



Limerick City and County Council.  
Kings Island (St. Marys Park) Playground.

**Appropriate Assessment Screening.**

June 2018.

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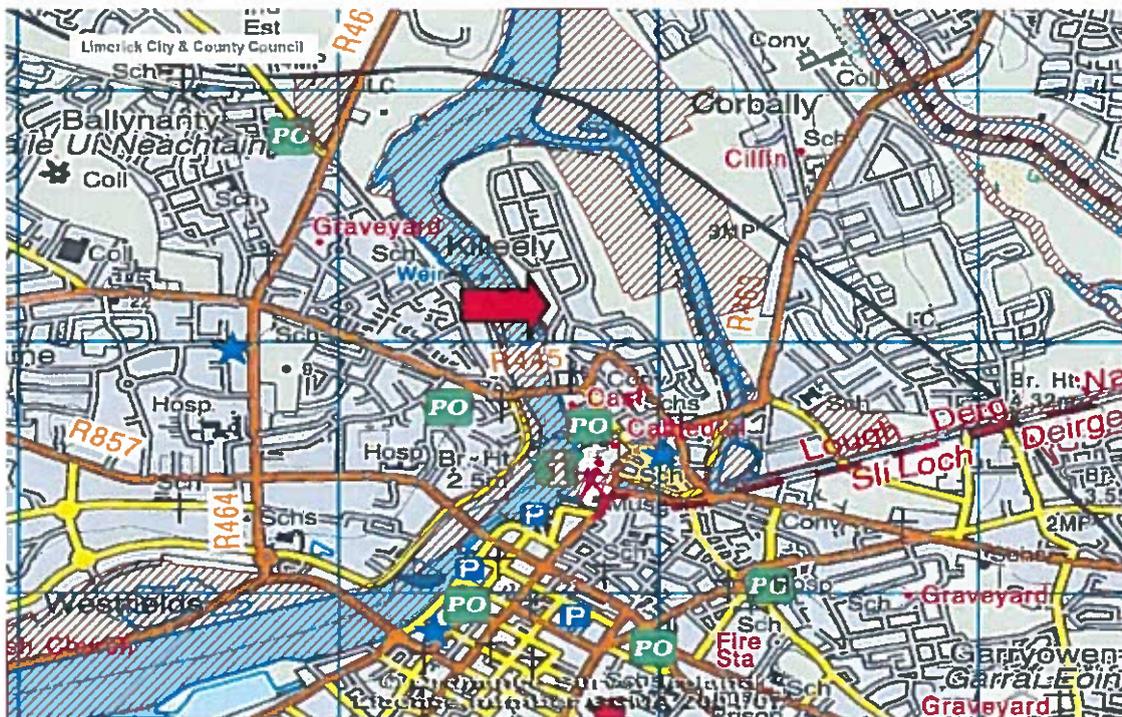
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## Appropriate Assessment Screening –Park Canal Pathway.

**1.0 Introduction:** The Appropriate Assessment Screening Document is for the proposed District Play Area which will be located in Verdant Place in St Mary's Park in the west of Kings Island. This screening report should be read in conjunction with the drawings that are included in the Part 8 Documentation.

**Works:** the works are re-placement of an existing open area with an artificially surfaced District Play Area. The finished play area will be 0.1 ha in area and consist of an open area close to the local Community Centre and Creche. This will have play equipment designed for children up to 10 years of age regardless of physical and mental ability. The Play area will have swings see-saw, springer units and two multi-play units which are integrated into earth mounds.

The screening is in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The principal consideration for an Appropriate Assessment would be if the proposed bridge repairs were likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site – Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas (SACs and SPAs) are Natura sites.



**Figure 1:** showing the location of the works on the western part of Kings Island. The hatched area shows the location of the Lower River Shannon SAC site.

Two sites are in question, the first being the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation Site (002165). The second is the River Shannon and Fergus estuary Special Protection Area (004077). The works area lies within 85m of the the Special Conservation area (SAC) and lies 1.2 km up stream of the Special Protection Area. There are no water courses on the site of the proposed play ground which might act as a link and hence a conduit for pollution to the SAC site.

It is not anticipated that the works **will** require progression to Stage 2 for the following reasons:

1 The proposed development is limited in scale and is the re-surfacing and re-development of a heavily used public area. The final development will be screened by existing buildings from the SAC site (see figure 2) and will have no deterrent effects for bird and mammal usage of the river channel and banks.

2 The habitats in which the development is to take place are amenity grassland (improved) – Fossitt habitat code GA2 and the other is Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3). This is the roadway along which the materials and machinery will access the site of the proposed development. Development in such surroundings does not have the same ecological effect as that on natural or semi-natural habitats. This means that there will not be effects on any of the habitats that are important for the conservation interests of the Special Area of Conservation site. These habitats are listed in Table 1, while the features of interest for the Special Protection Area are listed in Table 2.

The site is close to existing housing and also an existing roadway and with the nearby creche has had a history of public usage. The development of the play ground has to be viewed in this context. There is also the factor that the playground may concentrate public usage in terms of play, in this location that is screened from the SAC site.



**Figure 2:** aerial photo of the proposed development site showing it's location in Kings Island and nearby buildings in the inset picture.

## 2.0 Screening Matrix

### Brief description of the project:

The works are re-placement of an existing open area with an artificially surfaced District Play Area. The finished play area will be 0.1 ha in area and consist of an open area close to the local Community Centre and Crèche.

This will have play equipment designed for children up to 10 years of age regardless of physical and mental ability. The Play area will have swings see-saw, springer units and two multi-play units which are integrated into earth mounds.

In addition to the play area there will be an outdoor gym which will have exercise equipment suitable for outdoor use. This is immediately adjacent to the play area. Figure 3 below shows the Playground and Gym.



**Figure 3:** This is a computer generated image of the playground and the outdoor gym which is adjacent.

**Notes:** this area is already subject to much disturbance as the creche and community centre is located nearby.

**Brief description of the Natura 2000 sites:**

The playground lies within 85m of the Lower River Shannon SAC site see figure 1. The Lower River Shannon SAC (002165) site is designated for a range of riparian habitats and species including alluvial woodland, a habitat which lies on the on the Abbey River which is on the other side of Kings island. The Abbey is a tributary of the Shannon into which it drains directly. The development site lies 1.2 km up stream of the River Shannon and Fergus Estuary Special Protection Area (004077). This estuarine complex with its large area of mudflats holds internationally important concentrations of wild fowl particularly during the winter months.

**Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site:**

While the proposed development lies close to the SAC, works are confined to the previously developed area close to the Community Centre and Creche. As indicated above these are modified habitats and are of low ecological value. Given the fact that the roadway close to the proposed play ground is already used and that it is within

Limerick City any additional disturbance works are not judged to be significant. The works are expected to take place from late September onwards and to last a total of four months. This is outside the main mammal and bird-breeding season. As outlined above the area is screened from the SAC site by the presence of pre-existing buildings and the presence of breeding birds and mammals on site is regarded as unlikely. The previously modified nature of the site and the level of human disturbance renders it unsuitable as breeding or foraging habitats for mammals.

The main way in which ex-situ impacts could be created on the SAC site and the downstream portion of the SPA site is through the introduction of pollutants or sediments to the watercourse. This is unlikely to happen due to the distance of the proposed development site from the river and fact that access to the river is difficult and because of the presence of an embankment, which renders the dumping of waste material unlikely.

The following standard good practice measures to apply:

- 1 Fuels and lubricants are to be stored at least 15m from any watercourse.
- 2 Re-surfacing to cease during periods of heavy rain to avoid run off.
- 3 Any excess spoil that might exist after works to removed as quickly as possible to avoid run off.
- 4 Suitable precautions to be taken to avoid the spread of invasive species.

**Notes:** no signs of birds and mammals (for example otters *Lutra lutra*) were found on the day on inspection (21st June 2018).

**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:**

- **Size and scale;**

The finished play area will be 0.1 ha in area and consist of an open area close to the local Community Centre and Creche. This will be 85m from the Lower River Shannon SAC site.

- **Land-take;**

None- the proposed development site is an area of open space 85m from the Lower River Shannon SAC site.

- **Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site;**

The site lies within 85m of the SAC and is 1200m upstream from the Special Protection Area site. The proposed development is 300m away from a stretch of alluvial woodland on the eastern side of Kings island bordering the Abbey River. It is not anticipated that the proposed development will have any effects on this Annex Habitat due to the distance from the woodland, the limited scale of the development and that the area in which the development is to take place is previously modified.

- **Resource requirements (water abstraction etc);**

There are no resource implications it is not anticipated that any extraction of material – rock etc or soil or abstraction of water would take place from the Shannon. New material will be used in the re-surfacing of the development area. In this case it will be from established and licensed quarries or be newly manufactured. These quarries are governed by planning permissions or conditions laid down under the quarry registration process.

- **Emission (disposal to land, water or air);**

With the distance from the SAC site there is not a significant risk of sediment or pollutants being released to the watercourse.

- **Excavation requirements;**

All excavation will take place outside the designated sites.

**Transportation requirements;**

Plant and trucks will be involved in bringing the material to the site and for removal of spoil. With traffic movement confined to the roads it is not anticipated that there will be transport effects on the SAC or SPA sites.

- **Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc;**

It is anticipated that construction will take four months beginning in mid to late September 2018. Operation is expected to be indefinite as the proposed development will continue to be part of the amenity network of the city,

- **Other**

None.

**Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of :**

- **reduction of habitat area:**

None- the areas immediately around the proposed development are amenity grassland

or buildings. These are common habitats and are heavily modified from the natural state. This is not the construction of a new amenity on green field site.

- **habitat or species fragmentation;**

Given the location of the works and the 85m distance from the SAC site, it is not considered that fragmentation of habitats would occur. It is expected that the amenity grassland habitat that exists close to the development is capable of regeneration.

The area is currently intensively used and with re-development is not expected to add significantly to the numbers of people using it and as such not add to the disturbance potential of the site as a whole.

- **reduction in species density;**

See above, the area that will be the subject of works is not of high ecological quality and as noted previously no signs of otters were noted. The current habitats are amenity grassland and are at a distance from the SAC/SPA sites and no reduction in species density in the Natura 2000 sites are expected.

- **changes in key indicators of conservation value**

Since the habitats affected are those that are already modified and are not part of the conservation interests of the site it is not considered that any key indicators will be affected. Table 1 below shows the habitats that will be affected while Table 2 below it shows the conservation interests.

**Table 1 Habitats affected by the works.**

<b>Works</b>	<b>Habitats affected</b>	<b>Effects</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Development of Playground and outdoor gym.	Amenity grassland- grass verges- (GA2) and roadway (BL1)	Limited as these are modified habitats which are not part of the range of habitats identified as being of interest in the SAC site.	Due to distance from the SAC site and screening by buildings it is not anticipated that any effects will result from the development.

**Table 2: 002165 Lower River Shannon SAC: qualifying interests, species and habitats.**

1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>
1095 Sea Lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>
1096 Brook Lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i>
1099 River Lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>
1106 Atlantic Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> (only in fresh water)
1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time
1130 Estuaries
1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
1150 *Coastal lagoons
1160 Large shallow inlets and bays
1170 Reefs
1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks
1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts
1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand
1330 Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i> )
1349 Bottlenose Dolphin <i>Tursiops truncatus</i>
1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i>
1410 Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> )
3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation
6410 <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils ( <i>Molinion caeruleae</i> )
91E0 *Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ).

One issue which is of concern is the presence of invasive species on Kings Island though not on the development site. These include Japanese Knotweed, Himalyan Balsam and Giant hogweed. Work practices need to take into account the presence of these species and to avoid spreading them. It is recommended that the Inland Fisheries Ireland Protocol for invasive species is adhered to for this aspect of the works as part of standard good practice measures.

- **Climate change:**

These works would have no implications for climate change. The finished development will be part of the amenity network of the city which by helping local amenity needs would reduce the need to travel to avail of such facilities.

**Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of:**

- **interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site;**

None- due to the limited scale of the development and its location outside the SAC site in previously modified habitats.

- **interference with key relationships that define the function of the site;**

It is not anticipated that there will be any change from the current situation as the development footprint of the playground will not expand beyond the boundaries indicated in Figure 2. Due to distance from the SAC site it is not anticipated that there will be disruption during the construction phase.

**Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:**

- **loss;**

Not applicable, as outlined above the habitats that will be affected are man-modified and The proposed development site is outside any of the Natura 2000 sites.

- **Fragmentation;**

None as the playground and outdoor gym lie outside the Lower River Shannon SAC site and are in an undesignated heavily modified area.

- **Disruption;**

Due to the distance from the SAC site, the fact that it is screened by the existing community centre and is limited in scale it is not considered that there will be any significant disruption.

- **Disturbance;**

See above.

- **change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc);**

None- due to both the distance from the river that affords a buffer and the limited scale of the development.

**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 are not known.**

The works on the playground have to be considered with the possible effects of the other Kings Island projects such as the Kings Island flood relief works. While the works on the playground are limited in scale and 85m from the Lower river Shannon SAC site, the flood relief works will involve the creation of flood berms to the east of the proposed development and will involve substantial earth moving and construction works, both adjacent to and within, the Lower River Shannon SAC site. The berms will be over 600m long and over 4m high.

Given the limited scale of the proposed development and its location in a previously modified area it is not considered that it will have any significant effects. The flood relief works due to their scale and location are a different proposition but at the moment it can be said that the current proposed development i.e. the playground, will not have any significant effects on the Natura 2000 site network and its effects would not be significant even in association with the larger flood relief measures.

### 3.0 Finding of No Significant Effects Matrix

<b>Name of Project:</b>	Kings Island Playground.
<b>Name and location of Natura 2000 sites:</b>	<p>There are two, the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation Site (002165). The second is the River Shannon and Fergus estuary Special Protection Area (004077). The works area lies within 85m of the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and lies 1.2 km up stream of the Special Protection Area.</p> <p>Due to the limited and localised scale of the works it is not considered that there would be an effect on any other Natura 2000 sites.</p>
<b>Description of the Project</b>	<p>The works are re-placement of an existing open area with an artificially surfaced District Play Area. The finished play area will be 0.1 ha in area and consist of an open area close to the local Community Centre and Creche.</p> <p>This will have play equipment designed for children up to 10 years of age regardless of physical and mental ability. The Play area will have swings see-saw, springer units and two multi-play units which are integrated into earth mounds.</p> <p>In addition to the play area there will be an outdoor gym. This will have exercise equipment suitable for outdoor use. This is immediately adjacent to the play area. Figure 3 above shows the Playground and Gym.</p>
<b>Is the Project or Plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (provide</b>	No

details) ?	
<p><b>Are there other projects or plans that together with the project of plan being assessed could affect the site (provide details)?</b></p>	<p>The works on the playground have to be considered with the possible effects of the other Kings Island projects such as the Kings island flood relief works. While the works on the playground are limited in scale and 85m from the Lower river Shannon SAC site, the flood relief works will involve the creation of flood berms to the east of the proposed development and will involve substantial earth moving and construction works, both adjacent to and within, the Lower River Shannon SAC site.</p> <p>Given the limited scale of the proposed development and its location in a previously modified area it is not considered that it will have any significant effects. The flood relief works due to their scale and location are a different proposition but at the moment it can be said that the current proposed development i.e. the playground will not have any significant effects on the Natura 2000 site network and it's effects would not be significant even in association with the larger flood relief measures.</p>
<p><b>The Assessment of Significance of Effects</b></p>	
<p><b>Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 sites:</b></p>	<p>The works on the playground have to be considered with the possible effects of the other Kings Island projects such as the Kings Island flood relief works. While the works on the playground are limited in scale and 85m from the Lower river Shannon SAC site, the flood relief works will involve the creation of flood berms to the east of the proposed development and will involve substantial earth moving and construction works, both adjacent to</p>

	<p>and within, the Lower River Shannon SAC site. The berms will be over 600m long and over 4m high.</p> <p>Given the limited scale of the proposed development and its location in a previously modified area it is not considered that it will have any significant effects. The flood relief works due to their scale and location are a different proposition but at the moment it can be said that the current proposed development i.e. the playground will not have any significant effects on the Natura 2000 site network and it's effects would not be significant even in association with the larger flood relief measures</p>		
<b>Explain why these effects are not considered significant:</b>	<p>These effects of the proposed are not considered significant due to the limited scale of the works, their distance from the SAC site and the modified nature of the receiving environment.</p>		
<b>List of Agencies Consulted: Provide contact name and telephone or email address:</b>	<p><i>The Manager, Development Applications Unit DoEHLG Newtown Road, Wexford. (T: 053 9117382)</i></p>		
<b>Response to consultation</b>	<p><i>Awaited.</i></p>		
<b>Data Collected to Carry out the Assessment</b>			
<b>Who carried out the Assessment?</b>	<b>Sources of Data</b>	<b>Level of assessment Completed</b>	<b>Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed</b>
Heritage Officer, Forward Planning Section,	Existing NPWS Site Synopses	Desktop study, site visits	The conclusions are included in the screening

Limerick City and County Council.	Site visits and site surveys.		document and the site report is attached in an Appendix to this document.
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#### 4.0 Environmental Conditions:

The following standard good practice measures to apply:

Fuels and lubricants are to be stored at least 15m from any water course.

Re-surfacing to cease during periods of heavy rain to avoid run off.

Any excess spoil that might exist after works to removed as quickly as possible to avoid run off.

Suitable precautions to be taken to avoid the spread of invasive species.