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Section 34 Planning Application for
Proposed Development
at Ballinclare Quarry, Kilbride, County Wicklow

Natura Impact Statement:
Stage 1 Screening Assessment

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Kilsaran
ideas taking shape



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This report provides a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and information to inform a Stage 1 Screening Assessment to identify any likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites from the proposed development at Ballinclare Quarry, Co. Wicklow.

It has been prepared by SLR Consulting Ireland (SLR) on behalf of Kilsaran Concrete (trading as Kilsaran Build) hereafter referred to as Kilsaran in support their Section 34 planning application at Ballinclare Quarry to Wicklow County Council.

1.2 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 that requires 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 guidance¹ 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.

¹ 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.

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.

1.3 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 Wicklow County Council) in order for them to determine whether the proposed project at Ballinclare Quarry 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.

1.4 Ecologist and Experience

The Screening Assessment has been conducted by Steve Judge whom is an Associate Ecologist with 14 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.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Baseline Data Collection

Baseline information was gathered through a combination of desk-based study, site visit and inspection made on 1st September 2014 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 operation of the inert soil recovery facility 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)² 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 Habitat Regulations, 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 Stage 1 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 the designation 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 2009³ 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 development proposals at Ballinclare Quarry;
- 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)⁴. 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.

² <http://www.npws.ie>

³ 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.

⁴ Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2006). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom*.

2.3 Ascertaining the Threat to Site Integrity

The Competent Authority will be required to determine whether the project at Ballinclare Quarry 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.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

3.1 Location and Setting

Ballinclare Quarry is located in the townlands of Ballinclare and Carrigmore to the west of the N11 national road approximately 1.9km north west of the village of Kilbride, 3km south of the village of Glenealy and 7.5km south west of Wicklow town centre, Co. Wicklow (please refer to Figure 1).

The application site covers 36 hectares (ha) of land that comprises an active quarry and associated infrastructure including processing facilities, a concrete batching plant, asphalt plant as well as areas used for the storage of soils and overburden and water management.

The surrounding landscape is characterised by mixed agricultural land with fields typically bounded by hedgerows / treelines interspersed by blocks of woodland. The landscape is dissected northwest to southeast by the Potter's River and north to south by the N11 national road, currently being re-aligned with a new dual carriageway. Small rural settlements and isolated farmsteads scattered along the roads and lanes throughout landscape.

3.2 Outline Description of Project

The project involves an application for a revision to the existing permitted development at Ballinclare Quarry (Planning Reference 07/45) to allow for optimisation of extraction and manufacturing operations at this site. The planning application proposes within an overall application area of 36.0 hectares, and all for a period of 25 years, will consist of:

1. Permission for continued use of the permitted development under P. Reg. Ref. No. 07/45 for a period of 25 years including the existing quarry, stone extraction and processing, concrete and asphalt manufacturing facilities, and related ancillary buildings and facilities
2. Permission for extension to the permitted quarry by extraction to a quarry floor level of +1 mOD over an extraction area of 16.5 hectares.
3. Permission for a concrete block manufacturing plant (13.6m high approximately) (c. 362.1 sqm) and a concrete block manufacturing yard (c. 6225 sqm).
4. Permission for an aggregate washing plant (c. 142.6 sqm).
5. Permission for replacement of the existing septic tank with a proprietary effluent treatment system (Aeration Treatment Unit and two modular Puraflo).
6. Permission to increase product output from the quarry, from 70 to 150 loads per day, in line with market demand.
7. And all associated site works.

The extraction of diorite will be carried out in the same manner as the existing quarrying operations through periodic blasting to fragment the rock, primary crushing within the quarry void and part-processed rock transported to secondary processing plant for further size reduction, screening and washing.

Ballinclare Quarry has no trade effluent discharge to any other watercourse / waterbody outside the quarry site and at this current time it is not envisaged that the proposed development would require any trade effluent having to be discharged from site. However, if at a later date the current water management system requires a discharge to be made this will be subject to a future separate application for a discharge licence.

Other existing facilities present at the quarry site, including site offices and welfare facilities, weighbridge, car parking, fuel storage facilities etc, will continue to be used as part of any revision and extension of quarrying operations at Ballinclare.

The normal quarry operations (Le. extraction and processing) shall not commence before 08.00 am and shall not continue after 18.00 Monday to Friday and 14.00 on Saturday. Loading of vehicles shall not take place before 07.00. No work shall take place on Sunday or Bank Holiday;

Post cessation of quarrying operations, the site will be subject to a restoration plan for the quarry will be restored to a natural habitat, which is one of the beneficial after uses. The extraction void will be left to naturally fill with water to create a valuable wetland habitat after the removal of all plant and equipment from the site and re-grading of spoil and overburden storage areas.

4.0 NATURA 2000 SITES

There ten Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of project application site at Ballinclare Quarry. These sites are listed Table 1 and their locations shown in Figure 1.

Table 1: Natura 2000 Sites within a 15km of the Proposed Project

Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Location at Closest Point to Application Site
Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC	000717	1.7km north west
Vale of Clara (Rathdrum Wood) SAC	000733	5.8km west
Magherabeg Dunes SAC	001766	6.2km east southeast
Buckroney-Brittas Dunes and Fen SAC	000729	6.9km south east
The Murrough Wetlands SAC	002249	7.8km north east
The Murrough SPA	004186	7.8km north east
Wicklow Head SPA	004127	8.3km east northeast
Wicklow Reef SAC	002274	9.5km east
Wicklow Mountains SAC	002122	12.2km north west
Wicklow Mountains SPA	004040	14.8km west

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

Based on the size and nature of the proposed project, 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 5km from the application site unless there are any potential source-pathway-receptor links between the proposed project at Ballinclare Quarry and any Natura 2000 site(s) outside this distance.

At a distance greater than 5km 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 any drawdown in groundwater.

Ballinclare Quarry has no trade effluent discharge to any other watercourse / waterbody outside the quarry site and at this current time it is not envisaged that the proposed development would require such a discharge. If however, at a later date it is found that the water management system at the quarry requires the discharge of trade effluent to the Potter's River this would be subject to a separate NIS screening as part of any application for a discharge licence and therefore outside the scope of this assessment. Therefore there are no hydrological source-pathway-receptor links with any of the Natura 2000 lying outside the 5km potential zone of influence of Ballinclare Quarry.

Based on the above, it is considered that all of the following Natura 2000 sites 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:

- Vale of Clara (Rathdrum Wood) SAC;
- Magherabeg Dunes SAC;
- Buckroney-Brittas Dunes and Fen SAC;
- The Murrough Wetlands SAC;

- The Murrough SPA;
- Wicklow Head SPA;
- Wicklow Reef SAC;
- Wicklow Mountains SAC; and
- Wicklow Mountains SPA.

Only Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC lies within 5km of the project site and are therefore is deemed relevant and has been screened-in as part of this assessment.

4.2 Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC

4.2.1 Site Description

Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC, covering 48.26ha, is a good example of old oak sessile woodland which is characteristic of the valleys of Wicklow Mountains. The site is an important link in a series of oakwoods which extend from Glen of the Downs across to the Glendalough area.

A copy of the site synopsis is provided in Appendix A.

4.2.2 Qualifying Interests

Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve was selected as a SAC for the following habitat types listed under Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive:

- Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in British Isles;

4.2.3 Conservation Objectives

The overarching conservation objective for the Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.⁵ Specific conservation objectives for this site published by NPWS in 2009 are as following:⁶

- to maintain the Annex I habitat for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status; Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles (50% area of the site);
- to maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the entire site;
- to enhance the educational and amenity use of the site; and
- to establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant.

4.2.4 Site Vulnerabilities

The site vulnerabilities, including any key pressures or trends within and around Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC that have been identified as impacting upon the site, may be summarised as:

- agriculture, forestry and animal breeding:

⁵ NPWS (2011). *Conservation Objectives for Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC [000717]*. Generic Version 3.0. Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

⁶ NPWS (2009). *Conservation Statement for Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve cSAC*. Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

- grazing;
- general forestry management.
- leisure and tourism:
 - attraction park.
- natural process (biotic and abiotic):
 - other forms or mixed forms of interspecific floral competition.

5.0 HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND POTENTIAL EXPOSURE (SCREENING ASSESSMENT)

This section identifies the potential hazards (i.e. the pathways) through which the proposed development at Ballinclare Quarry could affect the interest features of the Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC and whether the exposure to a particular hazard is likely to have a significant effect.

The main purpose of this stage is to screen out those aspects of the project that can be considered not likely to have a significant effect, as well as those qualifying features of the relevant Natura 2000 site(s) that are not likely to be significantly affected from the exposure to a potential hazard and/or pathway. This is essentially a risk assessment to decide whether a more detailed assessment is required, and if so, the scope of the issues and features to be addressed. If it cannot be concluded with confidence that adverse effects are unlikely, then under the precautionary principle, it is assumed that the issue requires more detailed consideration.

Significant effects are defined in terms of changes to the baseline conditions of one or more the qualifying interest features for which the Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC was designated, whether negative or positive, and which are likely to be directly and indirectly attributable to the proposed development at Ballinclare Quarry, as a stand-alone project.

5.1 Hazard Identification and Potential Exposure

A review of the potential hazards, based on the proposed development and vulnerabilities of the Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC, that might affect the interest features of for which this site was designated and the potential exposure of the interest features from the proposed development at Ballinclare Quarry, has identified the following potential hazards:

- direct habitat loss, damage and disturbance;
- dust deposition; and
- alteration to the hydrogeological regime.

A summary of the screening assessment of the identified hazards and the likelihood of any exposure and significant effects of the proposed development is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Screening Assessment of Hazards & Likelihood of Significant Effects of the Project

Hazard	Nature of Hazard	Assessment	Qualifying Features at Potential Risk	Exposure to Hazard and Likelihood of Significant Adverse Effects
Direct habitat loss, damage and disturbance	Habitat loss involves the direct destruction or physical take-up of vegetation within a Natura 2000 site that would directly or indirectly affect the integrity of the site or the individual qualifying habitats and/or species for which the these sites are of European importance.	<p>The proposed development lies outside the boundaries of the Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC and will not result in any direct loss, damage or disturbance to any qualifying habitat(s) within this Natura 2000 site</p> <p>The application site does not support any Annex I habitats, as cited for the SAC, that would be lost to the proposed development and which could be considered to contribute to those qualifying habitats within the SAC.</p>	None	No likely exposure to hazard and no significant adverse effects predicted on the qualifying Annex I habitat of old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles or on the integrity of Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC.
Dust deposition	Fugitive dust can have adverse effects upon vegetation restricting photosynthesis, respiration and transpiration. Furthermore it can lead to phytotoxic gaseous pollutants penetrating the plants. The overall effect can be a decline in plant productivity, which may then have indirect effects on the quality of the affected habitats and associated fauna. There is limited research into dust particle dispersion however, literature on the mineral sector suggests that the most sensitive species area to be	<p>The extraction and processing diorite, the movement of vehicles around the site and the operation of a concrete batching plant and concrete block manufacturing yard have the potential to generate fugitive dust.</p> <p>Typically fugitive dust generated through quarrying operations would be expected to be deposited within 100-200m of its source; the greatest proportion of which comprising larger particles (greater than 30 microns) deposited within 100m of the facility, based on research for the</p>	None	No likely exposure to hazard and no significant adverse effects predicted on the qualifying Annex I habitat of old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles or on the integrity of Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC.

Hazard	Nature of Hazard	Assessment	Qualifying Features at Potential Risk	Exposure to Hazard and Likelihood of Significant Adverse Effects
	<p>affected by dust deposition at levels above 1000 mg/m²/day⁷ ⁸ which is five times greater than the level at which most dust deposition may start to cause a perceptible nuisance to humans. The amounts of dust deposited and its effects are dependent upon weather conditions as in wet weather less dust will be generated and that which has been deposited upon foliage is more likely to be washed off.</p>	<p>mineral sector⁹.</p> <p>A range of industry dust mitigation measures are already incorporated into the operation of the existing quarry site to ensure that dust does not exceed a threshold limit of 350mg/m²/day. These measures include dust suppression techniques (i.e. damping down) of roads, stockpiled materials and through the control of vehicle speeds. Dust monitoring indicate that dust levels generated through quarrying operations are in compliance with the 350mg/m²/day limits as conditioned under the existing planning consent.</p> <p>At a distance of 1.7km from the quarry site it is considered not likely that any dust reaching the Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC would be at levels where it could be reasonably expected sensitive ecological receptors could be affected by any deposition of dust and no measureable impacts on any qualifying Annex I habitats are predicted from the proposed development at</p>		

⁷ Farmer, A.M. (1993). *The Effects of Dust on Vegetation – A Review*. Environmental Pollution Vol.79, Issue 1, Pages 63-75.

⁸ UK Highways Agency (2007). Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11, Section 3, Part 1 HA207/7 Air Quality. Highways Agency.

⁹ UK Department of the Environment (1995). *The Environmental Effects of Dust from Surface Mineral Workings. Volume 1: Summary Report & Best Practice Guides*. HMSO.

Hazard	Nature of Hazard	Assessment	Qualifying Features at Potential Risk	Exposure to Hazard and Likelihood of Significant Adverse Effects
Ballinclare Quarry.				
Alteration to the hydrogeological regime	<p>Abstraction of groundwater or de-watering operations can result in the drawdown of groundwaters. The extent of the effects of drawdown can be influenced upon the local geology, soils, topography and climate.</p> <p>Changes in localised groundwater levels or in aquifers as a result of extraction of minerals can have direct and indirect ecological impacts on groundwater dependent ecosystems as well as on surface waters that may also be reliant upon groundwater inputs.</p>	<p>The diorite bedrock formation is classified as a poor aquifer which is unproductive except in local zones and has low permeability. Therefore although the quarry will be worked to below the water table any groundwater inflows are expected to be minor and no significant drawdown of localised groundwater levels are predicted within the wider surrounding area.</p> <p>Based on the above, the distance of the Deputy' Pass Nature Reserve SAC from the quarry and given that both the qualifying Annex I habitat of old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> is not a groundwater dependent ecosystem no effects are predicted from any alteration to the hydrogeological regime as a result of the proposed development at Ballinclare Quarry.</p>	None	<p>No likely exposure to hazard and no significant adverse effects predicted on the qualifying Annex I habitat of old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles or on the integrity of Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC.</p>

6.0 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Based on the screening in Section 5, it is assessed that the proposed development at Ballinclare Quarry will not have any effects on the Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC, or on its qualifying habitat (old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in British Isles) for which this site has been designated as being of European importance, as a stand-alone project.

It is therefore considered that no further assessment is required for the proposed development at Ballinclare Quarry as a stand-alone project on the Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC.

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 at Ballinclare Quarry will not have any stand-alone adverse effects on any Natura 2000 site. 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.

8.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This assessment has considered the potential effects associated with the proposed development at Ballinclare Quarry on Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the proposed project.

The assessment has concluded that the proposed development at Ballinclare Quarry will have no effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site, or on any of the qualifying habitats and/or species for which a site has been designated / 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 at Ballinclare Quarry.

8.1 Natura Impact Statement –Summary

A summary of the NIS and findings of no significant effects 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*’ is provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Finding of No Significant Effects Report

Name of project or plan	Proposed development at Ballinclare Quarry, Co. Wicklow
Name and location of Natura 2000 site(s)	<p>The following sites lie within a 15km radius of the proposed development site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy’s Pass Nature Reserve SAC [000717], 1.7km north west at closest point; • Vale of Clara (Rathdrum Wood) SAC [000733], 5.8km west; • Magherabeg Dunes SAC [001766], 6.2km east southeast; • Buckroney-Brittis Dunes and Fen SAC [000729], 6.9km south east; • The Murrough Wetlands SAC [002249], 7.8km north east; • The Murrough SPA [004186], 7.8km north east; • Wicklow Head SPA [004127], 8.3km east northeast; • Wicklow Reef SAC [002274], 9.5km east; • Wicklow Mountains SAC [002122], 12.2km north west; • Wicklow Mountains SPA [004040], 14.8km west. <p>Based on the size and nature of the proposed project it is considered that the maximum potential zone of influence, in the absence of any source-pathway-receptor link, would be up to a 5km radius of the application site. At this distance only the Deputy’s Pass Nature Reserve SAC has been deemed relevant to this project with all other Natura 2000s sites outside the potential zone of influence of the project and with no environmental pathways linking these Natura 2000 sites to the project site.</p>
Description of the project/plan	The project involves an application for a revision to the existing permitted development at Ballinclare Quarry (Planning Reference 07/45) to allow for optimisation of extraction and manufacturing operations at this site.

The planning application proposes within an overall application area of 36.0 hectares, and all for a period of 25 years, will consist of:

1. Permission for continued use of the permitted development under P. Reg. Ref. No. 07/45 for a period of 25 years including the existing quarry, stone extraction and processing, concrete and asphalt manufacturing facilities, and related ancillary buildings and facilities
2. Permission for extension to the permitted quarry by extraction to a quarry floor level of +1 mOD over an extraction area of 16.5 hectares.
3. Permission for a concrete block manufacturing plant (13.6m high approximately) (c. 362.1 sqm) and a concrete block manufacturing yard (c. 6225 sqm).
4. Permission for an aggregate washing plant (c. 142.6 sqm).
5. Permission for replacement of the existing septic tank with a proprietary effluent treatment system (Aeration Treatment Unit and two modular Puraflo).
6. Permission to increase product output from the quarry, from 70 to 150 loads per day, in line with market demand.
7. And all associated site works.

The extraction of diorite will be carried out in the same manner as the existing quarrying operations through periodic blasting to fragment the rock, primary crushing within the quarry void and part-processed rock transported to secondary processing plant for further size reduction, screening and washing.

Post cessation of quarrying operations, the site will be subject to a restoration plan for the quarry will be restored to a natural habitat, which is one of the beneficial after uses. The extraction void will be left to naturally fill with water to create a valuable wetland habitat after the removal of all plant and equipment from the site and re-grading of spoil and overburden storage areas.

Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?

No

Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site?

No

The assessment of significance of effects

Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 sites	The proposed development at Ballinclare Quarry will have no effects on the Deputy Pass Nature Reserve SAC, or on its qualifying Annex I habitat of old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles as a stand-alone project, or in-combination with other plans and projects.
Explain why the effects are not considered significant	<p>At a distance of 1.7km from Ballinclare Quarry, the Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC is of a sufficient distance that it would not be affected by any direct loss of habitat or impacted upon by any effects of dust deposition.</p> <p>The SAC and its qualifying Annex I habitat of old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles is not a groundwater dependent ecosystem and no effects on the status of the woodland habitat is predicted through any changes to the hydrogeological regime through the deepening of the quarry to 1mOD and any associated localised drawdown of groundwater levels as a result of the revision of an extension of quarrying operations at Ballinclare.</p>
List of agencies consulted: provide contact name and telephone or e-mail address	None.

Data collected to carry out the assessment

Who carried out the assessment	Sources of data	Level of assessment completed	Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed?
Steve Judge Senior Ecologist MCIEEM and employee of SLR	NPWS	<p>Stage 1 – Screening Assessment</p> <p>Review of desk-top information relating to the Natura 2000 sites and qualifying features.</p> <p>The assessment is qualitative and is based on best practice and professional experience.</p>	This document.

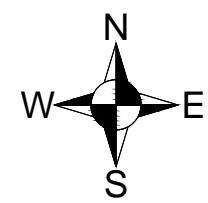
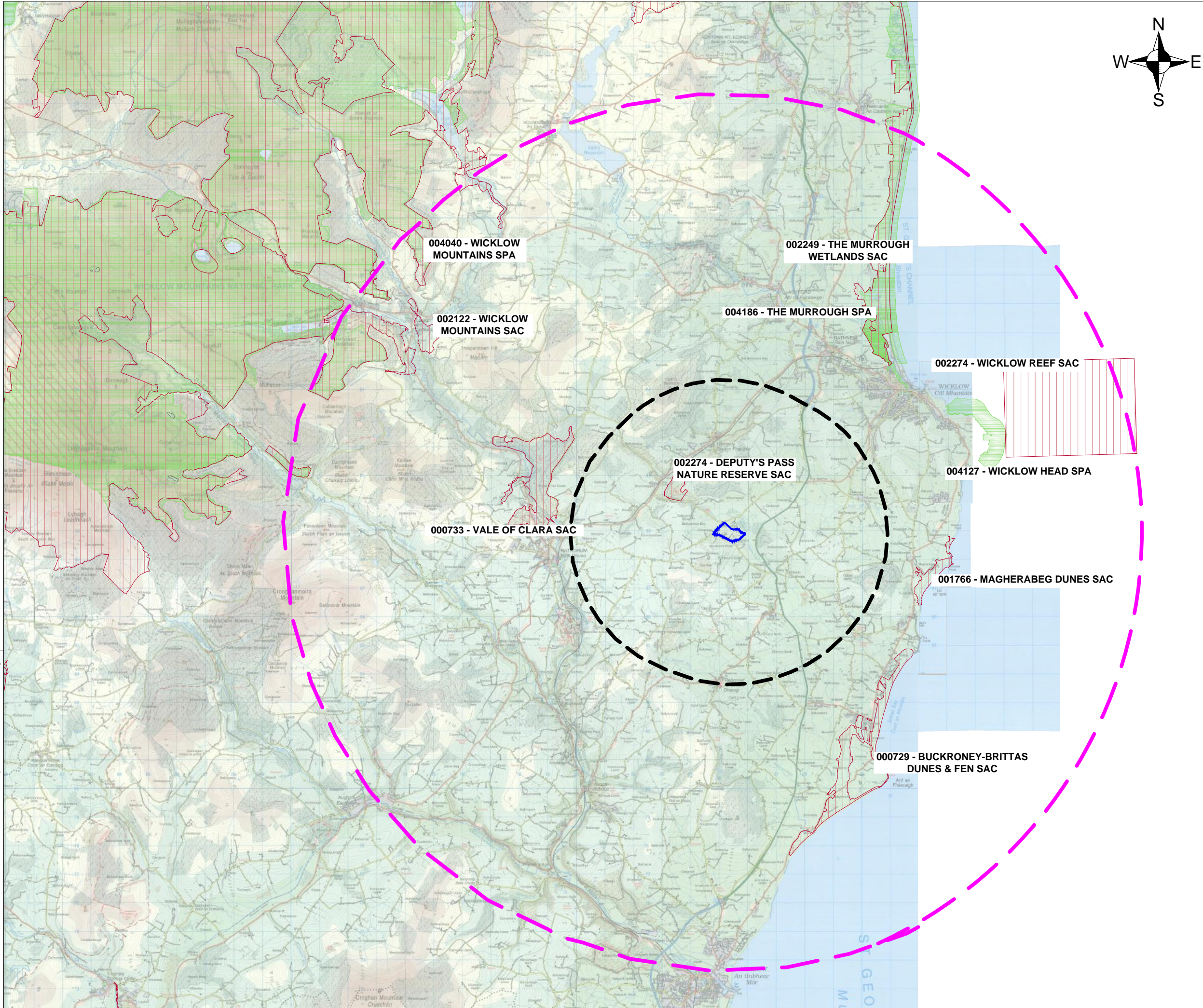
9.0 CLOSURE

This report has been prepared by SLR Consulting Ireland with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the manpower and resources devoted to it by agreement with the client. Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

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SLR disclaims any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the agreed scope of the work.

00036.00026.R1.FIG_1.Location of Ballinclare Quarry_Natura 2000 Sites.dwg



NOTES

- EXTRACT FROM ORDNANCE SURVEY 1:50,000 DISCOVERY SERIES MAPPING SHEET NO. 50 & 56
- ORDNANCE SURVEY IRELAND LICENCE CO. SU 0000714 (c) ORDNANCE SURVEY IRELAND & GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND

LEGEND

	LANDHOLDING BOUNDARY (c.36 Ha. / 89 acres)
	5KM RADIUS FROM LAND INTEREST BOUNDARY
	15KM RADIUS FROM LAND INTEREST BOUNDARY
	SPECIAL AREAS OF CONSERVATION (SAC)
	SPECIAL PROTECTED AREAS (SPA)

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KILSARAN CONCRETE
NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT: STAGE 1 SCREENING
BALLINCLARE QUARRY,
KILBRIDE (N11), CO. WICKLOW
LOCATION OF BALLINCLARE QUARRY
& NATURA 2000 SITES

FIGURE 1

Scale: 1:125,000 @ A3
Date: DECEMBER 2014

**Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC
Site Synopsis**

Site Name: Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC

Site Code: 000717

Deputy's Pass woodland is located on the northern spur of the Deputy's Pass near Glenealy in Co. Wicklow. It was designated a Nature Reserve in 1982.

The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes):

[91A0] Old Oak Woodlands

The predominant vegetation community in Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve is Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) woodland, referable to the Blechno-Quercetum petraeae association. The oak is of coppice origin, 70-80 years old, and forms a nearly closed canopy. Other tree species present are Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), occurring mainly at the edges. In some areas Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) also occurs. The understorey is formed of oak saplings, Holly and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), while the ground flora of the wood is dominated by Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*), and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.). Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) are abundant in some areas. In some parts, Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Male Fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), Hay-scented Buckler-fern (*D. aemula*), Sanicle (*Sanicula europea*) and Wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) occur commonly.

The regeneration of native trees and the good ground cover indicate an absence of grazing; there are no sheep in the site and deer very seldom occur.

Less than 10% of the site is occupied by conifers. Where they are present they consist of 20-30 years old plantations of Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), Norway Spruce (*P. abies*), European Larch (*Larix decidua*) and Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). Once mature these small stands will be removed, to allow native species to naturally replace them.

The site supports breeding populations of the Smooth Newt (*Triturus vulgaris*) and the Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*), amphibians protected by the Wildlife Act, 1976.

Deputy's Pass is managed as a Nature Reserve and is part of an internationally important series of oak woods in Co. Wicklow which are almost certainly natural in origin and which retain much of their original character and species composition (other examples include Glendalough, Clara Vale and Ballinacor).