

Article 6 (3) Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Killashee, Co. Longford

Decommissioning and
Rehabilitation Plan 2023





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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

MKO has been appointed to provide the information necessary to allow the undertaking of an Article 6(3) Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the decommissioning and rehabilitation of Killashee Bog, Co Longford.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment is required under Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive). Where it cannot be excluded that a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, would have a significant effect on a European Site then same shall be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The current project is not directly connected with, or necessary for, the management of any European Site consequently the project has been subject to the Appropriate Assessment Screening process.

The assessment in this report is based on a desk study and field surveys of Killashee Bog undertaken by Bord Na Mona ecologists from 2012-2022 and on a site visit on the 14th of March 2023 by Rudraksh Gupta (BSc., MSc) and Valerie Kendall (B.Sc(H), (M.EnvSc) of MKO. It specifically assesses whether the proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation will have any impact upon European Designated Sites.

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared in accordance with the European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2021) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010) and the Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. Office of the Planning Regulator, Dublin 7, Ireland OPR (2021).

1.2 Statement of Authority

A baseline ecological survey was undertaken on 14/03/2023 by Rudraksh Gupta (BSc., MSc) and Valerie Kendall (B.Sc(H), (M.EnvSc) of MKO. This report has been prepared by Rudraksh Gupta. Rudraksh is an ecologist with MKO with relevant academic qualifications in Environmental Sciences and Ecology. This report has been reviewed by Colin Murphy (B.Sc., MSc). Colin is an experienced project ecologist and has over 3 years' professional consultancy experience.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Site Location

Killashee bog is located in County Longford. It is approximately 4km to the East of Lanesborough (Grid reference: N 06853 70979) and approx. 5.8 km and 5.9km from Lough Ree SAC and Lough Ree SPA respectively. It comprises 111ha of land and can be accessed via the N63 to the south.

The site location is shown in Figure 2.1.

2.2 Site Description

Killashee Bog is a relatively recent production bog and was in production from 1985 until 2020. The bog was formerly used for both horticultural peat and fuel peat production. There is therefore very little development of pioneer cutaway habitats within the bog, and this area is predominately bare peat. The bog still retains a significant amount of “red” or “sphagnum” peat. There is a rail line to the centre of the site that runs through the southern margin. There are no pumps on the site.


The surrounding landscape is dominated by a mosaic of farmland, largely consisting of improved grassland, and other bogs, including Begnagh, Clooneeny, Knappoge, Derryarogue and Derryadd bogs, all owned and managed by Bord na Móna. Killashee bog is part of a cluster of bogs that have developed along the floodplains of the River Shannon. It is one of a group with the Moundillon Bog Group (Mostrim sub-group) that frequently floods during winter periods. In each of these bogs, a significant portion of the industrial peat production areas lie below the winter flood level of the Shannon and pumping these sites is critical to sustaining industrial peat production. Killashee has a gravity drainage regime.

Raised bog remnants occur along the western and eastern and southern margins of the cutaway bog. The western remnant bog parcels have been drained. The remnant bog along the eastern margin has been drained and has been subject to domestic turf cutting. These remnants raised bog parcels have never been subject to commercial peat extraction. Various habitats including Birch woodland (WN7) and conifer plantation (WD4) are located along the margins of the site.

The underlying geology of the bog comprises Visean Limestones (Undifferentiated limestone). The underlying soils and sub-soils are classed as ‘Raised Bog Cutover Peat’. The underlying geology of Killashee bog is calcareous. The site is underlain with marl. The majority of Killashee has very deep peat deposits with most of the bog having peat thickness of 2-5m. Only one section of the bog, located towards the north has shallow peat deposits remaining of <1m.



Map Legend

 Site Boundary



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Drawing Title	
Site Location	
Project Title	
Killeshee Bog, Co. Longford	
Drawn By	Checked By
RG	CM
Project No.	Drawing No.
230210	Fig. 2.1
Scale	Date
1:70000	07.03.2023
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2.3

Characteristics of the Peatland Climate Action Scheme (PCAS)

2.3.1

Overview

Bord na Móna operates under an IPC Licence issued and administered by the EPA to extract peat within the Mountdillon (Mostrim) bog group (Ref. P0504-01). As part of Condition 10.2 of this licence, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the boglands within the licensed area. The bog is part of the Mount Dillon group. This regulatory requirement is the main driver of the development of this rehabilitation plan.

A document titled ‘Killashee Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2023’ has been prepared specifically to describe the proposed D & R measures at Killashee Bog and is appended to this document as Appendix 1.

It is proposed by Government that Bord na Móna (BnM) carry out a Peatland Climate Action Scheme (PCAS) on peatlands previously used for energy production. The enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation, and restoration of the peatlands funded by the Scheme (PCAS) will deliver benefits across climate action (GHG mitigation, and acceleration towards carbon sequestration), enrich the state’s natural capital, increase eco-system services and biodiversity, improve water quality, and storage attenuations, and improve amenity opportunities for peatlands. The additional costs of the proposed Scheme will be supported by Government through the Climate Action Fund and Ireland’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan. Bord na Móna have identified a footprint of 33,000 Ha (a subset of the BnM estate that has been used for energy production) as peatlands suitable for enhanced rehabilitation – including Killashee Bog. This proposed scheme will significantly go beyond what is required to meet rehabilitation obligations under existing EPA IPC licence conditions.

Decommissioning is a requirement of the applicable Integrated Pollution Control Licence issued by the EPA, which seeks to address condition 10.1 of license Ref. P0504-01, which requires the following:

10.1 Following termination of use or involvement of all or part of the site in the licensed activity, the licensee shall:

10.1.1 Decommission, render safe or remove for disposal/recovery, any soil, subsoils, buildings, plant or equipment, or any waste, materials or substances or other matter contained therein or thereon, that may result in environmental pollution.

Decommissioning must take place at each bog prior to or concurrent with rehabilitation – the scale of decommissioning per bog varies dependent on the items/ infrastructure previously in place to facilitate prior peat extraction.

Enhanced decommissioning as part of the PCAS will enhance the future after use of the bog for amenity value, security against access for illegal and unsocial activities and general State and community benefit.

Rehabilitation seeks to address the requirements of Condition 10.2 of IPC License Ref. P0504-01 and is based on a reference document prepared by BnM per Bog for which the IPC license is applicable. See the following extract from IPC License Ref. P0504-01:

“The licensee shall prepare, to the satisfaction of the Agency, a fully detailed and costed plan for permanent rehabilitation of the cutaway boglands within the licensed area.”

Enhanced rehabilitation interventions supported by the above referenced Scheme will ensure that environmental stabilisation is achieved (meaning IPC obligations are met), and importantly, significant

additional benefits, particularly relating to climate action and other ecosystem services, will also be delivered.

2.3.2 Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Stage

Bord na Móna have defined the key rehabilitation outcome at Killashee Bog as environmental stabilisation, re-wetting and setting the bog on a trajectory towards development of naturally functioning peatland and wetland habitats. Rehabilitation is generally defined by Bord na Móna as:

- Stabilisation of bare peat areas via targeted active management (e.g., drain-blocking/ re-wetting) slowing movement of water across the site and encouraging natural colonisation; and
- Mitigation of key emissions (e.g., potential run-off of suspended solids).

111ha, of the present landcover will be subject to rehabilitation measures, as described in Table 2.1 below. These are bespoke interventions designed to stabilise the existing baseline and meet compliance with the requirements of the existing EPA, IPC License and the proposed PCAS. Prescriptive measures are unique to the existing baseline habitats and comprise 3 no. broad categories, 1) those associated with dry cutaway, 2) measures associated with deep peat cutover bog and 3) those associated with wetland cutaway. The aim of rehabilitation is as much as possible to place existing peatlands on a trajectory towards a naturally functioning peatland system (Renou-Wilson 2012).

The proposed Killashee rehabilitation will be undertaken using standard best practices in peatland restoration. These are based on published information in the Irish context, methodologies developed through rehabilitation trials, best practices employed elsewhere in Europe on peatland rehabilitation and restoration but also the experience of 40 years of research on the after-use development and rehabilitation of the BnM cutaway bogs (Clarke & Rieley 2010), including examples such as the BnM Raised Bog Restoration Project (Bord na Móna 2014).

In terms of rehabilitation, the ecological and site information collected during BnM ecological baseline surveys, additional site visits, stakeholder input, and monitoring and desktop analysis forms the basis for the planning of peatland rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, along with:

Experience of 40 years of research on the after-use development and rehabilitation of the Bord na Móna cutaway bogs (Clarke, 2010; Bord na Móna, 2016);

- Significant international engagement during this period with other counties in relation to best practice regarding peatland rehabilitation and after-use through the International Peat Society and the Society for Ecological Restoration (Joosten & Clarke, 2002; Clarke & Rieley, 2010; Gann et al., 2019).
- Consultation and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.
- GIS Mapping.
- BNM drainage surveys.
- Bog topography and LIDAR data.
- Previous research studies on site.
- Hydrological modelling
- The development of a Methodology Paper outlining the Scheme (PCAS). This rehabilitation includes enhanced measures defined in the Methodology Paper which are designed to exceed the standard stabilisation requirements as defined by the IPC Licence and to enhance the ecosystem services of Killashee bog, in particular, optimising climate action benefits.

2.3.2.1 Decommissioning Measures

The proposed **Decommissioning measures** at Killashee Bog include:

- > Clean-up of bog
- > Cleaning Silt Ponds
- > Peat stockpile management.
- > Decommissioning or removal of buildings and compounds
- > Decommissioning fuel tanks and associated facilities
- > Decommissioning or removal of septic tanks

Enhanced **Decommissioning measures** include:

- > Removal of railway lines
- > Decommissioning bridges and underpasses
- > Decommissioning railway level crossing
- > Restricting access (bog and silt ponds)
- > Removal of high voltage power lines.

Refer to Appendix VII in the Killashee Rehabilitation Plan in Appendix 1 of this AASR for full details of Decommissioning measures proposed for Killashee Bog.

Refer to Appendix IX in the Killashee Rehabilitation Plan in Appendix 1 of this AASR for further details on the Extractive Waste Management Plan for the minimisation, treatment, recovery, and disposal of wastes.

2.3.2.2 Rehabilitation Measures

The proposed **Enhanced rehabilitation measures** for Killashee Bog include:

- > Deep Peat measures including field re-profiling, creation of cells (45m x 60m cell & 30m x 30m cells) suitable for Sphagnum inoculation, on deeper peat; intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m) and modifying outfalls, and management of water levels with overflow pipes and blocking of internal outfalls.
- > Regular drain blocking (3/100) on dry cutaway along with the blocking of outfalls and management of water levels, along with organic fertiliser application.
- > Targeted drain blocking to optimise hydrological conditions/rewet the residual peat. in targeted marginal (degraded) raised bog remnants around the margins of the site and re-wetting, where possible, using an excavator to install peat blockages.
- > Targeted fertiliser applications to accelerate vegetation establishment on areas of bare peat on headlands and high fields, and within certain areas of dry cutaway. Areas where vegetation has established do not need fertiliser application.
- > Seeding of vegetation and inoculation of Sphagnum will be undertaken where required.
- > Initial hydrological modelling indicates that a small part of the site will develop a mosaic of wetland habitats with the potential for some deeper water. More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), modifying outfalls and managing overflows will be implemented in this area. Hydrological management will look to optimise summer water levels to maximise the development of wetland vegetation (by looking to set water depths at < 0.5 m, where possible. It is inevitable that some small sections will naturally have deeper water due to the topography at this site). Water-levels will be adjusted at outfalls and by adjusting piped drainage.

Refer to Table 2-1 below for details on the proposed enhanced rehabilitation for Killashee Bog.

Table 2-1 Enhanced rehabilitation measures and target area at Killashee Bog (See table 8.1, Appendix 1)

Type	Rehab Code	Enhanced Rehabilitation Measure Extent (Ha)
Deep peat cutover bog	DPT2	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m) and modifying outfalls and managing overflows
	DPT3	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), field reprofiling, modifying outfalls and managing overflows
	DPT4	Berms and field re-profiling (45x60m cell), modifying outfalls and managing overflows, drainage channels for excess water and Sphagnum inoculation
	DPT5	Cut and Fill cell bunding (30m x 30m cell), modifying outfalls and managing overflows, drainage channels for excess water, Sphagnum inoculation
Wetland	WLT4	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), modifying outfalls and managing overflows, transplanting Reeds and other rhizomes.
Dry Cutaway	DCT2	Regular drain blocking (3/100 m), modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes, targeted fertiliser treatment.
Marginal Land	MLT1	No work required
Additional Work	AW2	Targeted Drain Blocking
Silt Ponds	Silt Pond	Silt pond
Constraint	Constraint	Other Constraints (Turbarry)
Total Area		111ha

2.3.2.3 Aftercare and Maintenance

This programme for monitoring, aftercare and maintenance has been designed to meet the Conditions of the IPC Licence. This is defined as:

- There will be initial quarterly monitoring assessments of the site to determine the general status of the site, the condition of the silt ponds, assess the condition of the rehabilitation work, monitoring of any potential impacts on neighbour's land, general land security, boundary management, dumping and littering.
- The number of these site visits will reduce after 2 years to bi-annually and then after 5 years to annual visits.
- These monitoring visits will also consider any requirements for further practical rehabilitation measures.
- The baseline condition of the site will be established post-rehabilitation implementation by using an aerial survey to take an up-to-date aerial photo when rehabilitation is completed. This will be used to verify completion of rehabilitation measures. The extent of bare peat will be assessed using this baseline data, and habitat maps will be updated, if needed. It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.
- Water quality monitoring at the bog will be established. The main objective of this water quality monitoring will be to establish a baseline and then monitor the impact of peatland rehabilitation on water quality from the bog.
- In order to assist in monitoring surface water quality from this bog, it is planned to increase the existing licence monitoring requirements to sampling for the same parameters to every month during the scheduled activities and for a period up to two years. post rehabilitation, depending on the period required to confirm that the main two parameters, suspended solids and ammonia are remaining compliant with the licence emission and trigger limit values and there is an improving trajectory in these two parameters i.e., reduction in concentration.
- Enhanced water quality monitoring will aim to include up to 70% of a bog's drainage catchments.
- Monitoring results will be maintained, trended, and reported on each year as part of the requirement to report on Condition 10.1 of the IPC Licence on Bog Rehabilitation in the Annual Environmental Report, which will be available in April each year at www.epa.ie.
- The parameters to be included (as per condition 6.2 of the IPC Licence) include monthly monitoring for pH, Suspended Solids, Total Solids, Total Phosphorus, Total Ammonia, Colour, and COD and DOC.
- This monthly sampling regime on a selected number of silt ponds will be carried out over a two-year cycle. The original (licence) requirement was for a quarterly sampling regime, but this has been increased to a monthly regime to appropriately track the changing water chemistry that will occur as part of this enhanced rehabilitation. In addition, DOC will be included as a parameter to try and identify any changes in carbon in the surface water.
- If, after two years, key criteria for successful rehabilitation are being achieved and key targets are being met, then the water quality monitoring will be reviewed, with consideration of potential ongoing research on site. The water quality data, the aerial surveys and the habitat mapping will be collated and will be submitted to the EPA as part of the final validation report.
- If, after two years, key criteria for successful rehabilitation have not been achieved and key targets have not been met, then the rehabilitation measures and status of the site will be evaluated and enhanced, where required. This evaluation may indicate no requirement for additional enhancement of rehabilitation measures but may demonstrate that more time is required before key criteria for rehabilitation has been achieved. Monitoring of water quality will then also continue for another period to be defined.
- Where other uses are proposed for the site that are compatible the provision of biodiversity and ecosystem services, these will be assessed by Bord na Móna in consultation with interested parties. Other after-uses can be proposed for licensed areas and must go through the required assessment process and planning procedures.

Additional monitoring measures are also proposed to monitor ecosystem service benefits that have been derived by enhanced rehabilitation. These proposed monitoring measures will be funded by the proposed Climate Action Fund Scheme or additional other funding. Monitoring of climate action and other ecosystem service benefits will be designed to take account of the requirements of monitoring benefits of the overall Scheme and will be stratified; that is not all monitoring will be carried out in each site. These are defined as:

- Vegetation and habitat monitoring after rehabilitation is completed using a cutaway bog condition assessment (Similar to ecotope mapping). This assessment will include assessment of on environmental and ecological indicators such as vegetation cover, vegetation communities, presence of key species, Sphagnum cover, bare peat cover and water levels. It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.
- The condition of the bog can be assessed using the condition assessment and suitable Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission factors can be assigned to different habitats. GHG emission factors have been determined for various peatland habitats in Ireland (Wilson et al., 2015) and are constantly being refined with more and more research. BnM is actively supporting research into GHG fluxes in different rehabilitated peatland habitats. This means that potential GHG emissions can be estimated from the site, as the site continues along its trajectory towards a naturally functioning peatland ecosystem.

2.3.2.4 Rehabilitation Plan Validation and Licence Surrender

IPC License Condition 10.4. *‘A final validation report to include a certificate of completion for the Rehabilitation Plan, for all or part of the site as necessary, shall be submitted to the Agency within six months of execution of the plan. The licensee shall carry out such tests, investigations or submit certification, as requested by the Agency, to confirm that there is no continuing risk to the environment.’*

Reporting to the EPA will continue until the IPC License is surrendered. The bog will be included in the full licence surrender process as per the Guidance to Licensees on Surrender, Cessation and Closure of Licensed Sites EPA, 2012, when:

- The planned rehabilitation has been completed.
- The key criteria for successful rehabilitation have been achieved and key targets have been met.
- Water quality monitoring demonstrates that water quality of discharge is stabilising or improving; and
- The site has been environmentally stabilised.

2.3.2.5 Timeframe:

- 2022-2023: Short-term planning actions.
- 2023-2024: Short-term practical actions.
- 2024-2025: Long term practical actions. Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate where necessary.
- 2025: Decommission silt-ponds, if necessary.
- In general, rehabilitation activities will be carried out between the months of April and October inclusive. The decommissioning stage may overlap rehabilitation activities.
- The duration of activities provided are approximate and may be slightly shorter or longer, depending on weather conditions and progress on rehabilitation prescriptions. Activities may cease for the winter months due to rainfall and poor ground conditions.
- In any case, the rehabilitation period will not be longer than 1 year.
- Normal working times will be daylight hours between 08.00 and 17.30hrs Monday to Friday.



See Table 7.1 in the rehabilitation plan in the Killashee Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2023 in Appendix 1 of this AASR for full details on success criteria, targets, measuring success criteria and expected timeframes.

2.4

Description of the Baseline Ecological Environment

Assessing the impacts of any project and associated activities requires an understanding of the ecological baseline conditions prior to and at the time of the project proceeding. Ecological Baseline conditions are those existing in the absence of proposed activities (CIEEM, 2018).

Bord na Móna carried out a baseline ecological survey of all of its properties in 2009-2012 and developed habitat maps. As part of this exercise, Killashee bog was surveyed in 2012. An additional survey was carried out in 2022, in advance of the preparation of this rehabilitation plan. Habitat maps have been updated, where required. This rehabilitation plan is informed by the original baseline survey as well as subsequent confirmatory site walkover surveys and visits, and updates to baseline data. A detailed ecological survey report for Killashee bog as carried out by BnM ecologists in 2012 is detailed in Appendix III of the Killashee Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation plan 2023 in Appendix 1 of this AASR.

Habitat mapping followed best-practise guidance from Smith et al. (2011). General marginal habitats and other habitats that had not been modified significantly by industrial peat extraction were classified using Fossitt et al. (2000). Plant nomenclature for vascular plants follows Stace (2019), while mosses and liverworts nomenclature follows Atherton et al. (2010). A more detailed BnM classification system was previously developed for classifying pioneer cutaway habitats as Fossitt categories were deemed not to be detailed enough for cutaway bog (much of cutaway bog could be classified as Cutover Bog - PB4). Much of the pioneer cutaway vegetation is still at an early stage of its development and cannot be assigned to Fossitt Level 3 categories yet.

A walkover survey was conducted on the 14th of March 2023 by Rudraksh Gupta (BSc, MSc) and Valerie Kendall (B.Sc(H), (M.EnvSc) in addition to the surveys carried out by BnM.

During the multidisciplinary walkover survey, an otter survey was conducted as per NRA (2009) guidelines (Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes). This involved a search for all otter signs e.g., spraints, scat, prints, slides, trails, couches, and holts. In addition to the width of the rivers/watercourses, a 10m riparian buffer (both banks) was considered to comprise part of the otter habitat (NPWS 2009). The dedicated otter surveys also followed the guidance as set out in NRA (2008) 'Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters Prior to the Construction of National Roads Schemes' and following CIEEM best practice competencies for species surveys (CIEEM, 2013).

2.4.1

Habitats

The most dominant habitat type recorded on the site was **Cutover Bog (PB4) dominated by Bare Peat**, present across the majority of the bog (See plate 2-1). Habitats of biodiversity interest were largely confined to the marginal habitats fringing the bog. A number of old railway tracks were also recorded within the cutover bog dominated by bare peat area.

Drainage ditches (FW4) (plates 2-1, 2-4, 2-7 and 2-9) are present throughout the site and within the cutover bog dominated by bare peat areas. Some plant species recorded along and within the drainage ditches included soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), Ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Annual meadowgrass (*Poa annua*), purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*), reedmace (*Typha latifolia*), dandelion (*Taraxacum spp*), Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) and cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*).

To the south, near the site entrance from the N63 is a Cypress (*Cupressus spp*) **Tree line (WL2)** (plate 2-2), **Scrub (WS1)** comprising of gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), ivy (*Hedera hibernica*), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), willow (*Salix cinerea*), fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*) and **Wet grassland (GS4)** with annual meadowgrass (*Poa annua*, *Pseudosceleropodium purum*, ribwort plantain (*Plantago*

lanceolata), silver weed (*Potentilla anserina*), dandelion (*Taraxacum* spp), soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), *Brachythecium rutabulum*, *Kindbergia praelonga*, *Calliergonella cuspidata* and creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*).

The southwestern margin of the site comprised of an area of **cutover bog (PB4) dominated by bare peat** with some coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*), annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*), soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) and a **River (FW2)**, the Templeton_Glebe (plate 2-3) with some algae species, fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), yellow iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) and annual meadowgrass (*Poa annua*) growing along it. A large **drainage ditch (FW4)** (plate 2-4) that had been closed off was recorded near the Templeton Glebe River. Bryophytes and lichens were seen growing on its exposed soil bank and a culvert with running water was also recorded to the end of this drainage ditch. Along this ditch was an area of **scrub (WS1)** (plate 2-4) comprising of ivy (*Hedera hibernica*), willow (*Salix cinerea*), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), dry bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and a **conifer plantation (WD4)** (plate 2-4) with Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) and larch (*Larix* spp). Four silt ponds (plate 2-5) were also recorded close to each other along this margin. Vegetation around the silt ponds comprised of gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), willow (*Salix cinerea*), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*) and a small patch of puffballs (*Lycoperdon* spp). There was a change in habitat from scrub and cutover bog dominated by bare peat to **raised bog (PB1)** which comprised of ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *Dicranum scoparium*, gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*).

The western margin comprised of a **conifer plantation (WD4)** and a **treeline (WL2)** with species including Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), willow (*Salix cinerea*) and downy birch (*Betula pubescens*).

Scrub (WS1) is present to the southeast margin of the site, with species recorded including downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) and gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and a large drainage channel which was heavily shaded by gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) and willow (*Salix cinerea*). Eroded soil was recorded in the drainage channel with bryophytes including *Sphagnum fallax*, *Sphagnum palustre* and *Sphagnum capillifolium* and lichens growing along its bank. Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), reedmace (*Typha latifolia*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) were recorded within and along the smaller drainage ditches. A small area of **dry heath (dHeath)** (plate 2-6) was recorded along the drainage channel comprising of ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and cross leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*). Later, a **treeline (WL2)** of downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) and willow (*Salix cinerea*) was recorded along a large **drainage ditch (FW4)** (plate 2-7). On the opposite side of the ditch was an **improved agricultural grassland (GA1)**. A **birch woodland (WN7)** (plate 2-8) was also recorded to the southeast, followed by a **raised bog (PB1)** in poor condition (plate 2-9) with minimal moss cover and drainage ditches along it. The raised bog in poor condition comprised of ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), pine saplings (*Pinus* spp), common cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), dry bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), *Campylopus introflexus*, *Cladonia portentosa* and *Cladonia florkeana*.

The raised bog in poor condition continued into the eastern and north-eastern margins of the site. The north-eastern margin however comprised of more gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) plants followed by a **scrub (WS1)** and **drainage ditches (FW4)** with pondweed (*Potamogeton* spp) growing in them.

Scrub (WS1) present to the northern margin of the site comprised of species including willow (*Salix cinerea*), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), dry bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and a **wet grassland (GS4)** (plate 2-10) with *Pseudoscleropodium purum*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*, purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*), small patch of snowy waxcap mushrooms (*Cuphophyllus virgineus*), annual meadowgrass (*Poa* spp), soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) and common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*). The wet grassland led to a **birch woodland (WN7)** and **treeline (WL2)** to the north and northwest, which also comprised of gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), ivy (*Hedera hibernica*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and dry bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and adjoining this woodland was an **improved agricultural grassland (GA1)**.

2.4.2 Fauna

A number of species or signs thereof have been observed on Killashee Bog by Bord na Móna including buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), 14x field fare (*Turdus pilaris*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), badger (*Meles meles*) and foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*). More common species recorded during the BnM site visits include, robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), blackbird (*Turdus merula*), heron (*Ardea cinerea*), grey crow (*Corvus cornix*) and magpie (*Pica pica*).

A number of species or signs thereof were also recorded during the ecological walkover survey carried out by and Rudraksh Gupta (BSc, MSc) and Valerie Kendall (B.Sc(H), (M.EnvSc) of MKO, on 14th of March 2023. Signs of mammals (tracks, snuffle holes, burrows) including badger (*Meles meles*) were recorded on the site. No signs of otter were recorded during the survey. Amphibians recorded during the survey included common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and its frog spawn within the drainage ditches. 1x heron (*Ardea cinerea*), 3x passerines and 3x snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) were flushed during the site visit.

2.4.3 Drainage and Connection to European Sites

Killashee bog has a gravity drainage regime. The bog mainly drains into the Ballynakill stream to the south and northwest and via adjacent drains which flow to the Ballynakill stream which flows away from the bog towards the River Shannon. There are five different sub-catchments that drain water from Killashee Bog. Two of these drain water from both the bog and surrounding agricultural lands outside the bog. The remaining three only drain water from areas within the bog. Peat extraction at Killashee Bog has stopped and the bog has been selected by Bord na Móna for rehabilitation through the Peatlands Climate Action Scheme (PCAS). The measures proposed to achieve this include blocking the drainage network, deep peat cell bunding and creating wetland areas. These measures will result in raising the water table within the bog and reducing the rate that water drains out of the bog. The site contains open drainage channels.

Silt ponds are the key silt control infrastructure to control potential emissions from industrial peat production sites. As required under licence, BnM have a number of procedures for how it manages and maintains its silt pond network. The silt that builds up in silt ponds is excavated on a regular basis by Bord na Móna to facilitate an efficient level of silt control. Silt ponds will continue to be maintained during the rehabilitation and decommissioning. Silt pond decommissioning will be considered when sites are deemed to be on a trajectory of environmental stability and peatland rehabilitation has been completed. There are several silt ponds around the margins of Killashee Bog.

The Templeton Glebe stream flows in a north-westerly direction outside the southwestern bog boundary. The Templeton Glebe stream flows into the Ballynakill_26 River which flows in a northerly direction outside the western site boundary. The Ballynakill_26 River merges with the Shannon [Upper] River flowing in a westerly direction. The Shannon [Upper] River turns and flows in a south westerly direction before flowing into Lough Ree SAC and Lough Ree SPA, both located approximately 5.6km west of Killashee Bog. The Shannon [Upper] River flows in a southerly direction and into River Shannon Callows SAC and Middle Shannon Callows SPA, both located approx. 29.0km south of Killashee Bog. Further, the River Shannon [Lower] flows in a southerly direction into Lough Derg North-East Shore SAC and Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA, both located approx. 70.0km southwest of Killashee Bog. Finally, the River Shannon [Lower] flows into the Lower River Shannon SAC, located approx. 103.6km southwest of Killashee Bog and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA, located approx. 123.6km southwest of Killashee Bog before discharging into the Shannon Estuary.

2.4.4

Consequences of Proposed Rehabilitation for Current Habitats

It is not expected that Killashee Bog has the potential to develop active raised bog (ARB) analogous to the priority EU Habitats Directive Annex I habitat within the foreseeable future (c.50 years). Furthermore, only a proportion of the bog has potential to develop Sphagnum-rich habitats in this timeframe. Nevertheless, re-wetting across the entire bog, as part of the scheme, will improve habitat conditions of the whole bog. Other peatland habitats will develop in a wider mosaic that reflects underlying conditions.

Habitats currently evaluated as not requiring rehabilitation (i.e., marginal land, railway line) will remain in line with existing baseline trends for these habitats.



Plate 2-1 Areas of cutover bog (PB4) dominated by bare peat with drainage ditches (FW4) present throughout the site.



Plate 2-2 A treeline (WL2) comprising of Cypress (*Cupressus spp*) to the south.



Plate 2-3 The Templeton Glebe River (FW2) located at the south-western margin of the site.



Plate 2-4 A large drainage ditch (FW4) separating a Conifer Plantation (WD4) with Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) and Larch (*Larix* spp) and scrub (WS1) with willow (*Salix cinerea*), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), dry bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) located at the south-western margin of the site.



Plate 2-5 A silt pond located at the south-western margin.



Plate 2-6 A small area of dry heath (dHeath) with ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and cross leaved heath (*Erica tetralix*) located at the south-eastern margin.



Plate 2-7 A downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) and willow (*Salix cinerea*) treeline (WL2) located along a large drainage ditch (FW4) to the south east. On the opposite side of the ditch was an improved agricultural grassland (GA1).



Plate 2-8 A birch woodland (WN7) located at the south-eastern margin of the site.



Plate 2-9 A raised bog (PB1) in poor condition along a drainage ditch (FW4) with ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*), downy birch (*Betula pubescens*), pine saplings (*Pinus spp*), cottongrass (*Eriophorum angustifolium*), dry bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), *Campylopus introflexus*, *Cladonia portentosa* and *Cladonia florkeana* to the south eastern, eastern and north eastern margins of the site.



Plate 2-10 A wet grassland (GS4) to the northern margin with *Pseudoscleropodium purum*, *Pleurozium schreberi*, *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus*, purple moor grass (*Molinia caerulea*), annual meadowgrass (*Poa annua*) and soft rush (*Juncus effusus*).

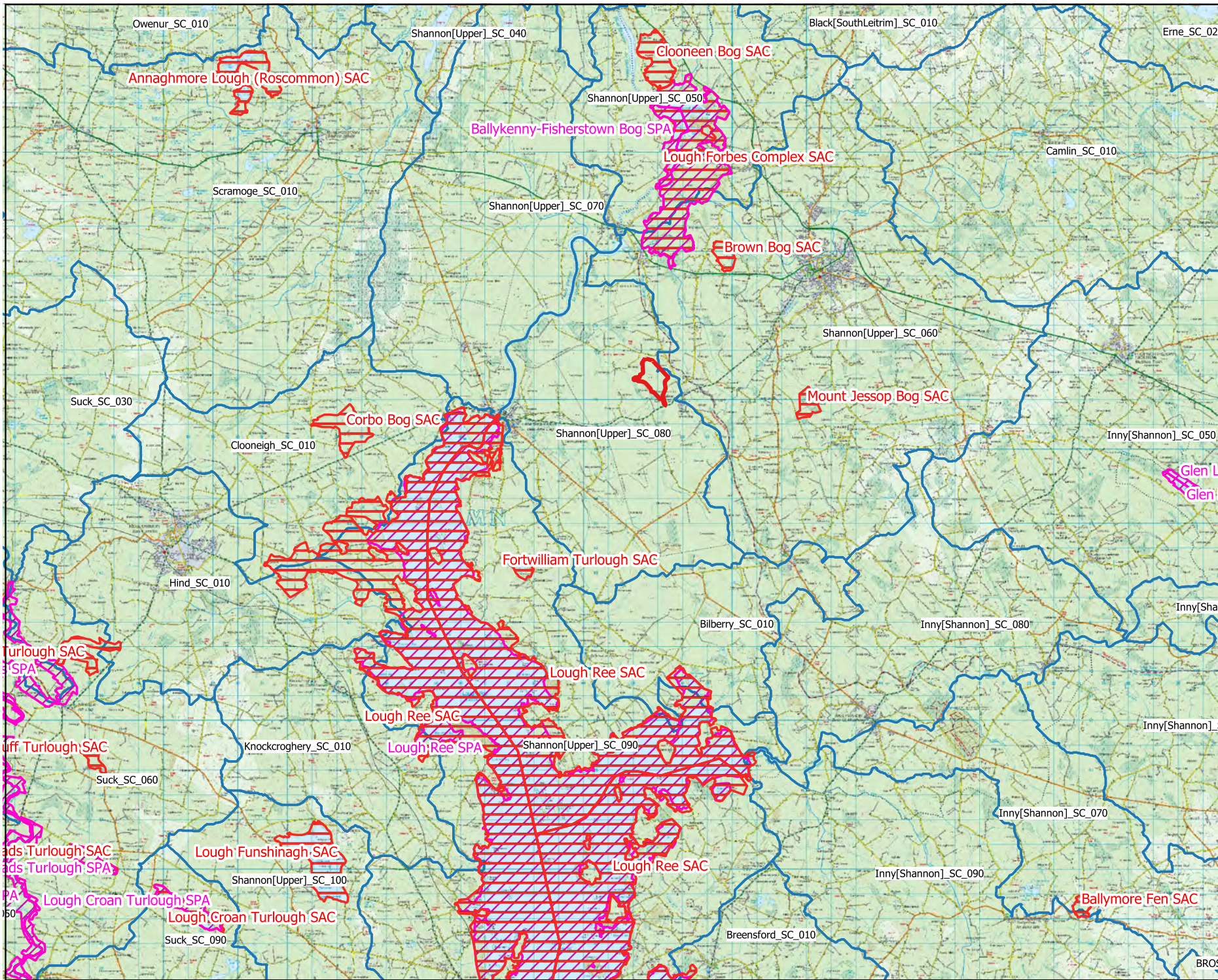
3. IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES

3.1 Identification of the European Sites within the Likely Zone of Impact

The following methodology was used to establish any European Sites upon which there is a potential for a likely significant effect to occur either individually or in combination with other plans and projects as a result of the proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation:

- Initially the most up to date GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites and water catchments were downloaded from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) and the EPA website (www.epa.ie) on the 13/03/2023.
- All European Sites that could potentially be affected were identified using a source-pathway - receptor model. To provide context for the assessment, European Sites surrounding the Decommissioning and Rehabilitation site are shown on Figure 3.1. Information on these sites according to the site-specific conservation objectives is provided in Table 3-1. The catchment mapping was used to establish or discount potential hydrological connectivity between the site of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation and any European Sites. The hydrological catchments are also shown in Figure 3.1. In this case connectivity with sites that were further downstream in the catchment was identified. These included River Shannon Callows SAC (approx. 29.0km), Lough Derg North- East Shore SAC (approx. 70.0km), Lower River Shannon SAC (approx. 103.6km), Middle Shannon Callows SPA (approx. 29.0km), Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA (approx. 70.0km), and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA (approx. 123.6km). However, given the nature, scale and location of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation and the attenuating properties of the of the intervening waterbodies, no potential pathway for significant effects on the above listed European sites was identified.
- Sites that were further away from the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation were also considered and no complete source-pathway-receptor chain for significant effect was identified for any other European Site
- In relation to Special Protection Areas, in the absence of any specific European or Irish guidance in relation to such sites, the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Guidance, '*Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPA)*' (2016) was consulted. This document provides guidance in relation to the identification of connectivity between proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation and Special Protection Areas. The guidance takes into consideration the distances species may travel beyond the boundary of their SPAs and provides information on dispersal and foraging ranges of bird species which are frequently encountered when considering plans and projects.
- Table 3.1 provides details of all relevant European Sites as identified in the preceding steps and assesses the potential for likely significant effects on each.
- The assessment considers any likely direct or indirect impacts of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation, both alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on European Sites by virtue of criteria including the following: size and scale, land-take, distance from the European Site or key features of the site, resource requirements, emissions, excavation requirements, transportation requirements and duration of construction, operation and decommissioning were considered in this assessment.


- The site synopses and conservation objectives of these sites, as per the NPWS website (www.npws.ie), were consulted and reviewed at the time of preparing this report 13/03/2023.
- Where potential pathways for Likely Significant Effect are identified, the site is included within the Likely Zone of Impact and considered in the screening statement below.
- The potential for the proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation to result in cumulative impacts on any European Sites in combination with other plans and projects was considered in the assessment that is presented in Table 3.1.



Map Legend

-  Site Boundary
-  Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
-  Special Protection Areas (SPA)
-  EPA Hydrological Subcatchments

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Drawing Title	
European Designated Sites within Zone of Likely Influence	
Project Title	
Killashee Bog, Co. Longford	
Drawn By	Checked By
RG	CM
Project No.	Drawing No.
230210	Fig 3.1
Scale	Date
1:200000	07.03.2023



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Table 3-1 Identification of Designated sites within the Likely Zone of Impact

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Lough Forbes Complex SAC [001818] Distance: 3.8km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation [3150] ➤ Active raised bogs [7110] ➤ Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] ➤ Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] ➤ Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, May 2016), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SAC as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Due to the absence of a hydrological connection, and the buffering distance of 3.8km from the project footprint to this SAC, no complete source-pathway was identified for this QI habitat. As such, there is no potential for indirect effects to occur.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>
Brown Bog SAC [002346] Distance: 4.6km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Active raised bogs [7110] ➤ Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] ➤ Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, February 2016), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SAC as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Due to the terrestrial nature of the QI habitats, the buffering distance of 4.6km from the project footprint to this SAC, no complete source pathway was identified. As such, there is no potential for indirect effects to occur.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>
<p>Mount Jessop Bog SAC [002202]</p> <p>Distance: 5.3km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] ➤ Bog woodland [91D0] 	<p>This site has the generic conservation objective:</p> <p>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.’</p> <p>NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Mount Jessop Bog SAC [002202]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SAC as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Due to the terrestrial nature of the QI habitats, the buffering distance of 5.3km from the project footprint to this SAC, no complete source pathway was identified. As such, there is no potential for indirect effects to occur.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>
<p>Lough Ree SAC [000440]</p> <p>Distance: 5.6km</p> <p>Surface Water Distance: 13.1km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] ➤ Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i> - type vegetation [3150] ➤ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, August 2016), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SAC as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p> <p>The is no complete source-impact-pathway for the following habitats due to their terrestrial nature and the 5.6km buffering distance from the project footprint of this SAC:</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
	<p>calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] ➤ Alkaline fens [7230] ➤ Limestone pavements [8240] ➤ Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] ➤ Bog woodland [91D0] 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco- Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ➤ Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] ➤ Limestone pavement [8240] ➤ Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] ➤ Bog woodland [91D0] <p>As such, there is no potential for indirect effects on these habitats.</p> <p>Killashee Bog and Lough Ree SAC are hydrologically connected via Templeton_ Glebe River, Ballynakill_26 River and the River Shannon [Upper]. This European Designated site is located approx. 13.1km downstream of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog. As such, following the precautionary principle, a potential pathway for effect on the following QI habitats and species was identified in the form of deterioration of water quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] ➤ Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotia- mion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i>-type vegetation [3150] ➤ Alkaline fens [7230]

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<p>However, the objective of the Decommissioning and Rehabilitation is to stabilise the bog. These proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation measures are specifically designed to reverse the drainage of the bog and to minimise the run-off of waters from it. The proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation will not result in any loss of habitats, are short term and will not be occurring over the entire bog at any one time, leaving much of the bog completely undisturbed. Further, due to the small nature and scale of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, there is no potential for indirect effects in the form of deterioration of water quality on Lough Ree SAC. There is no potential for the proposed R & D to result in significant effects on downstream watercourses and ecological receptors as the D & R primarily involves the blocking of drainage pathways from the bog.</p> <p>As such, in the absence of any mitigation, there is no potential for any significant effect on these QI receptors as a result of water pollution or change to the hydrological regime within the SAC.</p> <p>The potential for disturbance to otter, where it occurs outside the SAC was also assessed.</p> <p>Otters have been recorded within 1km of Killashee Bog during surveys undertaken at the site by BnM. Silt ponds were checked for otter breeding potential during the</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<p>ecological survey conducted by MKO on the 14th of March 2023. However, no otter signs/habitats were recorded. The Decommissioning and Rehabilitation will not result in any loss of potential otter habitat (foraging and breeding) as it is short term and will not be occurring over the entire bog at any one time, leaving much of the bog undisturbed. Hence there is no potential for Decommissioning and Rehabilitation, in the absence of any mitigation, to result in significant upstream ex-situ disturbance to this QI species.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>
<p>Fortwilliam Turlough SAC [000448]</p> <p>Distance: 8.4km</p>	<p>➤ Turloughs [3180]</p>	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, February 2018), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SAC as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Due to the absence of a hydrological connection, and the buffering distance of 8.4km from the project footprint to this SAC, no complete source-pathway was identified for this QI habitat. As such, there is no potential for indirect effects to occur.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.
Corbo Bog SAC [002349] Distance: 10.7km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Active raised bogs [7110] ➤ Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] ➤ Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, November 2015), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SAC as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Due to the terrestrial nature of the QI habitats, the buffering distance of 10.7km from the project footprint to this SAC, no complete source pathway was identified. As such, there is no potential for indirect effects to occur.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>
Clooneen Bog SAC [002348] Distance: 10.9km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] ➤ Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150] ➤ Bog woodland [91D0] 	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, August 2016), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SAC as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Due to the terrestrial nature of the QI habitats, the buffering distance of 10.9km from the project footprint to this SAC, no complete source pathway was identified. As such, there is no potential for indirect effects to occur.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation,</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<p>individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>
<p>River Shannon Callows SAC [000216]</p> <p>Distance: 29.0km</p> <p>Surface Water</p> <p>Distance: 34.5km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] ➤ <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty, or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] ➤ Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>, <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>) [6510] ➤ Alkaline fens [7230] ➤ Limestone pavements*[8240] ➤ Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) *[91E0] 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, January 2022), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SAC as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Killashee Bog and the River Shannon Callows SAC are hydrologically connected via the Templeton_Glebe River, Ballynakill_26 River and the River Shannon [Upper]. This European Designated site is located approx. 34.5km downstream of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog.</p> <p>Although there is potential hydrological connectivity to the River Shannon Callows SAC via the River Shannon [Upper], the SAC is located approx. 37km downstream. Therefore, due to the distance of greater than 23.5km, the assimilative capacity of the intervening watercourses and the small nature and scale of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, there is no potential for indirect effects in the form of deterioration of water quality on the River Shannon Callows SAC.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Designated Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment
<p>Lough Derg, North-East Shore SAC [002241]</p> <p>Distance: 70.0km</p> <p>Surface Water Distance: 84.5km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] ➤ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] ➤ Alkaline fens [7230] ➤ Limestone pavements [8240] ➤ Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] ➤ <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles [91J0] 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, April 2019), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SAC as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Killashee Bog and Lough Derg, North-East Shore SAC are hydrologically connected via the Templeton_Glebe River, Ballynakill_26 River, the River Shannon [Upper] and River Shannon [Lower]. This European Designated site is located approx. 84.5km downstream of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog.</p> <p>Although there is potential hydrological connectivity to Lough Derg, North-East Shore SAC via the River Shannon [Lower], the SAC is located approximately 84.5km downstream. Therefore, due to the distance of greater than 70.0km, the assimilative capacity of the intervening watercourses and the small nature and scale of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, there is no potential for indirect effects in the form of deterioration of water quality on the Lough Derg, North-East Shore SAC.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Designated Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment
<p>Lower River Shannon SAC [002165]</p> <p>Distance: 103.6km</p> <p>Surface Water Distance: 113.5km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) [1029] ➤ Sea Lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) [1095] ➤ Brook Lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) [1096] ➤ River Lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) [1099] ➤ Atlantic Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) (only in fresh water) [1106] ➤ Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time. [1110] ➤ Estuaries [1130] ➤ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide. [1140] ➤ *Coastal lagoons [1150] ➤ Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] ➤ Reefs [1170] ➤ Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, August 2012), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SAC as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Killashee Bog and the Lower River Shannon SAC are hydrologically connected via the Templeton_Glebe River, Ballynakill_26 River, the River Shannon [Upper] and River Shannon [Lower]. This European Designated site is located approx.113.5km downstream of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog.</p> <p>Although there is potential hydrological connectivity to the Lower River Shannon SAC via the River Shannon [Lower], the SAC is located approximately 113.5km downstream. Therefore, due to the distance of greater than 103.6km, the assimilative capacity of the intervening watercourses and the small nature and scale of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, there is no potential for indirect effects in the form of deterioration of water quality on the Lower River Shannon SAC.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Designated Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Vegetated Sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] ➤ <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand. [1310] ➤ Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] ➤ Bottlenose Dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>) [1349] ➤ Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355] ➤ Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] ➤ Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> ➤ Vegetation [3260] ➤ Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty, or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] ➤ Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0 *] 		<p>Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
Special Protection Area (SPA)			
<p>Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA [004101]</p> <p>Distance: 3.8km</p>	<p>➤ Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]</p>	<p>This site has the generic conservation objective:</p> <p>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.’</p> <p>NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA [004101]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SPA as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>The project footprint is located 3.8km from this SPA and is within the core foraging range of 5-8km for the Greenland White-Fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) (SNH 2016).</p> <p>However, there is no significant suitable habitats such as managed agricultural grasslands, blanket bogs, dune grasslands for Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) within the site. Further, due to the absence of a hydrological connection, there is no potential for ex situ disturbance or displacement related impacts on this SCI species as a result of the proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation at Killashee Bog.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>
<p>Lough Ree SPA [004064]</p>	<p>➤ Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004]</p>	<p>This site has the generic conservation objective:</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SPA as the project footprint is located entirely outside the designated site.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
<p>Distance: 5.6km</p> <p>Surface Water</p> <p>Distance: 13.1km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] ➤ Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] ➤ Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] ➤ Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] ➤ Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] ➤ Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] ➤ Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] ➤ Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] ➤ Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] ➤ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] ➤ Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] ➤ Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] ➤ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>‘To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA’.</p> <p>NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Lough Ree SPA [004064]. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.</p>	<p>Killashee Bog and Lough Ree SPA are hydrologically connected via the Templeton Glebe River, Ballynakill_26 River and River Shannon [Upper]. This European Designated site is located approx. 13.1km downstream of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog. As such, following the precautionary principle, a potential pathway for effect on the listed SCI species and their habitats was identified in the form of deterioration in water quality.</p> <p>However, the objective of the Decommissioning and Rehabilitation is to stabilise the bog. These proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation measures are specifically designed to reverse the drainage of the bog and to minimise the run-off of waters from it. The proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation will not result in any loss of habitats, are short term and will not be occurring over the entire bog at any one time, leaving much of the bog completely undisturbed. Further, due to the small nature and scale of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, there is no potential for indirect effects in the form of deterioration of water quality on Lough Ree SPA. There is no potential for the proposed R & D to result in significant effects on downstream watercourses and ecological receptors as the D & R primarily involves the blocking of drainage pathways from the bog.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<p>As such, in the absence of any mitigation, there is no potential for any significant effect on these QI receptors as a result of water pollution or change to the hydrological regime within the SPA.</p> <p>The potential for disturbance to the SCI species, where they occur outside the SPA was also assessed.</p> <p>The vast majority of Killashee Bog comprises of cutover bog dominated by bare peat. Therefore, there is no suitable habitat on or adjacent to the Killashee Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation site for the following SCI species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] ➤ Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] ➤ Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] ➤ Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] ➤ Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] ➤ Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] ➤ Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] ➤ Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] ➤ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] ➤ Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] ➤ Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] <p>The silt ponds located on the site have the potential to provide wetland habitat for wintering or passage wildfowl species, which are likely to occur where there is deep enough</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<p>water on areas of the bog. As such, there is potential habitat available for the following listed SCI species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] ➤ Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] ➤ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]. <p>However, the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog will not result in any loss of habitat, are short term and will not be covering the entire bog at any one time, leaving much of the bog completely undisturbed. Further, the proposed D&R will result in an overall increase of wetland habitats on Killashee Bog. Hence, there is no potential for the D&R in the absence of any mitigation, to result in significant disturbance to these SCI species mentioned above.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>
<p>Middle Shannon Callows SPA [004096]</p> <p>Distance: 29.0km</p> <p>Surface Water Distance: 34.5km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] ➤ Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] ➤ Corncrake (<i>Crex crex</i>) [A122] 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, November 2022), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SPA as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Killashee Bog and the Middle Shannon Callows SPA are hydrologically connected via the Templeton_Glebe River, Ballynakill_26 River and the River Shannon [Upper]. This</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)[A140] ➤ Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] ➤ Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] ➤ Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)[A179] ➤ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 		<p>European Designated Site is located approx. 34.5km downstream of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog.</p> <p>Although there is potential hydrological connectivity to the Middle Shannon Callows SPA via the River Shannon [Upper], the SPA is located approximately 34.5km downstream. Therefore, due to the distance of greater than 29.0km, the assimilative capacity of the intervening watercourses and the small nature and scale of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, in the absence of any mitigation, there is no potential for any significant effect on these SCI species as a result of water pollution or change to the hydrological regime within the SPA.</p> <p>Further, due to the small nature and scale of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, the distance of greater than approx 29.0km, there is no potential for ex situ disturbance or displacement related impacts on the SCI species as a result of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation on the Middle Shannon Callows SPA.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
<p>Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA</p> <p>Distance: 70.0km</p> <p>Surface Water</p> <p>Distance: 84.5km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] ➤ Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] ➤ Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] ➤ Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] ➤ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, October 2022), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SPA as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Killashee Bog and Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA are hydrologically connected via the Templeton_Glebe River, Ballynakill_26 River, the River Shannon [Upper] and River Shannon [Lower]. This European Designated Site is located approx. 84.5km downstream of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog.</p> <p>Although there is potential hydrological connectivity to Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA via the River Shannon [Lower], the SPA is located approximately 84.5km downstream. Therefore, due to the distance of greater than 70.0km, the assimilative capacity of the intervening watercourses and the small nature and scale of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, in the absence of any mitigation, there is no potential for any significant effect on these SCI species as a result of water pollution or change to the hydrological regime within the SPA.</p> <p>Further, due to the small nature and scale of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, the distance of greater than approx 70.0km, there is no potential for ex situ disturbance or displacement related impacts on the SCI species as a result of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation on Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
			<p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>
<p>River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA [004077]</p> <p>Distance: 123.6km</p> <p>Surface Water Distance: 142.5km</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] ➤ Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] ➤ Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>[A046] ➤ Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] ➤ Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] ➤ Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] ➤ Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] ➤ Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] ➤ Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>) [A062] ➤ Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] ➤ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] ➤ Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] 	<p>Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, September 2012), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie</p>	<p>There will be no direct effects on this SPA as the project footprint is located entirely outside the boundary of this designated site.</p> <p>Killashee Bog and River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA are hydrologically connected via the Templeton_Glebe River, Ballynakill_26 River, the River Shannon [Upper] and River Shannon [Lower]. This European Designated Site is located approx.142.5km downstream of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog.</p> <p>Although there is potential hydrological connectivity to the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA via the River Shannon [Lower], the SPA is located approximately 142.5km downstream. Therefore, due to the distance of greater than 123.6km, the assimilative capacity of the intervening watercourses and the small nature and scale of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, in the absence of any mitigation, there is no potential for any significant effect on these SCI species as a result of water pollution or change to the hydrological regime within the SPA.</p>

European Sites and distance from proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie on the 13/03/2023	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and Likely Zone of Impact Determination
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] ➤ Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] ➤ Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] ➤ Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] ➤ Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] ➤ Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] ➤ Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] ➤ Greenshank (<i>Tringa nebularia</i>) [A164] ➤ Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] ➤ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 		<p>Further, due to the small nature and scale of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog, the distance of greater than approx 123.6km, there is no potential for ex situ disturbance or displacement related impacts on the SCI species as a result of the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation on the. River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA.</p> <p>No pathway for significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects and the site is not within the Likely Zone of Impact and is not considered further in this Screening assessment.</p>

3.2 **Likely Cumulative Impact of the Proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation on European Sites, in-combination with other plans and projects**

A search and review in relation to plans and projects that may have the potential to result in cumulative and/or in-combination impacts on European Sites was conducted. This assessment focuses on the potential for cumulative in-combination effects on the European Sites considered in Table 3.1. This included a review of online Planning Registers, development plans and other available information and served to identify past and future plans and projects, their activities and their predicted environmental effects.

3.2.1 **Plans**

The following development plans been reviewed and taken into consideration as part of this assessment:

- > County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027
- > National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021

The review focused on policies and objectives that relate to Natura 2000 sites and natural heritage.

Table 3-2 Review of relevant Policies and Objectives

Plans	Key Policies/Issues/Objectives Directly Related to European Sites, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development in The Zone of Influence	Assessment of development compliance with policy
<p>County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027</p>	<p>CPO 12.1: Protect, conserve, and enhance to the County’s natural heritage and biodiversity. This includes wildlife (flora and fauna), habitats, landscapes and/or landscape features of importance to wildlife, or which play a key role in the conservation and management of natural resources.</p> <p>CPO 12.2: Encourage and promote access to and understanding of the natural heritage of the County.</p> <p>CPO 12.3: Protect important geological or geomorphological sites in the County, including any sites designated or proposed to be designated as Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs).</p> <p>CPO 12.5 Protect and conserve the conservation value of Special Areas of Conservation, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas and any other sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Plan.</p> <p>CPO 12.7 Ensure that any plan or project that could have a significant adverse impact (either by themselves or in combination with other plans and projects) upon the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 Site or would result in the deterioration of any habitat or any species reliant on that habitat will not be permitted. Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive; in so far as there must be – (a) no alternative solution available (b) imperative reasons of an overriding public interest for the project to proceed; and (c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.</p> <p>CPO 12.9 Ensure an Appropriate Assessment is carried out in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European Site(s), either individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site’s conservation objectives to comply with the Habitats Directive.</p> <p>CPO 12.10 Permit development on or adjacent to designated Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves, or those proposed to be designated over the period of the Plan, only where an appropriate level of assessment can clearly demonstrate that it will have no significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site.</p> <p>CPO 12.13 Undertake appropriate surveys and collect data to provide an evidence-base to assist the Council in meeting its obligations under Article 6 of the Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC) subject to available resources.</p>	<p>The Development plan was comprehensively reviewed, with particular reference to Policies and Objectives that relate to the Natura 2000 network and other natural heritage interests. No potential for cumulative impacts when considered in conjunction with the current proposal were identified.</p> <p>There will be no impact on designated sites or biodiversity as a result of the proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation.</p>

	<p>CPO 12.15 Require an ecological appraisal, in addition to an Appropriate Assessment, for development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites, or a proposed European Site and which are likely to have significant effects on that site either individually or cumulatively.</p> <p>CPO 12.17 Require an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) for any proposed development which may have a significant impact on rare, threatened and or protected species and non-designated habitats of biodiversity value.</p> <p>CPO 12.18 Where surveys carried out for the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA/EcIA)/ Natura Impact Statement or other assessments generate biodiversity data previously unknown or unrecorded in the County this data be submitted to the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NDBC).</p> <p>CPO 12.19 Ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological/networks of natural heritage, biodiversity, and environmental value outside designated sites and to require an appropriate level of ecological assessment by suitably qualified professional(s) to accompany development proposals likely to impact on such areas or species.</p> <p>CPO 12.27 Contribute towards the appropriate protection of Geological Natural Heritage Areas that become designated during the lifetime of the Plan from inappropriate development.</p> <p>CPO 12.51 Ensure that peatland areas which are designated (or proposed for designation) as NHAs, SACs or SPAs are conserved for their ecological, climate regulation, archaeological, cultural, and educational significance.</p> <p>CPO 12.52 Work in partnership with relevant stakeholders on all suitable peatland sites to demonstrate best practice in sustainable peatland conservation, management, and restoration techniques and to promote their heritage and educational value subject to Ecological Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening, as appropriate.</p> <p>CPO 12.57 Support the implementation of any relevant recommendations contained in the National Biodiversity Plan, the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and the National Peatlands Strategy the National Biodiversity Plan and the Longford Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024.</p> <p>CPO 12.58 Ensure, where appropriate, the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species, and ecological/networks of biodiversity value outside designated sites.</p> <p>CPO 12.62 Screen all projects and plans arising from this plan for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. All such projects and plans will also be required to comply with statutory Environmental Impact Assessment requirements where relevant.</p>	
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	<p>CPO 13.1 Develop the green infrastructure network to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, including: T the protection of European Sites; T the provision of accessible parks, open spaces and recreational facilities (including allotments and community gardens); T the sustainable management of water; T the maintenance of landscape character including historic landscape character; T the protection and enhancement of the architectural and archaeological heritage. T Any new greenway, blueway and peatway projects shall comply with CPO 5.15 in relation to Infrastructure corridor and route selection processes.</p> <p>CPO 13.7 Ensure the protection, enhancement, and maintenance of Green Infrastructure in the Development Management Process. Require an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) for all development proposals on lands zoned Recreation / Amenity / Green Space, to ensure that the potential impacts on protected species and habitats can be assessed.</p> <p>CPO 13.15 Support the delivery of sustainable strategic Greenways, Blueways and Peatways projects in the County in accordance with the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways.</p>	
<p>National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021</p>	<p>Objective 1 Mainstream Biodiversity into Decision Making Across all Sectors.</p> <p>Action 1.1.9: Integrate Natura 2000 and Biodiversity financial expenditure tracking into Government Programmes internal paying agency management procedures including linkage to the Prioritised Action Framework⁵¹ and this NBAP.</p> <p>Objective 4: Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside.</p> <p>Target 4.2 - Principal pollutant pressures on terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity substantially reduced by 2020.</p> <p>Objective 6: Expand and improve management of protected areas and species.</p> <p>Target 6.1.1. Complete designation process for Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), in particular, for marine coastal and offshore SPAs</p> <p>Target 6.1.2 Develop and utilise licensing and consent systems to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>Target 6.1.3. Publish detailed site-specific conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>Target 6.1.7. Implement the conservation measures necessary to achieve the published conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites. Develop and implement additional measures as necessary to achieve favourable conservation status both nationally and at site level.</p>	<p>The Development plan was comprehensively reviewed, with particular reference to Policies and Objectives that relate to the Natura 2000 network and other natural heritage interests. No potential for cumulative impacts when considered in conjunction with the current proposal were identified.</p> <p>There will be no impact on designated sites or biodiversity as a result of the proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation.</p>

	<p>Target 6.1.8. Implement measures to ensure that, taking account of climate change, there are no significant adverse effects from marine fisheries and aquaculture in and adjacent to Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>Target 6.1.9. Review and update the Prioritised Action Framework for Natura 2000</p> <p>Target 6.1.10. Continue to collect information on sites to be considered towards the protection and enhancement of the Natural Heritage Area network</p>	
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3.2.2 Other Projects

Assessment material for this in-combination impact assessment was compiled on the relevant developments within the vicinity of the Proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation and was verified on the 09/03/2023. The material was gathered through a search of relevant online Planning Registers, reviews of relevant documents, planning application details and planning drawings, and served to identify past and future projects, their activities, and their environmental impacts. All relevant projects were considered in relation to the potential for in-combination effects. All relevant data was reviewed (e.g., individual EISs/EIARs, layouts, drawings etc.) for all relevant projects where available. These consisted mainly of small scale to medium scale domestic developments.

- Permission to erect an extension to existing farm shed for machinery storage, and all associated works (Pl Ref: 19262).
- Retention of an existing dwelling house and storage shed as constructed and all ancillary works (Pl Ref: 21241).
- Permission to demolish existing agricultural shed and to construct new slatted shed together with all associated site works (Pl Ref: 21242).
- Permission to dispose of materials which will be inert materials, soils & subsoil on the lands to which this application relates so as to raise the existing ground level by a maximum of two meters, creation of entrance with access road all associated ancillary works (Pl. Ref: 20152).
- Permission for proposed construction of a single storey type dwelling house, detached garage, redesign of existing agricultural entrance into a vehicular entrance to service same, boundary fence/wall, wastewater treatment system with percolation area & ancillary site works (Pl. Ref: 21244).
- Permission to erect an extension to club house to include dressing rooms, toilets, gym, a new gravel walking track, ticket office, viewing stand and car parking facilities and all associated works (Pl Ref: 19103).
- Permission to erect a new milk silo and all associated works COVID 19 (Pl. Ref: 2063).
- Permission for proposed construction of a new milking parlour with underground effluent storage tank, adjoining dairy, and drafting area together with the proposed relocation of existing milk silo and meal bin and all ancillary works (Pl. Ref: 21348).
- Permission for a new 256m² two storey dwelling, a new 24m² single storey domestic garage, new site entrance, wastewater treatment system and all associated works (Pl. Ref: 18229).
- Permission for the proposed construction of a garage type structure to service & maintain air condition systems in commercial vehicles, formation of a new entrance, boundary fence/walls all ancillary works COVID 19 (Pl. Ref: 2062).
- Retention of existing single storey extension as constructed to the side of existing two storey type dwelling house previously granted full planning permission under planning reference number PL99/203 together with seeking full planning permission for the retention of an existing detached garage which services the above-mentioned dwelling house (Pl. Ref: 22298).
- Retention of stables, storage shed, garage and all associated works (Pl. Ref: 22130).
- Permission for conversion and extension to existing garage to granny-flat to the side of existing dwelling, provision of new detached garage and all ancillary site works (Pl. Ref: 21145).
- Permission to re-locate dwelling house, sewerage system and a treatment plant and alterations to site boundaries from that granted under planning permission ref: 21/260 and all associated works (Pl. Ref: 2225).
- Permission to erect a dwelling house, provide a sewerage system and a treatment plant, to provide secondary and tertiary treatment and all associated works (Pl. Ref: 21260).
- Permission to 1) construct a 5-bay portal frame feed/hay store 2) demolish existing galvanised grain bin, along with adjacent 3 bay shed with lean-to 3) to construct a 4-bay machinery storage shed and all ancillary site works (Pl. Ref: 18274).
- Retention and relocation of existing 1-bedroom self-contained living/holiday accommodation ancillary to main farmhouse, connection to existing sewerage, fence/boundaries, and all ancillary site works (Pl. Ref: 19303).

- Permission development consisting of a ten year permission for a solar farm on a site of approximately 34.54 hectares consisting of the following; 184,500 m² of solar photo-voltaic panels on ground mounted steel frames; Ring main unit (RMU) substation and associated hard standing; 12 no. inverter/transformer stations on 6 no. hardstandings; underground power and communication cables and ducts; boundary security fence; CCTV cameras; upgraded internal access tracks; new internal access tracks, internal bridge crossing and associated drainage infrastructure; and temporary construction compounds and all associated site services and works. The proposed development seeks to form an extension to the adjoining previously permitted "Middleton House" Solar Farm which was permitted under Longford County Council Reg. Ref 18135. Access to the proposed development is provided via the permitted "Middleton House" Solar Farm via the L-11261 local road (Pl. Ref: 21225).
- Permission to construct a single storey extension to existing dwelling, new entrance, boundary fence and all ancillary site works (Pl. Ref: 2138)
- Permission to construct a bell mouth entrance onto public road to facilitate access to forestry plantation together with internal access road and all associated site works (Pl. Ref: 1893).
- Permission for the construction of a new single storey extension of 80 sq.m to the rear of the existing single storey 67 sq.m house and associated works (Pl. Ref: 2091).
- An application is currently being prepared for the proposed windfarm at Derryadd, Co. Longford There will be no spatial or temporal overlap of the PCAS rehabilitation with this proposed windfarm project.
- Surrounding land uses which included agricultural grazing lands, commercial forestry and turf cutting activities.

3.2.3 Conclusion of Cumulative Assessment

Following the detailed assessment provided in the preceding sections, it is concluded that, the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog will not result in any residual significant effects on any of the European Sites, their integrity or their conservation objectives when considered on its own. There is therefore no potential for the proposed the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation at Killashee Bog to contribute to any cumulative significant effects on any European Site when considered in-combination with other plans and projects.

In the review of the projects that was undertaken, no connection, that could potentially result in additional or cumulative impacts was identified. Neither was any potential for different (new) impacts resulting from the combination of the various projects and plans in association with the proposed Decommissioning and Rehabilitation.

Taking into consideration the reported residual impacts from other plans and projects in the area and the predicted impacts with the current proposal, no residual cumulative impacts have been identified with regard to any European Site.

4. ARTICLE 6(3) APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING STATEMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this Screening Assessment are presented following the European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2021) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010).

4.1 Data Collected to Carry Out Assessment

- Review of NPWS Site Synopses, Conservation Objectives for the European Sites
- Review of 2019, 2013 and 2007 EU Habitats Directive (Article 17) Reports.
- Review of online web-mappers: National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Teagasc, EPA, Water Framework Directive (WFD), Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI), Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), Irish Wetland Bird Survey I-WeBS & Geohive online Environmental Sensitivity Mapping tool
- Review of Bird Atlases: (Sharrock, 1976; Lack, 1986; Gibbons et al., 1993; Balmer et al., 2013).
- Review of OS maps and aerial photographs of the site of the proposed project.
- Review of relevant databases including National Biodiversity Ireland Database and available literature of previous surveys conducted in the area.
- Review of other plans and projects within the area.
- Review of location and layout mapping for proposed rehabilitation
- Review of the results from previous ecological surveys of Killashee Bog.
- Review of description of proposed rehabilitation measures, including methodologies specific to the main categories of land types under consideration.
- Site visit conducted on the 14/03/2023 by MKO ecologists Rudraksh Gupta and Valerie Kendall

4.2 Concluding Statement

It is 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 proposed decommissioning and rehabilitation, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have a significant effect on any European Site.

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APPENDIX 1

**KILLAHSEE BOG, DECOMMISSIONING
AND REHABILITATION PLAN 2023**

Bord na Móna

Killashee bog

**Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and
Rehabilitation Plan**

2023

This document seeks to address the requirements of Condition 10.2 of IPC License Ref. P0504-01:

“The licensee shall prepare, to the satisfaction of the Agency, a fully detailed and costed plan for permanent rehabilitation of the cutaway boglands within the licensed area.”

This licence condition requires Bord na Móna agree with the EPA the measures that will provide for rehabilitation, i.e. stabilisation of Killashee bog upon cessation of peat production and compliments the licence requirement to decommission the site.

Rehabilitation generally comprises site stabilisation with natural colonisation with or without targeted management.

Industrial peat production has now fully ceased at Killashee bog.

In addition, to preparing this document to comply with Condition 10 of IPC Licence Ref. P0504-01, due regard was also given to the Peatlands Climate Action Scheme (PCAS) announced by the Minister. This Scheme will see the Minister support, via the Climate Action Fund and Ireland’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan, Bord na Móna in developing a package of measures, ‘the Scheme’, for enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration of cutaway peatlands referred to as, the Peatlands Climate Action Scheme’. However, only the additional costs associated with the additional and enhanced rehabilitation, i.e., measures which go beyond the existing standard mandatory decommissioning and rehabilitation requirements arising from Condition 10 will be eligible for support. The additional costs of the Scheme will be supported by Government, administered by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), while the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) will act as the Scheme regulator.

While this document outlines the enhanced rehabilitation measures planned for Killashee bog, activities which go beyond that required by Condition 10 in the Licence, rehabilitation necessary to comply with the ‘standard’ requirement of Condition 10 (in the absence of the Scheme) is also included, to estimate costs. The inclusion of the ‘standard’ rehabilitation together with the enhanced rehabilitation in this document allows the Scheme Regulator to distinguish and objectively determine the specific activities (and their associated costs) eligible for support under the Scheme.

Bord na Móna have defined the key rehabilitation outcome at Killashee bog as environmental stabilisation, re-wetting and setting the bog on a trajectory towards development of naturally functioning peatland and wetland habitats.

Any consideration of any other future after-uses for Killashee bog will be conducted in adherence to the relevant planning guidelines and consultation with relevant authorities and will be considered within the framework of this rehabilitation plan.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Bord na Móna operates under IPC Licence issued and administered by the EPA to extract peat within the Mount Dillon bog group (Ref. P0504-01). As part of Condition 10.2 of this license, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the boglands within the licensed area. Killashee bog is part of the Mount Dillon bog group (see Appendix II for details of the bog areas within the Mount Dillon Bog Group). Killashee bog is located in Co. Longford.

This plan is a specific rehabilitation plan for the bog and outlines:

- Description of site management and status.
- Main issues and approaches to rehabilitation.
- Consultation to date with interested parties.
- Interaction with other policy and legislative frameworks (Appendix VI).
- The planned rehabilitation goals and outcomes.
- The scope of the rehabilitation plan.
- Criteria which define the successful rehabilitation and key targets to validate rehabilitation.
- Proposed rehabilitation actions.
- Proposed timeframe to implement these measures.
- Budget and Costings.
- Associated aftercare, maintenance and monitoring.

Note: This plan should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Map book.

It is proposed by Government that Bord na Móna carry out a Peatlands Enhanced Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme on its peatlands. Note this proposal is also known colloquially as the 'Peatlands Climate Action Scheme' (PCAS). The additional costs of the Scheme will be supported by Government through the Climate Action Fund, and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan administered by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), while the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) will act as the Scheme regulator. Bord na Móna have previously identified a footprint of 33,000 ha as peatlands suitable for this scheme. This Scheme will significantly go beyond what is required to meet rehabilitation and decommissioning obligations (Appendix VII & IX) under existing EPA IPC licence conditions. Improvements supported by the Scheme will ensure that environmental stabilisation is achieved (meaning IPC obligations are met), and importantly, significant additional benefits, particularly relating to climate action and other ecosystem services, will also be delivered. The Scheme commenced in 2021.

Only the costs associated with the additional, enhanced, and accelerated rehabilitation, i.e. those measures which go beyond the existing decommissioning and rehabilitation requirements arising from Condition 10, will be eligible for support under the Scheme. Bord na Móna have now announced the complete cessation of industrial peat production across its estate (January 2021).

It is expected that the Scheme (PCAS) will have benefits accruing from biodiversity provision, water quality and storage attenuation as well as increased carbon storage, reduced carbon emissions and acceleration towards carbon sequestration. The Scheme will also facilitate monitoring of carbon fluxes (Greenhouse Gases and fluvial carbon) in selected areas (in addition to other established Research programmes), to monitor changes in where the interventions will accelerate the trajectory towards a naturally functioning peatland ecosystem.

It is envisaged that the Rehabilitation Scheme will support activities, interventions, or measures across the Bord na Móna cutaway peatlands which accelerate the original timelines. Selected rehabilitation measures will take account of site environmental conditions, which can vary significantly. These measures potentially include:

- more intensive management of water levels, drain-blocking and cell bunding,
- re-profiling that will deliver suitable conditions for development of wetlands, fens and bog habitats,
- targeted fertiliser applications,
- seeding of targeted vegetation, and
- proactive inoculation of suitable peatland areas with *Sphagnum*.

These are collectively designed to optimise hydrological conditions (ideally and where possible water-levels <10 cm) for climate action benefits and to accelerate the trajectory of the site towards a naturally functioning ecosystem, and eventually a reduced carbon source/carbon sink again. (In some areas of dry cutaway this trajectory will be significantly longer, and it is not feasible in the short-term to re-wet some areas. These areas will develop other habitats. The key to optimising climate action benefits is the restoration of suitable hydrological conditions and more intensive intervention means that the extent of suitable hydrological conditions can be optimised.

These measures are designed to encourage the development of peat-forming habitats, where possible. They are also designed to further slow the movement of water across the site (with the site acting similarly to a constructed wetland), slowing the release of water (improving local water attenuation) and water quality is also expected to improve as the site returns to a naturally functioning peatland ecosystem. The measures will also accelerate the development of new habitats for a range of species under pressure in the wider landscape and will have the potential to develop habitats (e.g. Annex I raised bog, wetlands that support wader water birds of conservation interest) that will contribute towards the delivery of national biodiversity objectives.

Killashee bog is proposed to be part of this Scheme (PCAS), which commenced in 2021 and this rehabilitation plan outlines the approach to be taken.

1.1 Constraints and Limitations

This document seeks to address the requirements of Condition 10.2 of IPC License Ref. P0504-01:

“The licensee shall prepare, to the satisfaction of the Agency, a fully detailed and costed plan for permanent rehabilitation of the cutaway boglands within the licensed area.”

It also seeks to outline measures to optimise climate action and other ecosystem services benefits, mainly through hydrological management.

This document covers the area of **Killashee bog**.

Industrial peat extraction at Killashee bog permanently ceased in 2020 (having commenced in 1985 and the early 1960's respectively), although some remaining stock is still on site. Currently the former peat production area comprises largely bare peat along with some pioneering cutaway habitats, in addition to marginal¹ habitats. Raised bog remnants occur along the western and eastern margins of the cutaway bog. The western remnant bog

¹ Marginal land is defined as land around the margin of the industrial peat production area. This margin generally contains a range of habitats including scrub, Birch woodland, cutover bog and raised bog remnants.

parcels are undrained. The remnant bog along the eastern margin has been drained and has been subject to domestic turf cutting. These remnant raised bog parcels have never been subject to commercial peat extraction.

It is anticipated that the combination of active enhanced rehabilitation measures and natural colonisation will quickly accelerate environmental stabilisation. Nevertheless, it will still take some time (30-50 years) for naturally functioning wetland and peatland ecosystems to fully re-establish.

The parts of Killashee bog (within the areas owned and under the control of Bord na Móna) that are currently used by domestic turf cutters to harvest peat are ecologically and hydrologically linked to the area owned by Bord na Móna where rehabilitation is planned. It is beyond the scope of this rehabilitation plan to address turf cutting issues on Killashee bog. Nevertheless, Bord na Móna are aware of such issues which may constrain the proposed rehabilitation actions, and this rehabilitation plan considered potential impacts of these on the delivery of the stated objectives.

Rehabilitation in other areas of the bog may also be constrained due to other property issues or archaeological features.

A railway line occurs at the south-eastern end of Killashee bog. A rail link connects Derryadd East with Killashee Bog to the north and Derryadd to the west. The rail line will be in operation in the short term until all peat stocks have been removed from the bog.

2. METHODOLOGY

This rehabilitation plan was developed with a combination of desktop and field surveys, consultations with internal and external stakeholders and cognisance of the Scheme (PCAS). The development of this rehabilitation plan considered **recently published** guidance issued by the EPA in 2020 – **Guidance on the process of preparing and implementing a bog rehabilitation plan**.

The ecological information and site information collected during the Bord na Móna ecological baseline survey, additional confirmatory site visits (covering the period 2011 to 2022 inclusive) and monitoring and desktop analysis forms the basis for the development of the rehabilitation plan for the bog, along with:

- Experience of 40 years of research on the after-use development and rehabilitation of the Bord na Móna cutaway bogs (Clarke, 2010; Bord na Móna, 2016);
- Significant international engagement during this period with other counties in relation to best practice regarding peatland rehabilitation and after-use through the International Peat Society and the Society for Ecological Restoration (Joosten & Clarke, 2002; Clarke & Rieley, 2010; Gann *et al.*, 2019);
- Consultation and engagement with internal and external stakeholders;
- GIS Mapping;
- BNM drainage surveys;
- Bog topography and LIDAR data;
- Previous research studies on site;
- Hydrological modelling; and
- The development of a Methodology Paper (draft) outlining the Scheme (PCAS). This rehabilitation includes enhanced measures defined in the Methodology Paper which are designed to exceed the standard stabilisation requirements as defined by the IPC Licence and to enhance the ecosystem services of Killashee bog, in particular, optimising climate action benefits.

2.1 Desk Study

The desk study involved collecting all relevant environmental and ecological data for the study area. The development of the rehabilitation plan also takes account of research, experience and engagement with other peatland restoration and rehabilitation projects and peatland research including Irish, UK, European and International best practice guidance (full citations are in the References Section):

- Anderson *et al.* (2017). An overview of the progress and challenges of peatland restoration in Western Europe.
- Barry, T.A. et al (1973). A survey of cutover peats and underlying mineral soils. Soil Survey Bulletin No. 30. Dublin, Bord na Móna and An Foras Taluntais.
- Bonn *et al.* (2017). Peatland restoration and ecosystem services- science, policy and practice.
- Carroll *et al.* (2009). *Sphagnum* in the Peak District. Current Status and Potential for Restoration. Moors for the Future Report No 16.
- Clark & Rieley (2010). Strategy for responsible peatland management.
- Eades *et al.* (2003). The Wetland Restoration Manual.
- Farrell & Doyle (2003). Rehabilitation of Industrial Cutaway Atlantic Blanket Bog, NW Mayo, Ireland.
- Gann *et al.* (2019). International Principles and Standards for the practice of Ecological Restoration.

- Hinde *et al.* (2010). *Sphagnum* re-introduction project: A report on research into the re-introduction of *Sphagnum* mosses to degraded moorland. Moors for the Future Research Report 18.
- Joosten & Clarke (2002). Wise Use of mires and peatlands – Background and Principles including a framework for Decision-making.
- Lindsay (2010). Peatbogs and Carbon: a Critical Synthesis to Inform Policy Development in Oceanic Peat Bog Conservation and Restoration in the Context of Climate Change.
- Mackin *et al.* (2017). Best practice in raised bog restoration in Ireland. Irish Wildlife Manuals, No. 99. National Parks and Wildlife Service,
- McBride *et al.* (2011). The Fen Management Handbook (2011), Scottish Natural Heritage.
- McDonagh (1996). Drain blocking by machines on Raised Bogs. Unpublished report for National Parks and Wildlife Service.
- NPWS (2017a). National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation management plan. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- Pschenyckyj et al., 2021, Optimising Water Quality Returns from Peatland Management while Delivering Co-Benefits for Climate and Biodiversity. An Fóram Uisce.
- Quilty & Rochefort (2003). Peatland Restoration Guide, second edition. Canadian *Sphagnum* Peat Moss Association and New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources and Energy.
- Regan, *et. al.* (2020). Ecohydrology, Greenhouse Gas Dynamics and Restoration Guidelines for Degraded Raised Bogs. EPA Research Report. Prepared for the Environmental Protection Agency by Trinity College Dublin.
- Renou-Wilson *et al.* (2011). BOGLAND - Sustainable Management of Peatlands in Ireland. STRIVE Report No 75 prepared for the Environmental Protection Agency.
- Schouten (2002). Conservation and Restoration of Raised Bogs: Geological, Hydrological and Ecological Studies. Dúchas - The Heritage Service of the Department of the Environment and Local Government, Ireland;
- Thom (2019). Conserving Bogs – Management Handbook.
- Wheeler & Shaw (1995). Restoration of Damaged Peatlands – with Particular Reference to Lowland Raised Bogs Affected by Peat Extraction.
- Wittram *et al.* (2015). A Practitioners Guide to Sphagnum Reintroduction. Moors for the Future Partnership.

Additional on-line resources were also incorporated into the desk study, including:

- Mount Dillon Integrated Pollution Control Licence;
- Mount Dillon Annual Environmental Reports;
- Review of the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) webmapper;
- Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) Reports;
- Environmental Protection Agency database (www.epa.ie);
- EPA Guidance on Requests for Alterations to a Licensed Industrial or Waste Activity;
- BirdWatch Ireland online data (including I-WeBS and CBS datasets; www.birdwatchireland.ie);
- Geological Survey of Ireland - National Draft Bedrock Aquifer map;
- Geological Survey of Ireland - Groundwater Database (www.gsi.ie);
- Historic Environment Viewer at <https://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/>
- National Parks & Wildlife Services Public Map Viewer (www.npws.ie);

- Water Framework Directive catchments.ie/maps/ Map Viewer (www.catchments.ie);
- OPW Indicative Flood Maps (www.floodmaps.ie);
- CFRAM Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) maps (www.cfram.ie);
- River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027
- Bord na Móna Annual Report 2020.
- Spatial data in respect of Article 17 reporting, available online at <https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/habitat-and-species-data/article-17>.

2.2 Consultation

A number of stakeholders have been identified during the course of Bord na Móna's rehabilitation and Biodiversity Action Plan activities and are contacted during the rehabilitation planning process for their views. See Section 4.

2.3 Field Surveys

Bord na Móna carried out a baseline ecological survey of all of its properties in 2009-2012 and developed habitat maps. As part of this exercise, Killashee bog was surveyed in 2012. An additional survey was carried out in xx 2022, in advance of the preparation of this rehabilitation plan. Habitat maps have been updated, where required. This rehabilitation plan is informed by the original baseline survey as well as subsequent confirmatory site walk-over surveys and visits, and updates to baseline data.

Habitat mapping followed best practice guidance from Smith *et al.* (2011). Map outputs including all habitat maps and target notes were produced using GIS software application packages (ArcGIS). General marginal habitats and other habitats that had not been modified significantly by industrial peat extraction were classified using Fossitt *et al.* (2000). Plant nomenclature for vascular plants follows Stace (2019), while moss and liverwort nomenclature follow identification keys published by the British Bryological Society (2010). A more detailed Bord na Móna classification system was previously developed for classifying pioneer cutaway habitats as Fossitt categories were deemed not to be detailed enough for cutaway bog (much of cutaway bog could be classified as Cutover Bog - PB4). Much of the pioneer cutaway vegetation is still at an early stage of its development and cannot be assigned to Fossitt Level 3 categories yet. A site visit was used to categorise any changes in habitat extent at Killashee bog in XXX 2022.

A detailed ecological survey report for Killashee bog is contained in Appendix II.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

Killashee bog is located in County Longford. Killashee is approximately 4km to the East of Lanesborough (Grid reference: N 06853 70979). It is part of the Mount Dillon group of bogs.

The surrounding landscape is dominated by a mosaic of farmland, largely consisting of improved grassland, and other bogs, including Begnagh, Clooneeny, Knappoge, Derryarogue and Derryadd bogs, all owned and managed by Bord na Móna. A rail link connects Killashee bog with Derryadd East to the South.

Killashee bog is part of a cluster of bogs that have developed along the floodplains of the River Shannon. It is one of a group with the Mount Dillon bog group that frequently floods during winter periods. In each of these bogs, a significant portion of the industrial peat production areas lie below the winter flood level of the Shannon and pumping these sites is critical to sustaining industrial peat production. Killashee has a gravity drainage regime.

The Templeton Glebe (EPA Code: 26T28) stream flows in a north-westerly direction outside the south western bog boundary. This watercourse flows into the Ballynakill_26 watercourse which flows in a northerly direction outside the western site boundary. There are no mapped EPA watercourses within the boundary of Killashee bog.

See Drawing number BNM-DR-24-13-01 titled **Killashee bog: Bog Site Location**, included in the accompanying Mapbook², which illustrates the location of Killashee bog in context to the surrounding area.

3.1 Status and Situation

3.1.1 Site history

Killashee bog is a relatively recent production bog and was in production from 1985 until 2020. The bog was formerly used for both horticultural peat and fuel peat production. There is therefore very little development of pioneer cutaway habitats within the bog, and this area is predominately bare peat. **Some extant stock is still present onsite (July 2022).** The bog still retains a significant amount of “red” or “sphagnum” peat.

3.1.2 Current land-use

The majority of the bog is cutover bare peat.

Raised bog remnants occur along the western and eastern margins of the cutaway bog. The western remnant bog parcels are undrained. The remnant bog along the eastern margin has been drained and has been subject to domestic turf cutting. These remnant raised bog parcels have never been subject to commercial peat extraction.

Various different habitats including Birch woodland (WN7) and conifer plantation (WD4) are located along the margins of the site.

3.1.3 Socio-Economic conditions

Bord na Móna has historically been a vital employer for the rural community of the Midlands of Ireland. Bord na Móna compiled a report on the role of peat extraction in the midlands historically in which they report that in

² Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan – Killashee bog Map Book

1986, by the end of Bord na Móna's Third Development Programme, a total of twenty-three work locations had been established around the country. The company had an average employment of approximately 4,688 in the mid 1980's, with a peak employment of 6,100 during the production season, which placed it among the country's largest commercial employers. The importance of such levels of employment were largely due to its regional concentration in the Midlands and the lack of alternative employment opportunities at the time.

According to the Energy Crop Socio-Economic Study undertaken by Fitzpatrick Associates in 2011, there were an estimated 1,443 jobs supported by the peat-to-power industry in Ireland at the time, some 81% of which were located in the catchment areas of the three peat-fired generating stations (Lough Ree, West Offaly, and Edenderry Power Stations). These constituted jobs in the plants and in peat extraction, jobs indirectly supported in upstream supply industries and jobs induced through the trickle-down effects of the wages and salaries of those supported directly or indirectly.

In respect of Killashee bog, jobs would have included those to facilitate horticultural peat and fuel peat production.

As the primary employer in many Midland counties, Bord na Móna played a central role in building communities through several initiatives, including Education bursaries, support of local sporting clubs, the provision of community gain funds, charity programmes and the provision and building of amenity areas."

These job numbers have now declined with the cessation of peat extraction at this bog. It is anticipated that the scheme (PCAS) will provide some employment for a team of workers at this site for a period of time (> 1 year).

There are approximately 1400 people working in Bord na Móna at present. There are approximately 215 roles directly involved in PCAS.

3.2 Geology and Peat Depths

3.2.1 Sub-soil geology

The underlying geology of the bog comprises Visean Limestones (Undifferentiated limestone). The underlying soils and sub-soils are classed as 'Raised Bog Cutover Peat'. The underlying geology of Killashee bog is calcareous. The site is underlain with marl.

3.2.2 Peat type and depths

The majority of Killashee bog is underlain by "red peat" or Sphagnum peat. The majority of Killashee has very deep peat deposits with most of the bog having peat thickness of 2-5m. Only one section of the bog, located towards the north has shallow peat deposits remaining of <1m.

3.3 Key Biodiversity Features of Interest

The majority of Killashee bog within the Bord na Móna boundary consists of bare peat, as this site was in production until 2020. Due to the recent cessation of peat production, there has been little opportunity for post-production habitats to develop, and habitats of biodiversity interest are therefore largely confined to the marginal habitats fringing the bare peat.

3.3.1 Current habitats

The most common habitats⁵ present in the former production areas at Killashee include:

- Bare peat (0-50% cover) (BP)
- Pioneer Dry Calluna community (dHeath)
- Scrub (Emergent Betula-dominated community (A) (eBir) and open Betula-dominated community (B) (oBir) and Closed Betula scrub community (C) (cbir)
- Silt Ponds (Silt) with associated habitats such as scrub, Bracken, rank grassland (GS2), dry calcareous grassland (gCal) and typical pioneer communities of disturbed areas (disTuss).

The most common habitats found around the margins of the site include:

- Birch woodland (WN7)
- Scrub (WS1) (Gorse scrub and Birch scrub developing of dry high bog around margins)
- Raised bog (PB1)
- Cutover bog (PB4) (several small fragments)
- Wet grassland (GS4)

See Drawing number BNM-DR-24-13-17 titled **Killashee bog: Current Habitat Map**, included in the accompanying Mapbook, which illustrates the habitats at Killashee bog.

[photos to be updated]

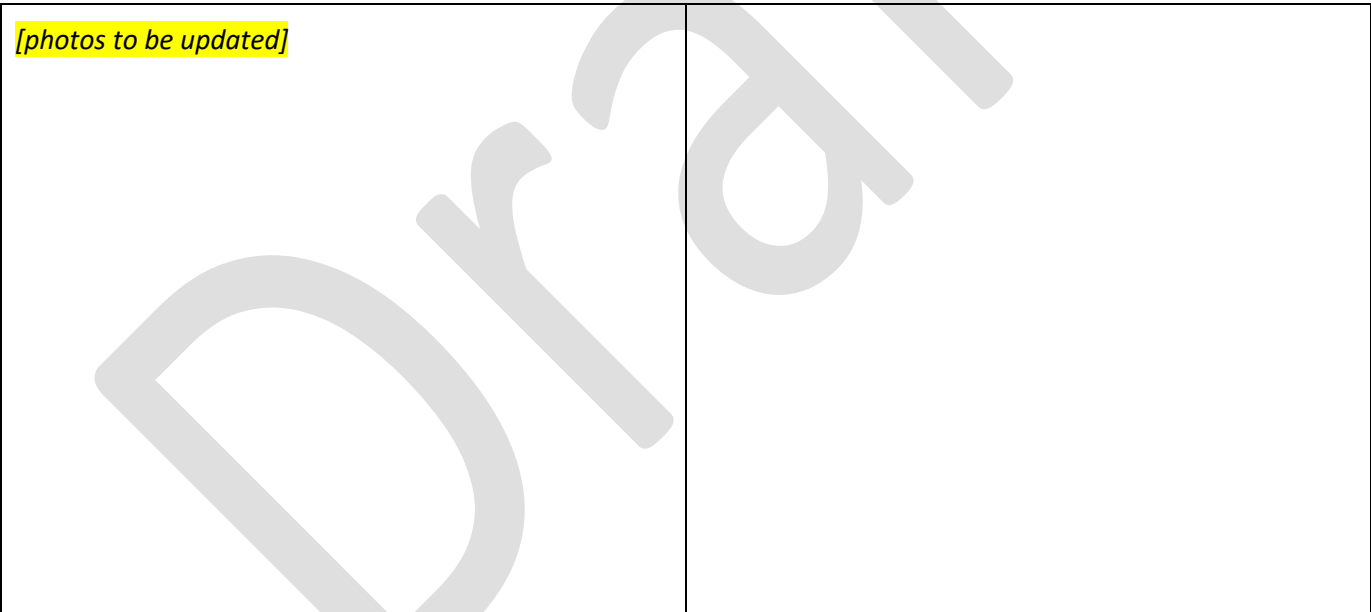


Table 1: Photos of Habitats at Killashee bog (xxxx 2023).

3.3.2 Species of conservation interest

A number of species of conservation concern utilize the habitats available at Killashee bog. The following is a summary of the records of these species available within both BnM records and those of the National Biodiversity Data Centre.

Multiple mammal species have been recorded on or within 1 Km of the bog; including Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Eurasian Badger (*Meles meles*) and European Otter (*Lutra lutra*).

Numerous bird species are known to use the cutover bogs in Ireland's midlands as breeding grounds, wintering grounds or both. NBDC Records for red-listed³ bird species of conservation concern recorded from the hectad N07 include Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), Swift (*Apus apus*), Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Red Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*), Grey Wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*), Redshank (*Tringa tetanus*), Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*), Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) and Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*). Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) (Annex I listed species of the EU habitats directive), have also been recorded within this hectad.

Red listed species Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) has been recorded on Killashee bog during previous surveys carried out by BNM ecologists.

3.3.3 Invasive species

The invasive species Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) has previously been recorded from Killashee bog close to the silt pond in the north of the site. There are no other NBDC or BNM records for high impact invasive species recorded from the bog.

A broad range of common garden escapes are occasionally present around the margins of Bord na Móna bogs, and although spatial overlap with the PCAS is expected to be limited, these are, where necessary, to be treated in line with best practice during PCAS activities.

3.4 Statutory Nature Conservation Designations

There are no European Sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPA), located within or adjacent to Killashee bog. The nearest EU Designated sites to Killashee bog are as follows:

- Mount Jessop SAC (Site Code: 002202) - 3.5 km to the south-east of Killashee
- Lough Ree SAC (Site Code: 000440) - 3.5 km to the south-west of Killashee
- Lough Ree SPA (Site Code: 004064) - 3.5 km to the south-west of Killashee
- Lough Forbes Complex SAC (site code: 001818) - 3.9 km to the north-east of Killashee
- Ballykenny-Fisherstown Bog SPA (site code: 004101) - 3.9 km to the north-east of Killashee
- Brown Bog (site code: 002346) - 4.6 km to the north-east of Killashee

There are no Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) located adjacent, or in close proximity to, Killashee bog. Lough Ree NHA (Site code: 000440), occurs approximately - 3.5 km to the south-west of Killashee.

³ Gilbert G, Stanbury A and Lewis L (2021), "Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020 –2026". Irish Birds 9: 523—544

A number of non-statutory designated sites also occur in the wider area around Killashee bog. The Royal Canal pNHA (NPWS Site Code: 002103) is located 450 m to the east of the bog. Lough Bannow pNHA (site code: 000449) located 2.6 km to the south-west.

3.4.1 Other Nature Conservation Designations

The Ramsar Convention entered into force in Ireland on 15th March 1985. Ireland currently has 45 sites/wetlands designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites). These cover a surface area of 66,994ha. There are no Ramsar sites located in proximity to Killashee bog.

3.5 Hydrology and Hydrogeology

Killashee bog lies in the Shannon catchment (Catchment ID: 26C), as defined by the EPA under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The majority of the bog is located in the Shannon [Upper]_SC_080 sub catchment with a small part of the site along the north-eastern boundary falling into the Shannon [Upper]_SC_060 sub catchment.

The Templeton Glebe (EPA Code: 26T28) stream flows in a north-westerly direction outside the south western bog boundary. This watercourse flows into the Ballynakill_26 watercourse which flows in a northerly direction outside the western site boundary. There are no mapped EPA watercourses within the boundary of Killashee bog.

Killashee is one of a cluster of bogs that has developed along the floodplains of the River Shannon. It is one of a group with the Mount Dillon bog group that frequently floods during winter periods. In each of these bogs, a significant portion of the industrial peat production area lies below the winter flood level of the Shannon and therefore Killashee bog has a gravity drainage regime.

Hydrological modelling (BNM-DR-24-13-01 titled **Killashee bog: Depression analysis**) indicates that parts of the bog form natural basins which have a significant potential for re-wetting, with the assumption that all drains would be blocked. It is likely that a portion of the basins in target areas will re-wet with deeper water, creating a mosaic of wetland habitats, when drains are blocked.

[to be updated with water quality text]

Regional hydrological data suggest that Killashee receives average precipitation of 926mm/yr (1981-2010), with an estimated annual effective rainfall rate of 525 mm/yr based on GSI data. The GSI estimate a recharge rate of 21mm/yr for Killashee. In areas with peat thickness in excess of 1.5m losses of water to depth are likely to correspond to this estimate, which means that, the available precipitation that may become runoff (assuming no change in storage) is 504mm/yr, which equates to an annual runoff rate of c. 5,040m³/ha. However, in areas of shallow peat, contributions from groundwater are anticipated with an estimate of 50mm/year considered a reasonable estimate. This would equate to 575mm/yr that may become runoff (assuming no change in storage) in this area. This equates to an annual runoff rate of c. 5,750m³/ha.

GSI data indicates that the Killashee Bog is underlain entirely by Visean Limestone which is classified as a regionally important aquifer since it is subject to karstification (conduit). Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) mapping identifies several karst features (enclosed depressions, spring, swallow hole, turlough and superficial solution feature) within 1km of the bog (north-west of the bog). No data exists concerning depth to bedrock, however, there is a small area of bedrock in close proximity to the bog.

An aquifer is an underground body of water-bearing rock or unconsolidated materials (gravel or sand) from which groundwater can be extracted in useful amounts. GSIs Aquifer classes are divided into three main groups based on their resource potential, and further subdivided based on the type of openings through which groundwater flows. There are nine aquifer categories in total. Locally important aquifers are capable of supplying locally important abstractions (e.g. smaller public water supplies, group schemes), or good yields (100-400 m³/d). This data gives an indication of sub-surface deposits (bedrock and unconsolidated materials) in terms of their groundwater resource potential and dominant groundwater flow type.

Regionally important aquifers are those in which the network of fractures, fissures and joints, through which groundwater flows, is well connected and widely dispersed, resulting in a relatively even distribution of highly permeable zones. There is good aquifer storage and groundwater flow paths can be up to several kilometres in length. There is likely to be substantial groundwater discharge to surface waters ('baseflow') and large (>2,000 m³/d), dependable springs may be associated with these aquifers.

The entirety of the bog is located in an area mapped by GSI as of moderate groundwater vulnerability (GSI Mapviewer). Groundwater vulnerability for the area surrounding Killashee bog is generally of high vulnerability. Groundwater vulnerability is a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease with which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities. Groundwater vulnerability maps are based on the type and thicknesses of subsoils (sands, gravels, glacial tills (or boulder clays), peat, lake and alluvial silts and clays), and the presence of karst features. Groundwater is most at risk where the subsoils are absent or thin and, in areas of karstic limestone, where surface streams sink underground at swallow holes. These data indicate there is generally low risk of any groundwater contamination occurring at this site. Groundwater vulnerability is typically used to indicate the susceptibility to groundwater pollution, it can provide a useful proxy indication of likely groundwater flow rates in the surrounding area.

3.6 Emissions to surface-water and watercourses

Drainage is an important feature of industrial peat production and there were extensive field drains maintained throughout bog areas to facilitate industrial peat production annually, each of which eventually drains into a terminal silt pond that allows for settlement of suspended solids before entering the main river systems. In accordance with the existing Integrated Pollution Control licence, all drainage water from boglands in a licensed area is discharged via an appropriately designed silt pond treatment arrangement as required in Condition 6.6. of the licence. Industrial peat production has now permanently ceased at Killashee bog.

Silt ponds are the key silt control infrastructure to control potential emissions from industrial peat production sites. As required under licence, BNM have a number of procedures for how it manages and maintains its silt pond network. The silt that builds up in silt ponds is excavated on a regular basis by Bord na Móna to facilitate an efficient level of silt control. Silt ponds will continue to be maintained during the rehabilitation and decommissioning. Silt pond decommissioning will be considered when sites are deemed to be on a trajectory of environmental stability and peatland rehabilitation has been completed.

Killashee bog has XXX treated surface water outlets, all to the XXXXXX. The XXX River was not listed as being under pressure from peat extraction in the 2nd cycle of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland, and is indicated as remaining so in the third cycle which is currently out for consultation.

Details of silt ponds, associated surface water emission points and those being monitored and sampled as part of the PCAS scheme are detailed on the accompanying structures map along with water quality map. See Drawing

number BNM-DR-24-13-02 titled **Killashee Bog : Structures and Sampling**, along with Drawing number BNM-DR-24-13-WQ01 titled **Killashee bog: Water Quality Map** included in the accompanying Mapbook, which illustrate the various drainage and water quality infrastructure present at Killashee.

There is a robust monitoring program to track and verify any changes in baseline water quality conditions pre and post decommissioning and rehabilitation so that the success or otherwise can be tracked and verified for the National Parks & Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency and Local Authority Water Program, amongst a range of stakeholders.

The main emission limit value associated with this bog is 35mg/l suspended solids, with trigger levels for ammonia of 4.53mg/l and COD 100mg/l. Initial monthly ammonia concentrations from September 2021 to date have a range of 1.93 to 2.37 mg/l with an average of 2.14 mg/l. Results for suspended solids for the same period indicate a range of 2 to 5 with an average of 3.66 mg/l.

From an analysis of any monitoring over the past 5 yrs. of the IPC licence environmental monitoring of some of the discharges from this bog, indicate that results were under the ELV for SS and for Ammonia, with COD exceeding the trigger level during some of the monitoring events, due to naturally occurring peat and subsoil interactions. See Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Programme Water Quality Monitoring.

Rehabilitation of cutaway peatland is closely linked with control of emissions. One of the criteria for successful rehabilitation is stabilisation through re-vegetation, which will stabilise all substrates and in turn remove the need for further silt control measures. Re-wetted peat also aids the primary objective of stabilizing peat, as when peat is re-wetted it is not vulnerable to wind erosion. Re-wetted peat and the development of wet peatland habitats can also act as sinks for silt and mobile peat, and increases additional retention time for solids, and the peatland vegetation can quickly stabilise this material within blocked drains on site (by acting like constructed wetlands).

Water quality of water discharges from restored peatlands normally improves as a result of bog restoration measures and the restoration of natural peatland processes (Bonn *et al.*, 20017). Bog restoration is also expected to improve water attenuation of the site as the drains are blocked, slowing water movement and water release from the site. Restored peatlands help slow the release of water and aid the natural regulation of floods downstream (Minayeva *et al.*, 2017). The National River Basin Management Plan (NRBMP) 2018-2021 (DHPCLG, 2017) is the key national plan for Ireland to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The NRBMP outlines how key actions such as the Bord na Móna peatland rehabilitation is expected to have a positive impact on water quality and help the NRBMP deliver its objectives in relation to the WFD.

Water will still discharge from designated emission points when rehabilitation at Killashee bog has been completed. This discharge will have improving water quality and there will be increased wetland attenuation, meaning slower release of water. This is expected to have a positive impact on status of downstream water bodies.

Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Programme Water Quality Monitoring.

The licence obligation of quarterly sampling regime on a selected number of ponds to be sampled over a 3 year cycle will not be sufficient to be able to appropriately track the changing water chemistry that will occur as part of this enhanced rehabilitation programme, so this sampling regime will occur on a monthly basis.

In order to assist in monitoring surface water quality from this bog, it was agreed to increase the existing licence monitoring requirements of the IPC Licence, to sampling for the same parameters every month.

This new sampling programme **commenced in September 2021** and is enabling a baseline to be established, with sampling to progress during the scheduled works, and for a period of up to 2 years post rehabilitation. Depending on the period required to confirm that the main two parameters, suspended solids and ammonia as remaining compliant with the licence emission and trigger limit values and there is an improving trajectory in these two parameters i.e. reduction in concentration, the monitoring programme and intensity will be periodically reviewed and amended.

In the preparation of this monitoring programme, Bord na Mona have been providing the Local Authority Water Programme (LAWPRO) with details of the surface water emissions points associated with this bog and will be amending some of the proposed monitoring locations on foot of this engagement. LAWPRO have in turn provided details of their 2021 monitoring programme and these are included in the Water Quality Map.

This is necessary to ensure that there is alignment with the WFD monitoring programme and that where possible, the monitoring programme will enable any improvements in water quality or establishing trends to be quantified against any available WFD monitoring data. It will also enable the periodic sharing of data which will inform the

monitoring reports, success criteria and enable LAWPRO under the Water Framework Directive to track any changes in pressures and be aware of changes in water chemistry.

This enhanced monitoring programme will aim to include a minimum of 70% of a bog's drainage catchments, whatever number of surface water outlets these include.

Monitoring results will be maintained, trended every six months and reported on each year and as required, as part of the requirement to report on Condition 10.1 of the IPC Licence on Bog Rehabilitation in the Annual Environmental Report, and will be provided to LAWPRO and the EPA as required to inform progress and national monitoring requirements under the WFD. These results will also be available in April each year as a requirement of the Annual Environmental Report at www.epa.ie.

The parameters to be included as per condition 6.2 of the IPC Licence include monthly monitoring for pH, Flow, Suspended Solids, Total Solids, Total Phosphorus, Total Ammonia, Colour & COD. In addition, DOC has been included as a parameter to try and identify any changes in carbon in the surface water, and where required by LAWPRO, to assist in investigating other changes in water chemistry, the series of parameters can be reviewed and amended.

Rehabilitation of cutaway peatland is closely linked with control of emissions. One of the criteria for successful rehabilitation is stabilisation through re-vegetation, which will stabilise all substrates and in turn remove the need for further silt control measures. This site is largely bare peat. Re-wetted peat also aids the primary objective of stabilizing peat, as when peat is re-wetted it is not vulnerable to wind erosion. Re-wetted peat and the development of wet peatland habitats can also act as sinks for silt and mobile peat, and increases additional retention time for solids, and the peatland vegetation can quickly stabilise this material within blocked drains on site (by acting like constructed wetlands).

Water quality of water discharges from restored peatlands normally improves as a result of bog restoration measures and the restoration of natural peatland processes (Bonn *et al.*, 2017). Bog restoration is also expected to improve water attenuation of the site as the drains are blocked, slowing water movement and water release from the site. Restored peatlands help slow the release of water and aid the natural regulation of floods downstream (Minayeva *et al.*, 2017). The National River Basin Management Plan (NRBMP) 2018-2021 (DHPCLG, 2017) is the key national plan for Ireland to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The NRBMP outlines how key actions such as the Bord na Móna peatland rehabilitation is expected to have a positive impact on water quality and help the NRBMP deliver its objectives in relation to the WFD.

Water will still discharge from designated emission points when rehabilitation at Killashee has been completed. This discharge will have improving water quality and there will be increased wetland attenuation, meaning slower release of water. This is expected to have a positive impact on status of the key water catchment (Shannon Upper_080) and is expected to support the future status of receiving waterbodies as being of Good Status.

3.7 Fugitive Emissions to air

None.

The bog is no longer in industrial peat production. Rehabilitation of the cutaway peatland will seek to re-wet the dry peat where possible, and re-vegetate all areas (whether wet or dry). Collectively, ceasing industrial peat production, re-wetting and re-vegetating will minimise any risk of emission to air from dust.

3.8 Carbon emissions

Irish peatlands are a huge carbon store, containing more than 75% of the national soil organic carbon (Renou-Wilson et al. 2012). Peatland drainage and extraction transforms a natural peatland which acts as a modest carbon sink into a carbon source (Waddington & McNeil, 2002; Alm *et al.*, 2007; Wilson *et al.*, 2007, Wilson *et al.*, 2015). A natural peatland can take in 0.1 to 1.1 t of carbon as CO₂-C /ha/yr while drainage and extraction can create large source of carbon dioxide releasing 1.3 to 2.2 t of carbon as CO₂-C /ha/yr (based on Tier 1 Emission factors, Evans et al. 2017). Renou-Wilson et al. (2018) reported losses of between 0.81 – 1.51 CO₂-C /ha/yr from drained peatlands located in Ireland.

Re-wetting of dry peatlands will increase methane emissions (Gunther et al. 2020) as a consequence of the anoxic conditions within the peat body that provide a suitable environment for the microbial breakdown of plant litter and root exudates. Tanneberger et al. (2021) describes how peatland management has to choose between CO₂ emissions from drained peatlands or increased methane (CH₄) emissions from rewetted industrial peatlands. However, when radiative effects and atmospheric lifetimes of both GHG gases are considered and modelled, postponing rewetting increases the long-term warming effect of continued CO₂ emissions (Gunther et al. 2020). This means the increase in methane due to rewetting of dry peatlands is still negated by the CO₂ emissions reductions. Degraded peatlands also release carbon/GHG emissions via the fluvial/aquatic pathway (Dissolved Organic Carbon – DOC, Suspended Solids/Particulate Matter, degassing of GHGs from water).

The EPA-funded CarbonRestore Project (Renou-Wilson et al. 2012) found that rewetting of drained peatlands can lead to restoration of functional peatland, such as the return of typical plant and animal species, which in turn may lead to the restoration of peat-formation and the C-sink function. The EPA NEROS project carried out GHG flux research at Moyarwood Bog and found that Moyarwood Bog was overall a Carbon sink (sink for CO₂ and a source for Methane) 6 years after bog restoration was carried out (Renou-Wilson et al. 2018). Further, Wilson et al. (2022) confirmed the benefit of rapid rewetting at this site to achieve strong carbon reductions and potentially altering the warming dynamics from warming to cooling depending upon the climate scenario.

It is expected that Killashee bog will become a reduced carbon source following rehabilitation. The potential of any cutaway site to develop as a carbon sink in the longer-term depends on the success of the rehabilitation measures, the extent of development of *Sphagnum*-rich or other peat-forming habitats, the balance of carbon fluxes from different cutaway habitats and future climatic conditions. Much of this site is expected to develop ***Sphagnum*-rich regenerating wet deep peat vegetation** on deep peat areas, and wetland habitats on shallow peat with open water, reed swamp and fen habitats with alkaline emission factors. Birch woodland is expected to develop on the drier mounds and peripheral headlands.

3.9 Current ecological rating

(Following NRA (2009) Evaluation Criteria)

The majority of Killashee bog can be rated as **Local Importance; lower value to Local Importance; higher value**. Bare peat and other intensively managed areas are assessed as **local importance (lower value)**. Marginal habitats including woodland, scrub, and remnant raised bog may act as a refuge and as ecological corridors for wildlife and are therefore deemed to be **locally important (higher value)**.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Consultation to date

Consultation seeks to engage an audience of relevant stakeholders at both a national and local level. National stakeholders have been identified from varied bog restoration and rehabilitation efforts undertaken by Bord na Móna over the past 40 years, with particular emphasis on engagement with stakeholders during their Biodiversity Action Plan programme, since 2010. National Stakeholders includes relevant government departments and agencies, relevant semi-state bodies, NGOs and other environmentally focused groups with a national remit.

There has been ongoing consultation about rehabilitation, biodiversity and other general issues over the years about Mount Dillon group bogs including Killashee bog with various stakeholders in relation to:

- General consultation with range of stakeholders at annual Bord na Mona Biodiversity Action Plan review days 2010-2018.
- Midlands & East Regional WFD Operational Committee (River Basin Management Plans).
- Archaeological Liaison Committee (National Museum of Ireland & Dept of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht).

To inform the current Plan, both national and local stakeholders, including neighbours whose land adjoins Killashee bog and local representatives of national bodies (such as Regional National Parks and Wildlife Service staff) and relevant offices in County Councils (such as the Heritage or Environmental Offices) will be contacted. Any identified local interest groups will be sought and informed of the opportunity to engage with this rehabilitation plan, and when identified invited to submit their comments or observations in relation to the proposed rehabilitation at Killashee bog.

All correspondence received will be acknowledged and evaluated against the rehabilitation work proposed here, and the final draft of the Killashee bog Rehabilitation Plan will contain a review of the consultation.

4.2 Issues raised by Consultees

N/A Yet as consultation has not commenced.

4.3 Bord na Móna response to issues raised during consultation

N/A Yet as consultation has not commenced.

5. REHABILITATION GOALS AND OUTCOMES

The rehabilitation goals and outcomes outline what Bord na Móna want to achieve by implementing the rehabilitation. These include:

- Meeting conditions of IPC Licence.
- Stabilisation or reduction in water quality parameters of water discharging from the site (e.g. suspended solids).
- Reducing pressure on receiving waterbodies that have been classified as At Risk from peatlands and from peat extraction, via stabilization or improving water-quality from this bog, and therefore, reducing pressures.
- Optimising hydrological conditions for **climate action benefits as part of PCAS**.
- Optimising hydrological conditions for the development of ***Sphagnum*-rich regenerating wet deep peat vegetation** communities on deep peat, or reed swamp and fen on shallow more alkaline peat and other subsoils, where present.
- Optimising hydrological conditions for the development of active raised bog on extant high bog.
- **Optimising hydrological conditions for the protection of exposed archaeological structures, their retention in situ and preservation into the future.**
- Supporting expected future land-uses.
- The main goal and outcome of this plan is the successful rehabilitation (environmental stabilisation) of peatlands used for industrial peat production at the bog in a manner that is acceptable to both external stakeholders and to Bord na Móna and which optimise climate action and other ecosystem service benefits.

The rehabilitation goals and outcomes take account of the following issues.

- It will take some time for stable naturally functioning habitats to fully develop at Killashee bog. This will happen over a longer timeframe than the implementation of this rehabilitation plan.
- Re-wetting residual peat will initially maintain and enhance the carbon storage capacity of the bog. There is scientific consensus that restoration of hydrology in damaged bog can improve carbon storage, water storage and attenuation and help support biodiversity both on the site and in the catchment (See Section 3.8). This will reduce carbon emissions from the site from a larger carbon source to a smaller carbon source. In time, the site has the capacity to develop in part as a carbon sink. PCAS is expected to deliver significant contributions to Ireland's climate action.
- It is not expected that the site has the potential to develop active raised bog (ARB) analogous to the priority EU Habitats Directive Annex I habitat within the foreseeable future (c.50 years). Furthermore, only a proportion of the bog has potential to develop *Sphagnum*-rich habitats in this timeframe. Nevertheless, re-wetting across the entire bog, as part of the scheme, will improve habitat conditions of the whole bog. Other peatland habitats will develop in a wider mosaic that reflects underlying conditions.
- Rehabilitating former industrial peat production bog will also in the longer-term support other ecosystem services such as the development of new habitat to support biodiversity and local attenuation of water flows from the bog.
- WFD status in receiving water bodies can be affected by peatlands and peat extraction but is also affected by other sources such as agriculture. In addition, receiving water bodies that are assessed as At Risk from peatlands and from peat extraction are likely to have several contributory sources of impacts (private peat extraction and Bord na Mona). Reducing pressures due to former peat extraction activities at

Killashee bog will contribute to stabilising or improving water quality status of receiving water bodies in general. Ultimately, improving the WFD status of the receiving water body will depend on reducing pressure from a range of different sources, including peatlands in general (private and Bord na Móna).

- Bord na Móna are also planning rehabilitation measures in some adjacent bogs (e.g. Derryadd east) in 2023, and rehabilitation has taken place in several surrounding bogs in 2021/2022, including Begnagh, Clooneeny, Knappoge, Derrycashel and Derraghan bogs. There are expected to be cumulative water quality and other ecosystem service benefits to receiving water bodies from rehabilitating more than one bog in the same catchment.
- Re-wetting in general will benefit the future preservation of most known and unknown archaeological features. An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) is to be carried out under the PCAS scheme.

Draft

6. SCOPE OF REHABILITATION

The principal scope of this enhanced rehabilitation plan is to rehabilitate the bog. This is defined by:

- The area of Killashee bog.
- EPA IPC Licence - Ref. P0504-01. As part of Condition 10.2 of this license, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the boglands within the licensed area. Killashee bog is part of the Mount Dillon Bog group.
- The Scheme is designed to exceed the stabilisation requirements as defined by the IPC Licence. This scheme is designed to enhance the ecosystem services of Killashee bog, in particular, optimising **climate action benefits**. The proposed interventions will mean that environmental stabilization is achieved (meaning IPC obligations are met) and, in addition, significant other ecosystem service benefits particularly for climate action will be accrued.
- The local environmental conditions of Killashee bog mean that deep peat measures along with wetland creation is the most suitable rehabilitation approach for this site. Killashee bog has a gravity drainage regime and has residual deep peat in the majority of the bog along with some small pockets of shallower peat.
- Bord na Móna have defined the key goal and outcome of rehabilitation at Killashee Bog as **environmental stabilisation** of the site via **optimising climate action benefits, where possible**. The re-wetting of residual peat in the area recently out of peat extraction will be optimised, **setting the site on a trajectory towards the development of peat-forming communities on residual deep peat, and the development of wetlands/Reed Swamp and fen on shallow more alkaline peat and other subsoils**.
- Rehabilitation of Killashee bog will support multiple national strategies of climate action, biodiversity action and other key environmental strategies such as the Water Framework Directive.
- The time frame for the delivery of the planned rehabilitation will be undertaken according to available resources and appropriate constraints.

6.1 Key constraints

- **Bog conditions.** Rehabilitation outcomes of sites are constrained by the environmental characteristics of these particular areas. For example, there is potential for raised bog restoration at some sites where there has not been significant industrial peat extraction and the peat body is largely intact (deep peat sites that are drained). At other sites, most of the peat mass has been removed, the environmental characteristics of these areas have therefore changed radically (peat depths, hydrology, water chemistry, substrate type, nutrient status, etc.) and there will therefore be different habitat outcomes (wetlands, fen, heathland, grassland and Birch woodland).
- Remaining peat depths are generally between 3 - 5 + metres deep in the majority of the bog. Some shallower peat occurs in the northern section of the site.
- **Surrounding landscape and neighbours.** Another key constraint is the interaction between the Bord na Móna sites and the surrounding landscape. Care has to be taken that no active rehabilitation management is carried out that could negatively and knowingly impact on surrounding land. This includes any hydrological management on neighbouring farmland. It is anticipated that the work proposed here (blocking drains and re-wetting cutaway peatlands) will not have any flooding impacts on adjacent land.
- **Archaeology.** The discovery of monuments or archaeological objects during peatland rehabilitation may potentially constrain the rehabilitation measures proposed for a particular area. While the rehabilitation

will optimise hydrological conditions for the protection of exposed archaeological structures, their retention in situ and preservation into the future, any new archaeology may require rehabilitation measures will be reviewed and adapted. If this occurs, rehabilitation measures will be reviewed and adapted. An Archaeological Impact Assessment (Appendix XII) will be carried out to mitigate against any impact on found archaeology at Killashee bog. In the worst-case scenario works affecting the surface and sub-surface of the bog might disturb previously unknown archaeological deposits or artefacts without preservation by record taking place. Should any previously unknown archaeological material be uncovered during the rehabilitation works, it should be avoided and reported to Bord na Móna Archaeological Liaison Officer and the National Museum of Ireland.

- **Public Rights of Way.** There are no known rights of way at Killashee bog. Where a public right of way or similar burden exists on Bord na Móna property, consideration will be given to ensuring that this remain intact where possible. In some instances, depending upon previous land uses and management, alternative solutions may be required. These will be explored in consultation with local communities and statutory bodies during the consultation work associated with the decommissioning and rehabilitation work described here.
- **Turbary.** An area of remnant raised bog close to the eastern margin is excluded as it is currently being used by domestic turf cutters to harvest peat. This area is ecologically and hydrologically linked to the area owned by Bord na Móna where rehabilitation is planned. It is beyond the scope of this rehabilitation plan to address turf cutting issues on Killashee bog.

6.2 Key Assumptions

- It is assumed that Bord na Móna will have all resources required to deliver this project.
- It is expected that weather conditions will be within normal limits over the rehabilitation plan timeframe. Long periods of wet weather have the capacity to significantly affect ground conditions and constrain drain blocking and other ground activities.

6.3 Key Exclusions

The scope of this rehabilitation plan does not cover:

- Active turbary areas to the east of the main production bog are excluded.
- The longer-term development of stable naturally functioning habitats to fully develop at Killashee bog. The plan covers the short-term rehabilitation **actions** and **an additional monitoring and after-care programme** to monitor the rehabilitation and to respond to any needs.
- This plan is not intended to be an after-use or future land-use plan for Killashee bog.
- The longer-term management of this site, potentially as a nature conservation site, or for amenity, or for other uses in the future.

7. CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL REHABILITATION

This section outlines what criteria will be used to indicate successful rehabilitation and what critical success factors are needed to achieve successful rehabilitation. All criteria used to indicate successful rehabilitation will be measured to validate the achievement of the rehabilitation goals and outcomes and validate the completion of the rehabilitation.

The key objective of this enhanced rehabilitation plan is **environmental stabilisation** and the stabilisation of any emissions from the site that related to the former industrial peat extraction activities.

Rehabilitation is generally defined by Bord na Móna as:

- stabilisation of bare peat areas via targeted active management (e.g. drain-blocking/re-wetting) slowing movement of water across the site and encouraging natural colonisation; and
- mitigation of key emissions (e.g. potential run-off of suspended solids).

In addition, Bord na Móna wish to optimise climate action and other ecosystem service benefits via enhanced rehabilitation measures.

7.1 Criteria for successful rehabilitation to meet EPA IPC licence conditions:

- Rewetting of residual peat in the former area of industrial peat production to offset potential silt run off and to encourage and accelerate development of vegetation cover via natural colonisation, and reducing the area of bare exposed peat. See Table 7.1 for a summary of the criteria for successful rehabilitation and associated monitoring. The target will be the delivery of measures and this will be measured by an aerial survey after rehabilitation is completed.
- That there is a stabilizing/improving concentration of suspended solids and ammonia in discharges from Bord na Móna sites, associated with the measures undertaken to stabilize the peat surface by the blocking of the internal drainage system and the maximized rewetting of the peat surface. This will be demonstrated by developing a stable or downward trajectory of water quality indicators (suspended solids and ammonia) towards what would be typical of a re-wetted cutaway bog. This will be measured via water quality monitoring (suspended solids and ammonia) for at least 2 years after the rehabilitation has been completed.
- Receiving water bodies have been classified under the River Basin Management Plan and this classification includes waters that are At Risk from peatlands and peat extraction. The success criteria will be that the At Risk classification will see improvements in the associated pressures from this peatland or if remaining At Risk, that there is an improving trajectory in the pressure from this peatland.

With regard to predicting and estimating likely trends that might materialize or could be considered as a target, monitoring of surface water ammonia emissions from Longfordpass bog in Littleton over 3 yrs., post cessation of peat extraction with ongoing rehabilitation, were considered. These are indicating a downward trend in Ammonia concentrations (Figure 7.1).

Similarly monitoring of surface water ammonia emissions from a Corlea bog in Mountdillon over the past 4 yrs. post cessation of peat extraction with ongoing rehabilitation, indicate downward trends.

As the monthly monitoring program at Killashee bog continues in 2022/2023 during the rehabilitation works planned for 2023, and data from the 2022 monitoring program is compiled, further trending will be produced to verify any ongoing trends.

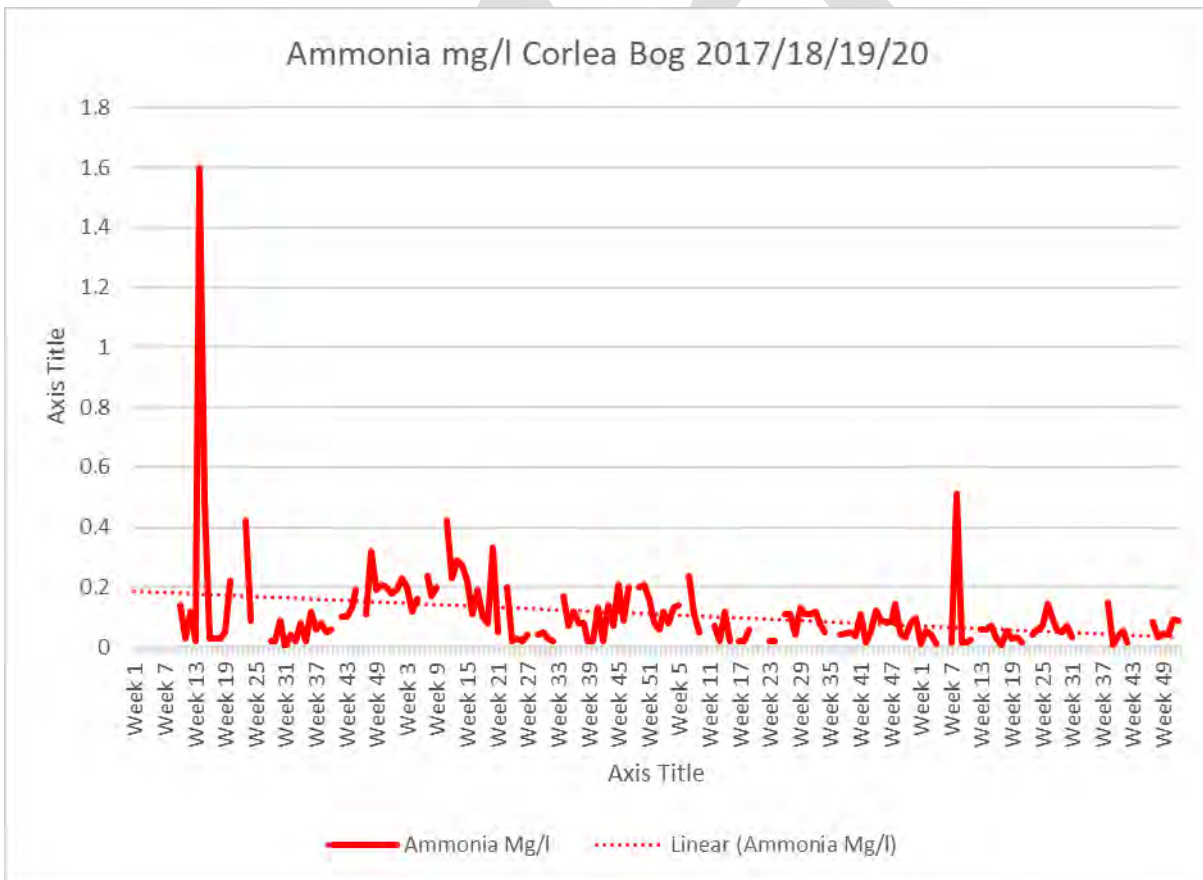
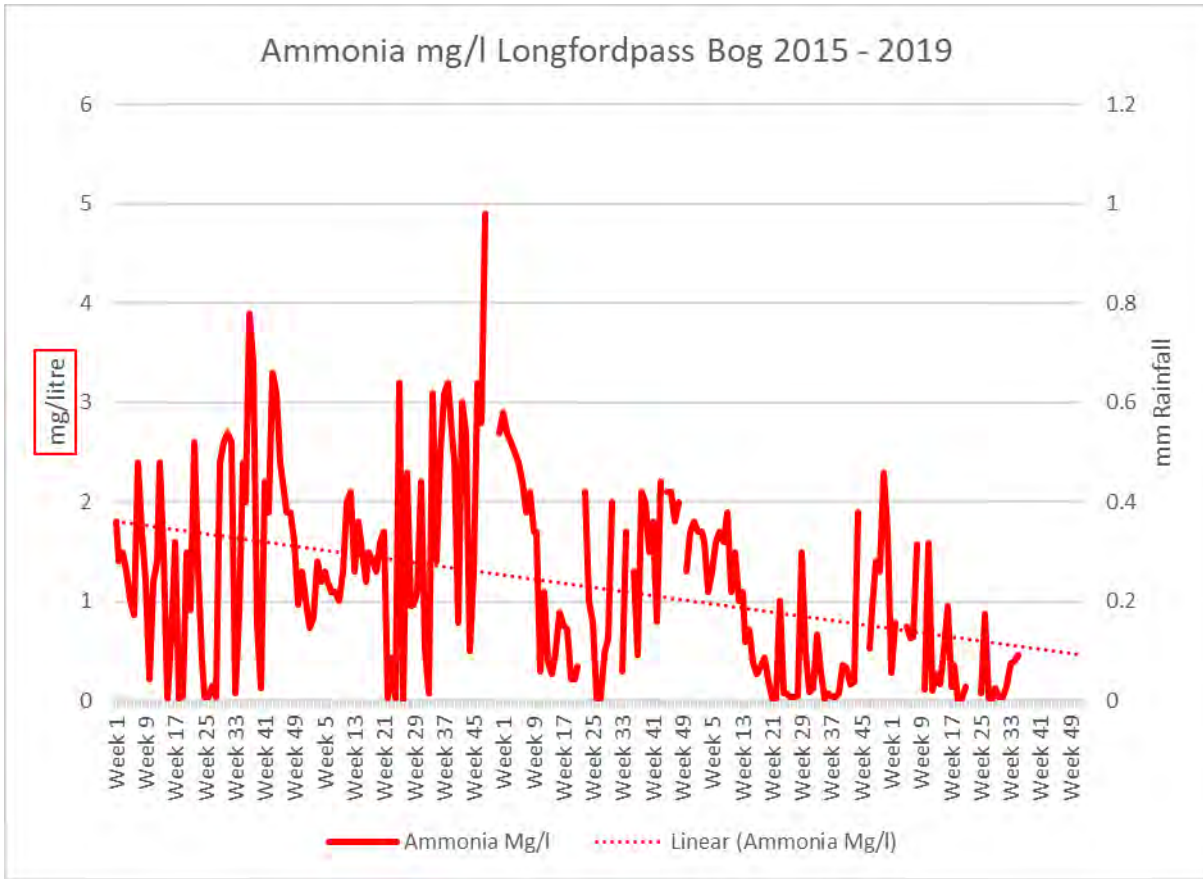


Figure 7.1. Ammonia levels over the period 2015-2019 at Longfordpass and the period 2017-2020 at Corlea.

Additional criteria for successful rehabilitation to optimise climate action and other ecosystem service benefits:

- Optimising the extent of suitable hydrological conditions to optimise climate action and other ecosystem service benefits (optimising and maximising residual peat re-wetting). This will be measured by an aerial survey after rehabilitation has been completed.
- Accelerating the trajectory of the bog towards becoming a reduced carbon source/carbon sink. This will be measured through habitat mapping and the development of cutaway bog condition assessment. This cutaway bog condition assessment will include assessment of environmental and ecological indicators such as vegetation cover, vegetation communities, presence of key species, *Sphagnum* cover, bare peat cover and water levels (similar to ecotope mapping). Baseline monitoring will be carried after rehabilitation is completed (during the scheme). It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.
- Reduction in carbon emissions. This will be estimated via a combination of habitat condition assessment and application of appropriate carbon emission factors derived from other sites. Baseline monitoring (habitat condition) will be carried after rehabilitation is completed (during the scheme). It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.
- Setting the site on a trajectory towards establishment of a mosaic of compatible habitats including ***Sphagnum*-rich regenerating wet deep peat** communities, wetland, fen, Reed swamp, heath, scrub, poor fen, and Birch woodland, where conditions are suitable. It will take some time for stable naturally functioning habitats to fully develop at Killashee bog. This will be demonstrated and measured via aerial photography, habitat mapping and cutaway/habitat condition assessment. Baseline monitoring will be carried after rehabilitation is completed (during the scheme). It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.
- Improvement in biodiversity and ecosystem services. This will be demonstrated by metrics outlined in Section 9.1 that can be used to measure changes in ecosystem services (e.g. water quality parameters, development of pioneer habitats, breeding bird monitoring). This will be measured by collecting a range of scientific data that can then quickly be adapted and into metrics that can be used to measure changes in various ecosystem services. Baseline monitoring will be carried after rehabilitation is completed (during the scheme). It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.

Table 7.1 Summary of Success criteria, targets, how various success criteria will be measured and expected timeframes.

Criteria type	Criteria	Target	Measured by	Expected Timeframe
IPC validation	Rewetting in the former area of industrial peat production	Delivery of rehabilitation measures Reduction in bare peat.	Aerial photography after rehabilitation has been completed – to demonstrate measures (drain-blocking) Establishment of a baseline for future monitoring of bare peat, vegetation establishment and habitat condition.	2023-2025
IPC validation	Key water quality parameters Ammonia, Phosphorous, Suspended solids, pH and conductivity	Reduction or stabilisation of key water quality parameters associated with this bog	Water quality monitoring for a period after rehabilitation has been completed	2022-2024
IPC validation	Reducing pressure from peat production on the local water body catchment (WFD)	Where this section of the water body, that this bog drains to, has not been identified as under pressure from peat extraction, that the intervening EPA monitoring programme associated with its Programme of Measures for this water body, confirms that its classification remains at not being at risk from peat extraction associated with activities at this bog.	EPA WFD monitoring programme	WFD schedule
Climate action verification	Optimising the extent of suitable hydrological conditions to optimise climate action	Optimal extent of suitable hydrological conditions	Aerial photography and Habitat mapping to map extent of suitable hydrological conditions. Baseline monitoring to be carried out during the scheme when rehabilitation is complete. Sites can be re-	2023-2025

Criteria type	Criteria	Target	Measured by	Expected Timeframe
			monitored in the future and compared against this baseline.	
Climate action verification	Reduction in carbon emissions.	Reduction in carbon emissions	Carbon emissions – estimated using a bog condition assessment and appropriate carbon emission factors.	2023-2025
Climate action verification	Setting the site on a trajectory towards establishment of a mosaic of compatible habitats	Establishment of compatible cutaway habitats	Habitat map, Cutaway bog condition map Baseline monitoring to be carried out during the scheme when rehabilitation is complete. Sites can be re-monitored in the future and compared against this baseline.	2023-2025

Meeting climate action verification criteria and monitoring of these criteria after the scheme has been completed is dependent on support from the Climate Action Fund or other sources of funding. Note that monitoring and verification of the overall scheme will be stratified – not all these criteria will be measured at each individual site. Baseline monitoring to be carried out during the scheme when rehabilitation is complete. Sites can be re-monitored in the future and compared against this baseline.

7.2 Critical success factors needed to achieve successful rehabilitation as outlined in the plan

The achievement of successful rehabilitation as outlined in the plan requires:

- **Funding to pay for resources required to deliver the planned rehabilitation (Bord na Móna and external).** Bord na Móna maintains a provision on its balance sheet to pay for these future costs when industrial peat extraction ceases. Bord na Móna is fully committed to meeting its obligations relating to rehabilitation and decommissioning under the Integrated Pollution Control Licence. It is expected that additional costs of enhanced rehabilitation will be supported by Government through the Climate Action Fund and Ireland’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan.
- **Bord na Móna to have sufficient resources (staff and training) to deliver the planned rehabilitation with required associated skills and competencies.**
- **Bord na Móna to have sufficient resources (suitable machinery) and staff to maintain this machinery.**
- **Weather conditions to be within normal limits over the rehabilitation plan timeframe.** Long periods of wet weather have the capacity to significantly affect ground conditions and constrain the delivery of rehabilitation. The potential impact of wet weather on ground conditions can be reduced by appropriate planning and management. Bord na Móna have significant experience of managing these issues through 70 years of working in these peatland environments.

- **Rehabilitation measures to be effective.** The rehabilitation measures proposed in this plan are based on 40 years of Bord na Móna experience of peatland management and best practice applied internationally in peatland management. Measures proposed in this plan have already been shown to be effective at other sites. Bord na Móna will apply a flexible and adaptable approach to the more innovative rehabilitation measures proposed in this plan. If measures are not initially effective, Bord na Móna will review any requirement for additional practical rehabilitation.
- **Natural colonisation of vegetation to develop semi-natural habitats at a rate within the normal limits.** The development of naturally functioning semi-natural habitats on degraded bog takes time. It may take 30-50 years for active raised bog vegetation to re-develop on suitable cutaway that was previously bare peat. However, Bord na Móna experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of these type of measures for re-wetting bog and creating carbon sinks (Renou-Wilson et al. 2018).
- Rehabilitation measures have been designed to accelerate and work with natural colonisation and other natural processes. Bord na Móna experience of rehabilitation has shown that re-wetting improves conditions for natural colonisation and that natural colonisation is accelerated where the environmental conditions are most suitable. Rehabilitation measures have been designed to modify the conditions of areas within sites where conditions are less suitable for natural colonisation (modifying hydrology, topography, nutrient status or availability of potential seed sources).
- **Monitoring to be robust and effective.** Rehabilitation Monitoring will be established to validate the success of rehabilitation as required by Condition 10 of the IPC Licence and to verify the benefits of the proposed enhanced measures to optimise climate action. This will focus on collecting a range of scientific data that can then quickly be adapted and into metrics that can be used to measure changes in various ecosystem services.

8. REHABILITATION ACTIONS AND TIME FRAME

Peatland rehabilitation requires detailed planning and the use of data from desktop surveys and field surveys. This data in association with topographical and hydrological modelling will be important in planning the future peatland landscapes and planning the use of the most appropriate rehabilitation methodologies to maximise climate action benefits. Hydrological modelling indicates those areas that are likely to re-wet when drains are blocked, based on the current topography, and areas where water levels may have to be modified, where needed. Enhanced rehabilitation measures will look to optimise hydrological conditions for re-wetting peat in other areas. This planning is also essential for matching the most sustainable rehabilitation methodology to the most suitable cutaway environment to maximise the benefits of the resource outlay (maximising cost/benefit).

A number of illustrative figures have been produced to inform Rehab Planning and Design, including Aerial Photography, Peat Depths, LiDar Surface Maps, and Depression Analysis modelling; these are included in the accompanying Mapbook as the drawings referenced below:

BNM-DR-24-13-21 titled **Killashee bog: Aerial Imagery 2020**

BNM-DR-24-13-04 titled **Killashee bog: PeatDepths**

BNM-DR-24-13-03 titled **Killashee bog: LiDAR Map**

BNM-DR-24-13-09 titled **Killashee bog: Depression Analysis**

The rehabilitation actions themselves will be a combination of PCAS measures to re-wet peat. The distribution of these measures is provisionally outlined in drawing titled **BNM-DR-24-13-05 Killashee bog: Enhanced Rehabilitation Measures** in the accompanying Mapbook (note that the actual distribution of these measures may be subject to change in response to stakeholder consultation and refinement of the enhanced rehabilitation measures.)

These enhanced measures for Killashee bog will include (see Table 8.1):

- Deep Peat measures including field re-profiling, creation of cells (45m x 60m cell & 30m x 30m cells) suitable for Sphagnum inoculation, on deeper peat; intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m) and modifying outfalls, and management of water levels with overflow pipes and blocking of internal outfalls;
- Regular drain blocking (3/100) on dry cutaway along with the blocking of outfalls and management of water levels, along with organic fertiliser application;
- Targeted drain blocking to optimise hydrological conditions/rewet the residual peat. in targeted marginal (degraded) raised bog remnants around the margins of the site and re-wetting, where possible, using an excavator to install peat blockages.
- Targeted fertiliser applications to accelerate vegetation establishment on areas of **bare peat** on headlands and high fields, and within certain areas of dry cutaway. Areas where vegetation has established do not need fertiliser application.
- Seeding of vegetation and inoculation of *Sphagnum* will be undertaken where required.
- Initial hydrological modelling indicates that a small part of the site will develop a mosaic of wetland habitats with the potential for some deeper water. More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), modifying outfalls and managing overflows will be implemented in this area. Hydrological management will look to optimise summer water levels to maximise the development of wetland vegetation (by looking to set water depths at < 0.5 m, where possible. It is inevitable that some small sections will

naturally have deeper water due to the topography at this site). Water-levels will be adjusted at outfalls and by adjusting piped drainage.

Table 8.1: Types of and areas for enhanced rehabilitation measures at Killashee bog. Note that the types of rehab and areas of rehab may change in response to stakeholder consultation and refinement of the enhanced rehabilitation measures.

Type		Enhanced Rehabilitation Measure	Extent (Ha)
Deep Peat	DPT2	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m) and modifying outfalls and managing overflows	xx
Deep Peat	DPT3	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), field reprofiling, modifying outfalls and managing overflows	
Deep Peat	DPT4	Berms and field re-profiling (45x60m cell), modifying outfalls and managing overflows, drainage channels for excess water and <i>Sphagnum</i> inoculation	xx
Deep Peat	DPT5	Cut and Fill cell bunding (30m x 30m cell), modifying outfalls and managing overflows, drainage channels for excess water, <i>Sphagnum</i> inoculation	
Wetland	WLT4	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), modifying outfalls and managing overflows, transplanting Reeds and other rhizomes.	xx
Dry Cutaway	DCT2	Regular drain blocking (3/100 m), modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes, targeted fertiliser treatment.	
Marginal land	MLT1	No work required	xx
Additional Work	AW2	Targeted Drain Blocking	xx
Silt ponds	Silt pond	Silt ponds	xx
Constraint	Constraint	Other Constraints (Turbarry)	xx
Total			xx

8.1 Short-term planning actions (0-1 years)

- Seek formal approval of the enhanced plan, noting the alternative standard plan should funding from the Scheme not materialise, from the EPA.
- Agree an *ex ante* budget of eligible costs (based on the approved enhanced plan) with the Scheme regulator.
- Develop a detailed site plan with engineering drawings outlining how the various rehabilitation methodologies will be applied to Killashee bog. This will take account of peat depths, topography, drainage and hydrological modelling (see map for an indicative view of the application of different rehabilitation methodologies).
- A drainage management assessment of the proposed enhanced rehabilitation measures will be carried out and any issues identified resolved and the rehabilitation plan adapted.

- A review of archaeology and an archaeological impact appraisal of the proposed rehabilitation will be carried out. The results of this assessment will be incorporated into the rehabilitation plan to minimise known archaeological disturbance, where possible.
- A review of issues that may constrain rehabilitation such as turbary and existing land agreements is to be carried out.
- A review of remaining milled peat stocks is to be carried out. There are peat stocks remaining on the bog.
- An ecological appraisal of the potential impacts of the planned rehabilitation on the presence of sensitive ground-nesting bird breeding species (e.g. breeding waders) is to be carried out. The scheduling of rehabilitation operations will be adapted, where required.
- Ensure all activities comply with the environmental protection requirements of the IPC Licence.
- Carry out Appropriate Assessment of the Rehabilitation Plan.
- Track implementation and enforcement of the relevant IPC Licence conditions, the mitigation measures (AA) and other environmental control measures during the implementation of the rehabilitation plan.

8.2 Short-term practical actions (0-2 years)

- Carry out proposed measures as per the detailed site plan. This will include a combination of drain blocking, and fertiliser applications targeting bare peat areas of headlands, high fields and other areas (where required) in addition to wetland creation and management prescriptions. All rehabilitation will be carried out with regard to best practice environmental control measures (Appendix IV).
- Monitor the success of rehabilitation measures in relation to developing suitable hydrological conditions.
- Carry out the proposed monitoring, as outlined.
- While natural colonisation is expected to commence almost immediately once peat production ceases, Phase 2 actions will be carried out in targeted areas to accelerate re-vegetation and colonisation of target species. Phase 2 actions may include seeding of targeted vegetation and inoculation of *Sphagnum*.
- Silt ponds will be monitored during this period and there will be continued maintenance and cleaning to prevent potential run-off of suspended solids from the site during the rehabilitation phase.
- Submit an ex post report to the Scheme regulator to verify the eligible measures to be carried out in year 1 of the Scheme, and an ex ante estimate for year 2 of the Scheme; and so on for each year of the Scheme.

8.3 Long-term (>3 years)

- Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate where necessary.
- Delivery of a monitoring, aftercare and maintenance programme (See section 10.2 below).
- Decommissioning of silt-ponds will be assessed and carried out, where required.
- Reporting to the EPA will continue until the IPC License is surrendered.

8.4 Timeframe

- **2022-2023:** Short-term planning actions.
- **2023-2024:** Short-term practical actions.
- **2024-2025:** Long term practical actions. Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate where necessary.

- **2025:** Decommission silt-ponds, if necessary.

8.5 Budget and costing

Bord na Móna (BnM) appreciates the Minister's intention to support Bord na Móna in developing a package of measures, 'the Scheme', for enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration of cutaway peatlands referred to as, the Peatlands Climate Action Scheme'. *However, only the additional costs associated with the additional and enhanced rehabilitation, i.e., measures which go beyond the existing standard mandatory decommissioning and rehabilitation requirements arising from Condition 10 will be eligible for support.*

The enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration of the peatlands funded by the Scheme will deliver benefits across climate action (GHG mitigation through reduced carbon emissions and acceleration towards carbon sequestration), enrich the State's natural capital, increase eco-system services, strengthen biodiversity, improve water quality and storage attenuation as well as developing the amenity potential of the peatlands.

Bord na Móna maintains a provision on its balance sheet to pay for the future costs of **standard** rehabilitation and decommissioning when industrial peat extraction ceases. This is updated every year - for more information see the Bord na Móna Annual Report (Bord na Móna, 2022). Bord na Móna is fully committed to meeting its obligations relating to rehabilitation and decommissioning under the Integrated Pollution Control Licence.

At this time, a 'standard' rehabilitation provision (sufficient to discharge the requirement of Condition 10 in the licence) has been allocated to the site based on the area of different cutaway types across the site (See Appendix I).

9. AFTERCARE AND MAINTENANCE

9.1 Programme for monitoring, aftercare and maintenance

This programme for monitoring, aftercare and maintenance has been designed to meet the Conditions of the IPC Licence. This is defined as:

- There will be **initial quarterly monitoring assessments** of the site to determine the general status of the site, the condition of the silt ponds, assess the condition of the rehabilitation work, monitoring of any potential impacts on neighbours land, general land security, boundary management, dumping and littering.
- The number of these site visits will reduce after 2 years to bi-annually and then after 5 years to annual visits.
- These monitoring visits will also consider any requirements for further practical rehabilitation measures.
- The **baseline condition of the site will be established** post-rehabilitation implementation by using an aerial survey to take an up to date aerial photo, when rehabilitation is completed. This will be used to verify completion of rehabilitation measures. The extent of bare peat will be assessed using this baseline data, and habitat maps will be updated, if needed. It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.
- **Water quality monitoring** at the bog will be established. The main objective of this water quality monitoring will be to establish a baseline and then monitor the impact of peatland rehabilitation on water quality from the bog.
- In order to assist in monitoring surface water quality from this bog, it is planned to increase the existing licence monitoring requirements to sampling for the same parameters to every month during the scheduled activities and for a period up to two years. post rehabilitation, depending on the period required to confirm that the main two parameters, suspended solids and ammonia are remaining compliant with the licence emission and trigger limit values and there is an improving trajectory in these two parameters i.e. reduction in concentration.
- Enhanced water quality monitoring will aim to include up to 70% of a bogs drainage catchments.
- Monitoring results will be maintained, trended and reported on each year as part of the requirement to report on Condition 10.1 of the IPC Licence on Bog Rehabilitation in the Annual Environmental Report, which will be available in April each year at www.epa.ie.
- The parameters to be included (as per condition 6.2 of the IPC Licence) include monthly monitoring for pH, Suspended Solids, Total Solids, Total Phosphorus, Total Ammonia, Colour, and COD and DOC.
- This monthly sampling regime on a selected number of silt ponds will be carried out over a two-year cycle. The original (licence) requirement was for a quarterly sampling regime, but this has been increased to a monthly regime to appropriately track the changing water chemistry that will occur as part of this enhanced rehabilitation. In addition, DOC will be included as a parameter to try and identify any changes in carbon in the surface water.
- If, after two years, key criteria for successful rehabilitation are being achieved and key targets are being met, then the water quality monitoring will be reviewed, with consideration of potential ongoing research on site. The water quality data, the aerial surveys and the habitat mapping will be collated and will be submitted to the EPA as part of the final validation report.
- If, after two years, key criteria for successful rehabilitation have **not** been achieved and key targets have **not** been met, then the rehabilitation measures and status of the site will be evaluated and enhanced, where required. This evaluation may indicate no requirement for additional enhancement of

rehabilitation measures, but may demonstrate that more time is required before key criteria for rehabilitation has been achieved. Monitoring of water quality will then also continue for another period to be defined.

- Where other uses are proposed for the site that are compatible the provision of biodiversity and ecosystem services, these will be assessed by Bord na Móna in consultation with interested parties. Other after-uses can be proposed for licensed areas and must go through the required assessment process and planning procedures.

Additional monitoring measures are also proposed to monitor ecosystem service benefits that have been derived by enhanced rehabilitation. These proposed monitoring measures will be funded by the proposed Climate Action Fund Scheme or additional other funding. Monitoring of climate action and other ecosystem service benefits will be designed to take account of the requirements of monitoring benefits of the overall Scheme and will be stratified; that is not all monitoring will be carried out in each site. These are defined as:

- Vegetation and habitat monitoring after rehabilitation is completed using a cutaway bog condition assessment (Similar to ecotope mapping). This assessment will include assessment of on environmental and ecological indicators such as vegetation cover, vegetation communities, presence of key species, *Sphagnum* cover, bare peat cover and water levels. It is proposed that sites can be monitored against this baseline in the future.
- The condition of the bog can be assessed using the condition assessment and suitable Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission factors can be assigned to different habitats. GHG emission factors have been determined for various peatland habitats in Ireland (Wilson *et al.*, 2015) and are constantly being refined with more and more research. BnM is actively supporting research into GHG fluxes in different rehabilitated peatland habitats. This means that potential GHG emissions can be estimated from the site, as the site continues along its trajectory towards a naturally functioning peatland ecosystem.

9.2 Rehabilitation plan validation and licence surrender – report as required under condition 10.4

IPC License Condition 10.4. *A final validation report to include a certificate of completion for the Rehabilitation Plan, for all or part of the site as necessary, shall be submitted to the Agency within six months of execution of the plan. The licensee shall carry out such tests, investigations or submit certification, as requested by the Agency, to confirm that there is no continuing risk to the environment.*

Reporting to the EPA will continue until the IPC License is surrendered. The bog will be included in the full licence surrender process as per the Guidance to Licensees on Surrender, Cessation and Closure of Licensed Sites EPA, 2012, when:

- The planned rehabilitation has been completed;
- The key criteria for successful rehabilitation has been achieved and key targets have been met;
- Water quality monitoring demonstrates that water quality of discharge is stabilising or improving; and
- The site has been environmentally stabilised.

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APPENDIX I: A STANDARD PEATLAND REHABILITATION PLAN TO MEET CONDITIONS OF THE IPC LICENCE

In the event that the Scheme (PCAS) is not supported by additional funding, Bord na Móna is still obligated to carry out peatland rehabilitation to meet the conditions of the IPC Licence. Under its EPA licences and following cessation of peat extraction, BnM is mandated to 'decommission' its operations by removing materials 'that may result in environmental pollution' and establish that 'rehabilitation' measures have environmentally stabilised peat production areas.

This proposed standard peatland rehabilitation plan is outlined here to **estimate potential costs**. Bord na Móna will still be expected to cover the costs that would have accrued from standard decommissioning and rehabilitation activities, as part of its original obligations. The existing costs associated with both the removal of potentially polluting materials and the environmental stabilisation of the peatlands resides with Bord na Móna. However, the expenditure necessary to deliver the additional and enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration and the benefits that flow from these measures and interventions/improvements will be eligible for funding by government through the Climate Action Fund and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

The same process as outlined in Section 2 will be followed.

Scope of rehabilitation

The principal scope of this rehabilitation plan is to rehabilitate the bog. This is defined by:

- The area of Killashee bog.
- EPA IPC Licence - Ref. P0504-01. As part of Condition 10.2 of this license, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the boglands within the licensed area. Killashee bog is part of the Mount Dillon Bog Group.
- The current condition of Killashee bog. This site has a gravity drainage regime.
- The key objective of rehabilitation, as defined by this licence, is **environmental stabilisation** of the bog.
- To minimise potential impacts on neighbouring land. Boundary drains around Killashee bog will be left unblocked as blocking boundary drains could affect adjacent land.
- Land-use.

Rehabilitation goals and outcomes

The key rehabilitation goal and outcome for Killashee bog are environmental stabilisation of the site via wetland creation. This is defined as:

- Carrying out drain blocking to re-wet peat and slow runoff.
- Stabilising potential emissions from the site (e.g. suspended solids).
- Environmental stabilisation.

The outcome is setting the site on a trajectory towards establishment of natural habitats.

Criteria for successful rehabilitation:

- Rewetting of residual peat and shallow cutaway in the former area of industrial peat production to offset potential silt run off and to encourage development of vegetation cover via natural colonisation, and reducing the area of bare exposed peat.
- That there is a stabilising/improving concentration of suspended solids and ammonia associated with the measures undertaken to stabilise the peat surface by the blocking of the internal drainage system and the maximised rewetting of the peat surface. This will be demonstrated by developing a stable or downward trajectory of water quality indicators (suspended solids and ammonia) towards what would be typical of a re-wetted cutaway bog. This will be measured via water quality monitoring (suspended solids and ammonia).
- Receiving water bodies have been classified under the River Basin Management Plan and this classification includes waters that are At Risk from peatlands and peat extraction. The success criteria will be that the At Risk classification will see improvements in the associated pressures from this peatland or if remaining At Risk, that there is an improving trajectory in the pressure from this peatland.

Rehabilitation targets

- Demonstrating the delivery of the rehabilitation through site visits and through updated aerial photography (indicating presence of peat blockages and re-wetting). This will be demonstrated by a post rehab aerial survey.
- Stabilising potential emissions from the site (e.g. suspended solids). The key target will be developing a stable or downward trajectory of water quality indicators (suspended solids and ammonia) towards what would be typical of a re-wetted cutaway bog. This will be demonstrated by water quality monitoring results.

Rehabilitation measures:

- Blocking field drains in drier sections of the former industrial production area using a dozer to create regular peat blockages (three blockages per 100 m) along each field drain.
- Re-alignment of piped drainage; and management of water levels to create/enhance existing wetlands.
- No measures are planned for the majority of surrounding marginal peatland habitats.
- Silt ponds will continue to be maintained during the rehabilitation and decommissioning phase.
- Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures and enhance where necessary.
- Decommissioning of silt-ponds will be assessed and carried out, where required.

Timeframe:

- 2023-2024. 1st phase of rehabilitation. Field drain blocking.
- 2025. 2nd phase. Further realignment of piped drainage and other re-wetting measures dependent on success of 1st phase re-wetting, as determined by ongoing monitoring of water levels and re-vegetation.
- Other enhancement measures such as fertiliser treatment will be carried out, if needed. These will be determined by ongoing monitoring.
- 2025-2026. Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate where necessary.

- 2025-2026. Decommission silt-ponds, if necessary.

Table AP-1. Rehabilitation measures and target area.

Type	Code	Description	Area (Ha)
Deep peat	DPT1	Regular drain blocking (3/100 m) + modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes	xx
Dry cutaway	DCT1	Modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes	xx
Wetland	WLT1	Modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes	xx
Marginal Land	MLT1	No work required	xx
Other	Silt Pond	Silt ponds	xx
Other	Constraint	Constrained areas	xx
Total			xx

See Drawing number BNM-DR-24-13-20 titled **Killashee bog: Standard Rehab Measures** included in the accompanying Mapbook which illustrates the standard rehab measures to be applied.

Monitoring, after-care and maintenance

- There will be initial quarterly monitoring assessments of the site to determine the general status of the site, the condition of the silt-ponds, assess the condition of the rehabilitation work, assess the progress of natural colonisation, monitoring of any potential impacts on neighbouring land and general land security. The number of site visits will reduce after 2 years to bi-annually. These site visits will assess the need to additional rehabilitation.
- Water quality monitoring will be established.
- Monitoring results will be maintained, trended and reported on each year as part of the requirement to report on Condition 10.1 of the IPC Licence on Bog Rehabilitation in the Annual Environmental Report, which will be available in April each year at www.epa.ie.
- The parameters to be included (as per condition 6.2 of the IPC Licence) include monthly monitoring for pH, Flow, Suspended Solids, Total Solids, Total Phosphorus, Total Ammonia, Colour, and COD.
- This sampling regime on a selected number of silt ponds will be carried out over a two-year cycle. The original (licence) requirement was for a quarterly sampling regime.
- Where other uses are proposed for the site, these will be assessed by Bord na Móna in consultation with interested parties. Other after-uses can be proposed for licensed areas and must go through the required assessment and planning procedures.

Validation and IPC Licence surrender

Reporting to the EPA will continue until the IPC License is surrendered. The bog will be included in the full licence surrender process as per the Guidance to Licensees on Surrender, Cessation and Closure of Licensed Sites (EPA, 2012) when:

- The planned rehabilitation has been completed;
- Water quality monitoring demonstrates that water quality of discharge is stabilising or improving; and
- The site has been environmentally stabilised.

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APPENDIX II: BOG GROUP CONTEXT

The Mount Dillon Bog Group IPC Licensed area is made up of two sub-groups (Lough Ree (the Mount Dillon Energy Peat Group) and Mostrim) and have been in industrial peat production for several decades. There are 28 defined sites covering a total area of 11,322 ha. Of the 28 sites, 23 mainly straddle the River Shannon within counties Roscommon and Longford, with five sites partially in County Westmeath to the east. Each bog area further comprises a range of habitats from bare milled peat production areas to re-colonising cutaway to workshops areas and transport infrastructure. Industrial peat extraction from these sites mainly supplied ESB power stations at Lanesborough (LRP) or for horticultural peat products.

Industrial peat extraction in the Mount Dillon Bog Group ceased in 2019. It is planned to supply remaining milled peat stocks to Lanesborough (LRP) during 2020. Both power stations will cease using peat by the end of 2020. All remaining horticultural peat stocks will also be removed during 2020. Intensive decommissioning and rehabilitation for the Mount Dillon Bog Group is expected to start in 2020/2021.

One bog site, Cloonmore, was never used for industrial peat production and several bogs in the Mostrim group have been drained but never fully developed and still retain typical high bog characteristics. These include Clonwhelan, Glenlough and a section of Mostrim. These sites have been zoned for biodiversity and a high bog drain blocking will be used to re-wet the high bog and encourage restoration of the raised bog habitat. Several sites (Glenlough, Mostrim, Clonwhelan and Clynan) were assessed by consultants for NPWS as part of the review of the raised bog Natural Heritage Area network (NPWS 2014).

The rehabilitation plan for the Mount Dillon Bog Group encompasses all areas involved in industrial peat production including industrial production areas and associated facilities. It also includes rehabilitation measures for those bogs that were initially drained but not fully developed.

A breakdown of the component bog areas for the Mount Dillon Bog Group IPC License Ref. PO-504-01-01 is outlined in Table Ap-2.

Industrial peat production history varies across the Mount Dillon bog group, so there is a wide range of peat depths at present. Bogs close to Lanesborough tend to have shallower peat depths or have been cutaway, while some bogs on the periphery of the group tend to have deeper peat reserves. Several sites such as Mount Dillon and Garryduff have been mostly cutaway to the fen peat layers or in some cases to expose the underlying gravel/sub-soil. Several bogs in the Mostrim group have only been partially developed or have had no industrial peat production, and have relatively deep peat depths

Table Ap-2: Mount Dillon Bog Group names, area and indicative status (Mount Dillon Energy Peat sub-group)

Bog Name	Area (ha)	Stage of development	Land-Use and History	Peat Production Cessation	Rehab Plan Status
Begnagh	265	Cutover Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Begnagh Bog in 1977 and ceased in 2020. Deep peat reserves remain on much of the former production area. Begnagh is considered a deep peat cutover bog.	Begnagh Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; fuel peat for Lough Ree Power Some areas of cutaway on site are developing pioneer cutaway vegetation communities.	2020	Finalised 2022 Rehab started in 2022

Bog Name	Area (ha)	Stage of development	Land-Use and History	Peat Production Cessation	Rehab Plan Status
Clooneeny	358	Cutover Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Clooneeny Bog in 1985 and ceased in 2020. Deep peat reserves remain on much of the former production area. Clooneeny is considered a deep peat cutover bog.	Clooneeny Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; horticultural peat and fuel peat for Lough Ree Power Most of the former production area on site is bare peat. Some areas of cutaway on site are developing pioneer cutaway vegetation communities.	2020	Finalised 2022 Rehab started in 2022
Cloonmore	102	N/A	Never developed for industrial peat production; scattered plots.	N/A	N/A
Cloonshannagh	494	Cutover Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Cloonshannagh Bog in 1985 and ceased in 2020. Deep peat reserves remain across the former production area. Cloonshannagh is considered a deep peat cutover bog.	Cloonshannagh Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; horticultural peat and fuel peat for Lough Ree Power Restoration work has been carried out on a 38ha section of high bog within Cloonshannagh Bog. Some of the former production area on site is developing pioneer cutaway vegetation communities, the remainder of the site is bare peat.	2020	Draft 2017
Cloonshannagh Rail Link	28	Cloonshannagh rail link is a link between sites.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Corlea	163	Cutaway Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Corlea Bog in 1960 and ceased in 2018. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Corlea is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog.	The former production area at Corlea has already extensively colonised. Pioneer wetland and scrub development has occurred over much of the site. Some wetland and rehabilitation management was undertaken between 2016-2018. Part of site leased to local community development group to develop amenity walkway in association with Longford County Council.	2018	To be finalised 2023
Derraghan	289	Cutover Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Derraghan Bog in the 1940's and ceased in 2020. Most of the former production area has shallow peat reserves. Some pockets of deep peat remain. Derraghan is considered a shallow peat cutover bog.	Derraghan Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; fuel peat for Lough Ree Power Much of the former production area at Derraghan has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer wetland and scrub vegetation communities.	2020	Plan Finalised 2021 Rehab commenced 2022
Derryadd	653	Cutover Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Derryadd Bog in 1964 and ceased in 2019. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Most of the former production area has shallow peat reserves. Some pockets of deep peat remain. Derryadd is considered a shallow peat cutover bog.	Much of the former production area at Derryadd has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer wetland and scrub vegetation communities Derryadd Bog will form part of the footprint of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Project (in pre-planning). An amenity walkway through part of Derryadd Bog is proposed for the Derryadd Wind Farm project	2019	Draft 2017
Derryadd2	328	Cutover Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Derryadd 2 Bog in 1960 and ceased in 2020. Long-	Much of the former production area at Derryadd 2 has been out of peat production for some time. These areas have already	2020	To be finalised 2023

Bog Name	Area (ha)	Stage of development	Land-Use and History	Peat Production Cessation	Rehab Plan Status
		term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Most of the former production area has shallow peat reserves. Some pockets of deep peat remain. Derryadd 2 is considered a shallow peat cutover bog.	extensively colonised with pioneer wetland and scrub vegetation communities		
Derryarogue (excluding the current PCAS extent)	895	Cutover Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Derryarogue Bog in 1952 and ceased in 2019. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Most of the former production area has shallow peat reserves. Some pockets of deep peat remain. Derryarogue is considered a shallow peat cutover bog.	Much of the former production area at Derryarogue has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer wetland, cutaway and scrub vegetation communities. Derryarogue Bog will form part of the footprint of the proposed Derryadd Wind Farm project (in pre-planning). An amenity walkway through part of Derryarogue is proposed for the Derryadd Wind Farm project	2019	To be finalised 2023
Derrycashel	388	Cutover Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Derrycashel Bog in 1951 and ceased in 2018. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Most of the former production area has shallow peat reserves. Some pockets of deep peat remain. Derrycashel is considered a shallow peat cutover bog.	Derrycashel Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; fuel peat for Lough Ree Power Much of the former production area at Derryarogue has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer wetland and scrub vegetation communities. Some wetland and rehabilitation management was undertaken (c.60ha) between 2014-2015.	2018	Finalised 2021 Rehab started in 2021
Derrycolumb	454	Cutover Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Derrycolumb Bog in the 1980's and ceased in 2019. Most of the former production area still has deep peat reserves. Derrycolumb is considered a deep peat cutover bog.	Derrycolumb Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; fuel peat for Lough Ree Power Much of the former production area at Derrycolumb has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer wetland and scrub vegetation communities.	2018	Finalised 2021 Rehab started in 2021
Derrymoylin	356	Cutover Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Derrymoylin Bog in 1985 and ceased in 2020. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog. Derrymoylin is considered a shallow peat cutover bog.	Derrymoylin Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; fuel peat for Lough Ree Power. Most of the former production area on site is bare peat.	2020	Draft 2021
Derryshannoge	452	Cutover Bog Industrial peat production commenced at Derryshannoge Bog in 1985 and ceased in 2020. Deep peat reserves remain across most of the site. Derryshannoge is considered a deep peat cutover bog.	Derryshannoge Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; fuel peat for Lough Ree Power. Much of the former production area at Derryshannoge has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities.	2020	To be finalised 2023
Edera	281	Cutover Bog Development for industrial peat production commenced at Edera Bog in 1990's. Active extraction from Edera began in 2003 and	Edera Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; fuel peat for Lough Ree Power. The majority of Edera Bog former production area is bare peat.	2020	Finalised 2021 Rehab started in 2021

Bog Name	Area (ha)	Stage of development	Land-Use and History	Peat Production Cessation	Rehab Plan Status
		ceased in 2018. Edera is considered a deep peat cutover bog.			
Erenagh	93	Cutover Bog Development for industrial peat production commenced at Erenagh Bog in 1970's. Erenagh is considered a deep peat cutover bog.	Erenagh Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; fuel peat for Lough Ree Power. Much of the former production area at Erenagh has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities.	2020	Draft 2017
Granaghan	212	Cutover Bog Development for industrial peat production commenced at Granaghan Bog in 1980's. Long-term peat extraction has reduced peat reserves on this bog but deep peat reserves remain on site. Granaghan is considered a deep peat cutover bog.	Granaghan Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; horticultural peat and fuel peat for Lough Ree Power. The majority of Granaghan Bog former production area is bare peat.	2020	To be finalised 2023
Killashee	110	Cutover Bog Development for industrial peat production commenced at Killashee Bog in 1985. Killashee is considered a deep peat cutover bog.	Killashee Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; horticultural peat and fuel peat for Lough Ree Power. The majority of Killashee Bog former production area is bare peat. Some areas have colonised with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities.	2020	To be finalised 2023
Knappoge	313	Cutaway Bog Peat Production at Knappoge bog commenced in 1963, and finished in 2018. Peat depths on the former production area are generally shallow. There are some pockets of deeper peat. Knappoge is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog.	Knappoge Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; fuel peat for Lough Ree Power. The majority of Knappoge Bog former production area is bare peat. Some areas have colonised with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities.	2018	Finalised 2021 Rehab started in 2022
Lough Bannow	739	Cutaway Bog Peat Production at Lough Bannow bog commenced in 1964 and finished in 2019. Peat depths on the former production area are generally shallow. There are some pockets of deeper peat. Lough Bannow is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog.	Much of the former production area at Lough Bannow has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities. A small (35ha) conifer plantation was established in 1980's. Lough Bannow will form part of the footprint of proposed Derryadd Wind Farm Project (in pre-planning). An amenity walkway through part of Lough Bannow is proposed for the Derryadd Wind Farm project	2019	Draft 2017
Moher	483	Cutover Bog Peat Production at Moher bog commenced in the 1960'S, and finished in 2020. Peat depths on the former production area remain relatively deep. Moher is considered a deep peat cutover bog.	Moher Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; fuel peat for Lough Ree Power. Much of the former production area at Moher has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised	2020	Draft 2021

Bog Name	Area (ha)	Stage of development	Land-Use and History	Peat Production Cessation	Rehab Plan Status
			with pioneer cutaway and scrub vegetation communities.		
Mount Dillon	592	Cutaway Bog Peat Production at Mount Dillon bog commenced in the 1940'S, and finished in 2020. Peat depths on the former production largely shallow and the peat is considered cutaway. Some deep peat remains on the west of the site. Mount Dillon is considered a shallow peat cutaway bog.	Mount Dillon Bog formerly supplied a range of commercial functions including; fuel peat for Lough Ree Power. Much of the former production area at Mount Dillon has been out of production for some time. These areas have already extensively colonised with pioneer cutaway, wetland and scrub vegetation communities.	2020	Draft 2017

See Drawing number BNM-DR-24-13-24 titled **Mount Dillon Bog Group**, included in the accompanying Mapbook which illustrates the location of Killashee bog and the Mount Dillon Bog Group in context to the surrounding area.

APPENDIX III: ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT

Ecological Survey Report			
<i>Note: This report outlines an ecological survey of the bog. This report should not be taken as a management plan for the site as other land-uses may still be considered. Information within this report may inform the development of other land-uses and identify areas with particular biodiversity value.</i>			
Bog Name:	<u>Killashee</u>	Area (ha):	111ha
Works Name:	Mount Dillon	County:	Longford
Recorder(s):	BnM Ecology Section	Survey/ monitoring Date(s):	7 th November 2012
Habitats present (in order of dominance)			
The most common habitats present at this site include:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bare peat (BP) (Codes refer BnM classification of pioneer habitats of production bog. See Appendix II). • Pioneer dry heath communities (dHeath) • Scrub (eBir, OBir and CBir). • Silt Ponds (Silt) with associated habitats such as scrub, Bracken, rank grassland (GS2), dry calcareous grassland (gCal) and typical pioneer communities of disturbed areas (disTuss). 			
The most common habitats present around the margins at this site include:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birch woodland (WN7) (Codes refer to Heritage Council habitat classification, Fossitt 2000), See Appendix II) • Scrub (WS1) (Gorse scrub and Birch scrub developing of dry high bog around margins) • Raised bog (PB1) • Cutover bog (PB4) (several small fragments) • Wet grassland (GS4) 			
Description of site			
<p>Killashee bog is located approximately 4km to the East of Lanesborough in County Longford. This site is located within one main block. A rail link connects Killashee site with Derryadd East to the South. The site is in active industrial peat production and the peat is used as fuel peat in Lough Ree Power in Lanesborough. There were no rail lines along the margins of the site and there are no pumps on the site.</p> <p>Killashee bog has been in industrial peat production since 1985, and the bog still retains a significant amount of “red” or “sphagnum” peat. There were no peat depths available for Killashee bog at the time of the ecological survey.</p>			

<p>The vast majority of the site has been mapped as bare peat with only one small area that appears to be cutaway to the north of the site. This section has begun to become vegetated with a mix of Purple Moor Grass and Bracken and it did not seem that the area had been in industrial peat production in recent years.</p> <p>The habitats along the edge of the site are typical of production bogs and contain remnant raised bog, dry heath and scrub. The section of remnant raised bog is located in the western edge of the site. This area was dominated by heather with little Sphagnum cover. A section of dry heath runs parallel to the western boundary of the site. This area appears to have been screw levelled in the past but was not used for industrial peat production and has since re-vegetated with Purple Moor Grass and Heather.</p> <p>The southern boundary of the site contained an access route that was partially bounded by a section of dry heath and an area of Soft Rush dominated poor fen. A line of <i>Leylandii</i> trees were also located here and were acting as a shelter belt for an adjacent house. A power line crosses this section of the site.</p> <p>A silt pond along the northern boundary contained a significant amount of Japanese Knotweed. This species is classed as an invasive alien species and spread from one site to another by means of moving the rhizome (roots). It would appear that each time the silt pond was cleaned out this species was spread further. If this species is not dealt with it has the potential to spread across the site and neighbouring lands. An eradication programme has been active since 2013 to control this alien invasive species.</p>
<p>Designated areas on site (cSAC, NHA, pNHA, SPA other)</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Adjacent habitats and land-use</p> <p>Adjacent habitats include lowland depositing river (FW2), wet grassland (GS4), improved agricultural grassland (GA1), cutaway bog (PB4), conifer plantation and raised bog (PB1).</p>
<p>Watercourses (major water features on/off site)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Templeton Glebe River flows within 500m of the south of the site. There are no watercourses located on the site.
<p>Peat type and sub-soils</p> <p>The majority of peat in Killashee bog are “red” or “Sphagnum” peat. The site is underlain with marl.</p>
<p>Fauna biodiversity</p> <p>Birds</p> <p>Several bird species were noted on the site during the survey.</p>

- Buzzard
- Snipe
- Field Fare (14)
- Other more common species include Blackbird, Heron, Robin, Magpie and Grey Crow.

Mammals

Signs of several mammal species were noted on the site during the survey.

- Otter
- Badger
- Fox

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APPENDIX IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL MEASURES TO BE APPLIED TO BOG REHABILITATION

- Bog restoration/rehabilitation measures will be restricted to within the footprint of the proposed rehabilitation area.
- The proposed rehabilitation will have due regard to noise limits and hours of operation (i.e. dusk and dawn) to minimise any potential disturbance on resident and local fauna that utilise the site and immediate environs.
- All plant and equipment for use will comply with the Construction Plant and Equipment Permissible Noise Levels Regulations (SI 359/1996).
- The proposed activities will be restricted to daylight hours and there will be no requirement for artificial lighting.
- Silt ponds will be inspected and maintained as per the IPC Licence.
- During periods of heavy precipitation and run-off, activities will be halted.
- Measures will be carried out using a suitably sized machine and in all circumstances, excavation depths and volumes will be minimised where possible.
- All machines will be regularly checked and maintained prior to arrival at the site to prevent hydrocarbon leakage.
- Hoses and valves will be checked regularly for signs of wear and will be closed and securely locked when not in use.
- Fuelling and lubrication of equipment shall only be carried out in designated areas away from surface water drainage features and ecologically sensitive areas.
- Waste oils and hydraulic fluids will be collected in leak-proof containers and removed from the site for disposal or re-cycling.
- Vehicles will never be left unattended during refuelling.
- No direct discharges to waters will be made. No washings from vehicles, plant or equipment will be carried out on site.
- All plant refuelling will take place using mobile fuel bowsers. Only dedicated trained and competent personnel will carry out refuelling operations.
- Mobile storage such as fuel bowsers will be bunded to 110% capacity to prevent spills. Tanks for bowsers and generators shall be double skinned. When not in use, all valves and fuel trigger guns from fuel storage containers will be locked. All pumps using fuel or containing oil will be locally and securely bunded where there is the possibility of discharge to waters.
- Potential impacts caused by spillages etc. during rehabilitation will be reduced by keeping spill kits and other appropriate equipment on-site.
- Site activities will be carried out in accordance with 'best practice'. In order to ensure compliance and implementation of 'best practice', these measures will be communicated to relevant Bord na Móna staff and updated as required.

APPENDIX V. BIOSECURITY

The potential for importation or introduction of non-native plant species (such as Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, etc.) during future rehabilitation management, such as drain-blocking using excavators, has the potential to result in the establishment of invasive species within the site. Section 49 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 prohibits the introduction and dispersal of invasive alien species (particularly plant species) listed on Part 1 (third column) of the 'Third Schedule'.

This section aims to reduce the risk from, and impacts of, invasive species and protecting biodiversity on lands under Bord na Móna ownership. Rehabilitation and decommissioning in the bog will have due regard to the relevant biosecurity measures outlined below:

- Records of problematic invasive species within the various bog units will be marked out with signs to highlight areas of infestation to personnel.
- All plant machinery will be restricted from disturbing known colonies of invasive species.
- All plant machinery will avoid unnecessary crossings to adjoining lands.
- Good site hygiene will be employed to prevent the introduction and spread of problematic invasive alien plant species (i.e. Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Himalayan Knotweed (*Persicaria wallichii*), etc.) by thoroughly washing vehicles prior to entering the area.

The biosecurity measures outlined above are in line with best practice guidelines issued by the National Roads Authority (NRA, 2010) – The Management of Noxious Weeds and Non-native Invasive Plant Species on National Roads and broadly based on the Environment Agency's (2013) – The Knotweed Code of Practice: Managing Japanese Knotweed on Development Sites (Version 3, amended in 2013).

In addition to the above, Best Practice measures around the prevention and spread of Crayfish plague⁴ will be adhered with throughout all rehabilitation measures and activities.

⁴ <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/invasive-species/crayfish-plague/>

APPENDIX VI. POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Bord na Móna Plc is a publicly owned company, originally established in 1934 to develop some of Ireland's extensive peat resources for the purposes of economic development and to support energy security. In the decades since its establishment the company has employed tens of thousands of people in its fuel, energy, and horticultural growing media businesses. For much of its history the company's support of important national policy aims has been enabled and encouraged in a variety of ways by Government.

Today, Bord na Móna is undertaking a number of highly significant actions in support of climate policy. These actions involve a radical transformation and decarbonisation of nearly the entire Bord na Móna business. This transformation will be driven by unlocking the full potential of our land and creating significant value for Ireland and the Midlands in particular.

Bord na Móna is an integral part of the economic, social, and environmental fabric of Ireland and Irish life. As a key employer in the Midlands, the company is conscious that its obligations go beyond purely commercial and environmental – there is also a social responsibility to employees and the communities served by Bord na Móna. It is the company's role and absolute priority to ensure that its long-term strategy delivers on all of these important areas in a robust and balanced way.

There are a wide range of policies, plans, legislation and land designations that inform the development of this Bord na Móna peatland rehabilitation plan. Bord na Móna have also developed and operate various policies and strategies that also inform the development of this rehabilitation plan.

1 EPA IPC Licence

Bord na Móna operates under IPC Licence issued and administered by the EPA to extract peat within the Mount Dillon bog group (Ref. PO-504-01). As part of Condition 10.2 of this license, a rehabilitation plan must be prepared for permanent rehabilitation of the boglands within the licensed area. The bog is part of the Mount Dillon group. This regulatory requirement is the main driver of the development of this rehabilitation plan.

2 The Peatlands Climate Action Scheme (PCAS)

Bord na Móna (BnM) understand that it is the Minister's (DECC) intention to impose an obligation on Bord na Móna to develop a programme of measures, 'the Scheme', for the enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration of boglands previously used to supply peat for electricity generation within the State. The enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration of the peatlands funded by the Scheme (PCAS) will deliver benefits across climate action (GHG mitigation through reduced carbon emissions and acceleration towards carbon sequestration), enrich the State's natural capital, increase eco-system services, strengthen biodiversity, improve water quality and storage attenuation as well as developing the amenity potential of the peatlands.

It is envisaged that Bord na Móna carry out an enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration, under the Scheme (PCAS), and supported by the Climate Action Fund and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan across a footprint of 33,000 ha. This scheme will significantly go beyond what is required to meet rehabilitation and decommissioning obligations under existing EPA IPC licence conditions. Interventions and measures supported by the Scheme will ensure that environmental stabilisation is achieved (meaning IPC obligations are met), and importantly, significant additional benefits, particularly relating to climate action and other ecosystem services, will also be delivered. However, only the additional costs associated with the additional

and enhanced rehabilitation, i.e., those activities which go beyond the existing decommissioning and rehabilitation requirements arising from Condition 10 will be eligible for support under the Scheme.

The proposed enhanced rehabilitation detailed in this document, are predicated on the understanding that the element of the activities, over and above the 'standard' rehabilitation necessary to comply with pre-existing Condition 10 IPC Licence requirements, will be deemed eligible costs by the Scheme regulator and funded by the Climate Action Fund and Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

For the avoidance of doubt, should the Scheme and the associated statutory obligation on Bord na Móna not materialise, Bord na Móna will not carry out the enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration measures described in this plan. Bord na Móna will instead plan to complete an adapted standard decommissioning and rehabilitation measures required under Condition 10 and outlined in Appendix I.

3 National and EU Climate and Biodiversity Policy

The National Policy Position establishes the fundamental national objective of achieving a transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. It sets out:

- the context for the objective;
- clarifies the level of GHG mitigation ambition envisaged; and
- establishes the process to pursue and achieve the overall objective.

The evolution of climate policy in Ireland will be an iterative process based on the adoption by government of a series of national plans over the period to 2050. GHG mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change are to be addressed in parallel national plans – respectively through the National Climate Action Plan. The plans will be continually updated, as well as being reviewed on a structured basis at appropriate intervals and, at a minimum, every five years. This will include early identification and ongoing updating of possible transition pathways to 2050 to inform sectoral strategic choices.

Bord na Móna is following a decarbonisation programme aimed at reducing the carbon emissions from its activities. Industrial peat production has now ceased, and several other decarbonisation measures are being implemented. The company aims to further develop renewable energy and resource recovery markets with a key objective of reducing the carbon intensity of all products. In addition, the carbon emission mitigation benefits associated with the post-peat extraction rehabilitated peatland following re-wetting, revegetation and colonisation of significant areas with native woodland will make a significant contribution to achieving the State's carbon emission reduction targets.

Peatlands rehabilitation and restoration is referenced in Section 17.3.3 of the Land Use, Land Use Change, Forestry and Marine Chapter of the National Climate Action Plan 2021 as follows:

"The rehabilitation of degraded peatlands to a condition in which they regain their ability to deliver specific ecosystem services has considerable potential for initial mitigation gains, and future carbon sequestration. Additional benefits of peatland restoration include positive socio-economic outcomes for the Midlands, increased natural capital, enriched biodiversity, improved water quality, and flood attenuation."

The scheme is included as Action 33 in the Climate Action Plan 2021 Annex of Actions - Deliver the Enhanced Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration (EDRR) Scheme for Bord na Mona Peatlands.

EDRRS is also referenced in the Climate Action Plan 2021 as a measure to deliver a Just Transition in the Midlands.

International research and scientific understanding of peatlands is now reflected in key Irish national policy and strategy documents such as the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017 - 2022 (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 2017), The National Peatland Strategy (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 2015), The National Biodiversity Action Plan (National Parks and Wildlife Service 2017), The River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government 2018), and the Biodiversity – Climate Change Sectoral Action Plan (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht 2019). Each of the national plans, which are also complemented with the recently published EU Green Deal communication on Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (COM 2020) have overlapping objectives and actions that focus on the restoration of peatlands damaged by turf-cutting, drainage and other impacts, as well as the re-wetting of Bord na Móna industrial peat extraction bogs.

While not specifically identified as a restoration implementor, EDRRS objectives are in line with those of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 of Preventing, Halting and Reversing the Degradation of Ecosystems worldwide.

EDRRS is also in line with the EU Commission proposal for a Nature Restoration Law which will apply legally binding targets for nature restoration in different eco-systems to every Member State. The aim is to cover at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030 with nature restoration measures and eventually extend these to all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

4 National Peatlands Strategy

The National Peatlands Strategy (2015) contains a comprehensive list of actions, necessary to ensure that Ireland's peatlands are preserved, nurtured and become living assets within the communities that live beside them. It sets out a cross-governmental approach to managing issues that relate to peatlands, including compliance with EU environmental law, climate change, forestry, flood control, energy, nature conservation, planning, and agriculture. The Strategy has been developed in partnership between relevant Government Departments/State bodies and key stakeholders through the Peatlands Council.

The strategy recognises that Ireland's peatlands will continue to contribute to a wide variety of human needs and to be put to many uses. It aims to ensure that Ireland's peatlands are sustainably managed so that their benefits can be enjoyed responsibly. It aims to inform appropriate regulatory systems to facilitate good decision making in support of responsible use. It also aims to inform the provision of appropriate incentives, financial supports and disincentives where required. The strategy attempts to strike an appropriate balance between different needs, including local stakeholders like turf-cutters and semi-state bodies such as Bord na Móna.

In line with a National Peatlands Strategy recommendation, a Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group (PSIG), was established, assisted in the finalisation of the Strategy, is overseeing subsequent implementation and will report to Government on an annual basis on the implementation of the actions and principles contained within the Strategy.

Bord na Móna is a key stakeholder in the National Peatlands Strategy and the Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group. The strategy recognises the potential for some Bord na Móna sites to be restored and to contribute to the national SAC and NHA network of protected raised bog sites. The strategy (agreed in 2015) also recognises the various different values of cutaway bog and developed six key principles (with Bord na Móna) for the after-use of cutaway bog.

- Bord na Móna will continue to assess and evaluate the potential of the company's land bank, using a land use review system. The assessment will help prepare a set of evidence-based management plans for the various areas of peatland. These plans will also inform its cutaway bog rehabilitation.
- The policy of Bord na Móna is not to open up any undrained new bogs for peat production.
- Lands identified by Bord na Móna as having high biodiversity value and/or priority habitats will be reserved for these purposes as the principal future land use.
- Generally, Bord na Móna cutaway bogs that flood naturally will be permitted to flood unless there is a clear environmental and/or economic case to maintain pumped drainage.
- In deciding on the most appropriate afteruse of cutaway peatlands, consideration shall be given to encouraging, where possible, the return to a natural functioning peatland ecosystem.
- This will require re-wetting of the cutaway peatlands which may lead in time to the restoration of the peatland ecosystem.
- Environmentally, socially and economically viable options should be analysed to plan the future use of industrial cutaway peatlands, in conjunction with limiting factors as outlined in Bord na Móna's Strategic Framework for the Future Use of Peatlands.

The National Peatlands Strategy highlights the importance and value of developing peatland rehabilitation plans for Bord na Móna cutaway sites and implementing this peatland rehabilitation. Some of these principles have now been superseded by the company's decision to cease industrial peat extraction. The National Peatlands Strategy is currently being reviewed by Government.

5 Draft National River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 (Water Framework Directive)

The National River Basin Management Plan (Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government 2017) is the key national plan for Ireland to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). In broad terms, the objectives of the WFD are (1) to prevent the deterioration of water bodies and to protect, enhance and restore them with the aim of achieving at least good status and (2) to achieve compliance with the requirements for designated protected areas.

The NRBMP 2018-2021 outlined how peat extraction can be a potentially significant pressure on various water quality parameters. Peatland rehabilitation of Bord na Móna cutaway (in addition to other measures) was part of the WFD (2018-2021) programme of measures. The NRBMP 2018-2021 takes account of the fact that Bord na Móna was in the process of phasing out the extraction of peat for energy production, that it set a target to rehabilitate 9,000 ha of cutaway bogs (covering 25 peatlands) by 2021 (in 2018) and will look to implement best-available mitigation measures to further reduce water quality impacts caused by peat extraction while the phasing-out process is taking place. This NRBMP 2018-2021 rehabilitation target was superseded by the acceleration of the Bord na Móna de-carbonisation programme and the Scheme (**PCAS**).

The development of site rehabilitation plans and the delivery of peatland rehabilitation by Bord na Móna was expected to have a positive impact on water quality and will help the NRBMP 2018-2021 deliver its objectives in relation to the Water Framework Directive and is one of the five key principle actions.

The draft NRBMP 2022-2027 describes how the number of waterbodies impacted by peat, industry and forestry have decreased by 10, 10 and 5 waterbodies, respectively since the second cycle. Impacts on water quality and river habitat arising from peat and peat extraction and associated drainage include the release of ammonium and

fine-grained suspended sediments, and physical alteration of aquatic habitats. Drainage of peatlands also results in changes to the hydromorphological condition of rivers.

The draft NWBMP 2022-2027 outlines how maintaining and restoring Irish bogs will lead to a decrease in waterborne carbon leaching to levels comparable with intact bogs as well as reducing losses of peat silt and ammonia. Vegetation on the surface of the peat can also slow the flow of water over the land surface. Based on the EPA's most recent reports, peat extraction and drainage is impacting on 106 water bodies across the country, with peat the single pressure on 28 of these water bodies. However, compared to the data in the second-cycle plan, the number of water bodies impacted by peat has decreased.

The cessation of industrial peat extraction by Bord na Móna in 2021 was expected to have a significant positive impact on water quality of receiving water courses by reducing the impact of peat extraction as a key pressure on particular water courses. This is now being supported by the results and conclusions of the draft NWBMP 2022-2027.

6 National Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021

The National Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2022 has a vision that biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland are conserved and restored, delivering benefits essential for all sectors of society and that Ireland contributes to efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU and globally. Ireland's 2nd National Biodiversity Action Plan outlines the main policies, strategies, actions and targets in relation to biodiversity. This plan has several Bord na Móna specific objectives and actions including implementing the BnM Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021 and overlaps with both the National Peatlands Strategy and the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022.

The delivery of rehabilitation via PCAS is expected to significantly contribute in the future to actions and targets of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021, particularly in relation to peatland restoration and creation of new habitats such as wetlands and woodlands.

A new National Biodiversity Action Plan is currently being developed.

7 National Conservation Designations

Bord na Móna operates in a wider landscape that also includes a network of European and National nature conservation sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), National Heritage Areas (NHAs, cNHAs) and National Nature Reserves). Bord na Móna will take account of this network of conservation objectives and their conservation objectives when developing these rehabilitation plans. It is expected that peatland rehabilitation will, in general, benefit the conservation objectives of this network of nature conservation sites.

8 National Raised Bog Special Area of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022.

The National Raised Bog Special Area of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022 sets out a roadmap for the long-term management, restoration and conservation of protected raised bogs in Ireland. The Plan strikes an appropriate balance between the need to conserve and restore Ireland's raised bog network as part of Ireland's commitments towards the EU Habitats Directive, and the needs of stakeholders and gives recognition to the

important role that communities have to play in the conservation and restoration of raised bogs. The National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017-2022 is part of the measures being implemented in response to the on-going infringement action against Ireland in relation to the implementation of the EU Habitats Directive, with regard to the regulation of turf cutting on the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). The then Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, also published a **Review of Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network** in 2014.

Bord na Móna has played a key role in the development of the National Raised Bog Special Area of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022 and the Review of the Raised Bog Natural Heritage Area Network. Several Bord na Móna sites were assessed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service as part of the above Plan and Review and there is an expectation that several Bord na Móna sites will be designated as SACs and NHAs in the future. This will reinforce the network of protected raised bog sites and replace in part sites that will be de-designated as they have been deemed to be significantly damaged and are deemed to have no raised bog restoration prospects. PCAS is expected to restore several sites that will contribute to The National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) Management Plan 2017-2022 targets in relation to the restoration of raised bog habitat.

Bord na Móna has also responded to the needs of the NRBMP and provided several sites to the government for the relocation of turf-cutters from SACs. This is part of a suite of ongoing bog conservation measures in the NRBMP to manage turf-cutting in protected sites. Bord na Móna and the National Parks and Wildlife Service continues to engage regarding the ongoing relocation of turf-cutters from protected raised bog sites.

9 All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 outlines key objectives and actions to protect and support pollinating insects and the habitats they rely on. A Bord na Móna specific action in this plan includes the adoption of pollinator-friendly management within the Bord na Móna network of sites. One action to help achieve this objective is habitat rehabilitation and restoration, where possible, of pollinator-friendly habitats, including peatland habitats.

10 Land-use Planning Policies

As Bord na Móna operates in many counties across Ireland, it is important to note the respective development plans in these counties. Many of the existing development plans recognise the potential that exists in the after-use of cutover/cutaway peatlands. Bord na Móna seeks to work with all of the relevant local authorities to ensure that the most appropriate after-uses are reflected in local planning policy. The following areas of consistent importance are of both direct and indirect relevance to Bord na Móna: heritage, tourism, biodiversity/conservation, landscape, renewable energy, and economy/enterprise.

11 National Archaeology Code of Practice

Bord na Móna operates under an agreed Code of Practice regarding archaeology with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the National Museum of Ireland which provides a framework to enable the Company to progress peat extraction whilst carrying out archaeological mitigation. (<https://www.archaeology.ie/sites/default/files/media/publications/cop-bord-na-mona-en.pdf>)

The Code replaced a set of Principles agreed with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in the 1990s. Under the Code Bord na Móna, the Minister and Director work together to ensure that appropriate archaeological mitigation is carried out in advance of peat extraction.

- BNM must ensure that any monuments or archaeological objects discovered during peat extraction are protected in an appropriate manner by following the Archaeological Protection Procedures.
- BNM must ensure that any newly discovered monuments on Bord na Móna lands are reported in a timely manner to the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- BNM must ensure that any archaeological objects discovered on Bord na Móna lands are reported immediately to the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.
- Bord na Móna will adhere to the Archaeology Code of Practice relating to management of any archaeological finds that may arise during cutaway peatland rehabilitation and decommissioning.

12 Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021

Rehabilitation of industrial peatlands is a key objective of the Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021. This action plan outlines the main objectives and actions around biodiversity on Bord na Móna lands. The Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan also outlines key International and European policy in relation to biodiversity. This includes the **United Nations Convention on Biodiversity 2011-2020 (CBD)** and **European Biodiversity Strategy to 2020**. Further details of these policies and Bord na Móna's responses can be found in the Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan (Bord na Móna, 2016). Both policy documents highlight targets such as reducing pressure on biodiversity, promoting sustainability, habitat restoration and benefits of ecosystem services.

One example of a key CBD target is:

- *“Restore at least 15% of degraded areas through conservation and restoration activities.”*

The EU's headline target for progress by 2020 is to:

- *“halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU by 2020, restore them as far as feasible, while stepping up the EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.”*

This rehabilitation plan is aligned to the CBD target and the EU Biodiversity Strategy target and will help Ireland meet its commitment to these international Biodiversity policies.

13 Bord na Móna Commitments

Bord na Móna made the commitment in 2009 not to develop any new peatland sites for industrial peat production. The company has continued to work with different stakeholders.

The company announced that industrial peat production would be cut by over 50 percent in 2019 and would entirely cease over most of its lands by the mid-2020s. Rehabilitation measures would continue to be carried out with the focus on re-wetting and rehabilitation of cutover and cutaway areas in line with national policies (such as the National Peatland Strategy, the National Biodiversity Action Plan, the Climate Action Plan 2019, the Water Framework Directive, etc.) and rehabilitation guidelines set down by the Environmental Protection Agency. To date, 15,000 hectares of cutaway and cutover bog have been rehabilitated using this approach with 5,000 hectares in active rehabilitation.

In line with Bord na Móna's accelerated decarbonisation programme, the company made a further commitment to a significantly larger rehabilitation target. This was reflected in our plans to rehabilitate a further 20,000 hectares of cutaway and cutover bog to wetland and woodland mosaics by 2025. In addition, we planned to restore a further 1,000 hectares of raised bog habitat by 2025.

The above commitments have now been followed by the decision by the company to cease industrial peat extraction and rehabilitate a target of 33,000 ha between 2021-2025.

These commitments outline the importance of peatland rehabilitation to Bord na Móna. The company will continue to demonstrate environmental responsibility and continue to deliver on these commitments in relation to peatland rehabilitation and in relation to the future management of these lands to maximise their benefits, particularly their ecosystem service benefits, along with the sustainable development of a portion of the land bank for other uses, such as renewable energy.

14 Bord na Móna Strategic Framework for the future use of cutaway peatlands 2020 (Draft)

The general after-use strategy of Bord na Móna is outlined in the Bord na Móna Strategic Framework for Future-Use of Cutaway Bogs 2020 (draft document). This document outlines how Bord na Móna's cutover peatland estate is complex in nature with great variability in terms of peat depths, peat types, drainage, subsoil condition and environmental value. Thus, future options require consideration on a site-specific basis, also bearing in mind the considerable internal variation within bogs. The development of the land-bank will also take account of national needs, while also taking account of the various national legislation, policies and plans related to the management of peatlands. In general, Bord na Móna will seek to balance and optimise commercial, social, and environmental value of these sites, and develop integrated land-uses, while taking account of the need for sustainability and their biodiversity value.

Any consideration of other future after-uses for Bord na Móna land such as development or other mixed uses will be conducted following the relevant planning guidelines and consultation with relevant authorities and will be considered within the framework of this peatland rehabilitation plan.

APPENDIX VII. DECOMMISSIONING

1. Condition 10 Decommissioning

This is a requirement of the applicable Integrated Pollution Control Licence issued by the Environmental Protection Agency. This condition 10.1 requires the following:

10.1 Following termination of use or involvement of all or part of the site in the licensed activity, the licensee shall:

10.1.1 Decommission, render safe or remove for disposal/recovery, any soil, subsoils, buildings, plant or equipment, or any waste, materials or substances or other matter contained therein or thereon, that may result in environmental pollution.

The main success criteria pertaining to successfully complying with this condition is ensuring that no environmental liability remains from this infrastructure and material and that the bog can be deemed suitable for surrender of the licence under section 95 of the EPA Acts. This is achieved by Bord na Móna identifying and quantifying any mechanical and infrastructural resources that were installed in the bog to enable the development and production operation at the site. This list is then refined to identify any items that would be deemed as possibly resulting in environmental pollution, should they not be removed.

Typically, these items/infrastructures would be any remaining, unconsolidated plant, equipment and attachments, waste materials, unused raw materials such as land drainage pipes, remaining peat stockpiles, stock pile covering, pumps, septic tanks and fuel tanks.

In relation to this bog, the list and tasks would be as follows:

Item	Description	Killashee Decommissioning Plan
1	Clean-up of remaining or unconsolidated waste or materials located in Bogs, Yards, Buildings and Offices	Clean-up of Bog
2	Cleaning Silt Ponds	Cleaning Silt Ponds
3	Decommissioning Peat Stockpiles	Peat Stockpile Management
4	Decommissioning or Removal of Buildings and Compounds	Where relevant
5	Decommissioning Fuel Tanks and associated facilities	Where relevant
6	Decommissioning and Removal of Bog Pump Sites	Not applicable
7	Decommissioning or Removal of Septic Tanks	Where relevant

In addition, condition 7 of the licence requires these now defined waste items to be disposed of or recovered as follows:

7.1 Disposal or recovery of waste shall take place only as specified in *Schedule 2(i) Hazardous Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* and *Schedule 2(ii) Other Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* of this licence and in accordance with the appropriate National and European legislation and protocols. No other waste shall be disposed of/recovered either on-site or off-site without prior notice to, and prior written agreement of, the Agency.

7.2 Waste sent off-site for recovery or disposal shall only be conveyed to a waste contractor, as agreed by the Agency, and only transported from the site of the activity to the site of recovery/disposal in a manner which will not adversely affect the environment.

7.3 A full record, which shall be open to inspection by authorized persons of the Agency at all times, shall be kept by the licensee on matters relating to the waste management operations and practices at this site. This record shall as a minimum contain details of the following:

7.3.1 The names of the agent and transporter of the waste.

7.3.2 The name of the persons responsible for the ultimate disposal/recovery of the waste.

7.3.3 The ultimate destination of the waste.

7.3.4 Written confirmation of the acceptance and disposal/recovery of any hazardous waste consignments sent off-site.

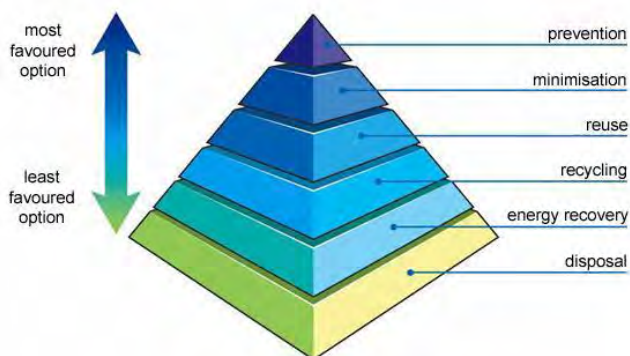
7.3.5 The tonnages and EWC Code for the waste materials listed in *Schedule 2(i) Hazardous Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* and *Schedule 2(ii) Other Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* sent off-site for disposal/recovery.

7.3.6 Details of any rejected consignments.

A copy of this Waste Management record shall be submitted to the Agency as part of the AER for the site.

As required by the licence, these waste items will be removed for recycling or disposal, using external contractors with the required waste collection permits, approved under 7.2, with waste records maintained as required under 7.3.

Where possible, Bord na Móna will utilize the appropriate waste hierarchy to identify waste that can be reused or recycled ahead of disposal.



The validation of the success of condition 10.1 is carried out through an Independent Closure Audit (ICA), followed by an EPA Exit Audit (EA) and the eventual partial or full surrender of the licence.

2. Enhanced Decommissioning.

The remaining infrastructure does not constitute a risk to the environment and would not be a requirement of condition 10 of the licence. The removal of these are deemed as enhanced measures. These may enhance the future afteruse of the bog for amenity value, security against access for illegal and unsocial activities and general State and community benefit. In relation to this bog, this would include the infrastructure defined below:

Item	Enhanced Decommissioning Type	Killashee Decommissioning Plan
1	Removal of Railway Lines	Removal of Railway Lines
2	Decommissioning Bridges and Underpasses	Where Applicable
3	Decommissioning Railway Level Crossing	Where Applicable
4	Restricting Access (bogs and silt ponds)	Restricting Access to Bog
5	Removal of High Voltage Power Lines	Where Applicable

APPENDIX VIII. GLOSSARY

Cutaway Bog: A Bord na Móna site generally becomes cutaway when it is economically unviable to continue industrial peat extraction or when the majority of peat has been removed.

Deep peat cutover bog. Deep peat cutover bog is defined as former raised bogs that have been in industrial peat production, where production has ceased but the residual peat depth is typically in excess of 2m. *Sphagnum* mosses are key species of raised bogs and the majority of the peat mass is formed from these mosses. *Sphagnum* species and other raised bog species are a key part of raised bog habitat function and prefer more acidic, nutrient poor, water-logged conditions. Typical raised bog *Sphagnum* mosses and other bog species do not thrive with the more typical alkaline water chemistry of cutaway bog but do grow well in these more acidic conditions where peat has been re-wetted. There is potential to re-develop *Sphagnum*-rich plant communities in these conditions if the peat can be re-wetted. This brings the opportunity of re-developing *Sphagnum*-rich vegetation communities that are considered Carbon sinks or peat-forming habitats and restoring the carbon sequestration function of these sites.

Dry cutaway bog: Cutaway bog is categorised as dry cutaway where it is not practical or feasible to re-wet these areas completely. It is inevitable that some areas of cutaway will remain relatively dry due to the heterogenous topography of the cutaway, as well as requirements for continued drainage on site for identified after-uses, or off site in relation to neighbouring lands or other infrastructure. Ridges and mounds of glacial deposits can become exposed during peat extraction and form a heterogenous topographical mosaic separated by basins. Dry cutaway may have very thin or no residual peat where ridges and mounds have been exposed. The exposed sub-soils are a mix of glacial gravels, muds and tills that can be quite free-draining. Dry cutaway may also have deeper residual peat, but in a location (i.e. at the margin) where the peat cannot be re-wetted due to boundary constraints. Dry cutaway may also develop in situations where there a relatively steep slope that inhibits re-wetting. The majority of dry cutaway will develop towards grassland, heath, scrub and dry woodland habitats.

Enhanced decommissioning: This is defined as decommissioning carried out under the Scheme, which is proposed to be externally funded.

Enhanced rehabilitation: This is defined as rehabilitation carried out under Scheme, which is proposed to be externally funded. It is proposed by Government that Bord na Móna be obligated to carry out enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration on peatlands. This Scheme will significantly go beyond what is required to meet rehabilitation and decommissioning obligations under existing EPA IPC licence conditions. Interventions and activities supported by the Scheme will ensure that environmental stabilisation is achieved (meaning IPC obligations are met), and importantly, significant additional benefits, particularly relating to climate action and other ecosystem services, will also be delivered. However, only the costs associated with the additional, enhanced and accelerated measures, i.e., those interventions which go beyond the existing decommissioning and rehabilitation requirements arising from Condition 10 will be eligible for support under the Scheme.

Environmental stabilisation: The key objective of peatland rehabilitation is environmental stabilisation. This means developing habitats and vegetation back onto the bare peat, slowing water movement across the bog, minimising effects to downstream waterbodies and meeting the conditions of the IPC Licence. This is achieved by a combination of re-wetting, where possible, and natural colonisation of the former cutaway, with or without intervention. Habitats will develop that reflect the underlying environmental conditions. Other after-use development may also serve to act as environmental stabilisation.

Marginal land. Marginal land is defined as land around the margin of the industrial peat production area. This margin generally contains a range of habitats including scrub, birch woodland, cutover bog and raised bog remnants. It has a variety of land-uses including turf-cutting (private turbary). The Scheme will consider potential rehabilitation and restoration actions (e.g. drain blocking) within marginal land zones, where appropriate.

Rehabilitation: Rehabilitation is defined in general by Bord na Móna as environmental stabilisation of the former cutaway. This is generally achieved via re-wetting, where possible, and natural colonisation of the former cutaway, with or without intervention. It is not possible to restore raised bog habitats on BnM cutaway in general in the short-term. In general, most of the peat mass has been removed from many BnM cutaway sites and the environmental characteristics of these areas have therefore changed radically (peat depths, hydrology, water chemistry, substrate type, nutrient status). This means there will therefore be different habitat outcomes (wetlands, fen, heathland, grassland and Birch woodland). Other after-use development may also serve to act as rehabilitation.

Restoration: Ecological restoration is defined as the process of re-establishing to the extent possible the structure, function and integrity of indigenous ecosystems and the sustaining habitats they provide” (SER, 2004). Defined in this way, restoration encompasses the repair of ecosystems (Whisenant, 1999) and the **improvement of ecological conditions in damaged wildlands** through the **reinstatement of ecological processes**. In general, Bord na Móna cutaway peatlands cannot be restored back to raised bog in a reasonable timeframe as their environmental conditions has changed so radically (with the removal of the acrotelem – the living layer and much of the peat mass). However, they can be returned to a **trajectory** towards a naturally functioning peatland system (Renou-Wilson, 2012). **Raised bog restoration** is an objective of some BnM sites where there is residual natural raised bog vegetation and where the majority of the peat is still intact.

Standard rehabilitation: This is defined as rehabilitation that is designed to meet the conditions of the EPA IPC Licence. The key objective of rehabilitation is environmental stabilisation. This is achieved by a combination of re-wetting, where possible, and natural colonisation of the former cutaway, with or without intervention. Other after-use development may also serve to act as rehabilitation.

Standard decommissioning: This is defined as decommissioning that is designed to meet the conditions of the EPA IPC Licence. This is defined as to render safe or remove for disposal/recovery, any soil, subsoils, buildings, plant or equipment, or any waste, materials or substances or other matter contained therein or thereon, that may result in environmental pollution.

Wetland cutaway bog: Wetland cutaway bog is defined as former raised bogs that have been in industrial peat production, where production has ceased and the majority of peat has been cutaway, and where this cutaway has the potential to be re-wetted. A significant number of Bord na Móna sites have pumped drainage and these sites are likely to develop a mosaic of wetland habitats when pumping is reduced or stopped. The water chemistry of wetland cutaway frequently is strongly influenced by the more alkaline sub-soils that have been exposed during peat production. This means that pioneer vegetation is more typical of fen and wetland, rather than raised bog. Wetland cutaway will have a broad range of hydrological conditions depending on the local topography. In some cases, these wetlands may form deep water (> 0.5 m) whilst other areas may have the water table at or just below the surface of the ground.

APPENDIX IX. EXTRACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

(Minimisation, treatment, recovery and disposal)

Objective:

The objective of this generic plan is to comply with the requirements of regulation 5 of the Waste Management (Management of Waste from Extractive Industries) Regulations, and to prevent or reduce waste production and its harmfulness.

Scope:

This plan covers IPPC Licence's Ref P0504-01, Mount Dillon Group of Bogs located in Counties Roscommon, Longford and Westmeath.

1.0 Extractive Waste:

Waste classified as extractive waste from peat extraction operations arise from three operations associated with this activity.

1.1 Silt Pond excavations and maintenance.

All peat extraction activities in the Mount Dillon bog group are serviced by silt lagoons/ponds. During the excavation of these silt ponds, pre IPPC Licensing in 1999 and since licensing, the excavated material is stored adjacent to the silt pond, where it either remains in situ or levelled out. As required by condition 6.6, these silt lagoons are cleaned twice per annum or more often if inspections dictate. These silt cleanings are also deposited on the same location, adjacent to the silt pond, where they may be levelled periodically to allow room for subsequent cleanings. These mounds of silt pond excavation material and cleanings are generally no higher than 2-3 metres.

1.2 Power Station screenings:

Lough Ree Power Station screens the peat from the bogs prior to processing. This screening removes oversized peat, stones and bog timbers. Schedule 3 (ii) of the IPPC licence permits disposal of these peat screenings back to the bog, where it is levelled and graded into the surrounding peat landscape. These locations have been agreed with the Agency as per condition 7.4 of the IPPC Licence, and as per the attached locations.

1.3 Bog Timbers:

During peat extraction operations, bog timbers often arise in the bog surface and are required to be cleared. These timbers consist of bog pine, oak and some yew. Some of these timbers, such as the oak and yew are removed for use in the wood craft industry, with the remaining bog pine stockpiled in locations at the opposite end of each bog, where it generally becomes a habitat for flora and fauna. These piles of timber are generally no higher than 1-2 metres.

2.0 P0504-01 IPPC Licence Extractive Waste Conditions

2.1 Condition 7.5 Extractive Waste Management

The licensee shall draw up a Waste Management Plan (to be known as an Extractive Waste Management Plan) for the minimisation, treatment, recovery and disposal of extractive waste. This Plan shall meet the requirements of regulation 5 of the Waste Management (Management of Waste from the Extractive Industries) Regulations, 2009. The Plan shall be submitted for agreement by the Agency by the 31st December 2012. The Plan shall be reviewed at least once every five years thereafter in a manner agreeable to the Agency and amended in the event of substantial changes to the operation of a waste facility or to the waste deposited. Any amendments shall be notified to the Agency.

All extractive waste shall be managed in accordance with the Extractive Waste Management Plan. A report on the implementation of the Extractive Waste Management Plan shall be provided in the AER.

2.2 Condition 7.6 Waste Facility

- (i) No new waste facility may be developed or an existing waste facility modified unless agreed by the Agency.
- (ii) The licensee shall ensure that all existing waste facilities are managed and maintained to ensure their physical stability and to prevent pollution or contamination of soil, air, surface water or groundwater.
- (iii) The licensee shall ensure that all new waste facilities are constructed, managed and maintained to ensure their physical stability and to prevent pollution or contamination of soil, air, surface water or groundwater.
- (iv) Operational measures shall be continuously employed to prevent damage to waste facilities from personnel, plant or equipment.
- (v) The licensee shall establish and maintain a system for regular monitoring and inspection of waste facilities.
- (vi) All records of monitoring and inspection of waste facilities, as required under the licence, shall be maintained on-site in order to ensure the appropriate handover of information in the event of a change of operator or relevant personnel.

2.3 Condition 7.7 Excavation Voids

7.7.1 Unless otherwise agreed by the Agency, only extractive waste shall be placed in excavation voids.

7.7.2 When placing extractive waste into excavation voids for rehabilitation and construction purposes, the licensee shall, in accordance with regulation 10 of the Waste Management (Management of Waste from the Extractive Industries) Regulations, 2009, and the Extractive Waste Management Plan:

- Secure the stability of the waste
- Put in place measures to prevent pollution of soil, surface water and ground water.
- Carry out monitoring of the extractive waste and excavation void.

Condition 7.5. Extractive Waste Management Plan. 5 (1)

3.0 Minimisation.

3.1 Silt pond excavation material and cleanings.

IPPC Licence conditions require all production areas to be serviced by an appropriately designed silt pond based on storage volume and retention time. Condition 6.6 requires all ponds to be cleaned bi-annually and more often if inspections dictate, so the only opportunity for minimisation of same is through Standard Operating Procedures. These are required under condition 2.2.2 (i) regarding minimisation of suspended solids, and are in-place to minimise the generation of silt, which in-turn will minimise the generation of silt pond waste.

3.2 Power Station Screenings.

These screenings cannot be minimised as they are a consequence of peat production, stones, timbers and oversize peat materials are naturally occurring on the bog, and are required to be removed prior to processing.

3.3 Bog Timbers.

Bog timbers are also naturally occurring materials within a bog and are required to be removed prior for production. The volume of these bog timbers varies from bog to bog and as such their minimisation is not controllable or quantifiable.

4.0 Treatment

4.1 Silt pond excavation material and cleanings.

The silt pond excavation material and silt cleanings do not require any treatment for its end use which will be either backfilling these silt pond voids as per condition 7.7.1 above as part of the Bog Rehabilitation Plan, or reincorporated into the surrounding peatlands.

4.2 Power Station Screenings.

The factory screenings are permitted to be returned to the bog as they were naturally occurring materials from the bog, and as such do not require any treatment to serve this purpose.

4.3 Bog Timbers

As per 1.3 above, these timbers are stockpiled at two locations in each bog, as per the attached list of sites and become habitats for various flora and fauna.

5.0 Recovery

5.1 Silt pond excavation material and cleanings.

Condition 2.2.2 (vi) requires the reuse of silt pond waste to be examined. This was undertaken in 2006, the outcome of which was that this waste peat silt material, as a fuel, was contaminated with sub-soils, rendering it unsuitable for combustion. In addition, volumes are small compared to overall peat production volumes.

5.2 Power Station Screenings.

Given the nature of these screenings as outlined in 1.2 above, there is no further use identified and they are permitted to be disposed of back to the bog.

5.3 Bog Timbers

Investigations into processing these materials into smaller fractions for potential heating purposes did not yield any viable results. In addition, these older stockpiles are now classified as habitats and as such would not be considered for reuse as a fuel.

6.0 Disposal

6.1 Silt pond excavation material and cleanings.

Schedule 3 (ii) permits the disposal of silt pond cleanings (Lagoon Sediments) to the bog and these locations, adjacent to the silt pond site, are presented in the attached spreadsheet, with associated grid coordinates.

6.2 Power Station Screenings.

Schedule 3 (ii) permits the disposal of screenings (Peat Screenings) to the bog at designated locations agreed under Condition 7.4, and these locations, are presented in the attached spreadsheet, with associated grid coordinates.

6.3 Bog Timbers

These naturally occurring bog timbers are stockpiled at locations in each bog, grid coordinates attached.

7.0 Extractive Waste Management Plan

5 (2a)(i)

The vast majority of peat extraction bogs were all designed and drained for production prior to the 1960's and as such the production fields layout cannot be altered. Under our Cleaner Reduction Procedures, various design changes have been implemented to the production machines and process to reduce lost peat which eventually is captured in the silt ponds and requires removal as waste peat silt. This along with training and ongoing research and development will continuously reduce waste peat and subsequently waste silt pond cleanings. Bog timbers are present naturally in various volumes and quantities in different bogs and as peat production involves stripping peat in layers, the exposure, generation and removal of these timbers is unavoidable. Work has been undertaken recently into project looking at grinding of these bog timbers in situ using a timber miller, and if this project becomes viable it will contribute to the reduction of bog timbers.

5 (2a)(ii)

Given the nature and expanse of peat bogs, the stockpiling and storage of these waste materials do not present a visual, storage or stability problem. As required under Condition 10 of the IPPC Licence, the silt pond excavations and screenings will be utilised to backfill the silt pond voids once the bogs have finished and stabilised in accordance with our Bog Rehabilitation Plan. Storage of these wastes in the interim, open to the elements does not present a change on the nature of these wastes that will threaten the environment or prevent their reuse during the bog rehabilitation process.

5 (2a)(iii)

Under Condition 10 of the IPPC Licence, all silt ponds will be decommissioned once the bog surface has stabilised, in agreement with the Agency. This will involve the removal of weirs and flow controls, returning the silt pond back to its original drain or removing the silt pond from the drainage system. Both of these activities will involve placing the silt pond extraction and cleaning material back into the excavation void.

5 (2a)(iv)

The peat bogs do not contain any topsoil, so this is not required.

5 (2a)(v)

Peat mineral resources do not undergo any treatment.

5 (2b)

These three extractive waste are all being reused and recovered back to their original extraction points and have not undergone any physical, chemical, or biological change.

5 (2c)(i, ii & iii)

These three extractive wastes, stored on the bog for reuse or recovery during the bog rehabilitation phase, do not require any management or monitoring during the operation of these bogs. Silt pond excavations and cleanings are stored adjacent to the silt pond and quickly revegetated and stabilise, the screenings are graded back into the bog at the agreed locations upon disposal and the bog timbers do not prevent any water or airborne danger to the environment.

5 (3)

The three extractive wastes arising from peat extraction operations at this site are classified wastes from mineral non-metalliferous excavation, with an EWC code of 0101 02. The materials are not classified as hazardous under Directive 91/689/EEC20, and do not contain substances or preparations classified as dangerous under Directives 67/548/EEC5 or 1999/45/EC6 above a certain threshold.

The peat excavations and cleanings are stored in locations and in a manner that they could not collapse, and are remote in their nature. The stockpiles are located adjacent to silt ponds that are cleaned regularly and as such these stockpiles are managed and levelled to facilitate further cleanings. Therefore the material stored at these waste facilities would not be considered to be a Category A waste facility.

Classification in accordance Annex II.

Waste Material	Description	Classification	Chemical Process treatment	Deposition description	Transport System
Silt Pond Excavations and cleanings	Peat and mineral soils associated with peatlands. Stored for reuse during bog rehabilitation, with no displacement of overburden	01 01 02	None	Excavated from silt ponds by excavator and deposited adjacent to the silt pond.	Excavator
Peat Screenings	Stones, timbers and oversized peat particles, reincorporated into low areas, agreed with the Agency, and stabilized under normal natural bog conditions	01 01 02	None	Removed by screen at the factory and transported by tractor and trailer to the designated and agreed locations	Tractor and trailer.
Bog Timbers	Pine, Oak and Yew species, stored at locations in each bog. Not subject to any stability issues due to exposure to atmospheric/meteorological conditions.	01 01 02	None	Removed from the bog surface by excavator and transported by tractor and trailer to the agreed locations	Tractor and Trailer

Description of operations.

Silt pond excavations arise from the requirement to have silt ponds treating all peat extraction sites. Silt pond cleanings arise from the removal of peat silt from silt ponds as required under IPPC Licence. Bog timbers arise from preparation of the bogs surface for peat production. Estimated quantities of materials are below:

Closure plan. (Bog Rehabilitation Plan).

Condition 10.1 – 10.3 of the IPPC Licence requires the following:

- 10.1 Following termination of use or involvement of all or part of the site in the licensed activity, the licensee shall:
- 10.1.1 Decommission, render safe or remove for disposal/recovery, any soil, subsoils, buildings, plant or equipment, or any waste, materials or substances or other matter contained therein or thereon, that may result in environmental pollution.
- 10.1.2 Implement the agreed cutaway bog rehabilitation plan (refer Condition 10.2).

10.2 Cutaway Bog Rehabilitation Plan:

- 10.2.1 The licensee shall prepare, to the satisfaction of the Agency, a fully detailed and costed plan for permanent rehabilitation of the cutaway boglands within the licensed area. This plan shall be submitted to the Agency for agreement within eighteen months of the date of grant of this licence.
- 10.2.2 The plan shall be reviewed every two years and proposed amendments thereto notified to the Agency for agreement as part of the AER. No amendments may be implemented without the written agreement of the Agency.

10.3 The Rehabilitation Plan shall include as a minimum, the following:

- 10.3.1 A scope statement for the plan; to include outcome of consultations with relevant Agencies, Authorities and affected parties (to be identified by the licensee).
- 10.3.2 The criteria which define the successful rehabilitation of the activity or part thereof, which ensures minimum impact to the environment.
- 10.3.3 A programme to achieve the stated criteria.
- 10.3.4 Where relevant, a test programme to demonstrate the successful implementation of the rehabilitation plan.
- 10.3.5 A programme for aftercare and maintenance.

10.4 A final validation report to include a certificate of completion for the Rehabilitation Plan, for all or part of the site as necessary, shall be submitted to the Agency within six months of execution of the plan. The licensee shall carry out such tests, investigations or submit certification, as requested by the Agency, to confirm that there is no continuing risk to the environment. This plan including maps and ecological classifications are available on file at the Mount Dillon IPPC Licence Coordinators office.

The location in relation to the silt pond excavations and cleanings are adjacent to the silt ponds, which are considered under the Shannon River Basin Management Plan in accordance with the requirements of Directive 2000/60/EC.

Screenings and bog timbers are all naturally occurring elements of peatland and their placement back to the bog in smaller concentrated designated waste facilities does not constitute a risk to the prevention of water compliance.

The lands under where these materials are deposited are peatlands and are un-affected by the placing of this material.

Review.

This plan will be reviewed every five years, the first review to take place in September 2017. This review will entail an inspection of these waste facilities to ensure their placing, management, maintenance and stability comply with the requirements of the Extractive Waste Management requirements and condition 7.5, 7.6 and 7.7 of the Mount Dillon IPPC Licence P0504-01.

APPENDIX X. MITIGATION MEASURES FOR THE APPLICATION OF FERTILISER

- Any fertiliser used will be Rock Phosphate and will not be applied in the following conditions:
 1. The land is waterlogged;
 2. The land is flooded, or it is likely to flood;
 3. The land is frozen, or covered with snow;
 4. Heavy rain is forecast within 48 hours (forecasts will be checked from Met Éireann).
 5. The ground slopes steeply and there is a risk of water pollution, when factors such as surface run-off pathways, the presence of land drains, the absence of hedgerows to mitigate surface flow, soil condition and ground cover are taken into account.
- No fertiliser will be spread on land within 2 metres of a surface watercourse.
- Buffer zones in respect of waterbodies, as specified on <https://www.epa.ie/about/faq/name,57156,en.html>, will be adhered with at all times with regard to fertiliser application. Reproduced as follows:

Water body / Feature	Buffer zone
Any water supply source providing 100m ³ or more of water per day, or serving 500 or more people	200 metres (or as little as 30 metres where a local authority allows)
Any water supply source providing 10m ³ or more of water per day, or serving 50 or more people	100 metres (or as little as 30 metres where a local authority allows)
Any other water supply for human consumption	25 metres (or as little as 30 metres where a local authority allows)
Lake shoreline	20 metres
Exposed cavernous or karstified limestone features (such as swallow holes or collapse features)	15 metres
Any surface watercourse where the slope towards the watercourse exceeds 10%	10 metres
Any other surface waters	5 metres*

APPENDIX XI. CONSULTATION SUMMARIES

Table APX -1 Consultees contacted

Table APX -2 Response summary from Consultees contacted

Draft

APPENDIX XII. ARCHAEOLOGY

Role of the Archaeological Liaison Officer

1. To communicate this Code of Practice and the *Archaeological Protection Procedures* (Appendix IV) to all personnel operating on the bog.
2. To ensure that all notices relating to the *Archaeological Protection Procedures* are posted and maintained at appropriate locations on the bog.
3. To report any stray finds, presented to the Liaison Officer from his/her group of bogs, to the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.
4. To provide for the appropriate protection of the stray find, whether in-situ or removed from the bog, as directed by the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.



Code of Practice

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Code of Practice

5. To arrange for the delivery or collection of the stray find, as directed by the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.
6. To complete the Report of Discovery of Archaeological Object(s) in Bogs (Appendix V), as directed by the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.
7. To maintain a file of all stray finds and associated documentation and provide copies to the Project Archaeologist.
8. To provide assistance, where required, to the Department during archaeological surveys.
9. To provide assistance, where required, to Bord na Móna's Consultant Archaeologists, during investigation and mitigation of monuments.
10. To report to the Bord na Móna members on the Archaeology Management Liaison Committee any planned developments or new activities on cutaway peatland areas within his/her group of bogs.



	Procedure: ENV017	Rev: 1
Title: Archaeological Findings	Approved: EM	Date: 13/10/2020

1) Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to describe the arrangements in Bord na Móna for findings of Archaeological material (Stray Finds).

All objects, sites or monuments, no matter how fragmentary, are important elements of our heritage.

2) Procedure

1. Check whether there are any known archaeological monuments in your area.
2. Be vigilant at all times - objects or traces of structures can be found on the field surfaces, in the drain faces, on the bog margins or caught within the mechanics of machinery.
3. If an object is found leave it in place, if it is safe to do so, note its position and immediately contact your Archaeological Liaison Officer who will assess the situation and contact the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.
4. Resist the temptation to investigate the find spot as this may disturb fragile archaeological deposits.
5. If the object is already dislodged or is in imminent danger, remove it carefully, mark its find spot and report it immediately to your Archaeological Liaison Officer.
6. Objects made of wood, leather or textile, which are removed from peat should be kept in conditions similar to those in which they are found. This can be done by packing them in peat or, if waterlogged, placing them in a clean basin of water and sealing the container. Resist the temptation to clean or remove peat from the object.
7. If timbers or other materials, such as gravel or stones, which could be part of a man-made structure are noted on the bog, mark the location and report it immediately to your Archaeological Liaison Officer. If you suspect the find is of archaeological importance, resist the temptation to expose it any further as this could result in damage to the structure.
8. Report anything that looks unnatural in the bog – your Archaeological Liaison Officer will decide whether it should be referred to the appropriate authorities.

NOTE: Our archaeological heritage is a finite, non-renewable resource. Once a site is destroyed its information is lost forever and we have lost the chance to understand a little more about our past, where we have come from and perhaps the opportunity to learn for the future.

Your Archaeological Liaison Officer is

3) Records

Revision Index			
Revision	Date	Description of change	Approved
1	13/09/2020	First release	EMcD
2			



APPENDIX 2

**KILLASHEE BOG
DECOMMISSIONING AND
REHABILITATION PLAN- GIS
MAPBOOK**