

# INERT WASTE RECOVERY FACILITY AT HALVERSTOWN, KILCULLEN, COUNTY KILDARE

**Appropriate Assessment: Screening Report**  
Prepared for: Kilsaran Concrete

**Kilsaran**  
build

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**SLR** 

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document provides an Appropriate Assessment screening report of likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites from the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility for the restoration of the former sand and gravel pit, and improvement of agricultural lands, at Halverstown, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare.

It has been prepared by SLR Consulting Ireland (SLR) on behalf of Kilsaran Concrete in support of their planning application for the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility at Halverstown.

### 1.1 Appropriate Assessment Overview

The requirements for an Appropriate Assessment are set out under Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive (92/34/EEC) transposed into Irish law through The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 and 2013. These regulations require a Competent Authority to make an Appropriate Assessment of the implications for Natura 2000 sites in view of a site's conservation objectives, before deciding to undertake, or give consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which:

- i. is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site; and
- ii. is likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects in view of its conservation objectives.

The European Commission's methodological guidance<sup>1</sup> promotes a four stage process, as set out below, to complete an Appropriate Assessment:

- Stage 1 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment;
- Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment;
- Stage 3 – Alternative Solutions; and
- Stage 4 – The 'IROPI Test' (Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest).

A person applying for any such consent, permission or other authorisation must provide such information in Stage 1, as the Competent Authority may reasonably require, for the purposes of the assessment or to enable them to determine whether an Appropriate Assessment is required.

In considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site or sites, the Competent Authority should consider whether the effects of the proposal on the site or sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to be significant in terms of the conservation objectives and in respect of each interest feature for which the site was designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive), or classified a Special Protection Area (SPA) under Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (The Birds Directive) that codifies Directive 79/409/EEC.

In the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and in consideration of Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI), the Competent Authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

<sup>1</sup> European Communities (2002). *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites. Methodological Guidance on the Provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.* European Communities, Luxembourg.

## 1.2 Purpose of this Report

This report has been produced to provide a screening statement, as required under Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment process, and includes all relevant information to the Competent Authority (in this case Kildare County Council) in order for them to determine whether the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility at Halverstown is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site, or sites, within its zone of influence and whether there is a requirement for an Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2 Assessment) to be undertaken.

## 1.3 Ecologist and Experience

The screening assessment has been conducted by Steve Judge whom is an Associate Ecologist with 17 years' experience in ecological consultancy and a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). All work produced is subject to technical review and Quality Assurance.

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## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Baseline Data Collection

Baseline information was gathered through a combination of desk-based study, site visit on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and technical assessments consistent with current standard methodologies and published best practice guidelines, in order to provide relevant data to allow an assessment of likely significant effects of the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility at Halverstown on any individual Natura 2000 site, or sites, within the zone of influence of this project.

The principal source of information on Natura 2000 sites and key qualifying features has been data collected through information publically available through the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)<sup>2</sup> and with other relevant sources used to provide data on current baseline conditions at the site of the proposed development and within its potential zone of influence.

### 2.2 Assessment Likely Significant Effects

Under the Habitats Directive, the first test that has to be considered is whether the development, either alone or in combination with other relevant projects and plans, would be likely to have a significant effect. Effects are judged to be significant where they affect the integrity of the site with respect to the conservation objectives of the features for which a Natura 2000 site was designated / classified as being of European importance.

The purpose of screening assessment is two parts, firstly to screen out those aspects of the proposal that can be considered not likely to have a significant effect, and secondly to screen the key qualifying features of any Natura 2000 site that are not likely to be significantly affected by the proposal.

In order to undertake an appropriate screening, the guidance produced by the NPWS in 2009<sup>3</sup> has been followed in order to:

- characterise the potential impacts to the qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 site or sites that may result from the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility at Halverstown;
- assess the likely significance of potential impacts on the qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 site or sites within the zone of influence of the proposed development; and
- assess the risk of an adverse effect on the integrity of the site or occurring to a qualifying interest feature for which the site is of European interest.

The methodology for the assessment of impacts is derived from the guidelines published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)<sup>4</sup>. Impacts are characterised in terms of whether specific hazards emanating from the project are likely to have potential significant effects on the integrity of a defined ecosystem and/or conservation status of individual habitats or species for which a site is of European interest, and on site as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.npws.ie>

<sup>3</sup> NPWS (2009 revised February 2010). *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

<sup>4</sup> CIEEM (2016). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

## 2.3 Ascertaining the Threat to Site Integrity

The Competent Authority will be required to determine whether the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility at Halverstown would adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site, or sites, in light of the conservation objectives for that particular site, or sites. The integrity of a site is defined as:

*“The integrity of a site is the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was designated / classified.”*

Further to the above, an adverse effect on integrity can also be defined as one that is likely to prevent the site from making the same contribution to favourable conservation status for the relevant features as it did at the time of its designation / classification.

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## 3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

### 3.1 Location and Setting

The proposed development site lies in the townland of Halverstown approximately 2.3km northeast of the village of Calverstown and 4.5km south of the town centre of Kilcullen, Co. Kildare (refer to Figure AA 1).

The application site covers approximately 17.5 hectares (ha), out of a total landholding of 26.5ha, that encompasses lands previously used for sand and gravel extraction and lands currently in agricultural use.

The surrounding landscape is characterised by agricultural land with fields under a mixture of arable production and permanent pasture some of which are bounded by hedgerows. The M9 motorway running in a north-south direction dissects the landscape to the east of the former sand and gravel pit forming a prominent landscape feature. The town of Kilcullen and the village of Calverstown are the largest urban areas with other small rural settlements and properties scattered along the roads and lanes throughout the local landscape.

### 3.2 Outline Description of Project

An inert waste recovery facility for the partial restoration of the former sand and gravel pit at Halverstown was granted planning permission (Planning Reference No. 15/189) and a waste permit (WP Ref. No. WFP KE 16 0085 01) was granted by Kildare County Council in August 2016. This development has commenced and associated infrastructure, including a wheelwash and weighbridge with office, has been constructed under this permission.

The project involves the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility for the restoration of the former sand and gravel pit and improvement of agricultural lands at Halverstown.

Planning permission is specifically sought for the following:

- the importation of approximately 1,200,000 tonnes of inert natural waste materials, principally excess soil, stones and/or broken rock and its use to restore a disturbed landform created by previous extraction of sand and gravel and to improve lands currently in agricultural use;
- the use of existing and/or previously approved site and services infrastructure including, site office, staff welfare facilities, weighbridge (with dedicated office), wheelwash, hardstanding areas, fuel storage tanks, waste inspection and quarantine facility and covered shed;
- the separation of any construction and demolition waste (principally concrete, metal, timber, PVC pipes and plastic) inadvertently imported to site prior to removal off-site to authorised waste disposal or recovery facilities;
- the temporary stockpiling of topsoil and subsoil pending re-use as cover material for final restoration of the site; and
- restoration of the excavated landform (including placement of cover soils and seeding) to natural habitat, rough grazing and tillage.

The inert waste recovery facility site will operate from 08:00 to 18:00hrs Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturday. No operations will take place outside these times.

Based on a maximum intake tonnage of 300,000 per annum, a 48 working week and 5.5 working days, the inert waste recovery facility is anticipated to generate an average annual daily traffic (ADDT) of 59 heavy goods vehicle movements in and out of the site per day through the importation of waste materials.

All waste imported will be inert and is envisaged to consist of the following wastes classified under the European Waste Catalogue (EWC) at the facility:



- 17 05 04 Soil and stones other than those mentioned in 17 05 03.
- 17 05 06 Dredging spoil other than those mentioned in 17 05 05
- 20 02 02 Soil and stone from municipal facilities

Any imported waste which is accepted at the facility but subsequently suspected to be non-compliant with waste acceptance criteria for the facility will be re-loaded onto HGV trucks and transferred across the application site to a proposed undercover waste inspection and quarantine facility, comprising a covered shed over a sealed concrete slab, for closer examination and/or testing.

Should any subsequent inspection or testing of suspect soil waste at the inspection and quarantine facility identify any non-inert material which cannot be accepted or reused in the restoration of this site it will be segregated and temporarily stockpiled (quarantined) pending removal off site by permitted waste collectors to an authorised waste disposal and/or recovery facility. Provision will also be made for temporary storage of any separated non inert construction and demolition waste (including metal, timber, plastic etc.) in skips prior to removal off site to a licenced recovery facility.

Fuel will be stored in bunded tanks at the existing concrete production facility to the north of the application site. Oils and lubricants are stored on suitable spill pallets within the existing workshop. All refuelling of plant and machinery will take place over a hardstanding area at the bunded fuel tanks in the existing concrete production facility located to the north of the application site.

All incidental rainfall and surface water run-off from the inert waste recovery facility will be allowed to naturally percolate into the ground. There will be no surface water discharge to any watercourse and/or waterbody off-site.

Prior to any deposition of inert waste on the agricultural field, all topsoils will be stripped and appropriately stored for later top-dressing of the restored landform.

Following cessation of recovery activities the proposed facility will be restored to natural habitat, rough grazing and tillage purposes using natural subsoils and topsoils acquired during the recovery operations. Surface water will be allowed to percolate to ground and there will not be the requirement for any particularly land drainage connecting to any surface watercourse and/or waterbody off-site.

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## 4.0 NATURA 2000 SITES

There are six Natura 2000 site within a 15km radius of the project site at Halverstown. These sites are listed in Table 1 and their location in relation to the project site shown on Figure 1.

**Table 1: Natura 2000 Sites within 15km of the Project Site**

Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Location at Closest Point to the Project Site
River Barrow and River Nore SAC	002162	9.2km west
Pollardstown Fen SAC	000396	9.7km north east
Slaney River Valley SAC	000781	12.0km south southeast
Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA	004063	12.4 km east
Mounds Bog SAC	002331	12.5km north east
Wicklow Mountains SAC	002122	14.6km south east

### 4.1 Potential Zone of Influence of Project and Screening of Natura 2000 Sites

Based on the size and nature of the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility at Halverstown, it is considered that the maximum distance for which the project should be evaluated in terms of Natura 2000 sites is up to a maximum radius of 2km from the application site, unless, there are any potential source-pathway-receptor links between the proposed inert waste recovery facility at Halverstown and any Natura 2000 site(s) outside this distance.

At a distance greater than 2km and in the absence of any potential source-pathway-receptor link it is considered that no Natura 2000 sites would be affected by any direct loss of habitat or impacted upon by any effects arising from disturbance (i.e. noise, vibration and human and visual disturbance), the effects of dust deposition or traffic emissions.

The inert waste recovery facility will not require any discharge to any surface or ground waters and therefore there are no hydrological pathways linking the project to any of the Natura 2000 sites detailed in Table 1.

Based on the above, it is considered that all of the Natura 2000 sites identified in Table 1 can be screened out from any further assessment as these lie outside the potential zone of influence of the project and there are no source-pathway-receptor links between the project and these Natura 2000 sites. Therefore in this case there are no relevant Natura 2000 sites carried forward for any further assessment.

## 5.0 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

Based on the screening of Natura 2000 sites in Section 4.1, it is assessed that the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility at Halverstown will not have any implications for, or effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site, or sites, or any of the qualifying habitats and/or species for which any such site has been designated / classified as being of European importance.

It is therefore considered that no further assessment is required for the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility for the restoration of the former sand and gravel pit at Halverstown as a stand-alone project.

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## 6.0 AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION

As no effects are predicted on any Natura 2000 site or sites, no specific avoidance and mitigation measures are proposed in respect of the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility at Halverstown.

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## 7.0 IN-COMBINATION ASSESSMENT

It is a requirement of The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 that, when considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 site that it must take into account in-combination effects with other current or reasonably foreseeable plans and projects.

There is no single agreed method for addressing the issue of in-combination effects, however, current practice and available guidance suggests a staged approach which takes into account the following:

- i. If it can be clearly demonstrated that the plan or project will not result in any effects at all that are relevant to the integrity of a Natura 2000 site then the plan or project should proceed without considering the in-combination test, further; or
- ii. If there are identified effects arising from the plan or project even if they are perceived as minor and not likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site alone, then these effects must be considered 'in-combination' with the effects arising from other plans and projects.

From the screening assessment undertaken here, it is considered that it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility for the restoration of the former sand and gravel pit and improvement of agricultural lands at Halverstown will not have any effects on any Natura 2000 site as a stand-alone project. Therefore it is considered that there is not a requirement in this case to undertake any further assessment in-combination with other plans and projects.

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## 8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This assessment has considered the potential effects associated with the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility for the restoration of the former sand and gravel pit at Halverstown, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare on Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius in line with the methodology set out in the *'Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites. Methodological Guidance on the Provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC'*.

The assessment has concluded that the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility for the restoration of the former sand and gravel pit at Halverstown will have no effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site or sites, or on any of the qualifying habitats and/or species for which a site has been designated or classified as being of European importance, either as a stand-alone development or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Based in the findings from this assessment, it is considered there is not a requirement to proceed to a Stage 2 Natura Impact Assessment for the proposed development of an inert waste recovery facility for the restoration of the former sand and gravel pit at Halverstown under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

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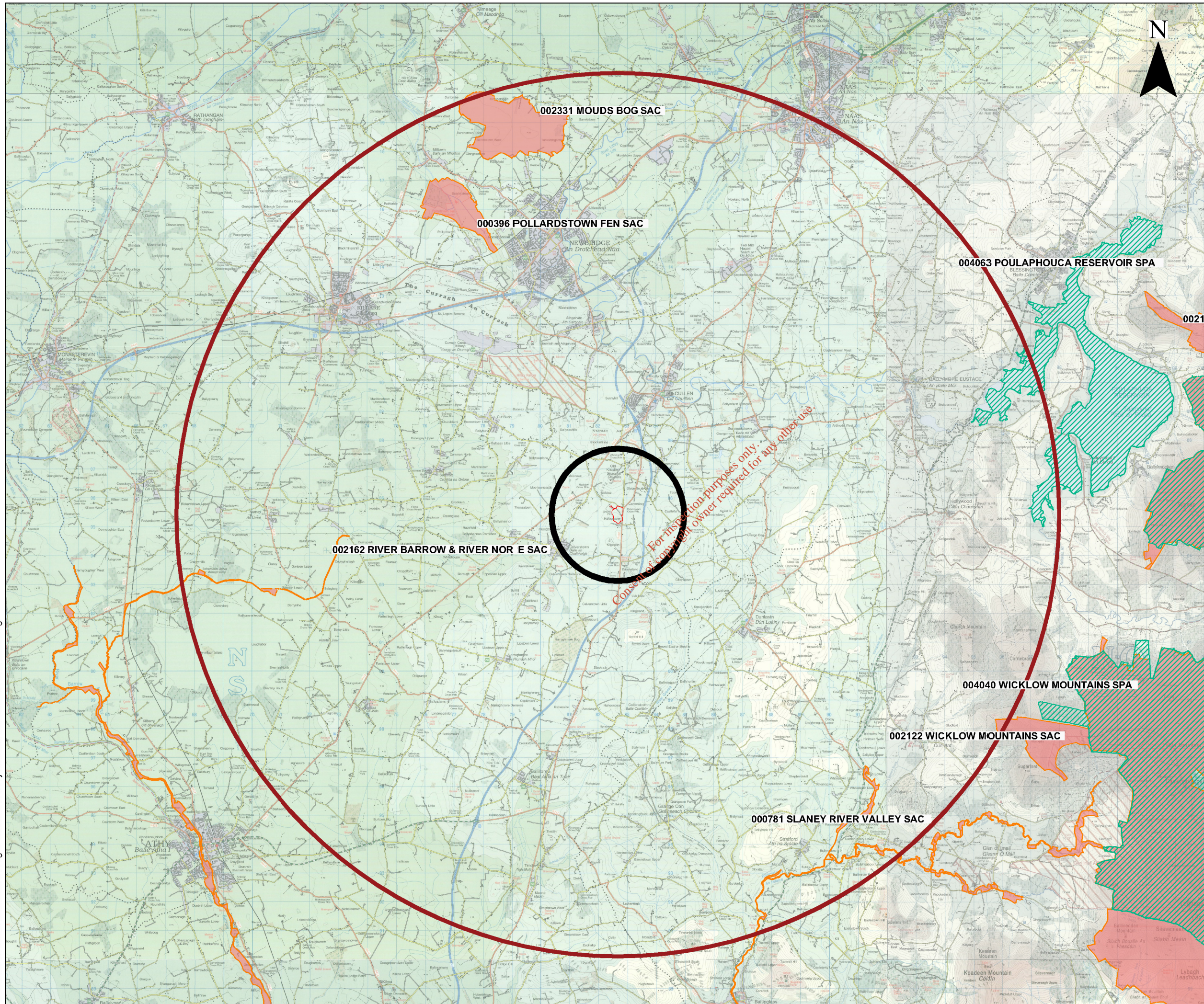
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## FIGURES

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00036.00054\_Halverstown\_AA-Fig1\_Location of Project Sites and Natura 2000 Sites.dwg




**NOTES**


1. Extract from Ordnance Survey Discovery Series Mapping 55
2. Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. SU 0000718 (c) Ordnance Survey Ireland and Government of Ireland

**LEGEND**

	PLANNING APPLICATION AREA (c.17.5 HECTARES)
	15KM RADIUS FROM APPLICATION AREA
	2KM RADIUS FROM APPLICATION AREA
	SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC)
	SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA)

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SLR CONSULTING IRELAND  
7 DUNDRUM BUSINESS PARK  
WINDY ARBOUR  
DUBLIN 14  
T: +353-1-2964667  
F: +353-1-2964676  
www.slrconsulting.com

**KILSARAN CONCRETE**  
APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT  
HALVERSTOWN SAND & GRAVEL PIT  
KILCULLEN, COUNTY KILDARE  
LOCATION OF PROJECT SITES AND  
NATURA 2000 SITES

**FIGURE AA 1**

Scale 1:125,000 @ A3	Date MARCH 2018
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## EUROPEAN OFFICES

### United Kingdom

#### AYLESBURY

T: +44 (0)1844 337380

#### BELFAST

T: +44 (0)28 9073 2493

#### BRADFORD-ON-AVON

T: +44 (0)1225 309400

#### BRISTOL

T: +44 (0)117 906 4280

#### CAMBRIDGE

T: + 44 (0)1223 813805

#### CARDIFF

T: +44 (0)29 2049 1010

#### CHELMSFORD

T: +44 (0)1245 392170

#### EDINBURGH

T: +44 (0)131 335 6830

#### EXETER

T: + 44 (0)1392 490152

#### GLASGOW

T: +44 (0)141 353 5037

#### GUILDFORD

T: +44 (0)1483 889800

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T: +44 (0)113 258 0650

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T: +44 (0)203 691 5810

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T: +44 (0)1622 609242

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T: +44 (0)161 872 7564

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T: +44 (0)191 261 1966

#### NOTTINGHAM

T: +44 (0)115 964 7280

#### SHEFFIELD

T: +44 (0)114 245 5153

#### SHREWSBURY

T: +44 (0)1743 23 9250

#### STAFFORD

T: +44 (0)1785 241755

#### STIRLING

T: +44 (0)1786 239900

#### WORCESTER

T: +44 (0)1905 751310

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### Ireland

#### DUBLIN

T: + 353 (0)1 296 4667

### France

#### GRENOBLE

T: +33 (0)4 76 70 93 41