

## Appropriate Assessment Screening

The Risk Assessment has identified the site as a Low Risk Site

Natura 2000 sites are those identified as sites of European Community importance and designated as such under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EC) (Special Area of Conservation) or the Birds Directive (Special Protection Areas). The closest Natura 2000 sites are the Carlingford Shore Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Carlingford Lough Special Protection Area (SPA). They are located approximately 500m to the north east of the site.

The Habitats Directive, which is implemented under the European Communities Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No 477 of 2011) requires an “appropriate assessment” of the potential impacts any works may have on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site. Article 6(3) of the Directive stipulates that *any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site, but likely to have a significant effect thereon...shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives.*

Guidance documents issued by Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the National Parks and Wildlife Services recommend that the assessment be completed in a series of Stages, which comprise:

### *Stage 1: Screening*

The purpose of this Stage is to determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone and in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of the site’s conservation objectives.

### *Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment*

This Stage is required if the Stage 1 Screening exercise identifies that the project is likely to have a significant impacts on a Natura 2000 site.

### *Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions.*

If Stage 2 determines that the project will have an adverse impact upon the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, despite the implementation of mitigation measures, it must be objectively concluded that no alternative solutions exist before the plan can proceed.

*Stage 4 : Compensatory Measures:*

Where no alternative solutions are feasible and where adverse impacts remain but imperative reasons of overriding public interest require the implementation of a project an assessment of compensatory measures that will effectively offset the damage to the Natura site 2000 is required.

**Stage 1 Screening Methodology**

The Stage 1 Screening was conducted in accordance with the guidance presented in the “Assessment of Plans and Projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites, Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC” (2001); The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009, revised February 2010) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland and the National Parks and Wildlife Services (2010) Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10 Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities.

A list of designated Natura 2000 sites (SAC and SPA) within 15km of the site is given in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1.** Designated Sites within 5km of the Waste Disposal Area

Site	Code	Distance
<b>SAC</b>		
Carlingford Shore Special Area of Conservation	002306	1300m east
Carlingford Lough Special Protection Area	004078	1300m east
Carlingford Mountain Special Area of Conservation	000453	710mwest

SACs and SPAs are selected for the conservation and protection of habitats listed on Annex I and species (other than birds) listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive, and their habitats. The habitats on Annex I require special conservation measures. SPAs are selected for the conservation and protection of bird species listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive and regularly occurring migratory species, and their habitats, particularly wetlands.

### *1.1.1 Carlingford Shore Special Area of Conservation*

The Carlingford Shore Special Area of Conservation is located 1.3km to the east of the site. The Carlingford Shore Special Area of Conservation (002306) was selected for perennial vegetation of stony banks and drift lines, both habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

The stony banks or shingle found along much of the site vary in width from less than a meter to approximately 50 m south of Ballagan Point. The best examples are found in this area. The perennial vegetation of the upper beach of these shingle banks is widely ranging, well developed and often stable. In places lichens encrust the stones farther back from the sea. Typical species present throughout the site include Oraches ( *Atriplex* spp.), Sea Beet (*Beta vulgaris*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Sea-milkwort (*Glaux maritima*), Lyme-grass (*Leymus arenarius*) and Wild Radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*). This grades landward into lowland dry grassland mainly though there are patches of wet grassland.

### *1.1.2 Carlingford Lough Special Protection Area*

The Carlingford Lough Special Protection Area is located 2km to the east of the site. The Carlingford Shore Special Area of Conservation (004678) was selected as the site supports part of a nationally important population of wintering Cormorant (233 average maximum, 1995/96-1999/00). A range of other waterfowl species occurs, notably Brent Goose (175), Oystercatcher (172), Dunlin (267), Bar-tailed Godwit (25), Redshank (35) and Turnstone (19). The intertidal flats provide feeding areas for the wintering birds.

### *1.1.3 Carlingford Mountain Special Protection Area*

This site is c710m to the east and up hydraulic gradient of the waste disposal area. It is important for the presence of nine habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Moreover, Carlingford Mountain is notable for the occurrence of certain alpine plants, including the rare Parsley Fern, several Red List bryophytes and for the presence of Peregrine Falcon.

The Carlingford Lough SPA and Shore SAC are located c1.3km east of the site while the Carlingford Mountain SAC is c710m to the east and up hydraulic gradient of the site. There is no surface or groundwater pathway beneath the site and the SACs or SPA.

No remedial measures are proposed for the site. OCM consider that based on the Low Risk the potential for impact on the Carlingford Lough SPA and Shore SAC is considered to be insignificant.

There is not a necessity to carry out Stage 3 or stage 4 of the assessment.