Screening Statement in support of Appropriate Assessment

for an

Industrial Emissions Licence for a proposed Poultry Unit

at

Templeglantine

Co. Limerick

Doherty Environmental

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Industrial Emissions Licence Application

Poultry Unit

Templeglantine, Co. Limerick

Document Stage	Document Version	Prepared by
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Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Doherty Environmental Consultants (DEC) Ltd. has been commissioned by NRGE Ltd. to undertake a Habitats Directive Stage 1 Screening Assessment in respect of an Industrial Emissions Licence Application (Ref No. P1042-01) for a proposed poultry unit at Michael Noel O'Connors Poultry Farm at Templeglantine, Co. Limerick.

This Screening Statement outlines the results of a Habitats Directive Stage 1 Screening Assessment for the proposed poultry unit. This Screening Statement of the proposed project and has been undertaken in order to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive Article 6(3) The function of this Screening Statement is to provide information that will facilitate the competent authority in completing a Stage 1 Screening Assessment of the proposed project's potential to result in likely significant effects to the Conservation Objectives of European Sites.

2.0 STAGE 1: SCREENING

The function of the Screening exercise is to identify whether or not the proposal will have a likely significant effect on European Sites. In this context "likely" refers to the presence of doubt with regard to the absence of significant effects (ECJ case C-127/02) and "significant" means not trivial or inconsequential but an effect that has the potential to undermine the site's conservation objectives (English Nature, 1999; ECJ case C-127/02 &). In other words any effect that compromises the conservation objectives of a site and interferes with achieving these conservation objectives for the site would constitute a significant effect.

The nature of the likely interactions between the project and the conservation objectives of European Sites will depend upon the sensitivity of these sites and their reasons for designation to potential impacts arising from the project; the current conservation status of the features for which European Sites have been designated; and any likely changes to key environmental indicators (e.g. habitat structure; vegetation community) that underpin the conservation status of European Sites, in combination with other plans and projects.

This Screening exercise has been undertaken with reference to respective National and European guidance documents: Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland:

Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG 2010) and *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC* and recent European and National case law (e.g. ECJ C-258/11 & High Court case ref 2014-320-JR). The following guidance documents were also of relevance during this Screening Assessment:

- A guide for competent authorities. Environment and Heritage Service, Sept 2002. Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010). DEHLG.
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/42/EED. European Commission (2001).
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC. European commission (2000). (To be referred to as MN 2000).
- Guidance on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solutions, Imperative reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall coherence, Opinion of the Commission. European Commission (2007).

The EC (2001) guidelines outline the stages involved in undertaking a Screening exercise of a project that has the potential to have likely significant effects on European Sites. The methodology adopted for this Screening exercise is informed by these guidelines and was undertaken in the following stages:

1. Describe the project and determine whether it is necessary for the conservation management of European Sites;
2. Identify European Sites that could be influenced by the project;
3. Where European Sites are identified as occurring within the sphere of influence of the project identify potential effects arising from the project and screen the potential for such effects to negatively affect European Sites identified under Point 2 above; and

4. Identify other plans or projects that, in combination with the project, have the potential to affect European Sites.

2.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The site of the Poultry Unit is located approximately 9km South West of Newcastle West and 1km from the village of Templeglantine, which is to the North East of the Unit (see Figure 2.1 for location.

An indicative site layout is shown on Figure 2.2 (see Planning Drawing for precise Site Layout). The total area of the site is 1.5 Hectares. The poultry unit as per Planning Ref 13366/12283 is approximately 50m North from the existing 2no poultry houses (20,000 birds each). The current capacity of the existing farm is 40,000. The new house has a capacity for 34,000 birds; amounting to a total of 74,000 birds.

2.1.1 Facilities

The buildings and its layout will be state of the art for the industry. A thorough review was undertaken of the best available techniques to minimise emissions from the unit and to maximise welfare conditions for animals and staff alike on-site. All facilities on-site are compliant with Best Available Techniques.

2.1.2 Drainage

All storm water from the yard will be diverted via a clean water drainage system to a single storm water monitoring point indicated as SW1 on the Site Layout Plan, which discharges to a small drainage ditch. This monitoring point will be inspected weekly and sampled quarterly for COD at an Independent Laboratory.

2.1.3 Soiled Water

Soiled water arising from the washing down of the accommodation houses is utilised on the applicant's land adjacent to the unit and amounts to approximately 5 vacuum tanks a year. The application of the soiled water is regulated under the EU (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) 2014 S.I. 31 of 2014.

2.1.4 Storm/clean surface water

All clean surface water collected will be discharged to an adjacent drainage ditch. Roof water is collected via galvanised gutters and downpipes and diverted to this drainage ditch also.

2.1.5 Storage Tanks

On site there are currently 2 no 37.6m^3 precise underground effluent tanks, which hold all washings from the poultry houses and soiled water from the yards. This tank's construction conforms to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's specification S123 Minimum Specification for Bovine Units and Reinsfored Tanks – March 2006.

2.1.6 Poultry Litter

The poultry litter from this unit is supplied to Custom Compost of Ballyminaun Hill, Gorey, Co. Wexford for use in the production of mushroom compost. The litter is removed off site on the same day as the shed cleaning is carried out.

2.1.7 Feed Silo

Feed silos, approximately 7.6 m high, 3.0 m diameter are installed adjacent to the accommodation houses.

2.1.8 Heating

Gas heating is installed in all poultry houses.

2.1.9 Feeding/Drinking Apparatus

An auger style feeding system is installed in each unit which has a low pan for easy access and low flow nipple-type drinkers with a drip cup to reduce spillages to the floor.

2.1.10 Traffic

The poultry unit is serviced by a local unnamed road, 1km from the village of Templeglantine. The Unit's entrance joins this road on a straight stretch giving maximum visibility for traffic. The increase in the use of raw materials associated with the increase in poultry growing

operation will not lead to a significant increase in traffic movements. Therefore, there will be no impact on the existing road network.

2.1.11 Noise & Odour

This Poultry operation has no significant effect on noise or odour. To date there has been no direct noise or odour related complaints made to the existing Poultry Unit.

2.1.12 Flora and Fauna

2.1.13 Waste Management

Michael Noel O' Connor has existing procedures in place with regards to waste management, in accordance with Part III of the Waste Management Acts 1996, as amended. These are outlined in the Waste Management Plan prepared by NRGE ltd.

2.1.14 Monitoring and Register

Proposals for monitoring storm water emissions at the site and noise monitoring locations carried out during the baseline survey are set down in the Environmental Report. There are no proposed monitoring measures for dust or odour at the unit. However, if any complaints are received, a follow up investigation will be initiated.

An Annual Environmental Report will be submitted annually to the Environmental Protection Agency, in accordance with the requirements of an Industrial Emissions Licence.

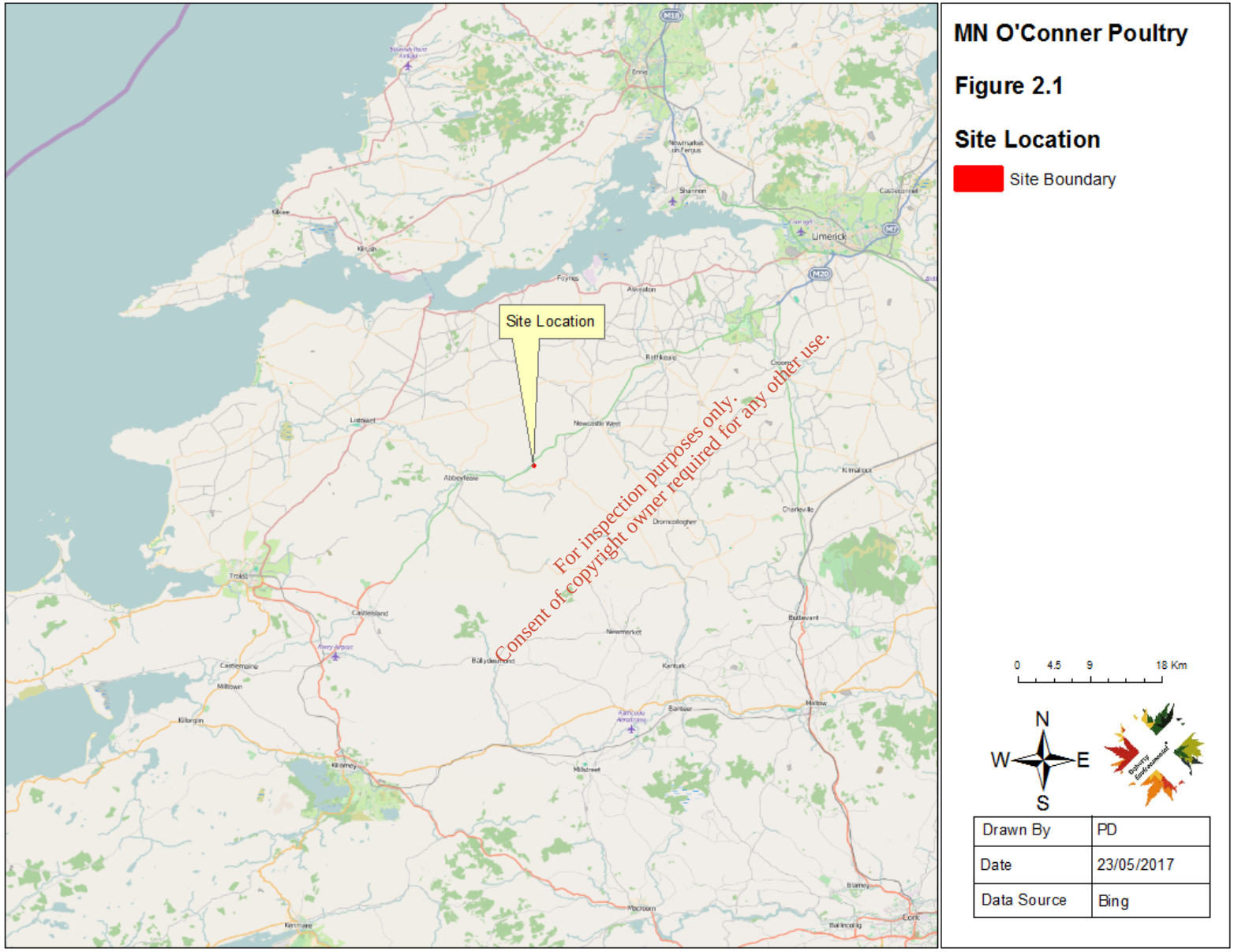
2.2 CONSTRUCTION & DESIGN MEASURES TO SAFEGUARD THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

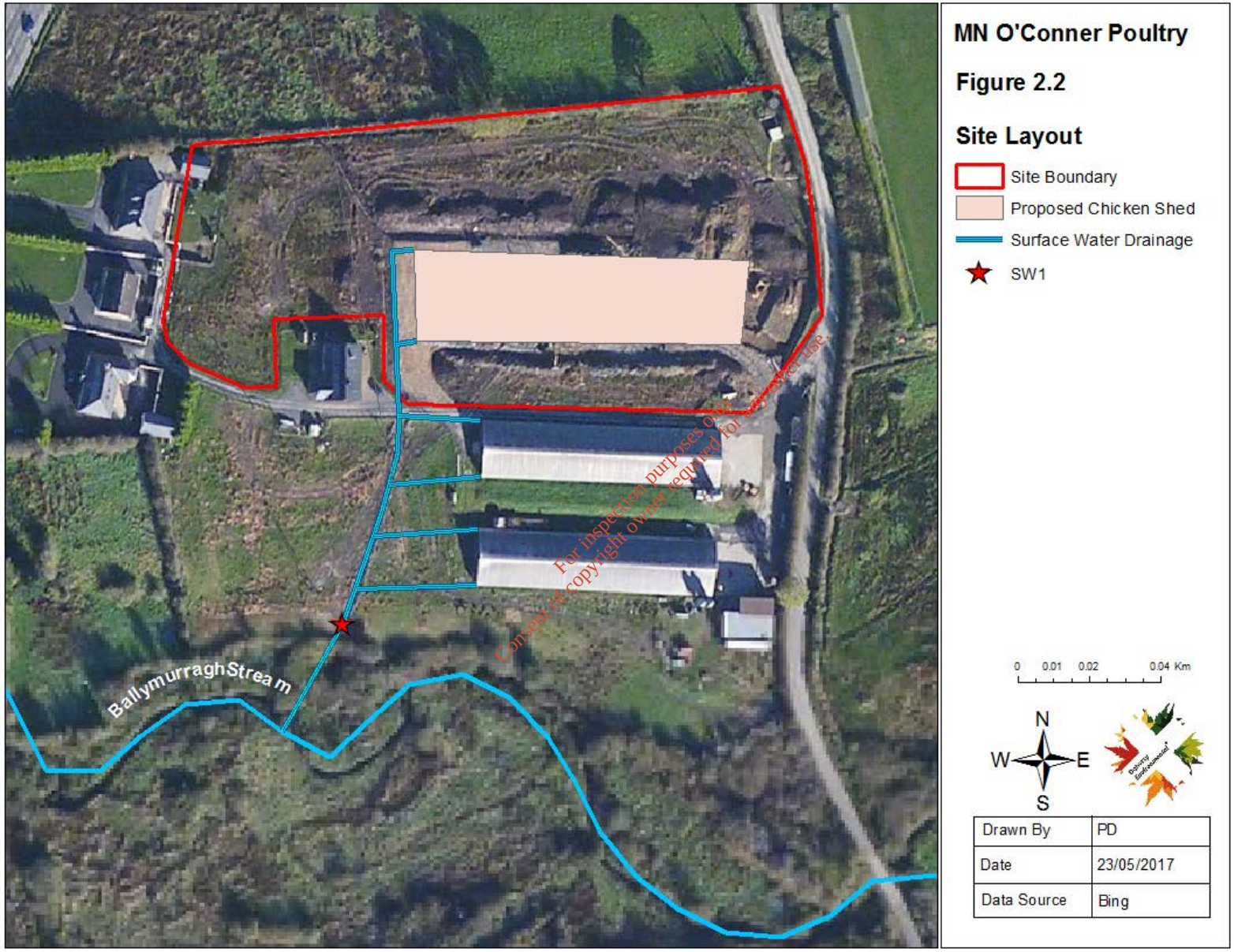
2.2.1 Construction Phase Measures

disturbance to protected species and their habitat will be provided to all construction staff.

The following best practice guidelines will be adhered to throughout the project:

- CIRIA (Construction Industry Research and Information Association) Guidance Documents
  - Control of water pollution from construction sites (C532)
  - Control of water pollution from linear construction projects: Technical Guidance (C648)
  - Control of water pollution from linear construction projects: Site Guide (C649)
  - Environmental Good Practice on Site (C692)
- NRA Guidance Documents
  - Guidelines for the Crossing of Watercourses during the Construction of National Road Schemes
  - Guidelines for the Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-Native Invasive Plant Species on National Roads
  - Guidelines for the Protection and Preservation of Trees, Hedgerows and Scrub Prior to, during and Post Construction of National Road Schemes.





3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT SITE SETTING

The proposed project site lies immediartely to the north of an existing poultry unit. The project site and the existing poultry unit are located in an area which is relatively flat with existing poultry units well screened by hedqerows from the N21.

Rural, agricultural land with little topographic relief occurs on-site. Much of the landscape surrounding the site is flat where levels are commonly 127 to 136m . Throughout the area the land is farmed with fields enclosed with a varied mix of hawthorn and blackthorn hedges, stonewalls and fences. Improved agricultural grassland dominates the surrounding land cover.

Improved agricultural grassland dominates the development footprint with surrounding hedgerows and treelines.

4.0 EUROPEAN SITES OCCURRING WITHIN THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PROJECT

Current guidance on undertaking EU Habitats Directive Article 6 Assessments advises that all European Sites occurring within a 15km radius of a project site should first be included within a Screening Assessment (Scott Wilson et al., 2006; DEHLG, 2010). Three European Sites, comprising of two SACs and one SPA occur within the surrounding 15km radius of the site (see Figure 4.1 & 4.2; Table 4.1 for list of European Sites).

The next step of the Screening Assessment is to identify which, if any of these sites, occur within the sphere of influence of the project.

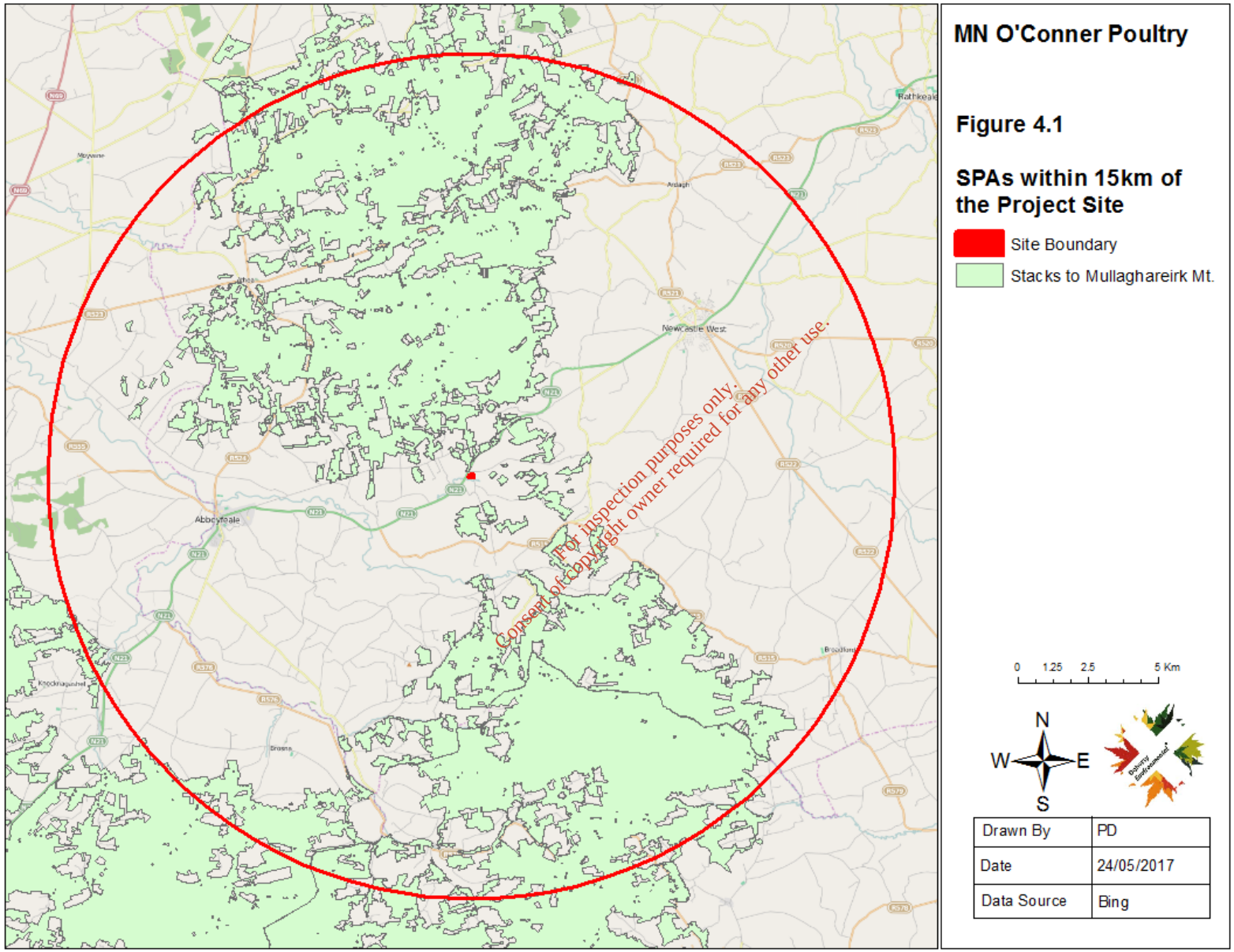
A source-pathway-receptor model has been used to establish which European Sites could occur within the sphere of influence of potential indirect impacts. Under such a model the project, as described above, represents the source.

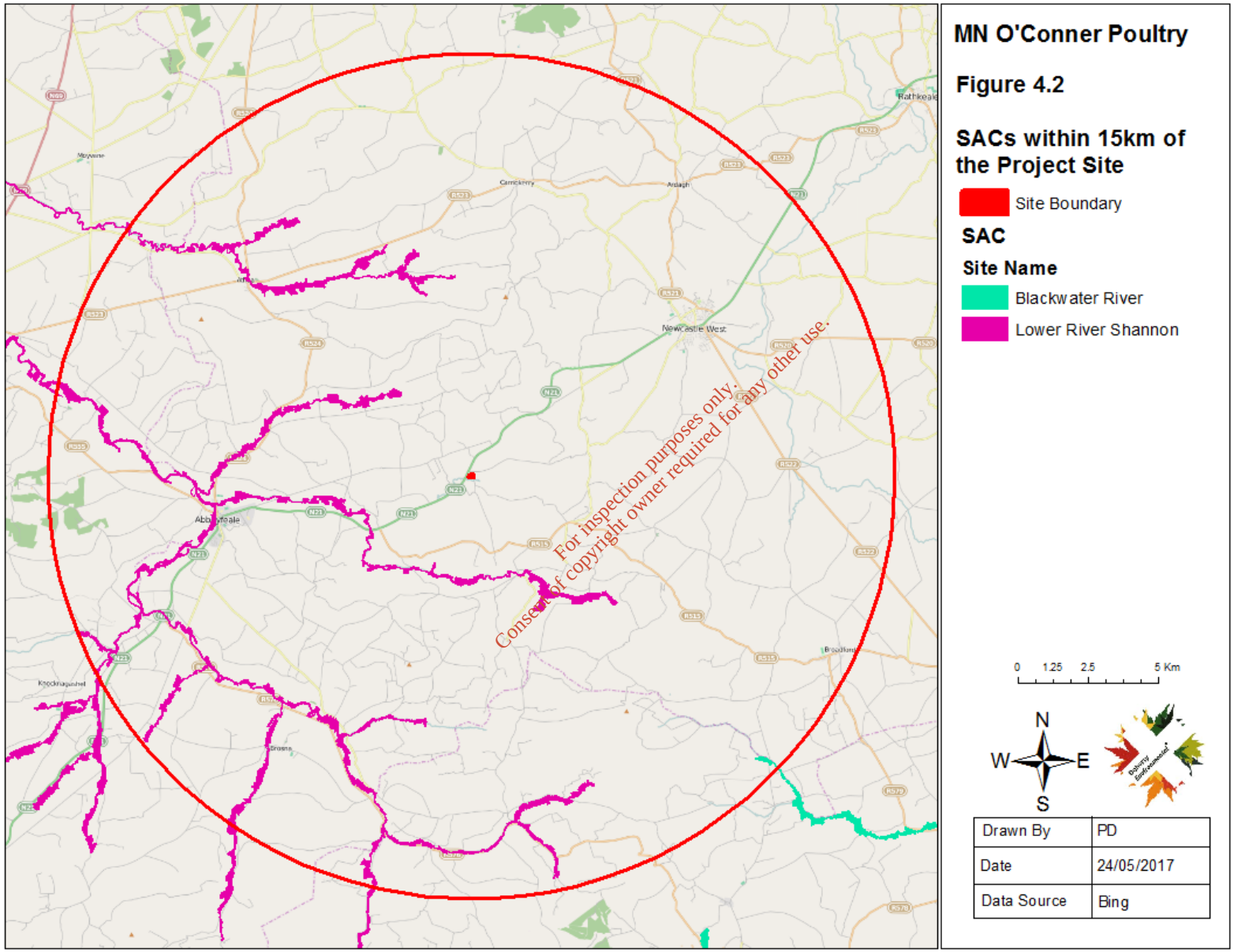
Potential impact pathways are restricted to hydrological pathways as this represents the principal emission generated by activities at the project site.

The receptors represent European Sites and their associated qualifying features of interest.

European Sites and their associated qualifying features are likely to occur in the sphere of influence of the project only where hydrological pathways establish a link between the project and the European Site or where the project site is likely to play an important role in supporting populations of mobile species that are listed as special conservation interests/qualifying species for surrounding European Sites. Table 4.1 provides a determination as to whether each European Site within a 15km buffer distance of the project site occur within the sphere of influence of the project. This determination has been undertaken in line with the following assessment questions:

- Is there a hydrological pathway linking the Project site to European Sites and does this pathway have the potential to function as an impact pathway?
- Are qualifying habitats of these European Sites at risk of experiencing impacts as a result of the project?
- Does the project site have the potential to interact with or support Annex II qualifying species/special conservation interest species of these European Sites?





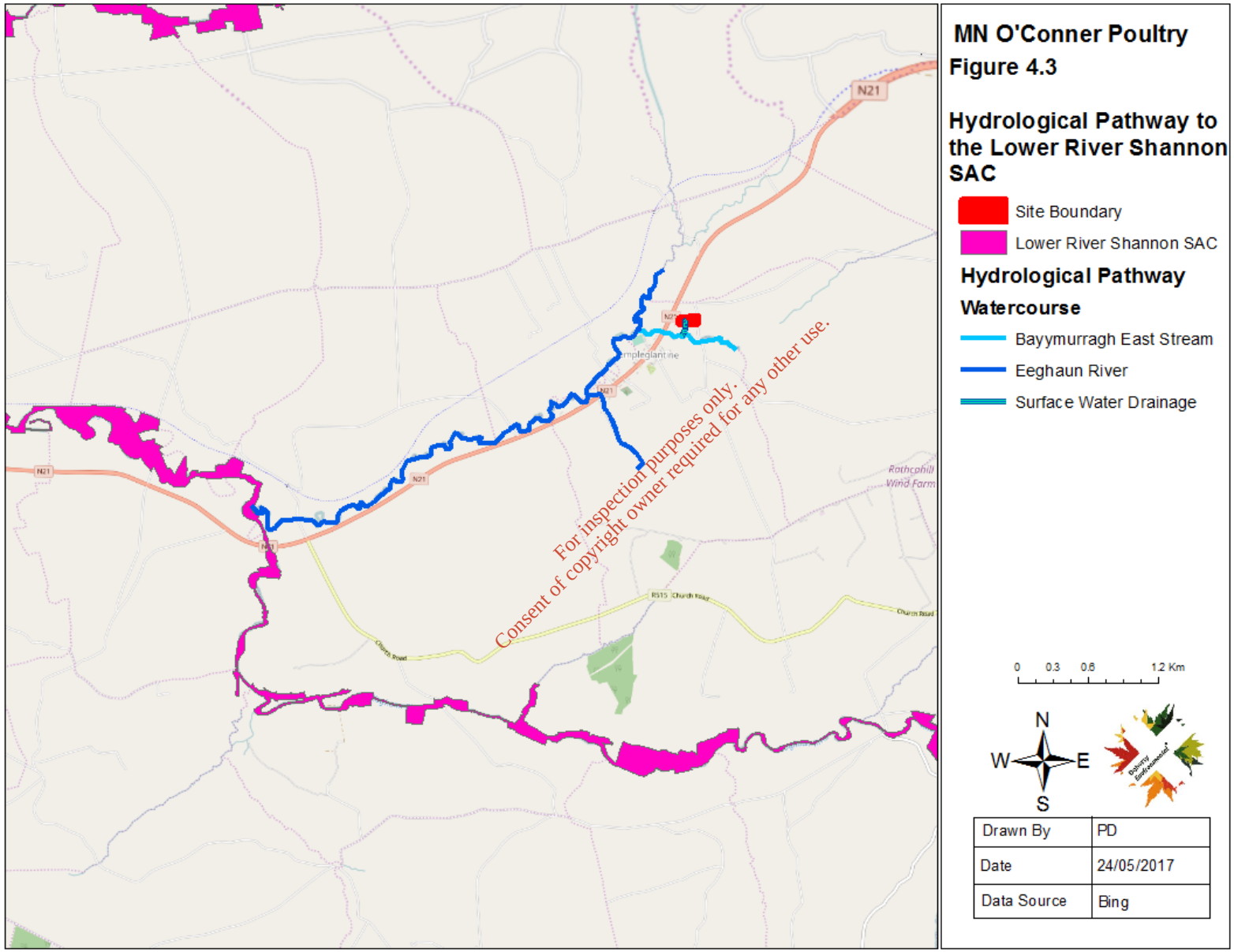


Table 4.1: Identification of European Sites within the sphere of influence of the Project

European Sites	Distance from Project Site	Is there a Hydrological Pathway and does it have the potential to function as an Impact Pathway	Do qualifying habitats of the European Site occur within the sphere of influence of the Project	Do mobile qualifying species of the European Site occur within the sphere of influence of the Project	Does the European Site or features of the European Site occur within the Projects Sphere of Influence?
Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA	13om to the north	No. The project site is located within the River Feale catchment. Upper order watercourses of the Feale catchment to which surface waters from the site drain and the River Feale itself, are not located within this SPA.	Terrestrial habitats designated as part of the SPA occur in close proximity to the project site. The nearest parcel of the SPA to the project site is approximately 130m to the northwest, or approximately 175m to the northwest of the nearest point of the proposed poultry unit. The land parcels of the SPA occurring in close proximity to the project site are generally characterised by unimproved or semi-improved rough and marshy grassland habitats. Further examination of the projects potential to influence parcels of terrestrial habitat of the SPA	The special conservation interest bird species of this SPA is hen harrier. Should emissions from the project site have the potential to effect designated parcels of foraging habitat of the SPA then there will be potential for associated effects to these species. Further examination of the projects potential to result in emissions that could result in negsative effects to terrestrial foraging habitats designated as part of the SPA is required.	Yes. Terrestrial habitats of the SPA occur in close proximity of the project site and further examination of the porject is required to determine whether it has the potential to pose likely significant effects to this SPA.

			occurring in the vicinity of the project site is required as part of this Screening Assessment.		
Lower River Shannon SAC	3.5km	Yes. The project site is located within the Feale River catchment. The River Feale, downstream of the project site, is designated as part of this SAC. Surface water generated on the project site will naturally flow to the Ballymurragh East Stream (see Figure 4.3 for location), which is an upstream feeder stream of the River Feale.	Freshwater lotic habitats of the SAC occurring along the River Feale have the potential to occur within the sphere of influence of the project.	Freshwater lotic species of the SAC have the potential to occur within the sphere of influence of the project.	Yes. The project site is hydrologically linked to this SAC and qualifying freshwater lotic habitats and species have the potential to occur within the sphere of influence of the project.
Blackwater River SAC	14.3km	No. This SAC is located within a separate surface water catchment to the project site.	No. All qualifying habitats of this SAC are located at very remote distances from the project site.	No. All qualifying species of this SAC are located at very remote distances from the project site.	No. This SAC does not occur within the sphere of influence of the project site.

Table 4.1 above shows that of the three European Sites occurring within a 15km radius of the project site, the Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA and the Lower River Shannon SAC have been identified as occurring within the sphere of influence of the project. The Blackwater Valley SAC has not been identified as occurring within the sphere of influence of the project site and is as such screened out at this stage from further assessment.

4.1 OVERVIEW OF EUROPEAN SITES OCCURRING WITHIN THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PROJECT SITE

4.1.1 Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA

The Stack's to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA is a very large site centred on the borders between the counties of Cork, Kerry and Limerick. The site is skirted by the towns of Newcastle West, Ballydesmond, Castleisland, Tralee and Abbeyfeale. The mountain peaks included in the site are not notably high or indeed pronounced, the highest being at Knockfeha (451 m). Other mountains included are Mount Eagle, Knockanefune, Garraunbaun, Taur, Rock Hill, Knockacummer, Mullaghamuish, Knight's Mt, Ballincollig Hill, Beennageeha Mt, Sugar Hill, Knockanimpuba and Knockathea, amongst others. Many rivers rise within the site, notably the Blackwater, Owentaraglin, Owenkeal, Glenlara, Feale, Clydagh, Allaghaun, Allow, Oolagh, Galey and Smerlagh.

The site consists of a variety of upland habitats, though almost half is afforested. The coniferous forests include first and second rotation plantations, with both pre-thicket and post-thicket stands present. Substantial areas of clear-fell are also present at any one time. The principal tree species present are Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) and Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*). A substantial part (28%) of the site is unplanted blanket bog and heath, with both wet and dry heath present. The vegetation of these habitats is characterised by such species as Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Common Cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), Hare's-tail Cottongrass (*Eriophorum vaginatum*), Deergrass (*Scirpus cespitosus*) and Purple Moor-grass (*Molinia caerulea*). The remainder of the site is mostly rough grassland that is used for hill farming. This varies in composition and includes some wet areas with rushes (*Juncus* spp.) and some areas subject to scrub encroachment.

This SPA is a stronghold for Hen Harrier and supports the largest concentration of the species in the country. A survey in 2005 recorded 45 pairs, which represents over 20% of the all-Ireland total. A similar number of pairs had been recorded in the 1998-2000 period. The mix of forestry and open areas provides optimum habitat conditions for this rare bird, which is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

No nest locations are known or likely to occur in the vicinity of the project site. Hen harrier nest is remote locations away from human habitation. The early stages of new and second-rotation conifer plantations are the most frequently used nesting sites, though some pairs may still nest in tall heather of unplanted bogs and heath. Hen Harriers will forage up to *c*. 5 km from the nest site, utilising open bog and moorland, young conifer plantations and hill farmland that is not too rank. Parcels of rough and marshy grassland included within the SPA surrounding the project site may be used as foraging habitat by hen harrier.

4.1.2 Lower River Shannon SAC

This very large SAC stretches along the Shannon valley from Killaloe to Loop Head/Kerry Head, a distance of some 120km. This site supports a range of habitats and species and includes the lower freshwater stretches of a number of major tributaries such as the Mulkear and Feale catchments. This large site supports up to fifteen habitats listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive and seven species listed on Annex II of the Directive. The complete NPWS site synopsis characterising this European site is reproduced in Appendix 1. The site is a candidate SAC selected for lagoons and alluvial wet woodlands, both habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected for floating river vegetation, *Molinia* meadows, estuaries, tidal mudflats, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows, *Salicornia* mudflats, sand banks, perennial vegetation of stony banks, sea cliffs, reefs and large shallow inlets and bays all habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected for the following species listed on Annex II of the same directive – Bottle-nosed Dolphin, Sea Lamprey, River Lamprey, Brook Lamprey, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Atlantic Salmon and Otter.

4.1.3 Qualifying features of interest of the Lower River Shannon SAC potentially occurring within the sphere of influence of the Project

The qualifying features of interest of the Lower River Shannon SAC are listed in Table 4.1 and an assessment is provided for the features likely to occur within the sphere of influence of the project.

Table 4.2: Identification of Qualifying Features Interest occurring within the Sphere of Influence of the Project

European Sites	Qualifying Interests	Does the qualifying feature of interest/special conservation interest occur within the Sphere of Influence of the Project
2165 – Lower River Shannon	Estuaries	No. The nearest example of this habitat is located at remote distances downstream. The distance between this project site and this feature will be sufficient to ensure that it is located outside the sphere of influence of the project.
	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	No, see reasons for estuaries above.
	Coastal Lagoons	No, see reasons for estuaries above.
	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts	No, see reasons for estuaries above.
	Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand	No, see reasons for estuaries above.
	Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae)	No, see reasons for estuaries above.
	Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi)	No, see reasons for estuaries above.
	Watercourses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation (to be referred to as "floating river vegetation"	Yes. Examples of this qualifying habitats are likely to be supported by the River Feale.
	Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time	No, see reasons for estuaries above.

	Large shallow inlets and bays	No, see reasons for estuaries above.
	Reefs	No, see reasons for estuaries above.
	Perennial vegetation of stony banks;	No, see reasons for estuaries above.
	Spartina swards (Spartinion maritimae);	No, see reasons for estuaries above.
	Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clay-silt-laden soils (Molinion caerulecae);	No, see reasons for estuaries above.
	Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*;	No. No example of this riparian habitat occurs downstream of the project site.
	River Lamprey;	Yes. This species is likely to occur along the Black River at and in the vicinity of the project works.
	Brook Lamprey;	Yes. This species is likely to occur along the Black River at and in the vicinity of the project works.
	Sea Lamprey	Yes. This species is likely to occur along the Black River at and in the vicinity of the project works.
	Atlantic Salmon	Yes. This species is likely to occur along the Black River at and in the vicinity of the project works.
	Bottle-nosed Dolphin	No. This species occurs at the outer and middle Shannon Estuary.
	Freshwater Pearl Mussel	No. This feature does not occur within the sphere of influence of the project.
	Otter	Yes. This species is likely to occur along the Black River at and in the vicinity of the project works.

From Table 4.1 above the qualifying features of interest of the SAC that occur within the sphere of influence of the project are:

- Floating river vegetation
- Atlantic salmon;

- Freshwater pearl mussels
- Brook lamprey;
- River lamprey;
- Sea lamprey; and
- Otter.

These features represent the key features/species occurring within the sphere of influence of the project.

4.2 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES FOR INTEREST FEATURES OF EUROPEAN SITES OCCURRING WITHIN THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE OF THE PROJECT

The conservation objectives for the species occurring within the sphere of influence of the project is to maintain these habitats and species at favourable conservation status. The favourable conservation status of these habitats and species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long- term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECTS POTENTIAL TO RESULT IN LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

Table 7.1 provides a Screening Assessment in line with EU Guidance (2001) Assessment Criteria used to examine the potential of the project to adversely impact upon European Sites. These assessment criteria are used to establish whether the project has the potential to result in likely significant effects to the Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA and the Lower River Shannon SAC and the relevant qualifying features of interest of these European Sites occurring within the sphere of influence of the project.

Table 5.1: Screening for likely significant effects

Assessment Criteria	
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) to the selected interest features of the Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA and the Lower River Shannon SAC occurring within the sphere of influence of the Project	
Size and Scale	The project is considered to be small in size and scale.
Land-take	The project will not result in any land take from a European Sites.
Distance from European sites or key features of the site	The project site and the proposed poultry unit are located approximately 130m and 175m respectively from the nearest parcel of the Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA. It is located approximately 8km upstream from the nearest point of the Lower River Shannon SAC.
Resource requirements	No resources associated with these European Sites will be required as part of the project.
Emissions	**Surface Water Emissions** All surface water runoff from roofs and clean yard areas will be directed to a surface water drainage network that discharges to a drainage ditch to the south of the project site. The drainage ditch in turn discharges to the Ballymurragh East Stream, which is an upper feeder stream of the River Feale. AS such there is a hydrological pathway between the surface water runoff generated on site

and the Lower River Shannon SAC.

However only surface water runoff generated from clean areas of the project site i.e. roofs, paved areas not trafficked by livestock and permeable surfaces such as surrounding grassland will be discharged to the surface water drainage network and on to the River Feale catchment. This runoff will not be contaminated with any soiled or wastewater associated with the proposed poultry unit and ancillary operations and as such will not have the potential to undermine water quality within the River Feale catchment. AS such it is not anticipated to have the potential to result in likely significant effects to the interest features of the Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA and the Lower River Shannon SAC occurring within the sphere of influence of the project.

Soiled & Wastewater Emissions

All soiled and waste-water generated on site by the proposed poultry unit will be discharged to two underground storage tanks. Both storage tanks will be bunded and constructed to conform with storage tank specifications outlined in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's specification S123 Minimum Specification for Bovine Units and Reinforced Tanks – March 2006.

Soiled water will be land spread on surrounding land in accordance with regulations for land spreading outlined under the EU (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) 2014. Ireland's Nitrates Action Plan (NAP) aims to address the potential for degradation to grassland and particularly waterbodies derived from excessive nutrient loading to agricultural lands. The NAP is currently in its third round having been updated in early 2014 through the establishment of the Good Agricultural Practices for Protection of Water Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 31 of 2014). These regulations outline a range of requirements to prevent water pollution arising as a result of the spread of approved quantities of organic nutrient on agricultural land. These measures include the establishment of buffer distances between areas receiving nutrient application and surface water bodies. A buffer distance of

10m is required between any surface watercourse and an areas where organic nutrient is to be applied where the slope towards the watercourse exceeds 10%. Where slopes are less than 10% a buffer distance of 5m between a surface watercourse and areas where organic nutrients are applied is required. Further requirements place restrictions on the manner of fertiliser application. For instance fertiliser is restricted from being applied to land that is:

- waterlogged;
- flooded or likely to flood;
- snow-cover or frozen;
- where a heavy rain forecast is predicted within 48 hours of proposed landspreading; or
- where the ground slopes steeply and taking into account factors such as proximity to waters, soil condition, ground cover and rainfall there is a signficiant risk of causing water pollution.

In addition these regulations require that a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) be prepared for all farm holdings. A NMP has been prepared for the applicants farm holding with the aim of avoiding the application of excessive nutrients to grasslands and potential nutrient runoff to surrounding watercourses. The implementation of the applicants NMP will be assured under the annual reporting requirements of the Good Agricultural Practices Regulations. The farm NMP and auditing of nutrient quantities spread on land and regular inspections on farm land will ensure that the spreading of excessive nutrients, derived from the soiled and wastewater arising from the poultry unit, on farm land is avoided.

The range of measures outlined above aim to ensure that the landspreading of soiled and wastewater generated at the poultry unit do not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to surrounding water quality. The avoidance of adverse effects to surface water quality surrounding the project site will ensure that such affects are avoided further downstream within the Lower

	River Shannon SAC. **Aerial Emissions** The project site is located within close proximity to parcels of the Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA. As such the potential for the proposed poultry unit to generate emissions to air have been examined. The emissions to air that have been examined are restricted to gaseous phase nutrients, in the form of ammonia and nitrogens. SCAIL modelling of the potential nutrient emissions generated by the project has been completed by NRGE Ltd. The results of this model indicate that the project will not have the potential to result in any nutrient exceedances within the surrounding Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA or further afield. **Noise Emissions** The project is not predicted to have the potential to result in changes to the baseline noise environment.
Excavation requirements	Any excavations for the project will be undertaken within the project site at a remote distance from surrounding European Sites.
Transportation requirements	The project will not result in changes to transport levels in the vicinity of any European Sites.
Duration of construction, operation etc.	It is estimated that the construction phase will be completed over a 3-month period.
In-Combination	The project represents an extension to an existing poultry farm operation. The

Effects	potential for the current project to combine with the existing poultry operation to result in nutrient emissions to air has been modeled as part of the SCAIL modeling completed by NRGE Ltd. The results of the cumulative modeling indicate that the proposed project and the existing poultry operations will not have the potential to combine to result in excessive nutrient deposition in surrounding European Sites.
Describe any likely changes to the European Sites arising as a result of:	
Reduction of habitat area	The project will not result in a reduction in the area of floating river vegetation potentially supported by the River Feale.
Disturbance of key species	The project will not have the potential to result in significant disturbance effects to the key species of the Lower River Shannon SAC or hen harrier of the SPA occurring within the sphere of influence of the project. This is due to the fact that the project is not predicted to have the potential to result in adverse effects to surrounding surface water quality or have the potential to generate other stimuli, such as noise, that could result in disturbance to hen harrier.
Habitat or species fragmentation	The project will not result in any habitat or species fragmentation.
Reduction in species density	For reasons outlined above (see Emissions and Disturbance to key species above) the project will not have the potential to result in a reduction in species density at the project site.

Changes in key indicators of conservation status	The key indicators in the conservation status of qualifying features of interest occurring within the sphere of influence of the project are those specific attributes and targets outlined for each of these features in the detailed Conservation Objectives for the Lower River Shannon SAC (NPWS, 2012 For reasons outlined above it is considered that there will be no potential impact pathway linking the project to this SAC and that it will not have the potential to undermine the attributes and associated targets outlined in the detailed Conservation Objectives (NPWS, 2012) for each of these features. These key indicators underpinning the generic Conservation Objectives for the Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA are the population size, distribution and range of hen harrier within the SPA. For reasons outlined above the project will not have the potential to undermine these key indicators.
Describe any likely impacts on the European Site as a whole in terms of:	
Interference with key relationships that define the structure and function of the site	In light of the assessment of the project's potential to influence the key indicators of conservation status of the qualifying feature of interest of the occurring within the sphere of influence of the project, it is concluded that the project will not have the potential to result in any changes to the key relationships that define the structure or function of these European Sites.
Describe from the above the elements of the project or plan or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale of magnitude of impacts is not known.	
Based upon the above assessment it has been concluded that the proposed poultry unit at Templeglantine does not have the potential to result in likely significant effects to the conservation	

objectives of the Lower River Shannon SAC or the Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA and will not influence the conservation status of the qualifying features of interest for which this European Site have been designated.

6.0 SCREENING CONCLUSION – FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

The proposed poultry unit at Templeglantine has been screened for its potential to result in likely significant effects to the conservation objectives and integrity of surrounding European Sites.

Two European Site, the Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA and the Lower River Shannon SAC, were identified as occurring within the sphere of influence of the project.

The features of this European Sites that occur within the sphere of influence of the project are Floating river vegetation; Hen Harrier; Freshwater pearl mussels; Sea Lamprey; River Lamprey; Brook Lamprey; Otter; and Salmon.

The Screening identified the project as occurring within the Feale River catchment and as such within the catchment of the Lower River Shannon SAC. The potential for the project to result in hydrological emissions to the River Feale was examined and it has been concluded that the project does not have the potential to undermine the water quality of the Feale River Catchment.

The potential for the project to generate nutrient emissions to air, alone and in combination with the existing poultry farm to the south of the project site has also be examined through the completion of a SCAIL model. The results of the SCAIL modelling has indicated that the project along or in combination with the existing poultry operation will not have the potential to result in any nutrient exceedances within surrounding European Sites.

In light of the above assessment this Screening for Appropriate Assessment has resulted in a finding that there is no potential for the proposed poultry unit at Templeglantine to result in likely significant effects to the Conservation Objectives or integrity of the Stacks to

Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mount Eagle SPA or the Lower River Shannon SAC.

As such this Screening Statement has resulted in a Finding of No Significant Effects and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

REFERENCES

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