



KI655-618 NEW HARBOUR ROAD, PORTAVOGIE

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1. Introduction

1.1 Terms of reference

AtkinsRéalis have been commissioned by Northern Ireland Water to carry out a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Stage 1 Screening for the construction of a new pipe and associated sea outfall to convey surface water drainage from a new 3G football pitch development on New Harbour Road, Portavogie, to the sea (North Channel). The new pipeline will be located under New Harbour Road, cross under land associated with Portavogie Harbour and likely to be used for carparking, through to Portavogie Bay Beach to discharge through a new headwall. See Appendix A for Site Drainage Plan.

The sections in this report are as follows:

- Section 2 outlines the methodology used for this HRA screening;
- Section 3-8 contains the HRA Screening Matrices;
- Section 9 outlines the proposed works and potential effects;
- Section 10 provides the conclusions of the HRA screening; and
- Associated appendices.

1.2 Background to the Habitat Regulation Assessment

In Northern Ireland, the European Habitats Directive (Directive 92/42/EEC) has been transposed into national legislation through the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) (referred to hereafter as the Habitats Regulations). Under this legislation, assessment is required to meet the requirements of Article 6.3 of the Directive for Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of a plan or project. Such an assessment is required where a plan or project under consideration could have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 (N2K) sites. N2K sites are those identified as sites of community importance designated under the Habitats Directive (Special Area of Conservation (SACs)) or the Birds Directive (Special Protection Area (SPAs)). According to Planning Policy Statement 2: Planning and Nature Conservation (PPS2), in such assessments, consideration is also given to sites designated as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites) and Sites of Community Importance (candidate SACs). Collectively, within this report, these are referred to as 'International Sites'.

The stages of the HRA process are:

- Stage 1 – Screening: To test whether a plan or project either alone or in combination with other plans and projects is likely to have a significant effect on an International Site;
- Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment: To determine whether, in view of an International Site's conservation objectives, the project or plan (either alone or in combination with other projects and plans) would have an adverse effect (or risk of this) on the integrity of the site with respect to the conservation objectives. If adverse impacts are anticipated, potential mitigation measures to alleviate impacts should be proposed and assessed;
- Stage 3 – Assessment of alternative solutions: Where a project or plan is assessed as having an adverse impact (or risk of this) on the integrity of an International Site, there should be an examination of alternatives (e.g. alternative locations and designs of development); and,
- Stage 4 – Assessment where no alternative solutions remain and where adverse impacts remain: In exceptional circumstance (e.g. where there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest), compensatory measures should be put in place to offset negative impacts.



This report comprises Stage 1 – Screening Assessment of the project.

A HRA must be completed by the Competent Authority (in this case NI Water). This report comprises the information required by NI Water, as Competent Authority, to determine whether the proposed scheme, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have a significant effect on these International Sites.

This HRA is being carried out due to the proximity and connection to the International Sites. It is considered that the nature of the proposed scheme has the potential to negatively affect the identified International Sites, during the construction and operation phase. It is important to note that during the operational phase there will be a discharge of surface water only from the proposed culvert.

1.3 Description of the project

The scope for the project is the construction of a surface water sewer for a new 3G football pitch and the associated pavilion and car park on the New Harbour Road, Portavogie. In addition, it will take some runoff from Portavogie Primary School to offset their foul connection. There is to be a new outfall and associated headwall constructed at the outfall location on Portavogie Bay beach, requiring the removal of large stones along the beach before, and reinstatement around the headwall after construction. The approximately 650m long pipeline will predominantly be located under New Harbour Road, with the final section towards the outfall under land adjacent to Portavogie Harbour / Portavogie Bay Beach, likely used for car parking.

The project will also include construction of 5m of 200mm PVC outfall pipe on Portavogie Bay Beach adjacent to Portavogie Harbour flowing to Irish Sea and include:

- Pipe laying works along New Harbour Road.
- Removal of large stones along beach/rock armour and lay new sections of pipe.
- Reinstatement of large stones/rock armour around new precast headwall.

The location of the outfall is shown in Figure 1-1.

1.3.1 Is the proposal directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site for conservation of the N2K features?

No. The proposed works are in order to facilitate surface water drainage from a new 3G football pitch at New Harbour Road, Portavogie.



Figure 1-1 - Outfall Location



2. Methodology

2.1 Determination of the International Sites included in the HRA

An initial review of the proposed works, in light of the Habitat Regulations has been undertaken as part of the HRA process. This initial review looked at the geographic extent or zone of influence of any impacts which could arise as a result of the works. In order to ensure that all potential impacts on International Sites were captured, such sites within 10km of the Scheme were identified.

The distance / geographical relationship between the Scheme and International Sites is as follows:

There are six International Sites within 10km of the Scheme, three of which are intersected by the scheme:

- North Channel SAC (UK0030399);
- Outer Ards SPA (UK9020271); and
- Outer Ards Ramsar (UK12018).

The works are immediately above the High Water Tide mark (which is the boundary to a number of the sites). The proposed outfall and headwall are located just within the boundary of these sites on Portavogie Bay Beach (See Figure 2-1).

The remaining three International Sites are located approximately 5.2km west of the scheme (See Figure 2-2):

- Strangford Lough SAC;
- Strangford Lough SPA; and
- Strangford Lough Ramsar.



Figure 2-1 – Intersected International Sites

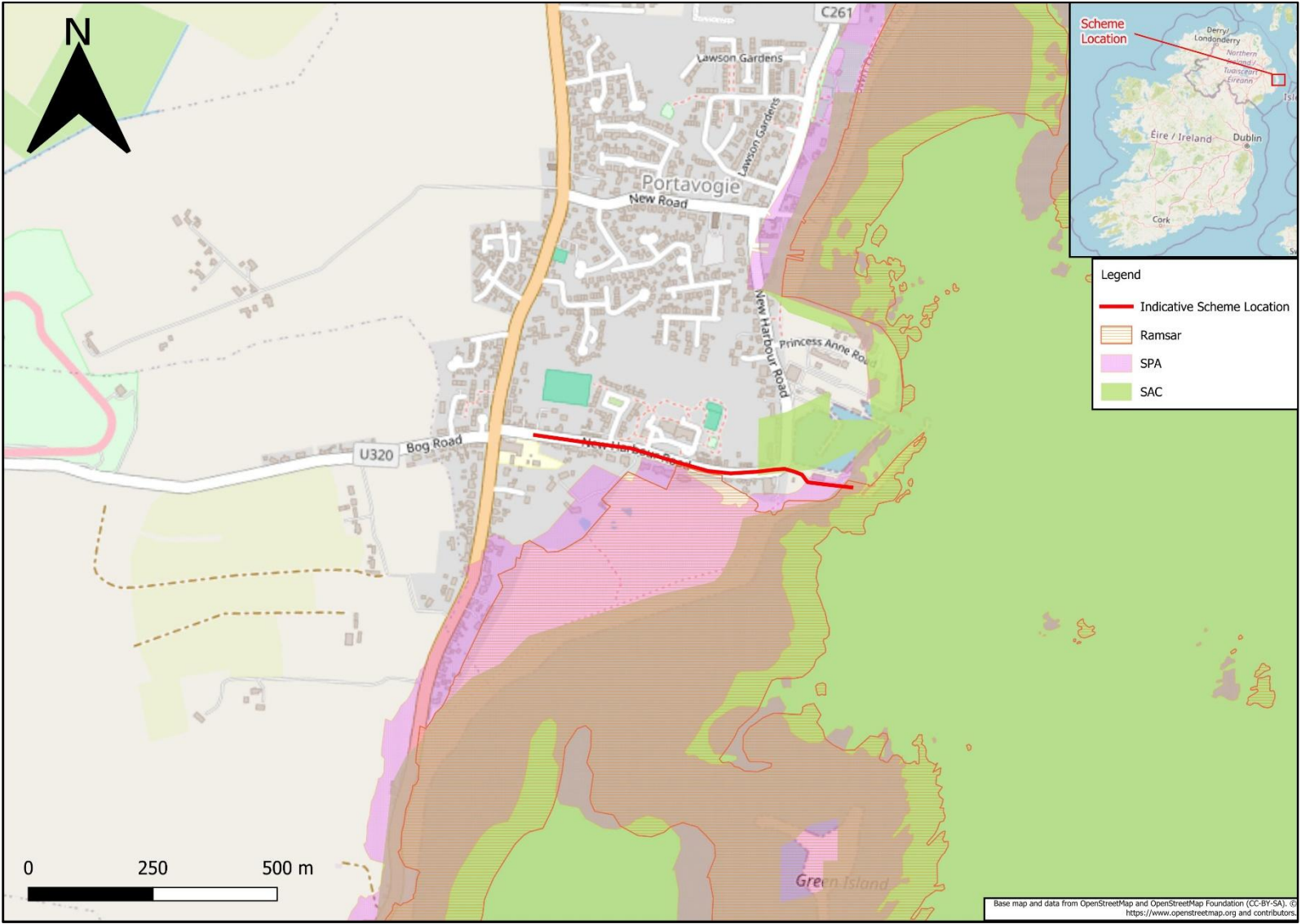
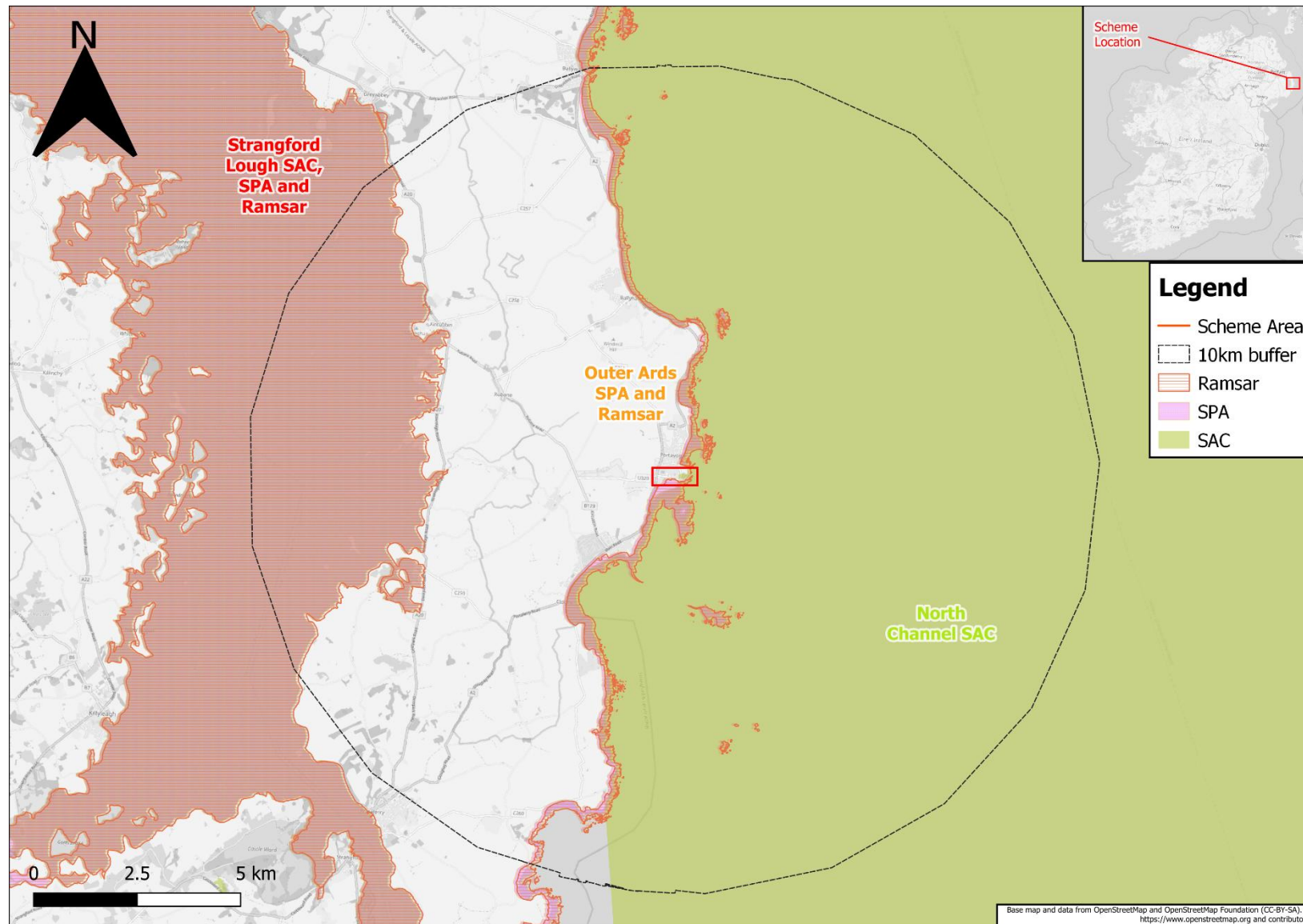


Figure 2-2 - International Sites within 10km of the Scheme Area



2.2 Obtaining information on the International Sites with the potential to be affected

Gathering the information on the International Sites to be included in the HRA involved a desk based review of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) data sheets¹, Northern Ireland Environmental Agency (NIEA) Natural Environment Map Viewer² as well as a review of information available on the DAERA website³.

2.3 Assessing the impacts of the proposed scheme

The assessment of likely significant effects is based on the conservation objectives of the International Site. If any plan or project causes the qualifying features of an International Site to fall into unfavourable condition, they can be considered to have had significant adverse effect upon the International Site.

Plans or projects can adversely affect an International Site by:

- Causing delays in progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site;
- Interrupting progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site;
- Disrupting those factors that help to maintain the favourable conditions of the site; and/or
- Interfering with the balance, distribution and density of key species that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the site.

2.3.1 Stage 1 Screening

Stage 1 (Screening) of this HRA comprises the following components:

- Information on the reasons for designation, the conservation objectives and the sensitivities of the International Sites;
- Identifying the elements of the scheme that could give rise to impacts on the International Sites, or result in changes to the sites;
- Information on other projects and plans in the area that could give rise to cumulative effects – information about any other plan or project that had also undergone assessment under the Habitat Regulations for potential impacts on the same International Sites is requested. Whereupon receiving this information, an assessment of likely in-combination effects is made by virtue of distance, timing, severity etc.; and
- Determines whether the proposed works will lead to likely significant effects on the International Sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

¹ <https://jncc.gov.uk/>

² <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/natural-environment-map-viewer>

³ <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/protected-areas>



3. North Channel SAC (UK0030399)

Site Designation Status	North Channel SAC (UK0030399) ⁴
Location of Site	The North Channel is located between the east coast of Northern Ireland and Scotland. Centroid: J750520 Latitude: 54.4555 Longitude: -5.2936
Brief description	The site is a marine area (fully saline) including sea inlets, with general habitat characteristics including a mixture of coarse sediments, sand and mud. Water depths are between Mean Low Water Tide and 150m, but much of the site lies between 10m and 40m. 85% of the site lies in Northern Irish inshore waters (0–12nm from shore)⁵.
Qualifying features and conservation objectives	The qualifying features of the site: Annex I: Not applicable Annex II: 1351 Harbour porpoise Conservation Objectives⁶: To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained and that it makes the best possible contribution to maintaining Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) for Harbour Porpoise in UK waters. In the context of natural change, this will be achieved by ensuring that: 1. Harbour porpoise is a viable component of the site; 2. There is no significant disturbance of the species; and 3. The condition of supporting habitats and processes, and the availability of prey is maintained. <i>Further detail on component objectives are included in Appendix B.</i>
Sensitivities of the Site	Key activities, their associated pressures and potential impacts to harbour porpoise are outlined below with the current relative level of risk of impact: ▪ Commercial fisheries with bycatch of harbour porpoise ▫ Pressure: Removal of non-target species ▫ Impacts: Mortality through entanglement/bycatch ▫ Level of risk: High ▪ Discharge/run-off from land fill, terrestrial and offshore industries ▫ Pressure: Contaminants ▫ Impacts: Effects on water and prey quality, Bioaccumulation through contaminated prey ingestion, Health issues (e.g. on reproduction)

⁴ <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0030399>

⁵ <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/north-channel-mpa/>

⁶ <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/be0492aa-f1d6-4197-be22-e9a695227bdb/NorthChannel-conservation-advice.pdf>

	▫ Level of risk: High ▪ Shipping, drilling, dredging and disposal, aggregate extraction, pile driving, acoustic surveys, underwater explosion, military activity, acoustic deterrent devices and recreational boating activity ▫ Pressure: Anthropogenic underwater sound ▫ Impacts: Mortality, Internal injury, Disturbance leading to physical and acoustic behavioural changes (potentially impacting foraging, navigation, breeding, socialising) ▫ Level of risk: Medium ▪ Shipping, recreational boating, tidal energy installations ▫ Pressure: Death or injury by collision ▫ Impacts: Mortality, Injury ▫ Level of risk: Medium/Low ▪ Commercial fisheries (reduction in prey resources) ▫ Pressure: Removal of target species ▫ Impacts: Reduction in food availability, Increased competition from other species, Displacement from natural range ▫ Level of risk: Medium
Describe the individual elements if the project is likely to give rise to impacts on the Site	The overall conservation objective for the site is to maintain the integrity of the site and ensure that it makes the best possible contribution to maintaining FCS for Harbour Porpoise in UK waters⁷. The following elements have been considered and are discussed in detail below: During proposed Construction works ▫ Disturbance to habitat There will be no operational impacts and no decommissioning is proposed.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the Project on the International Site by virtue of: ▪ Size and scale; ▪ Land take; ▪ Resource requirements; ▪ Emissions (disposal to land, water or air); ▪ Excavation requirements; and ▪ Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.	Size and scale The size and scale of the project does not give rise to impacts on the SAC. Land take Works are restricted to the area of existing rock armour i.e. its removal and reinstatement upon completion of outfall installation. Therefore no land take impacts anticipated. Resource requirements No resources required. Emissions During the proposed construction, there is potential for an increase in localised suspended sediments for short intermittent durations. Plant exhaust emissions will also likely be observed. Excavation Works are restricted to the area of existing rock armour i.e. its removal and reinstatement upon completion of outfall installation. No excavations will be undertaken within the International Site. Duration

⁷ <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/north-channel-mpa/>

	It is not considered that the Scheme will have any impact on qualifying features of the SAC.
Describe any likely changes to the International Site arising as a result of: ▪ Reduction of habitat area; ▪ Disturbance to key species; ▪ Habitat or species fragmentation; ▪ Reduction in species density; ▪ Changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); and ▪ Climate Change.	Reduction of habitat area Works are restricted to the area of existing rock armour i.e. its removal and reinstatement upon completion of outfall installation. Therefore no land take / reduction of habitat area impacts anticipated. Disturbance to key species There will be no disturbance to key species within the SAC due to the very localised nature of the work including use of a precast headwall, in an area already impacted by the adjacent Portavogie Harbour, carpark and port access road. Habitat or species fragmentation It is not predicted to cause any habitat or species fragmentation with respect to the SAC. Works are restricted to the area of existing rock armour i.e. its removal and reinstatement upon completion of outfall installation. Reduction in species density A reduction in density of the qualifying species is not anticipated as a result of the proposed works, due to distance, timing of the scheme and very localised nature of works in an area already disturbed by road and ribbon development and harbour activities. Changes in key indicators of conservation value No likely significant effects for water quality due to very localised nature of the works and its location adjacent to marine waters. Climate change The Scheme may produce very localised emissions during construction, though these will be negligible in relation to a changing climate. The Scheme is intended to allow for more effective site drainage.

4. Outer Ards SPA (UK9020271)

Site Designation Status	Outer Ards SPA (UK9020271)⁸
Location of site	The Outer Ards site extends along the coast of the Ards Peninsula from Grey Point on the north Down coast, to Ballyquintin Point in the south. The site is contiguous with Belfast Lough SPA and Strangford Lough SAC/SPA.
Brief description	The site mainly encompasses the inter-tidal areas, but with some additional adjoining areas of notable habitat. It includes sand and mud dominated shores, cobble and boulder beaches together with rocky shores. Off shore islands are also present. Adjoining habitat includes areas of maritime grassland and heath. It comprises a variety of shoreline types including rock platforms, off-shore islands, boulder, gravel and sand beaches. Coastal relief is low so that no significant cliffs are present. The principal interests are the breeding colony of Arctic Tern, together with the wintering populations of Light-bellied Brent Goose, Golden Plover, Turnstone and Ringed Plover. The boundary of the Special Protection Area site is entirely

⁸ [Outer Ards Special Protection Area | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

	coincident with the Outer Ards Area of Special Scientific Interest together with the Ballymacormick Point Area of Special Scientific Interest. It also includes the open marine area.
Qualifying features and Conservation Objectives	The qualifying features of the site: Annex I ▪ Artic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) ▪ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) Annex II ▪ Light Bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ▪ Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) ▪ Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) Non-qualifying species of interest In addition, the site supports nationally important numbers of Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> (5 year average of 221, 4.4 % of the Irish wintering population), Great Crested Grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> (82, 2.7%) and Eider <i>Somateria mollissima</i> (475, 23.8 %) occur offshore. Wading species of significance are Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> (917, 1.1 %), Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i> (2239, 1.8 %), Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> (5379, 2.2 %), Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> (1623, 3.3 %), Purple Sandpiper <i>Calidris maritima</i> (78, 7.8 %) and Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> (904, 3.7 %). The Conservation Objective for this site is: To maintain each feature in favourable condition. <i>Further detail on component objectives are included in Appendix B.</i>
Sensitivities of the site	The most important impacts and activities with high effect on the site⁹: ▪ Marine water pollution (H03) ▪ Utility and service lines (D02) ▪ Other ecosystem modifications (J03) ▪ Interspecific faunal relations (K03) ▪ Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities (G01) ▪ Changes in biotic conditions (M02) ▪ Changes in abiotic conditions (M01) Other issues that may have impacts on the site from the Scheme include¹⁰: ▪ Beach sand and gravel extraction ▪ Habitat quality – inter-tidal
Describe the individual elements of the project	The overall conservation objective for the site is to maintain each feature in favourable condition. The following elements have been considered and are discussed in detail below:

⁹ [UK9020271.pdf](#)

¹⁰ [Outer Ards SPA conservation objectives 2015](#)

likely to give rise to impacts on the site	During proposed Construction works ▫ Disturbance to habitat There will be no operational impacts and no decommissioning is proposed.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the Project on the International Site by virtue of: ▪ Size and scale; ▪ Land take; ▪ Resource requirements; ▪ Emissions (disposal to land, water or air); ▪ Excavation requirements; and ▪ Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.	Size and scale The size and scale of the project does not give rise to impacts on the SPA. Land take No land-take or disturbance is required within the International Site. Works are restricted to the area of existing rock armour i.e. its removal and reinstatement upon completion of outfall installation. Resource requirements No resources required. Emissions During the proposed construction, there is potential for increase in localised suspended sediments for short intermittent durations. Plant exhaust emissions will also likely be observed. Excavation Works are restricted to the area of existing rock armour i.e. its removal and reinstatement upon completion of outfall installation. Duration It is not considered that the Scheme will have any impact on qualifying features of the SPA.
Describe any likely changes to the International Site arising as a result of: ▪ Reduction of habitat area; ▪ Disturbance to key species; ▪ Habitat or species fragmentation; ▪ Reduction in species density; ▪ Changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); and ▪ Climate Change.	Reduction of habitat area There will be no land take or loss of habitat within the Outer Ards SPA. Works are restricted to land and the erection of a headwall will likely take up an insignificant amount of space outside of the SPA. Disturbance to key species There will be no disturbance to key species within the SPA due to the very localised nature of the work including use of a precast headwall, in an area already impacted by the adjacent Portavogie Harbour, carpark and port access road. Habitat or species fragmentation It is not predicted to cause any habitat or species fragmentation with respect to the SPA. Works are restricted to the area of existing rock armour i.e. its removal and reinstatement upon completion of outfall installation. Reduction in species density A reduction in density of the qualifying species is not anticipated as a result of the proposed works, due to distance, timing of the scheme and very localised nature of works in an area already disturbed by road and ribbon development and harbour activities. Changes in key indicators of conservation value No likely significant effects for water quality due to very localised nature of the works and its location adjacent to marine waters. Climate change The Scheme may produce very localised emissions during construction, though these will be negligible in relation to a changing climate. The scheme is intended to allow for more effective site drainage.

5. Outer Ards Ramsar Site (UK12018)

Site Designation Status	Outer Ards Ramsar Site (UK12018) ¹¹
Location of site	The Outer Ards Ramsar site is situated along part of the eastern shores of County Down and extends from Grey Point on the north Down coast to Ballyquintin Point in the south. The site boundary follows that of the Special Protection Area (SPA).
Brief description	The Site, which contains about 8% of the Northern Irish coastline and has a very high proportion of offshore reefs and islands, mainly encompasses intertidal areas with some other notable habitats. It includes sand- and mud-dominated shores, cobble and boulder beaches together with rocky shores. Adjoining habitats include areas of dune and maritime grassland, maritime heath and cliff ledge vegetation, saltmarsh, tidal and non-tidal fens and wet flushes. Some areas still display the natural transition from maritime to terrestrial vegetation and host a number of notable communities. At least 17 rare or local plant species have been recorded across the range of habitats within the area. The Outer Ards is especially important for the breeding colony of Arctic tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> , together with the wintering populations of light-bellied Brent goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> , European golden plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> , ruddy turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i> and ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> . Nationally important populations of 11 other species of bird have also been recorded within the Site ¹² .
Qualifying features and Conservation Objectives ¹³	The qualifying features of the site: Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance. <u>Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):</u> Species with peak counts in winter: ▪ Light-bellied brent goose, <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>, East Canada/Ireland - 209 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the population (5-year peak mean 1991/92 – 1995/96) ▪ Ringed plover, <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, Europe/Northwest Africa - 516 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the population (5-year peak mean 1991/92 – 1995/96) ▪ European golden plover, <i>Pluvialis apricaria apricaria</i>, P. a. altifrons Iceland & Faroes/E Atlantic - 2109 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the all-Ireland population (5-year peak mean 1991/92 – 1995/96) ▪ Ruddy turnstone, <i>Arenaria interpres interpres</i>, NE Canada, Greenland/W Europe & NW Africa - 1210 individuals, representing an average of 1.7% of the population (5-year peak mean 1991/92 – 1995/96) The Conservation Objectives for this site are: Ramsar sites do not have conservation objectives therefore the objectives for the Outer Ards SPA have been referenced: To maintain each feature in favourable condition.

¹¹ [Outer Ards RAMSAR | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

¹² [Outer Ards | Ramsar Sites Information Service](#)

¹³ [Outer Ards RAMSAR | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

Sensitivities of the site	No factors reported.
Describe the individual elements of the project likely to give rise to impacts on the site	The following elements have been considered and are discussed in detail below: During proposed Construction works ▫ Disturbance to habitat There will be no operational impacts and no decommissioning is proposed.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the Project on the International Site by virtue of: ▪ Size and scale; ▪ Land take; ▪ Resource requirements; ▪ Emissions (disposal to land, water or air); ▪ Excavation requirements; and ▪ Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.	Size and scale The size and scale of the project does not give rise to impacts on the Ramsar site. Land take Works are restricted to the area of existing rock armour i.e. its removal and reinstatement upon completion of outfall installation. Therefore no land take impacts anticipated. Resource requirements No resources required. Emissions During the proposed construction, there is potential for increase in localised suspended sediments for short intermittent durations. Plant exhaust emissions will also likely be observed. Excavation Works are restricted to the area of existing rock armour i.e. its removal and reinstatement upon completion of outfall installation. No excavations will be undertaken within the International Site. Duration It is not considered that the Scheme will have any impact on qualifying features of the Ramsar site.
Describe any likely changes to the International Site arising as a result of: ▪ Reduction of habitat area; ▪ Disturbance to key species; ▪ Habitat or species fragmentation; ▪ Reduction in species density; ▪ Changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); and ▪ Climate Change.	Reduction of habitat area Works are restricted to the area of existing rock armour i.e. its removal and reinstatement upon completion of outfall installation. Therefore no land take / reduction of habitat area impacts anticipated. Disturbance to key species There will be no disturbance to key species within the Ramsar site due to the very localised nature of the work including use of a precast headwall, in an area already impacted by the adjacent Portavogie Harbour carpark and port access road. Habitat or species fragmentation The scheme is not predicted to cause any habitat or species fragmentation with respect to the Ramsar site. Works are restricted to the area of existing rock armour i.e. its removal and reinstatement upon completion of outfall installation. Reduction in species density A reduction in density of the qualifying species is not anticipated as a result of the proposed works, due to distance, timing of the scheme and very localised nature of works in an area already disturbed by road and ribbon development and harbour activities. Changes in key indicators of conservation value No likely significant effects for water quality due to very localised nature of the works and its location adjacent to marine waters. Climate change

The Scheme may produce very localised emissions during construction, though these will be negligible in relation to a changing climate. The scheme is intended to allow for more effective site drainage.

6. Strangford Lough SAC (UK0016618)

Site Designation Status	Strangford Lough SAC (UK0016618)¹⁴
Location of Site	Strangford Lough is a large marine inlet on the east coast of County Down. Centroid: J559577 Latitude: 54.4444 Longitude: -5.5944
Brief description	Strangford Lough is a large (150 km²) marine inlet on the east coast of County Down, of which about 50 km² lies between high water mark mean tide (HWMMT) and low water mark mean tide (LWMMT). Its northern end lies some 15 km east of Central Belfast (6 km from the outskirts). Downpatrick lies 5 km west of the south west corner. Strangford, Killyleagh, Whiterock, Comber, Newtownards, Greyabbey, Kircubbin and Portaferry are situated on the edge of the Lough. The Lough supports an impressive range of marine habitats and communities with over 2,000 recorded species. It is important for marine invertebrates, algae and saltmarsh plants, for wintering and breeding wetland birds, and for marine mammals¹⁵.
Qualifying features and conservation objectives	The qualifying features of the site: Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: ▫ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ▫ 1150 Coastal lagoons ▫ 1160 Large shallow inlets and bays ▫ 1170 Reefs Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site ▫ 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines ▫ 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks ▫ 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand ▫ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: ▫ 1365 Harbour seal <i>Phoca vitulina</i> Conservation Objectives¹⁶: The Conservation Objective for this site is:

¹⁴ [Strangford Lough - Special Areas of Conservation](#)

¹⁵ [Strangford Lough SAC | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

¹⁶ [Strangford Lough SAC Conservation Objectives 2015](#)

	To maintain (or restore where appropriate) the ▪ Large shallow inlet and bay ▪ Coastal lagoons ▪ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide ▪ Reefs ▪ Annual vegetation of drift lines ▪ Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) ▪ Perennial vegetation of stony banks ▪ <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand ▪ Harbour (Common) Seal <i>Phoca vitulina</i> to favourable condition. <i>Further detail on component objectives are included in Appendix B.</i>
Sensitivities of the Site	The most important impacts and activities with high effect on the site: ▪ Changes in abiotic conditions (M01) ▪ Invasive non-native species (I01) ▪ Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) (H01)
Describe the individual elements if the project is likely to give rise to impacts on the Site	The overall conservation objective for the site is to maintain each feature in favourable condition. The following elements have been considered and are discussed in detail below: During proposed Construction works ▫ Disturbance to habitat There will be no operational impacts and no decommissioning is proposed.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the Project on the International Site by virtue of: ▪ Size and scale; ▪ Land take; ▪ Resource requirements; ▪ Emissions (disposal to land, water or air); ▪ Excavation requirements; and ▪ Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.	Size and scale The size and scale of the project does not give rise to impacts on the SAC. Land take No land-take or disturbance is required within the International Site, so there will be no reduction in extent as a result of the proposed works. The closest part of the SAC is located approximately 5.2km west of the scheme. Resource requirements No resources required. Emissions During the proposed construction, there is potential for an increase in localised suspended sediments for short intermittent durations. Plant exhaust emissions will also likely be observed. Excavation No excavations will be undertaken within the International Site. Duration It is not considered that the Scheme will have any impact on qualifying features of the SAC.
Describe any likely changes to the International Site arising as a result of:	Reduction of habitat area There will be no land take or loss of habitat within the SAC as the scheme is located outside the International Site boundary. Disturbance to key species

▪ Reduction of habitat area;	There will be no disturbance to key species within the SAC due to the distance from the scheme.
▪ Disturbance to key species;	Habitat or species fragmentation There will be no disturbance to key species within the SAC due to the distance from the scheme.
▪ Habitat or species fragmentation;	Reduction in species density A reduction in density of the qualifying species is not anticipated as a result of the proposed works, due to distance and type of works.
▪ Reduction in species density;	Changes in key indicators of conservation value No likely significant effects for water quality due to distance of the proposed works.
▪ Changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); and	Climate change The Scheme may produce very localised emissions during construction, though these will be negligible in relation to a changing climate. The scheme is intended to allow for more effective site drainage.
▪ Climate Change.	

7. Strangford Lough SPA (UK9020111)

Site Designation Status	Strangford Lough SPA (UK9020111)¹⁷
Location of Site	Strangford Lough is a large marine inlet on the east coast of County Down. Latitude: 54.4444 Longitude: -5.5944
Brief description	Situated on the east coast of Northern Ireland, Strangford Lough is a large shallow sea lough with an indented shoreline and a wide variety of marine and intertidal habitats. The west shore has numerous islands typical of flooded drumlin topography. The Lough contains extensive areas of mudflat and also sandflats, saltmarsh and rocky coastline. This is Northern Ireland's most important coastal site for wintering waterfowl, and it is particularly important for breeding terns. The landward boundary of the Special Protection Area (SPA) is entirely coincident with the landward boundary of the following five ASSIs: Strangford Lough Part 1, Strangford Lough Part 2, Strangford Lough Part 3, Killard and Ballyquintin Point. Marine areas below mean low water are also included such as the Quoile Pondage nature reserve ¹⁸ .
Qualifying features and conservation objectives	The qualifying features of the site: The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of EC Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds by supporting internationally important breeding populations of both Sandwich Tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i> and Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> and nationally important breeding populations of Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> . The site qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive by regularly supporting in winter over 20,000 waterfowl. The Conservation Objective for this site is:

¹⁷ [Strangford Lough - Special Areas of Conservation](#)

¹⁸ [Strangford Lough SPA | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

To maintain each feature in favourable condition.¹⁹

Further detail on component objectives are included in Appendix B.

Sensitivities of the Site	The most important impacts and activities with high effect on the site: ▪ Changes in biotic conditions (M02) ▪ Changes in abiotic conditions (M01) ▪ Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities (G01) ▪ Invasive non-native species (I01) ▪ Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) (H01) ▪ Other ecosystem modifications (J03)
Describe the individual elements if the project is likely to give rise to impacts on the Site	The overall conservation objective for the site is to maintain each feature in favourable condition. The following elements have been considered and are discussed in detail below: During proposed Construction works ▫ Disturbance to habitat There will be no operational impacts and no decommissioning is proposed.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the Project on the International Site by virtue of: ▪ Size and scale; ▪ Land take; ▪ Resource requirements; ▪ Emissions (disposal to land, water or air); ▪ Excavation requirements; and ▪ Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.	Size and scale The size and scale of the project does not give rise to impacts on the SPA. Land take No land-take or disturbance is required within the International Site, so there will be no reduction in extent as a result of the proposed works. The closest part of the SPA is located approximately 5.2km west of the scheme. Resource requirements No resources required. Emissions During the proposed construction, there is potential for an increase in localised suspended sediments for short intermittent durations. Plant exhaust emissions will also likely be observed. Excavation No excavations will be undertaken within the International Site. Duration It is not considered that the Scheme will have any impact on qualifying features of the SPA.
Describe any likely changes to the International Site arising as a result of: ▪ Reduction of habitat area; ▪ Disturbance to key species;	Reduction of habitat area There will be no land take or loss of habitat within the SPA as the scheme is located outside the International Site boundary. Disturbance to key species There will be no disturbance to key species within the SPA due to the distance from the scheme. Habitat or species fragmentation There will be no disturbance to key species within the SPA due to the distance from the scheme.

¹⁹ [Strangford Lough SPA conservation objectives 2015](#)

▪ Habitat or species fragmentation; ▪ Reduction in species density; ▪ Changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); and ▪ Climate Change.	Reduction in species density A reduction in density of the qualifying species is not anticipated as a result of the proposed works, due to distance and type of works. Changes in key indicators of conservation value No likely significant effects for water quality due to distance of the proposed works. Climate change The Scheme may produce very localised emissions during construction, though these will be negligible in relation to a changing climate. The scheme is intended to allow for more effective site drainage.
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8. Strangford Lough Ramsar Site (UK12021)

Site Designation Status	Strangford Lough Ramsar Site (UK12021)²⁰
Location of Site	Strangford Lough is a large marine inlet on the east coast of County Down. Latitude: 54.4444 Longitude: -5.5944
Brief description	Situated on the east coast of Northern Ireland, Strangford Lough is a large shallow sea lough with an indented shoreline and a wide variety of marine and intertidal habitats. The west shore has numerous islands typical of flooded drumlin topography. The Lough contains extensive areas of mudflat and also sandflats, saltmarsh and rocky coastline and is Northern Ireland's most important coastal site for wintering waterfowl. It is also an important site for breeding terns.²¹
Qualifying features and conservation objectives	The qualifying features of the site: <u>Ramsar criterion 1</u> This site supports a variety of important wetland features. Areas of fringing saltmarsh and freshwater habitats support a diversity of wetland plant species. Strangford Lough supports one of the most extensive saltmarsh areas in Northern Ireland. <u>Ramsar criterion 2</u> This site supports an important assemblage of vulnerable and endangered wetland plants and animal species. These include a number of marine sponges, marine hydroids, marine mollusc and sea urchins which are restricted to Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland or, in some cases unknown or very rare elsewhere in the British Isles. The mudflats support luxuriant beds of eelgrass; <i>Zostera noltei</i>, <i>Zostera angustifolia</i>, <i>Zostera marina</i> and <i>Ruppia maritima</i> are all present, with the latter widespread but quite local in its distribution. Such extensive 'beds' are rare in the British Isles. <u>Ramsar criterion 5</u>

²⁰ <https://jncc.gov.uk/jncc-assets/RIS/UK12021.pdf>

²¹ [Strangford Lough RAMSAR | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)

Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: 74876 waterfowl (5 year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003)

Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance.

Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation):

- Species regularly supported during the breeding season:
- Sandwich tern , *Sterna (Thalasseus) sandvicensis sandvicensis*, W Europe - 894 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 1% of the breeding population
- Common tern , *Sterna hirundo hirundo*, N & E Europe - 554 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 17.8% of the all-Ireland population
- Species with peak counts in spring/autumn:
 - Light-bellied brent goose, *Branta bernicla hrota*, East Canada/Ireland - 10863 individuals, representing an average of 54.3% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
 - Common redshank , *Tringa totanus totanus*, - 4145 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3)
- Species with peak counts in winter:
 - Red knot , *Calidris canutus islandica*, W & Southern Africa (wintering) - 4796 individuals, representing an average of 1% of the population (5 year peak mean 1998/9 2002/3)

The Conservation Objective for this site is:

Ramsar sites do not have conservation objectives therefore the objectives for the Outer Ards SPA have been referenced:

To maintain each feature in favourable condition.

Sensitivities of the Site	No factors reported.
Describe the individual elements if the project is likely to give rise to impacts on the Site	The overall conservation objective for the site is to maintain each feature in favourable condition. The following elements have been considered and are discussed in detail below: During proposed Construction works ▫ Disturbance to habitat There will be no operational impacts and no decommissioning is proposed.
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the Project on the International Site by virtue of: ▪ Size and scale; ▪ Land take; ▪ Resource requirements; ▪ Emissions (disposal to land, water or air); ▪ Excavation requirements; and	Size and scale The size and scale of the project does not give rise to impacts on the Ramsar site. Land take No land-take or disturbance is required within the International Site, so there will be no reduction in extent as a result of the proposed works. The closest part of the Ramsar site is located approximately 5.2km west of the scheme. Resource requirements No resources required. Emissions During the proposed construction, there is potential for an increase in localised suspended sediments for short intermittent durations. Plant exhaust emissions will also likely be observed.



▪ Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.	Excavation No excavations will be undertaken within the International Site. Duration It is not considered that the Scheme will have any impact on qualifying features of the Ramsar site.
Describe any likely changes to the International Site arising as a result of: ▪ Reduction of habitat area; ▪ Disturbance to key species; ▪ Habitat or species fragmentation; ▪ Reduction in species density; ▪ Changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality); and ▪ Climate Change.	Reduction of habitat area There will be no land take or loss of habitat within the Ramsar site as the scheme is located outside the International Site boundary. Disturbance to key species There will be no disturbance to key species within the Ramsar site due to the distance from the scheme. Habitat or species fragmentation There will be no disturbance to key species within the Ramsar site due to the distance from the scheme. Reduction in species density A reduction in density of the qualifying species is not anticipated as a result of the proposed works, due to distance and type of works. Changes in key indicators of conservation value No likely significant effects for water quality due to distance of the proposed works. Climate change The Scheme may produce very localised emissions during construction, though these will be negligible in relation to a changing climate. The scheme is intended to allow for more effective site drainage.

9. Details of the proposed works

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

The methodology of the proposed scheme comprises of:

- Protection of pedestrians.
- Installation of PVC Pipe
- Installation of Headwall

Plant and equipment are expected to include:

- 13 T Excavator
- 8 Wheel lorries/ Concrete lorries
- Traffic Control / Signs & Barriers
- Concrete pump
- Heras fencing
- Floating silt screen

The methodology sets out the details of sequence/methods of work:

- Site Induction/Training
 - All employees involved with works provided with an induction/tool box talk. Made aware of potential hazards and risks associated with operations, such as pollution prevention.
 - Health Declaration completed by all operatives on site.
 - Site Supervisors shall ensure that all delivery drivers are issued with Driver Site Induction.
- Site Access & Parking Arrangements:
 - Access/egress to work area controlled by Heras fencing placed around perimeter area.
 - Closed Gate Policy in operation to ensure safety of public.
 - Parking in designated car park area only.
- Mobilisation / Traffic Management
 - Traffic Management set up in accordance with TMP
- Environmental Considerations
 - All plant used on site is well maintained with noise and exhaust levels kept to specified limits.
 - During rest periods all machinery is turned off to stop emissions and save fuel.
 - When possible, materials will be recycled.
 - All fuel is stored in appropriate containers. All other containers of potential sources of contamination to be stored in a suitable bunded area
 - The bowser used to fuel the machines is bunded.
 - Machines to be fuelled and maintenance checks to be carried out in a specified area
 - Suitable emergency spill kits to be on hand near all potential sources of contamination
 - Wastes on site are controlled and appropriate disposal methods are employed.
 - No burning of waste on site.
 - Environmental Monthly Site Check List is completed and returned to our Environmental Policy Manager.
 - All operatives are informed of the dangers associated with Leptospirosis and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating.



- Sites will periodically be audited by both internal and external officers to ensure that the contractors Environmental Policy is being upheld
- Site Protection along works
 - Access/egress to work area controlled by Heras fencing placed around perimeter.
 - Perimeter of work area secured and signs posted warning all personnel and public of dangers
 - Earth-moving equipment segregated from construction workers where possible.
- Working Hours
 - Working hrs will be dictated by low tidal times, tide levels to be reviewed before works commence
- Construction and installation PVC Pipe
 - Excavator will track to works location from beach at low tide levels
 - Excavators will clear existing rock and debris away from work area, levelling sea bed to allow for install of pipe at correct level.
 - Removed rocks and debris to be moved by dumper to compound located off site.
- Working in water
 - Permit to work system in place, permit in place before any works to be carried out
 - No operative is to work in water alone, banksman must be present at all time
 - Operatives to wear waist high waders and life vests at all times
 - Work in water to only take place when tide levels in works area are waist high or lower
- Excavator working in water
 - Tide levels times and charts to be checked every day before works commence
 - Operative in chest high waders to check water levels using E-staff
 - Excavator to only enter water when levels below 800mm, excavator upper structure ground clearance is 1020mm (Excavator dimensions chart below, dimension K)
 - Permit to work in water issued before works
 - Bio Diesel will be used as a greener alternative to White Diesel and a Boi Hydraulic Oil will be used instead of the standard Hydraulic Oil. A 4.5m Sheet of white terram will be rolled out on the beach. All equipment will be tracked onto terram and left for a several hours to check for any leaks. If leaks appear the equipment will be taken off site to be repaired. This process will be repeated until we are confident that there are no leaks.
 - All machinery will be tracked to compound at end of shift so that they will not be in the water for long periods of time.
- Storage of Materials
 - All deliveries inspected by authorised persons and offloaded during off peak times within compound area

Describe any potential effects on the Natura 2000 site(s) as a whole in terms of: interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site(s).

It is noted that the potential for works within / adjacent to the boundary of Outer Ards Ramsar Site and SPA and North Channel SAC cannot be ruled out, and any disturbance to and effects on the designated sites are anticipated to be minor. There will be temporary disturbance to the existing wall to allow for installation of the pipeline and outfall, although this will be reinstated after construction is complete. It is also recognised that the proposed outfall site and the nearby designated sites are within an area with existing disruption such as the adjacent New Harbour Road and Portavogie Harbour / Portavogie Bay Beach.

As detailed in Section 2 there will be no direct impact on any of the above noted designated areas or any of the feature interests. All proposed work activities associated with undertaking the construction works adjacent to or with minor intersection of the designated sites will be limited to the existing wall (removal and reinstatement). Therefore, there will be no reduction / loss of habitat in the designated areas or other 'on-site' factors that may lead to a decline



in habitat or species numbers. There will also be no habitat or species fragmentation or reduction in species density in these areas. It is also anticipated that there will be no changes in key indicators of conservation value and the proposed work activities will not increase the vulnerability of the sites.

No mitigation measures are identified as being required to protect the International sites, though an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan has been produced and includes mitigation measures to ensure protection of water quality in the immediate vicinity of the works, for example, while the precise location of the site compound is not known at present, it will be a requirement of the oCEMP that this will be as far as possible from any watercourse, or pollution pathway. The oCEMP will be adopted by the contractor and updated as detailed design emerges ahead of construction. Additionally, it is the intention that a series of Method Statements and associated procedures will be enacted by the appointed contractor to address any potential issues such as a pollution incident. These will be based upon appropriate guidelines such as Guidance for Pollution Prevention produced by relevant statutory authorities. It is also worth noting that as the scheme is on behalf of NI Water (NIW), it will therefore fall under the auspices of the NIW Environmental Management System as a matter of course. Therefore, this proposed scheme has a series of mitigation measures which are 'designed into' the scheme and which are designed to prevent any accidental pollution incidents occurring. As with any construction activity, the risk of pollution can never be fully eradicated and as such the Contractor will ensure procedures to follow in the event of an incident occurring are fully understood by all concerned on the project. These procedures include informing the relevant authorities when applicable, as well as if necessary, dealing with the incident in a prompt, efficient and robust manner.

It will be a requirement of any contract that periodic inspection of the works by NIW officers will take place.

It is considered therefore that there will be no detrimental impact on the Main Conservation Objective for these noted designated sites "To maintain each feature in favourable condition", or any of their Component Objectives. It is considered that the effects on the International sites will be Non-Significant.

Provide details of any other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could (directly or indirectly) affect the site.

An examination of the following website <https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk> which details planning applications in the area has identified a range of Planning Applications in the general area of New Harbour Road over the last 3 years. None were identified as having particular implications for interaction with this proposed scheme and potential effects on designated sites. The following are the most recent planning applications in the general area of the proposed scheme:

Table 9-1 - Planning applications in proximity to the proposed scheme

Planning Ref.	Application decision / date	Details of application	Any risk to the proposed works?
LA06/2024/0527/F	Granted 20/08/2024	Demolition of rear return to facilitate a single storey rear extension	None identified
LA06/2024/0259/O	Not available (Site inspection complete) 22/03/2024	2 Detached dwellings and agricultural access (amended P1 form) (Amended proposal)	None identified
LA06/2025/0585/F	Granted 20/08/2025	Driveway creating level access to property providing parking space with dropped kerb to footpath	None identified



LA06/2020/0844/F	Granted 01/04/2026	Upgrade to existing football ground to include the replacement of the existing grass pitch with synthetic surface, fencing and floodlighting along with replacement changing pavilion, additional car parking spaces and associated siteworks. Widening of existing vehicular access lane. partial demolition and making good of garage at No. 8, relocation of vehicular entrance to No. 8 and construction of new perimeter walls to match existing at 4, 6 and 8 New Harbour Road to provide visibility splays (Amended proposal)	None identified
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Is the potential scale or magnitude of any effect likely to be significant?

Alone? No

In combination with other plans or projects? No.

List of Agencies / Organisations consulted:

No consultation has taken place, as of yet. This HRA is part of an application for a Marine Licence and as such consultation will take place during that process.



10. Habitats Regulation Assessment Summary

It is considered that the activities required in order to undertake construction of a Surface Water Sewer and associated outfall will not have an impact on any of the noted designated sites for the following reasons:

- Construction activities adjacent to or with minor intersections of the designated sites are limited to the existing wall (to facilitate its removal and reinstatement upon installation of outfall). Therefore there will be no reduction / loss in habitat in the designated areas or other 'on-site' factors that may lead to a decline in habitat or species numbers. There will also be no habitat or species fragmentation or reduction in species density in these areas. It is also anticipated that there will be no changes in key indicators of conservation value and the proposed work activities will not increase the vulnerability of the sites;
- The work will involve very localised construction activities, limited to the removal and reinstatement of rock armour at the designated sites;
- The proposed scheme is located immediately adjacent to a main road (New Harbour Road), with ribbon urban development and Portavogie Harbour and any additional disturbance will be minimal in this context;
- Pollution prevention / remediation measures have been 'built into' the scheme and there will be a periodic inspection by NIW officers;
- There will be no detrimental impact on any Conservation Objective or component objectives of any of the designated sites; and
- No other project or plan has been identified that will have a cumulative impact on any of the identified International sites in conjunction with this proposed scheme.

Conclusion: Is the proposal likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site?

No.

Who carried out the assessment?

[REDACTED]

Associate Director

AtkinsRéalis Limited

Consultant for Northern Ireland Water

Sources of data

- Northern Ireland Environment Agency website <http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/> and consultation with appropriate section within this organisation.
- Planning website <https://planningregister.planningsystemni.gov.uk>
- Proposed construction methodology information

Level of assessment completed

Screening



Summary of Response

N/A



APPENDICES

Appendix A. Site Drainage Plan



Appendix B. Summary of Conservation Objectives



Designated Site	Conservation Objectives	Selection Feature	Component Objectives	Potential impact identified from activities related to proposed scheme?
Outer Ards SPA and Ramsar ²²	To maintain each feature in favourable condition <i>(Ramsar sites do not have conservation objectives therefore the objectives for the Outer Ards SPA have been referenced.)</i>	Arctic Tern breeding population	To maintain or enhance the population of the qualifying species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will affect the species population.
			Fledging success sufficient to maintain or enhance population	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities, due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will affect fledging success.
			To maintain or enhance the range of habitats utilised by the qualifying species	The range of habitats are not expected to be impacted by the proposed scheme due to the nature of the works involved.
			To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained	The proposed scheme will not affect the integrity of the site.
			To ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities, due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will cause significant disturbance to the species.
			To ensure that the following are maintained in the long term: - Population of the species as a viable component of the site - Distribution of the species within site	The proposed scheme is not expected to impact on maintaining the population, their distribution, habitats or supporting processes.

²² [Outer Ards SPA conservation objectives 2015](#)



	▪ Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species ▪ Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species	
Light-bellied Brent Goose wintering population	To maintain or enhance the population of the qualifying species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will the species population.
	Fledging success sufficient to maintain or enhance population	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will affect fledging success.
	To maintain or enhance the range of habitats utilised by the qualifying species	The range of habitats are not expected to be impacted by the proposed scheme due to the nature of the works.
	To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained	The proposed scheme will not affect the integrity of the site.
	To ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities, due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will cause significant disturbance to the species.
	To ensure that the following are maintained in the long term: ▪ Population of the species as a viable component of the site ▪ Distribution of the species within site	The proposed scheme is not expected to impact on maintaining the population, their distribution, habitats or supporting processes.



	▪ Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species ▪ Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species	
Golden Plover wintering population	To maintain or enhance the population of the qualifying species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will the species population.
	Fledging success sufficient to maintain or enhance population	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will affect fledging success.
	To maintain or enhance the range of habitats utilised by the qualifying species	The range of habitats are not expected to be impacted by the proposed scheme, due to the nature of the works.
	To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained	The proposed scheme will not affect the integrity of the site.
	To ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will cause significant disturbance to the species.
	To ensure that the following are maintained in the long term: ▪ Population of the species as a viable component of the site ▪ Distribution of the species within site	The proposed scheme is not expected to impact on maintaining the population, their distribution, habitats or supporting processes.



	▪ Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species ▪ Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species	
Ringed Plover wintering population	To maintain or enhance the population of the qualifying species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will the species population.
	Fledging success sufficient to maintain or enhance population	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will affect fledging success.
	To maintain or enhance the range of habitats utilised by the qualifying species	The range of habitats are not expected to be impacted by the proposed scheme, due to the nature of the works.
	To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained	The proposed scheme will not affect the integrity of the site.
	To ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will cause significant disturbance to the species.
	To ensure that the following are maintained in the long term: ▪ Population of the species as a viable component of the site ▪ Distribution of the species within site	The proposed scheme is not expected to impact on maintaining the population, their distribution, habitats or supporting processes.

	▪ Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species ▪ Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species	
Turnstone wintering population	To maintain or enhance the population of the qualifying species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities, due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will the species population.
	Fledging success sufficient to maintain or enhance population	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities, due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will affect fledging success.
	To maintain or enhance the range of habitats utilised by the qualifying species	The range of habitats are not expected to be impacted by the proposed scheme, due to the nature of works.
	To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained	The proposed scheme will not affect the integrity of the site.
	To ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities, due to their location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will cause significant disturbance to the species.
	To ensure that the following are maintained in the long term: ▪ Population of the species as a viable component of the site ▪ Distribution of the species within site	The proposed scheme is not expected to impact on maintaining the population, their distribution, habitats or supporting processes.



		▪ Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species ▪ Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species		
		Habitat extent	To maintain or enhance the area of natural and semi-natural habitats used or potentially usable by Feature bird species (1001 ha intertidal area), (breeding areas xx ha) subject to natural processes	The proposed scheme is not expected to result in significant loss of habitats.
			Maintain the extent of main habitat components subject to natural processes	The proposed scheme is not expected to result in significant loss of habitats.
		Roost sites	Maintain or enhance sites utilised as roosts	The proposed scheme is not expected to result in significant loss of roost sites.
North Channel SAC ²³	The conservation objectives for the site is to maintain site integrity by ensuring: 1. Harbour porpoise are a viable component of the site 2. There is no significant	Harbour porpoise	Harbour porpoise are a viable component of the site	The proposed scheme is not expected to have an impact on the viability of harbour porpoise.
			There is no significant disturbance of the species	The proposed scheme will not cause significant disturbance to harbour porpoise due to the location of proposed works within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark.
			The condition of supporting habitats and processes, and the availability of prey is maintained	The proposed scheme is not expected to have an impact on the condition of supporting habitats and processes or the availability of prey, due to its location within a highly disturbed area adjacent to the port and carpark.

²³ [North Channel MPA: Conservation Objectives And Advice On Operations](#)

	disturbance of the species		Maintain the extent of main habitat components subject to natural processes	The proposed scheme is not expected to have an impact on the habitat extent due to the nature of the proposed works.
	3. The condition of supporting habitats and processes, and the availability of prey is maintained			
Strangford Lough SPA and Ramsar ²⁴	To maintain each feature in favourable condition	Sandwich Tern Breeding Population	To maintain or enhance the population of the qualifying species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will affect the species population.
	<i>(Ramsar sites do not have conservation objectives therefore the objectives for the Strangford Lough SPA have been referenced.)</i>	Common Tern Breeding Population	Fledging success sufficient to maintain or enhance population	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will affect fledging success.
		Arctic Tern Breeding Population	To maintain or enhance the range of habitats utilised by the qualifying species	The range of habitats are not expected to be impacted by the proposed scheme.
			To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained	The proposed scheme will not affect the integrity of the site.
			To ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will cause significant disturbance to the species.
			To ensure that the following are maintained in the long term:	The proposed scheme is not expected to impact on maintaining the population, their distribution, habitats or supporting processes.

²⁴ [Strangford Lough SPA conservation objectives 2015](#)

	- Population of the species as a viable component of the site - Distribution of the species within site - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species - Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species	
	Fledging success sufficient to maintain or enhance population	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will affect fledging success.
Golden Plover wintering population	To maintain or enhance the population of the qualifying species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will affect the species population.
Bar-tailed Godwit wintering population	Fledging success sufficient to maintain or enhance population	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will affect fledging success.
Light-bellied Brent Goose wintering population	To maintain or enhance the range of habitats utilised by the qualifying species	The range of habitats are not expected to be impacted by the proposed scheme.
	To ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained	The proposed scheme will not affect the integrity of the site.
	To ensure there is no significant disturbance of the species	No impact has been identified resulting from the proposed activities. As such, it is not anticipated that the proposed scheme will cause significant disturbance to the species.



Shelduck wintering population	To ensure that the following are maintained in the long term:	The proposed scheme is not expected to impact on maintaining the population, their distribution, habitats or supporting processes.
	Population of the species as a viable component of the site	
Knot wintering population	- Distribution of the species within site - Distribution and extent of habitats supporting the species	
Redshank wintering population	Structure, function and supporting processes of habitats supporting the species	
Great Crested Grebe wintering population		
Cormorant wintering population		
Greylag Goose wintering population		
Wigeon wintering population		
Gadwall wintering population		



Teal wintering
population

Mallard
wintering
population

Pintail wintering
population

Shoveler
wintering
population

Goldeneye
wintering
population

Red-breasted
Merganser
wintering
population

Coot wintering
population

Oystercatcher
wintering
population



Ringed Plover
wintering
population

Grey Plover
wintering
population

Lapwing
wintering
population

Dunlin wintering
population

Curlew
wintering
population

Turnstone
wintering
population

Waterfowl
Assemblage

No significant decrease in population
against national trends

No impact has been identified resulting from the
proposed activities. As such, it is not anticipated
that the proposed scheme will result in any
decrease in population.

Waterfowl
Assemblage
wintering
population

Maintain species diversity contributing to
the Waterfowl Assemblage

No impact has been identified resulting from the
proposed activities. As such, it is not anticipated
that the proposed scheme will impact species
diversity.



		Habitat Extent	To maintain or enhance the area of natural and semi-natural habitats used or potentially usable by Feature bird species (3781 ha intertidal area), (breeding areas X ha) subject to natural processes	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the habitat extent.
		Roost sites	Maintain or enhance sites utilised as roosts	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the roost sites.
Strangford Lough SAC ²⁵	To maintain (or restore where appropriate) the - Large shallow inlet and bay - Coastal lagoons - Mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide - Reefs - Annual vegetation of drift lines - Atlantic salt meadows (Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae)	Large shallow inlet and bay	Maintain the extent of the large shallow inlet and bay	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the inlet and bay extent.
			Allow the natural processes which determine the development, structure, function and extent of the large shallow inlet and bay, to operate appropriately	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the natural processes.
			Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the species diversity within this habitat.	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on species diversity.
		Coastal lagoons	Maintain the extent of the coastal lagoons	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the extent of the coastal lagoons.
			Allow the natural processes which determine the development, structure, function and extent of the coastal lagoons, to operate appropriately	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the natural processes.
			Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the species diversity within this habitat.	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on species diversity.

²⁵ [Strangford Lough SAC Conservation Objectives 2015](#)

▪ Perennial vegetation of stony banks ▪ Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand ▪ Harbour (Common) Seal <i>Phoca vitulina</i> to favourable condition.	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide	Maintain the extent of mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide Allow the natural processes which determine the development, structure and extent of mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide, to operate appropriately Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the species diversity within this habitat.	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the extent of the mudflats and sandflats not covered by sea water at low tide. None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the natural processes. None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on species diversity.
	Reefs	To restore the reefs and their characteristic species to favourable condition, allowing for natural change.	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the condition of the reefs.
		Allow the natural processes which determine the development, structure, function and extent of the reefs, to operate appropriately	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the natural processes.
		Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the species diversity within this habitat.	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on species diversity.
	Annual vegetation of drift lines	Maintain and enhance the extent of annual vegetation of drift lines subject to natural processes	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the extent of annual vegetation of drift lines.
		Allow the natural processes which determine the development and extent of annual vegetation of drift lines to operate appropriately	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the natural processes.



	Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the species diversity within this community including the presence of notable species	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on species diversity.
Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco Puccinellietalia maritimae)	To restore the Atlantic salt meadows and their characteristic species to favourable condition, allowing for natural change.	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the condition of Atlantic salt meadows.
	To maintain or enhance, as appropriate, the composition of the saltmarsh communities	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the saltmarsh communities.
	To maintain transitions between saltmarsh communities and to other adjoining habitats	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the saltmarsh communities.
	To permit the continued operation of formative and controlling natural processes acting on the saltmarsh communities	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the saltmarsh communities.
Perennial vegetation of stony banks	To restore the perennial vegetation of stony banks and their characteristic species to favourable condition, allowing for natural change.	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the condition of perennial vegetation of stony banks.
	Allow the natural processes which determine the development and extent of perennial vegetation of stony banks to operate appropriately	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the natural processes.
	Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the species diversity within this community including the presence of notable species	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on species diversity.
Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand	To restore the Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand and their characteristic species to favourable condition, allowing for natural change.	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the condition of Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand.



	Allow the natural processes which determine the development and extent of Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand, to operate appropriately	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the natural processes.
	Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the species diversity within this habitat.	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on species diversity.
Harbour (Common) Seal <i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the Harbour (Common) Seal population	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the Harbour (Common) Seal population.
	Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, physical features used by Harbour (Common) Seals within the site	None of the proposed scheme is located in the designated area. As such there will be no impact on the Harbour (Common) Seal population.



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