2025

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Large Scale Residential Development, Railpark West, Maynooth, County Kildare

Russell Environmental and Sustainability Services Limited

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02/12/2025

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Executive Summary

This Ecological Impact Assessment has been prepared by Russell Environmental and Sustainability Services Limited (RESS Ltd.) on behalf of Maynooth Montane Limited for the planning application for the Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) at Railpark West, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

The aim of this report was to identify, quantify and evaluate the impacts of the proposed development on ecosystems and their components, habitats, flora and fauna.

The site is located just outside Maynooth town centre to the south of the Royal Canal and Midland Great Western Railway. The main habitats within the development site are neutral grassland, scattered trees and hedgerows/treelines. These habitats are common and widespread in the surrounding area and the neutral grassland and scattered trees are of negligible ecological importance. The hedgerows/treelines are of local importance due to the presence of bat roosts and as wildlife corridors, whilst also providing habitats for birds and invertebrates.

Some common bird species were recorded in the site, and it is likely that bird's nest in in the hedgerows/treelines on the site. Impacts on nesting birds will be avoided by scheduling site clearance works outside of the nesting season.

The landscaping plan for the proposed development will include grassed areas that will utilise the existing soil and retain the current vegetation seed bank. Native and/or pollinator friendly trees will also be planted, together with new native hedgerows and shrub planting with pollinator species together with a number of SuDS measures to include bioretention areas and detention basins.

A number of the existing hedgerows/treelines will be retained, and these will be enhanced with additional native planting to fill in any gaps. Planting of standard native trees together with new native hedgerows will compensate for the loss of hedgerows/treelines that will be removed for the development. The SuDS measures will create new habitats. Thus, there will be no net biodiversity loss as a result of the proposed development and the biodiversity of the area will be enhanced hence, there will be an overall net gain for biodiversity.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

This Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) relates to the Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) for Railpark West, Maynooth, County Kildare. This report should be read in conjunction with the Biodiversity Action Plan (RESS Ltd., 2025).

The aim of this EcIA is to identify, quantify and evaluate the impacts of the proposed development on ecosystems and their components, including habitats, flora, and fauna. It has been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (2018). The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide an objective and transparent assessment of the potential ecological impacts of the proposed development for all interested parties, including planning authorities and the general public.
- Facilitate objective and transparent determination of the consequences of the development in terms of national, regional and local policies relevant to ecology.
- Propose the steps will be taken to adhere to legal requirements relating to designated sites and legally protected species (CIEEM 2018).

Although the above guidelines provide a framework for EcIA, many processes rely on the professional judgement of an ecologist, including survey design, the valuation of ecological features, and the characterisation of impacts.

1.2 Author of the Report

Russell Environmental and Sustainability Services Limited (RESS Ltd.) was contracted to conduct an ecological impact assessment on behalf Maynooth Montane Limited. This report details the likely effect of the potential works on the habitats and species of the development site and surrounding environs. The site was surveyed by ecologists from RESS Ltd. On the 4th and 5th of October 2024 and the 16th of September 2025. The conditions during both surveys were dry and there were no constraints to the survey.

Statement of Authority

Dr Jane Russell-O'Connor holds a PhD in Ecology and a Degree in Ecology and Environmental Science from the University of

Wolverhampton as well as a HDip in Science. She has been a practicing consultant ecologist for 12 years and previously managed a nature reserve and country parks in the UK. She also lectures part-time in Ecology and Environmental Science at South East Technological University, has published in peer reviewed journals and presented research at international conferences.

2.0 Scoping

The objective of this assessment is to identify any ecological features that may pose a constraint to the proposed development. It involves the following steps:

1. Identification of designated sites within an appropriate zone of influence
2. A walkover survey incorporating the following elements:
   i) Classification and mapping of habitats
   ii) A search for rare / protected flora, and for problematic non-native plant species (e.g., Japanese Knotweed)
   iii) A search for field signs of rare or protected fauna (e.g., badgers), and habitat suitability assessments for species that are secretive, nocturnal or seasonal.
   iv) Valuation of ecological features, review of legal considerations, and selection of important ecological features

       It is accepted that any development will have an impact on the receiving environment, but the significance of the impact will depend on the importance of the ecological features that would be affected. The following is outlined in the CIEEM guidelines:

       "One of the key challenges in an EcIA is to decide which ecological features (habitats, species, ecosystems, and their functions/processes) are important and should be subject to detailed assessment. Such ecological features will be those that are considered to be important and potentially affected by the project. It is not necessary to carry out detailed assessment of features that are sufficiently widespread, unthreatened, and resilient to impacts from the development, and that will remain viable and sustainable" (CIEEM, 2018).

   v) Assessment of impacts on important ecological features and development of appropriate mitigation strategies
   Potential direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on ecological features can be described in relation to their magnitude, extent, duration, reversibility and timing/frequency, as outlined in the CIEEM (2018) guidelines. Depending on the type of impact and the sensitivities of the important ecological feature, the ecologist may

determine that the impact would have a 'significant effect'. The following definitions are provided in the CIEEM guidelines:

> *"A significant effect is simply an effect that is sufficiently important to require assessment and reporting so that the decision maker is adequately informed of the environmental consequences of permitting a project". "For the purpose of EcIA, a 'significant negative effect' is an effect that undermines biodiversity conservation objectives for 'important ecological features', or for biodiversity in general"* (CIEEM, 2018).
> Where significant impacts are identified, measures will be taken to avoid, minimise or compensate for impacts (where possible). Based on these measures, any residual impacts are then described.

2.1 Description of the Proposed Development

The development will comprise a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) on a site at "Railpark West", in the townland of Railpark, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.

The proposed development is for 139 no. units comprising 36 no. houses (ranging in heights up to 3 storeys), 95 no. apartments (5 no. blocks ranging in heights up to 5 storeys partially over podium parking) and 08 no. duplexes (1 no. 3/4 storey Block).
The proposal includes for a new vehicular/pedestrian/cyclist access from the permitted Maynooth Eastern Ring Road (MERR) to the east and the adjoining development to the South, and pedestrian/cyclist access (and vehicular access for one of the proposed houses) to Parklands Grove/Old Railpark to the north of the site.

The development also includes all car and bicycle parking at surface and podium underdeck level, new streets and footpaths, bin stores, residential private open spaces, public & communal open spaces, boundary treatments, waste management areas, landscaping and all associated site development works (Figure 1).

2.2 Valuation of Ecological Features

Based on the information from the desktop and walkover surveys, each feature is assigned an ecological importance based on its conservation status at different geographical scales (Table 1) For example a site may be of ecological importance for a given species if it supports a significant proportion of the national population.

Figure 1 Site Plan (Duignan Queen Architects, 2025)

Ecological Value	Geographical Scale of Importance
International	International or European Scale
National	The Republic of Ireland or the island of Ireland
Regional	Leinster
County	County Kildare
Local	Maynooth Town
Negligible	None, the feature is common and widespread.

Table 1 The six-level ecological valuation scheme used in the CIEEM guidelines (CIEEM, 2018)

It is accepted that the proposed development will have an impact on the receiving environment, but the significance of the impact will depend on the importance of the ecological features that would be affected.

2.3 Ecological Impact Assessment

Potential, indirect or cumulative impacts on ecological features can be described in relation to their magnitude, extent, duration, reversibility and timing/frequency, as outlined in the CIEEM (2018) guidelines. Depending on the type of impact and the sensitivities of the important ecological features, it may be determined that the impact would have a significant effect. Where significant impacts are identified, measures will be taken to avoid, minimise or compensate for impacts (where possible). Based on these measures, any residual impacts are then described.

3.0 The Receiving Environment

3.1 Site Description, Location and Topography

The site is located to the east of the R405 Straffan Road and approximately 1.25km from Maynooth Town Centre in Co. Kildare. (Figure 2). To the north of the site is the Maynooth to Dublin train line and the Royal Canal. The Longitude is -6.5755320 and the Latitude is 53.3774201 (EPA, 2025).

The site is relatively level ranging from elevations of 64m to 58m above sea level (OSI, 2025).

Figure 2 Location map (OSI, 2025).

3.2 Geology and Soils

The site has bedrock geology of Dinantian pure unbedded limestones (EPA, 2025). The soil type overlying the bedrock for the site is basic, deep well drained mineral soils comprised of acid brown earths and grey-brown podzolics (EPA, 2025).

3.3 Hydrology

The site is located on a greenfield site in Maynooth, adjacent to a housing Estate in Railpark, Maynooth. There is no flowing or standing water on the site. The site is approximately 300m from the Royal Canal, which drains

into the River Liffey and down river into South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA. Also, the site is in close proximity to the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (Figure 3). However as there is no flowing water on the site, thus no direct hydrological connection to the Royal Canal or the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC. Furthermore, the Royal Canal is physically separated from the site by rail embankments. The site is located outside of the flood zone as detailed in Figure 4 (EPA 2025; OPW, 2025).

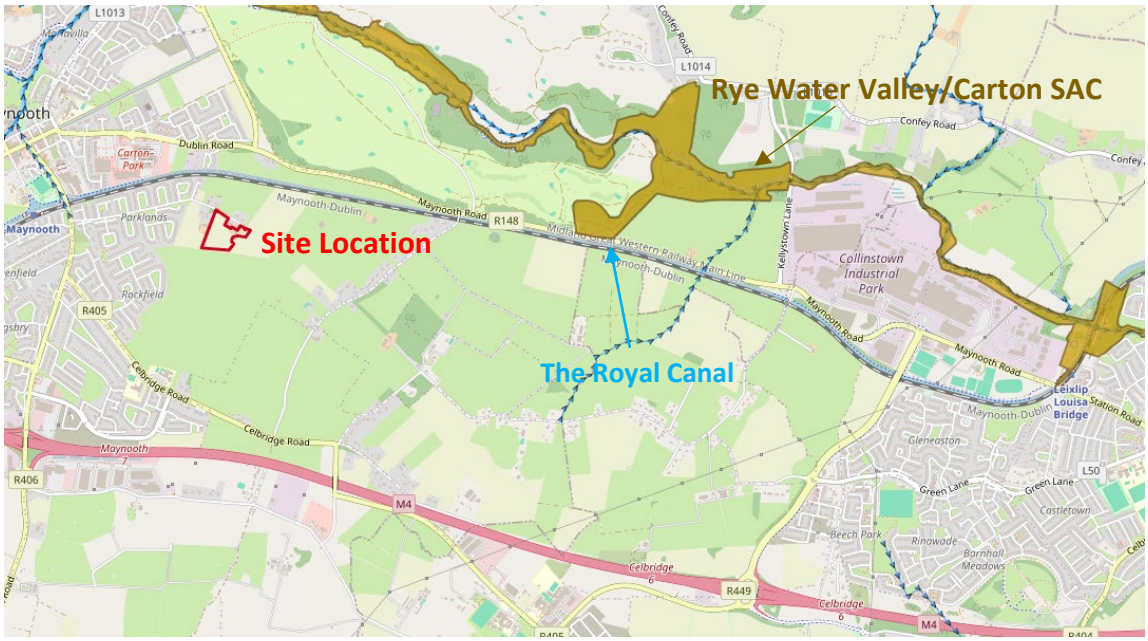

Figure 3 Site location in relation to the flow network (EPA, 2025)

The site is however, connected to the Rye Water Valley /Carton SAC via groundwater and the Stage 1 for Appropriate assessment 'screened in' on this basis (RESS Ltd., 2025). Therefore a stage 2 NIS in support of Appropriate Assessment Report was completed (RESS Ltd., 2025).

The management of surface water will be via the use of Sustainable Drainage solutions (SuDS) incorporated into the proposed development as detailed in the engineering reports (Kavanagh Burke Engineering Consultants, 2025). The surface water strategy is to attenuate the surface water from the development within the site. Therefore there will be no flow off the site to any watercourses.

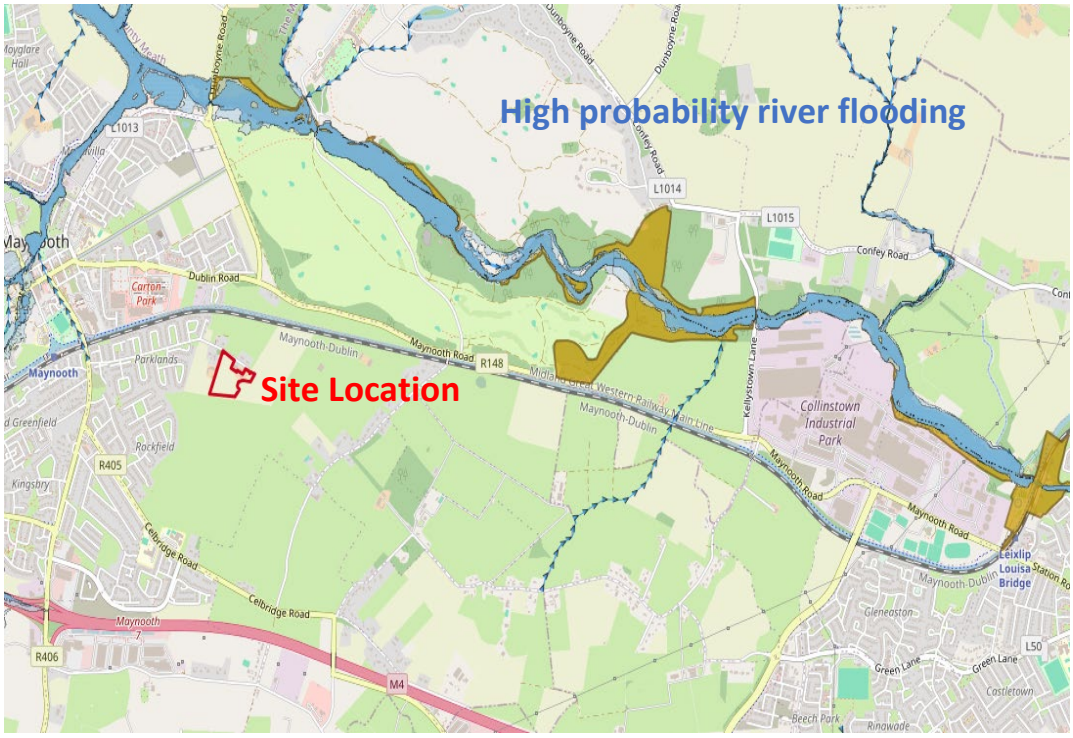

Figure 4 Proximity of the site to the flood plain (OPW, 2025)

As mentioned above the proposed SuDS measures include:

- A green/blue roof on each apartment block and the creche
- Permeable paving in driveways and parking areas
- Soakaway in central green area
- Rain butts
- Tree pits
- Bio-retention areas
- Rain gardens
- Vegetated detention basins x 3
- Silt traps and hydrocarbon interceptors

The bioretention areas, rain gardens and detention basins will be planted with native /pollinator friendly species that will serve not only to contain and act as soakage for any rain/storm water but will enhance the biodiversity in the area.

The proposed Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) measures will also comply with the EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC) and other legislation pertaining to surface water quality.

Furthermore, proposed SuDS components such as bioretention areas, rain gardens, detention basins and green roofs can be used to remove pollutants thereby improving water quality before soaking away through the ground.

The proposed development is located in the planned residential zoned

lands as identified in the Maynooth Local Area Plan 2013-19 and as the site is a greenfield site it is not currently serviced by any wastewater infrastructure, however a new pumping station will be constructed that will connect to the existing wastewater network that connects to the Lower Liffey Valley Sewage Scheme Wastewater Treatment Plant. According to the Wastewater Treatment Capacity Register (Uisce Eireann, 2025) has available capacity for the proposed development. The AER in 2023 for this WWTP had a number of incidents that have been closed out (Uisce Eireann, 2023).

3.4 Desk Based Survey

A desk-based study was undertaken to determine the proximity of any designated sites within the vicinity of the proposed development site. In addition, relevant legislation, documents and data bases were also reviewed in relation to the proposed LRD.

EU Habitats

Article 6(1) and article 6(2) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21st May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora aims to promote the maintenance of biodiversity. It forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy with the Birds Directive and establishes the EU wide Natura 2000 ecological network of protected areas, safeguarded against potentially damaging developments." (EEC, 1992). These sites are known as European Sites or Natura 2000 Sites. The development site is not designated as a European Site. There are no other designations for the site.

Although there are a number of sites within the 15km radius of the site as indicated in Figure 5, a more accurate assessment is where the Source-Pathway-Receptor (SPR) model is applied together with the Zone Of Influence (ZOI), which in the case of rivers may be outside of the 15km radius (OPR, 2021).

The European Commission Nature Restoration Law (2022) which has now been adopted in Ireland has the following objectives:

The proposal aims to restore ecosystems, habitats and species across the EU's land and sea areas in order to:

- enable the long-term and sustained recovery of biodiverse and resilient nature.
- contribute to achieving the EU's climate mitigation and climate adaptation objectives.
- meet international commitments.

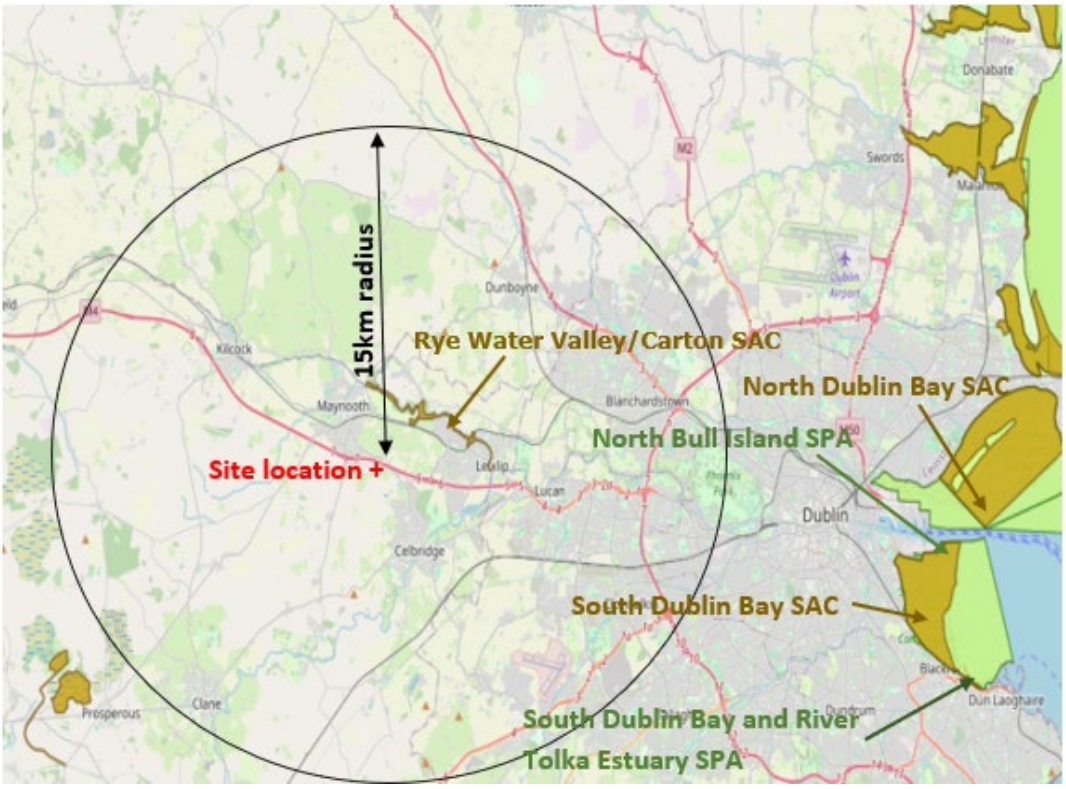

Figure 5 European Sites located within 15km radius or potential Zone of Influence of the proposed LRD

Water Framework Directive

The EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) required all Member States to protect and improve water quality in all waters so that we achieve good ecological status by 2015 or, at the latest, by 2027. It was given legal effect in Ireland by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003). It applies to rivers, lakes, groundwater, and transitional coastal waters.

Hence, considerations are required to address surface water management in proposed developments. To address the issues of additional surface water created because of the loss of green field site, where natural soakage would usually occur to the ground, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) are an appropriate way to manage surface and storm water, whilst improving the quality of runoff water and as detailed in Section 3.3 have been incorporated into the design of the proposed development. Furthermore, agreement was sought in relation to Uisce Éireann to ensure that there is sufficient supply of potable water for the proposed development, together with capacity for foul water treatment as part of the municipal wastewater treatment system.

National and Local Plans, Directives and Data Bases

The EPA provides the AA Geotool that is a database of the protected sites and associated flow network for water courses within Ireland. The flow network was identified for water courses on or near to the site (Figure 3) (EPA, 2025).

The National Biodiversity Data Centre (Biodiversity Ireland, 2025) provides a national database of biological records from Ireland. The database was consulted with regard to species identified on the site or that may be using the site.

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (2021-2025) was utilised by the Landscape Architects (Landmark Design & Consultancy Ltd., 2025) for the planting within the development.

The Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029 (2023) was reviewed with particular reference to Chater 12 Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure in relation, in particular to Objectives BI01, BI02,and BI03.

The Maynooth and Environs Joint Local Area Plan 2025-20231 (2024), in particular Section 9 was also reviewed in relation to protecting biodiversity.

In relation to the above points, SuDS considerations will be applied to this development and site-specific mitigation measures will be carried out to protect the bats, birds and their habitats.

In line with the EC Nature Restoration Law (2022) and the Kildare County Development Plan 2023 – 2029, (Section 12.4.1), the Biodiversity Net Loss and Net Gain has been assessed for the proposed development in Section 6 of this report.

3.4.1 Designated Sites

Within 5km of the site there are five designated sites which are detailed in Table 2 (the pNHA sites are detailed in Figure 6). The site is located in the 1km Grid squares N9437 and N9537 and the 2km Grid square N93N.

Designated Site	**Distance**	**Qualifying Interests (SAC) /Features of Interest (NHA)**
		Species/Habitat
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398	1.26m	1014 Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail *Vertigo angustior* 1016 Desmoulin's Whorl Snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*
Rye Water Valley/Carton pNHA 001398	1.26m	This site is located between Leixlip and Maynooth. Hairy St. John's wort (*Hypericum hirsutum*), a species legally protected under the Flora Protection Order (1987), occurs in Carton Estate. This is also the site of a rare Myxomycete

		fungus, *Diderma deplanatum*. The Rye Water is a spawning ground for Trout and Salmon, and the rare, White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) has been recorded at Leixlip.
Royal Canal pNHA 002103	324m	The Royal Canal is a man-made waterway linking the River Liffey at Dublin to the River Shannon near Tarmonbarry. The canal NHA comprises the central channel and the banks on either side of it. The rare and legally protected Opposite-leaved Pondweed (*Groenlandia densa*) (Flora Protection Order 1987) is present at one site in Dublin, between locks 4 and 5. A stonewort (*Tolypella intricata*) is also found in the Royal Canal, the only site in Ireland where it is found.

Table 2 Designated sites within 5km of the development site. NB pNHA = proposed Natural Heritage Areas

Otter *Lutra lutra* have been recorded just over 2km of the site in 2016 as part of the Mammals of Ireland 2016-2025 Survey in Grid N930381 (Biodiversity Ireland 2025).

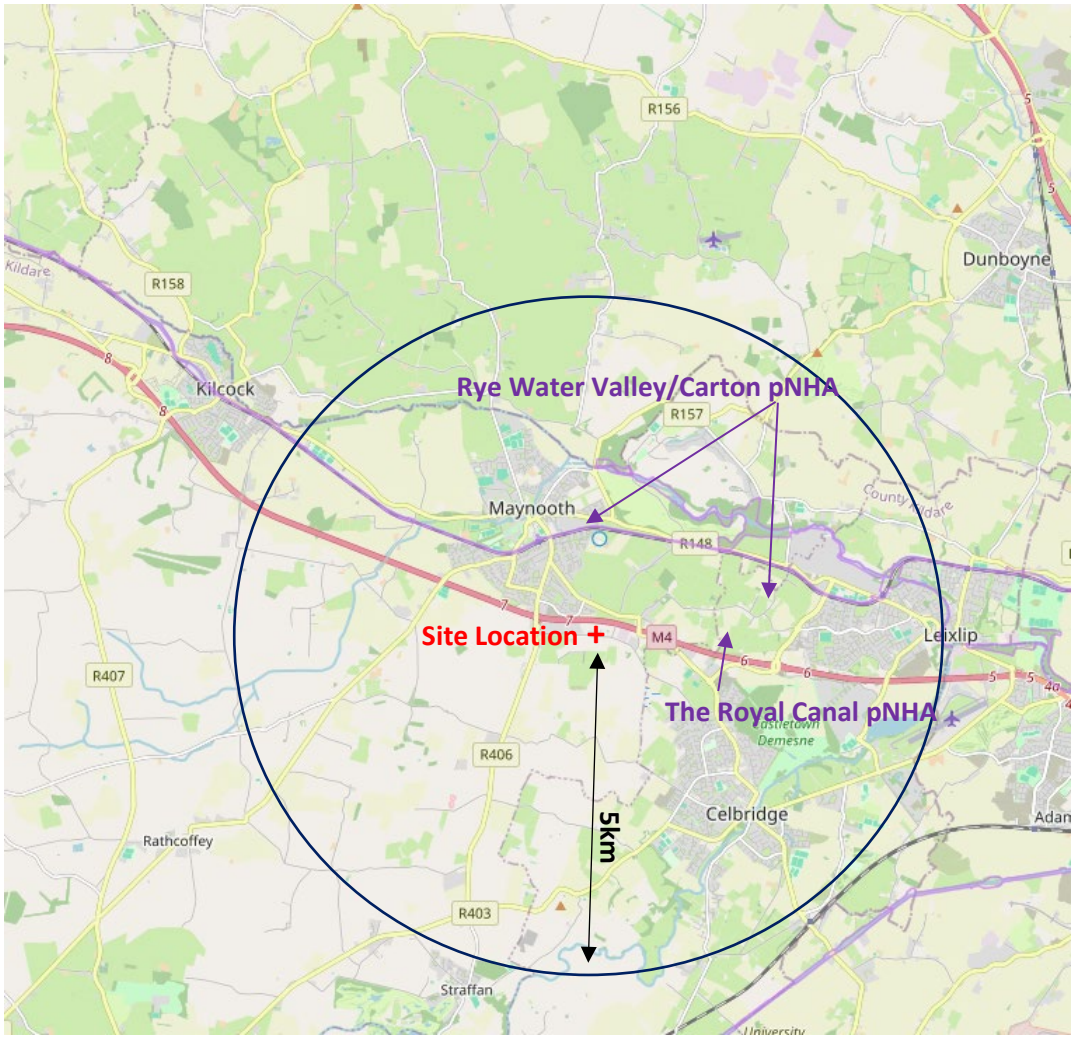

Figure 6 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas within a 5km radius (EPA, 2025)

3.5 Walkover Survey

As detailed in section 1.2 a walkover field survey took place by ecologists from RESS Ltd. on the 4th and 5th of October 2024 and the 16th of September 2025. The conditions were dry for both surveys and there were no constraints to the survey.

3.5.1 Flora and Fauna Survey

The flora and fauna survey that took place was based on the Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Surveying and Mapping (Smith *et al.*, 2011). The habitats were classified according to Fossitt (2000). In addition, the habitats mapped, and their species were compared with Annex species and habitats of the E.U. Habitats Directive. A dusk and dawn bat survey was also conducted (RESS Ltd. 2024).

Both the common name and the Latin names have been provided for the main plant and animal species identified. The Latin names are in italics. The letter and number codes i.e., GA1 for *Improved grassland* are the standard codes for habitat classification in Ireland (Fossitt, 2000).

In addition, the site was surveyed for invasive species.

4.0 Results

4.1 Flora and Fauna Survey

Flora

This report presents the results of a site visit by ecologists from RESS Ltd. on the 4th and 5th of October 2024 and the 16th of September 2025 on which the site was surveyed. The conditions were dry and there were no constraints to the survey.

The site is comprised of fields bounded by hedgerow/treelines (Appendix i).

Within the site and adjacent to it, there were five vegetation habitats identified in the site of the LRD as well as a barn (Fossitt, 2000) (See Appendix i for the habitat map). These are as follows:

GS1 Neutral Grassland

The majority of the site is indicative of former grazed field, although the species are more indicative of less intense grazing, hence the *GS1 Neutral*

Grassland classification. The following species relate to the fields labelled as F1 and F2 (Appendix i).

F1 - The predominant grass species are Annual meadow grass *Poa annua*, Black bent *Agrostis gigantea,* Cocks-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Common bent *Agrostis tenuis,* Creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, False oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatus*, Perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne,* Timothy *Phleum pratense* and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus.* There are a range of broad-leaved species, such as American willowherb *Epilobium ciliatum*, Chickweed (Common) *Stellaria media*, Creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense,* Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale,* Dock *Rumex acetosa,* Hawkbit (Rough) *Leontodon hispidus,* Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium,* Nettle *Urtica dioica,* Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, Red bartsia *Odontites vernus,* Red clover *Trifolium pratense*, Ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata,* Rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium,* Sorrel *Rumex acetosa* and Spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* (Figure 6). Small amounts of Dog rose *Rosa canina* with juvenile Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* have begun to colonise (Figure 7).

F2 – The majority of the species present are the same as for F1, however there are additional juvenile trees that have colonised of Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Grey willow *Salix cinerea* together with Bramble *Rubus fruiticosus agg.,* Bush vetch *Vicia sepium,* Lesser Burdock *Arctium minus* and Willowherb (hoary) *Epilobium parviflorum*. Rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium* is much more prolific in this field (Figure 8).

GS1 Neutral Grassland/WD5 Scattered Trees Mosaic

Only a small portion of this field (F3) is within the site, however a large portion of the field will be excavated for the proposed Maynooth Eastern Ring Road (MERR). The vegetation in this field is very similar to F1 and F2 however with additional broad-leaved species Fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*, Self-heal *Prunella vulgaris* and Sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum.* There are significantly more juvenile trees, hence the classification, which are Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Goat willow *Salix caprea,* Grey willow *Salix cinerea,* Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna,* Oak *Quercus robur* and Silver Birch *Betula pendula.* Like F2 Rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium* is much more prolific (Figure 9).

WS1 Scrub

There are small sections of scrub comprised of Bramble *Rubus fruiticosus agg.,* near where the barn is located.

Figure 7 F1 GS1 Neutral Grassland

Figure8 F2 GS1 Neutral Grassland

Figure 9 GS1 Neutral Grassland/WD5 Scattered Trees Mosaic

Figure 10 GS1 Neutral Grassland/WD5 Scattered Trees Mosaic with WL1 Hedgerow/WL2 Treeline (H5)

WL1 Hedgerows/WL2 Treelines

There are five hedgerows/treelines within the site. These are mostly hedgerows where the hedge trees have grown to maturity. The hedges are described individually as below:

H1 – This hedge is at the western boundary of the site and forms a thick hedgerow/treeline without any gaps. The predominate species are Elder *Sambucus nigra* and English elm *Ulmus procera,* with Bramble *Rubus fruiticosus agg.* and Nettle *Urtica dioica.*

H2 – This hedgerow/treeline runs to the south of the site and has a number of mature Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* used as bats roosts in the active season (See Bat Survey, RESS Ltd., 2024). Other species present are Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa,* Elder *Sambucus nigra,* Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna,* with Bramble *Rubus fruiticosus agg.* and Dog rose *Rosa canina.*

H3 – This hedgerow bisects F1 and F2 and is not an entire boundary as it has numerous gaps and the southern section is missing completely. There are not many trees in this boundary apart from some Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna,* with predominantly Bramble *Rubus fruiticosus agg.* and Ivy *Hedera helix.* Overall, this habitat is of poor quality.

H4 – This boundary borders the lane at the northern boundary of the site and is entire with Cherry *Prunus avium,* Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna,* with Privet *Ligustrum vulgare,* Bramble *Rubus fruiticosus agg.* and Dog rose *Rosa canina.*

H5 – This hedgerow/treeline is on the eastern boundary of the site and is Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna,* with Bramble *Rubus fruiticosus agg.,* Dog rose *Rosa canina* and Ivy *Hedera helix* (Figure 10).

WL2 Treeline

H6 – This is a short section of a WL2 Treeline of Lawson's Cypress *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana* around the house in the northern section of the site.

BL3 Buildings and Artificial Surfaces

There is an open sided barn, that it is mostly overgrown with Bramble *Rubus fruiticosus agg.* There were no bats present roosting in this barn and due to its open sides, it is not suitable as a hibernaculum either.

There were no invasive species of Union Concern identified on the site at the time of either of the surveys.

Fauna

Avifauna

Within the overall site the species of birds present, either heard or seen were Blackbird *Tardus merula,* Bullfinch *Pyrrhula Pyrrhula*, Blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*, Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis,* Great tit *Parus major,* House sparrow *Passer domesticus*, Robin *Erithacus rubecula,* Rook *Corvus frugilegus*, Song thrush *Turdus philomelos* and Wren *Troglodytes troglodytes.* There were no overwintering birds on the site at the time of the survey nor the presence of any ground nesting birds at the time of the survey.

Mammals

No mammals were recorded at the time of surveying, but small mammals are likely to be found on the site such as Shrew *Sorex spp.* and Rat *Rattus rattus.* Considering that all habitats within the site boundary are well-represented elsewhere in the county and with more superior diversity, they are considered to be of Negligible importance for these taxa.

No evidence of Otter was recorded (holts, sprint or tracks) on the site at the time of surveying. However their use of the site is unlikely as there is no standing or flowing water on the site.

No Badger setts were present at the time of the survey.

Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and Leisler's Bat *Nyctalus leisleri* were identified roosting in large trees in H2 hedgerow/treeline and using the overall site for foraging during the dusk and dawn survey on the 4th and 5th of October 2024 (RESS Ltd., 2024).

Reptiles and Amphibians

There was no evidence, at the time of surveying, of reptiles and amphibians, especially as there are no areas of permanent flowing or standing water.

Invertebrates

The habitats within the development site are common in urban landscapes in Ireland, so the site is considered to be of Negligible importance for invertebrates.

4.2 Identification of Important Ecological Features

Based on the desk-based survey and walkover surveys, Table 3 details a summary of ecological features on the development site together with their importance and legal/conservation status and duration of impact.

Ecological Feature	Valuation	Legal Status *	Important Feature?
GS1 Neutral Grassland	Negligible	-	No, although some species diversity in the ground flora
GS1 Neutral Grassland/WD5 Scattered Trees Mosaic	Negligible	-	No, although some species diversity in the ground flora, but immature trees
WS1 Scrub	Negligible	-	Some value as food source for birds and insects
WL1 Hedgerows/WL2 Treelines	High local	-	Value as food source and birds, bats and insects. Valuable as wildlife corridors
WL2 Treeline	Negligible	-	Some value as food source and nesting for birds and insects, although non-native coniferous species.
Birds	Negligible	Wildlife Act (WA)*	No
Terrestrial Mammals	High local and national	Wildlife Act (WA)*/EU Habitats Directive	Yes, bat species present on the site
Reptiles and Amphibians	Negligible	Wildlife Act (WA)*	No
Invertebrates	Negligible	-	No

Table 3 Assessment of ecological features within the site (CIEEM 2018) * Wildlife [Amendment] Act 2000.

Some of the hedgerow/treelines are considered important features as a valuable habitat for birds, bats for foraging and roosting. Although it is worth noting that there are no, notable vegetation species present in this habitat, it is its potential as a food source and linear wildlife corridor that gives rise to their value.

5.0 Predicted Impacts of the Proposed Development

Designated Sites

As identified in the Stage 1 Screening Report there were potential source-pathways for impact on the receptors of the European Sites via groundwater therefore Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC was 'screened in'.

Although the habitats as identified in Table 3 are mostly valued as negligible, mitigating measures are required to ensure that any species occupying these habitats are protected in line with the EC Nature Restoration Law, and retained, where possible. The potential impacts and their nature are summarised in Table 4.

Avifauna

Disturbance of nesting birds and or breeding fauna may occur during the removal of scrub and overgrown vegetation. If site clearance works are carried out during the bird nesting season (between March and August, inclusive), it is possible that active nests could be destroyed. The killing of any birds, or the disturbance of their nesting sites, would constitute an offence under the Wildlife Act 2000 (as amended). Therefore, removal of any trees, scrub or treeline encroachment should be completed outside of this time period.

Habitats

Four of the habitats will be lost/partially as a result of the development, such as the neutral grassland, scattered tees, scrub and hedgerows/treelines. The latter two habitats cover a minimal area, but the scrub and hedgerows/treelines do provide vegetation for nesting birds, mammals and invertebrates and if lost, then may result in the loss of species in the area, unless compensatory measures are implemented.

Bats

An assessment was carried out during the EcIA site survey on 4th and 5th of October 2024 for the suitability of habitats onsite to support bat roosting, foraging and commuting. All trees on site were inspected in accordance with guidance (Collins, 2023).

During the ecological site survey, the scattered trees on or adjacent to the neutral grassland were surveyed for their suitability as bat roosts and it was deemed unlikely that any were suitable due to their juvenile age.

According to best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023) bat surveys are required when potential roosing features are present and such roosting features are to be interfered with and as thus a dusk and dawn survey was completed, with 3 species identified as using the site for roosting and foraging. Further details are available in the accompanying bat report.

All measures in relation to bats within the development site are precautionary/enhancement measures.

Therefore, any mature tree removal or undergrowth cutting back should take place under the direction of a derogation licence from the NPWS*. In addition, 'Bat-sensitive lighting' should be implemented for this development and during construction all lighting should be directed away from the treelines and watercourses.

*A derogation licence has been granted by the NPWS for the removal of Ash trees T22, T23 and T24 in hedgerow/treeline H2 (Charles McCorkell Arboricultural Consultancy, 2025). However following the finalisation of plans only T24 has been removed. T22 and T23 have been pollarded to prolong the life of these trees, in accordance with the derogation licence (Appendix ii).

Ecological Feature	Nature of Impact	Duration & Likelihood	Mitigation Measures
GS1 Neutral Grassland	Removal of this habitat	Permanent likely	None
GS1 Neutral Grassland/WD5 Scattered Trees Mosaic	Removal of this habitat	Permanent likely	Removal of vegetation during appropriate time
WS1 Scrub	Removal of this habitat	Permanent likely	Removal of vegetation during appropriate time
WL1 Hedgerows/WL2 Treelines	Vegetation cutting back/Tree removal. H3 and H4 will be removed. A small portion of H2 will be removed along with a mature Ash tree T24 to enable road linkage to the south and a small section of H1.	Short term likely Permanent likely	H1, H2, H6 will generally remain untouched apart from the removal of a small section of H2 and H1 for connection to adjacent development.
WL2 Treeline	None	None	This habitat will remain undisturbed
Avifauna	Vegetation cutting back/Tree removal	Short term likely	Removal of vegetation during appropriate time
Bats	Removal of 1 tree in H2	Short term likely	Removal of vegetation during appropriate time as per derogation licence
Terrestrial mammals	Vegetation cutting back	Short term likely	Removal of vegetation during appropriate time
Reptiles and amphibians	None	None	None
Invertebrates	Vegetation cutting back/Tree removal	Short term likely	Removal of vegetation during appropriate time within the development

Table 4 Summary of potential impacts and mitigation measures

6.0 Proposed Mitigation and Compensatory Measures

Avifauna

Birds should be protected during site clearance works as under Section 22 of the Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended 2000), it is an offence to kill or injure a protected bird, or to disturb their nests. Most birds nest between March and August (inclusive), so it is strongly recommended that all scrub removal, tree removal, cutting back of vegetation and site clearance works are carried out between September and February (inclusive), i.e., outside the nesting season.

If this is not possible, an ecologist will survey the affected areas in advance in order to assess whether any breeding birds are present. If any are encountered, vegetation clearance will be delayed breeding has been completed, i.e., after chicks have fledged and a nest has been abandoned.

To minimise disturbance of birds and to avoid the nesting season, the optimal time for ground clearance works to take place would be between 1st September and 28th February.

Any tree removal or tree surgery works should take place between 1st September until the 28th of February to minimise impact on bird and bat species, unless otherwise stated by the NPWS Derogation Licence (Appendix ii).

Provision of 'Bat-sensitive lighting'

Bats are highly sensitive to artificial lighting and may be displaced from the site if lights are particularly intense. However, if 'bat-sensitive' lighting techniques are incorporated into the lighting plan, bats should continue to use the site. Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Guidance Note GN08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting At Night and Bat Conservation Ireland (2010) Bats & Lighting Guidance Notes for: Planners, engineers, architects and developers were adhered to by the lighting engineers.

It has been noted that the proposed lighting poles are at the optimum height for bats at 6m and fitted with directional hoods and/or luminaires to direct the light onto targeted areas and to prevent unnecessary light-spill (Thorlux Lighting, 2021).

In addition, there are numerous trees and a native hedgerow to be planted adjacent to the apartment blocks that will help screen any light

spillage into the and enable bats to continue to use the site for foraging.

All works are to be completed during daylight hours so as to minimise disruption to nocturnal animals.

These measures will apply both to temporary lighting during the construction of the proposed development, and to permanent lighting during the operation of the development.

Habitats

The individual habitats are discussed in more detail in Sections 6.1 and 6.2, however as there will be site clearance as a result of this development, it is imperative that the removal of vegetation impact as little as possible on any fauna occupying the habitats on site and therefore site clearance works should take place between 1st September and 28th February, outside of the majority of breeding seasons for mammals and other taxa. In addition, soil from site clearance should be retained and re-used in the landscaped areas to promote the naturalisation of the grassed areas and encourage locally native species as detailed in the habitat survey in Section 4.1.

Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS)

As mentioned above the proposed SuDS measures include:

- A green/blue roof on each apartment block and the creche
- Permeable paving in driveways and parking areas
- Soakaway in central green area
- Rain butts
- Tree pits
- Bio-retention areas
- Rain gardens
- Vegetated detention basins x 3
- Silt traps and hydrocarbon interceptors

The purpose of SuDs measures is to mimic natural drainage, which is now reduced due to the creation of man-made surfaces in the form of buildings, impermeable footpaths and roadways as part of the development. SuDS measures will therefore assist with the slowing down of runoff, thus reducing the potential for flooding. As a result of the SuDS measures, all surface water will be contained within the site.

Construction Mitigation Measures

As the movement around the site will involve the use of large construction vehicles, then care should be taken with re-fuelling and dust suppression on the site as detailed in the NIS (RESS Ltd., 2025) and CEMP (Montane Developments Ltd.,2025).

Good site management will assist with the maintenance of the quality of any water flowing from the site during storms and rainfall etc as detailed in the CEMP under 'Pollution Prevention' and 'Sediment and Run-off Control' (Montane Developments Ltd., 2025).

Any cutting back or removal of any trees or scrub should be carried out outside of the nesting season (1st March – 31st August).

The trees that require removal or tree work, that contain bat roosts as identified in the accompanying bat survey (RESS Ltd., 2025) have been granted a derogation licence from the NPWS (Appendix ii). All works will be carried out as specified in the derogation licence.

Construction site works should take place only during daylight hours to minimise nocturnal animal activities and any lighting should be directed away from the drainage ditch and rivers where bats may be foraging. Further details on the protection of the ecology are also outlined in the CEMP on (Montane Developments Ltd., 2025).

To further ensure that the potential impact is reduced the following best practice measures will be implemented during the construction phase.

Mitigation Measure	**How Measure Will Avoid/Reduce Adverse Effects**	**Implementation of Mitigation Measure and Likely Success**	**Monitoring scheme to prevent mitigation failure**
Timing of the clearance works - 1st September – 28th February Should any active nests be encountered during the development work, then work will be ceased immediately, and the site inspected by an ecologist.	The clearance of the site should not take place during the spring or summer so as to avoid disruption to any nesting birds on the site. Should any active nests be encountered during the development work, then work will be stopped immediately, and the site visited by an ecologist.	Mitigation measure will be implemented by the Client	The Client will ensure that a suitably qualified person will be appointed by the Client to ensure that the CEMP is finalised prior to the development works and the measures detailed in the CEMP and this document implemented for the duration of the construction phase*.
All works to be carried out during daylight hours	Avoidance of disturbance to any nocturnal animal activities	Mitigation measure will be implemented by the Client	

Removal of any construction material shall take place each day with no accumulation of material to take place on the site	Avoidance of any waste material remaining within the adjacent habitat	Mitigation measures will be implemented by the Client	
No soil shall be imported from outside of the site.	This will prevent the colonisation of species not native to the site	Mitigation measures will be implemented by the Client	
All waste generated on site must be removed on a daily basis and recycled where appropriate	This will ensure that no waste is blown into nearby habitats or aquatic habitats	Mitigation measures will be implemented by the Client	

Table 5 Site specific mitigation measures

* As mentioned in the CEMP (Montane Developments Ltd., 2025) the contractor will assign a member of the site staff as the environmental officer with the responsibility for ensuring the environmental measures prescribed are adhered to.

Following completion of the works, the ecologist will complete a final audit report to show how the works complied with the environmental provisions described in this document.

This audit report may be forwarded to Kildare CC for their records if required.

6.1 Biodiversity Net Loss/Net Gain

Table 6 details the habitats that will be lost and the compensation measures that will be put in place as part of the proposed development. These were identified within the area occupied in the red line boundary for the proposed development.

Habitat Classification	**Component of the site**	**Compensation measure**	**Overall net gain or net loss**
GS1 Neutral Grassland	Main site component, relatively low value for nature conservation	Wildflower meadow green areas where the existing seed bank will be utilised to provide naturalised grassland that will be enhanced with the seeding of native wildflower species and planted with native trees.	Although reduction in habitat area, the biodiversity potential is greater than the existing habitat, therefore net gain in biodiversity

		Grassland areas to be managed with differential mowing.	
WD5 Scattered Trees	These will be removed	Mature native or pollinator friendly trees will be planted as part of the landscaping plan	No net loss
WS1 Scrub	This habitat will be lost as a result of the development	However, there will be habitat creation for SuDS and additional tree planting as part of the landscaping	No net loss
WL1/WL2 Hedgerows/ Treelines	H3 and H4. Small sections will be removed in H1 and H2 to provided road linkage	Hedgerow planting within the development of native species	No net loss (Approximately 120m of hedgerow/treeline removal)
WL2 Treeline	This habitat will remain untouched		No net loss
Habitat Creation Measures			
	Compensation measure		**Net loss/Net gain**
Bio-retention areas	These will be planted with native and or pollinator friendly species		Net gain
Green/blue roofs	These will be planted with native *Sedum spp*		Net gain
New hedgerows	These will be planted with native species and compensate for any hedgerows lost		Net gain 352m planted
Standard trees	These will be planted with native/pollinator friendly species planted within the development. They will compensate for some of the tees lost in hedgerows, but overall number greater than those to be removed.		Net gain
Detention basins	These will be native species suitable for damp/wet conditions		Net gain

Table 6 Habitat evaluation of net loss/net gain and compensation measures

Overall, although there is reduction in the area of habitats, the planned landscaping including the SuDS measures aim to improve the overall biodiversity by species rich habitat creation utilising native species planting and planting for pollinators and management of grassland with differential mowing. Therefore, the proposed development will provide an increase in biodiversity and net gain in the conservation value of the proposed habitats to be created due to the landscaping within the development.

6.2 Compensatory measures

The Landscape Plan (Landmark Design & Consultancy Ltd., 2025) and Biodiversity Action Plan (RESS Ltd., 2025) submitted with the planning application detail the proposals for green areas and planting. All trees in the green areas will be planted as standards and native and/or pollinator friendly species.

The grassed areas will utilise soil retained from the site to encourage naturalisation and deferential mowing will be used to encourage wildflower growth from the seed bank, which will provide a valuable habitat for pollinators, birds and other fauna. Any additional seeding will be with Irish grown, native species.

Any additional planting in flower beds will be with native and/or pollinator friendly species.

There will be a newly planted hedgerow with native species

In addition, there will be new habitats as part of the SuDS measures such as green roof, bioretention areas and detention basins.

Thus, overall, there will be no net biodiversity loss as a result of the proposed development due to the biodiversity measures as a result of the landscaping of the finished development, but there will be an overall net gain for biodiversity.

7.0 Residual Impacts

Tree removal, cutting back of vegetation or scrub, and other site clearance works will take place outside the season of peak nesting activity in birds and roosting for bats, or the area will be surveyed by an ecologist to confirm that no protected fauna are present. As a result, there will be no impact on nesting birds and roosting bats, and no legal offence under the Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended)/EU legislation.

Bat-sensitive lighting will be utilised throughout construction.

Site based measures during the construction phase will ensure that there is not surface runoff into nearby drains or groundwater of particulate matter or other pollutants.

Landscaped areas have been designed for biodiversity, and thus will compensate for the loss of habitats, resulting in biodiversity net gain.

Subject to the successful implementation of these measures, it can be concluded that the proposed development will not cause any significant negative impacts on the habitats, legally protected species, designated sites, or any other features of ecological importance.

This assessment has been undertaken on the basis of the best scientific knowledge in the field and the Precautionary Principle.

Dr Jane Russell-O'Connor PhD, P.G.C.E, BSc.
Russell Environmental and Sustainability Services Limited

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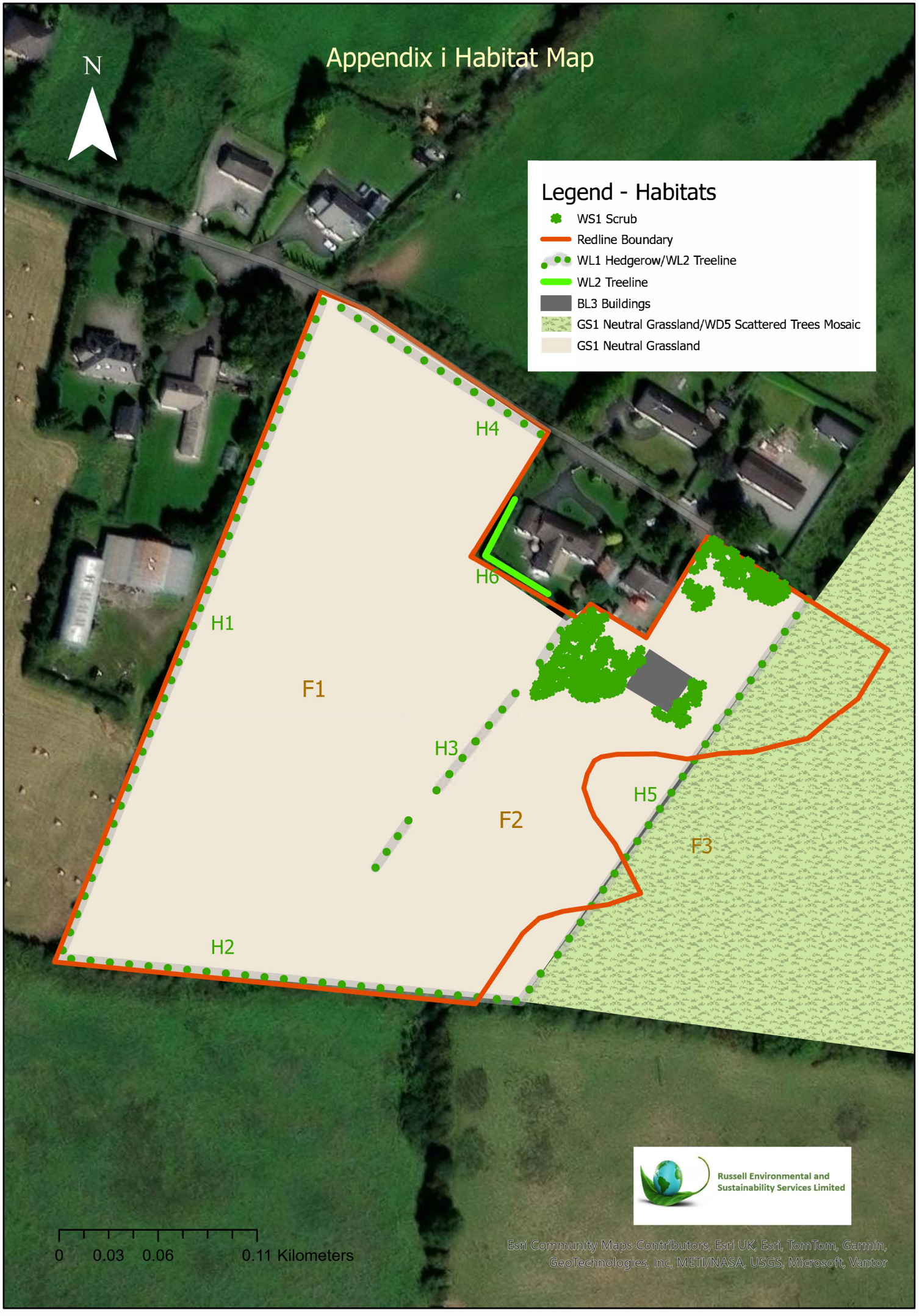
Appendices


Appendix i Habitat Map
N
Legend - Habitats
WS1 Scrub
Redline Boundary
WL1 Hedgerow/WL2 Treeline
WL2 Treeline
BL3 Buildings
GS1 Neutral Grassland/WD5 Scattered Trees Mosaic
GS1 Neutral Grassland
H1
H2
H3
H4
H5
H6
F1
F2
F3
0 0.03 0.06 0.11 Kilometers
Russell Environmental and Sustainability Services Limited
Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri UK, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Microsoft, Vantor

Appendix ii

Derogation Number
DER-BAT-2025-248

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (BIRDS AND NATURAL HABITATS) REGULATIONS, 2011 (S.I. No 477 of 2011)

DEROGATION

Granted under Regulation 54 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, hereinafter referred to as "the Habitats Regulations".

The Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, in exercise of the powers conferred on him by Regulation 54 of the Habitats Regulations hereby grants to **Ross Connolly** of **Maynooth Montane Limited, Unit J1, Maynooth Business Campus, Maynooth, County Kildare, W23 D343** a derogation. It is stated that this derogation is issued:

A. In the interests of public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment
B. As there is no satisfactory alternative, and the action authorised by this derogation will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of **bats** referred to below at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

This derogation authorises the following:

1. Roost disturbance
2. Actions authorised within the derogation

The derogation is issued in respect of the following **bat species**:

- **Common Pipistrelle** **Pipistrellus Pipistrellus**
- **Soprano Pipistrelle** **Pipistrellus Pygmaeus**

Terms and Conditions

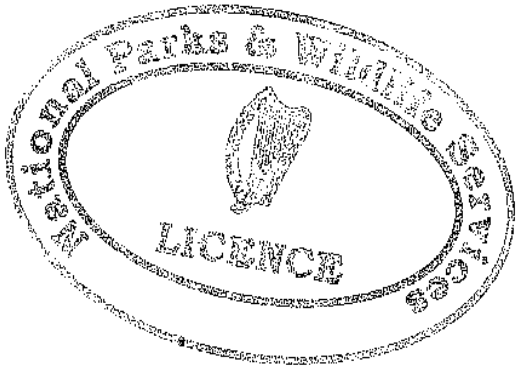
1. This derogation is granted solely to allow the activities specified in connection with the works located at **Railpark, Parklands, Maynooth, County Kildare**, for **Ross Connolly.**
2. All activities authorised by this derogation, and all equipment used in connection herewith, shall be carried out, constructed and maintained (as the case may be) so as to avoid unnecessary injury or distress to any species of **BAT**. Anything done other than in accordance with the terms of this derogation may constitute an offence
3. This derogation may be modified or revoked, for stated reasons, at any time.
4. The mitigation measures outlined in the application report (**Bat Survey Railpark**), together with any changes or clarification agreed in correspondence between NPWS and the agent or applicant, are to be carried out. Strict adherence must be paid to all the proposed measures in the application.
5. The actions which this derogation authorise shall be completed between **26th May – 31st December 2025, inclusive.**
6. The works will be supervised by bat ecologist: **Jane Russell-O'Connor.**
7. Bat boxes erected under the mitigation measures are to be placed in advance of the tree felling - providing the trees in question are felled in sections with limbs lowered carefully to the ground and all elements left to lie on the ground for at least 24 hours before clearing.
8. If this derogation addresses works that are subject of a planning application, no such works permitted under this derogation can occur until planning permission is granted.
9. If this derogation expires prior to works permitted under this derogation commencing, a new application must be sought in advance, including the provision of any updated data or reports.
10. This derogation shall be produced for inspection on a request being made on that behalf by a member of An Garda Síochána or an authorised NPWS officer appointed under Regulation 4 of the Habitats Regulations.
11. The local **NPWS Regional Manager,** roy.thompson@npws.gov.ie**,** must be contacted prior to the commencement of any activity, and if bats are detected on site during the course of the work, under the terms of this derogation.
12. On completion of the actions which this derogation authorises, all recordings of bat species affected will be made using the standardised data form provided below and must be submitted to the NPWS **within four weeks of the expiry date of this licence**. Included with the below returns form, a report will also be submitted to wildlife.reports@npws.gov.ie detailing results of works and success of mitigation. **Both documents must be submitted to constitute a derogation return.**

For the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage

(an officer authorised by the Minister to sign on his behalf)

26 May 2025

Any query in relation to this derogation should be sent to reg54derogations@npws.gov.ie



Article 16 (Habitats Directive) - Returns Form

This returns form is for use in respect of:

Regulation 54 – Derogation to protect wild fauna and conserving natural habitats

1st January to 31st December 2025, inclusive

Derogation Number: DER-BAT-2025-248
Derogation Holder: Ross Connolly

Species (English & Scientific)	No. of Individuals Affected	No. of Breeding Places	No. of Resting Places

Nil Return ☐

Derogation Holder Signature: _____ Date: _____

Returns must be emailed to the following email address:

wildlife.reports@npws.gov.ie