

Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

Description of Development: Development of Beach Management Plan for Bettystown, Laytown and Mornington

The proposed scheme includes the development of a Beach Management Plan for the named beaches along the East Meath Coastline.

Under the EU Habitats Directive a Screening for AA is required independently of other assessments, to determine if a plan is likely to significantly impact any European sites (ie SAC and SPA), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Relevant European sites (and QIs) present with Draft Plan area and within potential ZoI of Draft Plan

European site (and code)	QIs present (HT = High Tide; LT = Low Tide)
River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (4158)	<p>Wintering birds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Herring gull (Significant numbers at LT and HT) -Golden plover (Significant numbers at LT and HT) -Knot (HT and LT) -Oystercatcher (HT and LT) -Ringed plover (LT only) -Sanderling (LT only) <p>Habitats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wetlands
Boyne Estuary SPA (4080)	<p>Wintering birds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Golden plover (Significant numbers only at LT and HT) -Knot (HT and LT) -Oystercatcher (HT and LT) -Redshank (potentially significant numbers at HT only) -Sanderling (LT only) <p>Habitats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wetlands
Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (1957)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mudflats and sandflats -<i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white) dunes)

European site (and code) QIs present (HT = High Tide; LT = Low Tide)

- Embryonic dunes
- Fixed (grey) dunes

AECOM was engaged to advise Meath County Council, and having regard to ecological data contained in NPWS supporting documents, advising the following:

- NPWS data shows significant populations of three SPA Qualifying interest species within the plan area
 - The plan area appears to be significant for feeding birds at low tide
 - The NPWS assign a "high disturbance score" to pedestrians/dog walkers disturbing SPA birds at Bettystown
 - The NPWS assign a "low disturbance score" to motorised vehicles (but this is still a concern in the eyes of AA)
 - The plan poses, due to its remit in permitting beach access, a very obvious risk to the integrity of the Nanny estuary and Shore SPA and/or River Boyne SPA (bird disturbance)
 - The plan poses a potential, albeit less likely, risk to the integrity of the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (compaction/pollution effects from vehicles on intertidal areas)
- The potential for likely significant effects (LSE) from the plan on one or more sites cannot be excluded

Meath County Council agrees with the assessment by Robert Fennelly, AECOM, that significant effects from the plan cannot be ruled out.

Meath County Council has made a determination that an Appropriate Assessment is required for the Beach Management Plan for Laytown Bettystown and Mornington.

Larry Whelan
Senior Executive Officer
1/9/17



Jackie Maguire
Chief Executive
1/9/17


