

## Preliminary Environmental Assessment on lands at Edenderry Power Plant, Co. Offaly



30<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Prepared by:** Altemar Ltd.

**On behalf of:** Bord na Mona.

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## Introduction

Altamar, Marine and Environmental Consultants has been retained by Bord na Mona to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal report to assess the environmental considerations at Edenderry Power Plant

The following report provides a preliminary site ecological assessment for the site and follows the guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal outlined by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2017). The subject site outline and location are demonstrated in Figures 1 & 2.

## Scope of Service

This review included:

- Site visit (18<sup>th</sup> November 2025)
- Review available desktop data
- Identify any important environmental issues on site and potential constraints associated with the proposed works
- For identified issues, identify the potential risks or impact on the project in terms of consents and licenses, potential timings, need for avoidance, mitigation, restrictions, etc.
- As outlined by the CIEEM the purpose of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is to:
  - establish baseline conditions and determine the importance of ecological features present (or those that could be present) within the specified area, as far as is possible;
  - establish any requirements for detailed/further surveys;
  - identify key constraints to the project and make recommendations for design options;
  - avoid significant effects on important ecological features/resources at an early stage;
  - identify the mitigation measures as far as possible, including those that will be required, and those that may be required (based on results of further surveys or final scheme design); and
  - to identify enhancement opportunities.

## Proposed Project

The subject site is located south of Edenderry town, on the lands of the Edenderry Power Plant. Habitats on site include amenity grassland, treelines, scrub and built land.

## Field Survey

The following report is a preliminary ecological appraisal and does not aim to replace extensive surveys that may be carried out to inform an application for planning permission. A site visit was carried out on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025 (Emma Peters BSc) to assess the site for habitat/species of conservation importance and identify key ecological constraints on site that may impact on the proposed works.



Survey area

0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 km

Project: Edenderry Renewable Energy Complex  
 Location: Edenderry, Co. Offaly  
 Date: 11th March, 2026.  
 Drawn By: Emma Peters (Altemar).

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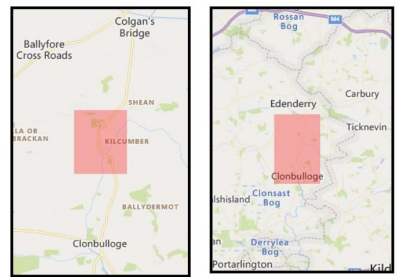


Figure 1. Area of study and location on satellite imagery



 Survey area

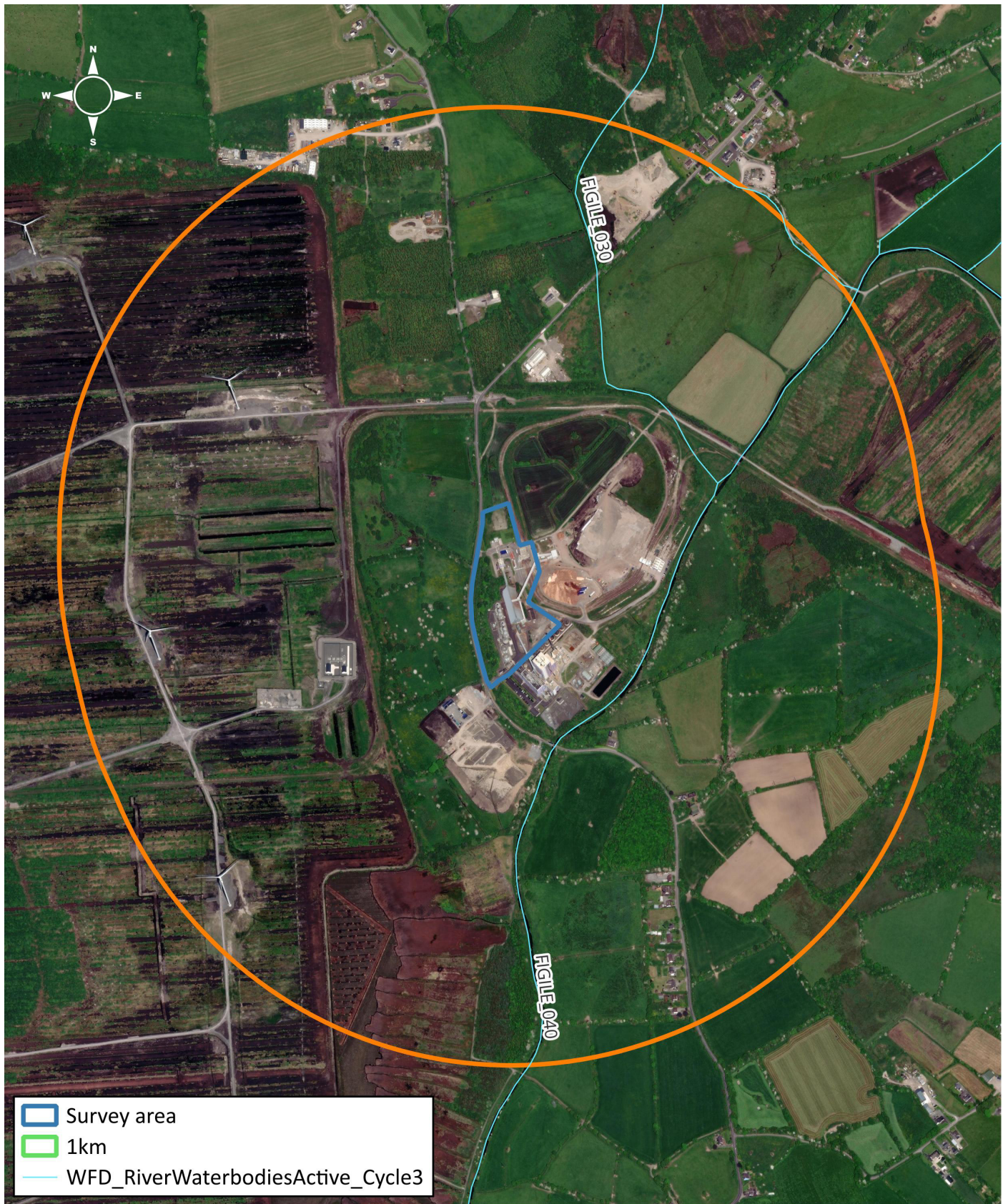
0 50 100 150 200 250 m

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Figure 2. Survey area.

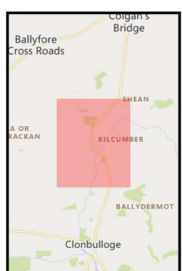


- ▭ Survey area
- ▭ 1km
- WFD\_RiverWaterbodiesActive\_Cycle3

0      250      500      750      1,000      1,250      1,500 m

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**Figure 3.** Watercourses that flow proximate subject site

# Results

## Desk Study

### Designated sites and watercourses

Designated conservation sites (National and international) within 15km of the proposed development are seen in Figures (4-8) and Tables 1 & 2. It should be noted that there are no designated conservation sites within the site outline. The closest Natura 2000 site is The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC located 5.0km northeast of the subject site. The closest proposed National Heritage Area (pNHA) is Grand Canal (4.3 km from the subject site). The nearest National Heritage Areas (NHA) is Black Castle Bog NHA (7.3 km from the subject site). No Ramsar sites are within 15km of the subject.

The Figle River is located along 243m south of the site, and flows in a southerly direction. This River ultimately discharges to the River Barrow, located >16km downstream.

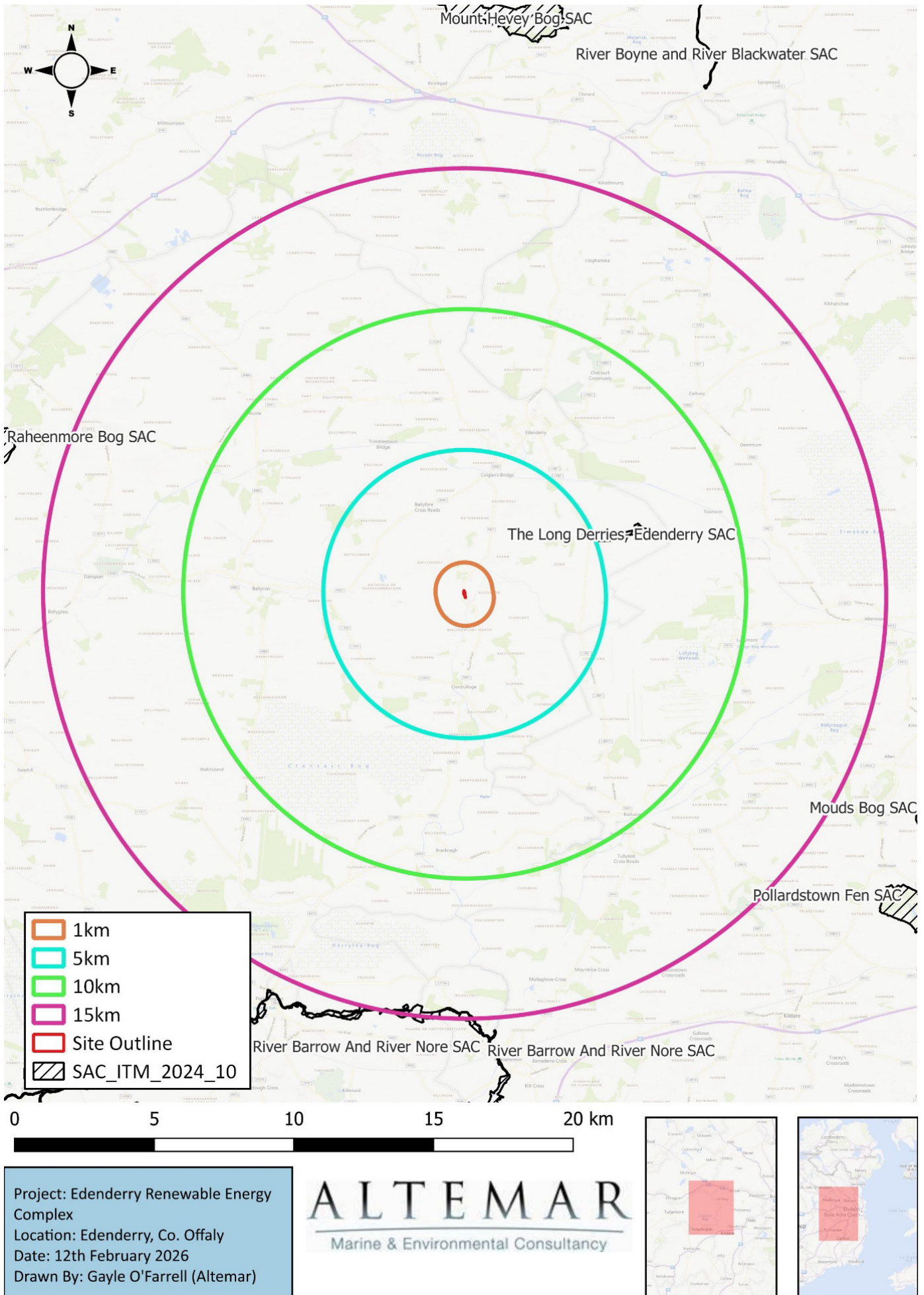
Waterbodies proximate to the subject site and designated conservation sites with a potential hydrological connection to the subject site are demonstrated in Figures 9-10. The River Flow Direction, WFD Catchments and Sub Catchments of the subject site are demonstrated in Figures 11 – 13.

Table 1. Natura 2000 sites located within 15km of the subject site

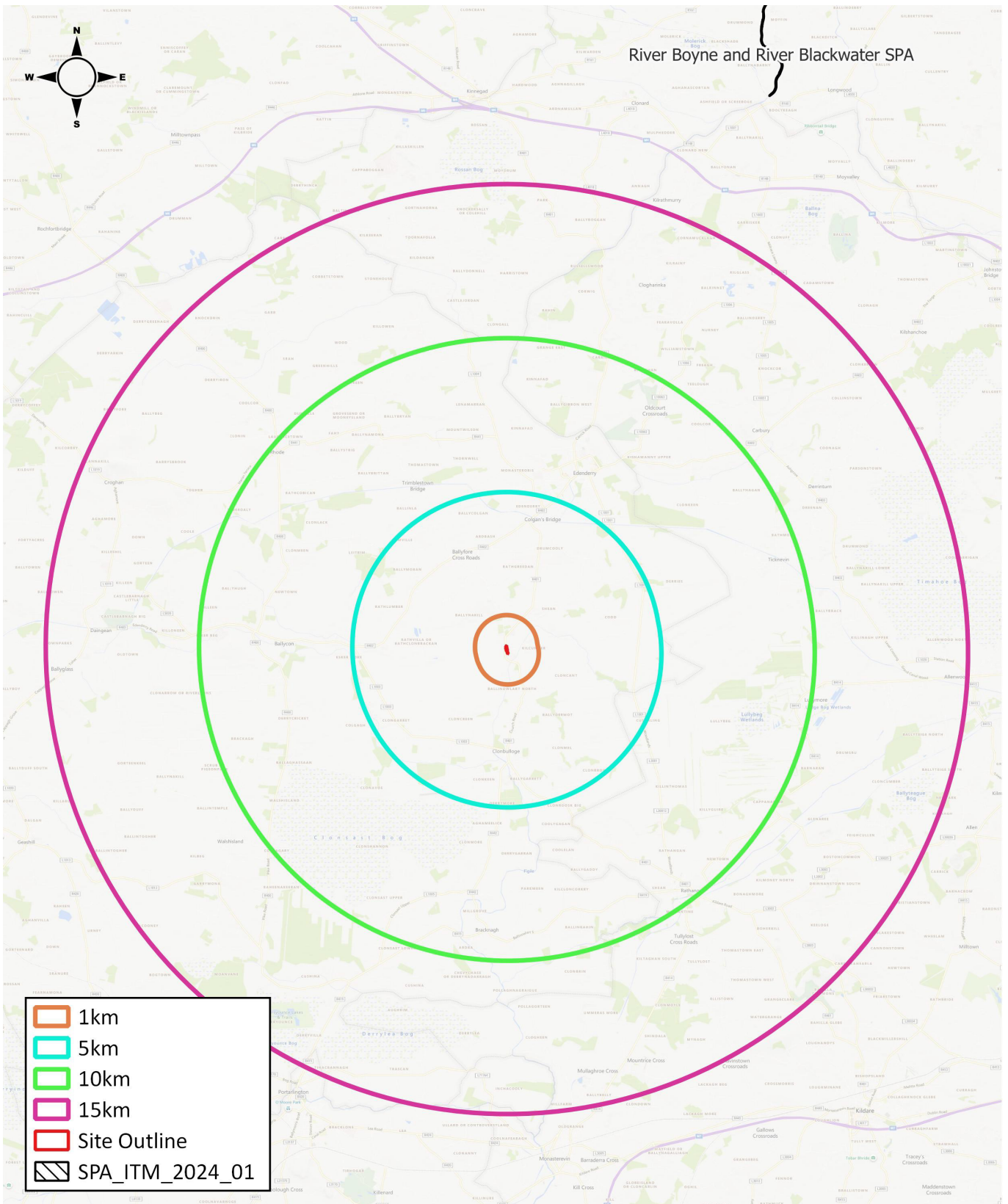
Site Code	NATURA 2000 Site	Distance
<b>Special Areas of Conservation</b>		
000925	The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC	5.0 km
002162	River Barrow and River Nore SAC	14.6 km
<b>Special Protection Areas</b>		
<i>None within 15km of the study area</i>		

Table 2. NHAs, and proposed NHAs located within 15km of the subject site

Status	Site Name	Distance
Proposed NHA	Grand Canal	4.3 km
Proposed NHA	The Long Derries, Edenderry	5.0 km
NHA	Black Castle Bog NHA	7.3 km
NHA	Carbury Bog NHA	11.2 km
NHA	Daingean Bog NHA	14.8 km



**Figure 4.** Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) within 15km of the subject site



Project: Edenderry Renewable Energy Complex  
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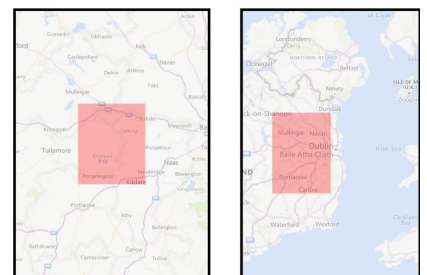
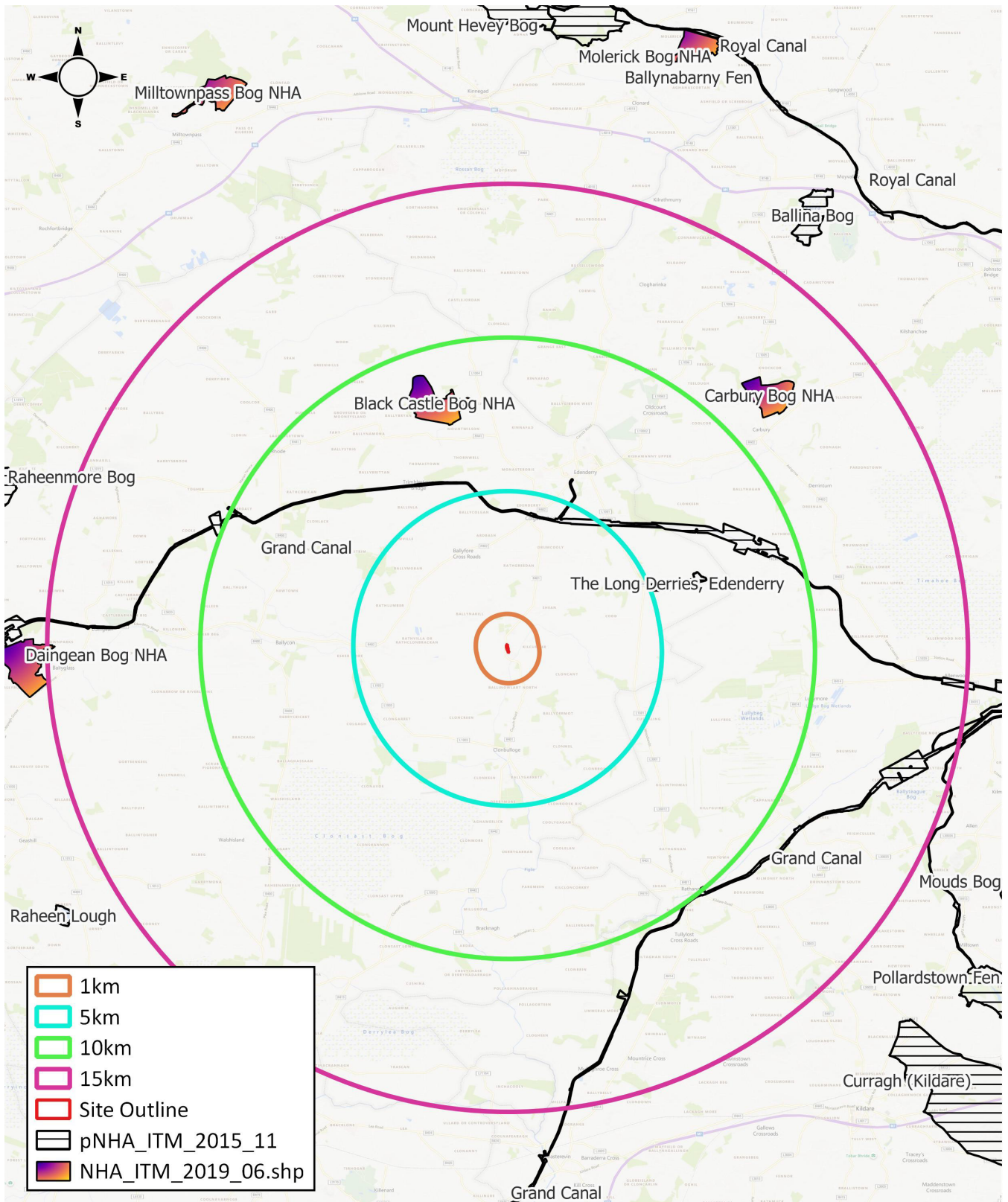
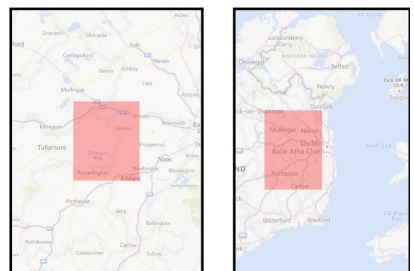


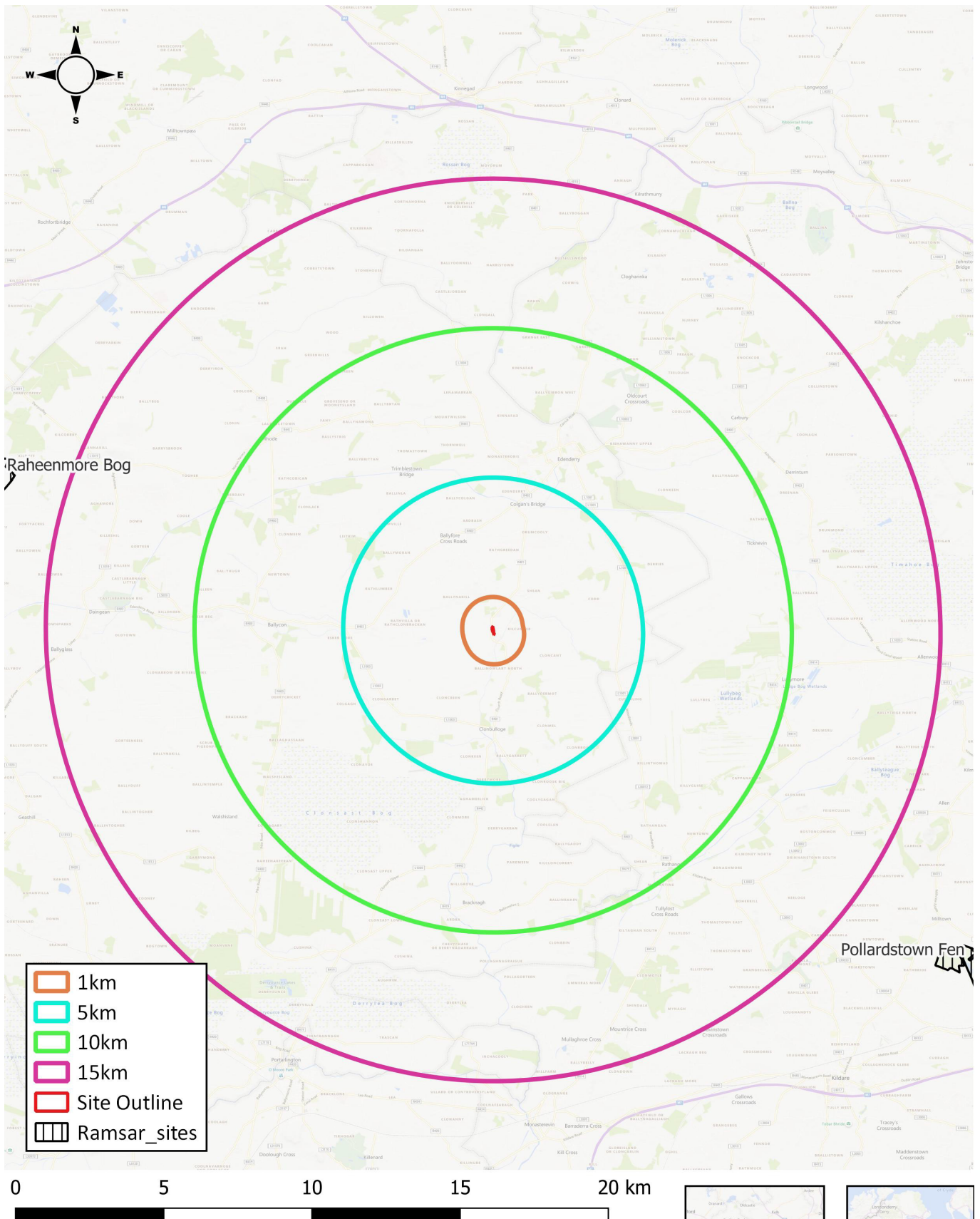
Figure 5. Special Protected Areas (SPA) within 15km of the subject site (none)



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**Figure 6.** National Heritage Areas (NHAs) (none) and proposed National Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within 15km of the subject site.



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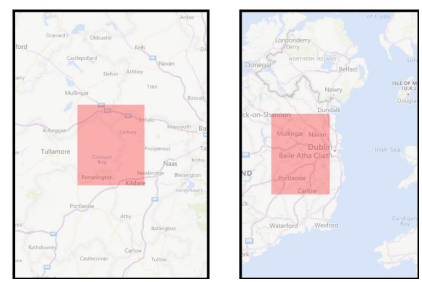
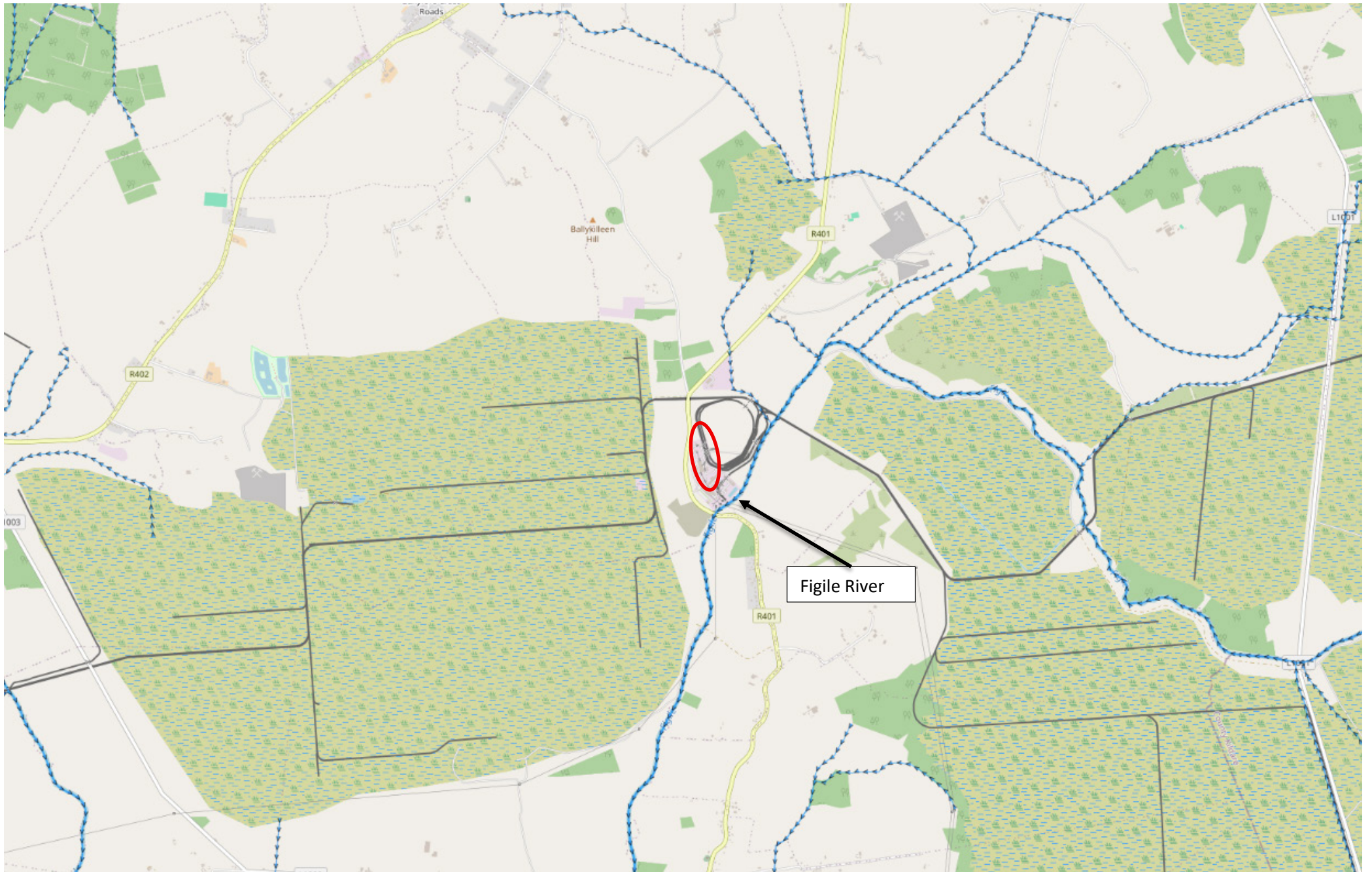


Figure 7. Ramsar sites (none) within 15km of the subject site.



**Figure 8.** Waterbodies proximate to the subject site and SACs with potential hydrological connection to the subject site



**Figure 9.** WFD - Water flow direction of watercourses proximate to the subject site (Site – Red circle)

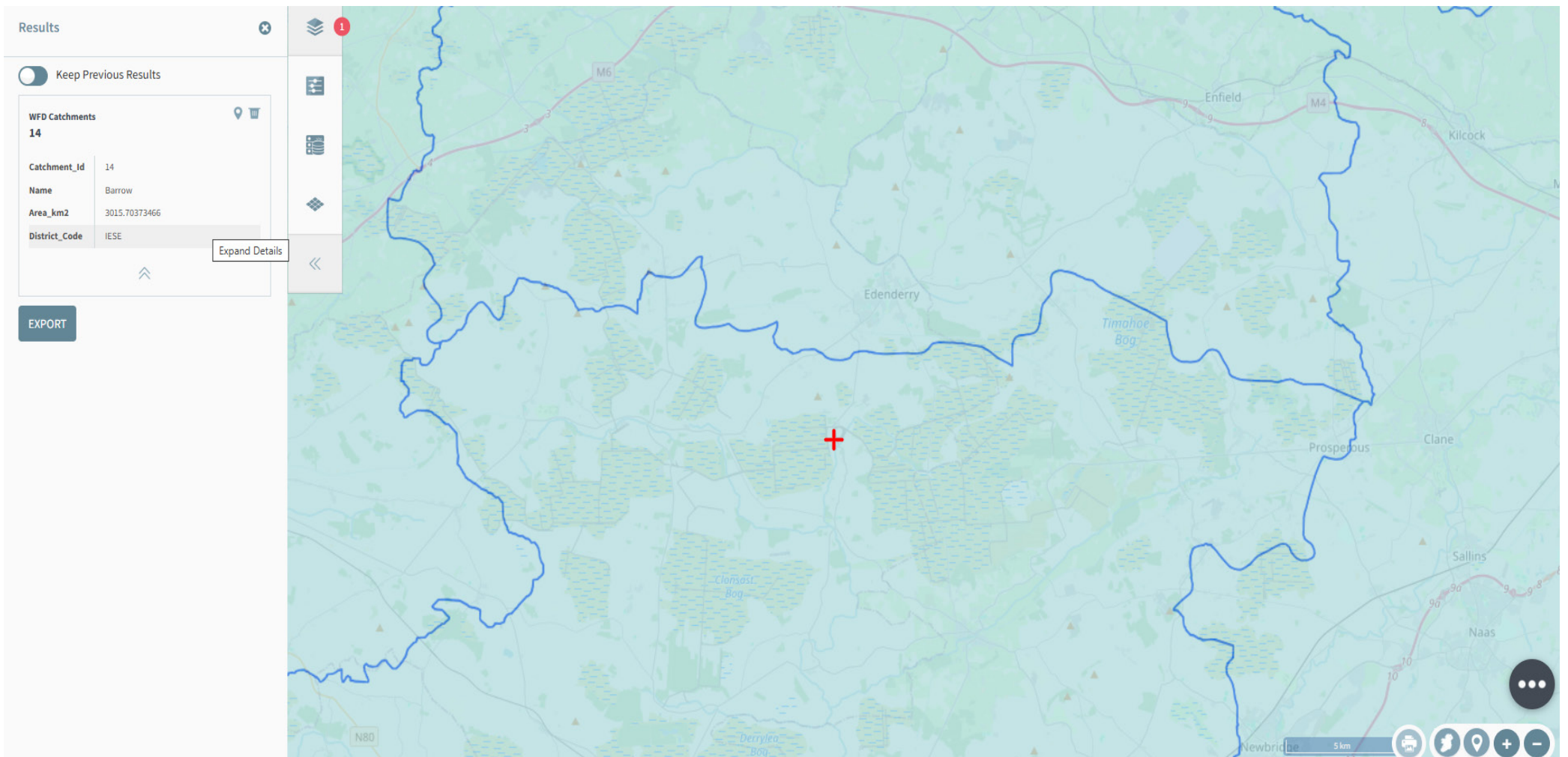
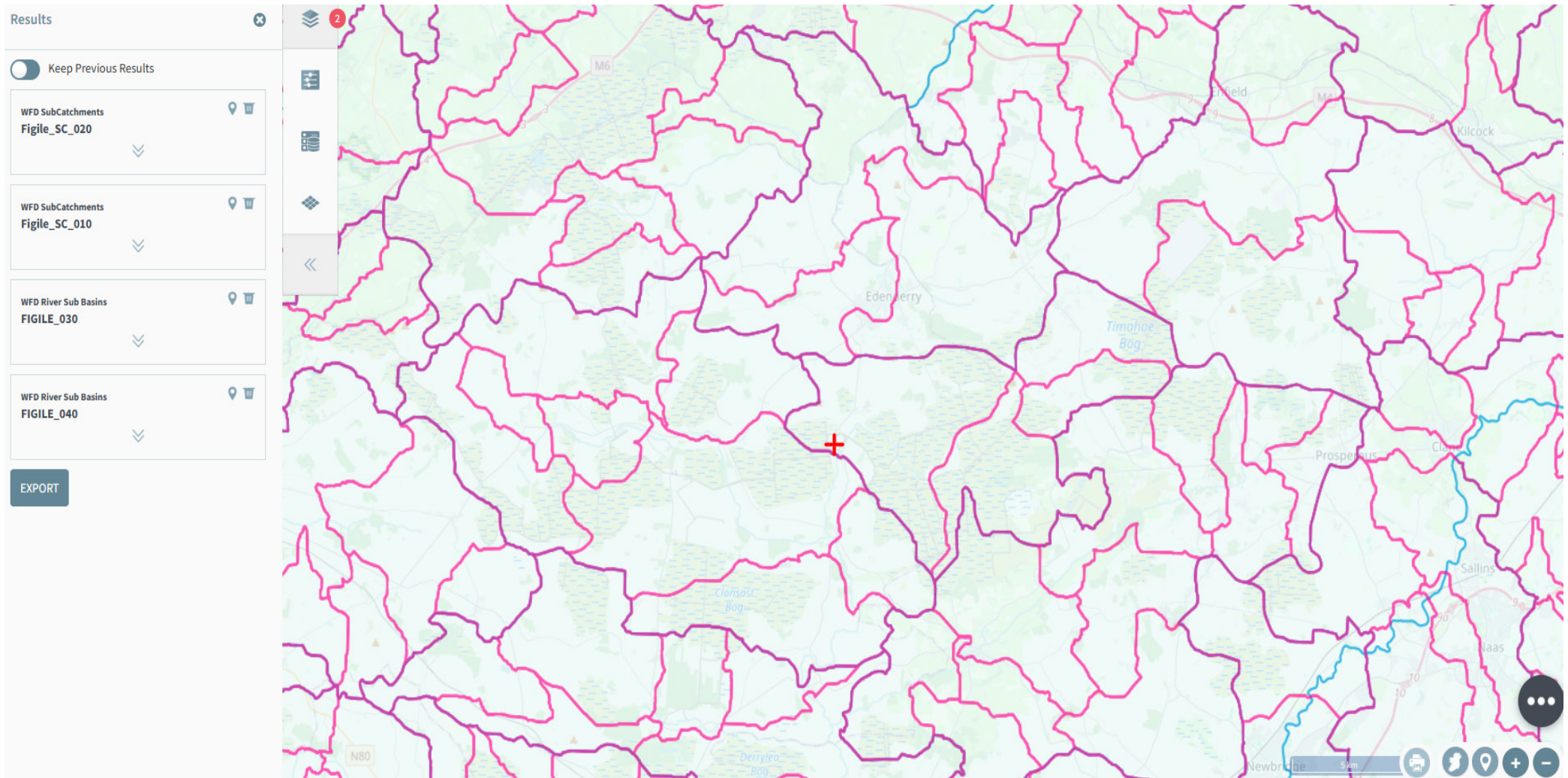


Figure 10. WFD Catchments encompassing the subject site (site: red cross)



**Figure 11.** WFD - Water flow direction of watercourses proximate to the subject site (Sites – Red Crosses) (blue arrow - flow direction).

## Biodiversity

The National Biodiversity Data Centre's online viewer was consulted in order to determine the extent of biodiversity and/or species of interest in the area. First, an assessment of the site-specific area was carried out by generating a report based on the site outline. No species of conservation importance have been recorded within the site outline. Following this, a 2 km<sup>2</sup> grid that encompasses the site outline (reference number N62D) based on the Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) Irish Grid classification system was assessed. Table 3 provides a list of all species recorded in the species report generated for these grids that possess a specific designation, such as Invasive Species or Protected Species.

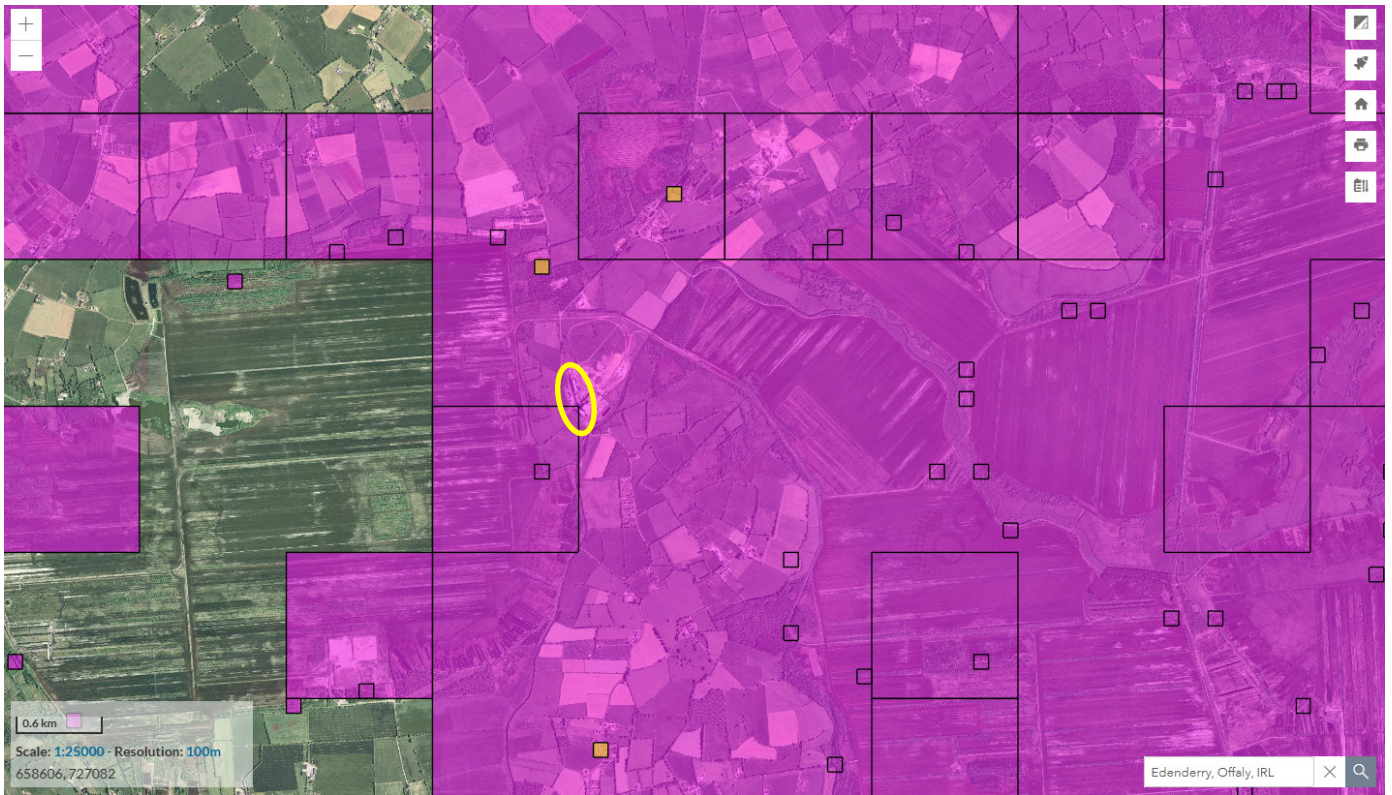
Table 3. Table of species, NBDC (N62D)

Species name	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
Greenfinch ( <i>Chloris chloris</i> )	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Lapwing ( <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> )	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts    Protected Species: EU Birds Directive    Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section II Bird Species    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Linnet ( <i>Linaria cannabina</i> )	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Mallard ( <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i> )	31/12/2011	Bird Atlas 2007 - 2011	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts    Protected Species: EU Birds Directive    Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species    Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section I Bird Species    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Robin ( <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> )	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Skylark ( <i>Alda arvensis</i> )	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Snipe ( <i>Gallinago gallinago</i> )	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts    Protected Species: EU Birds Directive    Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex II, Section I Bird Species    Protected Species: EU Birds Directive >> Annex III, Section III Bird Species    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List
Sparrowhawk ( <i>Accipiter nisus</i> )	20/04/2012	Birds of Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Starling ( <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> )	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Swallow ( <i>Hirundo rustica</i> )	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
Swift ( <i>Apus apus</i> )	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Red List

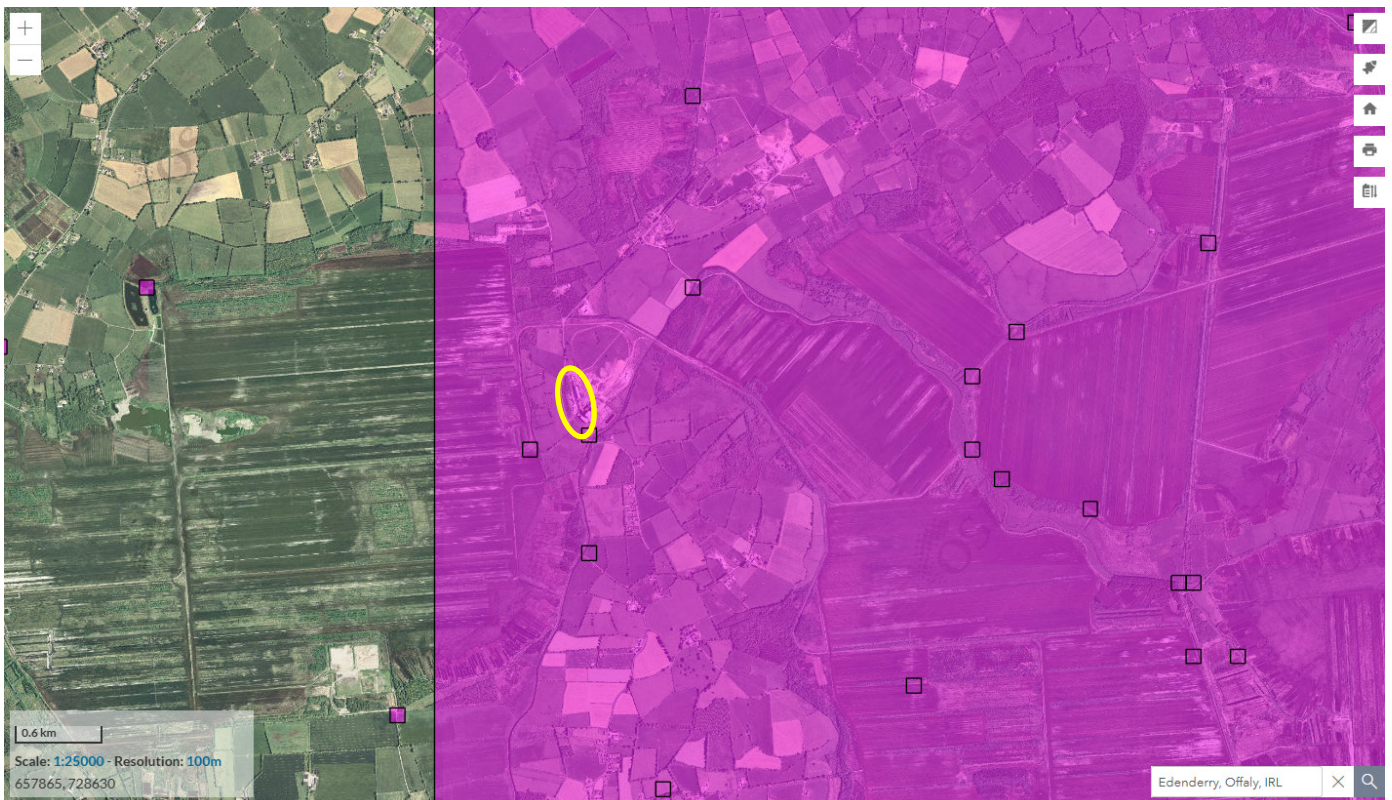
Species name	Date of last record	Title of dataset	Designation
Willow Warbler ( <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> )	31/07/1991	The Second Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern    Threatened Species: Birds of Conservation Concern >> Birds of Conservation Concern - Amber List
<i>Gammarus pulex/fossarum agg.</i>	12/08/2009	A national macroinvertebrate dataset collected for the biomonitoring of Ireland's river network, 2007–2018 (EPA)	Invasive Species: Medium Risk Invasive Species (2013 Report)    Invasive Species: The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985
White-clawed Crayfish ( <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> )	22/08/2017	A national macroinvertebrate dataset collected for the biomonitoring of Ireland's river network, 2007–2018 (EPA)	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive    Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex II    Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex V    Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Basil Thyme ( <i>Clinopodium acinos</i> )	05/08/2010	Discrete vascular plant surveys	Threatened Species: Near threatened
Jenkins' Spire Snail ( <i>Potamopyrgus antipodarum</i> )	22/08/2017	A national macroinvertebrate dataset collected for the biomonitoring of Ireland's river network, 2007–2018 (EPA)	Invasive Species: Medium Risk Invasive Species (2013 Report)
Badger ( <i>Meles meles</i> )	12/03/2015	General Biodiversity Records from Ireland	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Common Pipistrelle ( <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu stricto</i> )	18/05/2019	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive    Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV    Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Daubenton's Bat ( <i>Myotis daubentonii</i> )	27/07/2008	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive    Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV    Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Fallow Deer ( <i>Dama dama</i> )	12/03/2015	General Biodiversity Records from Ireland	Invasive Species: Regulation S.I. 477/2011 (Ireland)    Invasive Species: High Risk Invasive Species (2013 Report)    Invasive Species: Regulation S.I. 374/2024 (Ireland)    Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Hedgehog ( <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i> )	02/08/2013	Atlas of Mammals in Ireland 2010-2015	Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Leisler's Bat ( <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i> )	12/07/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive    Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV    Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> )	26/03/2015	General Biodiversity Records from Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive    Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex II    Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV    Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Rabbit ( <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i> )	15/06/2013	Atlas of Mammals in Ireland 2010-2015	Invasive Species: Medium Risk Invasive Species (2013 Report)
Soprano Pipistrelle ( <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> )	12/07/2018	National Bat Database of Ireland	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive    Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV    Protected Species: Wildlife Acts

### ***Terrestrial mammals (NBDC)***

The National Biodiversity Data Centre's online viewer was consulted in order to determine whether there have been recorded terrestrial mammal sightings in the wider area. This is visually represented in Figure 12 & 13. The following species were noted: Eurasian badger (*Meles meles*), West European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and Otter (*lutra lutra*).



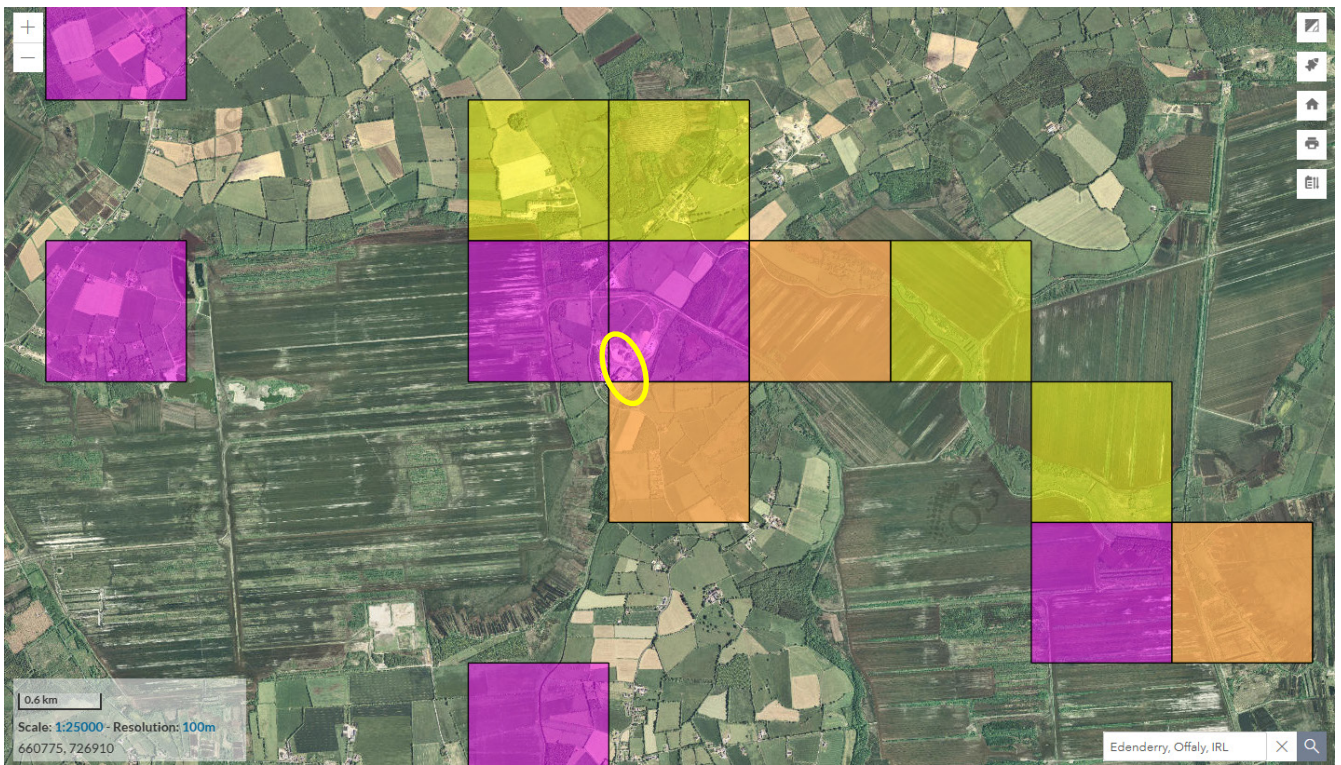
**Figure 12.** West European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) (yellow) Eurasian badger (*Meles meles*) (purple), and both West European Hedgehog and Eurasian badger (orange) (Source NBDC) (Site – yellow circle)



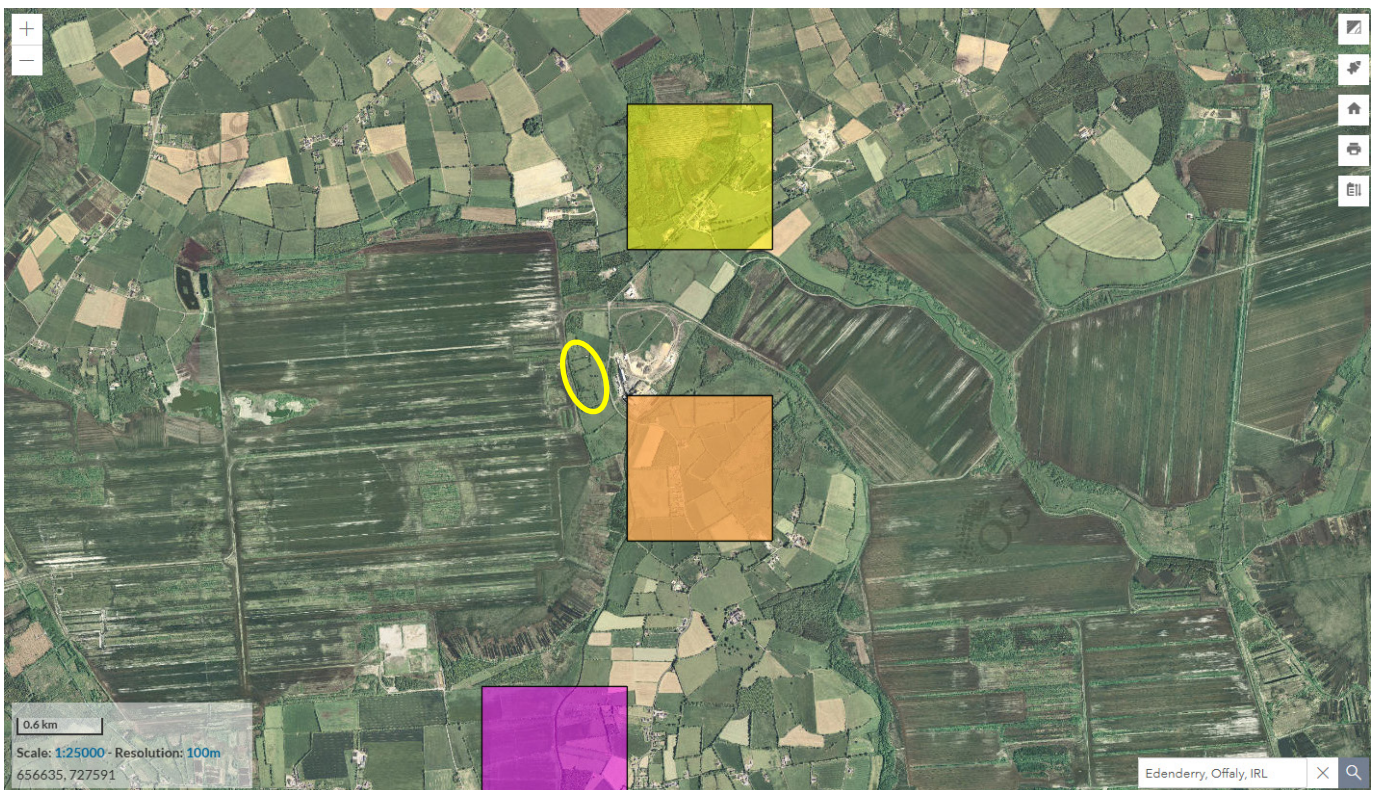
**Figure 13.** Otter (*lutra lutra*) (purple) (Source NBDC) (Site – yellow circle)

### **Terrestrial Mammals - Bats**

The National Biodiversity Data Centre's online viewer was consulted to determine whether there have been recorded bat sightings in the wider area. This is visually represented in Figure 14 & 15. The following species was noted: Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) and Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*).



**Figure 14.** Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), (yellow) Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), (purple), and both Common pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle (orange) (Source NBDC) (Site – yellow circle)



**Figure 15.** Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) (yellow), Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) (purple), and both Leisler's Bat and Daubenton's Bat (orange) (Source NBDC) (Site – yellow circle)

### **Amphibians**

The National Biodiversity Data Centre's online viewer was consulted to determine whether there have been recorded amphibian sightings in the wider area. This is visually represented in Figure 16. The following species were noted: Common frog (*Rana temporaria*).



**Figure 16.** Common frog (*Rana temporaria*) (Purple) (Source NBDC) (Site – yellow circle)

### **Invasive Species (NBDC)**

The National Biodiversity Data Centre's online viewer was consulted in order to determine whether there have been recorded sightings of invasive species in the wider area. This is visually represented in Figure 17. The following species were mapped: Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*) and Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*).



**Figure 17.** Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*) (purple) and Rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) (yellow) (Source NBDC) (Site – yellow circle).

## National Monuments

Heritage data on the historic monument map viewer was consulted. No national monuments or historic sites are within or proximate to the survey area.



**Figure 18.** Map denoting location of historic sites proximate to the sites. Site = black rectangle

## Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Offaly County development plan sets out the policies and objectives for the development of the local area over the 2021-2027 period.

Objectives of note concerning the site include:

### **4.17 Biodiversity and Landscape Objectives**

#### *Natural Capital*

*BLO-01 It is an objective of the Council that development occurs within environmental limits, having regard to the requirements of all relevant environmental legislation and the sustainable management of County Offaly's natural capital.*

#### *Designated and Non-Designated Sites*

*BLO-02 It is an objective of the Council that no plans, programmes or projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on European sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans, programmes, etc. or projects<sup>6</sup>).*

*BLO-03 It is an objective of the Council that all projects and plans arising from this Plan<sup>7</sup> will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and subsequent Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:*

- 1. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or*
- 2. The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or*
- 3. The plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.*

*BLO-04 It is an objective of the Council to ensure that the impact of development within or adjacent to national designated sites, Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites and Nature Reserves likely to result in significant adverse effects on the designated site is assessed by requiring the submission of an*

*Ecological Impact Assessment prepared by a suitably qualified professional, which should accompany planning applications.*

*BLO-05 It is an objective of the Council in accordance with Article 4(4) of the Birds Directive and Regulation 27(4) of the European Communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015 to strive to avoid pollution or deterioration of bird habitats outside Special Protection Areas.*

*BLO-06 It is an objective of the Council to take account of the objective and management practices proposed in any management or related plans for European Sites (SACs and SPAs) in and adjacent to the county published by the Department including the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017-2022 and any subsequent editions.*

#### *Peatlands*

*BLO-10 It is an objective of the Council to require the preparation and submission of a Hydrological Report/Assessment for significant developments within and in close proximity to protected raised bogs and to take account of same in the assessment of impacts on the integrity of peatland ecosystems.*

*BLO-11 It is an objective of the Council to work with relevant stakeholders on suitable peatland sites in order to demonstrate best practice in sustainable peatland conservation, management and restoration techniques to promote their heritage and educational value subject to ecological impact assessment and appropriate assessment screening.*

#### *Waterways, Lakes and Wetland Landscapes*

*BLO-12 It is an objective of the Council to maintain a riparian zone for larger and smaller river channels based on the Inland Fisheries Ireland updated guideline document, 'Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment, a Guide to the Protection of Watercourses through the use of Buffer Zones, Sustainable Drainage Systems, Instream Rehabilitation, Climate / Flood Risk and Recreational Planning'.*

*BLO-13 It is an objective of the Council to (a) investigate the feasibility of and cooperate with relevant agencies in providing a Linear Park based on the River Shannon from Banagher to Meelick, which takes account of the sensitive ecological nature of the Callows area and (b) to support the development of an overall vision/strategy for the Shannon Callows in co-operation with all stakeholders to ensure that the area is appropriately managed at a landscape scale.*

#### *Trees, Forestry and Hedgerows*

*BLO-14 It is an objective of the Council to preserve individual trees and groups of trees that are included in Table 4.13 and 4.14.*

*BLO-15 It is an objective of the Council to consider the making of Tree Preservation Orders to protect trees and woodlands of high value.*

*BLO-16 It is an objective of the Council to encourage the preservation and enhancement of native and semi-natural woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees, not listed in Table 4.13 and 4.14; (a) in particular, on the grounds of Country Houses, Gardens and Demesnes and on approaches to settlements in the county; and (b) as part of the development management process, require the planting of native, deciduous, pollinator friendly trees in all new developments where possible.*

*BLO-17 It is an objective of the Council to encourage pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological*

*coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.*

*BLO-18 It is an objective of the Council to encourage the retention, wherever possible, of hedgerows and other distinctive boundary treatment in the county. Where removal of a hedgerow, stone wall or other distinctive boundary treatment is unavoidable, provision of the same type of boundary will be required of similar length and set back within the site in advance of the commencement of construction works on the site (unless otherwise agreed by the Planning Authority).*

#### *Green Infrastructure*

*BLO-19 It is an objective of the Council to require all new developments to identify, protect and enhance ecological features by making provision for local biodiversity (for example, through provision of swift boxes or towers, bat roost sites, green roofs, etc.) and provide ecological links to the wider Green Infrastructure network as an essential part of the design process.*

#### *Invasive Species*

*BLO-20 It is an objective of the Council to require, as part of the planning application process, the appropriate eradication/control of invasive species when identified on site or in the vicinity of a site, in accordance with Regulation 49 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 to 2015.*

*BLO-21 It is an objective of the Council to continue to maintain mapping identifying the location of invasive species in the county in conjunction with the National Biodiversity Data Centre.*

## **Site visit**

A site visit was carried out on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2025. This involved a walkover assessment of the lands outlined in Figure 1. The following should be noted following the site visit:

- 1) During the site visit, all area of the site were accessible. The intention of walkover was to identify ecological sensitivities onsite.
- 2) The site consists of small pockets of built land, mixed woodland, amenity grassland, dry meadow, treelines, hedgerows, recolonising bare and pockets of scrub.
- 3) No protected species or habitats of conservation importance were noted on site. However, the preliminary assessment is not considered to be a full detailed assessment of the site.
- 4) The area of dense scrub/woodland located to the west/southwest of the site is ideal habitat for fox dens and badger setts. The site visit took place within mammal survey season, however, no evidence of protected terrestrial mammals were noted within the survey area.
- 5) No protected habitats were noted onsite. Habitats onsite would be considered of low importance to local biodiversity.
- 6) Full inspections will be required to determine the presence of roosting bats within and proximate to the subject site. Bat roosts are protected under Irish and EU law.
- 7) High impact invasive species e.g. Japanese knotweed and Giant Hogweed were not noted on site. An in-depth flora survey must be carried out during the optimal survey period (April – September) for scheduled invasive species. It should be noted that Japanese knotweed was noted on the wider Edenderry Power Plant lands, some 400m to the east of the survey area.

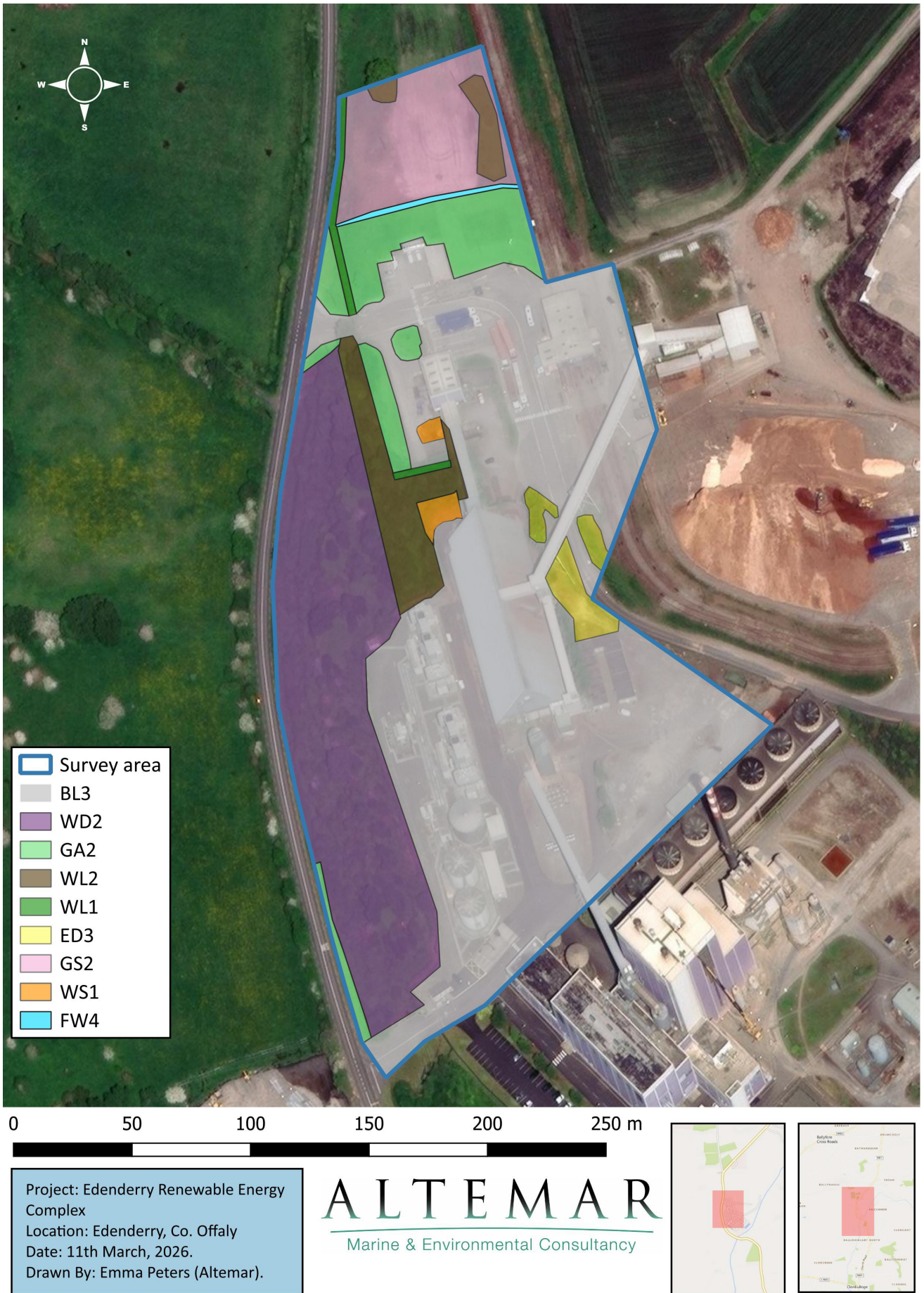


Figure 19. Habitats present within the site.



## Habitats:

A preliminary assessment was carried out on a small section of the Edenderry power plant on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2025. It should be noted that this survey was taken outside of the optimal flora season.

### **BL3 – Built land including BL3**

The built land within the redline consisted of facility buildings, roadways and footpaths. No species of conservation of conservation concern were noted here.



***Plate 1.*** Facility buildings.



**Plate 2.** Facility buildings.



**Plate 3.** Facility buildings.

## WS1/WD2– Scrub /,Mixed broadleaf/conifer woodland

An area in the centre of the site was a plantation of black poplar (*Populus x euramericana*) with brambles (*Rubus fruticosus agg*) and red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) understory. The area of scrubby woodland along the west side of the survey area between the roadway and power plant was largely dominated by willow (*Salix spp.*) and brambles (*Rubus fruticosus agg*) however, other species such as red clusterberry (*Cotoneaster parneyi*), red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), cherry laurel (*Laurocerasus officinalis*), lawson cyprus (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) and black poplar (*Populus x euramericana*) were noted here.



**Plate 4.** Scrub/immature treeline.

## GA2 – Amenity grassland

Small patches of maintained amenity grassland were noted at the north of the redline and at the foot of the treeline. The species included silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), thistles (*Cirsium spp.*), dock s (*Rumex spp.*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), creeping cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), Canadian fleabane (*Erigeron canadensis (Conyza canadensis)*) and coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*).



**Plate 5.** Amenity grassland.

### **GS2 – Dry meadow and grassy verges**

An area of dry meadow was located at the north if the survey area

This habitat was found in multiple ways throughout the survey area. GS2 was noted on the sides of roadways, in unattended areas of fields and as large meadows. dock s (*Rumex spp.*), dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.), red bistort (*Persicaria amplexicaulis*), meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), daisy (*Bellis perennis*), self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), creeping cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*) and cats-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*),). Grasses species noted within this habitat included cocksfoot grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra* agg.) and Yorkshire (*Holcus lanatus*).



**Plate 6.** Dry meadow grassland.

#### **WL2 – Treelines**

The large treeline in the northwest of the redline consisted of Lawson cyprus (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*), black poplar (*Populus x euramericana*) and willow (*Salix spp.*) however, this treeline had quite a shrubby understory with red clusterberry (*Cotoneaster parneyi*), red-osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*), cherry laurel (*Laurocerasus officinalis*) and brambles (*Rubus fruticosus agg*). This extended into an **WD2 – Mixed broadleaf /conifer woodland** towards the R405 road to the west of the site.



**Plate 7.** Treeline.

**WL1 – Hedgerows**

A managed Lawson cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) hedgerow ran a short distance west to east in the centre of the site.



**Plate 8.** Hedgerow.

#### **ED2 – Spoil and bare ground**

A small amount of bare soil was noted between the WS1 and the existing facility building. No plants of conservation concern were noted here. No invasive plant species were noted here.

#### **ED3 – Recolonising bare ground**

Small areas of recolonising bare ground were noted scattered throughout the site with partial cover of vegetative cover. Species here included coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*), common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), thistles (*Cirsium spp.*), cats-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), wild carrot (*Daucus carota subsp. carota*).



**Plate 9.** Recolonising bare ground habitat..

**FW4 – Drainage ditch**

A shallow drainage ditch runs between dry meadow and amenity grassland. During the time of the survey the drainage ditch was filled with flora species of the dry meadow grassland.

**ED1 – Exposed sand, gravel or till**

Exposed gravel and rock substrate was use around the building that was southwest of the survey area. No plants of conservation concern were noted here. No invasive plant species were noted here.



**Plate 10.** Gravel habitat outside of the redline.

### **Discussion of habitats**

Overall, the site is highly managed, and activity used as the Edenderry power plant. No protected habitats were noted onsite however, it is worth mentioning, that northeast of the red line Blue fleabane was noted. This is not a protected plant in the Republic of Ireland however it is considered endangered on the red data list of Irish plants. Japanese knotweed has also been identified on the ground of the powerplant (>400m east of the redline); however, it was not found within the redline during the time of this survey. It should be noted that the assessment was taken outside of optimal flora season and this was a preliminary assessment.

## Plant Species

The plant species encountered at the various locations on site are detailed above. No plant species protected under Irish or international legislation were noted on site. No rare or threatened plant species were recorded within the proposed development site. No invasive species that are listed on the First Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011) which makes it an offence under Regulation 49 to plant, disperse, allow or cause to grow these plants. However, it should be noted that the assessment was carried out outside optimal flora survey season (April- September).

## Terrestrial Mammals

All areas of the site were accessible. Full survey coverage of the site was possible and there are no limitations in relation to the mammal assessment. No protected terrestrial mammals were noted on within the survey area. A badger sett was noted on separate surveys on the lands of the power plants approximately 250m northeast of the survey area (figure 20).

## Bats

No evidence of bat roosts was found in any of the onsite trees or proximate buildings. No trees or buildings of moderate or high roosting potential were found on site. However, bat surveys will be required during the bat activity season.

## Amphibians/Reptiles

The common frog (*Rana temporaria*) or the common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) were not observed on site. There are no water features within the site boundary that could be important to frogs.

## Birds

No rare birds or bird species of conservation value (red or amber listed) were noted during the field assessment. Species noted are seen in Table 5. It should be noted that the building along the eastern boundary may be important to nesting swifts and swallows, however no buildings are located within the site outline.

**Table 5:** Bird Species noted in the vicinity of the proposed development.

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Robin</b>	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	<b>Green</b>
<b>Blue tit</b>	<i>Parus caeruleus</i>	<b>Green</b>
<b>Blackbird</b>	<i>Turdus merula</i>	<b>Green</b>
<b>Woodpigeon</b>	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	<b>Green</b>
<b>Rook</b>	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	<b>Green</b>

## Notes on Invasives

No invasive plant or animal species listed under the First Schedule of the European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 374/2024) were noted on site. No terrestrial or aquatic invasive species such as Japanese knotweed, giant rhubarb, Himalayan balsam, giant hogweed etc. that could hinder removal of soil from the site during groundworks were noted. However, the survey was undertaken outside of the optimal survey period for identifying invasive species. Therefore, this does not discount the presence of invasive species within the site.

## Recommendations

Incorporating existing biodiversity on site into any proposed development would be of importance when development of the site is proposed, and development should include consideration of the potential environmental risks.

- It is recommended that there is ecological input into the initial masterplanning of the site. The purpose of this is to outline the potential constraints and workarounds/mitigation at an early stage to prevent abortive work from team members at a later stage.
- Badgers and their resting/breeding places are protected under Irish law. Currently NPWS are not granting derogation licenses for the closure of setts. There needs to be a minimum of 30m from a non-breeding sett and 50m from a breeding sett (during the breeding season). A mammal assessment should be carried out (Jan-early April) given the presence of badgers on the NBDC Records. It is likely that the area of scrub/woodland onsite is used as breeding areas for birds and badger and it would be recommended that this would be left undeveloped if possible.
- All bats and their roosts are protected under Irish and EU law. The removal of the buildings on site would involve the removal of structures supporting bat roosting potential. There are several trees on site, and a bat assessment should be carried out on these trees and all buildings proximate to the redline.
- If lighting is proposed, a bat sensitive lighting strategy should be put in place across the site, but particularly in close proximity to scrub, woodland, treelines and hedgerow areas. Lighting should consider bat lighting guidelines. The reason for this is that bat foraging areas are increasingly becoming more important and are being requested to be retained. These areas are primarily concentrated around woodland/hedgerow edges.
- A detailed site walkover to determine the presence of invasive species should be undertaken during the optimal survey season (April-September).
- An Arborist should be engaged at an early stage particularly in relation to ensuring root protection areas are maintained.
- Hedgerows, scrub and mature trees on site should be retained where possible. Compensatory planting should be put in place where hedgerow/scrub/treelines are being removed.

### Design Recommendations

- A setback should be considered along the hedgerow/treeline area of the site. This would help maintain bat foraging corridors and protect potential roosts within trees, as well as maintaining corridors for biodiversity through the sites.
- The design should try to retain as many trees and scrub as possible.
- Compensatory habitats should be in place to compensate for the loss of bird and potentially bat habitats. Ideally this would see continued connectivity through the site of unlit biodiversity areas e.g. preparation of biodiversity corridors on site.
- Native wildflower meadows should be considered in amenity grassland areas of the site. Additional areas should also consider a 6 week mowing policy where possible.

### Surveys Required

For a robust submission detailed surveys will be required, including flora, bat, mammal and potentially breeding bird and aquatic surveys. The majority of the site is considered of low biodiversity value.

As there are temporal constraints in relation the surveys required ensuring that the surveys are carried out in the optimal survey season and are sufficient for the assessment of the project in the eyes of NPWS, IFI and the County Council. It would be expected that following the required surveys being carried out, that it is likely that the site itself would be deemed to be currently of low biodiversity importance based on the current use.

**Flora:** A flora assessment (April-October) must be carried out to inspect the site and surrounding areas for floral species of conservation importance. In addition, this survey will determine the presence of any invasive species that may be present during the optimal survey period.

**Mammals:** Terrestrial mammals e.g. badgers, hedgehogs and otters and their resting and breeding places are protected. The site visits were carried out over summer which is not the optimal survey season for mammals (December-March). A mammal assessment must be carried out to inspect the site and surrounding areas for badgers and otter. It should be noted that these areas would be expected to be in the woodland, scrub and hedgerow areas. Camera should be deployed over any existing burrows on-site to determine their ecological significance.

**Bats:** All bats and their resting and breeding places are protected under Irish and EU law. The derelict buildings on the site would be considered to be of low to moderate roosting potential. Buildings to be demolished/modified should be assessed. This would include a visual inspection and emergent surveys. These surveys must be carried out in the optimal survey season of April-September inclusive. It is important to note that foraging corridors also important. These would be expected along woodland and hedgerow edges but may also be present in open spaces. The lighting strategy should assume that bats are present on site.

**Breeding Birds:** If significant amounts of trees, scrub and hedgerows are being removed it is advisable that a breeding bird assessment is carried out. This involves three site visits between April and June.

**Aquatic assessment:** If the project is impacting on the ponds or the nearby watercourse, an Aquatic assessment should be carried out.

## Conclusions

The proposed development is not within a designated site. The closest Natura 2000 site is The Long Derries, Edenderry SAC (5.0km). There may be a remote indirect hydrological link to this designated site via the proximate Figile River. An Ecological Impact Assessments (EClA) including flora, fauna, bird, mammal and bat surveys should be prepared for a robust submission.

Based on the provisional site assessment, many of the potential biodiversity issues noted on-site can be mitigated against and would not impact on the designated sites, based on ecological sensitivities becoming part of the development design. A detailed assessment of flora, bat, and mammal species and the potential risk to proposed development should be carried out.