

# APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING DETERMINATION UNDER THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (BIRDS AND NATURAL HABITATS) REGULATIONS, 2011 (AS AMENDED)

## FOR

### For the Emerging Draft Limerick City Centre and Environs Blue Green Ring Masterplan

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination is being made by Limerick City and County Council regarding the emerging draft Limerick City Centre and Environs Blue Green Ring Masterplan (draft Masterplan).

The current status of the draft Masterplan is that it is a non-statutory document. The draft Masterplan aims to refine the existing alignment of routes found within the Limerick City and Environs Green Blue Infrastructure Strategy (GBI Strategy), with the intention to designate active travel routes away from vehicular routes and large infrastructure, promoting healthy lifestyles by increasing access to Blue Green Infrastructure and sports facilities for local communities and recreational users through an active travel network with improved air quality.

In accordance with the EU Habitats Directive and section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), this document provides screening in order to determine whether Appropriate Assessment (AA) is necessary by examining whether the draft Masterplan might be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site/s in question;

The nearest proposed EU Designated Sites are the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Lower River Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (located within the subject lands).

The draft Masterplan has the potential for significant effects on the Lower River Shannon SAC as its implementation would be promoting the use of lands located within the SAC for recreational and green transport purposes.

Future developments that may arise from the implementation of the plan could result in the intensification of land use within the SAC. Whilst such future developments/projects arising from the draft Masterplan would be subject to their own Appropriate Assessment, potential effects may include but are not limited to pollution, disturbance, increased lighting and habitat removal.

As such, there is potential for the draft Masterplan to result in likely significant effects on this European Site and further assessment is required.

The draft Masterplan boundary is located adjacent in close proximity to the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA.

The draft Masterplan has the potential for significant effects on the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA as its implementation would be promoting the use of lands located adjacent to the SPA for recreational and green transport purposes.

Future developments that may arise from the implementation of the plan could result in the intensification of land use close to the SPA. Whilst such future developments/projects arising from the draft Masterplan would be subject to their own Appropriate Assessment, potential effects may include pollution to supporting wetland habitat and disturbance.

As such, there is potential for the draft Masterplan to result in likely significant effects on this European Site and further assessment is required.

As a result of the foregoing, it cannot be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European Sites, that the draft Masterplan, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on the Lower River Shannon SAC and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA. It is concluded that Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2) of the draft Masterplan is required.

Signed:



Dated: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021