

**Habitats Directive**  
**Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report**

**Ecological Assessment of**  
**Likely Significant Impacts of a Proposed Development at**  
**Castletownshend, Co. Cork,**  
**on Conservation Objectives of Natura 2000 Sites**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Legislative Background and Context

The primary purpose of this report is to provide relevant material to inform a decision by the public authority, as required under Article 6.3 of the EU Habitats Directive, as to whether the proposed development is likely to have any significant impacts of on the Conservation Objectives of a Natura 2000 site.

Section 42 (1) of S.I. No. 477 of 2011, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 states: “A screening for *Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project for which an application for consent is received, or which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt, and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site, shall be carried out by the public authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the site, if that plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.*”

Where the screening process cannot exclude the possibility that a plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, could have a significant effect on a European site, there is a requirement under Article 42 (9) of these Regulations for the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement to inform the *Appropriate Assessment* process.

In this report, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidance “*Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009*” and the European Commission guidelines (EC, 2018) are followed.

It is necessary to examine all aspects of the proposed development which could potentially impact on the Conservation Objectives of any Natura 2000 site within the potential impact zone of the proposed development. The site of the proposed development is not within any Natura 2000 site. The following four Natura 2000 sites are within 15km of the proposed development (see Appendix 4):

- Castletownshend Special Area of Conservation (SAC 001547), located within 200m to the north of the proposed WWTP site. The Qualifying Interest is Killarney Fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*) [Code 1421].
- Moyross Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC 001070), located c. 5km to the northeast of the proposed development. The Qualifying Interest is Killarney Fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*) [Code 1421].
- Sheep's Head to Toe Head Special Protection Area (SPA 004156), located c. 5km to the southwest of the proposed development. The Features of Interest are Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) [Code A103] and Chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) [Code A346]
- Lough Hyne Reserve and Environs Special Area of Conservation (SAC 000097), located over 9km to the southwest of the proposed development and approximately 12km from the subject site by sea. The Qualifying Interests are Large Shallow Inlets and Bays [Code 1160], Reefs [Code 1170] and Submerged or Partially Submerged Sea Caves [Code 8330].

In this report, the implications of all aspects of the proposed development are assessed, individually and in combination with any other relevant developments, plans or projects, in light of:

- information relating to the ecology of the Natura 2000 site;
- the status of Qualifying Interests of the Natura 2000 site (Annex I habitats and Annex II species of the EU Habitats Directive) and the relevant conservation status and objectives for these species;
- the key structural and functional relationships maintaining the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;
- the scale and nature of the aspects of the project in relation to the Natura 2000 site.

The aim of the report is to provide the public authorities with the relevant information necessary to inform the decision-making process, while ensuring that the requirements of the EU legislation quoted above are fully complied with.

## 1.2 Ecological Consultancy Engaged

Pascal Sweeney was engaged to carry out this report. Qualifications and past experience are presented in Appendix 3.

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## 2.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Proposed Development Description

The proposed development is for an upgrade of wastewater collection and treatment under the Castletownshend Collection and Treatment System UTAS project. The existing sewerage scheme consists of an old stone culvert acting as a combined sewer taking foul and surface water from the older properties fronting onto Main Street and pavement run-off. The culvert discharges directly into the harbour through an outfall adjacent to the Boat Slip (Appendix 4). Some properties at the southern end of the village have individual septic tanks, discharging to soakaways and in a few instances, the foreshore. The housing fronting onto Cross Street and the R595, as well as three houses at the top of Main Street are served by individual septic tanks and soakaways.

The proposed development comprises of the following:

1. The Castle pumping station (PS), a proposed underground pumping station and associated infrastructure within the curtilage of the Castle B&B including an underground pump sump, underground stormwater storage tank, vent pipe, kiosks and surge vessel.
2. Proposed extension to the existing culvert outfall adjacent to the slipway to below low tide extent
3. A proposed rising main and gravity sewer to convey flows from the Castle pumping station to the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) site.
4. A proposed WWTP with associated ancillary development works including inlet works, tanks, kiosks, pumping station, entrance, hardstanding and perimeter boundary fencing.
5. A proposed outfall pipe to convey treated effluent and storm flows to Castle Haven Bay.
6. All associated ancillary site development works above and below ground.

The scheme will also include the following infrastructure which is considered to be exempt from requiring planning permission in accordance with S.I. No. 29/2018 (Class 58 (b)) of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Regulations 2018

1. Gravity sewer from the existing culvert to the Pumping Station (PS).
2. Gravity sewer from the Lawn housing estate to the header manhole.
3. Separation of waste water from existing culvert with the laying of a new gravity sewer on Main Street.

### 2.2 Relevance of Proposal to Management of Natura 2000 Sites

The proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any Natura 2000 site and, as such, does not undertake measures for the sites' conservation management.

### **3.0 SITE ASSESSMENTS**

#### **3.1 Natura 2000 Sites**

While SAC 001547 is located within 200m to the north of the proposed WWTP site (see Appendix 6), Killarney fern, its sole Qualifying Interest is a terrestrial species, growing in woodland that will not be disturbed by the proposed development.

The Qualifying Interest of SAC 001070, located c. 5km from the proposed development, is also Killarney fern. It will not be disturbed by the proposed development.

While it would be possible for peregrine and/or chough (the two Features of Interest of SPA 004156) to visit the subject site, there are no suitable nesting areas for either species here and the vegetation in the grassland is too high for chough foraging. The proposed development will not impact on the Conservation Objectives of SPA 004156.

At a distance of approximately 12km by sea from the subject site to SAC 000097, this Natura 2000 site is outside the potential impact zone of a proposed development of this nature (see the Dispersion Modelling Report which accompanies the Castletownshend Sewerage Scheme planning application).

#### **3.2 Subject Site Field Assessments**

Field work was carried out on four occasions: 02 May 2018, 14 September 2018 and 20 August 2019 by Pascal Sweeney and a shoreline survey at the proposed outfall location was carried out by Geoff Oliver on 18 May, 2018.

## **4.0 SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT**

### **4.1 Screening of Potential Impacts: Construction Phase**

As there are no potential pathways for impacts arising from the proposed works to affect SAC 001547 or SAC 001070, as the subject site is c. 5km from SPA 004156, with no suitable habitat for the two Features of Interest, neither of which would be affected by water quality issues, and as the the distance to SAC 000097 is c. 12km via surface waters, a distance to which pollutants potentially released by a project of this nature and scale would not have potential to reach, there will be no impacts on the Conservation Objectives of these sites at construction phase of the project and impacts can be screened out.

### **4.2 Screening of Potential Impacts: Operational Phase**

At operational phase, the proposed development cannot impact on the terrestrial species for which SAC 001547, SAC 001070 or SPA 004156 are designated. As the only pathway to SAC 000097 is via surface waters, at a distance of approximately 12km, treated effluent from the proposed development will not impact on this Natura 2000 site. For further information on the treated effluent dispersion during the operational phase, please see the Near Field Dilution Modelling Report which accompanies the Castletownshend Sewerage Scheme planning application. Therefore, due to the location of the proposed development in relation to Natura 2000 sites, there will be no impacts on the Conservation Objectives of these sites at operational phase of the project and impacts can be screened out.

### **4.3 Assessment of Significance**

The proposed development will not result in any loss or fragmentation of habitats for which any Natura 2000 site is designated.

The proposed development will not have any significant negative impacts on the Qualifying Interests for which any Natura 2000 site is designated.

The proposed development will not have any significant negative impacts on the Conservation Objectives of any Natura 2000 site.



#### **4.4 Cumulative Impacts**

No other proposed plans or projects that could add to the cumulative impact are known.

The proposed development will not, on its own, negatively impact on the Conservation Objectives of any Natura 2000 site. Neither will it add to the other cumulative impacts on the Natura 2000 site from other sources

#### **4.5 Conclusions of Screening Report**

Having assessed all relevant potential effects of the proposed development, it is considered that all potential impacts on the Conservation Objectives and integrity of Natura 2000 sites can be screened out. It is therefore considered that it is not necessary to proceed to Natura Impact Statement.

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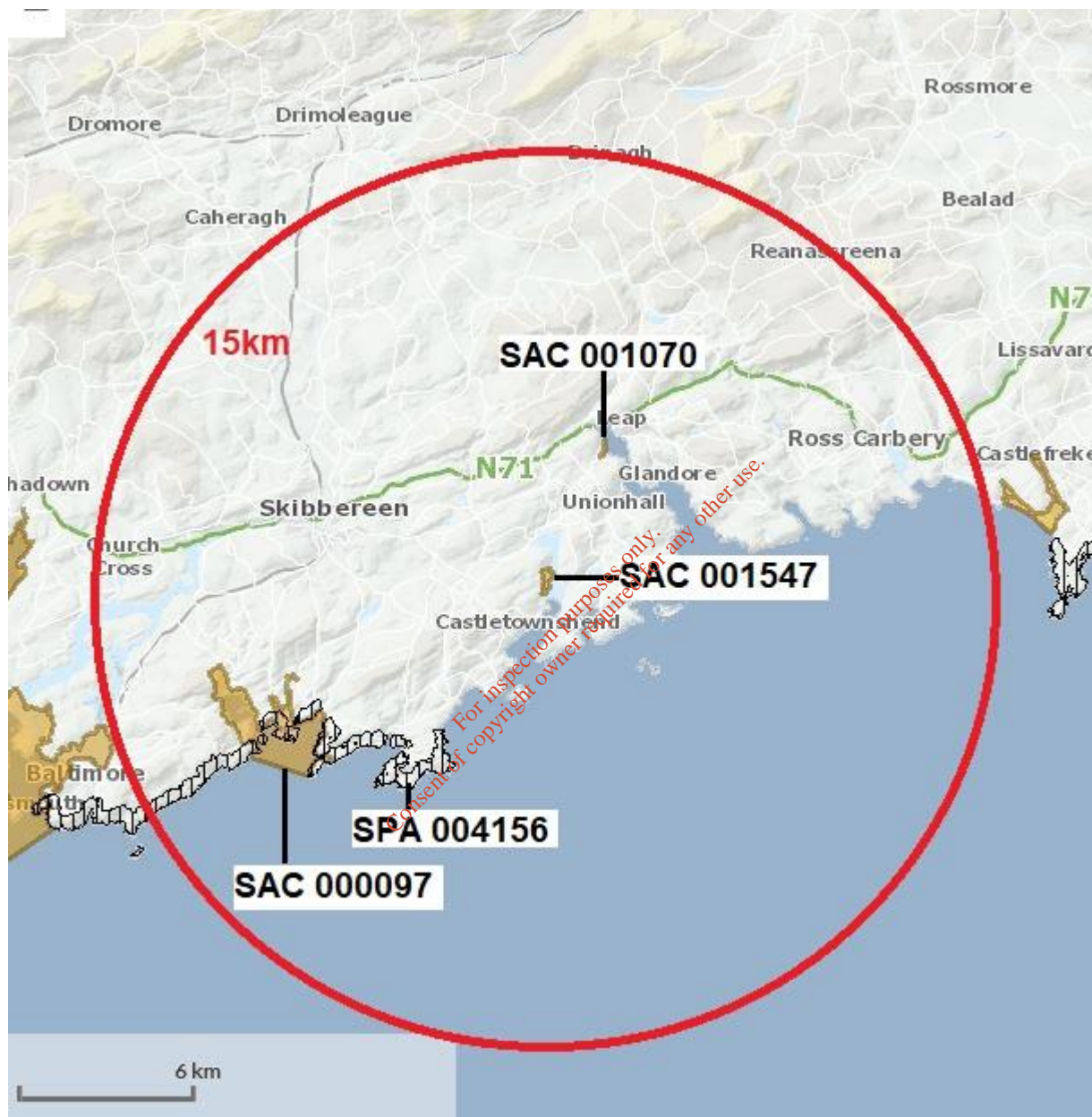
## APPENDIX 1

### REFERENCES

EC (2018). Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC

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## APPENDIX 2 NATURA 2000 SITES WITHIN 15KM



## **APPENDIX 3 PASCAL SWEENEY: QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE**

### **QUALIFICATIONS: B.Sc., M.Sc., MCIEEM.**

M.Sc. thesis by research on aquatic insect populations and eutrophication in the Killarney Lakes. Member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, the Freshwater Biological Association and the Botanical Society of the Britain and Ireland.

### **MAIN RELEVANT EXPERIENCE:**

#### **Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment:**

Over 200 reports for Appropriate Assessment (Screening Reports and Natura Impact Statements) for a wide variety of proposed developments, including local authority waste water treatment plants, flood defence schemes, fish passes, bridge improvements, landfills, large industrial developments and private housing.

#### **Freshwater Biological Water Quality Monitoring:**

Yearly monitoring of biological water quality of rivers for the EPA Q-scheme monitoring programme from 2012 to 2019. Water quality surveys for local authorities (Wexford, Kilkenny, Kildare Waterford and Tipperary Co. Cos.), and industries (e.g. Glanbia, Dairygold, Irish Sugar, Irish Distillers, Lisheen Mine, Carbury Mushrooms). Profundal species analysis of over 600 lake samples for EPA and 250 lake samples for NIEA.

#### **Estuarine Monitoring:**

Analysis of oligochaete communities in 66 Munster estuaries for a Praeger Grant funded research project. Analysis of estuarine fauna of 10 estuaries for discharge licences or NIS.

#### **Impact Assessment:**

Impact assessment of proposed developments on freshwater habitats and recommendation of mitigation measures. These developments include roads, gas pipelines, landfills, quarries, hydropower stations, intensive agriculture and industries.

**Agri-Environmental Schemes REPS, AEOS and NPWS Hen Harrier Farm Plans:**

Ecological surveying of lands in NHA/SAC/SPA sites and preparation of Environmental Reports throughout Munster (over 700 reports).

**Commonage Framework Planning:**

Surveyed habitats, assessed vegetation condition and recommended management requirements on mountain and coastal commonages in Cork Tipperary, Limerick, Clare, Carlow and Wexford.

**Habitat Surveys and Management Planning of Coillte Property:**

Habitat and botanical surveys of potential Biodiversity Areas in Cork and Waterford.

**Native Woodland Scheme:**

Approved by the Forest Service as a Participating Ecologist. Preparation of the ecological aspects of the Ecological Survey/Management Plans. (49 plans).

**Bat Surveys:**

Bat surveys at a variety of structures at proposed development sites, including buildings, road bridges and tree lines. Participant in the All Ireland Daubenton's Bat Waterways Monitoring Survey, co-ordinated by Bat Conservation Ireland.

**Freshwater Pearl Mussel Surveys:**

Licensed surveys for *Margaritifera margaritifera* in the following river catchments: Munster Blackwater, Lee, Bandon, Slaney, Barrow, Nore, Suir, Corrib and Moy.

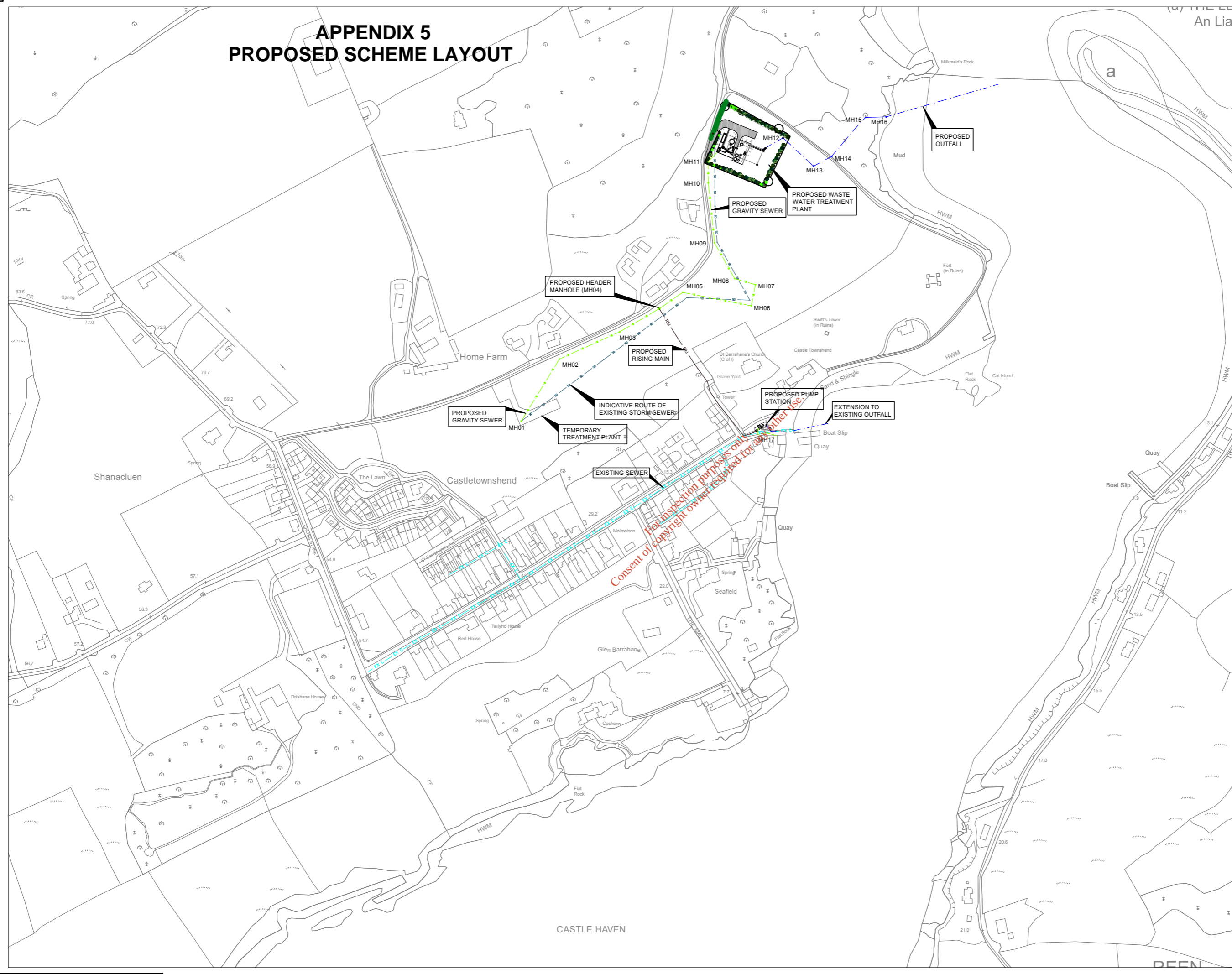
**White-Clawed Crayfish Surveys:**

Licensed surveys in the Liffey, Shannon, Munster Blackwater, Bandon, Barrow, Nore and Suir catchments.

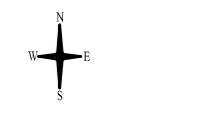
# APPENDIX 4 OUTFALL LOCATIONS



# APPENDIX 5 PROPOSED SCHEME LAYOUT



GENERAL NOTES



- NOTES:**
1. ORDNANCE SURVEY IRELAND LICENCE NUMBER EN 3-3-34.
  2. FIGURED DIMENSIONS ONLY TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS DRAWING.
  3. ALL DIMENSIONS TO BE CHECKED ON SITE.
  4. ANY QUERIES OR DISCREPANCIES SHOULD BE REFERRED TO THE EMPLOYERS REPRESENTATIVE IMMEDIATELY.
  5. EXISTING & PROPOSED PIPE LOCATIONS ARE INDICATIVE ONLY.

- LEGEND:**
- EXISTING COMBINED SEWER — EX C — EX C —
  - EXISTING STORM SEWER — SS — SS —
  - PROPOSED SEWER — PS — PS —
  - PROPOSED RISING MAIN — RM — RM —
  - PROPOSED OUTFALL — OF — OF —

FS	19.06.20	WWTP LAYOUT UPDATED	LT	OL	KT
A4	20.03.20	REVISED GRAVITY SEWER AND OUTFALL ROUTE	OL	OL	KT
A3	05.11.19	WWTP LAYOUT UPDATED	LT	OL	KT
A2	22.10.19	PIPE ROUTES REVISED, EXISTING SERVICES ADDED	LT	OL	KT
A1	22.08.19	WWTP & PS LAYOUT UPDATED	LT	OL	KT
Rev	Date	Description	By	Chk	App

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 Working in Partnership

PROJECT  
**UTAS - CORK BUNDLE  
 CASTLETOWNSHEND**

DRAWING TITLE  
**PROPOSED SCHEME LAYOUT**

STATUS  
**FOR INFORMATION**

Date:	10.05.19	Scale:	1:2000	Drawn:	LBR	Chk:	OL	App:	KT
Project No:	257589_00	Dwg. No.:	IW-10015228-04-01-001	Rev:	F5				

**APPENDIX 6**  
**SAC 001547 LOCATION**

