



Appropriate Assessment (Screening)

Draft Claremorris Local Area Plan 2012 – 2018

**In accordance with Articles 6(3) & (4) of the Habitats Directive
92/43/EEC & Part XAB of the Planning & Development Acts
2000-2010**

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1.1 Introduction

The Draft Claremorris Local Area Plan is a land use plan intended to provide a positive framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town for the next six years.

A Local Area Plan is one of the land use plans prepared in a hierarchy of land use plans including the National Spatial Strategy 2000 - 2020, the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022 for the West Region and the Mayo County Development Plan 2008 - 2014. The LAP strategy is required to be consistent with the policies and objectives of these strategic actions. In turn, any programmes or projects which may take place in Claremorris will have to be consistent with the LAP.

Mayo County Council is required to undertake Appropriate Assessment Screening on the Draft Claremorris Local Area Plan to fulfil the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC and Part XAB of the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2010 which requires the planning authority to carry out a screening for appropriate assessment of a draft land use plan *“to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge if the plan, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on any European site”*.

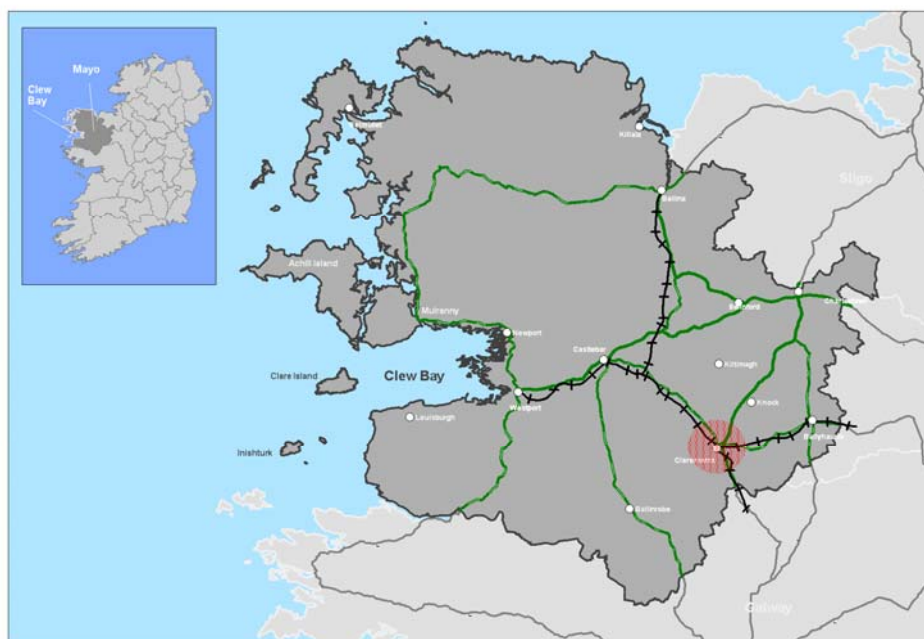


Figure 1 – Claremorris in context

1.2 The Purpose of Appropriate Assessment (AA)

Appropriate Assessment (AA) is an evaluation of the potential impacts of a plan or project on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site(s), and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects. Principally, the purpose of AA is to identify the possible effects of implementing a Plan or Project on the conservation status of designated Natura 2000 sites within the Plan or Project area. Directive 92/43/EEC *on the conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna* – the ‘Habitats Directive’ provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of interest to the EU in a favourable condition.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states *‘Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public’*.

Article 6 (4) states *‘if, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the Nature 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted’*.

1.3 Overview of Appropriate Assessment (AA) Process

The European Commission, as well as the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government have both published methodological guidance, both of which recommend a four stage approach in carrying out the entire Appropriate Assessment process as follows:

Stage 1 – Screening:

Determines whether a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have an impact on a Natura 2000 site, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant;

Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment:

Considers the impact of the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites of the project or plan either alone or in combination with other plans or projects with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, it assesses the potential mitigation of those impacts;

Stage 3 – Assessment of Alternative Solutions:

Examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites;

Stage 4 – Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest:

Assesses compensatory measures where in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the plan or project should proceed.

Each stage determines whether the next stage in the process is required. If for example, it is concluded that at the end of the Stage One are that there will be no significant impacts on the Natura 2000 site, there is no requirement to proceed further.

1.4 Appropriate Assessment Screening – The Process involved

In accordance with European Commission and Irish Government guidance Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment process is Screening which comprises four steps:

- Determining whether the project or plan is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the Natura 2000 site.
- Describing the project or plan and the description and characterisation of other projects or plans that in combination have the potential for having significant effects on the Natura 2000 site(s).
- Characteristics of the site – identifying the potential effects on the Natura 2000 site(s).
- Assessment of the Significance – assessing the significance of any effects on the Natura 2000 site.

1.5 Sources/References

In preparation of this Appropriate Assessment Screening regard has been had to the following documents:

- National Parks & Wildlife Service (2008) *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland*
- Part XAB of the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2010.
- Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government – *Appropriate Assessment of Plans & Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*.
- European Commission (2000) *Managing Natura 2000 Sites. The provision of Article 6, of the 'Habitats' directive 92/43/EEC*
- European Commission (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 92/443/EEC*.
- Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*
- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) (2007): *The Appropriate Assessment of Spatial Plans in England – A Guide to why, when and how to do it*
- Scott Wilson/Levet-Terivel/Treweek Environmental Consultants/Land Use Consultants(September 2006) *Appropriate Assessment of Plans*

- Scottish Natural Heritage(January 2006) *Guidance for Competent Authorities when dealing with proposals affecting SAC freshwater sites*
- Scottish Executive Development Department (May 2006) *Assessing Development Plans in Terms of Need for Appropriate Assessment – Interim Guidance.*
- Dúchas, The Heritage Service 1998/ J.D Reynolds; Irish Wildlife Manuals No.1: *Conservation Management of the White-Clawed Crayfish*

• **Other websites consulted:**

- National Parks & Wildlife Service (Internet) Available from www.npws.ie
- EU Water Framework Directive (Internet) Available from www.wfdireland.ie
- Western River Basin District Project (Internet) Available from <http://www.wrbd.ie/>
- Environmental Protection Agency (Internet) Available from www.epa.ie

2.1 Claremorris Local Area Plan Boundary and Natura 2000 network

There are presently no Natura 2000 sites (European Sites) within the proposed Local Area Plan boundary. Figure 2 illustrates the Natura 2000 sites in closest proximity to Plan boundary, and those within 15km are outlined in the table below. Table 1 & 2 describe the relevant sites.

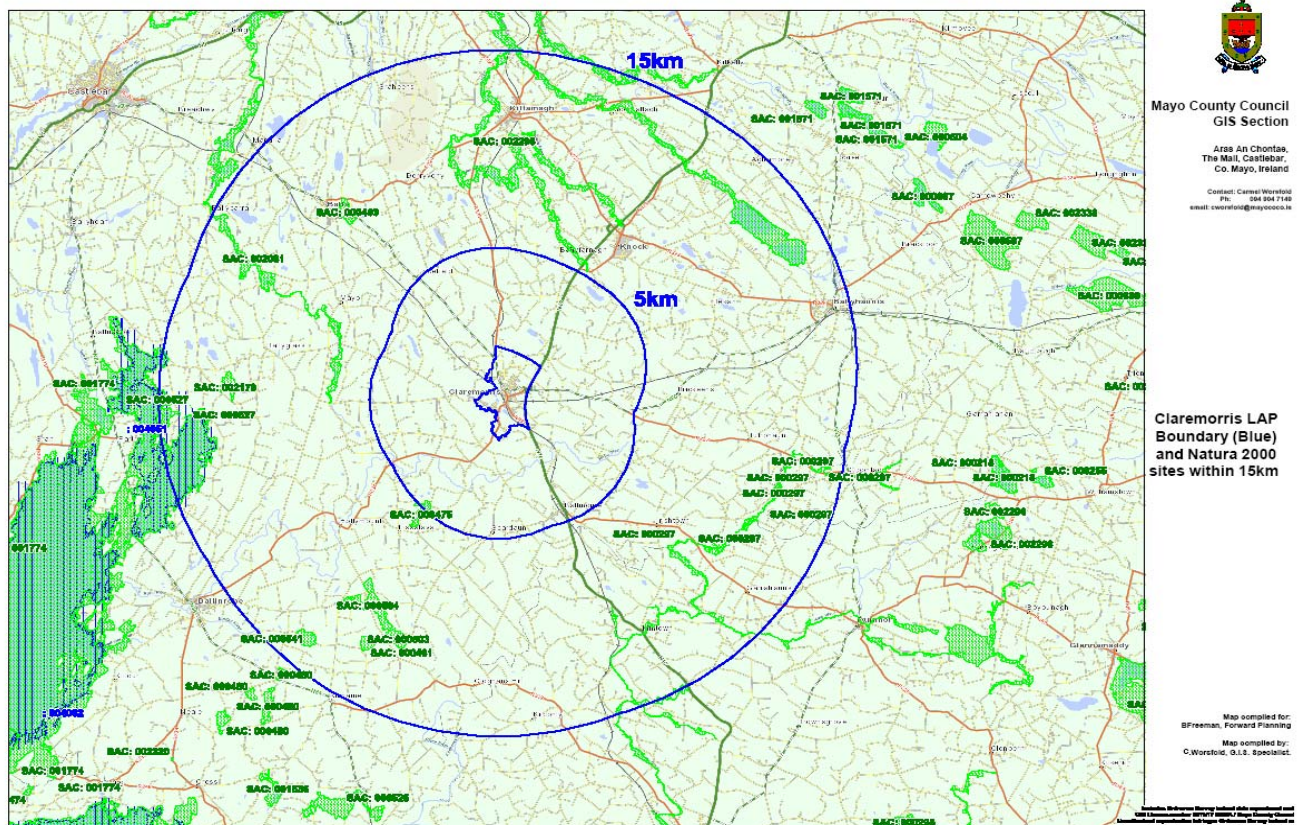


Figure 2 - Claremorris Local Area Plan Boundary and Natura 2000 network – Sites with 5km and 15km

2.2 Natura 2000 Site Conservation Objectives

Favorable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

Favorable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis

Table 2.1 - SACs within the 15km Study Area, Qualifying Interests and Threats

Site Code 000297	Site Name Lough Corrib SAC			
Site Quality & Importance ¹ The site is of immense importance for the occurrence of scarce and specialised habitats, as well as animal and plant species. Lough Corrib is the second largest oligotrophic lake in the country and is a superb example of a hardwater system. The site holds 14 Annex I habitats, 6 of these are priority Annex I habitats of the EU Habitats Directive, 5 Red Data Book plant species, also <i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i> and <i>Lutra lutra</i> , and a rare chironomid <i>Corynorera ambigua</i> , good populations of <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> , <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> , <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> and <i>Lampetra planeri</i> . The site also supports an important population of <i>Salmo salar</i> . Important for wintering and breeding birds with <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i> , <i>Sterna hirundo</i> and <i>Sterna paradisea</i> .				
		Habitat & Species	Current threats to qualifying interests	Specific threats to site ²
		Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp.	Threat from nutrient enrichment in these lowland lakes arising from intensification of agriculture and urban developments.	Uncontrolled discharge of sewage, seasonal disturbance from shooting and fishing activities may impact on bird usage. Suburbanisation and holiday home developments on the shores may also affect water quality. Continued peat cutting poses a threat.
		Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae)	Nutrient enrichment from agricultural practices, including overgrazing and excessive fertilisation, afforestation and waste water from housing developments in rural areas. Lakes may also be negatively affected by the introduction of invasive alien species, and their utilisation for an increasing number of sport and leisure activities. While the range and area of this habitat are stable, significant areas are suffering from, or are at risk	

¹ Source – NPWS site standard data form (same source for all sites hereunder)

² Source – NPWS site standard data form (same source for all sites hereunder)

			from nutrient enrichment.	
		Active raised bogs	Ongoing deterioration of the hydrological conditions of raised bogs at current rates caused by peat cutting, drainage, forestry and burning severely threatens the viability of the habitat at most locations	
		Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles	Clearance, invasive alien species, grazing	
		<i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>)	Agricultural intensification over the past century, drainage and more recently, abandonment of pastoral systems, which contributes to rank vegetation and scrub encroachment, all lead to the loss of some typical flora and to a reduction in the area of the habitat.	
		Alkaline fens	peat mining, draining for cropland, infilling, and fertiliser pollution and eutrophication.	
		Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i>	drainage, land reclamation, peat cutting and forestry	
		Limestone pavements	Quarrying and reclamation for agriculture. Reduced farming activity is causing scrub to spread over some areas, resulting in the loss of some of the typical flora. Intensive agriculture and domestic/municipal waste sources in the vicinity of pavement may threaten groundwater.	
		Semi-natural dry grasslands	abandonment of traditional agricultural practices	

		and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) (*important orchid sites)	on these marginal lands and reclamation.	
		Bog woodland	drainage, peat cutting, burning and development;	
		Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation	eutrophication, overgrazing, excessive fertilisation, afforestation and the introduction of invasive alien species	
		Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)	land reclamation, turf cutting, and drainage	
		Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration	Ongoing deterioration of the hydrological conditions of raised bogs at current rates caused by peat cutting, drainage, forestry and burning severely threatens the viability of the habitat at most locations	
		Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion	None	
		<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>	Channel maintenance and Weirs	
		<i>Salmo salar</i>	Sea – diseases, predation, parasites and marine pollution; River - reduced marine survival (as a result of climate change), poor river water quality (resulting from factors such as inadequate sewage treatment, agricultural enrichment, acidification, erosion and siltation), forestry-related pressures and over-fishing.	

		<i>Lampetra planeri</i>		Habitat degradation from drainage works within Corrib Catchment.
		<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	Loss of suitable summer and winter roosting sites due to the deterioration / renovation of derelict buildings, loss of commuting routes linking roosts to foraging sites, and loss of suitable foraging sites are the major threats to this species.	
		<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Main threats to the otter are road kill, smaller number are killed in fishing nets and lobster pots; localised reduction in otter habitat quality, due mainly to water pollution and clearance of riparian vegetation	
		<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	the introduction of diseases transmitted by introduced American crayfish, habitat degradation and water quality deterioration	
		<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	poor substrate quality due to increased growth of algal and macrophyte vegetation as a result of severe nutrient enrichment, as well as physical siltation	
		<i>Najas flexilis</i>	eutrophication, due to inputs from domestic sources, agricultural use of fertilisers and manure spreading. The spread of and competition from invasive species including <i>Lagarosiphon major</i> may be detrimental to this species.	<i>Najas flexilis</i> is affected by water turbidity and is often out-competed by the invasive <i>Lagarosiphon major</i> , both being tall macrophytes inhabiting deep waters.
		<i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i>	None	

Site Code 000461	Site Name Ardkill Turlough SAC			
Site Quality & Importance The site is in good condition with a high level of vegetation diversity for its small size. It is an unusual turlough because of its great range of water levels and for the exposure of limestone cliff at its edge. It is possibly unique in Mayo.				
		Habitat & Species	Current threats to qualifying interests Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing regimes are the main threats to turlough habitats in Ireland.	Specific threats to site The condition of the ground water gives some cause for concern as the basin has two farms beside it, one highly intensive for the region.
Site Code 000463	Site Name Balla Turlough SAC			
Site Quality & Importance The site is unusual in having a peat dome which shows a possible route for the formation of a raised bog. The vegetation here includes <i>Stellaria palustris</i> which is more often a fen plant and is seldom found in turloughs. It also has a small area of the peculiar, and, more usually calcifuge, vegetation associated with oligotrophic marl deposits.				
		Habitat & Species	Current threats to qualifying interests Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing regimes are the main threats to turlough habitats in Ireland.	Specific threats to site Some grazing occurs on site and there is the possibility of fertilizer use on the peat dome. Some fencing and drains dug recently suggest intensification.
Site Code 00475	Site Name Carrowkeel Turlough SAC			
Site Quality & Importance Carrowkeel has a high habitat diversity for such a small area, as well as clear zonation in its grassland vegetation. The northern scraw contains <i>Alisma lanceolatum</i> - the only turlough where it is known to occur (in the west, in Ireland or in Europe), while the lake has some nesting waterfowl. Overall the site differs markedly from adjacent turloughs. Arterial drainage in the Robe (1.9 km distant) seems to have had very little impact on this site.				

		Habitat & Species Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration	Current threats to qualifying interests Ongoing deterioration of the hydrological conditions of raised bogs at current rates caused by peat cutting, drainage, forestry and burning severely threatens the viability of the habitat at most locations.	Specific threats to site The site is likely to be suffering from eutrophication (from an adjacent farm and domestic sources) with a consequent change in vegetation. Grazing is also locally intensive.
Site Code 00503	Site Name Greaghans Turlough SAC			
Site Quality & Importance The site is somewhat uniform because of the topography but what vegetation it has is well developed. There is a relatively large stand of wet annual plants which is otherwise scarce in the locality. Wintering whooper swans add significantly to its value.				
		Habitat & Species	Current threats to qualifying interests Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing regimes are the main threats to turlough habitats in Ireland.	Specific Threats to Site Some of the inflows to the site are polluted so eutrophication is a significant threat to the natural ecology. The source would seem to be agricultural. The Robe River has been drained arterially though impacts to this site are not obvious.
Site Code 000504	Site Name Kilglassan/Caheravoostia Turlough Complex SAC			
Site Quality & Importance Kilglassan is large and has considerable habitat diversity. For a turlough it is unusual in its large amount of wetland vegetation that occurs at the base. The occurrence of <i>Oenanthe fistulosa</i> is unusual in a turlough and the site is also of value for breeding waders.				

		Habitat & Species	Current threats to qualifying interests	Specific Threats to Site
			Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing regimes are the main threats to turlough habitats in Ireland.	Some adverse impacts have been caused by agricultural intensification in the surrounding area and there is a possibility of future site drainage. The habitat is fairly eutrophic so that pollution of the ground water does not pose a significant ecological threat.
Site Code 000527	Site Name Moore Hall (Lough Carra) SAC			
Site Quality & Importance As more than 200 lesser horseshoe bats (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) use this site throughout the year as both a winter and summer site, it is a site of international importance. This is the largest known site for this species at its northern distribution limit in Europe.				
		Habitat & Species <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	Current threats to qualifying interests	Specific Threats to Site
			Loss of suitable summer and winter roosting sites due to the deterioration / renovation of derelict buildings, loss of commuting routes linking roosts to foraging sites, and loss of suitable foraging sites are the major threats to this species.	Grilles have been erected to protect the hibernation sites and repair work undertaken to conserve the breeding site. There is a low level of vandalism at present but this is not endangering the bats. The house has some tourist development potential which should be monitored closely. Commercial felling would negatively impact on the site.
Site Code 000541	Site Name Skealaghan Turlough SAC			
Site Quality & Importance Skealaghan is of considerable value because of the high level of diversity in flora and fauna (e.g. birds). The vegetation is well developed and, although controlled by grazing, is not significantly damaged by it. The site was rated 19th overall in an evaluation of major Irish turloughs in 1990.				

		Habitat & Species	Current threats to qualifying interests Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing regimes are the main threats to turlough habitats in Ireland.	Specific Threats to Site The site seems to be largely unaffected by intensive pastures at the western end but is obviously susceptible to eutrophication. It is one of five wetlands in a small area so bird disturbance by hunting is not likely to be significant.
Site Code 002081	Site Name Ballinafad SAC			
		Habitat & Species <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	Current threats to qualifying interests Loss of suitable summer and winter roosting sites due to the deterioration / renovation of derelict buildings, loss of commuting routes linking roosts to foraging sites, and loss of suitable foraging sites are the major threats to this species.	Specific Threats to Site The main threat facing this site is roof deterioration.
Site Code 002179	Site Name Towerhill House SAC			
Site Quality & Importance As more than 50 lesser horseshoe bats (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) hibernate in this site, it is a site of international importance. It is one of just a few known sites for this species in County Mayo - the most northerly distribution point in Europe for this species.				
		Habitat & Species <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	Current threats to qualifying interests Loss of suitable summer and winter roosting sites due to the deterioration / renovation of derelict buildings, loss of commuting routes linking roosts	Specific Threats to Site Public access to the bat roost is possible though difficult at the moment. The roost would benefit from the erection of a grille at

			to foraging sites, and loss of suitable foraging sites are the major threats to this species.	the entrance. The essential shelter belt around the roost may be felled for commercial reasons in the future.
Site Sode 002298	Site Name River Moy SAC			
Site Quality & Importance This extensive site contains good examples of the Annex 1 habitats active raised bog, degraded raised bog, Rhynchosporion vegetation, alkaline fen, alluvial woodland and old oak woodlands. The raised bog areas present constitute the most north-westerly examples of raised bog in Ireland, with the most important examples occurring at Derrynabrock and Tawnaghbeg. Alkaline fen is particularly well developed at Mannin and Island Lakes, an excellent example of old oak woodland is to be found just east of Pontoon along the shores of Loughs Conn and Cullin. This represents one of the largest stands of oak woodland in western Ireland. Water quality of the river channels is generally good and the majority is classified as unpolluted. The open waters of Loughs Conn and Cullin are moderately hard with relatively low colour and good transparency. Lough Conn, with a surface of 50km², is classified as a mesotrophic system, while Lough Cullin (surface of 11 km²) is classified as an oligotrophic system. The rivers and lakes support important populations of <i>Lutra lutra</i> , <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> , <i>Lampetra planeri</i> and <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> . The Moy system is one of the most important in Ireland for <i>Salmo salar</i> and is an internationally renowned fishery. It also has important stocks of <i>Salmo trutta</i> . Lough Conn supports a nationally important population of <i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i> and has regionally important numbers of <i>Cygnus cygnus</i> and <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> (all Annex I Bird Directive species). The lakes support a range of other wintering waterfowl, notably nationally important populations of <i>Aythya fuligula</i> and <i>Bucephala clangula</i> . Lough Conn / Cullin represents one of only four breeding sites in Ireland for <i>Melanitta nigra</i> , which in Ireland is at the south-west end of its European range. The population, however, has seriously declined in recent years. A range of mammals listed in the Red Data Book occur within the site, including <i>Martes martes</i> and <i>Myotis daubentonii</i> . At least five Red Data Book plant species occur, including <i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i> and <i>Spiranthes romanoffiana</i> .				
		Habitat & Species Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i>	Current threats to qualifying interests (See “Specific Threats to Site” opposite)	Specific Threats to Site Lough Conn is a mesotrophic system but with eutrophic tendencies in its North Basin. A doubling of phosphorus inputs for the period 1980 to 1990 caused a number of ecological changes such as an apparent increase in the littoral algal production and the possible extinction of <i>Salvelinus alpinus</i> . While conditions stabilised during the 1990s, the lake, as well as Lough Cullin and the river and its tributaries, are susceptible to water pollution mainly from

				agricultural intensification and poor farm practices within the catchment. Further afforestation in the catchment is not desirable for water quality reasons. The main threats to raised bog areas within the site are peat-cutting and associated activities such as drainage and burning. The long-term future of the woodland areas near Pontoon is threatened by overgrazing and the spread of exotic plant species, particularly <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> . The breeding <i>Melanitta nigra</i> population has seriously declined in the last decade, possibly due to predation by <i>Mustela vison</i> which has spread throughout the site.
		<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>	Channel maintenance and Weirs	
		<i>Salmo salar</i>	Sea - diseases, parasites and marine pollution; River - reduced marine survival (probably as a result of climate change), poor river water quality (resulting from factors such as inadequate sewage treatment, agricultural enrichment, acidification, erosion and siltation), forestry-related pressures and over-fishing.	
		<i>Lampetra planeri</i>	None	
		<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	Loss of suitable summer and winter roosting sites due to the deterioration / renovation of derelict buildings, loss of commuting routes linking roosts to foraging sites, and loss of suitable foraging sites are the major threats to this species.	

		<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Main threats to the otter are road kill, smaller number are killed in fishing nets and lobster pots; localised reduction in otter habitat quality, due mainly to water pollution and clearance of riparian vegetation	
		<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	the introduction of diseases transmitted by introduced American crayfish habitat degradation and water quality deterioration.	
		<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	poor substrate quality due to increased growth of algal and macrophyte vegetation as a result of severe nutrient enrichment, as well as physical siltation	
		<i>Najas flexilis</i>	eutrophication, due to inputs from domestic sources, agricultural use of fertilisers and manure spreading. The spread of invasive species may be detrimental to this species.	
		<i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i>	None	

Table 2.2 - SPAs within the 15km Study Area, Qualifying Interests and Threats

Site Code 004051	Site Name Lough Carra SPA			
Site Quality & Importance Lough Carra is an important site for wintering waterfowl, with nationally important populations of <i>Anas strepera</i> and <i>Anas chyeata</i> occurring. A range of other species occur, including diving duck, though all are in relatively low numbers. The site supports important breeding colonies of <i>Larus canus</i> and <i>Larus ridibundus</i> , representing over 6% and 2.5% of the respective national totals. However, considerably higher numbers of both of these species have been recorded in the past.				
		Habitat & Species (species in italic)	Current threats to qualifying interests Habitat loss/degradation, human disturbance,	Specific Threats to Site Eutrophication of this hard water and naturally mesotrophic system is a serious threat.

		<i>Larus ranus</i> Common Gull	introduced ground predators, man induced increase of avian predators, blackfly outbreaks, pollutants	Increased planktonic algal growth was recorded during sampling in 1999 and this, in addition to attached algal growth continues to the present. Clearance of lakeshore vegetation for agricultural intensification has occurred and is a continued and very serious threat.
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2.3 Screening Assessment

The following screening assessment is carried out in accordance with EU guidance (EC 2001) and using the screening assessment form provided in that document.

Assessment criteria	
Describe the individual elements of the plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site.	<p>It is considered that the implementation of the LAP either alone or in combination with other plans or projects through the safeguarding measures incorporated into the policies, objectives and standards in the LAP is not likely to give rise to significant effects on the Natura 2000 sites. A justification of this is set out hereunder</p> <p>The Local Area Plan relates to the town of Claremorris, which comprises a total of 759 Ha(7.59km²). There are no Natura 2000 sites within the plan area however a number of Natura 2000 sites occur within 15km of the proposed plan boundary comprising 11 SACs and 1 SPA as outlined in tables 2.1 and 2.2 above.</p>
<p>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Size and scale; ▪ Land-take; ▪ Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site; ▪ Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.); ▪ Emissions (disposal to land, water or air); 	<p>No impacts on any Natura 2000 sites are envisaged due to the LAP's implementation by virtue of:</p> <p>Size and Scale - Variation No. 2 of the Mayo County Development Plan 2008-2014 (Core Strategy) was adopted 17th October 2011. This sets out population targets and associated residential land requirements for the towns and villages in the County. This will result in less lands being required for residential, as well as other more intensive land uses, and will also promote a phasing approach to the release of residential land being incorporated into the Claremorris LAP.</p> <p>Land Take – There will be no land take as there are no Natura sites within the plan boundary.</p> <p>Distance from Natura 2000 site or key feature of the site – There are a number of Natura sites within 15km of the plan boundary as illustrated in Figure 2 above. The nearest site is c.5km from the proposed LAP boundary.</p> <p>Resource requirements – The implementation of the plan is not dependent on any resource, such as freshwater, that any of the Natura sites rely upon.</p> <p>Emissions – Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the plan area support a diversity of freshwater, and terrestrial habitats and species. Water quality and quantity, and the extent and quality of these habitats are the key conditions that support the integrity of these sites. As many of these sites are water dependant the main potential environmental impact that the LAP may have on the conservation of these sites relates to Sewage Treatment for the Town. This aspect was examined when Mayo County Council was granted a discharge license for the Claremorris Sewerage Treatment Plan and the Appropriate Assessment screening undertaken concluded that there were no adverse impacts envisaged arising from the Waste Water Treatment Plant on the Natura 2000 network in the area.</p>

▪ **Excavation requirements;**

Excavation requirements - Excavation requirements within the plan area may arise through individual development consents which are controlled by the Development Management process. However no impacts will occur due to the distance between the LAP boundary and the nearest European site(s).

▪ **Transportation requirements;**

Transportation Requirements – While there will inevitably be some increased traffic and subsequent road construction and improvements arising from the plan’s implementation, however no impacts will occur due to the distance between the LAP boundary and the nearest European site(s).

▪ **Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.;**

Duration of Construction, Operation, Decommissioning – This will be inline with planning permissions granted.

▪ **Other**

Other - None envisaged

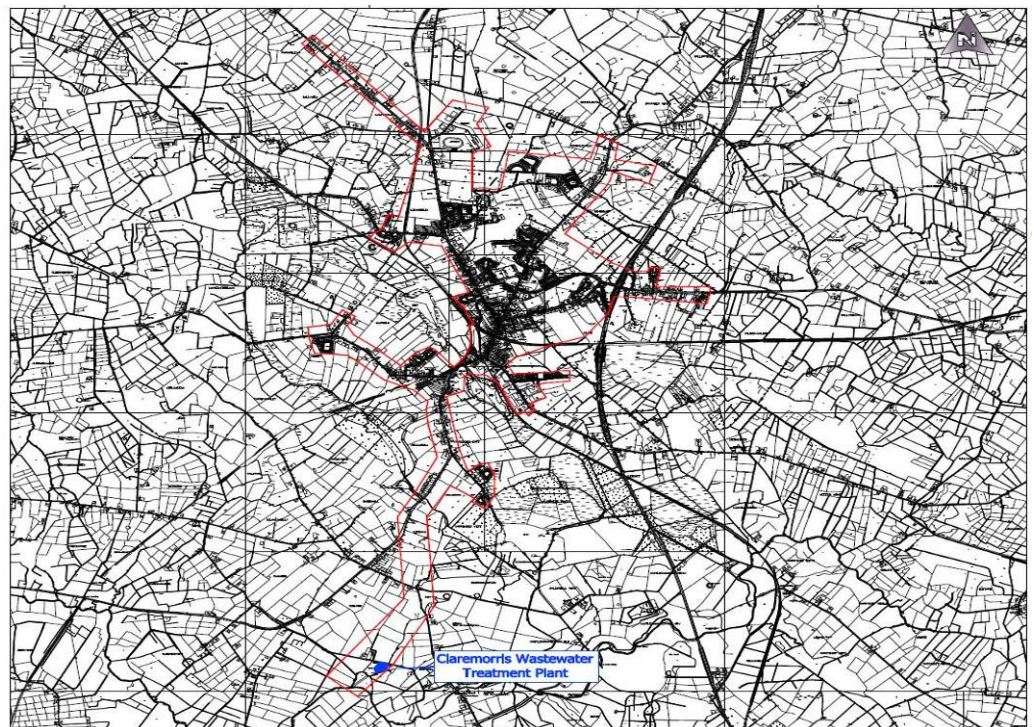



Figure 3 – Location of wastewater treatment plant which discharges to the Robe River

	 <p>Scale 1:4000</p> <p>Includes Ordnance Survey Ireland data reproduced under OSI Licence number 2003/07 CCMA. Mayo County Council. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Ordnance Survey Ireland and Government of Ireland copyright. © Ordnance Survey Ireland, 2006.</p>
<p>Describe any likely changes to the site(s) arising as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ reduction of habitat area; ▪ disturbance to key species; ▪ habitat or species fragmentation; ▪ reduction in species density; ▪ changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.); ▪ climate change. 	<p>Reduction of habitat area – N/A</p> <p>Disturbance of key species – None envisaged</p> <p>Habitat or species fragmentation – None envisaged</p> <p>Reduction in species density – None envisaged</p> <p>Changes in key conservation indicators – None envisaged</p> <p>Climate change – None envisaged</p>
<p>Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:</p>	<p>Loss – N/A</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss; • Fragmentation; • Disruption; • Disturbance; • Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.) 	<p>Fragmentation – N/A</p> <p>Disruption - None envisaged</p> <p>Disturbance - None envisaged</p> <p>Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.) - None envisaged</p>
Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.	The Local Area Plan by its nature is a strategic document, and the exact nature and location of development that may arise is largely unknown and will be the subject of individual project proposals. However, it is considered that the Local Area Plan, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, does not have the potential to have significant impacts on the Natura 2000 sites within the 15km buffer and their respective qualifying interests, as outlined in tables 2.1 and 2.2.
Findings of no significant effects report matrix	
Name of project or plan	Draft Claremorris Local Area Plan.
Name and location of Natura 2000 sites	Please refer to Table 2.1 & 2.2 above.
Name and location of Natura 2000 sites	Please refer to Table 2.1 & 2.2 above.
Description of the project or plan	The Claremorris Draft Local Area Plan (LAP), when implemented, will provide a positive framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the town for duration of six years unless amended. It consists of a written statement – which indicates land use and other development standards together with various local objectives – and maps - which provide a graphical representation of the LAP proposals.
Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide details)?	The Draft Claremorris LAP is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site. This is a land use Plan and not a Plan designed for the purpose of conservation management of any Natura 2000 Site.
Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site(s) (provide details)?	The River Moy SAC and its associated tributaries drain many different areas (including other towns) of the county. Some of these towns already have LAPs nevertheless all LAPs are below the County Development Plan in the hierarchy of plans and will comply with all policies/objectives/development management standards contained therein, including those relating to the conservation and protection of Natura 2000 sites.
The Assessment of significance of effects	
Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site.	It is considered that the implementation of the Draft LAP (alone or in combination) <u>will not give rise</u> to adverse impacts on any Natura 2000 site.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.	<p>As stated previously, there will be no direct habitat loss arising from the Plan's implementation. Allied to the policies and objectives in the Draft Claremorris Local Area Plan, proposed developments as may be permitted on the basis of the Plan will also be required to conform with the relevant regulatory provisions for the prevention of pollution, nuisance or other environmental effects. Taken in combination these policies, plans and regulations will protect the integrity of the Natura 2000 Site. As no part of the plan area is within an SAC, the potential for significant effects on the listed Annex 1 habitats is negligible.</p> <p>Many of the Natura 2000 species within 15km of the town boundary are water dependant and in this regard the main potential environmental impact that the LAP may have on the conservation of these sites relates to Sewage Treatment for the Town. This aspect was examined when Mayo County Council was granted a waste water discharge license for the Claremorris Sewage Treatment Plan and the environmental assessments concluded that there was no adverse impact on any Natura 2000 site envisaged.</p> <p>The existing Claremorris Waste Water Sewerage network and treatment plant was upgraded and commissioned in 2000. The treatment plant has a design capacity population equivalent of 5333 PE. The population of Claremorris according to the 2006 Census is 2595 persons. The treatment plant is at near capacity at present but this includes the provision of 447 housing units that have been granted planning permission in the Town that have not yet commenced. It is considered that this number of new units would adequately meet the population requirements for the town over the Plan period. Mayo County Council will monitor the situation in relation to waste water collection and treatment for Claremorris and where the council considers existing infrastructure is inadequate to service the needs of any future development, such development may be considered premature. It is not anticipated that the capacity of the Waste Water treatment for Claremorris will be exceeded over the lifespan of the Plan. Therefore, in addition to the foregoing sections of this report, it is considered that there will be no adverse impacts on the Natura 2000 network in the region.</p>
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Data collected to carry out the Assessment	
Who carried out the Assessment	Forward Planning Section Mayo County Council in conjunction Heritage Officer, Environment and Sanitary sections of Mayo County Council.
Sources of data	Refer to Section 1.5 of this report
Level of assessment	Desk Top Study Site Visit
Where can the full results of the Assessment Screening be accessed and viewed?	Forward Planning Section, Mayo County Council

Conclusion
<p>There are no Natura 2000 sites within the LAP boundary. There are a number within 15km of the boundary however it is not envisaged that development arising from the implementation of the LAP will adversely affect any such site. The nearest site is c.5km from the proposed LAP boundary.</p> <p>Physical changes to any site will not occur from any works arising within the LAP boundary. The Proposed Draft LAP has been formulated to ensure that the uses, developments and effects arising from proposals and/or permissions based upon the policies and objectives of the Plan, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects will not give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites, having regard to site conservation objectives.</p> <p>Therefore the proposed plan, either individually, or in combination with other plans/projects will not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. Therefore, it is not considered necessary to proceed to a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.</p>

