

**APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING
REPORT FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS**



Screening is used to determine if an AA is necessary by examining:

- If the plan / project is directly connected with / necessary to the management of the European site.
- If the effects will be significant on a European site in view of its conservation objectives, either alone / in combination with other plans / projects.

Planning Application Ref. No.:

(A) DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AND LOCAL SITE:			
Proposed development:	Birr Courthouse – conservation of existing building		
Site location:	Townsend Street, Birr		
Site Area	0.1 hectares	Floor Area of Proposed Development:	453sqm approx.
Identification of nearby European Site(s):	Natura 2000 site(s): SPA 004137– Dovegrove Callows SPA		
Distance to European Site(s):	1.9 km		
The characteristics of existing, proposed or other approved plans / projects which may cause interactive / cumulative impacts with the project being assessed and which may affect the European site:	None		
Is the application accompanied by an EIS?			No: ✓
(B) IDENTIFICATION OF THE RELEVANT European SITE(S):			
The reasons for the designation of the European site:	Dovegrove Callows – Qualifying Interest – Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>)		
The conservation objectives / qualifying interests of the site and the factors that contributes to the conservation value of the site: (which are taken from the Natura 2000 site synopses and, if applicable, a Conservation Management Plan; all available on www.npws.ie) (ATTACH INFO.)	Dovegrove Callows- SITE SYNOPSIS SITE NAME: DOVEGROVE CALLOWS SPA SITE CODE: 004137 Dovegrove Callows is an area of callowland beside the Little Brosna River 2 km downstream from Birr, Co. Offaly and 5 km upstream from the start of the main area of River Little Brosna callows. The main habitat is wet grassland which floods. The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest		

for Greenland White-fronted Goose. The site is an important feeding area for the internationally important Little Brosna Greenland White-fronted Goose flock (527 individuals - 5 year mean peak for the period 1994/95 to 1998/99) and is used on an occasional basis when other feeding sites along the middle Shannon and Little Brosna callows are flooded. It is of particular importance as it can support the entire Little Brosna flock. For this reason the site is a key part of this flock's winter range and important for its protection. Dovegrove Callows SPA is of major conservation significance as a feeding site for an internationally important flock of Greenland White-fronted Goose, a species that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

Conservation objectives for Dovegrove Callows SPA [004137] The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as the Natura 2000 network. European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain habitats and species in the Natura 2000 network at favourable conservation condition. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites. The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level. Favourable 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. The favourable 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. Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:
 Bird Code Common Name Scientific Name A395 Greenland White-fronted Goose Anser albifrons flavirostris

(C) NPWS ADVICE:

Advice received from NPWS over phone:	None received
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(D) ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS:

*(The purpose of this is to identify if the effect(s) identified could be significant – if **uncertain** assume the effect(s) are significant).*

If the answer is 'yes' to any of the questions below, then the effect is significant. *(Please justify your answer. 'Yes' / 'No' alone is insufficient)*

Would there be... ... any impact on an Annex 1 habitat?	No. Project focuses on conservation of the existing building.
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<p>(Annex 1 habitats are listed in Appendix 1 of AA Guidance).</p>	
<p>... a reduction in habitat area on a European site?</p>	<p>There will be no reduction in the habitat area.</p> <p>The site is sufficient distance from the European site.</p>
<p>... direct / indirect damage to the physical quality of the environment (e.g. water quality and supply, soil compaction) in the European site?</p>	<p>The site is sufficient distance from the European site.</p>
<p>... serious / ongoing disturbance to species / habitats for which the European site is selected (e.g. because of increased noise, illumination and human activity)?</p>	<p>No. The project focuses on internal building conservation works</p> <p>The site is sufficient distance from the European site.</p>
<p>... direct / indirect damage to the size, characteristics or reproductive ability of populations on the European site?</p>	<p>None likely due to the location and type of development</p> <p>The site is sufficient distance from the European site</p>
<p>Would the project interfere with mitigation measures put in place for other plans / projects. [Look at <i>in-combination effects</i> with completed, approved but not completed, and proposed plans / projects. Look at projects / plans within and adjacent to European sites and identify them]. Simply stating that there are no cumulative impacts' is insufficient.</p>	<p>No other plans known of in the vicinity of the site.</p> <p>The site is sufficient distance from the European site.</p>
<p>(E) SCREENING CONCLUSION:</p>	
<p>Screening can result in:</p>	
<p>1.</p>	<p>AA is not required because the project is directly connected with / necessary to the nature conservation management of the site.</p>

2.	<i>No potential for significant effects / AA is not required.</i>		
3.	<i>Significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain. (In this situation seek a NIS from the applicant, or reject the project. Reject if too potentially damaging / inappropriate.</i>		
Therefore, does the project fall into category 1, 2 or 3 above?		Category 2	
Justify why it falls into relevant category above:		There would be no impact on European sites from the proposed development.	
Name:			
Position:	ASEP	Date:	19 May 2024

Given the location the nature and size of the development applied for and the characteristics of European sites in the vicinity it is considered that two kms metres should be used as a potential zone of impact of the project in accordance with section 3.2.3 of the appropriate assessment guidelines.