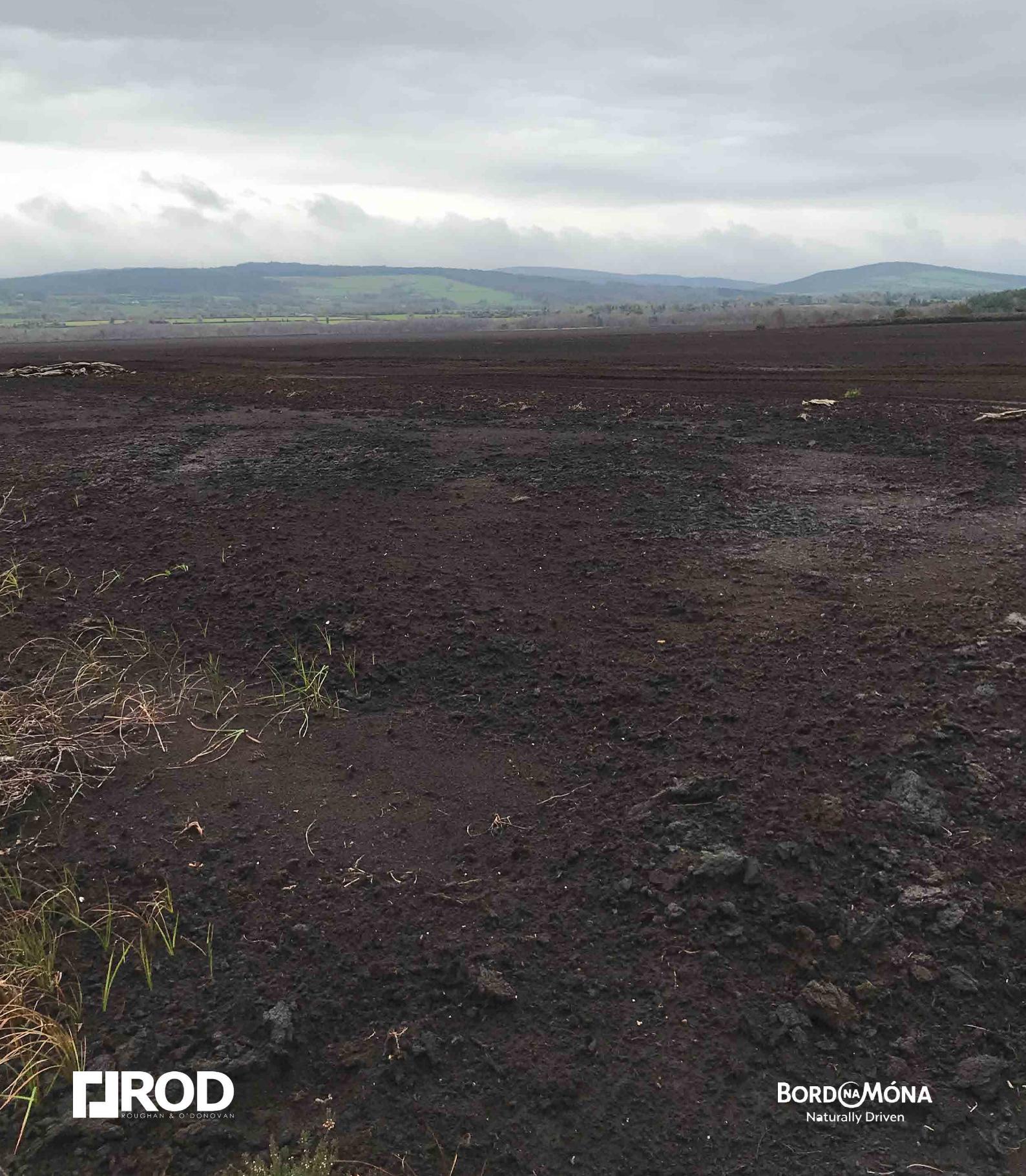




# Bawnmore Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025

SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT | August 2025



# Bawnmore Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025

## Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

Roughan & O'Donovan (ROD) was appointed by Bord na Móna (BnM) to produce, on its behalf, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report in respect of the proposed Bawnmore Bog Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025 ("the project").

The AA Screening Report is intended to determine whether or not the project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of best scientific knowledge, is likely to have a significant effect on areas designated as being of European importance for nature conservation ("European sites"), thereby enabling BnM, as the competent authority in this case, to fulfil its obligations under Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive").

This document comprises the AA Screening Report in respect of the project and was prepared by ROD on behalf of BnM and in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended) ("the Habitats Regulations"). The aim of this AA Screening Report is to inform and assist the competent authority in carrying out its AA Screening by determining whether or not the project, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, has the potential to significantly affect one or more European sites, in view of their Conservation Objectives.

It is the considered opinion of ROD, as the author of this AA Screening Report, that the project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of best scientific knowledge, does not have the potential to significantly affect the Lower River Suir SAC, the River Barrow and River Nore SAC or the River Nore SPA in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. Therefore, AA is not required in respect of the project.

### 1.2 Competent Experts

This AA Screening Report was prepared by Rachel Heaphy and reviewed by Patrick O'Shea. Rachel is an Ecologist with 4 years' experience in ecological assessment. She holds a BSc in Zoology and a Master of Research from the University of Roehampton. She is a Qualifying member of the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (QualCIEEM).

Patrick is a Principal Ecologist with over 12 years' experience in ecological consultancy. He holds a degree in Botany from Trinity College Dublin and an MSc in Ecological Management and Conservation Biology from Queen's University Belfast. Patrick is a Full member of Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (MCIEEM).

### 1.3 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of the 21<sup>st</sup> May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive") and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds ("the Birds Directive") list habitats and species which are, in a European context, important for conservation and in need of protection. This protection is afforded in part through the designation of sites which support significant examples of habitats or populations of species. ("European sites"). Sites designated

for wild birds are termed “Special Protection Areas” (SPAs) and sites designated for natural habitat types or other species are termed “Special Areas of Conservation” (SACs). The complete network of European sites is referred to as “Natura 2000”.

In order to ensure the protection of European sites in the context of land use planning and development, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive provides for the assessment of the implications of plans and projects for European sites, as follows:

*“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site<sup>1</sup> and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”*

In Case C-323/17 [§34], *People Over Wind*, the Court of Justice of the European Union ('the CJEU') referred to the nature of the test to be applied in making a screening determination as follows:

*“[...] it is settled case-law that Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive makes the requirement for an appropriate assessment of the implications of a plan or project conditional on there being a probability or a risk that the plan or project in question will have a significant effect on the site concerned. In the light, in particular, of the precautionary principle, such a risk exists if it cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information that the plan or project will have a significant effect on the site concerned (judgment of 26 May 2011, *Commission v Belgium*, C-538/09, EU:C:2011:349, paragraph 39 and the case-law cited). The assessment of that risk must be made in the light *inter alia* of the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site concerned by such a plan or project (see, to that effect, judgment of 21 July 2016, *Orleans and Others*, C-387/15 and C-388/15, EU:C:2016:583, paragraph 45 and the case-law cited).”*

Further clarification on the use of mitigation measures was provided in *Eco Advocacy*<sup>2</sup>, where the CJEU ruled that where constituent elements are incorporated into the design of a project as standard features required for all projects of that nature and not within the aim of reducing negative effects of a project on European sites, those features should not be interpreted as mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects (i.e. likely significant effects) of a project on those European sites. The judgment stated that:

*“In the light of the foregoing considerations, the answer to the fourth question is that Article 6(3) of the Directive 92/43 must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out an appropriate assessment of the implications of a plan or project for a site, account may be taken of the features of that plan or project which involve the removal of contaminants and which therefore may have the effect of reducing harmful effects of the plan or project on that site, where those features have been incorporated into that plan or project as standard features, inherent in such a plan or project, irrespective of any effect on the site.”*

Article 7 of the Habitats Directive provides that the provisions of, *inter alia*, Article 6(3) are to apply to SPAs under Directive 2009/147/EC (the “Birds Directive”).

<sup>1</sup> Including, where applicable, ‘sites’.

<sup>2</sup> *Eco Advocacy v. An Bord Pleanála* [2023] C-721/21.

As stated, the requirements arising out of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive are transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended<sup>3</sup> (S.I. No.477 of 2011) (the Habitats Regulations), including Part 5 thereof.

The determination of whether or not a plan or project requires AA is referred to as “Stage 1” or “AA Screening”. A “Stage 1” or “AA Screening” is completed to determine whether or not the project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of best scientific knowledge, is likely to have a significant effect on areas designated as being of European importance for nature conservation (“European sites”), thereby enabling the Applicant, to fulfil its obligations under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

In accordance with Regulation 42 of the Habitats Regulations, AA must be undertaken by the competent authorities. In Ireland, the competent authority is the relevant public authority for each plan or project (as defined in Part 1 of the Habitats Regulations), e.g. the local authority, in this case BnM. Consequently, the responsibility for carrying out AA Screening lies solely with the competent authority. In that respect, the AA Screening Report is not in itself an AA Screening Assessment but provides the competent authority with the information it needs in order to carry out its AA Screening.

#### 1.4 Screening Methodology

At this stage of the process, the AA Screening Report assesses the potential effects from the plan or project on the European sites within the Zone of Influence and evaluates them in view of the sites’ Conservation Objectives.

This AA Screening Report has had regard inter alia to the following matters<sup>4</sup>:

- The threshold test is that an appropriate assessment will be required if the Project is likely to *have a significant effect* on (a) European site(s) either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.
- It is not necessary, in order to trigger the requirement to proceed to stage 2 AA that the Project will ‘*definitely*’ have significant effects on the protected site, but such a requirement will arise if it is a ‘*mere probability*’ that such an effect exists. The requirement to carry out an AA will be satisfied if there is a ‘*probability or a risk*’ that the Project will have ‘*significant effects*’ on (a) European site(s).
- Consequent upon the application of the precautionary principle, such a ‘*risk*’ will be found to exist if ‘*it cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information*’ that the particular Project ‘*will have significant effects*’ on (a) European site(s).
- An AA will be required if, on the basis of objective information, a ‘*significant effect*’ on a European site ‘*cannot be excluded*’. An AA will not be required if, on the basis of objective information, a ‘*significant effect*’ on (a) European site(s) ‘*can be excluded*’.
- In the case of ‘*doubt as to the absence of significant effects*’ an AA must be carried out.

<sup>3</sup> Including inter alia S.I. 290 of 2013; SI 499 of 2013; SI 355 of 2015; the Planning, Heritage and Broadcasting (Amendment) Act 2021, Chapter 4; SI 293 of 2021.

<sup>4</sup> See Eoin Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála [2019] IEHC 84; Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála [2014] IEHC 400; Connelly v. An Bord Pleanála [2018] IESC 31; [2018] ILRM 453.

- The requirement to conduct an AA will arise where, at the screening stage, it is ascertained that the particular development is '*capable of having any effect*' (albeit this must be any '*significant effect*') on (a) European site(s).
- The '*possibility*' of there being a '*significant effect*' on (a) European site(s) will give rise to a requirement to carry out an AA for the purposes of Article 6(3). There is no need to '*establish*' such an effect and it is merely necessary to determine that there '*may be*' such an effect.
- In order to meet the threshold of likelihood of significant effect, the word '*likely*' in Article 6(3) means less than the balance of probabilities. The test does not require any '*hard and fast evidence*' that *such a significant effect was likely*. It merely has to be shown that there is a '*possibility*' that this significant effect is likely.
- The assessment of whether there is a risk of '*significant effect*' on the European site must be made in light, *inter alia*, of the '*characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site concerned*' by the relevant plan or project.
- Plans or projects or applications for developments which have *no appreciable effect* on European sites are excluded from the requirement to proceed to AA. If all applications for permission for projects capable of having *any effect whatsoever* on such sites were to be caught by Article 6(3) *activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill*.

While the threshold at the screening stage of Article 6(3) is very low nonetheless it is a threshold which must be met before it is necessary to proceed to the stage 2 AA.

Accordingly, best practice in undertaking AA Screening involves five steps as follows:

- (1) The first step involves gathering the information and data necessary to carry out a screening assessment. These include, but are not limited to, the details of all phases of the plan or project, environmental data pertaining to the area in which the plan or project is located, e.g. rare or protected habitats and species present or likely to be present, and the details of the European sites within the Zone of Influence.
- (2) The second step involves examining the information gathered in the first step and a scientific analysis of the potential impacts of the project on the receiving environment, particularly the European sites in the Zone of Influence.
- (3) The third step evaluates the impacts analysed in the second step against the Conservation Objectives of the relevant European sites, thereby determining whether or not those impacts constitute "*likely significant effects*", within the meaning of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.
- (4) The fourth step involves considering the potential for likely significant effects to arise from the combination of the impacts of the plan or project with those of other plans or projects. If it is determined in the third step that Stage 2 (AA) is required, consideration of potential cumulative impacts may be deferred to that stage.
- (5) The last step involves the issuing of a statement of the determination of the AA Screening. Notwithstanding the recommendation made in the AA Screening Report, the responsibility for completing this step lies solely with the competent authority.

The following guidance documents informed the assessment methodology:

- European Commission (EC) (2021) *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Environment Directorate-General of the European Commission.
- European Commission (EC) (2018) *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, Brussels.
- European Commission (EC) (2007) *Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC: Clarification of the Concepts of Alternative Solutions, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence*. Opinion of the European Commission.
- Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government (DEHLG) (2010) *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) (2010) *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Circular Letter NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10. National Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021) *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*. Office of the Planning Regulator.

## 1.5 Ecological Assessment

In order to fully inform this AA Screening Report in respect of the project, it was necessary to establish the baseline ecological conditions in the receiving environment, particularly with regard to European sites.

### 1.5.1 Desk Study

During the desk study, the statutory consultee, the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS), provided data on designations of sites, habitats and species of conservation interest. This included reports pursuant to Article 17 of the Habitats Directive<sup>5</sup> (NPWS, 2019a, b, c) and Article 12 of the Birds Directive<sup>6</sup> (Eionet, 2018), as well as the Site Synopses and Conservation Objectives for the relevant European sites.

The desk study involved a thorough review of existing information relating to ecology in the vicinity of the project and in the surrounding area. The following web-based Geographic Information Systems (GISs) were used to obtain information relating to the natural environment surrounding the project. These included the NPWS *Map Viewer* (NPWS, 2025), which provided information on the locations of protected sites, the National Biodiversity Data Centre's (NBDC) *Biodiversity Maps* (NBDC, 2025), which provided recent and historic records of rare and protected species in the area as well as the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) *Unified GIS Application* (EPA, 2025) which provided additional information on the wider environment.

<sup>5</sup> Under Article 17, to report to the European Commission every six years on their status and on the implementation of the measures taken under the Directive.

<sup>6</sup> Every three years, Member States of the European Union are required by Article 12 of the Birds Directive to report on implementation of the Directive. The most recent reporting available is for the period 2013-2018.

The desk study was also informed by the following documents:

- BnM (2025a) *Bawnmore Bog Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025*.
- BnM (2025b) *Bawnmore Bog Rehab Plan GIS Map Book 2025*.
- BnM (2025c) *Peatlands Climate Action Scheme - Bawnmore/Inch Bog Site Characterisation and Monitoring 2025*.
- BnM (2023) *Peatland Climate Action Scheme – Environmental Management Plan*.
- BnM (2022) *Methodology Paper for the Enhanced Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration on Bord na Móna Peatlands – Preliminary Study*.

As with all desk studies, the data considered were only as good as the data supplied by the recorders and recording schemes. The recording schemes provide disclaimers in relation to the quality and quantity of the data they provide, and these were considered when examining outputs of the desk study.

### 1.5.2 Assessment

The ecological baseline which was established by the desk study described above was used to inform the assessment of the potential ecological effects likely to arise from the project, particularly with regard to European sites. Any assumptions that were made in view of gaps in the ecological data were made in strict accordance with the Precautionary Principle.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

### 2.1 Overview

Bawnmore Bog is located in Counties Tipperary and Kilkenny. Bawnmore Bog is approximately 530.8 ha. Industrial peat production commenced at Bawnmore Bog in 1970 and ceased in 2017, when BnM announced the closure of the Littleton Briquette factory and the cessation of industrial peat production in a number of cutaway bogs within the Littleton Bog Group.

BnM are obliged to carry out peatland rehabilitation, as a requirement of the applicable Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) Licence issued by the Environmental Protection Agency. Condition 10 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 requirements of Condition 10.2 of IPC Licence Ref. P0-409-01 which the Bawnmore Bog Rehabilitation Plan seeks to address are:

*“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.”*

BnM are to carry out a Peatlands Enhanced Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme on its peatlands. This scheme is often referred to as the ‘Peatlands Climate Action Scheme’ (PCAS). The additional costs of the Scheme will be supported by Government through 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) acts as the Scheme regulator.

The key objective of peatland rehabilitation is environmental stabilisation. This means developing habitats and vegetation back onto the bare peat (putting a “skin” back onto the peat), and minimising effects to downstream waterbodies. Bawnmore was drained in the past to allow peat production. Better results for water quality improvements, climate action, the reduction of carbon emissions and biodiversity are achieved when the remaining peat is re-wetted. This means drain-blocking and other measures to raise water levels to the surface of the bog and to encourage the natural colonisation of vegetation. In some instances, where depressions retain deeper water, further optimisation of water levels to further facilitate revegetation may also be achievable.

In general, soggy ground conditions are preferred. This means the remaining peat is wet and that plants that prefer wetter conditions, like Bog Cotton will thrive. Some small sections with deeper residual peat have the capacity to regrow *Sphagnum* moss again, where there are suitable hydrological conditions. *Sphagnum* is a key species for restoring naturally functioning raised bog conditions. Many BnM bogs cannot be restored back to raised bog in the short-term, as so much peat has been removed, and the environmental conditions have been modified.

However other peatland habitats with Heather, Bog Cotton, Rushes, Purple Moor-grass, Bog-mosses and scattered trees will develop, and in time a naturalised peatland can be restored.

The development of a range of habitats in Bawnmore Bog will support biodiversity including plants, insects, birds and mammals. This includes some species that are rare and protected in the wider landscape. It will increase the national area of native woodland. Many wetland habitats in the wider landscape have been reclaimed for agriculture and other uses, and peatland rehabilitation is an opportunity to create new peatland and wetland habitats.

Rehabilitation measures proposed for Bawnmore Bog include optimisation of water levels within existing waterbodies and drain blocking. Some fertiliser will be spread on headlands and other areas (a small part of the overall area) to encourage vegetation growth. These rehabilitation measures will be planned by a team consisting of expert ecologists, hydrologists and engineers. It is a guiding principle of BnM rehabilitation planning that no actions or activities will be undertaken that would negatively impact on adjacent land. No boundary drains will be blocked. Water will still leave the bog via the existing outlets.

It will take some time for vegetation and habitats to fully develop at the more recently peat harvested areas of Bawnmore Bog, and for a wetland/peatland ecosystem to be restored. However, it is expected that most of these areas will be developing pioneer habitats after 5-10 years. This is a peatland rehabilitation plan. This plan does not consider future after-use or development. BnM continually reviews its land-bank to consider future commercial or industrial developments. Any other proposed development will be planned in adherence to relevant planning guidelines and will consider the rehabilitation and the condition of the bog.

In addition to the above measures proposed for the rehabilitation of Bawnmore Bog, there are residual peat stockpiles remaining on the bog, which are required to be decommissioned and rehabilitated as per Condition 10 of the IPC license. The aim of the Stockpile Decommissioning Procedure is to stabilise any remaining stockpiles by depositing the peat in the two drains located immediately adjacent to the stockpile field, enabling the re-shaping of the stockpile to facilitate stabilization and revegetation. The full Stockpile Decommissioning Procedure is described in Appendix XIII of the *Bawnmore Bog Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025*, which is provided in full in Appendix A to this report.

Peatland rehabilitation of this bog will bring a range of benefits to the local community via improvements to the local landscape and is also important for supporting national policies and strategies in relation to reduction of carbon emissions from these peatlands, supporting biodiversity and improvements to water quality.

The project does not overlap with, nor is it necessary for the management of any European site.

## 2.2 Location of Project

Bawnmore Bog is located approximately 3km to the west of Urlingford on the Tipperary/Kilkenny border. It is part of the Littleton group of bogs with Inch bog to the south and Derryville bog to the north. The location of the project site is shown in Figure 2.1.



**Figure 2.1 Bawnmore Bog Location**

## 2.3 Receiving Natural Environment

### Overview

Bawnmore Bog is located approximately 3km east of Urlingford on the Tipperary/Kilkenny border. It is part of the Littleton Bog Group with Inch bog to the south and Derryville bog to the north.

The county boundary divides the bog into roughly equal sections. Bawnmore has an irregular shape with one main central lobe, sub divided by the old railway network route and a small lobe to the north-east. A significant part of the bog has developed typical cutaway habitats. Bawnmore also contains a relatively large area of marginal high bog in the northeastern lobe that has been drained yet had no peat removed.

Bawnmore Bog was rehabilitated by BnM from 2018-2022 as part of its Phase 1 rehabilitation. The bog formerly had a pumped drainage regime; however, pumping ceased at Bawnmore in 2018. The bog now has a gravity-based drainage regime.

The surrounding landscape is dominated by a mosaic of farmland, largely consisting of improved grassland along with several areas of coniferous forestry, and other raised bogs, including Templetohy, Carrickhill and Derryville to the north and Longfordpass to the south, all of which are owned and managed by BnM.

Part of the marginal areas around the bog were developed for conifer forestry in the 1990s by Coillte. Areas where Coillte forestry overlaps the bog boundary have been identified as constrained land on the rehabilitation plan. Bawnmore Bog is proposed for inclusion in the Coillte/BnM Midlands Native Woodland Project, with 39ha proposed for planting at Bawnmore. This proposed project is currently being considered for consent by the Forest Service. Areas proposed to be included in Native Woodland Project have also been mapped as constrained land in the rehabilitation plan.

Part of the access route at Bawnmore is used for log biomass storage (for Edenderry Power). There are known rights of way around the margins of Bawnmore Bog. There are some areas of agricultural grassland along the margins of Bawnmore Bog. Cutover bog and remnants of intact raised bog are present along the western margins of the bog and are subject to domestic turf cutting. These areas will not be subject to rehabilitation and have been identified as constrained land.

Areas dominated by bare peat are deemed to be of Local Importance (lower value). A proportion of the bog are rated as Local Importance (higher value) where semi-natural habitats, including woodland, scrub, wetlands and pioneer cutaway habitats are developing, in accordance with the criteria outlined in '*Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes*' (TII, 2009).

Bawnmore Bog lies in the Suir Catchment (Catchment ID: 16) and the Nore Catchment (Catchment ID: 15) as defined by the EPA under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The eastern section of the bog is situated within the Goul\_SC\_010 sub catchment and the western section is in the Suir\_SC\_040 sub catchment.

Bawnmore Bog has 4 No. treated surface water outlets (SW20, SW21, SW22 and SW23) from previously active peat extraction catchments, which discharge to the Drish Rivers; (IE\_SE\_16D020068 DRISH\_020), (IE\_SE\_16D020070 DRISH\_030) and (IE\_SE\_16D020100 DRISH\_040). As reported in the WFD, the Drish River is classed as 'Poor' water quality status (Ecological Status or Potential SW 2016-2021).

## Habitats

The most common vegetation communities/habitats<sup>7</sup> present in the former production areas at Bawnmore include:

- Bare peat (0-50% cover) (BP);
- Pioneer *Eriophorum angustifolium*-dominated community (Bog Cotton) (pEang) and pioneer *Juncus effusus*-dominated community (Soft Rush);
- Willow-dominated scrub (eWill) (in mosaic with pJeff) (in those areas that are flooded regularly);
- Open water (OW) (permanent) and Temporary open water (TOW);
- Wetlands with pioneering *Typha latifolia* (pTyp), *Phragmites australis* (pPhrag), Pioneer *Carex rostrata*-dominated community (Bottle Sedge) (pRos);
- Birch-dominated woodland and scrub (BirWd, eBir, oBir) (on drier higher ground that is not flooded);
- Heather dominated vegetation/Pioneer dry heath (dHeath) (mainly in mosaic with Birch scrub and along the raised bog remnant along the powerline route)
- *Molinia caerulea*-dominated community (dry) (Purple Moorgrass) (gMol);
- Access routes (Acc);
- Riparian zones (Rip) (with drains and associated habitats such as scrub and Birch woodland);
- Silt ponds (Silt) with Gorse/Birch scrub and *Molinia caerulea*-dominated community (dry) (Purple Moorgrass)(gMol);

The following habitats are classified according to *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland* (Fossitt, 2000) and any habitats corresponding to types listed on Annex I to the Habitats Directive were identified using the Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats (EC, 2013). Photos taken from site of different habitat types are displayed in Plate 1(a-f). The habitat map of Bawnmore Bog is presented in Figure 2.2 below.

The most common habitats found around the margins include:

- Raised bog (PB1);
- Cutover Bog (PB4);
- Scrub (WS1);
- Wet grassland (GS4);
- Birch woodland (WN7);
- Dense Bracken (HD1);
- Improved grassland (GA1).

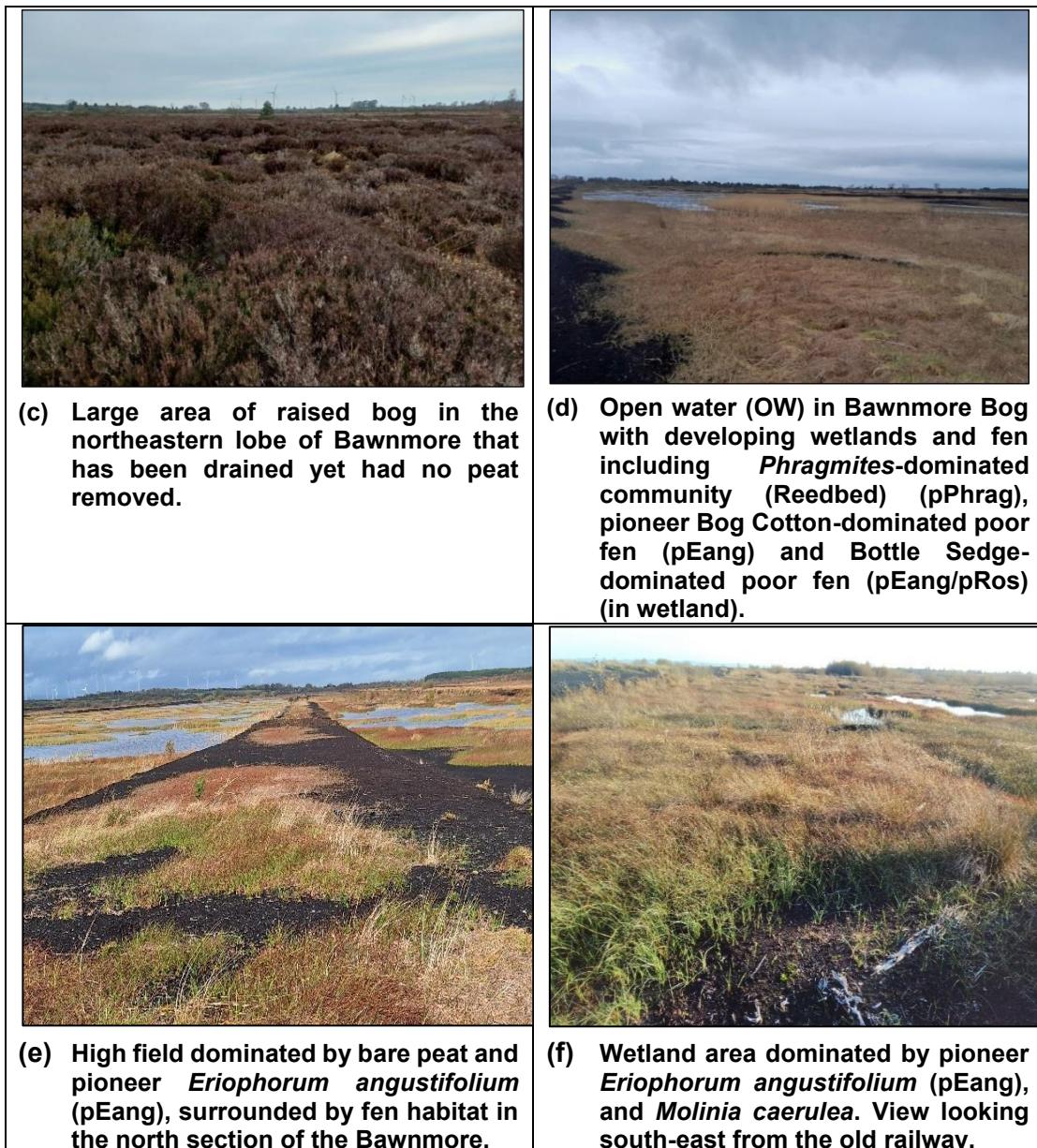
<sup>7</sup> Codes refer BnM classification of pioneer habitats of production bog. See Appendix II – “An Overview of the BnM Habitat Classification” of the BnM Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021. Note: habitat categories presented are not exhaustive and are meant to indicate the primary habitats of importance which are present.



**(a) Western section of Bawnmore (view looking north), dominated by pioneer vegetation, developing scrub and open water/wetland.**



**(b) Central section of Bawnmore (view looking north), dominated by pioneer vegetation, developing scrub and open water/wetland.**



Plates 1a-f Examples of different habitats at Bawnmore Bog.

### Species of Conservation Interest

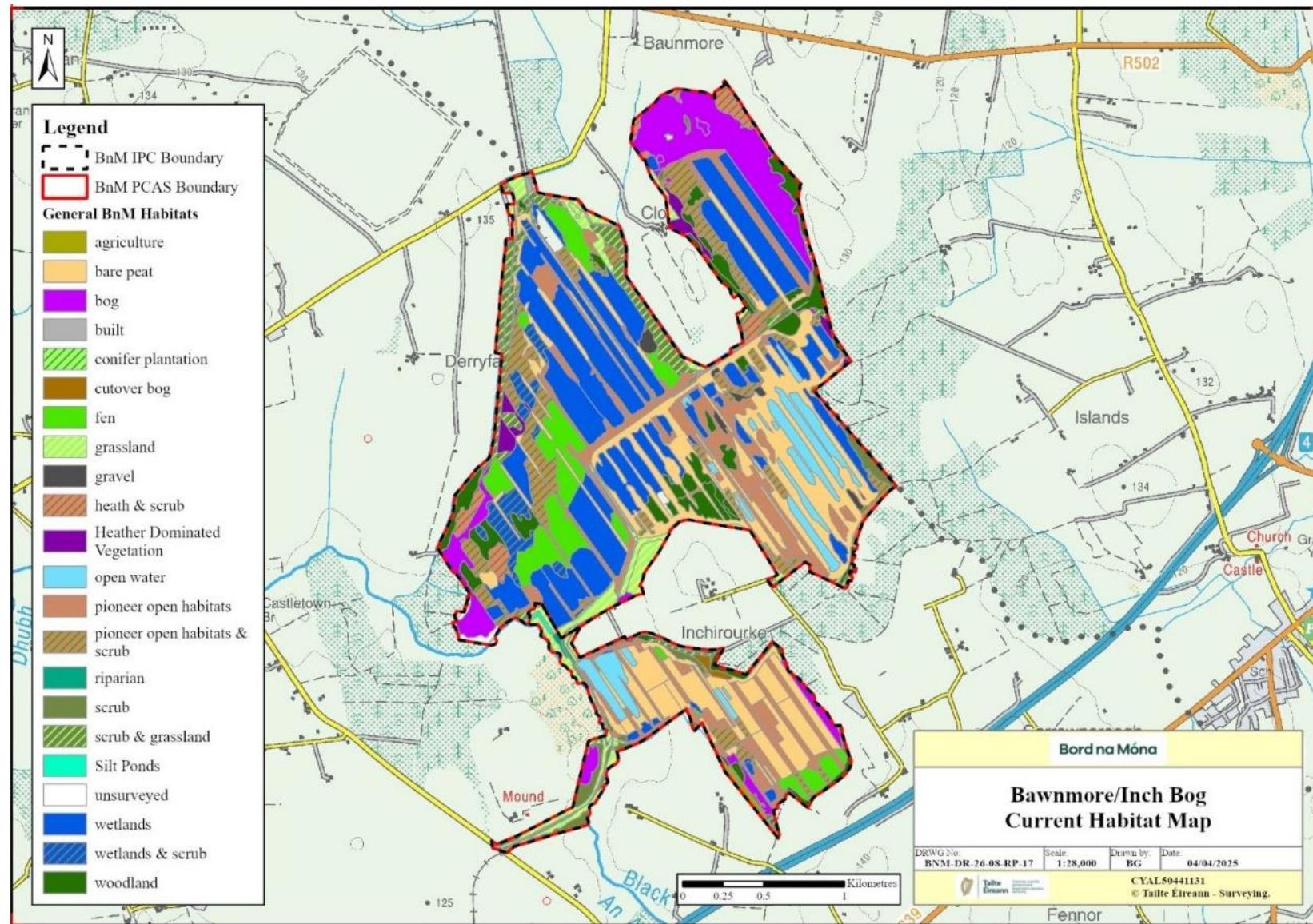
A number of species of conservation concern utilise the habitats available at Bawnmore Bog. The following is a summary of the records of these species available within both BnM and those of the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC).

- Multiple mammal species have been recorded as part of BnM surveys on or in close proximity to the bog including Badger (*Meles meles*), Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*) and Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*).
- Bird species of conservation interest recorded from the bog include the BOCCI red listed species Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and the amber listed species Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), Sky Lark (*Alauda arvensis*), Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) and Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*).

- Yellowhammer, Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) and the first record of Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*) were all recorded in 2023/2024.
- Several butterflies have been recorded on Bawnmore Bog including Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*), Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*), Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*), Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*), Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*), Small White (*Pieris rapae*), Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*), Peacock (*Inachis io*), Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) and Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*), a rare species which is listed on Annex II of the European Union Habitats and Species Directive.

### **Invasive Species**

There are no 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 BnM 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.



## Figure 2.2 Current Habitats at Bawnmore Bog

## 2.4 Description of the Project

The following paragraphs describe the rehabilitation measures proposed at Bawnmore Bog:

- Wetland measures will be used across the former production area of Bawnmore Bog that has been subject to phase 1 rehabilitation. Previous rehabilitation has increased the height of the water table and several areas of deep, enclosed basins with ponded water have formed. Some additional berms are proposed in these areas. Measures will also include managing outfalls, managing water levels with overflow pipes and targeted blocking of outfalls within the bogs.
- There is an opportunity to review water levels across existing wetlands. Hydrological management will look to optimise summer water levels to maximise the development of wetland vegetation (by looking to set water depths at <0.5m). The main objective is to increase the potential for wetland habitats to develop and reduce the extent of deeper water. Part of these basins will always have some extent of deeper permanent open water due to the original topography, as these basins are quite low-lying relative to external drainage features. Wetland measures will examine how water flows across the site and will look to install taps or overflow pipes, where needed, to optimise water levels across the site.
- Targeted drain blocking to optimise hydrological conditions/rewet (degraded) raised bog remnants around the margins of the bog. Re-wetting, where possible, using drain blocking (max 7/100m) and modifying outfalls and managing overflows.
- Deep Peat measures on high fields will include field re-profiling, creation of shallow depressions and management of water levels with overflow pipes and blocking of outfalls and managing overflows.
- Targeted drain blocking (3/100m) on dry cutaway.
- 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.

### 2.4.1 Rehabilitation Methodology

#### Drain-blocking with an excavator to re-wet cutaway bog

This enhanced measure can be applied to cutover bog, cutaway bog and drained raised bog with different environmental characteristics. It can be applied to residual peat of various depths including deep cutover peat. The main objective is to block drains with peat dams to raise water levels, rewetting peat and slowing water movements through the site. Slowing water movement will have additional benefits of reducing fluvial carbon loss (via water) and also eventually improving water quality leaving the site by reducing emissions of silt and ammonia.

These drains blocks are used in a number of enhanced rehabilitation methodologies, including DPT2, DPT3, DCT3, WLT4, WLT5, MLT2 and AW2. They are also used at the cell berm locations for the DPT4 and DPT5 methodologies. Rehabilitation methodologies are summarised in Table 2.1.

The number of peat dams per 100m is determined by the topography of the site, but an allowance has been estimated at a minimum of 4 per 100m and a maximum of 7 blocks per 100m of field drain. The number of drain blocks is dictated by the gradient of the drain and the blocks are set out at every 100mm fall up to a max of 7 blocks per

100 metres. In the case of wetland methodology WLT4 the maximum number of drain blocks is 4 per 100 metres regardless of the gradient.

The methodology follows NPWS guidelines published by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (Mackin et al. 2017) and in line with methodologies originally developed by McDonagh (1996), however the drain block frequency differs as the NPWS guidelines has a maximum of 10 blocks per 100 metres.

This method requires the cutting of a 500mm key along the side and base of the drain and the compaction of peat in layers when forming the drain block. This method of forming drain blocks along with the increased number of drain blocks (compared with the standard measures) benefits re-wetting, traps silt on cutaway with slightly greater slopes and further slows the movement of water from these sites.

Where areas are heavily vegetated with scrub/trees, it is not always possible to install the number of drain blocks in accordance with the above methodology without damaging existing vegetation. In some cases, a tree felling licence would be required as small trees may be established. In these situations, targeted drain blocking is carried out and drain blocks positioned in more accessible less vegetated areas. This allows for some rewetting of these areas with minimal interference to existing ecology and biodiversity.

An example of the application of this enhanced drain blocking rehabilitation measure is at Ballysorrell Bog. Drain blocks have been provided in circa 3700 ha of the BnM peatlands as part of the Year 1 rehabilitation under the scheme. These drain blocks are performing successfully to date.

### **Stockpile Decommissioning Procedure**

All IPC licensed peatlands with residual peat stockpiles requiring decommissioning and rehabilitation, as required by Condition 10. The procedure set out for stockpile decommissioning and rehabilitation is as follows:

1. Strip any remaining stockpile protection and remove using the poly wrapper for recycling.
2. Ensure the silt pond servicing this pile field catchment has been cleaned within the last six months as per condition 6.8, and visually inspected as per condition 6.7, prior to any pile decommissioning.
3. Where stockpiles occur within areas planned for rehabilitation, such planned rehabilitation measures (regular drain blocking) will be implemented in advance of any stockpile decommissioning, with priority given to the required adjacent stockpile field drains.
4. Once the rehabilitation measure above has been completed, proceed to reprofile the stockpile as per below.
5. Using suitable available excavator/dozer to make a safe ramp up onto the end of the pile.
6. Track up onto the pile and establish a safe level base.
7. Using the machine to reduce and reprofile the pile height and deposit into the adjoining pile field drains. The residual height to be determined based on stockpile size and area required to reprofile.
8. Work along the pile using this method until reaching the pile end.
9. Using a suitable machine, track the peat into the pile field drain along both sides of the pile, ensuring the final level is below the existing drain blocks and any damage to existing drain blocks avoided.

10. If required, use a suitable machine to track along the top of the reprofiled stockpile to level and flatten the profile to reduce the runoff gradient.
11. Fertiliser application and any grass seed mix should be applied to each stockpile following completion of the above steps, to accelerate the stabilisation.

**Table 2.1 Rehabilitation Methodologies**

Code	Description
<b>Deep Peat Cutover Bog</b>	
<b>DPT 1</b>	Regular drain blocking – Speed Bump method (3/100 m) + modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes
<b>DPT 2</b>	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m) + modifying outfalls and managing overflows with a controlled weir outfall + fertiliser application
<b>DPT 3</b>	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), + field reprofiling + modifying outfalls and managing overflows with a controlled weir outfall + fertiliser application
<b>DPT 4</b>	Berms and field re-profiling (circa 45m x 60m cell) + modifying outfalls and managing overflows with a controlled weir outfall + drainage channels for excess water + fertiliser application + <i>Sphagnum</i> inoculation
<b>DPT 5</b>	Cut and Fill cell bunding (circa 30m x 30m cell) + modifying outfalls and managing overflows with a controlled weir outfall + drainage channels for excess water + fertiliser application + <i>Sphagnum</i> inoculation
<b>DPT 6</b>	Trench drain blocking + modifying outfalls and managing overflows with a controlled weir outfall + fertiliser application
<b>DPT 7</b>	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), + field reprofiling, creation of shallow depressions on elevated deep peat + blocking outfalls and managing overflows
<b>Dry Cutaway</b>	
<b>DCT 1</b>	Targeted fertiliser application
<b>DCT 2</b>	Regular drain blocking – speed bump method (3/100 m) + modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes + targeted fertiliser treatment
<b>DCT 3</b>	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m) + modifying outfalls and managing overflows with a controlled weir outfall + targeted fertiliser treatment
<b>Wetland</b>	
<b>WLT 1</b>	Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway + modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes + targeted fertiliser application
<b>WLT 2</b>	Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway + modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes + targeted modifying of outfalls within a site + targeted fertiliser application
<b>WLT 3</b>	Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway + modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes + targeted modifying of outfalls within a site + constructing larger berms to re-wet cutaway + transplanting Reeds and other rhizomes + targeted fertiliser application
<b>WLT 4</b>	More intensive drain blocking (4/100 m), + modifying outfalls and managing overflows with a controlled weir outfall + transplanting Reeds and other rhizomes + targeted fertiliser application
<b>WLT 5</b>	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), + field reprofiling + modifying outfalls and managing overflows with a controlled weir outfall + transplanting Reeds and other rhizomes + targeted fertiliser application
<b>Marginal Land</b>	

Code	Description
<b>MLT 1</b>	No work required
<b>MLT 2</b>	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m)
<b>Additional Work</b>	
<b>AW 1</b>	No work required
<b>AW 2</b>	Targeted drain blocking with excavator (1 per 100 m)

Table 2.2 summarises the rehabilitation measures and the extent of these rehabilitation measures proposed for Bawnmore Bog.

**Table 2.2 Types and areas of enhanced rehabilitation measures for Bawnmore Bog.**

Type [Rehab Code]	Enhanced Rehabilitation Measure	Extent (Ha)
<b>Dry Cutaway [DCT1]</b>	Blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes	1.6
<b>Dry Cutaway [DCT2]</b>	Regular drain blocking (3/100m), modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes and targeted fertiliser treatment.	13.8
<b>Wetland [WLT1]</b>	Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway, blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes.	4.6
<b>Wetland [WLT2]</b>	Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway + modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes + targeted modifying of outfalls within a site + targeted fertiliser application.	295.4
<b>Wetland [WLT3]</b>	Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway + blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes + Targeted blocking of outfalls within a site + constructing larger berms to re-wet cutaway + transplanting Reeds and other rhizomes.	3.3
<b>Wetland [WLT4]</b>	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), modifying outfalls and managing overflows, transplanting Reeds and other rhizomes.	0.6
<b>Deep Peat [DPT2]</b>	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m) and modifying outfalls and managing overflows.	10.3
<b>Deep Peat [DPT7]</b>	Field Depressions 2 x (6m x 10m x 0.2mDp) at spacings of between 25m and 50m + targeted fertiliser treatment.	26.2
<b>Marginal Land [MLT1]</b>	No work required.	22.5
<b>Additional Work [AW1]</b>	No work required.	11.0
<b>Additional Work [AW2]</b>	Targeted Drain Blocking.	20.3
<b>Silt Ponds [Silt Pond]</b>	Silt ponds.	1.1
<b>Constraint [Constraint]</b>	Other constraints (rights of way, turf cutting areas, Coillte, native woodland scheme, agricultural grassland, access, successfully rehabilitated areas).	120.1

Type [Rehab Code]	Enhanced Rehabilitation Measure	Extent (Ha)
<b>Total</b>		<b>530.8</b>

## 2.4.2 Programme

The programme for completion of the project is as follows:

### Completed and ongoing

- BnM carried out rehabilitation at Bawnmore Bog between 2018-2021 (Phase 1 rehabilitation). Pumping ceased during this period.
- Part of the bog has already re-vegetated, with significant cover of pioneer vegetation developing a mosaic of typical cutaway peatland and wetland habitats developing in basins. Since the cessation of pumping and the sites reversion to gravity drainage, large wetlands have formed.
- Natural re-colonisation of the cutaway so far has been effective. Bare peat areas within the cutaway are reducing as vegetation develops and consolidates.

### 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 (The Scheme PCAS) will be applied to Bawnmore Bog. This will take account of peat depths, topography, drainage, and hydrological modelling.
- 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 known archaeology and an Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA), 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 known rights of way, turbary and existing land agreements is to be carried out.
- A review of remaining milled peat stocks is to be carried out.
- 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.
- Track implementation and enforcement of the relevant IPC Licence conditions, and other environmental control measures during the implantation of the rehabilitation plan.

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

- Carry out proposed measures as per the detailed site plan. This will include a combination of bunding and drain blocking on deep peat, and fertiliser application

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.

- Monitor the success of rehabilitation measures in relation to developing suitable hydrological conditions.
- Carry out the proposed monitoring, as outlined.
- While natural colonisation has commenced since peat production ceased, Phase 2 actions will be carried out in targeted areas to accelerate re-vegetation and colonisation of target species.
- 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.

**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.
- Decommissioning of silt-ponds will be assessed and carried out, where required.
- Reporting to the EPA will continue until the IPC Licence is surrendered.

#### **2.4.3 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 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](http://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 Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) and Dissolved Organic Carbon (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 BnM 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. This 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. 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.

The monitoring, aftercare and maintenance programme is detailed in full in draft “*Bawnmore Bog Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025*” provided in Appendix A to this Report.

## 2.5 Likely Effects of the Natural Environment

Several elements of the project are considered likely to give rise to environmental and ecological impacts.

### Water Quality

The project has the potential for negative effects on water quality during the rehabilitation works due to the presence of equipment and machinery on the bogs, which increases the potential for the spillage of pollutants and sediment laden runoff entering watercourses through surface or groundwater connections. The project could also lead to an increase or decrease in flow and changes to the flooding regime locally and downstream.

### Disturbance/displacement

Disturbance will occur during the construction phase of the project as a result of noise, lighting and vibration. The presence of machinery on the bog could lead to disturbance of mammals, birds and other wildlife.

### Invasive Species

The project also has the potential to introduce and spread invasive species through the movement of equipment to, from, or within the site.

## 3.0 IDENTIFICATION OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

### 3.1 Establishing the Zone of Influence

Section 3.2.3 of DEHLG (2010) outlines the procedure for selecting the European sites to be considered in AA. It states that European sites potentially affected should be identified and listed, bearing in mind the potential for direct, indirect and in-combination effects. It also states that the specific approach in each case is likely to differ depending on the scale and likely effects of the plan or project. However, it advises that the following sites should generally be included:

- All European sites within or immediately adjacent to the plan or project area;
- All European sites within the Zone of Influence of the plan or project; and,
- In accordance with the Precautionary Principle, all European sites for which there is doubt as to whether or not they might be significantly affected.

The “Zone of Influence” of a project is the geographic extent over which significant ecological effects are likely to occur. In the case of projects, the guidance recognises that the Zone of Influence must be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor Model (OPR, 2021). A project may only lead to significant effects on the integrity of the European site where all three elements of Source-Pathway-Receptor are linked. In the absence of one element of this model, likely significant effects can be screened out with confidence. The assessment should make reference to the following key variables:

- The nature, size and location of the project;
- The nature of the impacts which may arise from the project;
- The sensitivities of the ecological receptors; and,
- The potential for in-combination effects.

For example, in the case of a project that could affect a watercourse, it may be necessary to include the entire upstream and/or downstream catchment in order to capture all European sites with water-dependent features of interest.

- The project site boundary plus a 550m buffer;
- Water Framework Directive (WFD) SubCatchment Suir\_SC\_040.
- Water Framework Directive (WFD) SubCatchment Goul\_SC\_010;

This area encompasses the maximum distance at which potential likely significant effects could occur via terrestrial and hydrological connections i.e., surface and groundwater pathways.

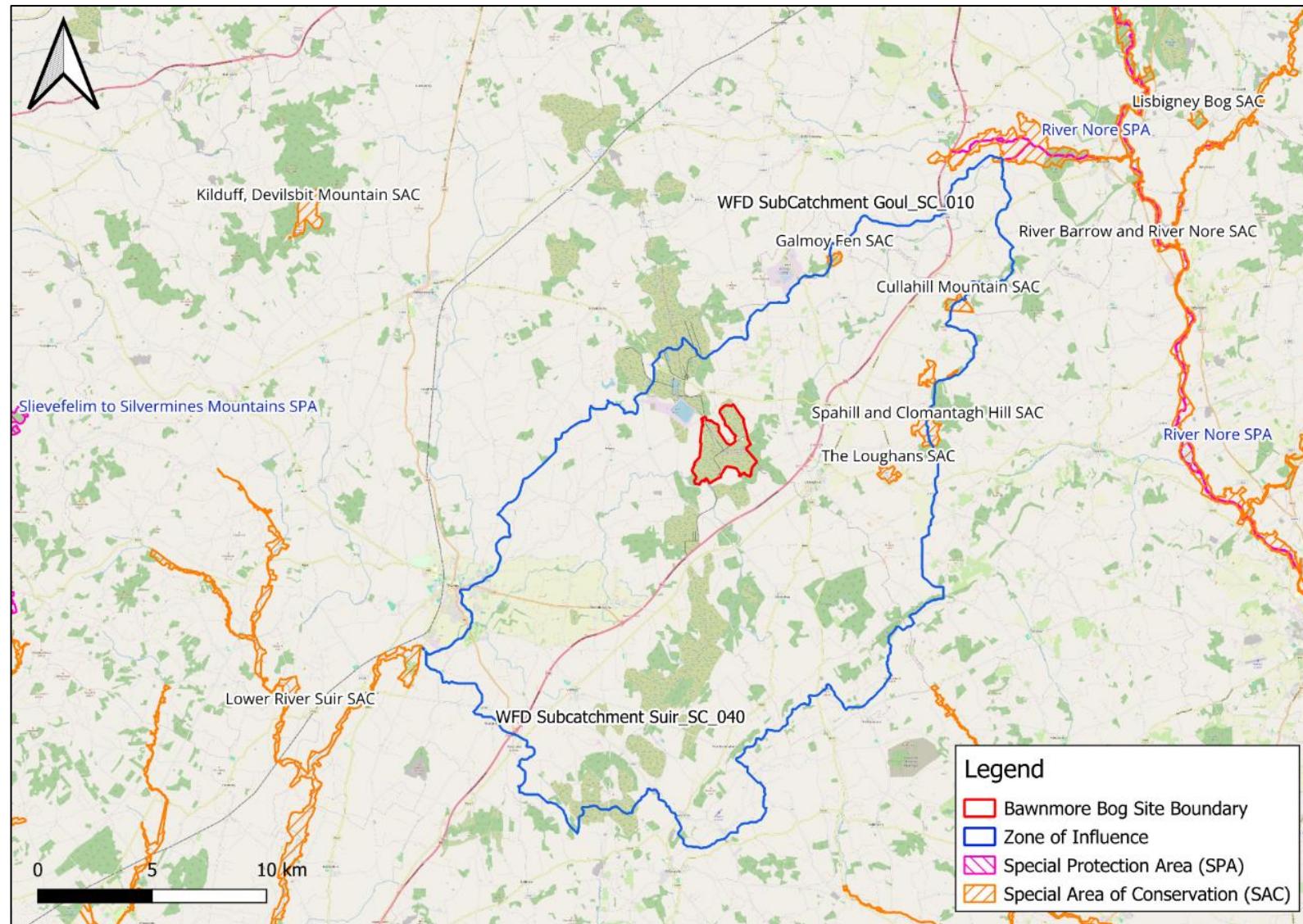
A geographical representation of the Zone of Influence was produced in QGIS 3.34.5 using the project site boundary and publicly available OpenStreetMaps (OpenStreetMap, 2025). This was used in combination with NPWS shapefiles to identify the boundaries of European sites in relation to the Zone of Influence.

It was determined that seven European sites, namely the Lower River Suir SAC, the Galmoy Fen SAC, the Cullahill Mountain SAC, the Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC, The Loughans SAC, the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and the River Nore SPA occur within the Zone of Influence. The Zone of Influence is presented in Figure 3.1.

Table 3.1 describes how these sites are connected to the project. Detailed descriptions of these sites are provided in Section 3.2.

**Table 3.1 European sites located within the Zone of Influence.**

European site [site code]	Are there potential pathways for effects from the project to this site? Explain.
<b>Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)</b>	
<b>Lower River Suir SAC [002137]</b>	<b>Yes.</b> The shortest absolute distance from the project to this European site is approximately 13.8 km southwest. This distance is over land. There is also a hydrological connection from the project site to this European site via the Drish River. The Drish River is located at the southwestern boundary of the project site. The Drish River flows westwards into the River Suir southeast of Thurles. Therefore, this European site occurs approximately 19.7 km downstream of the project site. As such, pathways for effects exist from the project to this European site.
<b>Galmoy Fen SAC [001858]</b>	<b>No.</b> The shortest distance from the project to this European site is 7.7 km northeast. There is no hydrological connectivity between the project and this European site. Due to the lack of hydrological connection, no pathways for effects exist from the project to this European site.
<b>Cullahill Mountain SAC [000831]</b>	<b>No.</b> The shortest distance from the project to this European site is 10.5 km northeast. There is no hydrological connectivity between the project and this European site. Due to the lack of hydrological connection, no pathways for effects exist from the project to this European site.
<b>Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC [000849]</b>	<b>No.</b> The shortest distance from the project to this European site is 7.1 km northeast. There is no hydrological connectivity between the project and this European site. Due to the lack of hydrological connection, no pathways for effects exist from the project to this European site.
<b>The Loughans SAC [000407]</b>	<b>No.</b> The shortest distance from the project to this European site is 5.3 km northeast. There is no hydrological connectivity between the project and this European site. Due to the lack of hydrological connection, no pathways for effects exist from the project to this European site.
<b>River Barrow and River Nore SAC [002162]</b>	<b>Yes.</b> The shortest absolute distance from the project to this European site is approximately 12.1km southeast. This distance is over land. Surface water connectivity routes show a hydrological connection from the project site to this European site via an unnamed stream which discharges into the Goul River. Therefore, this European site occurs approximately 23.8 km downstream of the project site. As such, pathways for effects exist from the project to this European site.
<b>Special Protection Areas (SPA)</b>	
<b>River Nore SPA [004233]</b>	<b>Yes.</b> The shortest distance from the project to this European site is approximately 15.7km northeast. This distance is over land. Surface water connectivity routes show a hydrological connection from the project site to this European site via an unnamed stream which discharges into the Goul River. Therefore, this European site occurs approximately 24.2 km downstream of the project site. This European site is designated for Kingfisher, a species sensitive to water quality impacts. As such, pathways for effects exist from the project to this European site.



**Figure 3.1** Location of European sites in relation to the Zone of Influence of the project. (Map data copyrighted OpenStreetMap contributors and available from <[www.openstreetmap.org](http://www.openstreetmap.org)>)

## 3.2 Site Descriptions

### 3.2.1 Lower River Suir SAC

The description of the Lower River Suir SAC provided here is based on the Conservation Objectives (NPWS, 2017), Site Synopsis (NPWS, 2023) for the site. Priority habitats are highlighted with an asterisk '\*'.

#### Qualifying Interests of the Site

- [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)
- [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation
- [6430] Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels
- [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles
- [91E0] \*Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)
- [91J0] \**Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles
- [1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)
- [1092] White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*)
- [1095] Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)
- [1096] Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*)
- [1099] River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*)
- [1103] Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax*)
- [1106] Salmon (*Salmo salar*)
- [1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

#### Site Overview

The Lower River Suir SAC consists of the freshwater stretches of the River Suir south of Thurles, the tidal stretches as far as the confluence with the Barrow/Nore east of Cheekpoint, and many tributaries including the Clodiagh, Lingaun, Anner, Nier, Tar, Aherlow and Multeen. The River Suir and its tributaries flow through the counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny and Waterford.

Upstream of Waterford city, the swinging meanders of the Suir criss-cross the Devonian sandstone rim of hard rocks no less than three times as they leave the limestone-floored downfold below Carrick-on-Suir. In the vicinity of Carrick-on-Suir the river follows the limestone floor of the Carrick Syncline. Upstream of Clonmel the river and its tributaries traverse Upper Palaeozoic Rocks, mainly the Lower Carboniferous Visean and Tournaisian. The freshwater stretches of the Clodiagh River in Co. Waterford traverse Silurian rocks, through narrow bands of Old Red Sandstone and Lower Avonian Shales, before reaching the carboniferous limestone close to its confluence with the Suir. The Aherlow River flows through a Carboniferous limestone valley, with outcrops of Old Red Sandstone forming the Galtee Mountains to the south and the Slievenamuck range to the north. Glacial deposits of sands and gravels are common along the valley bottom, flanking the present-day river course.

Alluvial wet woodland is a declining habitat type in Europe as a result of drainage and reclamation. The best examples of this type of woodland in the site are found on the islands just below Carrick-on-Suir and at Fiddown Island.

Species occurring here include Almond Willow (*Salix triandra*), White Willow (*S. alba*), Rusty Willow (*S. cinerea* subsp. *oleifolia*), Osier (*S. viminalis*), with Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Hemlock Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and Common Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*). The terrain is littered with dead trunks and branches and intersected with small channels which carry small streams to the river. The bryophyte and lichen floras appear to be rich. A small plot is currently being coppiced and managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. In the drier areas species such as Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) occur.

Eutrophic tall herb vegetation occurs in association with the various areas of alluvial forest and elsewhere where the floodplain of the river is intact. Characteristic species of the habitat include Meadowsweet, Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Marsh Ragwort (*Senecio aquaticus*), Ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*).

Old oak woodlands are also of importance at the site. The best examples are seen in Portlaw Wood which lies on both sides of the Clodiagh River. On the south-facing side the stand is more open and the oaks (mainly Pedunculate Oak, *Quercus robur*) are well grown and spreading. Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) are common on the ground, indicating relatively high light conditions. Oak regeneration is dense, varying in age from 0-40 years and Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) is fairly common but mostly quite young. Across the valley, by contrast, the trees are much more closely spaced and though taller, are poorly grown on average. There are no clearings; large oaks extend to the boundary wall. In the darker conditions, Ivy is much rarer and Holly much more frequent, forming a closed canopy in places. Oak regeneration is uncommon since there are as yet few natural clearings. The shallowness of the soil on the north-facing slope probably contributes to the poor tree growth there. The acid nature of the substrate has induced a 'mountain' type oakwood community to develop. The site is quite species-rich throughout, including an abundance of mosses, liverworts and lichens. The rare lichen *Lobaria pulmonaria*, an indicator of ancient woodlands, is found here.

Inchinsquillib Wood consists of three small separate sloping blocks of woodland in a valley cut by the young Multeen River and its tributaries through acidic Old Red Sandstone and Silurian rocks. Two blocks, both with an eastern aspect, located to the north of the road, are predominantly of Sessile Oak (*Quercus petraea*) and Hazel, with Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Ash and Holly. The ground flora is quite mixed with, for example, Wood-sedge (*Carex sylvatica*), Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), Primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), Wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), Pignut (*Conopodium majus*) and Hard Fern (*Blechnum spicant*). The base poor nature of the underlying rock is to some extent masked by the overlying drift. The third block, to the south of the road, and with a northern aspect, is a similar although less mature mixture of Sessile Oak, Birch and Holly. Here the influence of the drift is more marked, with the occurrence of Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*) amongst the ground flora.

Two stands of Yew (*Taxus baccata*) woods, a rare habitat in Ireland and the E.U., occur within the site. These are on limestone ridges at Shanbally and Cahir Park. Both are in woods planted with non-native species, including conifers. However, the area at Cahir Park is fairly substantial in size and includes some relatively undisturbed patches of wood and some very old trees.

Regeneration of the Yew trees is mostly poor, due to competition from species such as Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and, at Shanbally, due to heavy grazing by goats.

Other native species which occur with the Yew trees include Ash, Pedunculate Oak, Hazel and Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*). Future prospects for these Yew woods are good as the sites are proposed for restoration under a Coillte E.U. LIFE programme.

Floating river vegetation is evident in the freshwater stretches of the River Suir and along many of its tributaries. Typical species found include Canadian Pondweed (*Elodea canadensis*), water-milfoils (*Myriophyllum* spp.), Fennel Pondweed (*Potamogeton pectinatus*), Curled Pondweed (*P. crispus*), Perfoliate Pondweed (*P. perfoliatus*), Pond Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus peltatus*), other crowfoots (*Ranunculus* spp.) and the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica*. At a couple of locations along the river Opposite-leaved Pondweed (*Groenlandia densa*) occurs. This species is protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022. The Aherlow River is fast flowing and mostly follows a natural unmodified river channel. Submerged vegetation includes the aquatic moss *Fontinalis antipyretica* and Stream Water-crowfoot (*R. pectinatus*), while shallow areas support species such as Reed Canary-grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Brooklime (*Veronica beccabunga*) and Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*). The river bank is fringed in places with Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and willows (*Salix* spp.).

The Multeen River is fast flowing, mostly gravel-bottomed and appears to follow a natural unmodified river channel. Water-crowfoots occur in abundance and the aquatic moss *Fontinalis antipyretica* is also common. In sheltered shallows, species such as Water-cress (*Nasturtium officinale*) and water-starworts (*Callitrichia* spp.) occur. The river channel is fringed for most of its length with Alder, Willow and a narrow strip of marshy vegetation.

Salt meadows occur below Waterford City in old meadows where the embankment is absent, or has been breached, and along the tidal stretches of some of the inflowing rivers below Little Island. There are very narrow, non-continuous bands of this habitat along both banks. More extensive areas are also seen along the south bank at Ballynakill, the east side of Little Island, and in three large salt meadows between Ballynakill and Cheekpoint. The Atlantic and Mediterranean sub-types are generally intermixed. The species list is extensive and includes Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), oraches (*Atriplex* spp.), Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Sea Couch (*Elymus pycnanthus*), frequent Sea Milkwort (*Glaux maritima*), occasional Wild Celery (*Apium graveolens*), Parsley Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe lachenalii*), English Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia anglica*) and Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*). These species are more representative of the Atlantic sub-type of the habitat. Common Cord-grass (*Spartina anglica*), is rather frequent along the main channel edge and up the internal channels. The legally protected (Flora (Protection) Order, 2022) Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) grows at the landward transition of the saltmarsh. Sea Rush (*Juncus maritimus*), an indicator of the Mediterranean salt meadows, also occurs.

Other habitats at the site include wet and dry grassland, marsh, reedswamp, improved grassland, coniferous plantations, deciduous woodland, scrub, tidal river, stony shore and mudflats. The most dominant habitat adjoining the river is improved grassland, although there are wet fields with species such as Yellow Iris, Meadowsweet, rushes (*Juncus* spp.), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) and Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*).

Cabragh marshes, just below Thurles, lie in a low-lying tributary valley into which the main river floods in winter. Here there is an extensive area of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) with associated marshland and peaty fen. The transition between vegetation types is often well displayed.

A number of wetland plants of interest occur, in particular the Narrow-leaved Bulrush (*Typha angustifolia*), Bottle Sedge (*Carex rostrata*) and Blunt-flowered Rush (*Juncus subnodulosus*).

The marsh is naturally eutrophic but it has also the nutritional legacy of the former sugar factory which discharged into it through a number of holding lagoons, now removed. Production is high, which is seen in the size of such species as Celery-leaved Buttercup (*Ranunculus sceleratus*), as well as in the reeds themselves.

Throughout the Lower River Suir site are small areas of woodland other than those described above. These tend to be a mixture of native and non-native species, although there are some areas of semi-natural wet woodland with species such as Ash and Willow. Cahir Park Woodlands is a narrow tract of mixed deciduous woodland lying on the flat-lying floodplain of the River Suir. This estate woodland was planted over one hundred years ago and it contains a large component of exotic tree species. However, due to original planting and natural regeneration there is now a good mix of native and exotic species. About 5km north-west of Cashel, Ardmayle pond is a long, possibly artificial water body running parallel to the River Suir. It is partly shaded by planted Lime (*Tilia hybrids*), Sycamore and the native Alder. Growing beneath the trees are shade tolerant species such as Remote sedge (*Carex remota*). The site is of particular conservation interest for the presence of a number of Annex II animal species, including Freshwater Pearl Mussel (both *Margaritifera margaritifera* and *M. margaritifera* subsp. *durrovensis* occur), White-clawed Crayfish, Salmon, Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax*), three species of Lampreys - Sea Lamprey, Brook Lamprey and River Lamprey, and Otter. This is one of only three known spawning grounds in the country for Twaite Shad.

The site also supports populations of several other animal species. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include Daubenton's Bat, Natterer's Bat, Pipistrelle Bat, Pine Marten, Badger, Irish Hare, Smelt and Common Frog. Breeding stocks of Carp are found in Kilsheelan Lake. This is one of only two lakes in the country which is known to have supported breeding Carp. Carp require unusually high summer water temperatures to breed in Ireland. As the site is therefore unusual in this regard, it may also support interesting invertebrate populations.

Parts of the site have also been identified as of ornithological importance for a number of Annex I (E.U. Birds Directive) bird species, including Greenland White-fronted Goose (10), Golden Plover (1,490), Whooper Swan (7) and Kingfisher. Figures given in brackets are the average maximum counts from four count areas within the site for the three winters 1994-1997. Wintering populations of migratory birds use the site. Flocks are seen in Coolfinn Marsh and also along the reedbeds and saltmarsh areas of the Suir. Coolfinn supports nationally important numbers of Greylag Goose on a regular basis, with numbers between 600 and 700 recorded. Other species occurring include Mallard (21), Teal (159), Wigeon (26), Tufted Duck (60), Pintail (4), Pochard (2), Little Grebe (2), Black-tailed Godwit (20), Oystercatcher (16), Lapwing (993), Dunlin (101), Curlew (195), Redshank (28), Greenshank (4) and Green Sandpiper (1). Nationally important numbers of Lapwing (2,750) were recorded at Faithlegg in the winter of 1996/97.

In Cabragh marshes there is abundant food for surface feeding wildfowl which total approximately 1,000 in winter. Widgeon, Teal and Mallard are numerous, and the latter has a large breeding population, with up to 400 in summer. In addition, less frequent species like Shoveler and Pintail occur and there are records for both Whooper and Bewick's swans. Kingfisher, a species that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, occurs along some of the many tributaries throughout the site.

Land use at the site consists mainly of agricultural activities including grazing, silage production, fertilising and land reclamation. The grassland is intensively managed, and the rivers are therefore vulnerable to pollution from run-off of fertilisers and slurry. Arable crops are also grown. Fishing is a main tourist attraction on stretches of the Suir and some of its tributaries, and there are a number of Angler Associations, some with a number of beats. Fishing stands and styles have been erected in places. Both commercial and leisure fishing takes place on the rivers. The Aherlow River is a designated Salmonid Water under the E.U. Freshwater Fish Directive. Other recreational activities such as boating, golfing and walking are also popular. Several industrial developments, which discharge into the river, border the site including three dairy related operations and a tannery.

The Lower River Suir contains excellent examples of a number of Annex I habitats, including the priority habitats alluvial forest and yew woodland. The site also supports populations of several important animal species, some listed on Annex II to the Habitats Directive or in *Ireland Red List No. 12: Terrestrial Mammals* (Marnell et al., 2019). The presence of two plant species protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2022 and the ornithological importance of the site adds further to its ecological interest and importance.

### 3.2.2 River Barrow and River Nore SAC

The description of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC provided here is based on the Conservation Objectives (NPWS, 2025b), Site Synopsis (NPWS, 2024a) for the site. Priority habitats are highlighted with an asterisk '\*'.

#### Qualifying Interests of the Site

- [1130] Estuaries
- [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- [1170] Reefs
- [1310] *Salicornia* and other annuals colonizing mud and sand
- [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)
- [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*)
- [3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation
- [4030] European dry heaths
- [6430] Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels
- [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*)\*
- [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles
- [91E0] Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)\*
- [1016] Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (*Vertigo mouliniana*)
- [1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)
- [1092] White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*)
- [1095] Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)
- [1096] Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*)
- [1099] River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*)
- [1103] Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax*)

- [1106] Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*)
- [1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)
- [1421] Killarney Fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*)

## Site Overview

This site consists of the freshwater stretches of the Barrow and Nore River catchments as far upstream as the Slieve Bloom Mountains, and it also includes the tidal elements and estuary as far downstream as Creadun Head in Waterford. The site passes through eight counties – Offaly, Kildare, Laois, Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Wexford and Waterford. Major towns along the edge of the site include Mountmellick, Portarlington, Monasterevin, Stradbally, Athy, Carlow, Leighlinbridge, Graiguenamanagh, New Ross, Inistioge, Thomastown, Callan, Bennettsbridge, Kilkenny and Durrow. The larger of the many tributaries include the Lerr, Fushoge, Mountain, Aughavaud, Owenass, Boherbaun and Stradbally Rivers of the Barrow, and the Delour, Dinin, Erkina, Owveg, Munster, Arrigle and King's Rivers on the Nore.

Good examples of alluvial forest (a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive) are seen at Rathsnagadan, Murphy's of the River, in Abbeyleix estate and along other shorter stretches of both the tidal and freshwater elements of the site. Typical species seen include Almond Willow (*Salix triandra*), White Willow (*S. alba*), Rusty Willow (*S. cinerea* subsp. *oleifolia*), Crack Willow (*S. fragilis*) and Osier (*S. viminalis*), along with Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Hemlock Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Thin-spiked Wood-sedge (*Carex strigosa*), Pendulous Sedge (*C. pendula*), Meadowweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Common Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) and the Red Data Book species Nettle-leaved Bellflower (*Campanula trachelium*).

A good example of petrifying springs with tufa formations occurs at Dysart Wood along the Nore. This is a rare habitat in Ireland and one listed with priority status on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. These hard water springs are characterised by lime encrustations, often associated with small waterfalls. A rich bryophyte flora is typical of the habitat and two diagnostic species, *Palustriella commutata* and *Eucladium verticillatum*, have been recorded.

The best examples of old oak woodlands are seen in the ancient Park Hill woodland in the estate at Abbeyleix; at Kyleadahir, on the Delour, Forest Wood House, Kylecorragh and Brownstown Woods on the Nore; and at Cloghristic Wood, Drummond Wood and Borris Demesne on the Barrow, though other patches occur throughout the site. Abbeyleix Woods is a large tract of mixed deciduous woodland which is one of the only remaining true ancient woodlands in Ireland. Historical records show that Park Hill has been continuously wooded since the 16th century and has the most complete written record of any woodland in the country. It supports a variety of woodland habitats and an exceptional diversity of species including 22 native trees, 44 bryophytes and 92 lichens. It also contains eight indicator species of ancient woodlands. Park Hill is also the site of two rare plants, Nettle-leaved Bellflower and the moss *Leucodon sciuroides*. The rare Myxomycete fungus, *Licea minima*, has been recorded from woodland at Abbeyleix.

Oak woodland covers parts of the valley side south of Woodstock and is well developed at Brownsford where the Nore takes several sharp bends. The steep valley side is covered by oak (*Quercus* spp.), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*), with some Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). All the trees are regenerating through a cover of Bramble (*Rubus*

*fruticosus* agg.), Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), Great Wood-rush (*Luzula sylvatica*) and Broad Buckler-fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*).

Floating river vegetation is well represented in the Barrow and in the many tributaries of the site. In the Barrow the species found include water-starworts (*Callitriches* spp.), Canadian Pondweed (*Elodea canadensis*), Bulbous Rush (*Juncus bulbosus*), water milfoils (*Myriophyllum* spp.), the pondweed *Potamogeton × nitens*, Broad-leaved Pondweed (*P. natans*), Fennel Pondweed (*P. pectinatus*), Perfoliated Pondweed (*P. perfoliatus*) and crowfoots (*Ranunculus* spp.). The water quality of the Barrow has improved since the vegetation survey was carried out (EPA, 1996).

Salt meadows occur at the southern section of the site in old meadows where the embankment has been breached, along the tidal stretches of in-flowing rivers below Stokestown House, in a narrow band on the channel side of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) beds and in narrow fragmented strips along the open shoreline. In the larger areas of salt meadow, notably at Carrickcloney, Ballinlaw Ferry and Rochestown on the west bank; Fisherstown, Alderton and Great Island to Dunbrody on the east bank, the Atlantic and Mediterranean sub types are generally intermixed. At the upper edge of the salt meadow in the narrow ecotonal areas bordering the grasslands where there is significant percolation of salt water, the legally protected species Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia fasciculata*) and Meadow Barley (*Hordeum secalinum*) are found. The very rare and also legally protected Divided Sedge (*Carex divisa*) is also found. Sea Rush (*Juncus maritimus*) is also present. Other plants recorded and associated with salt meadows include Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*), Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Sea Couch (*Elymus pycnanthus*), Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*), Lesser Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia marina*), Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*) and Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*).

The site is very important for the presence of a number of E.U. Habitats Directive Annex II animal species including Freshwater Pearl Mussel (both *Margaritifera margaritifera* and *M. m. durrovensis*), White-clawed Crayfish, Salmon, Twaite Shad, three lamprey species – Sea Lamprey, Brook Lamprey and River Lamprey, the tiny whorl snail *Vertigo moulinsiana* and Otter. This is the only site in the world for the hard water form of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, *M. m. durrovensis*, and one of only a handful of spawning grounds in the country for Twaite Shad. The freshwater stretches of the River Nore main channel is a designated salmonid river. The Barrow/Nore is mainly a grilse fishery though spring salmon fishing is good in the vicinity of Thomastown and Inistioge on the Nore. The upper stretches of the Barrow and Nore, particularly the Owenass River, are very important for spawning. The site supports many other important animal species. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include Daubenton's Bat, Badger, Irish Hare and Common Frog. The rare Red Data Book fish species Smelt (*Osmerus eperlanus*) occurs in estuarine stretches of the site. In addition to the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, the site also supports two other freshwater mussel species, *Anodonta anatina* and *A. cygnea*.

The site is of ornithological importance for a number of E.U. Birds Directive Annex I species, including Greenland White-fronted Goose, Whooper Swan, Bewick's Swan, Bar-tailed Godwit, Peregrine and Kingfisher. Nationally important numbers of Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit are found during the winter. Wintering flocks of migratory birds are seen in Shanahoe Marsh and the Curragh and Goul Marsh, both in Co. Laois, and also along the Barrow Estuary in Waterford Harbour. There is also an extensive autumnal roosting site in the reedbeds of the Barrow Estuary used by Swallows before they leave the country. The old oak woodland at Abbeyleix has a typical bird fauna including Jay, Long-eared Owl and Raven. The reedbed at Woodstown supports

populations of typical waterbirds including Mallard, Snipe, Sedge Warbler and Water Rail.

The main threats to the site and current damaging activities include high inputs of nutrients into the river system from agricultural run-off and several sewage plants, over-grazing within the woodland areas, and invasion by non-native species, for example Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*). The water quality of the site remains vulnerable. Good quality water is necessary to maintain the populations of the Annex II animal species listed above. Good quality is dependent on controlling fertilisation of the grasslands, particularly along the Nore. It also requires that sewage be properly treated before discharge. Drainage activities in the catchment can lead to flash floods which can damage the many Annex II species present. Capital and maintenance dredging within the lower reaches of the system pose a threat to migrating fish species such as lamprey and shad. Land reclamation also poses a threat to the salt meadows and the populations of legally protected species therein.

Overall, the site is of considerable conservation significance for the occurrence of good examples of habitats and of populations of plant and animal species that are listed on Annexes I and II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Furthermore, it is of high conservation value for the populations of bird species that use it. The occurrence of several Red Data Book plant species including three rare plants in the salt meadows and the population of the hard water form of the Freshwater Pearl Mussel, which is limited to a 10 km stretch of the Nore, add further interest to this site.

### 3.2.3 River Nore SPA

The description of the River Nore SPA provided here is based on the Conservation Objectives (NPWS, 2024b) and Site Synopsis (NPWS, 2011) for the site.

#### Qualifying Interests of the Site

[A229] Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

#### Site Overview

The River Nore SPA is a long, linear site that includes the following river sections: the River Nore from the bridge at Townparks, (north-west of Borris-in-Ossory) to Coolnamuck (approximately 3 km south of Inistioge) in Co. Kilkenny; the Delour River from its junction with the River Nore to Derrynaseera bridge (west of Castletown) in Co. Laois; the Erkina River from its junction with the River Nore at Durrow Mills to Boston Bridge in Co. Laois; a 1.5 km stretch of the River Goul upstream of its junction with the Erkina River; the Kings River from its junction with the River Nore to a bridge at Mill Island, Co. Kilkenny. The site includes the river channel and marginal vegetation.

For a large part of its course the River Nore traverses Carboniferous limestone plains; it passes over a narrow band of Old Red Sandstone rocks below Thomastown.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive of special conservation interest for the following species: Kingfisher.

A survey in 2010 recorded 22 pairs of Kingfisher (based on 16 probable and 6 possible territories) within the SPA. Other species which occur within the site include Mute Swan (35), Mallard (267), Cormorant (14), Grey Heron (45), Moorhen (14), Snipe (17) and Sand Martin (1,029) – all figures are peak counts recorded during the 2010 survey.

The River Nore SPA is of high ornithological importance as it supports a nationally important population of Kingfisher, a species that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive.

### **3.2.4 Evaluation Against Conservation Objectives**

Table 3.2, Table 3.3 and Table 3.4 below details the evaluation of the likely effects of the project in view of the Conservation Objectives of the sites identified in Section 3.1 and described in Section 3.2. As explained in Sections 1.3 and 1.4, AA Screening is carried out in view of the Conservation Objectives of the relevant European sites, which are in turn defined by detailed Attributes and corresponding Targets. Therefore, the evaluation of whether or not a likely effect is significant (in view of the Conservation Objective in question) is made with regard to these Attributes and Targets.

**Table 3.2 Evaluation of the likely significant effects of the project in view of the Conservation Objectives of the Lower River Suir SAC [002137].**

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2017)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
<b>Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330]</b>	<i>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) in Lower River Suir SAC</i>	<p>The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on “Habitat area”, “Habitat distribution”, “Physical Structure”, “Vegetation structure” and “Vegetation composition”.</p> <p>This Qualifying Interest occurs in this European site at least 100km downstream of the project site. Due to the hydrological connection, there is a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this Qualifying Interest within this European site.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Atlantic salt meadows for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The existing silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	No
<b>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-</i></b>	<i>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis</i>	<p>The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on “Habitat area”, “Habitat distribution”, “Hydrological regime”, “Substratum composition”, “Water quality”, “Typical species”, “Floodplain connectivity” and “Fringing habitats”.</p> <p>This habitat type is found throughout Ireland covering upland to tidal rivers (NPWS, 2019a). The distribution of this habitat within the Lower River Suir SAC is</p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2017)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
<b><i>Batrachion vegetation [3260]</i></b>	<i>and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation in Lower River Suir SAC</i>	<p>currently unknown (NPWS, 2017) and there is potential for this habitat to occur in this European site at least 19.7km downstream of the project. Due to the hydrological connection, there is a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to these Qualifying Interests within this European site.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Water courses of plain to montane levels for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The existing silt ponds associated with former peat extraction will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
<b><i>Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels [6430]</i></b>	<i>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels in Lower River Suir SAC</i>	<p>The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on <i>“Habitat area”</i>, <i>“Habitat distribution”</i>, <i>“Hydrological regime”</i>, <i>“Vegetation composition”</i>, <i>“Vegetation structure”</i>, and <i>“Physical structure”</i>.</p> <p>The distribution of Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels within the Lower River Suir SAC is currently unknown (NPWS, 2017). However, there is potential for this Qualifying interest to occur within this European site at least 19.7km downstream of the project. Due to the hydrological connection, there is a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to these Qualifying Interests within this European site.</p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2017)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		<p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The existing silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
<b>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</b>	<p><i>"To restore the favourable conservation condition of Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles in Lower River Suir SAC"</i></p>	<p>The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on "Habitat area", "Habitat distribution", "Woodland size", "Woodland structure" and "Vegetation composition".</p> <p>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles occurs in this SAC at least 13.8km southwest of the project. This is a terrestrial habitat and thus has no hydrological connection to the project. There are no pathways for impact between the project and this Qualifying Interest.</p> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	No
<b>*Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion,</b>	<p><i>"To restore the favourable conservation condition of Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion,</i></p>	<p>The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on "Habitat area", "Habitat distribution", "Woodland size", "Woodland structure", "Hydrological regime" and "Vegetation composition".</p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2017)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
<b><i>Alnion incanae, Salicion albae</i> [91E0]</b>	excelsior (Alno-Padion, <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ) in Lower River Suir SAC"	<p>Alluvial woodland occurs in this European site at least 120 km southwest of the project. This hydrological connection provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff to be discharged to this European site during periods of high-water level or flooding.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Alluvial forests for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
<b>*<i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles [91J0]</b>	"To restore the favourable conservation condition of <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles in Lower River Suir SAC"	<p>The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on "Habitat area", "Habitat distribution", "Woodland size", "Woodland structure" and "Vegetation composition".</p> <p><i>Taxus baccata</i> woods is a terrestrial habitat and thus has no hydrological connection to the project. There are no pathways for impact between the project and this Qualifying Interest.</p> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2017)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
<b>Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) [1029]</b>	<p><i>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Freshwater Pearl Mussel in Lower River Suir SAC</i></p>	<p>The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on “<i>Distribution</i>”, “<i>Population size</i>”, “<i>Population structure</i>”, “<i>Suitable habitat</i>”, “<i>Water quality</i>”, “<i>Substratum quality</i>”, “<i>Hydrological regime</i>”, “<i>Host fish</i>” and “<i>Fringing habitat</i>”.</p> <p>The project is located within a Freshwater Pearl Mussel sensitive catchment. This species has been recorded in the tributaries of the River Suir within this European site, although not in watercourses hydrologically connected to the project. Although there are no recent live records of this species within the River Suir, there are historic records which indicate that there is suitable habitat for this species downstream of the project site in the River Suir. The hydrological connection between the project and this Qualifying Interest provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to suitable habitat, impacting this species directly and indirectly through its host fish (i.e. Salmonids, which are essential to this species' life cycle).</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Freshwater Pearl Mussel for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for this species as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2017)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
<b>White-clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) [1092]</b>	<i>"To maintain the favourable conservation condition of White-clawed Crayfish in Lower River Suir SAC"</i>	<p>The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on "Distribution", "Population structure", "Negative indicator species", "Disease", "Water quality" and "Habitat quality".</p> <p>There are records of White-clawed Crayfish in the River Suir within this European site at least 20 km downstream of the project (NPWS, 2017). This hydrological connection between the project and this Qualifying Interest provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this European site, impacting this species directly.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on White-clawed Crayfish for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for this species as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	No
<b>Brook Lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) [1096]</b>	<i>"To restore the favourable conservation condition of Brook Lamprey in Lower River Suir SAC"</i>	The Attributes of these Conservation Objectives focus on "Distribution", "Population structure of juveniles", "Juvenile density in fine sediment", "Extent and distribution of spawning habitat" and "Availability of juvenile habitat".	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2017)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
Sea Lamprey ( <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> ) [1095]	"To restore the favourable conservation condition of Sea Lamprey in Lower River Suir SAC"	These species occur in suitable habitat in the River Suir within this European site at least 20km downstream of the project. These are mobile species and could occur in watercourses between the project and the SAC, and therefore there is also potential for ex-situ impacts to these species. This hydrological connection between the project and suitable habitat for these Qualifying Interests provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this European site, impacting these species directly.	No
River Lamprey ( <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> ) [1099]	"To restore the favourable conservation condition of River Lamprey in Lower River Suir SAC"	<p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on these Qualifying Interests for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for these species as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for these Qualifying Interests.</b></p>	No
Salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> ) [1106]	"To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic Salmon in Lower River Suir SAC"	<p>The Attributes of these Conservation Objectives focus on "Distribution", "Population structure", "Extent and distribution of spawning habitat", "Water quality" and "Spawning habitat quality".</p> <p>Atlantic Salmon occur in suitable habitat in the River Suir within this European site at least 20 km downstream of the project. This is a mobile species and could occur in watercourses between the project and the SAC, and therefore, there is also potential for ex-situ impacts to this species. This hydrological connection</p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2017)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		<p>between the project and suitable habitat for this Qualifying Interest provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this European site, impacting this species directly.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Atlantic Salmon for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for these species as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
Twaite Shad ( <i>Alosa fallax</i> ) [1103]	<p><i>"To restore the favourable conservation condition of Twaite Shad in Lower River Suir SAC"</i></p>	<p>The Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest are <i>"Distribution: extent of anadromy"</i>, <i>"Percentage of river accessible"</i>, <i>"Population structure: age classes"</i>, <i>"Extent and distribution of spawning habitat"</i>, <i>"Water quality: oxygen levels"</i>, <i>"Spawning habitat quality: filamentous algae; macrophytes; sediment"</i>.</p> <p>Twaite Shad are an anadromous species that spawn close to the upper tidal limit. The tidal limit of the River Suir occurs at least 120 km downstream of the project site in Carrick-on-Suir. This hydrological connection between the project and suitable habitat for this Qualifying Interest provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this European site, impacting this species directly.</p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2017)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		<p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Twaite Shad for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for these species as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> <li>• The hydrological distance and dilution capacity of the River Suir will allow for the settlement of any suspended solids.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> ) [1355]	<p><i>"To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Otter in Lower River Suir SAC"</i></p>	<p>The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on "Distribution", "Extent of terrestrial habitat", "Extent of marine habitat", "Extent of freshwater habitat", "Couching sites and holts", "Fish biomass available" and "Barriers to connectivity".</p> <p>Otter is a Qualifying Interest of this European site, which is 20 km downstream of the project. There is a hydrological connection between the project and suitable habitat for this Qualifying Interest, and the project has the potential to affect this species outside the SAC boundary. Otter territories are typically between 2 – 32 km in length but can be up to 80 km (Kruuk, 1995). Otter holts are important resting sites found along territories, often occurring in the natural crevices of tree roots growing along riverbanks (VWT, 2025).</p> <p><u>Water Quality</u></p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2017)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		<p>The Bawnmore bog drains to the Derryfadda 16 stream which joins the Black River and flows into the River Suir. The hydrological connection between the project and this Qualifying Interest provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to suitable otter habitat, impacting otter directly and indirectly through prey availability. Fish and other aquatic prey species are likely to be present in the rivers downstream of the project and are also vulnerable to potential water quality impacts associated with the project.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on otter due to water quality for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable otter habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• There are no works proposed beyond the location of the existing silt ponds, as presented in Appendix B.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><i><u>Disturbance</u></i></p> <p>Noise and vibration impacts during the rehabilitation works will be temporary, very localised and occur during daylight hours only. The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project. Otter that reside in rivers and lakes tend to be crepuscular (VWT, 2025) and are a very mobile species.</p> <p>Should any individuals be in the vicinity of the rehabilitation works, they will have the ability to move away from the area, as their ecological corridors will not be obstructed.</p>	

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2017)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.	

**Table 3.3 Evaluation of the likely significant effects of the project in view of the Conservation Objectives of the River Barrow and River Nore SAC [002162].**

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
<b>Estuaries [1130]</b>	<p><i>"To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Estuaries in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC"</i></p>	<p>The attributes of this Conservation Objective focus on <i>Habitat area</i>, <i>Community distribution</i>, and <i>Community extent</i>.</p> <p>This Qualifying Interest occurs in this European site at least 85km downstream of the project site. Due to the hydrological connection, there is a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this Qualifying Interest within this European site.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Estuaries for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The existing silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	No
<b>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</b>	<p><i>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</i></p>	<p>The attributes of this Conservation Objective focus on <i>Habitat area</i> and <i>Community distribution</i>.</p> <p>This Qualifying Interest occurs in this European site at least 85km downstream of the project site. Due to the hydrological connection, there is a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this Qualifying Interest within this European site.</p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
	<i>in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC</i>	<p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The existing silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
<b>Reefs [1170]</b>	<i>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in River Barrow and River Nore SAC</i>	<p>The attributes of this Qualifying Interest focus on <i>“Habitat area”, “Distribution”, “Community extent” and “Community structure”</i>.</p> <p>This Qualifying Interest occurs in this European site at least 85km downstream of the project. Due to the hydrological connection, there is a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this Qualifying Interest within this European site.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Reefs for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> </ul>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
<b>Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand [1310]</b>	<p><i>"To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand in River Barrow and River Nore SAC"</i></p>	<p>The attributes of these Qualifying Interest focus on "Habitat area", "Habitat distribution", "Physical structure: sediment supply", "Physical structure", "Vegetation structure" and "Vegetation composition".</p> <p>These Qualifying Interests occur in this European site at least 85km downstream of the project site. Due to the hydrological connection, there is a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this Qualifying Interest within this European site.</p>	No
<b>Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330]</b>	<p><i>"To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC"</i></p>	<p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on these Qualifying Interests for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>The existing silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> </ul>	No
<b>Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimii</i>) [1410]</b>	<p><i>"To restore the favourable conservation condition of Mediterranean salt meadows in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC"</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for these Qualifying Interests.</b></p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
<b>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</b>	<p><i>To maintain the Favourable conservation condition of Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC</i></p>	<p>The attributes of this Qualifying Interest focus on "Habitat distribution", "Habitat area", "Hydrological regime", "Hydrological regime", "Substratum composition", "Water chemistry", "Water quality", "Vegetation composition" and "Floodplain connectivity".</p> <p>This habitat type is found throughout Ireland covering upland to tidal rivers (NPWS, 2019a). The distribution of this habitat within the River Barrow and River Nore SAC is currently unknown (NPWS, 2025b) however there is potential for this habitat to occur in this European site at least 23.8km downstream of the project. Due to the hydrological connection, there is a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to these Qualifying Interests within this European site.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Water courses of plain to montane levels for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The existing silt ponds associated with former peat extraction will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	No
<b>European dry heaths [4030]</b>	<p><i>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of European dry heaths in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC</i></p>	<p>The attributes of this Qualifying Interest focus on "Habitat distribution", "Habitat area", "Physical structure", "Vegetation structure", "Vegetation composition".</p> <p>This is a terrestrial habitat and thus has no hydrological connection to the project. There are no pathways for impact between the project and this Qualifying Interest.</p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		<p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
<b>Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities [6430]</b>	<p><i>"To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC"</i></p>	<p>The attributes of this Qualifying Interest focus on "<i>Habitat distribution</i>", "<i>Habitat area</i>", "<i>Hydrological regime</i>" and "<i>Vegetation structure</i>".</p> <p>The distribution of Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels within the River Barrow and River Nore SAC is currently unknown (NPWS, 2025b). However, there is potential for this Qualifying interest to occur within this European site at least 23.8km downstream of the project. Due to the hydrological connection, there is a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to these Qualifying Interests within this European site.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The existing silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	No
<b>Petrifying springs with tufa formation</b>	<i>"To maintain the favourable</i>	The attributes of this Qualifying Interest focus on " <i>Habitat area</i> ", " <i>Habitat distribution</i> ", " <i>Hydrological regime</i> ", " <i>Water quality</i> " and " <i>Vegetation composition</i> ".	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
(Cratoneurion) [7220]	<p><i>conservation condition of petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC</i></p>	<p>The distribution of Petrifying springs with tufa formation within the River Barrow and River Nore SAC is currently unknown (NPWS, 2025b). However, there is potential for this Qualifying interest to occur within this European site at least 23.8km downstream of the project. Due to the hydrological connection, there is a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to these Qualifying Interests within this European site.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Petrifying springs with tufa formation for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No water will be pumped or drawn from the ground during the rehabilitation works. Any water that may reach the surface as a result of the standard rehabilitation methodology will be allowed to be reabsorbed into the soil naturally.</li> <li>• There will be no works undertaken within this habitat and there will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]	<p><i>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC</i></p>	<p>The attributes of this Qualifying Interest focus on "Habitat area", "Habitat distribution", "Woodland size", "Woodland structure" and "Vegetation composition".</p> <p>Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles occurs in this SAC at least 12.1km southeast of the project. This is a terrestrial habitat and thus has no hydrological connection to the project. There are no pathways for impact between the project and this Qualifying Interest.</p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		<b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b>	
<b>Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]</b>	<i>"To restore the favourable conservation condition Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC"</i>	<p>The attributes of this Qualifying Interest focus on "Habitat area", "Habitat distribution", "Woodland size", "Woodland structure", "Hydrological regime", "Woodland structure" and "Vegetation composition".</p> <p>Alluvial woodland occurs in this European site at least 12.1km southeast and 23.8km downstream of the project site. This hydrological connection provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff to be discharged to this European site during periods of high-water level or flooding.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Alluvial forests for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in habitat area as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	No
<b>Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo moulensisana</i>) [1016]</b>	<i>"To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Desmoulin's whorl snail in the River</i>	The attributes of this Conservation Objective focus on "Distribution", "Population size", "Population density", "Area of occupancy" and "Habitat quality".	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
	<i>Barrow and River Nore SAC</i>	<p>Desmoulin's Whorl Snail depend on emergent vegetation typically associated with marsh and fen habitat, which allows them to escape to higher ground during period of flooding or high-water levels. As well as suitable vegetation structure, this Qualifying Interest requires a stable hydrogeology, where the water-table is at, or slightly above, the ground surface for much of the year and any seasonal flooding is of very low amplitude (Tattersfield &amp; McInnes, 2003). As this species is dependent on wetland habitats, the hydrological connection between the project and suitable habitat which might contain this Qualifying Interest provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to suitable habitat for this Qualifying Interest.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant on Desmoulin's Whorl Snail for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No water will be pumped or drawn from the ground during the rehabilitation works. Any water that may reach the surface as a result of the standard rehabilitation methodology will be allowed to be reabsorbed into the soil naturally.</li> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for this species as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
<b>Freshwater pearl mussel (<i>Margaritifera</i>)</b>	<i>To restore the favourable conservation condition</i>	The attributes of this Conservation Objective focus on "Distribution", "Population size", "Population structure", "Suitable habitat", "Water quality", "Substratum quality", "Hydrological regime", "Host fish" and "Fringing habitat".	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
<i>margaritifera)</i> [1029]	of Freshwater pearl mussel ( <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> ) in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC"	<p>The eastern side of the project is located within a Freshwater Pearl Mussel sensitive catchment (Nore Upper). There is suitable habitat for this in the River Nore downstream of the project (NPWS, 2025b). The hydrological connection between the project and suitable habitat which might contain this Qualifying Interest provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to suitable habitat, impacting this species directly and indirectly through its host fish (i.e. Salmonids, which are essential to this species' life cycle).</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Freshwater Pearl Mussel for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for this species as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
<b>White-clawed crayfish</b> <i>(Austropotamobius pallipes)</i> [1092]	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of White-clawed crayfish ( <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> ) in the River	<p>The attributes of this Conservation Objective focus on "Distribution", "Population structure", "Negative indicator species", "Disease", "Water quality", and "Habitat quality".</p> <p>There is potential for this Qualifying Interest to occur in suitable habitat within this European site at least 23.km downstream of the project (NPWS, 2025b). This hydrological connection between the project and this Qualifying Interest provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this European site, impacting this species directly.</p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
	<i>Barrow and River Nore SAC</i>	<p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on White-clawed Crayfish for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for this species as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
<b>Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) [1095]</b>	<i>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Sea lamprey in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC</i>	<p>The attributes of these Conservation Objectives focus on "Distribution", "Population structure of juveniles", "Juvenile density in fine sediment", "Extent and distribution of spawning habitat", and "Availability of juvenile habitat".</p>	No
<b>Brook lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) [1096]</b>	<i>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Brook lamprey in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC</i>	<p>These species occur in suitable habitat in the River Nore within this European site at least 23.8km downstream of the project. These are mobile species and there is also potential for ex-situ impacts to these species. This hydrological connection between the project and suitable habitat for these Qualifying Interests provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this European site, impacting these species directly.</p>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
<b>River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) [1099]</b>	<p><i>"To restore the favourable conservation condition of River lamprey in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC"</i></p>	<p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on these Qualifying Interests for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for these species as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for these Qualifying Interests.</b></p>	No
<b>Twaite shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>) [1103]</b>	<p><i>"To restore the favourable conservation condition of Twaite shad in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC"</i></p>	<p>The attributes of this Conservation Objective focus on <i>Distribution</i>", "<i>Population structure</i>", "<i>Extent and distribution of spawning habitat</i>", "<i>Water quality</i>", and "<i>Spawning habitat quality</i>".</p> <p>Twaite Shad are an anadromous species that spawn close to the upper tidal limit. The tidal limit of the River Nore occurs at least 85km downstream of the project site in Inistioge. This hydrological connection between the project and suitable habitat for this Qualifying Interest provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this European site, impacting this species directly.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Twaite Shad for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for these species as part of the project.</li> </ul>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
<b>Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) [1106]</b>	<p><i>"To restore the favourable conservation condition of Salmon in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC"</i></p>	<p>The attributes of this Conservation Objective focus on <i>"Distribution: extent of anadromy"</i>, <i>"Adult spawning fish"</i>, <i>"Salmon fry abundance"</i>, <i>"Out-migrating smolt abundance"</i>, <i>"Number and distribution of redds"</i>, and <i>"Water quality EPA Q value"</i>.</p> <p>Salmon occur in suitable habitat in this European site at least 23.8km downstream of the project. This is a mobile species and there is also potential for ex-situ impacts. This hydrological connection between the project and suitable habitat for this Qualifying Interest provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to this European site, impacting this species directly.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Salmon for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for these species as part of the project.</li> <li>The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> </ul>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	
Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> ) [1355]	<p><i>To restore the favourable conservation condition of Otter in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC</i></p>	<p>The attributes of this Conservation Objective focus on "Distribution", "Extent of terrestrial habitat", "Extent of marine habitat", "Extent of freshwater (river) habitat", "Extent of freshwater (lake) habitat", "Couching sites and holts", and "Fish biomass available".</p> <p>Otter is a Qualifying Interest of this European site, which is 23.8km downstream of the project. There is a hydrological connection between the project and suitable habitat for this Qualifying Interest, and the project has the potential to affect this species outside the SAC boundary. Otter territories are typically between 2 – 32 km in length but can be up to 80 km (Kruuk, 1995). Otter holts are important resting sites found along territories, often occurring in the natural crevices of tree roots growing along riverbanks (VWT, 2025).</p> <p><b><u>Water Quality</u></b></p> <p>Surface water connectivity routes show a hydrological connection from Bawnmore Bog to this European site via an unnamed stream which discharges into the Goul River, which subsequently flows into the River Nore. The hydrological connection between the project and this Qualifying Interest provides a pathway for sediment laden runoff and other pollutants to be transported to suitable otter habitat, impacting otter directly and indirectly through prey availability. Fish and other aquatic prey species are likely to be present in the rivers downstream of the project and are also vulnerable to potential water quality impacts associated with the project.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on otter due to water quality for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable otter habitat area as part of the project.</li> </ul>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2025b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> </ul> <p><u>Disturbance</u></p> <p>Noise and vibration impacts during the rehabilitation works will be temporary, very localised and occur during daylight hours only. The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project. Otter reside in rivers and lakes, tend to be crepuscular (VWT, 2025) and are a very mobile species. Should any individuals be in the vicinity of the rehabilitation works, they will have the ability to move away from the area, as their ecological corridors will not be obstructed.</p> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest</b></p>	
<b>Killarney fern (<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>) [1421]</b>	<p><i>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Killarney fern in the River Barrow and River Nore SAC</i></p>	<p>The attributes of this Qualifying Interest focus on <i>"Distribution location"</i>, <i>"Population size"</i>, <i>"Population structure: juvenile fronds"</i>, <i>"Habitat extent"</i>, <i>"Hydrological conditions: visible water"</i>, <i>"Hydrological conditions: humidity"</i>, <i>"Light levels: shading"</i>, <i>"Invasive species"</i>.</p> <p>This species occurs in terrestrial habitat only and thus has no hydrological connection to the project. There are no pathways for impact between the project and this Qualifying Interest.</p> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	No

**Table 3.4 Evaluation of the likely significant effects of the project in view of the Conservation Objectives of the River Nore SPA [004233].**

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2024b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
<b>Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>) [A229]</b>	<p><i>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Kingfisher in River Nore SPA</i></p>	<p>The Attributes of this Conservation Objective focuses on “Population size”, “Productivity rate”, “Spatial distribution of territories”, “Extent and quality of nesting banks and other suitable nesting features”, “Forage spatial distribution, extent, abundance and availability”, “Water quality”, “barriers to connectivity” and “Disturbance to breeding sites”.</p> <p>Kingfisher are a resident in Ireland throughout the year and are typically found in shallow freshwater systems that contain thriving populations of small fish with look-out perches from which to hunt (NPWS, 2024b). Most of the project area is comprises of rehabilitated wetland and bare peat habitat and as such, does not contain suitable habitat for this Qualifying Interest.</p> <p>The main impact to this Qualifying Interest arising from the project includes disturbance from noise and vibration and water quality impacts altering suitable habitats, which could deter species away from certain areas.</p> <p>However, there is considered to be no risk of likely significant effects on Kingfisher for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no land-take or reduction in suitable habitat for this species as part of the project.</li> <li>• The silt ponds associated with former peat extraction activities will allow for the settlement of suspended solids as part of the existing drainage management prior to water draining into the main river systems.</li> <li>• The works will be temporary and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The decommissioning and rehabilitation of the remaining peat stockpiles will be very localised and small-scale in nature.</li> <li>• The adjacent rivers will not be altered or realigned as part of the project.</li> <li>• This European site occurs approximately 15.7km northeast and 24.2km downstream of the project site. Kingfisher movement does not often extend beyond 9km, with some exceptions (Morgan &amp; Glue, 1977). Given the distance between the project site and this European site, the existing buffer of agricultural fields and the M8 motorway,</li> </ul>	No

Qualifying Interest	Conservation Objective as per NPWS (2024b)	Does the project provide for any potential delay or interruption in the achievement of this Conservation Objective, as defined by its Attributes and Targets?	Likely Significant Effect
		<p>as well as the widespread availability of more suitable habitat closer to this European site, there will be no likely significant effects on Kingfisher from noise, vibration or visual disturbance.</p> <p><b>Therefore, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the project will not significantly affect this European site in view of its Conservation Objectives for this Qualifying Interest.</b></p>	

### 3.3 Summary of Likely Significant Effects

In Section 3.1, it was established that seven European sites, namely the Lower River Suir SAC, Galmoy Fen SAC, Cullahill Mountain SAC, Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC, The Loughans SAC, the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and the River Nore SPA occur within the Zone of Influence of the project. It was determined that potential pathways for effects only exist between the project and the Lower River Suir SAC, the River Barrow and River Nore SAC and the River Nore SPA. There are no pathways for effects between the project and any other European sites. These sites were described in detail in Section 3.2.

In Section 3.3, it was established, in light of best scientific knowledge, that the project will not give rise to ecological impacts which would constitute significant effects on any European site, in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives. This finding had regard to the nature, size and location of the project as well as the sensitivities of the Qualifying Interests of the site concerned.

## 4.0 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

### 4.1 Introduction

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that AA be carried out in respect of plans and projects that are likely to have significant effects on European sites, “*either individually or in combination with other plans or projects*”. Therefore, regardless of whether or not the likely effects of a plan or project are significant when considered on their own, the significance of the combination of the effects of the plan or project under assessment with the effects of other past, present or foreseeable future plans or projects must also be evaluated.

### 4.2 Methodology

Plans and projects approved for planning within the previous 10 years in the Zone of Influence with potential for interactions with the project were selected for assessment. For the purposes of the assessment, small scale and domestic developments were not considered given the nature of the project and the fact that these projects would be subject to stringent planning controls.

The ePlanning websites for Tipperary County Council, Kilkenny County Council and the EIA Portal was used to search for planning applications.

### 4.3 Outcome

Table 4.1 below details the assessment of the likelihood of significant effects arising from the project in combination with other plans or projects. This assessment was undertaken in view of the Conservation Objectives of the relevant European sites and found that the project does not have the potential to significantly affect any European site in combination with other plans or projects.

**Table 4.1 Assessment of the potential of likely significant effects in combination with other plans and projects**

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-Combination Effect(s)
<b>Carrickhill Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025</b>	BnM proposes to 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). Carrickhill Bog is proposed to be part of the PCAS, and this rehabilitation plan outlines the approach taken. The Carrickhill Bog is located north of Bawnmore Bog and is within the same sub-catchments. The Carrickhill Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025 will subject to Appropriate Assessment screening in accordance with Article 6(3).	The proposed development is located 3 km northwest of the project site. The potential effects arising these projects are similar. Owing to the nature and scale of the project, it does not have the potential to cause likely significant effects in combination with the Carrickhill Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025.
<b>Derryville Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025</b>	BnM proposes to 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). Derryville Bog is proposed to be part of the PCAS, and this rehabilitation plan outlines the approach taken. The Derryville Bog is located to the north of Bawnmore Bog and is within the same sub-catchment. The Derryville Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025 will subject to Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3).	The proposed development is located north of the Project site. The potential effects arising these projects are similar. Owing to the nature and scale of the Project, it does not have the potential to cause likely significant effects in combination with the Derryville Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025.
<b>Inch Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025</b>	BnM proposes to 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). Inch Bog is proposed to be part of the PCAS, and this rehabilitation plan outlines the approach taken. Inch Bog is located southeast of Bawnmore Bog and is within the same sub-catchment. The Inch Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025 will subject to Appropriate Assessment screening in accordance with Article 6(3).	The proposed development is located approx. 3.5km southeast of the project site. The potential effects arising these projects are similar. Owing to the nature and scale of the project, it does not have the potential to cause likely significant effects in combination with the Inch Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025.
<b>Templetuohy Bog Decommissioning</b>	BnM proposes to 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). Templetuohy Bog is proposed to be part of the PCAS, and this rehabilitation plan outlines the approach taken. Templetuohy Bog is north	The proposed development is located approx. 1.9km north of the project site.

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-Combination Effect(s)
<b>and Rehabilitation Plan 2025</b>	of Bawnmore Bog and is within the same sub-catchment. The Templetuohy Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025 will subject to Appropriate Assessment screening in accordance with Article 6(3).	The potential effects arising these projects are similar. Owing to the nature and scale of the project, it does not have the potential to cause likely significant effects in combination with the Templetuohy Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025.
<b>Killeen Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025</b>	BnM proposes to 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). Killeen Bog is proposed to be part of the PCAS, and this rehabilitation plan outlines the approach taken. Killeen Bog is located southwest of Bawnmore Bog and is within the same sub-catchment. The Killeen Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025 will subject to Appropriate Assessment screening in accordance with Article 6(3).	The proposed development is located approx. 12 km southwest of the project site. The potential effects arising these projects are similar. Owing to the nature and scale of the project, it does not have the potential to cause likely significant effects in combination with the Killeen Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025.
<b>Ballybeg-Lanespark-Derryvella Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025</b>	BnM proposes to 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). Ballybeg-Lanespark-Derryvella Bog is proposed to be part of the PCAS, and this rehabilitation plan outlines the approach taken. Ballybeg-Lanespark-Derryvella Bog is located southwest of Bawnmore Bog and is within the same sub-catchment. The Ballybeg-Lanespark-Derryvella Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025 will subject to Appropriate Assessment screening in accordance with Article 6(3).	The proposed development is located approx. 13 km south of the project site. The potential effects arising these projects are similar. Owing to the nature and scale of the project, it does not have the potential to cause likely significant effects in combination with the Ballybeg-Lanespark-Derryvella Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025.
<b>An Coimisiún Pleanála</b>  <b>ABP Reference No.:</b> PA92.321454	<b>Planning Application Lodged:</b> 12/12/2024 <b>Decision due date:</b> Pending Proposed development of 10 Wind Turbines, 110kV Electrical Substation and ancillary development within the townlands of Brittas, Rossestown, Clobanna, Brownstown,	The proposed development is located approx 7.6km southwest of the project site. The potential effects arising from the proposed development and the

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-Combination Effect(s)
<p><b>Applicant Name:</b> Brittas Windfarm Limited</p> <p><b>Address:</b> Within the townlands of Brittas, Rossestown, Clobanna, Brownstown, Killeenleigh, Kilkillahara, Brittasroad, Coolgarrane, Athinid More, Cassestown, Laghtagalla, Farranreigh, Furze, Loughlahan, Ballygammame, County Tipperary.</p>	<p>Killeenleigh, Kilkillahara, Brittasroad, Coolgarrane, Athinid More, Cassestown, Laghtagalla, Farranreigh, Furze, Loughlahan, Ballygammame, County Tipperary.</p> <p>A Natura Impact Statement and Environment Impact Assessment Report has been submitted with this planning application.</p>	<p>project are similar. The NIS has identified adverse effects such as impacts to water quality.</p> <p>Provided the mitigation measures presented in the NIS and EIAR for the proposed development are adhered to and considering the nature and scale of the project works, no likely significant effects are predicted to arise from the project in in-combination with the proposed afforestation.</p>
<p><b>Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine</b></p> <p><b>Competent Authority Reference:</b> CN90049</p> <p><b>Applicant Name:</b> BnM Energy Limited</p> <p><b>Address:</b> Littleton Bog Complex, Co.</p>	<p><b>Planning Application Lodged:</b> 29/11/2021</p> <p><b>Decision due date:</b> Pending</p> <p>Establishment of 206.1 hectares of native woodland on industrial cutaway bog areas that cannot be rewetted to restore active, Raised bogs. Seeding &amp; planting of native trees will stabilise exposed bogs, reduce wind &amp; water erosion, &amp; enhance biodiversity.</p> <p>A Natura Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Assessment Report have been prepared in respect of the afforestation license application.</p>	<p>The development is located immediately adjacent to the project site on Carrickhill Bog and 225m southwest of the project site on Derryfadda Bog.</p> <p>The potential effects arising from the proposed afforestation and the project are similar. The NIS has identified adverse effects such as impacts to water quality. Provided the mitigation measures presented in the NIS and EIAR for the proposed afforestation are adhered to and considering the nature and scale of the project works, no likely significant</p>

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-Combination Effect(s)
Tipperary and Co. Kilkenny (near Littleton, Co. Tipperary, i.e. Carrickhill, Inch, Baunmore, Killeens and Lanespark Bogs)		effects are predicted to arise from the project in in-combination with the proposed afforestation.
<b>Tipperary County Council</b>  <b>Planning Application No.:</b> 2460987  <b>Applicant Name:</b> Dew Valley Foods  <b>Address:</b> Dew Valley Foods, Holycross Road, Thurles, Co. Tipperary, E41 CX29	<b>Planning Application Lodged:</b> 18/11/2024 <b>Decision due date:</b> pending  A 10-year permission for the development which will consist of the phased extension of the existing food manufacturing facility comprising: 1) construction of an 11,267 m <sup>2</sup> extension to the existing food manufacturing facility, including: (a) cold storage areas; (b) two-storey office space, toilet block, and drivers' area; (c) new processing, packing, intake/dispatch areas; (d) electrical plant, maintenance rooms, and external steel access staircases; (e) new gas tanks, transformer compound, and pipe bridge; 2) construction of an 1,500 m <sup>3</sup> storage building for packaging and machinery; 3) extension of existing wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) buildings (primary: 107 m <sup>2</sup> , secondary: 250 m <sup>2</sup> ); 4) construction of an 110 m <sup>2</sup> waste collection building; 5) extension to the existing water treatment plant (WTP) building (70 m <sup>2</sup> ); 6) expansion of the high temperature (HT) plant room (64 m <sup>2</sup> ); 7) construction of 4 no. tanks; 8) installation of 3 no. bundled kerosene tanks (50,000 L each); 9) construction of a 16 m high boiler stack; 10) construction of new internal access roads (c. 8,825 m <sup>2</sup> ); 11) creation of a 520 m <sup>2</sup> internal courtyard area; 12) construction of a 630 m <sup>2</sup> external storage compound; 13) construction of a 3,120 m <sup>3</sup> stormwater attenuation pond and discharge line; 14) installation of a standby treated effluent discharge pipeline (1,490 m); 15) realignment and expansion of site boundary, including new boundary walls, fencing and planting; 16) provision of an additional 8 no. truck parking spaces; 17) relocation of the existing fuel tank and weighbridge; 18) expansion of the existing sprinkler pump house (24 m <sup>2</sup> ); 19) conversion of 22 no. existing car spaces including 1 no. accessible space to 22 no. EV car spaces as required and provision of 30 no. bicycle parking spaces; 20) installation of new site lighting; 21) demolition of existing buildings and structures (total 1,840 m <sup>2</sup> ); and 22) all ancillary site development works and services to facilitate the development including drainage, landscaping, temporary construction compound and utility connections.  A Natura Impact Statement and Environment Impact Assessment Report has been submitted with this planning application.	The proposed development is located 13.4km southwest of the project site. The potential effects arising from the proposed development and the project are similar. The NIS has identified adverse effects such as impacts to water quality. Provided the mitigation measures presented in the NIS and EIAR for the proposed development are adhered to and considering the nature and scale of the project works, no likely significant effects are predicted to arise from the project in in-combination with the proposed development.

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-Combination Effect(s)
<p><b>Tipperary County Council</b></p> <p><b>Planning Application No.:</b> 2460978</p> <p><b>Applicant Name:</b> Tatver Properties Ltd.</p> <p><b>Address:</b> Killoran, Thurles, Co. Tipperary</p>	<p><b>Planning Application Lodged:</b> 14/11/2024 <b>Decision due date:</b> 23/04/2025</p> <p>A state-of-the-art healthcare waste treatment and recycling facility and a waste transfer station. The development will include the construction of 3 no. buildings; Building 1 (total gross floor area of circa (ca.) 2,242m<sup>2</sup> and ca. 9m tall), Building 2 (total gross floor area of ca. 229m<sup>2</sup> and ca. 6m tall) and Building 3 (total gross floor area of ca. 68m<sup>2</sup> and ca. 4m tall) along with associated ancillary development including rooftop solar photovoltaic panels, 1no. battery energy storage system (total gross floor area of ca. 34m<sup>2</sup> x 2m tall) and inverter, onsite tank with bunding, vehicle parking, rainwater harvesting tank, surface water retention ponds, firewater retention pond, firewater storage pillow tank, an on-site wastewater treatment system and associated polishing filter bed percolation area, dedicated container storage yard for the temporary storage of container units, signage, landscaping, perimeter security fencing and all ancillary works. The total development area will be ca. 3.75 hectares(ha). The development will intake ca. 10,000 tonnes per annum of healthcare waste for treatment and recycling and an additional ca. 15,000 tonnes per annum of hazardous waste will be accepted, temporarily stored, handled and consolidated onsite for onward transfer</p> <p>An AA Screening report and Environment Impact Assessment Report has been submitted with this planning application.</p>	<p>The proposed development is located adjacent to and on the southern boundary of the project site.</p> <p>The potential effects arising from the proposed development and the current project are similar. The AA Screening has identified pathways for effects such as impacts to water quality. Owing to the conclusion of the AA Screening Report, the nature and scale of the project works and provided the mitigation measures presented in the EIAR are adhered to, no likely significant effects are predicted to arise from the project in-combination with the proposed development.</p>
<p><b>Tipperary County Council</b></p> <p><b>Planning Application No.:</b> 2460936</p> <p><b>Applicant Name:</b> Nua Bioenergy Limited</p> <p><b>Address:</b> Former Lisheen Mine Site, Killoran, Moyne,</p>	<p><b>Planning Application Lodged:</b> 02/11/2024 <b>Decision due date:</b> 08/05/2025</p> <p>Construction of an anaerobic digestion plant comprising: 4 no. primary digester tanks (each measuring c. 7.6 m in height); 3 no. secondary digester tanks (each measuring c. 14.5 m in height); 4 no. feed hoppers; 4 no. technical rooms (ranging in size from c. 35 sq m to c. 95 sq m GFA); 2 no. biogas conditioning units; process, storage and buffer tanks (comprising: 1 no. buffer digestate storage tank (c. 7.5 m in height), 1 no. suspension buffer tank (c. 8 m in height), 1 no. process area runoff storage tank (c. 4.5 m in height); 1 no. buffer digestate process tank (c. 4.5 m in height), 1 no. treated digestate liquids recycle storage tank (c. 4.5 m in height); 1 no. roofed liquids feed-mix tank (c. 3 m in height)); these components will be located within a containment bund constructed c. 3 m below ground level. The proposed development will also consist of: feedstock storage (comprising 3 no. storage clamps (c. 1,050 sq m in area each) and 2 no. storage sheds (c. 500 sq m GFA each)); a biomethane upgrading plant (including natural gas compression unit); a biomethane loading facility (comprising 4 no. loading bays with associated gates and safety features measuring c. 490 sq m in area); a biomass boiler with its associated pellet storage silo (c. 12.5 m in height);</p>	<p>The proposed development is located 341m southwest of the project site.</p> <p>The potential effects arising from the proposed development and the project are similar. The NIS has identified adverse effects such as impacts to water quality.</p> <p>Provided the mitigation measures presented in the NIS and EIAR for the proposed development are adhered to and considering the nature and scale of the project works, no likely significant effects are predicted to arise from the project in-combination with the proposed development.</p>

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-Combination Effect(s)
Thurles, Co. Tipperary	<p>Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant and associated heat exchanger; a single storey bio-based fertiliser processing and storage unit (c. 3,890 sq m GFA) (including digestate dewatering plant, fertiliser pasteurisation plant and bio-based fertiliser loading facilities); a single storey office building (c. 105 sq m GFA) (including offices, meeting room, control room, laboratory, welfare facilities, storeroom and a first-aid facility); bin storage; 9 no. car parking spaces (including 5 no. standard parking spaces, 2 no. electric vehicle (EV) spaces and 1 no. accessible car parking space); electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure; 10 no. bicycle parking spaces; vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian access / egress and associated circulation routes; 2 no. weighbridges; a vehicle steam wash area; fuel storage tank and associated bund; an emergency flare (c. 7.6 m in height); a process area runoff lagoon; an attenuation pond; an ESB sub-station; boundary treatments [including gates, piers and fencing]; site lighting; all hard and soft landscaping; provision of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS); and all other associated site excavation, infrastructural and all other associated site excavation, infrastructural and site development works above and below ground, including changes in level and associated retaining features, and associated site servicing [water and electricity supply].</p> <p>A Natura Impact Statement and Environment Impact Assessment Report has been submitted with this planning application.</p>	
<p><b>Tipperary County Council</b></p> <p><b>Planning Application No.:</b> 2260395</p> <p><b>Applicant Name:</b> NaringTech Limited</p> <p><b>Address:</b> Derryville, Co. Tipperary, Tipperary, E41R622</p>	<p><b>Planning Application Lodged:</b> 28/07/2022</p> <p><b>Decision date:</b> 21/11/2022</p> <p>A 10-year planning permission for development of a BioProducts Campus. The Bioproducts Campus development consists of an integrated Compost / Growing Media Facility and Anaerobic Digestion Facility as well as a Biorefinery. The Compost / Growing Media Facility comprises 1 No. composting building (incorporating feedstock intake area, storage area, in-vessel tunnels, workshop), solar panels at roof level, associated biofilter and liquid storage tanks, 1 No. maturation building and 1 No. office building. The Anaerobic Digestion Facility comprises 3 No. digester tanks, 2 No. digestate storage tanks, 2 No. biogas fuelled electricity generating gas engines, 3 No. biogas processing units, associated storage tanks, bunding, plant and 1 No. gas flare. The BioRefinery includes 1 No. building (incorporating a goods inward area, processing area, drying room, process control rooms, a laboratory and offices), associated feedstock storage tanks; a BioEnergy Facility comprising 1 No. biomass boiler building, associated water storage tank, 1 No. materials storage building. The integrated Compost / Growing Media Facility and Anaerobic Digestion Facility will accept up to 80,000 tonnes of waste materials per annum. Provision of new site access from the R502, internal access roads and hardstanding, car parking, fire water tank and retention</p>	<p>The proposed development is located approx. 533m northwest of the project site via linear distance.</p> <p>The potential effects arising from the proposed development and the current project are similar. The AA Screening has identified pathways for effects such as impacts to water quality and disturbance during construction.</p> <p>Owing to the schedule of conditions of the planning permissions, the conclusion of the AA Screening Report, the nature and scale of the project works and provided the mitigation measures presented in the EIAR are adhered to, no likely</p>

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-Combination Effect(s)
	<p>pond, ESB substation and pump house, 4 No. weighbridges, entrance gate and security fence. The proposed development includes all ancillary site development, landscaping and boundary treatment works above and below ground. The application relates to development which comprises or is for the purposes of an activity requiring an Industrial Emissions Licence.</p> <p>An AA Screening report and Environment Impact Assessment Report has been submitted with this planning application.</p>	<p>significant effects are predicted to arise from the project in-combination with the proposed development.</p>
<p><b>Tipperary County Council</b> <b>Planning Application No.:</b> 20816</p> <p><b>Applicant Name:</b> Derryville Environmental Solutions Ltd.</p> <p><b>Address:</b> Derryville, Moyne, Thurles, Co. Tipperary</p>	<p><b>Planning Application Lodged:</b> 27/07/2020 <b>Decision date:</b> 17/05/2021</p> <p>The acceptance and processing of organic waste materials at the existing Anaerobic Digestion Facility of up to 30,000 tonnes per annum; glass lined steel digestate storage tank of 46.1m in diameter and 5.67m in height; an office building of 5.83m in height, 7.6m in width and 15m in length; and all associated site development works, ancillary works and equipment.</p> <p>An Environment Impact Assessment Report has been submitted with this planning application.</p>	<p>The proposed development is located approx. 148m northeast of the project site via linear distance.</p> <p>Provided the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission are adhered to and owing to the conclusion of the EIAR and the nature and scale of the project works, no likely significant effects are predicted to arise from the project in-combination with the proposed development.</p>
<p><b>Tipperary County Council</b> <b>Planning Application No.:</b> 18601296</p> <p><b>Applicant Name:</b> Glanbia Ireland DAC</p>	<p><b>Planning Application Lodged:</b> 26/10/2018 <b>Decision date:</b> 13/05/2019</p> <p>A biorefinery facility comprising of a process building with processing areas, plant rooms, stores, personnel &amp; administrative areas; external bunded process &amp; storage areas; vessels and tanks; CHP plant; an effluent &amp; water treatment plant which includes bunded tanks &amp; a building; sewage treatment plant; water storage tanks &amp; site development works including demolition of an existing electrical building, roads, paved areas, parking areas, drains and services, bore well, lighting, fire water retention tank, attenuation pond, site fencing, alterations to the discharge pipeline from the sewage treatment plant, weighbridges &amp; weighbridge office, connection to an existing outfall pipeline and landscaping works. This application relates to development which comprises or is for the purpose of an activity requiring an Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control Licence.</p>	<p>The proposed development is located approx. 290m south of the project site via linear distance.</p> <p>The potential effects arising from the proposed development and the current project are similar. The AA Screening has identified pathways for effects such as impacts to water quality and disturbance during construction.</p> <p>Provided the schedule of conditions laid out in the planning permission and the mitigation measures</p>

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-Combination Effect(s)
<b>Address:</b> Killoran, Moyne, Thurles, Co Tipperary	An AA Screening report and Environment Impact Assessment Report has been submitted with this planning application.	presented in the EIAR are adhered to and owing to the conclusion of the AA Screening Report as well as the nature and scale of the project works, no likely significant effects are predicted to arise from the project in-combination with the proposed development.
<b>Kilkenny County Council</b>  <b>Planning Application No.:</b> 20459; 19787; 15629; <b>14202</b>  <b>Applicant Name:</b> Lisheen III Wind Farm Limited; SWS Energy Limited  <b>Address:</b> Bruckana, Baunmore and Rathpatrick, County Kilkenny	<b>Planning Application Lodged:</b> 16/07/2020 <b>Decision date:</b> 01/12/2020  The development will consist of 6 no. wind turbines, to a maximum tip height of 156m; Associated hardstandings at each turbine location; Underground electrical and communication cables, linking the turbines to the substation and control building at the existing 110kV Lisheen Sub-Station, Co. Tipperary; Upgrade of approximately 380m of existing access tracks; Construction of approximately 4.5km of new internal site access tracks; Construction of new drainage system and watercourse crossings; 2 no. borrow pits; associated felling of forestry and replanting; and Related site works and ancillary development. A ten-year permission is sought. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement and Natura Impact Statement. The development is part of a larger development and the site also extends into the townlands of Graigueadrishy, Co.Laois and Killoran near Templetuohy, Co. Tipperary. SWS Energy Limited also intends to apply to Laois County Council for planning permission for development at Graigueadrishy, Co. Laois. The development will consist of two wind turbines to a maximum tip height of 156m; Associated hardstandings at each turbine location; Underground electrical and communication cables, linking the turbines to the substation and control building at the existing 110kV Lisheen Sub-Station, Co.Tipperary; Construction of approximately 1.2km of new internal site access tracks; Construction of new drainage system and watercourse crossings; associated felling of forestry and replanting; and Related site works and ancillary development. A ten-year permission is sought. The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement and Natura Impact statement. SWS Energy Limited also intends to apply to North Tipperary County Council for planning permission for development at Killoran near Templetuohy, Co. Tipperary. The development will consist of underground electrical and communication cables, linking the turbines to the substation and control building at the existing 110kV Lisheen Sub-Station, Co. Tipperary; and Construction of approximately 1.3km of new internal site access tracks. A ten-year permission is sought.	The proposed development is located adjacent to the project site.  The potential effects arising from the proposed development and the current project are similar. The NIS has identified adverse effects such as impacts to water quality during construction.  Owing to the schedule of conditions of the planning permissions, the nature and scale of the project works and provided the mitigation measures presented in the NIS and Environmental Impact Statement are adhered to, no likely significant effects are predicted to arise from the project in-combination with the proposed development.

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-Combination Effect(s)
	The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement and Natura Impact Statement.	
<b>Kilkenny County Council</b>  <b>Planning Application No.:</b> 15629  <b>Applicant Name:</b> Brookfield Renewable Ireland Limited  <b>Address:</b> Bruckana and Baunmore, near Johnstown, Co. Kilkenny	<b>Planning Application Lodged:</b> 23/10/2015 <b>Decision date:</b> 03/08/2016  <p>The development will consist of alterations to a previously permitted wind farm development (Planning Register References 14/202 (Kilkenny), 14/109 (Laois) and 14/510138 (Tipperary)), where the permitted development also extends into the townland of Rathpatrick near Johnstown, County Kilkenny, Killoran County Tipperary and Graigueadrishy, County Laois. The proposed alterations will consist of: relocated vehicular entrance on R502 through widening existing agricultural entrance; alterations to internal access tracks including construction of approximately 572m of new access track with associated drainage and watercourse crossing; the omission of 1.775 km of previously permitted access tracks; Clearfelling of approximately 0.5 Hectares of forestry associated with the new section of internal access track within the Baunmore forestry plantation, County Kilkenny; Amended cable route for underground electrical and communication cables; and all associated works and services. A ten-year permission is sought. The application is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement. The current application is part of an application for development which extends into the townland of Killoran near Templetoohy, County Tipperary, detailed as follows. Brookfield Renewable Ireland Limited also intends to apply to Tipperary County Council for planning permission for development at Killoran near Templetoohy, County Tipperary. The proposed alterations will consist of: Amended cable route for underground electrical and communication cables; the omission of 1.3 km of previously permitted access track in Tipperary and all associated works and services. A ten-year permission is sought.</p> <p>The application is accompanied by a Natura Impact Statement.</p>	<p>The proposed development is adjacent to the project site.</p> <p>Although no documents submitted with the planning application are available for online viewing, owing to the operational status of the proposed development as well as the nature and scale of the project works, no likely significant effects are predicted to arise from the project in-combination with the proposed development.</p>

Plan or Project	Description of Plan or Project	In-Combination Effect(s)
<b>Address:</b> Rathpatrick, Bruckana & Baunmore, Johnstown, Co. Kilkenny	<p>meteorological lattice mast 100m high; and associated works. This development is part of a larger development which also extends to parts of County Laois (townland of Baunaghra) and North Tipperary (townlands of Killoran and Tullowmacjames). The development as a whole will consist of a wind farm comprising: 16 wind turbines of up to 100m hub height and up to 112m rotor diameter with a total height not exceeding 156m; a transformer and crane hardstanding area at each turbine; underground electrical and communication cables linking the turbines; internal site tracks; a permanent meteorological lattice mast 100m high; drainage works; a 38kV substation and associated equipment and control building with associated septic tank and treatment system; a 38kV overhead line to the 110kV Lisheen substation; and associated works. The development is proposed on a site that is the subject of an Integrated Pollution Control Licence (Reg. No. 499) as issued by the EPA in accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992.</p> <p>The application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement.</p>	combination with the proposed development.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, Regulations 42 of the Habitats Regulations, the relevant case law, established best practice and the Precautionary Principle; this AA Screening Report has examined the details of the project and the relevant European sites and has concluded, on the basis of objective information, that the project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is not likely to give rise to impacts that would constitute likely significant effects in view of the Conservation Objectives of those sites.

In light of this conclusion, it is the considered opinion of ROD, as the author of this AA Screening Report, that the competent authority, BnM, may find in completing its AA Screening in respect of the Bawnmore Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan, that the project, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site, in view of best scientific knowledge and the Conservation Objectives of the sites concerned. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the author of this AA Screening Report that the competent authority may determine that AA is not required in respect of the project.

## 6.0 REFERENCES

BnM (2025a) *Bawnmore Bog Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025*. Bord na Móna, Co Kildare

BnM (2025b) *Bawnmore/Inch Bog GIS Map Book 2025*. Bord na Móna, Co Kildare.

BnM (2025c) *Peatland Climate Action Scheme – Bawnmore/Inch Bog GIS Site Characterisation and Monitoring 2025*. Bord na Móna, Co Kildare.

BnM (2023) *Peatland Climate Action Scheme – Environmental Management Plan*. Bord na Móna, Co Kildare

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## APPENDIX A

### **Bawnmore Bog - Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan 2025**



**Bawnmore Bog**

# **Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan**

**2025**

This document seeks to address the requirements of Condition 10.2 of IPC Licence Ref. P0-409-01:

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

*This licence condition requires BnM (formerly Bord na Móna) agree with the EPA the measures that will provide for rehabilitation, i.e., stabilisation of Bawnmore 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 Bawnmore Bog.*

*In addition, to preparing this document to comply with Condition 10 of IPC Licence Ref. P0-409-01, 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, BnM 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 Bawnmore Bog, activities which goes 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.*

*BnM have defined the key rehabilitation outcome at Bawnmore 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 Bawnmore 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.*

## Document Control Sheet

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## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- BnM (formerly Bord na Móna) is updating its rehabilitation plan for Bawnmore Bog, located approximately three kilometres to the east of Urlingford on the Co. Tipperary/Kilkenny border.
- Bawnmore Bog was in industrial peat production from 1970 until 2017.
- In 2017, BnM announced the closure of the Littleton Briquette factory and the cessation of industrial peat production in a number of cutaway bogs within the Littleton Bog Group.
- BnM are obliged to carry out peatland rehabilitation via an IPC Licence issued by the Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, the Government has agreed to support peatland rehabilitation via the establishment of the Peatland Climate Action Scheme (PCAS). This is funded via the Government and by BnM.
- Peatland rehabilitation was carried out at the bog in 2018-2021 with an extensive drain-blocking programme (Phase 1 rehabilitation).
- BnM are proposing to carry out additional rehabilitation in 2025 (Phase 2).
- The key objective of peatland rehabilitation is environmental stabilisation. This means developing habitats and vegetation back onto the bare peat (putting a “skin” back onto the peat), and minimising effects to downstream waterbodies. Bawnmore was drained in the past to allow peat production. Better results for water quality improvements, climate action, the reduction of carbon emissions and biodiversity are achieved when the remaining peat is re-wetted. This means drain-blocking and other measures to raise water levels to the surface of the bog and to encourage the natural colonisation of vegetation. In some instances, where depressions retain deeper water, further optimisation of water levels to further facilitate revegetation may also be achievable.
- In general, soggy ground conditions are preferred. This means the remaining peat is wet and that plants that prefer wetter conditions, like Bog Cotton will thrive.
- Some small sections with deeper residual peat have the capacity to regrow *Sphagnum* moss again, where there are suitable hydrological conditions. *Sphagnum* is a key species for restoring naturally functioning raised bog conditions.
- Many BnM bogs cannot be restored back to raised bog in the short-term, as so much peat has been removed, and the environmental conditions have been modified. However other peatland habitats with Heather, Bog Cotton, Rushes, Purple Moor-grass, Bog-mosses and scattered trees will develop, and in time a naturalised peatland can be restored.
- The development of a range of habitats in Bawnmore Bog will support biodiversity including plants, insects, birds and mammals. This includes some species that are rare and protected in the wider landscape. It will increase the national area of native woodland. Many wetland habitats in the wider landscape have been reclaimed for agriculture and other uses, and peatland rehabilitation is an opportunity to create new peatland and wetland habitats.
- Measures proposed for Bawnmore Bog include optimisation of water levels within existing waterbodies and drain blocking. Some fertiliser will be spread on headlands and other areas (a small part of the overall area) to encourage vegetation growth.
- BnM plan to carry out this work in 2025.
- These rehabilitation measures will be planned by a team consisting of expert ecologists, hydrologists and engineers. It is a guiding principle of BnM rehabilitation planning that no actions or activities will be undertaken that would negatively impact on adjacent land. No boundary drains will be blocked. Water will still leave the bog via the existing outlets.

- It will take some time for vegetation and habitats to fully develop at the more recently peat harvested areas of Bawnmore Bog, and for a wetland/peatland ecosystem to be restored. However, it is expected that most of these areas will be developing pioneer habitats after 5-10 years.
- This is a peatland rehabilitation plan. This plan does not consider future after-use or development. BnM continually reviews its land-bank to consider future commercial or industrial developments. Any other proposed development will be planned in adherence to relevant planning guidelines and will consider the rehabilitation and the condition of the bog.
- Peatland rehabilitation of this bog will bring a range of benefits to the local community via improvements to the local landscape and is also important for supporting national policies and strategies in relation to reduction of carbon emissions from these peatlands, supporting biodiversity and improvements to water quality.

Draft

## 1. INTRODUCTION

BNM (formerly Bord na Móna) operates under IPC Licence issued and administered by the EPA to extract peat within the Littleton Bog Group (Ref. P0-409-01) (see Appendix II for details of the bog areas within this Group). 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. Bawnmore Bog is located along the county Tipperary/Kilkenny border, approximately three kilometres to the east of Urlingford.

This document seeks to address the requirements of Condition 10.2 of IPC Licence Ref. P0-409-01:

*“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 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.

Bawnmore Bog is part of the Littleton Bog Group and supplied the Littleton Brickette Factory. BnM made the decision to close this brickette factory in 2017 and to rehabilitate the Littleton Bog group. Bawnmore Bog was rehabilitated by BnM during 2018-2022 (Phase 1 rehabilitation). This updated rehabilitation plan supersedes the previous rehabilitation plan prepared in 2018.

It is proposed by Government that BnM 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. BnM 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.

Bawnmore Bog is proposed to be part of this Scheme (PCAS), and this updated rehabilitation plan outlines the approach to be taken. Additional peatland rehabilitation (Phase 2 Rehabilitation) has been proposed for Bawnmore Bog with the objective of improving hydrological conditions across this site and targeting bare peat areas to speed up the trajectory of natural vegetation colonisation. Measures will include:

- more intensive management of water levels through modifying outfalls, drain-blocking and bunding,
- optimising hydrological conditions for development of wetlands, fens and bog habitats, and
- targeted fertiliser applications.

These measures 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.

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. BnM announced the complete cessation of industrial peat production across its estate in 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.

## 1.1 Constraints and Limitations

This document covers the area of **Bawnmore Bog** shown in drawing number *BNM-DR-26-08-RP-01: Site Location*.

There are areas of active turf cutting (turbary) on the western margins of the bog which have been mapped as a constraint. The parts of Bawnmore Bog (within the areas owned by BnM) that are currently used by domestic turf cutters to harvest peat are ecologically and hydrologically linked to the area owned by BnM where rehabilitation is planned. BnM are aware of such issues which may constrain the proposed rehabilitation actions, and this rehabilitation plan considered potential impacts of turf cutting on the delivery of the stated objectives.

Part of the marginal areas around the bog were developed for conifer forestry in the 1990s by Coillte. Areas where Coillte forestry overlaps the bog boundary have been identified as constrained land on the rehabilitation plan.

Bawnmore Bog is proposed for inclusion in the Coillte/BnM Midlands Native Woodland Project, with 39 ha proposed for planting at Bawnmore. This proposed project is currently being considered for consent by the Forest Service. Areas proposed to be included in Native Woodland Project have also been mapped as constrained land in the rehabilitation plan.

Part of the access route at Bawnmore is used for log biomass storage (for Edenderry Power).

There are known rights of way around the margins of Bawnmore Bog. Where a public right of way or similar burden exists on BnM property, consideration will be given to ensuring that this remains 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.

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

There are some areas of agricultural grassland along the margins of Bawnmore Bog. These areas will not be subject to rehabilitation and have been identified as constrained land.

## 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, *'Guidance on the Process of Preparing and Implementing a Bog Rehabilitation Plan'* (EPA, 2020).

The ecological information and site information collected during the BnM ecological baseline survey, additional confirmatory site visits (covering the period 2011 to 2024 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 BnM 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 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 Bawnmore 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.
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- 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:

- Littleton Integrated Pollution Control Licence;

- Littleton Annual Environmental Reports;
- Review of the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) webmapper;
- Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) Reports;
- Environmental Protection Agency database ([www.epa.ie](http://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](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie));
- Geological Survey of Ireland - National Draft Bedrock Aquifer map;
- Geological Survey of Ireland - Groundwater Database ([www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie));
- Historic Environment Viewer at <https://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/>
- National Parks & Wildlife Services Public Map Viewer ([www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie));
- Water Framework Directive catchments.ie/maps/ Map Viewer ([www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie));
- OPW Indicative Flood Maps ([www.floodmaps.ie](http://www.floodmaps.ie));
- CFRAM Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) maps ([www.cfram.ie](http://www.cfram.ie));
- River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027
- Bord na Móna Annual Report 2024.
- 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 BnM'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

BnM carried out a baseline ecological survey of all of its properties in 2012-2018 and developed habitat maps. As part of this exercise, Bawnmore Bog was surveyed in 2012. Habitat maps were updated in 2017. Surveys also took place between October 2024 and February 2025, 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 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 detailed ecological survey report for Bawnmore Bog is contained in Appendix III.

### 3. SITE DESCRIPTION

Bawnmore Bog is located approximately three kilometres to the east of Urlingford on the Tipperary/Kilkenny border. It is part of the Littleton group of bogs with Inch bog to the south and Derryville bog to the north.

The county boundary divides the bog into roughly equal sections. Bawnmore has an irregular shape with one main central lobe, sub divided by the old railway network route and a small lobe to the north-east. The total combined area of the rehabilitation footprint of the bog is 530.8 ha.

Bawnmore was in industrial peat production from the 1970s. Peat extraction ceased on a phased basis finally ending in 2017. A significant part of the bog has developed typical cutaway habitats. Bawnmore also contains a relatively large area of marginal high bog in the northeastern lobe that has been drained yet had no peat removed.

Bawnmore Bog was rehabilitated by BnM during 2018-2022 (Phase 1 rehabilitation). The bog formerly had a pumped drainage regime; however, pumping ceased at Bawnmore in 2018. The bog now has a gravity drainage regime.

The surrounding landscape is dominated by a mosaic of farmland, largely consisting of improved grassland along with several areas of coniferous forestry, and other raised bogs, including Templetouhy, Carrickhill and Derryville to the north and Longfordpass to the south, all of which are owned and managed by BnM.

BnM propose to rehabilitate Bawnmore Bog in 2025. See Figure *BNM-DR-26-08-RP-01: Bog Site Location*, included in the accompanying Mapbook<sup>1</sup>, which illustrates the location of Bawnmore Bog in context to the surrounding area.

#### 3.1 Status and Situation

##### 3.1.1 Site history

Bawnmore Bog was used to supply fuel peat in Lough Ree Power in Littleton Briquette Factory. Bawnmore Bog was in industrial peat production from the 1970's. In 2017, BnM announced the closure of the Littleton Briquette factory and the cessation of industrial peat production in a number of cutaway bogs within the Littleton Bog Group, including Bawnmore.

Rehabilitation commenced at Bawnmore Bog in 2018, with a program of intensive drain blocking. A large part of the site has been re-wetted. Some large areas of bare peat still remain, as the vegetation has been slower to colonise due to underlying environmental factors (deeper residual peat). The pump was decommissioned in 2018.

##### 3.1.2 Current land-use

Industrial peat extraction has now completely ceased.

Part of the marginal areas around the bog were developed for conifer forestry in the 1990s by Coillte. Areas where Coillte forestry overlaps the bog boundary have been identified as constrained land on the rehabilitation plan.

Bawnmore Bog is proposed for inclusion in the Coillte/BnM Midlands Native Woodland Project, with 39 ha proposed for planting at Bawnmore. This proposed project is currently being considered for consent by the Forest

<sup>1</sup> Cutaway Bog Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Plan – Bawnmore Bog Map Book

Service. Areas proposed to be included in Native Woodland Project have also been mapped as constrained land in the rehabilitation plan.

Part of the access route at Bawnmore is used for log biomass storage (for Edenderry Power).

There are known rights of way around the margins of Bawnmore Bog.

There are some areas of agricultural grassland along the margins of Bawnmore Bog. Cutover bog and remnants of intact raised bog are present along the western margins of the bog and are subject to domestic turf cutting. These areas will not be subject to rehabilitation and have been identified as constrained land.

### **3.1.3 *Socio-Economic conditions***

Bord na Móna has historically been a vital employer for the rural communities in the Irish Midlands. Bord na Móna compiled a report on the role of peat extraction in the midlands historically in which they report that in 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 in these areas 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. These job numbers have now declined with the cessation of peat extraction.

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

In 2017, Bord na Móna announced the closure of the Littleton Briquette factory and the cessation of industrial peat production in a number of cutaway bogs within the Littleton Bog Group, including Bawnmore. Employment numbers have now declined following 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 BnM at present, with approximately 135 roles directly involved in PCAS.

## 3.2 Geology and Peat Depths

### 3.2.1 Sub-soil geology

The underlying geology<sup>2</sup> at Bawnmore Bog is predominantly underlain by the Crosspatrick formation of pale-grey cherty crinoidal limestone. Marginal areas in the northwestern and southeastern are underlain by Waulsortian Limestones (dolomitised massive fine-grained limestone).

Quaternary sediment maps map Bawnmore Bog as cut over raised peat, yet surrounded by inorganic deposits, which are predominantly till derived from limestone along with some localised pockets of gravels from limestones and small pockets of lacustrine sediments in the wider surroundings.

### 3.2.2 Peat type and depths

Peat depths have been mapped across the bog using GPR and are provided in figure *BNM-DR-26-08-RP-04: Peat depths*. Across Bawnmore peat depths are more variable with peat generally being shallow in the northwest and west of the bog (<1.5m) with deeper deposits to the northeast and southeast of the site.

## 3.3 Key Biodiversity Features of Interest

The majority of Bawnmore Bog comprises a mosaic of bare peat, pioneer open habitats, wetland and Birch scrub and woodland.

### 3.3.1 Current habitats

The most common vegetation communities/habitats<sup>3</sup> present in the former production areas at Bawnmore include (Codes refer BnM classification of pioneer habitats of production bog. See Appendix III):

- Bare peat (0-50% cover) (BP) (Plate 3-5)
- Pioneer *Eriophorum angustifolium*-dominated community (Bog Cotton) (pEang) and pioneer *Juncus effusus*-dominated community (Soft Rush) (Plate 3-1, Plate 3-2, Plate 3-4, Plate 3-5, Plate 3-6)
- Willow-dominated scrub (eWill) (in mosaic with pJeff) (in those areas that are flooded regularly) Plate 3-2
- Open water (OW) (permanent) and Temporary open water (TOW) (Plate 3-3, Plate 3-2, Plate 3-4)
- Wetlands with pioneering *Typha latifolia* (pTyp), *Phragmites australis* (pPhrag), Pioneer *Carex rostrata*-dominated community (Bottle Sedge) (pRos) (Plate 3-4, Plate 3-2, Plate 3-4)
- Birch-dominated woodland and scrub (BirWD, eBir, oBir) (on drier higher ground that is not flooded)
- Heather dominated vegetation/Pioneer dry heath (dHeath) (mainly in mosaic with Birch scrub and along the raised bog remnant along the powerline route)
- *Molinia caerulea*-dominated community (dry) (Purple Moorgrass) (gMol)
- Access routes (Acc)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/data-and-maps/Pages/Bedrock.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Codes refer BnM classification of pioneer habitats of production bog

- Riparian zones (Rip) (with drains and associated habitats such as scrub and Birch woodland)
- Silt ponds (Silt) with Gorse/Birch scrub and *Molinia caerulea*-dominated community (dry) (Purple Moorgrass) (gMol)

The most common habitats<sup>4</sup> found around the margins include:

- Raised bog (PB1) (plate 3-3)
- Cutover Bog (PB4)
- Scrub (WS1)
- Wet grassland (GS4)
- Birch woodland (WN7)
- Dense Bracken (HD1)
- Improved grassland (GA1) around the boundary extending into adjacent fields

See Drawing number *BNM-DR-26-08-RP-17: Current Habitat Map*, included in the accompanying Mapbook, which illustrates the habitats at Bawnmore Bog. See also Table 3-1 for photographic plates of habitats (taken in 2024).

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<sup>4</sup> Codes refer to Heritage Council habitat classification (Fossitt 2000)

## Photos of Habitats at Bawnmore Bog (2024)



Plate 3-5 Western section of Bawnmore (view looking north), dominated by pioneer vegetation, developing scrub and open water/wetland.



Plate 3-6 Central section of Bawnmore (view looking north), dominated by pioneer vegetation, developing scrub and open water/wetland.

### Photos of Habitats at Bawnmore Bog (2024)



Plate 3-7 Large area of raised bog in the northeastern lobe of Bawnmore that has been drained yet had no peat removed.



Plate 3-8 Open water (OW) in Bawnmore Bog with developing wetlands and fen including Phragmites-dominated community (Reedbed) (pPhrag), pioneer Bog Cotton-dominated poor fen (pEang) and Bottle Sedge-dominated poor fen (pEang/pRos) (in wetland).



Plate 3-9 High field dominated by bare peat and pioneer *Eriophorum angustifolium* (pEang), surrounded by fen habitat in the north section of the Bawnmore.



Plate 3-10 Wetland area dominated by pioneer *Eriophorum angustifolium* (pEang), and *Molinia caerulea*. View looking south-east from the old railway.

Table 3-1: Photos of Habitats at Bawnmore Bog (October 2024).

### 3.3.2 Species of conservation interest

A number of species of conservation concern utilize the habitats available at Bawnmore Bog. The following is a summary of the records of these species available within both BnM and NBDC records.

- Multiple mammal species have been recorded as part of BnM surveys on or in close proximity to the bog including Badger (*Meles meles*), Hare (*Lepus timidus hibernicus*) and Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*).
- Bird species of conservation interest recorded from the bog include the BOCCI<sup>5</sup> red listed species Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Meadow Pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and the amber listed species Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), Sky Lark (*Alauda arvensis*), Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), Mute Swan (*Cygnus olor*) and Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*).
- Yellowhammer, Common Sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), Little Egret (*egrette garzette*) and the first record of Great White Egret (*Ardea alba*) were all recorded in 2023/2024.
- Several butterflies have been recorded on Bawnmore Bog including Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*), Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*), Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*), Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*), Green-veined White (*Pieris napi*), Small White (*Pieris rapae*), Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*), Peacock (*Inachis io*), Large White (*Pieris brassicae*) and Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*), a rare species which is listed on Annex II of the European Union Habitats and Species Directive.

Peatland rehabilitation may result in positive quality effects on the relative abundance or proportion of species of conservation concern utilising bogs post rehabilitation. This may include Red or Amber listed species of breeding waders along with wintering species including Swans and other wildfowl.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.3.3 Invasive species

There are no 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 BnM 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 in close proximity (i.e. within a 5km radius at minimum) to Bawnmore Bog.

The closest EU designated sites are as follows:

- The Loughans SAC - Site code: 000407 - Distance: 5.2 km
- Spahill and Clomantagh Hill SAC - Site code: 00849 - Distance: 7.1 km
- Cullahill Mountain SAC - Site code: 00831 - Distance: 10 km
- River Barrow and River Nore SAC - Site code: 002162 - Distance: 12 km
- Lower River Suir SAC - Site code: 002137 - Distance: 13 km

<sup>5</sup> <https://birdwatchireland.ie/app/uploads/2021/04/BOCCI4-leaflet-2-1.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.bnmpcas.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2023/08/Annual-Monitoring-Report\\_Final-Rev-A\\_Redacted.pdf](https://www.bnmpcas.ie/wp-content/uploads/sites/18/2023/08/Annual-Monitoring-Report_Final-Rev-A_Redacted.pdf)

A number of NHA's (Natural Heritage Areas) and pNHA's (Proposed Natural Heritage Areas) also occur within the wider area of Bawnmore Bog including:

- The Loughans pNHA - Distance: 5.2 km
- Spahill and Clomantagh Hill NHA - Distance: 7.1 km
- Cullahill Mountain NHA - Distance: 10 km
- Kilcooly Abbey Lake

See Figure *BNM-DR-26-08-RP-23: Proximity to Designated Sites* in the accompanying mapbook.

### 3.4.1 Other Nature Conservation Designations

The Ramsar Convention entered into force in Ireland on 15<sup>th</sup> 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 in close proximity to Bawnmore Bog.

## 3.5 Hydrology and Hydrogeology

Bawnmore Bog lies in the Suir Catchment (Catchment ID: 16) and the Nore Catchment (Catchment ID: 15) as defined by the EPA under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The eastern section of the bog is situated within the Goul\_SC\_010 sub catchment and the western section is in the Suir\_SC\_040 sub catchment.

Bawnmore has a gravity-based drainage system, since the cessation of pumping in 2018.

Hydrological modelling (*BNM-DR-26-08-RP-09: Depression analysis*) indicates that parts of the bog are in natural basins. These areas which have undergone phase 1 rehabilitation have re-wetted following drain blocking, forming a mosaic of wetland habitats. Phase 2 rehabilitation will aim to optimise water levels in these areas.

GSI bedrock geology data indicates that Bawnmore is underlain two main bedrock units. Bawnmore primarily underlain by the Crosspatrick Formation, which consists of pale-grey cherty crinoidal limestone. Marginal sections to the north and south of Bawnmore are underlain by a Waulsortian Limestone unit which is characterised by dolomitised massive fine-grained limestone. Bedrock outcrops are recorded in the immediate vicinity of the Bawnmore Bog boundary.

There is a structural fault that extends southeast-northwest through the central area of Bawnmore, intersecting the Waulsortian limestone unit and Crosspatrick Formation. The strike and dip of the bedding within the Crosspatrick formation south of Bawnmore is 30 degrees west. The Crosspatrick Formation is classified as a locally important aquifer (Lm) as the bedrock units are generally moderately productive. In contrast, the Waulsortian Limestone unit is described as a regionally important aquifer (Rk) as it is karstified (diffuse).

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 m<sup>3</sup>/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 m<sup>3</sup>/d), dependable springs may be associated with these aquifers.

Bawnmore Bog is located in an area mapped by GSI as of moderate or low groundwater vulnerability (GSI Mapviewer). Groundwater vulnerability for the area surrounding Bawnmore Bog ranges from low to extreme vulnerability in places. 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.

### 3.6 Emissions to surface-water and watercourses

Bawnmore Bog has 4 treated surface water outlets (SW20, SW21, SW22 and SW23) from previously active peat extraction catchments, which discharge to the Drish Rivers; (IE\_SE\_16D020068 DRISH\_020), (IE\_SE\_16D020070 DRISH\_030) and (IE\_SE\_16D020100 DRISH\_040). The Drish River is classed as Poor water quality status (Ecological Status or Potential SW 2016-2021) – Water Framework Directive.

The locations of silt ponds, associated surface water emission points and those being monitored and sampled as part of the PCAS scheme are detailed on the attached water quality map (BNM-DR-25-06-13: General Drainage Map).

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.

Peat extraction is identified as a pressure in the third cycle of the river basin management plan (Water Action Plan for Ireland).

The main emission limit value (ELV) associated with these bogs is 35mg/l suspended solids, with trigger levels for ammonia of 3.6 mg/l and COD 100mg/l.

An analysis of the results over a number of years of the IPC licence environmental monitoring of some of the discharges from these bogs indicates that results were under the Emission Limit Value for Suspended Solids 99% of this period, with a similar level of compliance for COD and under the trigger level for Ammonia.

Ammonia averaged 0.5606mg/l and ranged from 0.01 to 3.6mg/l with Suspended Solids ranging from <2 to 12 mg/l and averaging 5.19mg/l.

Table 3.1 Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Programme Water Quality Monitoring.

Bog	SW	Monitoring	SS	Colour	COD	pH	TS	TP	Ammonia
Bawnmore	SW20	Q4 16	<5	106	36	7.7	402	<0.05	0.18

Bog	SW	Monitoring	SS	Colour	COD	pH	TS	TP	Ammonia
Bawnmore	SW21	Q4 16	12	88	39	8.1	338	<0.05	0.32
Bawnmore	SW22	Q4 16	<5	67	23	7.8	400	<0.05	0.10
Bawnmore	SW23	Q4 16	<5	64	37	8.0	356	<0.05	1.4
Bawnmore	SW20	Q3 17	5	128	59	8	320	0.05	0.12
Bawnmore	SW21	Q3 17	7	159	65	8.2	334	0.05	3.6
Bawnmore	SW22	Q3 17	5	155	62	7.7	396	0.05	0.09
Bawnmore	SW23	Q3 17	5	137	58	7.9	298	0.05	1
Bawnmore	SW20	Q1 18	<5	177	53	7.6	328	0.06	0.05
Bawnmore	SW21	Q1 18	<5	219	59	7.6	148	<0.05	1.6
Bawnmore	SW22	Q1 18	<5	163	59	7.7	354	<0.05	0.48
Bawnmore	SW23	Q1 18	<5	177	55	7.7	332	<0.05	0.06
Bawnmore	SW20	Q3 19	5	177	53	7.6	328	0.06	0.05
Bawnmore	SW21	Q3 19	5	219	59	7.6	148	0.05	1.6
Bawnmore	SW22	Q3 19	5	163	59	7.7	354	0.05	0.48
Bawnmore	SW23	Q3 19	5	177	56	7.7	332	0.05	0.06
Bawnmore	SW22	Q3 20	5	148	47	8.1	336	<0.01	0.01
Bawnmore	SW23	Q3 20	<2	120	55	7.7	342	<0.01	0.079
Bawnmore	SW22	Q4 20	<2	196	54	7.8	176	<0.01	0.378
Bawnmore	SW23	Q4 20	<2	197	54	7.8	171	<0.01	0.345
Bawnmore	SW22	Q1 21	<2	186	<10	7.7	396	<0.01	0.226
Bawnmore	SW23	Q1 21	<2	190	20	7.6	429	0.01	0.225
Bawnmore	SW22	Q2 21	<2	93.3	42	8.2	354	<0.05	0.009
Bawnmore	SW23	Q2 21	<2	95.1	39	8.2	347	<0.05	0.009
Bawnmore	SW22	Q3 21	<2	100	46	8	291	<0.05	0
Bawnmore	SW23	Q3 21	<2	100	37	8	296	<0.05	0
Bawnmore	SW22	Q1 22	<2	214	55	7.5	104	<0.05	0.478
Bawnmore	SW23	Q1 22	6	211	46	7.5	175	<0.05	0.129
Bawnmore	SW22	Q3 23	<2	212	54	7.7	246	<0.05	0.136
Bawnmore	SW23	Q3 23	<2	186	59	7.5	323	<0.05	0.031
Bawnmore	SW22	Q4 23	<2	167	50	7.5	434	<0.05	0.048
Bawnmore	SW23	Q4 23	<2	154	53	7.4	452	<0.05	0.132
Bawnmore	SW22	Q1 24	3	192	47	7.7	387	0.05	0.153
Bawnmore	SW23	Q1 24	3	279	64	7.1	223	<0.05	0.803
Bawnmore	SW22	Q2 24	2	290	59	7.7	374	0.07	0.074
Bawnmore	SW23	Q2 24	<2	335	47	5.6	137	<0.05	0.595
Bawnmore	SW22	Q3 24	<2	218	84	7.3	429	0.05	0.091
Bawnmore	SW23	Q3 24	6	218	84	7.3	429	0.05	2.74
Bawnmore	SW22	Q4 24	3	158	59	7.9		<0.05	0.034
Bawnmore	SW23	Q4 24	7	173	43	7.5	345	0.05	2.82

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 already vegetated in some areas. 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 draft National River Basin Management Plan (NRBMP) 2022-2027 (DHPCLG, 2022) 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 BnM 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 Bawnmore 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. While water quality improvements assist in meeting water frameworks directive ambitions and targets, they can also improve drinking water sources in applicable catchments with drained peatlands and the potential for associated reduction in treatment requirements at drinking water treatment facilities.

#### **Decommissioning and Rehabilitation Programme Water Quality Monitoring.**

The licence obligation of a quarterly sampling regime on a selected number of ponds to be sampled over a 3-year cycle would 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 monthly.

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 July 2023 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.

Initial quarterly results are included in appendix XIII, for Bawnmore. These results cover the period from July 2023 to December 2024 and are from some of the surface water outlets from the sections of bog to be rehabilitated in 2025. Peat extraction ceased in these bogs in 2017 and as expected some of the key water quality parameters that can impact water quality from peat extraction activities, remain on a relatively static trajectory, with suspended solids indicating a level trend from all outlets during the period, all well below any limits of concern. During this same period there was a slight downward trend in Ammonia for emission points, with all other parameters fluctuating slightly, most likely influenced by normal weather patterns, including rainfall.

Monthly Ammonia concentrations for this period averaged 0.1132mg/l and ranged from 0.048 to 0.169mg/l, with Suspended Solids ranging from <2 to 3mg/l and averaging 3mg/l.

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. LAWPRO have in turn provided details of their 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.

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](http://www.epa.ie).

The parameters to include as per condition 6.2 of the IPC Licence include monthly monitoring for pH, 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.

#### **Success criteria:**

The key water quality success criteria associated with this enhanced rehabilitation are as follows:

- 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.
- 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 any 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.

As the monthly monitoring program at Bawnmore Bogs continues in 2025 and during the rehabilitation works planned for 2025 further trending will be produced to verify any ongoing trends.

### **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 (taking in 0.1 to 1.1 t of carbon as CO<sub>2</sub>-C /ha/yr) into a cutaway ecosystem which is a large source of carbon dioxide (releasing 1.3 to 2.2 t of carbon as CO<sub>2</sub>-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 CO<sub>2</sub>-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 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from drained peatlands or increased methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) 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 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (Gunther *et al.* 2020). This means the increase in methane due to rewetting of dry peatlands is still negated by the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reductions. Further, Wilson *et al.* (2022) confirmed the benefit of rapid rewetting to achieve strong carbon reductions and potentially altering the warming dynamics from warming to cooling depending upon the climate scenario.

It is expected that Bawnmore 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 bog is expected to develop wetland habitats on shallow peat with open water, reed swamp and fen habitats with alkaline emission factors and a smaller proportion will develop as regenerating wet deep peat vegetation on deep peat areas. Birch woodland is expected to develop on the drier mounds, high fields and along peripheral headlands.

### 3.9 Current ecological rating

(Following NRA (2009) Evaluation Criteria)

Areas dominated by bare peat are deemed to be of **Local Importance (lower value)**. A proportion of the bog are rated as **Local Importance (higher value)** where semi-natural habitats, including woodland, scrub, wetlands and pioneer cutaway habitats are developing.

## 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 BnM 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 Littleton bog group, including Bawnmore Bog, with various stakeholders in relation to:

- General consultation with range of stakeholders at annual BnM Biodiversity Action Plan review days 2010-2018.
- Open consultation with range of stakeholders at annual BAP review days 2010-2018
- Consultation with the North Tipperary Heritage Forum during the period 2010-2015
- General consultation at a local community event in Littleton in Dec 2016;
- General consultation with Tipperary County Council and other stakeholders in relation to the Littleton Labyrinth Project Feasibility Study
- Ongoing engagement with Lisheen Mine
- Archaeological Liaison Committee (National Museum of Ireland & Dept of Culture Heritage and the Gaeltacht)
- Midlands & East Regional WFD Operational Committee (River Basin Management Plans)
- Ongoing consultation with Coillte – proposed Coillte/BnM Midlands Native Woodland Project
- Consultation with Tipperary Climate Action Officer and Biodiversity Officer during Bawnmore site visit (April 2024)

There was specific consultation and engagement about rehabilitation of the Littleton Bog group, including Bawnmore Bog, with various stakeholders during the period 2018-2021:

- Lisheen Mine
- Irish Peatland Conservation Council
- NPWS (site visits)
- Tipperary County Council (2018)
- Tipperary Heritage Forum
- Kilkenny County Council
- Consultation with members of the local community
- Consultation with local community groups
- Slieve Ardagh Rural Development
- National University of Galway
- Limerick Institute of Technology
- Irish Wildlife Trust
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Birdwatch Ireland
- Birdwatch Ireland Tipperary Branch
- Forest Service

- Coillte

To inform the original Plan (Phase 1 Rehabilitation), both national and local stakeholders, including neighbours whose land adjoins Bawnmore 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) were contacted. Any identified local interest groups were informed of the opportunity to engage with this rehabilitation plan and were invited to submit their comments or observations in relation to the proposed rehabilitation (Phase 1) at the Bawnmore Bog or the programme in general (see Appendix XI).

All correspondence was acknowledged and reviewed and evaluated against the rehabilitation measures proposed.

## 4.2 Issues raised by Consultees

To date, a number of issues have been raised by consultees during the consultation process for both the current and previous drafts of the rehabilitation plan for Bawnmore Bog – these are summarised below. A number of general submissions in respect of previous PCAS consultation are also referenced where applicable.

### 4.2.1 Consultation

During the initial commencement of PCAS, a number of consultees including: the Irish Farmers Association (IFA), the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association (ICMSA) and Trinity College Dublin have raised concerns regarding the duration and scope of consultation period. Stakeholders suggested that the consultation period should be extended to allow all potential stakeholders to make submissions where required.

### 4.2.2 Assessments of rehabilitation

Queries on pre-rehabilitation assessments were raised by NPWS and the National Museum of Ireland relating to the finalisation of several bog rehab plans in 2021 in relation to Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment. Further queries regarding AIA were made in a submission by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage – National Monuments Service with specific reference to Bawnmore Bog.

### 4.2.3 Restoration scope

Restoration/rehabilitation of marginal habitats was raised by the Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC) and Butterfly Conservation Ireland (BCI) relating to the finalisation of several bog rehab plans in 2021 and 2022 as worthy of consideration within the rehabilitation measures to support carbon sequestration and biodiversity objectives.

### 4.2.4 Monitoring

Further details on monitoring of ecological metrics, and how and where reporting on this monitoring would take place, was raised by the IPCC, University College Dublin and Trinity College researchers in their respective submissions relating to the finalisation of several bog rehab plans in 2021. Uisce Éireann (formerly Irish Water) reiterated the requirement of a strong monitoring program with respect to water quality during and post rehabilitation.

### 4.2.5 Flooding, drainage or other impacts on adjacent land.

The Irish Farmers Association (IFA), The Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine, individual local residents and ICMSA queried likely impacts relating to the finalisation of several bog rehabilitation plans in 2021 and 2022.

They raised concerns based on the proposed re-wetting in relation to flooding on adjoining lands and, specifically, with regards to the maintenance of drains. In previous submissions, the IFA also raised the issue of Health and Safety in relation to raising water levels as well as possible impacts on land and property prices. Further queries regarding the perceived potential of increased flood risk arising due to PCAS activities were made in a submission by a local member of the public in possession of land adjoining Bawnmore Bog.

#### 4.2.6 *Amenity*

Since the beginning of consultation by BnM relating to Peatlands Climate Action Scheme funded, several consultees including various politicians, have requested information regarding the development of amenities on BnM bogs. Further queries regarding the walkways and accessibility onto the bog post rehabilitation was made in a submission by a local homeowner.

#### 4.2.7 *Water Quality*

A number of consultees have contacted BnM to express their concerns regarding the potential impact of PCAS related activities on water quality within waterbodies that are hydrologically connected to BnM bogs. *Uisce Éireann* have expressed their support for PCAS in general but have also requested information regarding the potential hydrological repercussions of PCAS.

#### 4.2.8 *Future management*

In submissions made on earlier PCAS plans the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) expressed concerns regarding the future ownership of the BnM bogs subject to rehabilitation. They expressed a desire for contingency planning for potential future ownership of designated bogs so as to ensure no negative impacts arise on adjacent properties from any new ownership.

#### 4.2.9 *Other issues*

Other issues (raised by IPCC) during the finalisation of several bog rehab plans in 2021, 2022 and in 2023 included after use of the bog and turf cutting on the margins of the bog (outside of the area owned by BnM). The IPCC have also requested information regarding the resilience of rehabilitation measures to climate change induced climatic alterations.

In the early stages of PCAS archaeological end of life survey of all the bogs were requested by National Museum of Ireland and National Monuments Unit. The National Museum of Ireland also requested that due diligence be taken during works to protect any archaeologically significant findings or areas. They also reiterated the importance of peatlands for the preservation of archaeology and requested they be consulted as part of any EIA undertaken.

A turbary owner with a holding within Bawnmore bog made an enquiry regarding the red line boundary for proposed PCAS activities.

A separate local landowner expressed concerns over the perceived potential increase in flood risk arising due to PCAS activities.

For a complete summary of submissions received and replies, see Appendix XI.

### 4.3 BnM response to issues raised during consultation

#### 4.3.1 *Consultation*

BnM are carrying out consultation as part of the process of developing the rehabilitation plan for Bawnmore Bog. This is ongoing with a dedicated Community Liaison Officer communicating with affected and interested parties. A website has been developed to make information available. This will be continually updated. Some PCAS Bogs have been used as demonstration sites so that interested stakeholders can come to organised visits and observe the measures on the ground.

#### *4.3.2 Assessments of rehabilitation*

Appropriate Assessment screening will be undertaken on all the bogs as part of PCAS. This was undertaken by external consultants for Bawnmore Bog.

Implementation of rehabilitation measures including machine access across the bog will be carried out in conjunction with BnM Ecology Department. Seasonal and other restrictions will be put in place to mitigate against any impacts on biodiversity.

An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) has been undertaken for Bawnmore Bog (Appendix XII). The aim for known archaeology on these bogs is to accomplish preservation in situ and we are taking steps to identify and avoid all known archaeology. BnM aim to achieve this through including all known archaeology in the planning process of rehabilitation works and implementing and exclusion or buffer zone around these features. These measures should sufficiently protect any archaeology in these areas, during any ground works in the final plan. It is anticipated that any archaeology will benefit from the ultimate remit of the rehabilitation, in that water tables will be raised thereby preserving in-situ. There is also an identified procedure for managing reports of stray finds that may arise during rehabilitation works.

#### *4.3.3 Restoration scope*

Consultees during the Phase 1 rehabilitation (2018-2021) including NPWS and the IPCC suggested the use of more intensive rehabilitation measures such as contouring and bunding. These ultimately were beyond the scope of the rehabilitation budget allocated to these sites by BnM at the time (2018-2021). PCAS is an opportunity to carry out some of these suggested measures (e.g. bunding, recontouring) through the Littleton Bog Group as part of Phase 2 rehabilitation.

As part of PCAS, all restoration/rehabilitation options have been developed to support climate action and biodiversity objectives. Other issues such as existing amenity, social impacts, industrial history, archaeology were not part of the direct scope of PCAS but were considered when developing the rehabilitation plan. After-use of the bog is outside the scope of PCAS. Rehabilitation will lead to the development of a stable diverse re-wetted cutaway landscape that will have added benefits for amenity in the future.

As part of PCAS, one of the objectives for the rehabilitation of bogs is to promote the development of a naturally functioning peatland system. BnM would envisage benefits to biodiversity on these bogs as a result of rehabilitation. The most intensive peatland re-wetting will be applied to bare peat areas. Where there are diverse habitats already present, less intensive, targeted drain-blocking will be applied. While the overall objective is to make the bog wetter and increase the footprint of wet peatland habitats, there will still be a mosaic of habitats present, including a transition from wet to drier areas of peat, in areas that cannot be re-wetted.

The local environmental conditions of Bawnmore Bog means that wetland measures combined with some additional works, dry cutaway and deep peat measures are the most suitable rehabilitation approach for this bog to optimise benefits for desirable climate-based emissions reductions. Since phase 1 rehabilitation, there has been some development of pioneer cutaway habitats and wetland habitats within the main PCAS area of the bog. Phase 2 rehabilitation will aim to optimise water levels.

*Sphagnum* inoculation is one measure that was initially suggested by IPCC (in 2018) for use at Ballysorrel to support raised bog restoration. This measure was ruled out initially by BnM due to its relatively high cost, lack of resources and other logistical issues such as lack of suitable local *Sphagnum* donor sites. Since then, BnM has developed the Peatlands and People LIFE Project ([Home | Ireland's Climate Action Catalyst | Peatlands & People](#)) and one of the main objectives of this project on BnM land is to inoculate approx. 800 ha of suitable residual deep peat with *Sphagnum* plugs to speed up the trajectory of development of *Sphagnum*-rich embryonic bog vegetation. So far, 250 ha has been inoculated across midlands bogs. The future selection of sites within the Littleton Bog Group for *Sphagnum* inoculation will be dependent on availability of resources for planting.

#### 4.3.4 Monitoring

As part of PCAS, a monitoring and verification plan has been developed to support climate action and biodiversity objectives. This will include stratified monitoring of bog condition, habitats and biodiversity at several different scales. It is proposed to monitor the improvement of some biodiversity ecosystem services. The appearance of key species such as *Sphagnum* moss will be monitored during walk-over surveys and general monitoring visits. It is not proposed to carry out any additional monitoring of biodiversity ecosystem services at this site. Biodiversity monitoring for PCAS planned for a stratified approach with different targeted monitoring at different sites based on the site characteristics.

It is the expectation of BnM that rehabilitation measures should positively impact the water quality in receiving water bodies through enhancing the water attenuation across rehabilitated sites. The robust water monitoring programme implemented as part of PCAS will be used to assess water quality leaving rehabilitated sites at designated points.

An overview of the Water Quality Monitoring plan is provided to relevant stakeholders, including that water flow and dissolved organic carbon (DOC) is being monitored.

BnM also informed the relevant stakeholders that decommissioning of silt ponds will only be carried out when the EPA are satisfied that adequate stabilisation of the bog has been achieved and silt ponds are no longer required. This decommissioning will be determined by water quality results and EPA approval.

Rehabilitation of bogs in the same catchment is likely to result in beneficial impacts on water quality in the catchment. This will be captured by the results from EPA monitoring stations in the vicinity of the bogs.

#### 4.3.5 Flooding, drainage or other impacts on adjacent land.

It is the intention of BnM that the re-wetting of the bogs will be carried out in such a manner that does not impact on third party lands. Where it is deemed that blocking of a shared drain would cause any adjoining lands to be adversely affected, this will be avoided, and alterations made to the rehabilitation plan. In general, drains around the margins of the bog will not be blocked.

External consultants have been appointed to carry a hydrological assessment to identify any potential impacts to neighbouring lands and to mitigate against any such impacts. There is no potential for direct impacts on arterial drainage downstream.

The rehabilitation measures proposed at Bawnmore Bog will generally result in increased water attenuation across the site and reduce the speed of drainage from the existing peat fields through a mixture of techniques including drain blocking, cell bunding and re-profiling. This will arrest active drainage systems and enable the return of the peatland to its natural, water retention functionality. It is intended that these measures will not significantly alter the existing topographical catchments and that the spine of the drainage networks, those which the upstream catchments drain through, will be retained by BnM.

BnM community liaison officer will meet with a concerned landowner in possession of land adjoining Bawnmore Bog, regarding the perceived potential of increased flood risk arising due to PCAS activities.

#### **4.3.6 Amenity**

Creating amenity developments such as walking tracks is not included within the scope of PCAS. However, PCAS rehabilitation will enable and support potential future amenity developments, and this was reiterated to a local homeowner expressing concern about the future accessibility onto the bog following rewetting.

#### **4.3.7 Water Quality**

It is the expectation of BnM that PCAS rehabilitation should positively impact the water quality of surrounding water bodies through enhancing water attenuation across rehabilitated sites. The robust water quality monitoring programme implemented as part of the PCAS will be used to assess the water quality leaving rehabilitated sites at designated points.

#### **4.3.8 Future management**

BnM will continue to manage their land bank into the future. As peat production has now ceased on BnM lands and rehabilitation measures will be carried out, a regular drainage maintenance programme will not be required or carried out as would have been the case in the past. However, if issues arise with the BnM internal drainage system that affects upstream or downstream landowners, then these issues will be addressed by BnM.

BnM considers issues regarding estate security, fire risk, invasive species and water pollution of utmost importance. BnM intends to maintain security and manage fire risk over the entirety of the estate. In this regard, PCAS activities, should have no detrimental impact on these issues. Regarding water pollution, BnM is regulated by the EPA and as such adheres to the strict water pollution measures laid out by the same.

#### **4.3.9 Other issues**

Other issues, including after-use and management issues outside the boundary of Bawnmore Bog, are acknowledged but are specifically outside the scope of this rehabilitation plan.

As part of the consultation process, The National Museum of Ireland (NMI) and the National Monuments Service (NMS) were included in the stakeholder consultation process. The Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) was in preparation at the time of the submission of the rehabilitation packages to NPWS, it was subsequently provided. The NMS acknowledged that AIA desk-based process and associated outputs designed to ensure any known archaeology was identified and protected during the implementation process, and the Project Archaeologist's recommendations regarding buffering and ongoing vigilance and reporting of any stray finds to NMS. NMS requested that the AIA be supplemented with walking field surveys and that monitoring of rehabilitation measures was undertaken when the work commences.

**Security:** It is the intention of BnM to keep secure the estate and ensure that any anti-social behaviour that occurs within the estate is reported and dealt with by the appropriate authorities.

A number of local landowners expressed a variety of concerns, within submissions on Bawnmore Bog (see above). These queries were addressed through contact with the BnM land liaison officer.

#### **4.3.10 Concluding statement**

- No specific issues were raised during consultation that required significant changes to the substance of the rehabilitation plan.

- Marginal drains will not be blocked to avoid impacts on adjacent lands or lands under the ownership of third parties or turf-banks. This does not change the overall rehabilitation goals and outcomes and can be integrated with the other rehabilitation measures to allow cutaway re-wetting.
- Turbary rights, if present, will remain unaffected.
- BnM intend to continue management of this site into the future and issues such as security and trespass will be addressed on an ongoing basis in association with other stakeholders.
- BnM intends to maintain a “No Shooting” policy on Bawnmore Bog.

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## 5. REHABILITATION GOALS AND OUTCOMES

The rehabilitation goals and outcomes outline what BnM 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 reed swamp and fen on shallow more alkaline peat and other subsoils, or *Sphagnum*-rich regenerating wet deep peat vegetation communities on deep residual peat, where present.
- Supporting ongoing and potential future renewable energy, amenity, and other land-uses. Integrating rehabilitation measures with current amenity infrastructure on site. It is not proposed to carry out any rehabilitation actions to change or negatively affect any infrastructure.
- 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 BnM and which optimise climate action and other ecosystem service benefits.

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

- BnM have carried out rehabilitation at Bawnmore Bog between 2018-2021 (Phase 1 rehabilitation). Drain-blocking and re-wetting was carried out during this phase. The pump was decommissioned in 2018 and the bog reverted to gravity drainage.
- It will take some time for stable naturally functioning habitats to fully develop at Bawnmore 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.
- It is not expected that the cutover bog in the former production area 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, the majority of the cutaway bog is shallow peat and only a small proportion of the bog has potential to develop *Sphagnum*-rich habitats in this timeframe (north-eastern area of remnant raised bog). 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.
- There is potential for the rehabilitated raised bog in the north-east of the Bawnmore to develop active raised bog in the future. Additional works in this section of raised bog, as part of the scheme, will further improve its condition.

- Rehabilitating former industrial peat production bog will also in the longer-term support other ecosystem services such as such 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 BnM). Reducing pressures due to former peat extraction activities at Bawnmore 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 BnM).
- 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.

## 6. SCOPE OF REHABILITATION

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

- The area of Bawnmore Bog within the PCAS rehabilitation footprint.
- EPA IPC Licence - Ref. P0-409-01. 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 Scheme is designed to exceed the stabilisation requirements as defined by the IPC Licence. This scheme is designed to enhance the ecosystem services of Bawnmore 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 majority of the cutaway area has shallow peat reserves remaining, with some pockets of deeper peat. The local environmental conditions of Bawnmore Bog mean that a combination of wetland measures and dry cutaway measures are the most suitable rehabilitation approach for shallow peat areas, including (fertiliser treatment), targeted drain-blocking, wetland outfall management (phase 2 rehabilitation). Deep peat measures (drain blocking) will be applied to areas of deeper peat, including the area of drained raised bog in the eastern lobe.
- BnM have defined the key goal and outcome of rehabilitation at Bawnmore Bog as **environmental stabilisation** of the site via **optimising climate action benefits, where possible**. The re-wetting of residual peat in the cutaway will be optimised, **setting the site on a trajectory towards the development of wetlands/Reed Swamp and fen on shallow more alkaline peat and other subsoils, and the development of peat-forming communities on residual deep peat, where possible**.
- Rehabilitation of Bawnmore Bog will support multiple national strategies of climate action, biodiversity action and other key environmental strategies such was 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).
- The majority of Bawnmore Bog is cutaway with shallow peat reserves and has a gravity-based regime. Post Phase 1 rehabilitation, wetland habitats (fen, wetland, reedswamp) and dry cutaway habitats (birch woodland, scrub and heath) have developed on shallow cutaway in response to re-wetting. Phase 2 rehabilitation will optimise the water levels and increase the rewetted area. The area of drained raised bog remaining in the northeast of Bawnmore is likely to develop active raised bog in time, following Phase 2 rehabilitation.
- **Surrounding landscape and neighbours.** Another key constraint is the interaction between the BnM 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. The rehabilitation will optimise hydrological conditions for the protection of exposed archaeological structures, their retention in situ and preservation into the future. Any newly discovered archaeology may require rehabilitation measures to be reviewed and adapted. An Archaeological Impact Assessment (Appendix XII) will be carried out to mitigate against any impact on archaeology that may be found at Bawnmore Bog. Should any previously unknown archaeological material be uncovered during the rehabilitation works, it will be avoided and reported to the BnM Archaeological Liaison Officer and the National Museum of Ireland.
- **Public Rights of Way.** There are known rights of way at Bawnmore Bog. Where a public right of way or similar burden exists on BnM property, consideration will be given to ensuring that these 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.
- **Turf-cutting.** There are areas of active turf cutting on the margins of the site which have been mapped as a constraint. These areas are ecologically and hydrologically linked to the area owned by BnM where rehabilitation is planned.
- **Coillte.** Part of the marginal areas around the bog were developed for conifer forestry in the 1990s by Coillte. Areas where Coillte forestry overlaps the bog boundary have been identified as constrained land on the rehabilitation plan.
- **Native Woodland Project.** Bawnmore Bog is proposed for inclusion in the Coillte/BnM Midlands Native Woodland Project, with 39 ha proposed for planting at Bawnmore. This proposed project is currently being considered for consent by the Forest Service. Areas proposed to be included in Native Woodland Project have also been mapped as constrained land in the rehabilitation plan.
- **Access.** Part of the access route at Bawnmore is used for log biomass storage (for Edenderry Power).
- **Marginal Agricultural Grassland.** There are some areas of agricultural grassland along the margins of Bawnmore Bog. These areas will not be subject to rehabilitation and have been identified as constrained land on rehabilitation mapping.

## 6.2 Key Assumptions

- It is assumed that BnM 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:

- Areas subject to turf cutting and areas proposed for inclusion in the Native Woodland Scheme are excluded.

- The longer-term development of stable naturally functioning habitats at Bawnmore 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 Bawnmore Bog.
- The longer-term management of this site, potentially as a nature conservation site, or for amenity, or for other uses in the future.

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## 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 BnM 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).

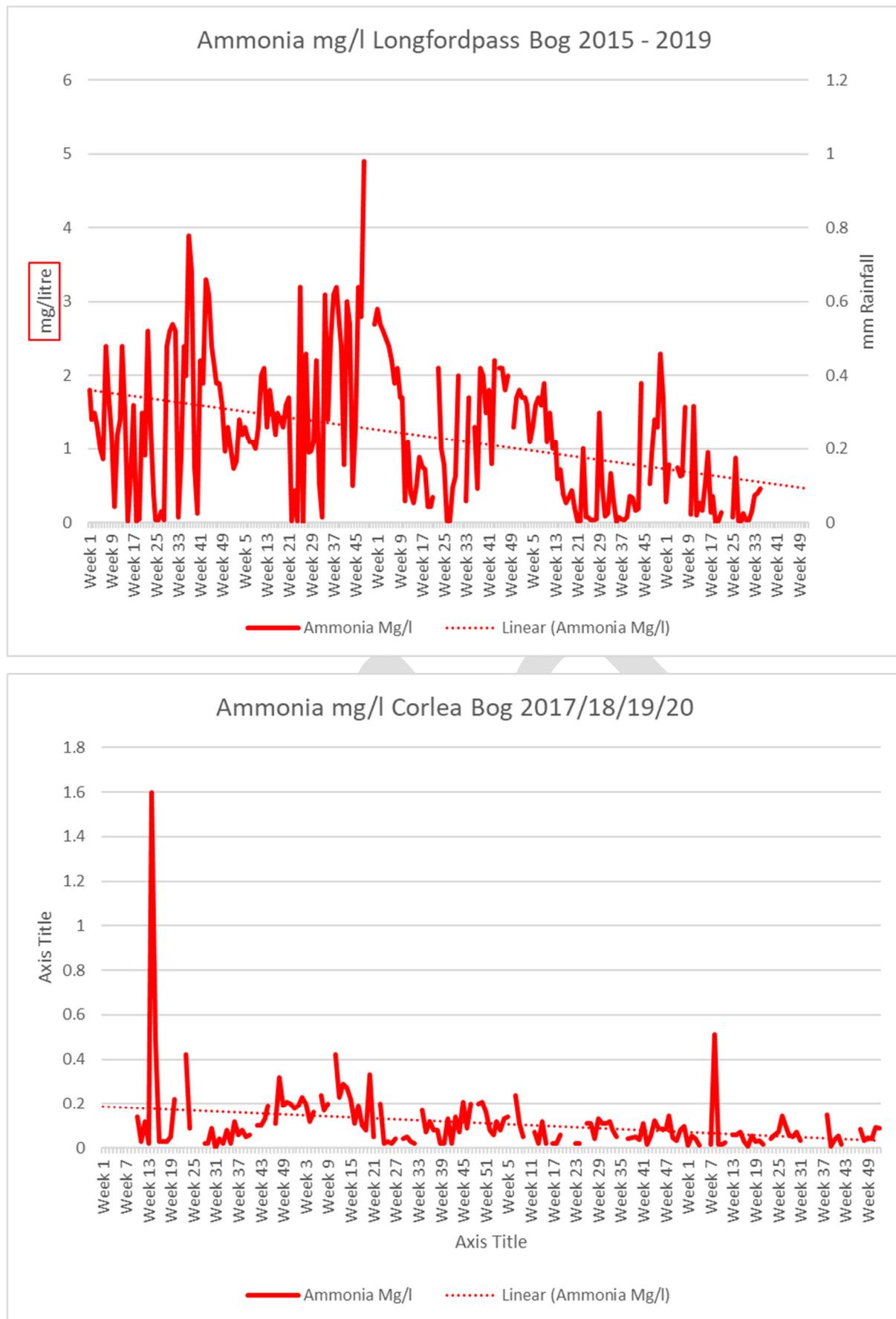
In addition, BnM wish to optimise climate action and other ecosystem service benefits via enhanced rehabilitation measures.

### 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 BnM 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 years, post cessation of peat extraction with ongoing rehabilitation, were considered. These are indicating a downward trend in Ammonia concentrations (Figure 7.1).

As the monthly monitoring program at Bawnmore Bog continues in 2025 and during the rehabilitation works planned for 2025, 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 vegetation communities, wetland, fen, reed swamp, heath, scrub, poor fen, and birch woodland, where conditions are suitable. Some of these habitats have already in part established as pioneer vegetation/wetlands. It will take some time for stable naturally functioning habitats to fully develop at Bawnmore 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.	2025-2027
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	2025-2027
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-monitored in the future and	2025-2027

Criteria type	Criteria	Target	Measured by	Expected Timeframe
			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.	2025-2027
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.	2025-2027

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 (BnM and external).** BnM maintains a provision on its balance sheet to pay for these future costs when industrial peat extraction ceases. BnM 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.
- **BnM to have sufficient resources (staff and training) to deliver the planned rehabilitation with required associated skills and competencies.**
- **BnM 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. BnM 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 BnM 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. BnM will apply a flexible and adaptable approach to the more innovative rehabilitation measures proposed in this plan. If measures are not initially effective, BnM 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, BnM 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. BnM 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-26-08-RP-22: Aerial Imagery 2021*

*BNM-DR-26-08-RP-04: Peat Depths*

*BNM-DR-26-08-RP-03: LiDAR Map*

*BNM-DR-26-08-RP-09: 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-26-08-RP-05: 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.)

Drain-blocking was already carried out as part of Phase 1 rehabilitation between 2018-2022.

Proposed Phase 2 rehabilitation measures for Bawnmore Bog will include (see Table 8.1):

- Wetland measures will be used across the former production area of Bawnmore Bog that has been subject to phase 1 rehabilitation. Previous rehab has increased the height of the water table and several areas of deep, enclosed basins with ponded water have formed. Some additional berms are proposed in these areas. Measures will also include managing outfalls, managing water levels with overflow pipes and targeted blocking of outfalls within the bogs.
- There is an opportunity to review water levels across existing wetlands. 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). The main objective is to increase the potential for wetland habitats to develop and reduce the extent of deeper water. Part of these basins will always have some extent of deeper permanent open water due to the original topography, as these basins are quite low-lying relative to external drainage features. Wetland measures will examine how water flows across the site and will look to install taps or overflow pipes, where needed, to optimise water levels across the site.
- Targeted drain blocking to optimise hydrological conditions/rewet (degraded) raised bog remnants around the margins of the bog. Re-wetting, where possible, using drain blocking (max 7/100 m) and modifying outfalls and managing overflows.
- Deep Peat measures on high fields will include field re-profiling, creation of shallow depressions and management of water levels with overflow pipes and blocking of outfalls and managing overflows.
- Targeted drain blocking (3/100 m) on dry cutaway.

- 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.

Table 8.1: Types of and areas for enhanced rehabilitation measures at Bawnmore Bog.

Type	Rehab Code	Enhanced Rehabilitation Measure	Area (Ha)
Dry Cutaway	DCT1	Blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes	1.6
Dry Cutaway	DCT2	Regular drain blocking (3/100m), modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes and targeted fertiliser treatment.	13.8
Wetland	WLT1	Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway, blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes.	4.6
	WLT2	Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway + modifying outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes + Targeted modifying of outfalls within a site+ targeted fertiliser application.	295.4
	WLT3	Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway + blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes + Targeted blocking of outfalls within a site + constructing larger berms to re-wet cutaway + transplanting Reeds and other rhizomes.	3.3
	WLT4	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m), modifying outfalls and managing overflows, transplanting Reeds and other rhizomes.	0.6
Deep Peat	DPT2	More intensive drain blocking (max 7/100 m) and modifying outfalls and managing overflows.	10.3
	DPT7	Field Depressions 2 x (6m x 10m x 0.2mDp) at spacings of between 25m and 50m + targeted fertiliser treatment.	26.2
Marginal land	MLT1	No work required.	22.5
Additional Work	AW1	No work required.	11.0
	AW2	Targeted Drain Blocking.	20.3
Silt ponds	Silt pond	Silt ponds.	1.1
Constraint	Constraint	Other constraints (rights of way, turf cutting areas, coillte, native woodland scheme, agricultural grassland, access, successfully rehabbed area).	120.1
<b>Total</b>			<b>530.8</b>

*Note that the types of rehab and areas of rehab may change in response to stakeholder consultation and refinement of the enhanced rehabilitation measures.*

### **8.1 Completed and ongoing**

- BnM carried out rehabilitation at Bawnmore Bog between 2018-2021 (Phase 1 rehabilitation). Derryville received some drain-blocking and hydrological management of outfalls. Pumping ceased during this period (See figure *BNM-DR-26-08-RP-30: Previous Rehabilitation*).
- Part of the bog has already re-vegetated, with significant cover of pioneer vegetation developing a mosaic of typical cutaway peatland and wetland habitats developing in basins. Since the cessation of pumping and the sites reversion to gravity drainage, large wetlands have formed.
- Natural re-colonisation of the cutaway so far has been effective. Bare peat areas within the cutaway are reducing as vegetation develops and consolidates.

### **8.2 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 (The Scheme PCAS) will be applied to Bawnmore 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 known archaeology and an archaeological impact assessment (AIA), 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 known rights of way, turbary and existing land agreements is to be carried out.
- A review of remaining milled peat stocks is to be carried out.
- 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 implantation of the rehabilitation plan.

### **8.3 Short-term practical actions (0-2 years)**

- Carry out proposed measures as per the detailed site plan. This will include a combination of bunding and drain blocking on deep peat, and fertiliser application 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 has commenced since peat production ceased, Phase 2 actions will be carried out in targeted areas to accelerate re-vegetation and colonisation of target species.
- 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.

#### **8.4 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 Licence is surrendered.

#### **8.5 Timeframe**

- **2025:** Short-term planning actions.
- **2025-2026:** Short-term delivery actions.
- **2026-2027:** Long term delivery actions. Evaluate success of short-term rehabilitation measures outlined above and remediate where necessary.
- **2028:** Decommission silt-ponds, if necessary.

#### **8.6 Budget and costing**

BnM appreciates the Minister's intention to support BnM 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.

BnM 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 BnM Annual Report (Bord na Móna, 2024). BnM 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).

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## 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](http://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 BnM 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. This 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. 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 Licence 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 Licence 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.

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

BnM operates under IPC Licence issued and administered by the EPA to extract peat within the Littleton Bog Group (Ref. PO-409-01). 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.

This document seeks to address the requirements of Condition 10.2 of IPC Licence Ref. PO-409-01:

*"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."*

Bawnmore Bog is part of the Littleton Bog Group and supplied the Littleton Brickette Factory. BnM made the decision to close this brickette factory in 2017 and to rehabilitate the Littleton Bog Group. BnM carried out rehabilitation at Bawnmore Bog between 2018-2021 (Phase 1 rehabilitation). Bawnmore Bog received some drain-blocking and hydrological management of outfalls. Pumping ceased during this period.

The standard peatland rehabilitation plan is outlined here to **demonstrate rehabilitation that was completed** between 2018-2021.

BnM have covered the costs that 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 BnM. However, the expenditure necessary to deliver the additional and enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration (EDRRS/PCAS) proposed for 2025 and the benefits that flow from these measures and interventions/improvements will be eligible for funding by the EU through Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

### Scope of rehabilitation

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

- The area of Bawnmore Bog.
- EPA IPC Licence - Ref. PO-409-01. 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. Bawnmore Bog is part of the Littleton (Lough Ree) Bog Group.
- The current condition of Bawnmore Bog.
- 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 Bawnmore 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 Bawnmore Bog is 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 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, where needed.
- No measures were 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:**

- 2018-2021. 1<sup>st</sup> phase of rehabilitation. Removal of milled peat stock.
- 2018-2021. 1<sup>st</sup> phase of rehabilitation. Field drain blocking across the bog. Cessation of pumping.
- > 2026. Decommission silt-ponds, if necessary.

**Table AP-1. Rehabilitation measures and target area.**

Type	Code	Description	Area (Ha)
Dry cutaway	DCT1	Blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes	15.4
Deep peat	DPT1	Regular drain blocking (3/100 m) + blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes	36.5
Wetland	WLT1	Turn off or reduce pumping to re-wet cutaway + blocking outfalls and managing water levels with overflow pipes	303.9
Marginal Land	MLT1	No work required	22.5
Additional Works	AW1	Targeted drain blocking	31.3
Other	Silt Pond	Silt ponds	1.1
Other	Constraint	Rights of Ways, Turf Cutting, Access, Coillte, Native Woodland Scheme	120.1
<b>Total</b>			<b>530.8</b>

See Drawing number *BNM-DR-26-08-RP-20: 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](http://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 BnM 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 Licence 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.

Draft

## APPENDIX II: BOG GROUP CONTEXT

The Littleton Bog Group IPC Licenced area was in industrial peat production for several decades until 2017. There are 11 defined bog units covering a total area of 4,421 ha. Each bog area further comprises a range of habitats from bare milled peat former production areas to re-colonising cutaway to workshops areas and transport infrastructure. Industrial peat extraction from these sites mainly supplied briquettes (Littleton Brickette Factory), horticulture and commercial turf for domestic use.

Industrial peat extraction across the majority of the Littleton Bog Group ceased in 2017 (Killeen extended to 2021). Littleton Brickette Factory finally ceased production in 2021. All licences for sod turf production also ceased during this period.

The Littleton Rehabilitation Programme started in 2018. Rehabilitation was planned and implemented across all of the Littleton Bogs. A range of different strategies was implemented across different sites, which reflect variable underlying environmental conditions and land-uses and potential future land-uses at the time.

Drain-blocking was carried out at Ballysorrel Bog and Knockahaw Bogs with the objective of raised bog restoration. These bogs had not had significant peat extraction and retained raised bog restoration potential. Rehabilitation measures at Templetohy took account of the Bruckana Windfarm, which was operational since 2015. Bawnmore, Littleton, and Templetohy were developing cutaway habitats already as scrub and wetland, and targeted measures were carried out through these sites to enhance these developing habitats. More intensive drain-blocking was carried out across Carrickhill, Inch, Ballybeg, Derryvalla, Longfordpass and Killeen Bogs, particularly where there was recent industrial peat extraction and there were functional drains and bare peat dominated. Pumping ceased at Carrickhill, Inch and Bawnmore. Some pumping continued for various periods at Derryvalla, Longfordpass and Littleton, due to operational issues. Some fertiliser treatments were carried out at Carrickhill and Derryvalla in 2020 as a pilot rehabilitation project.

A project called the BnM/Coillte Midlands Native Woodland Project was developed over the same period ([Midlands Native Woodland - Coillte](#)). It was proposed to be funded and administered by the Forest Service. The main objective of this proposed project is to develop and enhance native woodland in areas of cutaway that would remain naturally dry, developing woodland habitat that would naturally complement wetland and peatland habitats already developing across these sites. An initial feasibility study was carried out in 2018 and a project was developed across the Littleton bogs, which finally identified 225 ha of cutaway to be developed as woodland. This project has piloted alternative methods to establish native woodland, including seeding, and these trials were carried out at Bawnmore. This proposed project has not been approved by the Forest Service yet. Areas of cutaway at Carrickhill, Bawnmore, Inch, Ballybeg, Lanespark and Killeen have been proposed as part of this project.

The Littleton Labyrinth is a proposed amenity project that was also developed during this period, in partnership with Tipperary County Council. Initially a feasibility study was carried out that looked at developing greenway amenity, and associated facilities across the Littleton Bogs, and potential links to existing infrastructure and local villages/towns. The first phase of this project was developed by Tipperary County Council in 2023/24, and a greenway was constructed on former BnM industrial railway through Killeen and Lanespark Bog to link with Loch Doire Bhile amenity, north of Lanespark. There are proposals to develop a Phase 2 shortly, with additional links being planned in Ballybeg and Derryvalla Bogs. This project is in pre-planning and is funded via Failte Ireland.

BnM and SSE are currently developing a renewable energy project called Littleton Windfarm, which will overlap Littleton Bog and Lanespark Bogs and a small part of Longfordpass. This project is in pre-planning ([Bord na Móna Wind Farm | Littleton Wind Farm](#)).

Rehabilitation measures so far has been very effective. The majority of the targeted areas have been re-wetted. Ballysorrel and Knockahaw Bogs are responding quite quickly to the new conditions with the development of Sphagnum and improvement in bog conditions. Areas at Templetohy, Bawnmore, Littleton and Derryvila are changing quickly with the development of existing habitats and new pioneer vegetation where there was bare peat. Habitats at Killeen and Lanespark are developing and integrating with the new greenway amenity. Areas in Carrickhill, Inch and Killeen that where large areas of bare peat in 2018 have been slower to recolonise due to underlying environmental factors (deeper residual peat).

BnM are proposing to bring several bogs in the Littleton Bog Group into the Peatland Climate Action Scheme in 2025. The main objective of this proposed phase 2 rehabilitation is to look at enhancing re-wetting and development of pioneer vegetation to support climate action, where possible. Measures are likely to include targeted drain-blocking, use of fertiliser to encourage pioneer vegetation growth, water-level management (adjustment of outfalls and use of over-flows).

A breakdown of the component bog areas for the Littleton Bog Group IPC Licence Ref. P0-409-01 is outlined in Table Ap-2. Industrial peat production history varies across the Littleton bog group, so there is a wide range of peat depths at present.

*Table Ap-2: Littleton Bog Group names, area and indicative status*

Bog Name	Area (ha)	Stage of development	Land-Use and History	Peat Production Cessation	Rehab Plan Status
Carrickhill	171 ha	Cutover Bog  Industrial peat production started in the 1970's and ceased in 2017. There is residual deep peat across much of this site. Carrickhill had a partially pumped drainage system.	Carrickhill Bog formerly supplied peat to the Littleton briquette factory.  Some areas of shallow peat cutaway on site are developing pioneer cutaway vegetation communities.  The pump was decommissioned in 2018.  Drain blocking was carried out in 2018. A fertiliser treatment on part of the headland was carried out in 2021.  The majority of the site is still mostly bare peat.  Carrickhill is proposed for the Coillte/BnM Midlands Native Woodland Project. 28 ha is proposed for planting at this site. This proposed project is currently being considered for consent by the Forest Service.	2017	Final 2018, Rehab measures implemented 2018-2021 Updated 2025
Templetohy	737 ha	Cutover Bog  Industrial peat production commenced at Templetohy Bog in 1940's. Areas began to develop as cutaway during the 1980s as peat extraction ceased on a phased basis. Industrial peat extraction finally ceased in 2017.	Templetohy Bog formerly was developed to supply fuel sod peat and also supplied peat to the Littleton briquette factory.  BnM have constructed a 40MW Wind Farm with 14 turbines and road network on cutaway at Templetohy bog called Bruckana Wind Farm. This windfarm is operational. Pumping is still operational across this site to support the windfarm infrastructure.	2017	Draft 2018 Rehab measures implemented 2018-2021 Updated 2025

Bog Name	Area (ha)	Stage of development	Land-Use and History	Peat Production Cessation	Rehab Plan Status
		<p>This bog has a partially pumped drainage system.</p> <p>Part of the site has developed pioneer cutaway habitats. Areas re-developed for peat extraction in 2015-17 are now revegetating quickly. Areas that were used for peat extraction upto 2017 are a mosaic of re-wetted bare peat and pioneer communities.</p>			
Derryville	250 ha	<p>Cutover Bog</p> <p>Industrial peat production commenced at Derryville Bog in 1970's. Areas began to develop as cutaway during the 2000s as peat extraction ceased on a phased basis. Peat extraction finally ceased in 2017.</p> <p>This bog has a partially pumped drainage system.</p>	<p>Derryville Bog formerly supplied peat to the Littleton briquette factory.</p> <p>Part of the site has been developed for conifer forestry and is leased to Coillte.</p> <p>Part of the site was sold to Lisheen Mine and removed from the IPC Licence in the 2000s.</p> <p>Much of the former production area on site is developing pioneer cutaway vegetation communities, the remainder of the site is bare peat and developing wetland.</p> <p>Pumping continued at Derryville until 2022. Pumping has now ceased, and measures have been implemented in 2024 to manage water levels across the site and to decommission the pump.</p>	2017	Updated 2025
Bawnmore	531 ha	<p>Revegetating cutover bog.</p> <p>Industrial peat production commenced at Bawnmore Bog in 1970's. Areas began to develop as cutaway during the 2000s as peat extraction ceased on a phased basis. Peat extraction finally ceased in 2017. Much of the site is now developing a mosaic of woodland, peatland and wetland habitats.</p> <p>Bawnmore had a partially pumped drainage regime.</p>	<p>Bawnmore Bog formerly supplied peat to the Littleton briquette factory.</p> <p>Much of the site is developing pioneer cutaway habitats and the site has significant biodiversity value.</p> <p>Pumping ceased in 2018.</p> <p>Part of the access is used for log biomass storage (for Edenderry Power).</p> <p>Bawnmore is proposed for the Coillte/BnM Midlands Native Woodland Project. 39 ha is proposed for planting at this site. This proposed project is currently being considered for consent by the Forest Service.</p>	2017	Updated 2025
Ballysorrel	196 ha	<p>Drained raised bog – This site was initially drained for peat extraction. It was developed for peat production in the 1970s, but milled peat harvesting only occurred over a short 2 year timeframe.</p> <p>The site was then left as a peat reserve to be re-developed in the future.</p> <p>Restoration/drain blocking carried out in 2018.</p>	<p>Much of the site was bare peat in the early 2000s. The site has since re-vegetated naturally (in a drier situation) since then and is now responding quickly to the recent re-wetting.</p> <p>Much of the high bog has re-colonised with Heather-dominated vegetation. Small hummocks of <i>Sphagnum capillifolium</i> and <i>S. subnitens</i> are present. <i>Sphagnum</i> spp. are also present in some low-lying areas that are permanently waterlogged and are spreading.</p>	2017	Final 2019
Inch	120 ha	<p>Cutover Bog</p> <p>Industrial peat production since 1970s. Finallyceased in 2017.</p>	<p>Inch Bog formerly supplied peat to the Littleton briquette factory.</p> <p>Some areas of shallow peat cutaway on site are developing pioneer cutaway vegetation</p>	2017	Updated 2025

Bog Name	Area (ha)	Stage of development	Land-Use and History	Peat Production Cessation	Rehab Plan Status
		Inch had a partially pumped drainage regime.	<p>communities with deep peat areas slow to colonise and remaining mostly bare peat.</p> <p>Pumping ceased in 2018.</p> <p>Inch is proposed for the Coillte/BnM Midlands Native Woodland Project. 19 ha is proposed for planting at this site. This proposed project is currently being considered for consent by the Forest Service .</p>		
Longford Pass (Popes Bog)		<p>Cutaway Bog</p> <p>Peat production at Longfordpass bog commenced in the 1940's and finally ceased in 2017. Peat extraction ceased and cutaway habitats began to develop on a phased basis.</p> <p>Longfordpass has a partially pumped drainage system.</p>	<p>Longford Pass Bog initially was developed as a sod turf production site. It then formerly supplied peat to the Littleton briquette factory.</p> <p>The site was bisected by the construction of the N8 Motorway in 2000s.</p> <p>A small area between the new motorway and R639 (old main road) was leased and developed for farmland in 2018.</p> <p>Longford Pass is part of the proposed Littleton Windfarm Project. This project is currently in pre-planning.</p> <p>Some areas of shallow peat cutaway on site are developing pioneer cutaway vegetation communities with deep peat areas slower to colonise.</p> <p>Pumping continued at the site until 2022, when the pumping failed. Since then, measures have been carried out to manage water-levels.</p>	2017	Draft 2018
Ballybeg, Lanespark and Derryvilla		<p>Cutaway Bog</p> <p>Industrial peat production since 1970s and finally ceased in 2017. Peat extraction ceased and cutaway habitats developed on a phased basis during this period.</p>	<p>Ballybeg, Lanespark and Derryvilla initially were developed for sod turf production, and then formerly supplied peat to the Littleton briquette factory.</p> <p>Part of the site has been developed for conifer forestry and is leased to Coillte.</p> <p>Part of Lanespark/Derryvilla (Loch Doire Bhile) was developed as fishing lake and an amenity site in 1999-2002. This site is leased to Slieve Ardagh Rural Development.</p> <p>Lanespark is part of the proposed Littleton Windfarm Project. This project is currently in pre-planning.</p> <p>A greenway was constructed across the site as part of the Littleton Labyrinth Project in 2024, connecting the historical site of Derrynaflan to Loch Doire Bhile amenity, via Lanespark.</p> <p>Additional greenway is proposed to extend amenity through Derryvilla and Ballybeg as part of Failte Ireland. Midlands Trail project. This is currently in pre-planning.</p> <p>Ballybeg and Lanespark are proposed for the Coillte/BnM Midlands Native Woodland Project. 21 ha is proposed for planting at this</p>	2017	Updated 2025

Bog Name	Area (ha)	Stage of development	Land-Use and History	Peat Production Cessation	Rehab Plan Status
			site. This proposed project is currently being considered for consent by the Forest Service .		
Killeen	632 ha	Industrial peat production commenced at Killeen Bog in 1980s. Industrial peat extraction finally ceased in 2021.	Killeen bog formerly supplied peat to the Littleton briquette factory and the horticultural market.  Re-wetting was carried out across the site in 2021.  Some areas of shallow peat cutaway on site are developing pioneer cutaway vegetation communities with deep peat areas slower to colonise since the site was re-wetted.  A greenway was constructed across the site as part of the Littleton Labyrinth Project in 2024, connecting the historical site of Derryflan to Loch Doire Bhile amenity, via Lanespark.  Killeen is proposed for the Coillte/BnM Midlands Native Woodland Project. 31 ha is proposed for planting at this site. This proposed project is currently being considered for consent by the Forest Service .	2017	Updated 2025
Littleton	1,020 ha	Cutaway Bog  Littleton is a relatively old industrial peat production bog. Large-scale industrial peat production began in the 1940's where sod peat was produced for fuel. Sod peat production was mechanised during the 1950's. Milled peat production began in the 1970's and milled peat was supplied to the Briquette factory (constructed in 1981) at Lanespark.  Peat extraction ceased and cutaway habitats developed on a phased basis since the 1890s and some well-established cutaway habitats have developed. Industrial peat extraction finally ceased in 2018.  Littleton has a partially pumped drainage system.	Littleton Bog formerly supplied sod peat before supplying peat to the Littleton briquette factory.  Older cutaway has already extensively colonised with pioneer cutaway, wetland and scrub habitats.  Part of the site has been developed for conifer forestry and is leased to Coillte.  A small area (10 ha) was used as a pilot biomass project and Eucalyptus was planted in 2018.  Littleton is part of the proposed Littleton Windfarm Project. This project is currently in pre-planning.  Some pumps in Littleton Bog have been decommissioned and some have been retained and are still operational.	2017	Updated 2025

See Drawing number *BNM-DR-26-08-RP-24: Littleton Bog Group*, included in the accompanying Mapbook which illustrates the location of Templeouhy Bog and the Littleton Bog Group in context to the surrounding area.

## APPENDIX III: ECOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT

<b>Ecological Survey Report</b> <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>			
<b>Bog Name:</b>	Bawnmore	<b>Area (ha):</b>	531ha
<b>Works Name:</b>	Littleton	<b>County:</b>	Tipperary
<b>Recorder(s):</b>	BnM Ecology Section	<b>Survey Date(s):</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> & 10 <sup>th</sup> of August 2012
<b>Habitats present (in order of dominance)</b>			
<p>The most common habitats present at this site include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bare peat (0-50% cover) (BP)</li> <li>• Pioneer Soft Rush-dominated poor fen (pJeff)</li> <li>• Willow-dominated scrub (eWill) (in mosaic with pJeff) (in those areas that are flooded regularly)</li> <li>• Open water (OW) (permanent) and Temporary open water (TOW)</li> <li>• Wetlands with pioneering <i>Typha latifolia</i> (pTyp) and <i>Phragmites australis</i> (pPhrag)</li> <li>• Birch-dominated scrub (eBir, oBir) (on drier higher ground that is not flooded)</li> <li>• Heather dominated vegetation/Pioneer dry heath (dHeath) (in mosaic with Birch scrub and along the raised bog remnant along the powerline route)</li> <li>• Dry pioneer Purple Moorgrass-dominated grassland (gMol)</li> <li>• Access routes (Acc)</li> <li>• Riparian zones (Rip) (with drains and associated habitats such as scrub and Birch woodland)</li> <li>• Silt ponds (Silt) with Gorse/Birch scrub and Purple Moorgrass-dominated grassland (gMol)</li> </ul>			
<p>The most common habitats found around the margins of the site include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised bog (PB1) (Codes refer to Heritage Council habitat classification, Fossitt 2000), See Appendix II)</li> <li>• Cutover Bog (PB4)</li> <li>• Scrub (WS1)</li> <li>• Wet Grassland (GS4)</li> <li>• Birch Woodland (WN7)</li> <li>• Dense Bracken (HD1)</li> <li>• Improved grassland (GA1) around the boundary where the GIS boundary extends into adjacent fields</li> </ul>			
<b>Description of site</b>			
<p>Bawnmore is located 3km east of Urlingford. The Tipperary/Kilkenny border passes through the site, dividing the site into roughly equal sections. It is part of the Littleton bog group with Inch located to the south and Derryville to the north. A BnM railway passes through the site and connects the northern BnM sites to the wider Littleton network. Bawnmore is found in a lowland landscape and is mostly surrounded by farmland. Coillte forestry does border parts of the western and</p>			

eastern margins. The Lisheen Mine development and wind farm is located close by (< 1 km) to the north-east of the site. Up until 2017/2018, the majority of Bawnmore was managed for industrial milled peat production and is dominated by bare peat and recolonising vegetation. In 2017, Bord na Móna announced the closure of the Littleton Briquette factory and the cessation of industrial peat production in a number of cutaway bogs within the Littleton Bog Group, including Bawnmore.

Bawnmore has an irregular shape with one main lobe (O'Gorman's Bog to the north-east) and several main sub-sections that are divided by the railway network. It has been in industrial peat production for some time and a significant part of the bog is now considered production-related cutaway and is developing typical cutaway habitats. Underlying shell marl and gravel is already being exposed in some of this bog. Bawnmore also contains a relatively large area of marginal high bog that was formerly considered a peat reserve (43 ha). This area borders O' Gormans Bog to the north-east.

Bawnmore has a partially pumped drainage system. There were two main pump stations. The LiDAR dataset indicates that the topography of Bawnmore is quite variable with a relatively high contrast between the highest and lowest parts of the bog. The highest sections are found to the east and include the reserve high bog found along the margins. The lowest parts of the bog are found in the western and southern sections and tend to be underlain by shell marl. Sub-soil (mixed till) mounds and ridges have been exposed around some of the bog and these have affected hydrology in places, for example near the tea centre/Works area where some water is trapped between one of these ridges and the margin of the site.

### **South-East Section**

The majority of the south-west section (south of the railway) was in active milled peat production until 2017. Peat depths increase towards the east and shell marl is being exposed in the western part of this section, where there is a relatively deep basin. This area is pumped towards a silt-pond on the other side of the railway. Several small areas have come out of production in the past around the south-east section. These mainly include higher ground where mounds/ridges have been exposed. These mounds are generally underlain with a mixed till sub-soil with gravel, cobbles and silt/mud. They are being vegetated mainly by Soft Rush-dominated poor fen and Birch scrub. The Birch scrub is developing mostly along the edges of the drains. The small ridge to the north of this section and adjacent to the tea centre has trapped some water to a sub-basin and has created a small wetland. This is relatively young in development with Soft Rush and Bog Cotton-dominated poor fen mainly found around the edges. Some of the drier edges of fields on the mounds are also vegetated with a dry grassland pioneer community (gAn-Ho-Eq) with Sweet Vernal-grass and Bent-grass prominent. Some of the exposed gravel is also being vegetated by disturbed vegetation communities with species such as Colt's-foot. Deeper peat tends to be vegetated by Soft Rush.

The small area of pioneer cutaway located along the southern margin has much more developed Birch scrub compared to the other mounds. There has been some recent drainage work along the southern margin with a new deep outfall dug into the former milled peat production bog.

### **North-East section (O'Gorman's Bog)**

The majority of this area was also still in milled peat production until recently. This area has pumped drainage. There is a small amount of developing pioneer cutaway located towards the north-west. Vegetation tends to be dominated by scattered Soft Rush as well as Birch scrub along the margins of the field-drains. There is a small area with impeded drainage here and this section is being colonised by Bog Cotton as well as Soft Rush. A pump was located midway along the eastern margin of this section. The western margin does have some higher fields that have been out of milled peat production for some time and have re-generated with dry heath and scrub.

There is a large area of partially developed high bog located at the northern end and along the eastern margin of this section. This high bog was ditched in the past but not fully developed (some of the bog may have been screw-levelled). The high bog also has older drains criss-crossing more recent excavated BnM drains and there are also signs of older natural drainage features over the high bog. The original high bog is also surrounded by former cutover bog that has been abandoned for some time and has also regenerated. The whole section has regenerated to some extent, with some sections having infilled drains. At present it seems quite disturbed overall, with Purple Moor-grass scattered through the vegetation and

dominating some sections. It is difficult to determine if some sections are original high bog, secondary cutover bog or natural flushed features due to the disturbance to the high bog vegetation and the topography. A large naturally flushed feature may have been formerly present in this part of the bog.

The western margin contains some original flush vegetation (PF2) dominated by Purple Moorgrass and also containing Bog Asphodel, Tormentil, Hare's-tail Bog Cotton, Common Reed, Devil's-Bit, Carnation Sedge, Spotted Orchid, Bog Myrtle, and Cross-leaved Heath. This side of the bog was not ditched. Gorse scrub has colonised the flush/high bog/secondary cutover further north along the margin, and the flush vegetation is characterised by Common Reed. Purple Moorgrass dominates along the northern margin along with patches of Gorse scrub. This may be former flushed sections or redevelopment of secondary cutover bog. The eastern margin is also dominated by a mosaic of Gorse scrub and Purple Moorgrass. This has more definitely developed as secondary cutover bog as there is a more obvious boundary with the uncut high bog.

The high bog is underlain by a mound along the southern margin with the milled peat production bog. This higher ground has dried out and firm, and the vegetation is dominated by Heather and is more typical of facebank vegetation. Further north into the high bog there are more frequent typical high bog indicators, with patches dominated by Bog Asphodel and Carnation Sedge. Both Bog Cotton species are also present as well as Deergrass and White Beak-sedge. Purple Moorgrass is also present but is not frequent. The bog is still quite firm. *Sphagnum* cover tends to be dominated by hummocks of *S. papillosum*, *S. subnitens* and *S. capillifolium*. Some areas seem to have been screw-levelled and are more typical of pioneer dry heath vegetation where *Sphagnum* is absent. Further north towards the margin the bog gets wetter with significant surface water. The cover of Purple Moorgrass also increases. There is also significant *Sphagnum* cover (50-75%) in places and the drains have also infilled. This may have been as a result of subsidence, creating a basin that collects surface water. There are no indications that the bog is quaking, although it is quite wet. Much of the *Sphagnum* cover is dominated by *S. subnitens* and *S. capillifolium* indicating that it is probably recent regeneration. These sections could be considered as 'active regenerating bog', although there have a quite disturbed appearance (either due to the development or naturally as a result of flushing).

There is a large gravel mound at the southern margin of this section. The railway and some deep drainage ditches pass through this section. The vegetation is well-established and is dominated by Gorse scrub with some Birch. There are also significant grassy areas that have been disturbed more recently. The grassy areas tend to be dominated by Sweet Vernal-grass and Bentgrass (gA-Ho-Eq), although there are also some sections more typically dominated by Purple Moorgrass.

#### **Northern section –east of railway**

This section is bounded on one side by the railway and on the other by the long access road that serves as the main point of access to the bog. There are some grassy areas at the entrance to the bog that are grazed by tethered ponies. These grassy areas tend to be on peat and can be characterised as GS3 dry acidic grassland dominated by Purple Moorgrass and Bentgrass. A long narrow strip of bog along the access track has come out of milled peat production. This is mainly dominated by pioneer Purple Moorgrass in mosaic with other vegetation including Birch scrub. There is also some colonisation of Common Reed and Bottle Sedge in association with the Purple Moorgrass. Some of this ground, although still on a pioneer phase, seems to have characteristics of future potential rich fen with the mixture of Purple Moorgrass, Bottle Sedge and Yellow Sedge. One tussock of Black Bog-rush was noted in this area. Further out and adjacent to the industrial peat production area in this section, the younger fields tend to be colonising with Marsh Arrow-grass.

There is some wetland development at the northern end of the industrial peat production bog in this section. These wetlands are poorly developed so far and consist of Bottle Sedge-dominated vegetation in mosaic with open water. There is some colonisation of Common Reed in patches and some colonisation of Purple Moorgrass in association with the Bottle Sedge where it is drier.

There is a small section of partially developed bog midway along this section, adjacent to the access track. This has now regenerated very well as a mosaic of dry heath, Purple Moorgrass-dominated vegetation and patches of scrub. There were several small patches where Devil's Bit dominated the vegetation and this area could be suitable Marsh Fritillary habitat.

### **Northern section – west of railway**

This sub-section is quite variable. There is a long narrow strip of well-established cutaway along the north-western margin of the bog. The eastern section was in active milled peat production until recently. Shell marl is being exposed and some of this ground is being colonised by Marsh Arrowgrass-dominated poor fen. Further west the ground is higher and there are fields at different peat depths. This section is underlain by a mixed till gravel mound, which is being exposed in places. Some fields are only lightly vegetated and only recently have become inactive. These tend to be dominated by Marsh Arrowgrass and Bog Cotton towards the southern end where the ground is lower. Further north there is more dominance of Soft Rush on high ground with Marsh Arrowgrass where gravel is being exposed in places.

Further west there is a larger low mound with exposed gravel and older pioneer cutaway vegetation. Here there is a mosaic of pioneer dry heath and Soft Rush-dominated poor fen along with open Birch scrub. Around this mound there are some areas with bare peat, along with some wetland areas where water has been trapped between the mound/ridge, high fields and the higher marginal ground. The wetlands in the south-west section are typically colonised with a mosaic of Bottle Sedge, Bog Cotton and Common Reed-dominated vegetation. This forms a mosaic with open water in places.

The long narrow strip of well-established vegetation along the northern western margin of the bog is generally dominated by a mosaic of Purple Moorgrass, dry heath and scrub. The oldest sections are at the southern end where there is extensive Gorse and Birch scrub establishing. The northern end is much younger and there is more poor-fen development in association with Purple Moorgrass. Both Soft Rush and Bottle Sedge dominate some of the vegetation at the northern end of this zone. Purple Moorgrass and Heather appear along the edges of drains. Some water is also trapped in this zone at the northern end creating some shallow wetland or areas with impeded drainage. Some of these areas are developing typical potential rich fen communities with Purple Moorgrass, Bottle Sedge and Yellow Sedge, similar to the vegetation at Lough Doire Bhile. This vegetation is not as diverse yet as that found at Lough Doire Bhile with the moss layer dominated by *Calliergonella cuspidata*.

### **South-west section – wetland**

This section has been out of industrial peat production for some time. It is separated from the cutaway and production bog to the north by a travel path and is bounded by the railway along the east and to the south. The majority of this area is developing wetland vegetation. It is located in one of the lowest topological areas of the bog and is underlain by shell marl, which is exposed in places. A shallow basin has formed here, with high ground along the margins of the bog and the railway. It is divided into several different sub-sections by regular high fields that act as travel paths and also act as berms or embankments within the wetland. There are several large areas of open water. This area is surrounded by Bottle Sedge-dominated poor fen vegetation and in some cases the Bottle Sedge-dominated areas have re-wetted and form mosaics with the open water. There is a lower abundance of Bog Cotton-dominated vegetation in association with the Bottle Sedge. Other species present include Marsh Pennywort, Marsh bedstraw, Purple Loosestrife, Creeping Bent, Jointed Rush and Bulbous Rush. Reedmace is also present. Some Reedbeds are developing in the centre of some of the sub-sections to the west. The drier zones around the edges of the sub-sections tend to be colonised by a mosaic of pioneer Marsh Arrow-grass and Bog Cotton-dominated poor fen. These drier sections may have potential for Yellow Sedge colonisation (and potential rich fen development) in the future. There are also several sections within the wetland where there is some colonisation of Willow and Birch, along with Soft Rush.

These wetlands are likely to have significant bird usage. Fourteen Snipe were flushed along one of the travel paths, and Heron (5), Moorhen and Little Grebe were all noted within the wetland. Local staff report swans, duck and waders (Plover/Lapwing) during the winter.

### **Designated areas on site (cSAC, NHA, pNHA, SPA other)**

None

### Adjacent habitats and land-use

Adjacent habitats include wet grassland (GS4), improved agricultural grassland (GA1), raised bog (PB1), scrub (WS1), Birch woodland (WD7), conifer plantation (WD4) along with active and inactive cutover bog (PB4).

### Watercourses (major water features on/off site)

- Bawnmore is located within the Suir catchment. The Black River flows south along the western margin of the site and then joins the Drish River flowing west until it meets the River Suir.
- There are several main sub-catchments within the bog, with the main catchments separated by the railway. Both the north-east section (O'Gormans Bog), and the northern half of the western section drains into the same silt-ponds along the central railway. Further west, there are two other sub-catchments with drain into silt-ponds located at the south-west corner of the site. The south-west section (south of the railway), is divided into two different catchments, both of which drain towards silt-ponds along the southern margin.
- There are channelized streams/drains along the southern and western margins of the bog. These flow into the Black River. The western channel drains siltponds that treat runoff from Derryville to the north. All of the silt-ponds eventually drain into the Black River.
- There is anecdotal evidence that bogs around the Lisheen mine development including Bawnmore have seen a drop in overall water levels since the development of the mine. This has been correlated with drainage and pumping around the mine affecting the surrounding hydrology. It could be expected that when the mine ceases production, there could be impacts on the surrounding bogs including increasing water levels.

### Peat type and sub-soils

The main peat type exposed at Bawnmore is fen peat. However, some of the cutaway around the margins where peat was thin and overlying mixed till has developed dry heath and Purple Moorgrass-dominated mosaics, which usually indicate more acidic remnant peat.

Mixed till glacial sub-soil is exposed at several locations around the bog including along the northern and north-western margins, the south-west drainage system and in some of the north-west drains. There are also some typical gravel mounds exposed in the cutaway of the western bog. Shell marl is exposed or is being exposed in other sections of the bog including the south-west section the northern section and south of the railway. The shell marl deposits correspond with the lowest sections of the bog and are found in the basins.

### Fauna biodiversity

#### Birds

Several bird species were noted on the site during the survey.

- Little Grebe, Moorhen, Snipe (12) and Heron (4) on SW wetland.
- Yellowhammer singing over Works area in Derryville.
- Reed Bunting, Swallow, Grey Crow, Wood Pigeon, Blackbird, Wren, Willow Warbler, Stonechat, Kestrel (2) and Meadow Pipit.
- Local staff report that Lapwing are attempting to breed on the site in the past year or two. The wetland also attracts wintering swans, duck and waders.

#### Mammals

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

- Badger tracks noted at several locations including the north-east section.
- Hares spotted on bog at several locations. Droppings and prints sighted around the site.
- Fox spoor noted at several locations. Local staff report breeding Foxes on site.

#### Other species

- Several butterflies were noted on site including Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Common Blue, Small Tortoiseshell Green-veined White, Small White, Small Copper. The cutaway along the access road had numerous butterflies including Meadow Brown (32), Green-veined White (5), Ringlet (5) and Small White (1).
- Frog
- Brown Hawker, 6-spotted Burnet Moth.

## 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 BnM 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 BnM 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 plague<sup>7</sup> will be adhered with throughout all rehabilitation measures and activities.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.biodiversityireland.ie/projects/invasive-species/crayfish-plague/>

## APPENDIX VI: POLICY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

BnM 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, BnM 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 BnM 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.

BnM 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 BnM. 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 BnM peatland rehabilitation plan. BnM have also developed and operate various policies and strategies that also inform the development of this rehabilitation plan.

### 1 EPA IPC Licence

BnM operates under IPC Licence issued and administered by the EPA to extract peat within the Littleton bog group (Ref. P0-409-01). 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 Littleton group. This regulatory requirement is the main driver of the development of this rehabilitation plan.

### 2 The Peatlands Climate Action Scheme (PCAS)

BnM understand that it is the Minister's (DECC) intention to impose an obligation on BnM 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 BnM 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 BnM not materialise, BnM will not carry out the enhanced decommissioning, rehabilitation and restoration measures described in this plan. BnM will instead plan to complete an adapted standard decommissioning and rehabilitation measures required under Condition 10 and outlined in Appendix I.

### **3 National Climate 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.

BnM 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.

### **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 BnM.

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.

BnM is a key stakeholder in the National Peatlands Strategy and the Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group. The strategy recognises the potential for some BnM 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 BnM) for the after-use of cutaway bog.

- BnM 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 BnM is not to open up any undrained new bogs for peat production.
- Lands identified by BnM as having high biodiversity value and/or priority habitats will be reserved for these purposes as the principal future land use.
- Generally, BnM 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 BnM's Strategic Framework for the Future Use of Peatlands.

The National Peatlands Strategy highlights the importance and value of developing peatland rehabilitation plans for BnM 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 National River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 (Water Framework Directive)

The Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2022) 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 2022-2027 outlined how peat extraction can be a potentially significant pressure on various water quality parameters. Peatland rehabilitation of BnM cutaway (in addition to other measures) was part of the WFD (2022-2027) programme of measures. The NRBMP 2022-2027 takes account of the fact that BnM 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 2022-2027 rehabilitation target was superseded by the acceleration of the BnM de-carbonisation programme and the Scheme (PCAS).

The development of site rehabilitation plans and the delivery of peatland rehabilitation by BnM was expected to have a positive impact on water quality and will help the NRBMP 2022-2027 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 NRBMP 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 BnM 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 NRBMP 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 2<sup>nd</sup> National Biodiversity Action Plan outlines the main policies, strategies, actions and targets in relation to biodiversity. This plan has several BnM 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.

## **7 National Conservation Designations**

BnM 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). BnM 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.

BnM 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 BnM 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 BnM 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.

BnM 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. BnM 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 BnM specific action in this plan includes the adoption of pollinator-friendly management within the BnM 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 BnM 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. BnM 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 BnM heritage, tourism, biodiversity/conservation, landscape, renewable energy, and economy/enterprise.

## 11 National Archaeology Code of Practice

BnM operated under an agreed Code of Practice (COP) regarding archaeology with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the National Museum of Ireland which provided 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>)

Under the Code, BnM, the Minister and Director worked together to ensure that appropriate archaeological survey and mitigation was carried out in advance of peat extraction.

As peat extraction ceased in 2019, the remaining elements of the COP that are still applicable include:

- BnM must ensure that any newly discovered monuments on BnM 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 BnM lands are reported immediately to the Duty Officer of the National Museum of Ireland.
- BnM will adhere to the Archaeology Code of Practice relating to management of any archaeological finds that may arise during cutaway peatland rehabilitation and decommissioning.

Under the Peatlands Climate Action Scheme, an Archaeological Impact Assessments is prepared for each bog in advance, from a review of historical data and desk-based searches of:

- The IAWU Peatland Survey
- BnM Re-assessment survey 2009
- The Sites and Monuments Record that is maintained by the Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- The topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland.
- The Excavations database
- Previous assessments
- Field survey

The Draft AIA determines and advises on any known archaeology and its required protection, and determines what is required to be undertaken if archaeology is found during the rehabilitation.

## 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 BnM 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 BnM 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 BnM Commitments

BnM 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 BnM'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 BnM. 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 BnM Strategic Framework for the future use of cutaway peatlands 2020 (Draft)

The general after-use strategy of BnM is outlined in the BnM Strategic Framework for Future-Use of Cutaway Bogs 2020 (draft document). This document outlines how BnM'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, BnM 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 BnM 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.

**Draft**

## APPENDIX VII: DECOMMISSIONING

### 1. Condition 10 Decommissioning

Decommissioning 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 BnM 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	Bawnmore 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	Decommissioning or Removal of Buildings and Compounds
5	Decommissioning Fuel Tanks and associated facilities	Where relevant
6	Decommissioning and Removal of Bog Pump Sites	Where relevant
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.

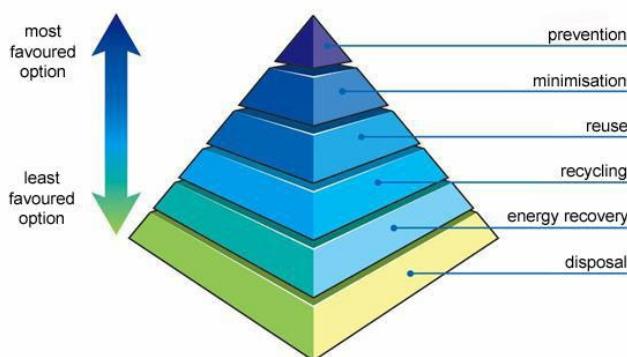
7.3.5 The tonnages and EWC Code for the waste materials listed in *Schedule 2(i) Hazardous Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* and *Schedule 2(ii) Other Wastes for Disposal/Recovery* sent off-site for disposal/recovery.

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, BnM will utilize the appropriate waste hierarchy to identify waste that can 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 after use 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	Bawnmore 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 BnM 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 heterogeneous 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 heterogeneous 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 BnM 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 BnM 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, BnM 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 acrotelm – 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 BnM 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 PO-409-01, Littleton Group of Bogs located in Co. Tipperary/Co. Kilkenny.

#### **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 Littleton 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 remains in situ or is 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 bogs 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 PO-409-01 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 out 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 bogs 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 Allen Clonsast 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-effected 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 Littleton IPPC Licence PO-409-01.

## 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 <sup>3</sup> 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 <sup>3</sup> 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 APXI -1 Consultees contacted

Bog Name	Contact Organisation	Contact Name	Date of Issue	Format	Date Response Received	Response Format
Baunmore	Private individual A		27/11/2017	Letter		
Littleton Bog Group	Irish Peatland Conservation Council	Several staff members		letter	14/02/2018	
Ballysorrell, Templetohy, Baunmore	National Parks and Wildlife Service	Several staff members	6/02/2018	Site meeting	8/3/2018	
Lanespark	Private individual B		11/04/2018	Site Visit	11/04/2018	
Ballysorrell, Carrickhill Baunmore	University of Galway	Several staff members	23/04/2018	Site Visit	23/04/2018	
Littleton Bog Group	Private individual C		25/04/2018	Phone	25/04/2018	
Derryvilla	Slieve Ardagh Rural Development Group	Several staff members	1/06/2018	Meeting	1/6/2018	
Littleton Bog Group	National Parks and Wildlife Service	Regional staff members	24/05/2018	Email	1/06/2018	
Littleton Bog Group	General community meeting – Loch Doire Bhile, site visit to Baunmore		12/06/2018	Site Visit/meeting	12/06/2018	
Littleton Bog Group	National Parks and Wildlife Service	Regional staff members	14/06/2018	Site visit	14/06/2018	
Littleton Bog Group	Tipperary County Council	Heritage Officer	23/06/2018	Phone	23/06/2018	
Derryvilla	Private Individual D		27/06/2018	Meeting	27/06/2018	
Littleton Bog Group	Birdwatch Ireland	Several staff members	1/08/2018	Email	3/08/2018	
Littleton Bog Group	Irish Peatland Conservation Council	Several staff members	1/08/2018	Letter	15/08/2018	
Littleton Bog Group	Kilkenny County Council	Heritage Officer	1/08/2018	Email	3/08/2018	

Bog Name	Contact Organisation	Contact Name	Date of Issue	Format	Date Response Received	Response Format
Littleton Bog Group	National Parks and Wildlife Service	Several staff members	1/08/2018	Letter	9/10/2018	
Littleton Bog Group	Irish Peatland Conservation Council	Several staff members	30/08/2018	Meeting	30/08/2018	
Littleton	Forest Service	Several staff members	14/08/2018	Email	14/08/2018	
Baunmore & Littleton	Birdwatch Ireland – Tipparay Branch	Several staff members	1/10/2018	Site visit	1/10/2018	
Littleton Bog Group	Tipperary County Council	Several staff members)	5/11/2018	Email	19/11/2018	
Littleton Bog Group	Tipperary Heritage Forum	Several staff members	15/02/2019	Presentation	15/02/2019	
Knockahaw	Private Individual E		1/02/2019	Site Visit	1/02/2019	
Littleton Bog Group	Environmental Protection Agency, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Irish Peatland Conservation Council	Several staff members	26/02/2019	Presentation meeting	26/02/2019	
Baunmore	Irish Wildlife Trust	Several staff members	12/05/2019	Site Visit/Walk	12/05/2019	
Lanespark Derryvilla	National Parks and Wildlife Service and Slieve Ardagha Rural Development Group – Loch Doire Bhile	Several staff members	22/05/2019	Meeting	22/05/2019	
Longfordpass	Private Individual F		5/07/2019	Site visit	5/07/2019	
Ballysorrell	Heritage Week Walk - Ballysorrell	Several staff members	17/08/2019	Site Visit/Wak	17/08/2019	
Baunmore Carrickhill	Limerick Institute of Technology	Several staff members	13/09/2019	Site visit	13/09/2019	

**APXI -2 Response summary from Consultees contacted**

Organisation	Summary of Response by Stakeholder
NPWS 8/3/2018	<p><b>Ballysorrell</b> All walked over the bog and viewed the bog restoration works. MCC outlined work carried out so far and work planned for the future. Planned work is &gt; 75% complete.</p> <p>NPWS very complementary of the bog restoration work (drain-blocking with peat dams) carried out so far. All agreed that the bog had significant potential for bog restoration, and future nature conservation. Signs that the bog is already re-wetting in places due to drain-blocking. Discussions about potential for designation of the site for nature conservation by NPWS in future. Review and discussion of NPWS degraded raised bog model outputs for Ballysorrell. Model predicted that 9 ha would have potential for development into active raised bog in the future. General view was that this was probably an under-estimate and that the model likely to be affected by the intensive BnM drainage network. Discussion of potential measures to further increase re-wetting of the bog including berms across high bog at southern section.</p> <p><b>Bruckana</b> All visited the Bruckana Windfarm. Viewed a cutaway bog area within the windfarm complex where there has been significant natural colonisation for at least 20 years and some targeted hydrological management. Discussion of the former history of Templetohy Bog as a sod turf production bog. Sod turf cutaway tends to have deeper remnant peat, which in turn can develop Sphagnum-rich vegetation, where conditions suit. Attendees viewed some wet cutaway where there has been some Sphagnum colonisation. Discussion of environmental conditions that led to the development of this specific vegetation type. Discussion of potential to re-wet similar cutaway, with similar environmental conditions and deeper peat, to encourage development of Sphagnum-rich peat-forming vegetation. Discussion of different constraints and opportunities for this type of re-wetting. This Sphagnum-rich peat-forming vegetation only has potential to develop in certain environmental conditions in association with deeper peat. NPWS suggested that intensive bunding would have potential to increase the overall re-wetted area. There was general discussion of potential larger project opportunities, in association with planned BnM rehabilitation or future BnM afteruse development. These larger projects could potentially focus on GHG emission reduction, creation of peat-forming habitats, biodiversity enhancement, other ecosystem services enhancement/restoration.</p> <p><b>Baunmore</b> All visited Baunmore cutaway. Baunmore is a typical milled peat cutaway with pumped drainage and with shallower remnant peat more typical of milled cutaway in the Littleton Bog Group, in contrast to Bruckana. All walked part of the bog where some recent rehabilitation trials have been carried out. MMC pointed out the recent field drain blocking using a bull-dozer that has been carried out so far. The target here was to block drains, re-establish surface drainage and re-wet peat. This work has already successfully held back surface water in places. The cambered fields and variable topography mean that a proportion of the peat fields remain dry. The expected habitat development is a mosaic of poor fen wetland communities, Reed swamp and scrub/wet woodland. MMC explained how blocking the field drains is Phase 1 of the planned rehab trial and that Phase 2 will involve blocking outfalls and cutting new overflow drains to further manipulate overall water levels. The overall strategy is to maximise the area of re-wetted peat with water levels close to the peat surface and emergent wetland communities. NPWS staff suggested that more intensive bunding would have potential to increase the overall re-wetted area and help manage water levels. All then examined some cutaway that is colonising naturally with pioneer vegetation. This cutaway is much more alkaline compared to Bruckana with indicators such as the presence of Black Bog-rush.</p>

Organisation	Summary of Response by Stakeholder
Tipperary County Council	<p>The draft plan is an overview of the rehabilitation within the Littleton bog group this comprises of 12 bog areas. The plan is developed under Condition 10 of IPC Licence Ref. P0499-01. (An incorrect licence ref. is given in the plan.) Any consideration for future after uses for the bog areas will be subject to the planning regulatory framework and the Environment section will be obliged to comment at this time on a more detailed proposal.</p> <p>The rehabilitation plan should include best practice measures for the restoration of an optimal range of biodiversity and ecosystems. The aftercare management activities on the level, quantity and quality of water both on site and in the surrounding landscape should avoid any unnecessary deterioration in the quality and quantity of ground and surface waters.</p> <p>After use, peatland water levels and flow regimes should be restored to as close to the natural reference conditions as possible.</p> <p>Any works carried out must be detailed and all stakeholders consulted.</p>
Irish Peatland Conservation Council	<p>The IPCC welcome the zonation of Ballysorrell Bog for biodiversity and the decision not to develop it for peat resources (Page 3). Ballysorrell Bog is quite southerly in its location and its rehabilitation and zonation for biodiversity will help to extend the range of raised bog habitat in Ireland, which according to "The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland   2013" (NPWS, 2013) is "BAD". We have a few questions and points to make on the draft re-habilitation plan with the aim to improving its content. It is good to see that Bord na Móna will be restoring the hydrology of the high bog through drain blocking as mentioned on Page 4 and that you also intend to carry out a trial rehab programme of a selected area for training purposes. Could you please elaborate on this? What training/trials do you intend to conduct and is it only inhouse training for Bord na Móna staff? The rehabilitation process may be a good time to test the Canadian method of Sphagnum transfer as there would be time to prepare the site prior to drain blocking. Please give this suggestion consideration as you indicated the peat present as light red brown Sphagnum peat (Page 9). There is Sphagnum on site that could be harvested and used as a donor inoculum for a Sphagnum trial. Page 5 gives information on the short and long-term time-frames of the plan. Could you give more details on the methods that will be utilised to monitor the hydrology i.e. will piezometers be used to measure water levels and will they be measured before drain blocking? This could ensure that any hydrological successes will be shown. In addition, how frequently will the ecotope mapping be conducted? Page 3 details the time-line for the development of Ballysorrell ("Ballysorrell was originally developed....."). Could this historical timeline be re-written as it is difficult to follow. For instance, when did the private sodpeat cutting around the bog cease? When did the milled peat production cease? Could you please specify how Ballysorrell Bog will help to achieve the national conservation target for active raised bog and supporting habitat in Ireland? Are there plans to formally designate this site in the future? Thank you for giving us this opportunity to make some comments on this welcome initiative by Bord na Mona.</p>
Birdwatch Ireland	<p>Many thanks for this – good to see it! He didn't get any curlew on site this year, but we now know (due to a communication breakdown!) that he didn't survey the main area; he did go and have a look last week at Derryhogan and not surprisingly, didn't find anything, it being probably too late. Next year, we will be better organised and hopefully will be able to monitor the occurrence of the pair on site, as well as the Lapwing, if present. When do you think any rehabilitation works on the Curlew and Lapwing areas might start? I know the planned AA will cover timing of works in relation the breeding bird season season, however, it would be good to know timescales for these areas. Just one initial comment, the breeding Lapwing would be important nationally (not just at county level) , as they are red listed and being now very scare, even small populations are important in the context of maintaining the geographical spread of the resource.</p>

Organisation	Summary of Response by Stakeholder
Private Individual A	Seeking return of land at Baunmore CPOed by Bord na Móna
NPWS 09/10/2018	<p>The Department, particularly, welcomes the restoration measures proposed for Ballysorrell Bog and Knockahaw Bog which will result in the development of active raised bog habitat and acknowledge that this will significantly aid Ireland in meeting its commitments under the EU Habitats Directive. Whilst it is appreciated that “the rehabilitation measures will be adapted to the various baseline conditions” (Part 1, pg.20) the Department recommends that Bord na Móna consider more fully the potential for forward-planning during production phases of its operation so that the topography of the commercial fields could be engineered so as to best facilitate rewetting of the sites. Such an approach would better conform to Principle 17 (afteruse of cutaway peatlands) of the National Peatlands Strategy (2015). The Department recommends that the ongoing research into the interaction between rehabilitation measures and carbon emissions is prioritized so as to better inform future rehabilitation plans. In the absence of the assimilation of such research outputs into rehabilitation planning it is nonetheless recommended that serious consideration is giving to reprofiling works within the Littleton Bog Group. In relevant sites this could greatly improve the baseline conditions for rewetting and would be justified on the basis that rewetted cutaway has lower carbon emissions than dry, bare cutaway. The foregoing is in line with Principle 19 (contribution of peatland rehabilitation and restoration to climate change mitigation and adaption) of the National Peatlands Strategy. There is some difficulty interpreting the maps due to their complexity and the size of the legend. Maps showing specific restoration actions would be useful, possibly in the form of an overview grid at a scale 1:35,000 with more detailed mapping as per grid squares. Eco-hydrological modelling based on LiDAR/DTM would be essential to ascertain the potential to achieve wet habitats with the potential to turn into carbon sinks. .... 2 The Department is keen to continue engagement with Bord na Móna as regards investigating more engineered restoration techniques likely to provide results in line with the principles of the National Peatlands Strategy. The NPWS of the Department would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to allow for the Plan to be presented by your Ecology Team and to further explore the options of external funding such as EU LIFE funding, as discussed in previous meetings.</p>
IPCC 15/08/2018	<p>Could you please clarify the correct area for the group of 12 sites included: is it 5050ha (Page 11, Section 4.2) or is it 4824ha (Page 11, Table 1). If it is the latter could you clarify what the other 226ha constitutes please. IPCC's principal interest in this plan lies in the future of existing acid peat bog remnants, the potential of the cutaway areas to provide biodiversity value and priority habitats for nature conservation, climate change mitigation and the extent to which the plan meets requirements of the National Peatlands Strategy 2015. The area of peatland included in the Littleton Bog Group is significant in the county of Tipperary as it represents one third of the original area of raised bog that occurred in the whole County particularly concentrated in South Tipperary (Hammond 1979 Peatland Map of Ireland) the southern distribution range for raised bogs described in the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species. In your plan on Table 5 only two bog restoration sites (Ballysorrell and Knockahaw) are proposed covering an area of 567ha. Can you explain the method used in choosing these areas for bog restoration and were any other sites considered within the group? IPCC maintain that two sites is far too little considering the area of the land in the Littleton Group and the lack of any sites of conservation value in this area of former raised bog distribution. We note that Killeen Bog contains acidic peat and that it appears to be earmarked for horticultural peat (sod moss judging from the satellite photograph) should this be required. On Page 16 in conclusion 5 the plan states that this bog could be restored if horticultural peat extraction is stopped. IPCC strongly recommend the immediate cessation of this activity on this site and its inclusion in the restoration sites plan. We have reasoned with Bord na Móna on numerous occasions about the continued national production of horticultural peat as we do not agree that this use represents responsible management as defined in principle P24 in the National Peatlands Strategy. We understand that Sod Moss is regarded in economic terms as a “lost leader” product which negates any economic argument for keeping this site in production. Here in Littleton where Bord na Móna have exploited over 5000ha of Tipperary's natural peatland resources, all peat production should cease and every effort should be made to restore suitable acid peat resources to living bog</p>

Organisation	Summary of Response by Stakeholder
	<p>where they exist. In this regard on Page 15 (Section 4.3.1.1 [ii]) two further sites with acid peat are mentioned - Carrickhill (substantial raised bog cutover east and west of the cutaway) &amp; Inch (raised bog cutover to the south west of the cutaway) - why are these sites not being included in the bog restoration sites line-up? In the IPCC Sites Database we have a site named Longford Pass - Littleton Bog which is a remnant raised bog that we surveyed with a former Bord na Móna employee Sean Canney and which we subsequently used for educational purposes with local schools with the agreement of Bord na Móna. We would like to see this site included in the bog sites restoration list. (Grid ref. = S 23023 59319).</p> <p>IPCC are very unclear about your aims for the non-designated sites with considerable wildlife interest described on Page 21 of the plan. We estimate that there are 10 sites mentioned that are noteworthy for birds, crustaceans and invertebrates. In addition a further 3 rehabilitation sites are included in the Bord na Móna Biodiversity Plan. On the one hand Bord na Móna makes use of the fact that cutaway bogs are rich in biodiversity as part of the "Naturally Driven" image you like to portray but we can see no substantial commitment to undertake targeted management actions in relation to enhancing and maintaining these species on the sites. For example on Page 19 you state that without additional funding targeted conservation works for breeding birds will not be a feature of this plan. This is wrong and is at odds with Principle 15 in the National Peatlands Strategy 2015. In relation to climate change this rehabilitation plan needs to ensure that all of the cutaway bogs within the Littleton Group are rewetted to prevent carbon leakage. In our experience through visits to Mount Lucas, Ballycon and Lullymore cutaway bogs there are substantial areas within these rehabilitated sites that are dry and emitting carbon. Why does Bord na Móna not recontour sites with un-even topography to ensure that the majority of the bare peat is rewetted? Surely at the peat production stage more effort could be made to extract the peat so that flat substrate remains. Can you indicate within the plan the percentage of peat that will be rewetted and be carbon neutral? This is an important consideration in line with national climate change policy. IPCC find that the plan is overstating the company's intention to cease peat production for electricity by 2030 as their contribution to climate change policy</p>
Private Individual B	Meeting to discuss land security issues and leasing of land at Lanespark and Derryvilla.
Private Individual C	Phone call to discuss potential to develop greenway amenity across the Littleton Bog Group.
Private Individual D	Meeting to discuss boundary issues and potential impact of rehabilitation on adjoining land
Private Individual E	Meeting to discuss potential gun club project at Knockahaw Bog.
Private Individual F	Meeting to discuss rare orchids at Longfordpass railway cutting

## 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.



		Land & Habitats– Bog Operations	
		Archaeological Findings	
Document Approved By:	Revision Date:	Doc No:	Revision No:
EMD	13/08/2024	ENV017	2
	Control Location		Page
	Environment Department		1 of 5

## Purpose

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

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

## 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 manmade 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.

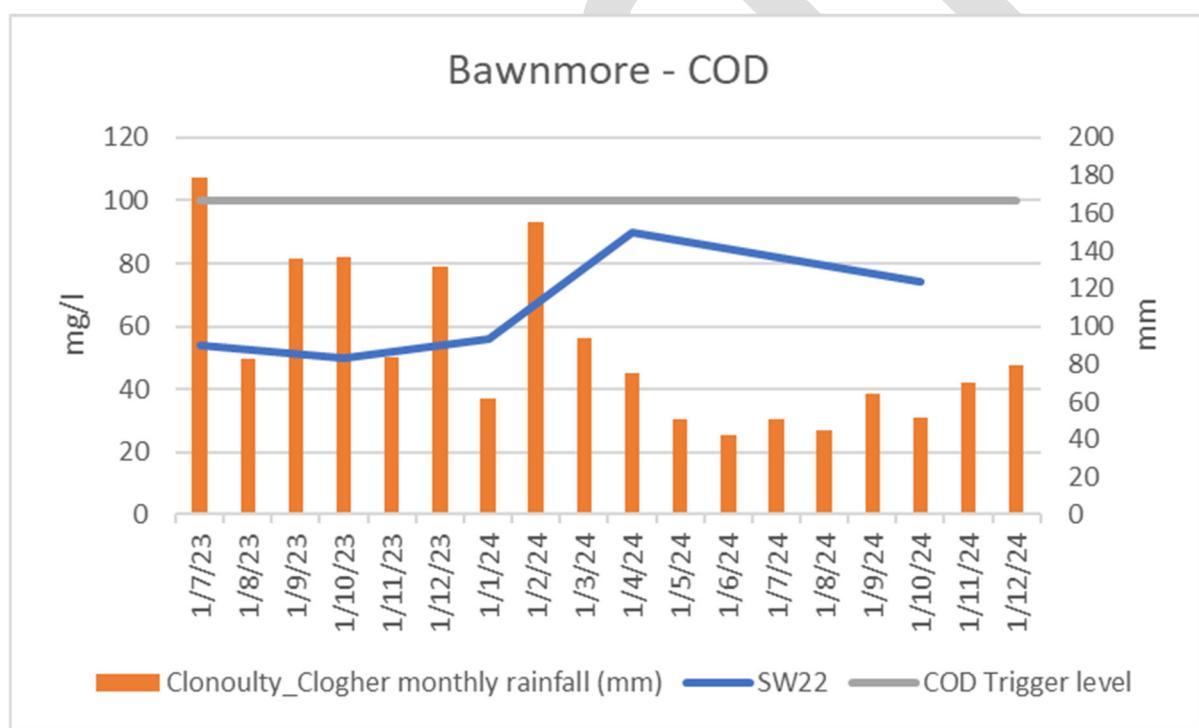
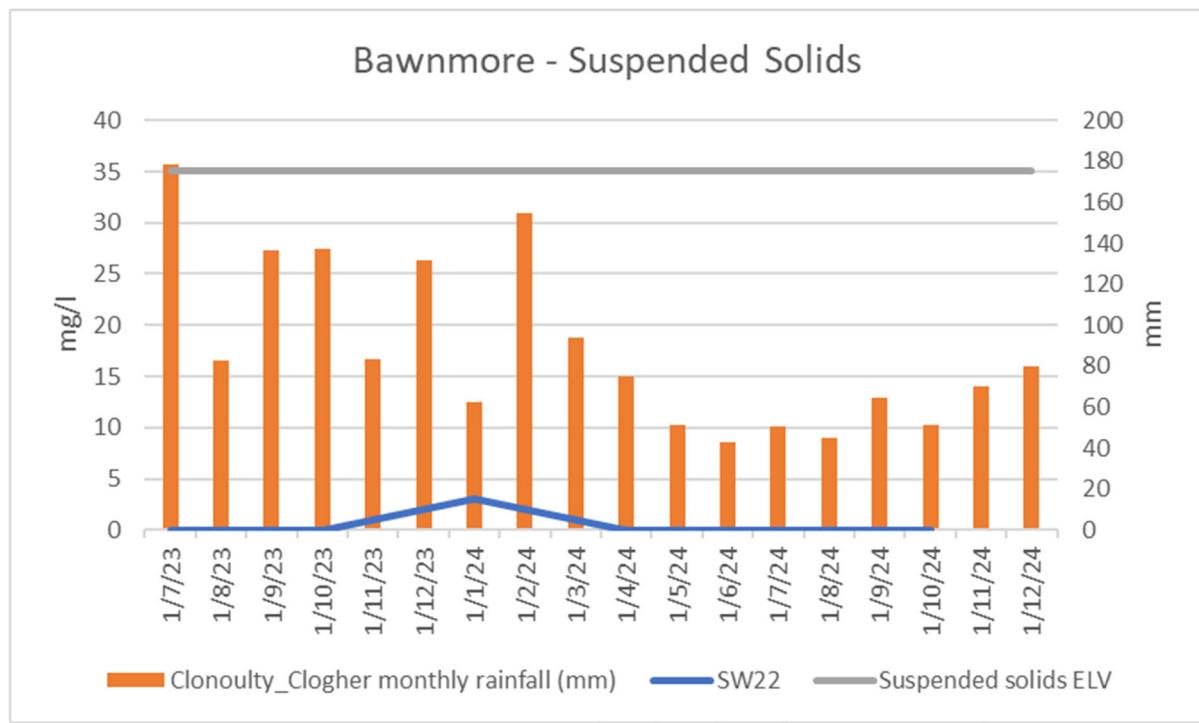
Your Archaeological Liaison Officer is Enda McDonagh.

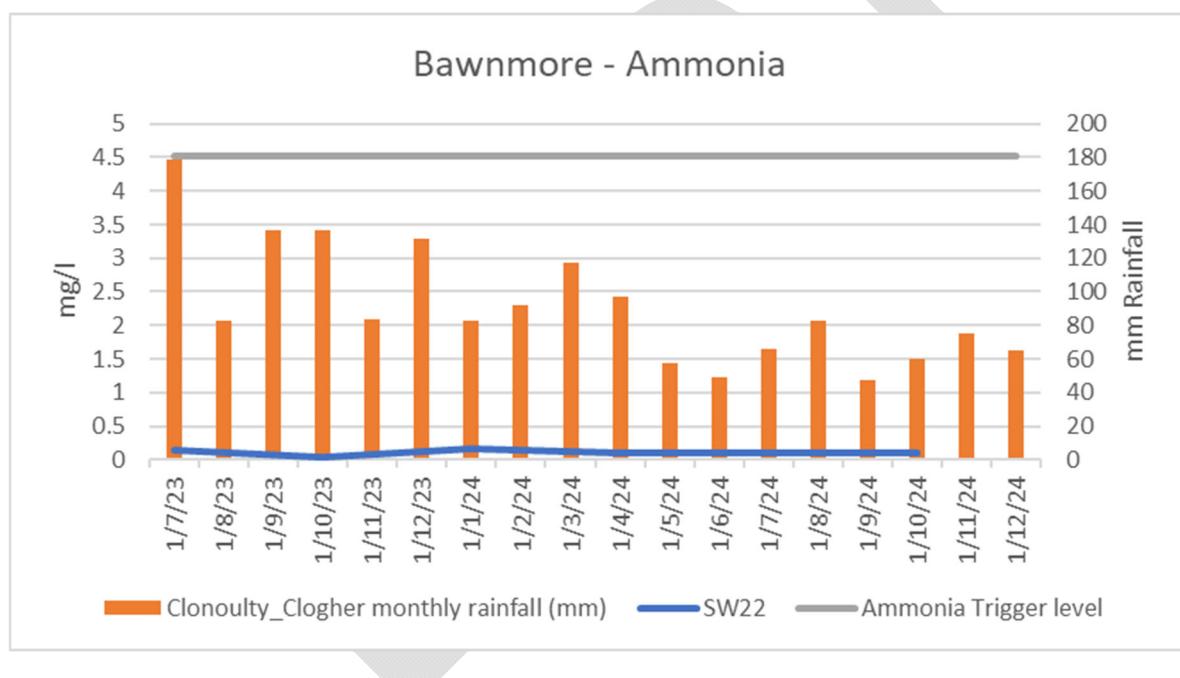
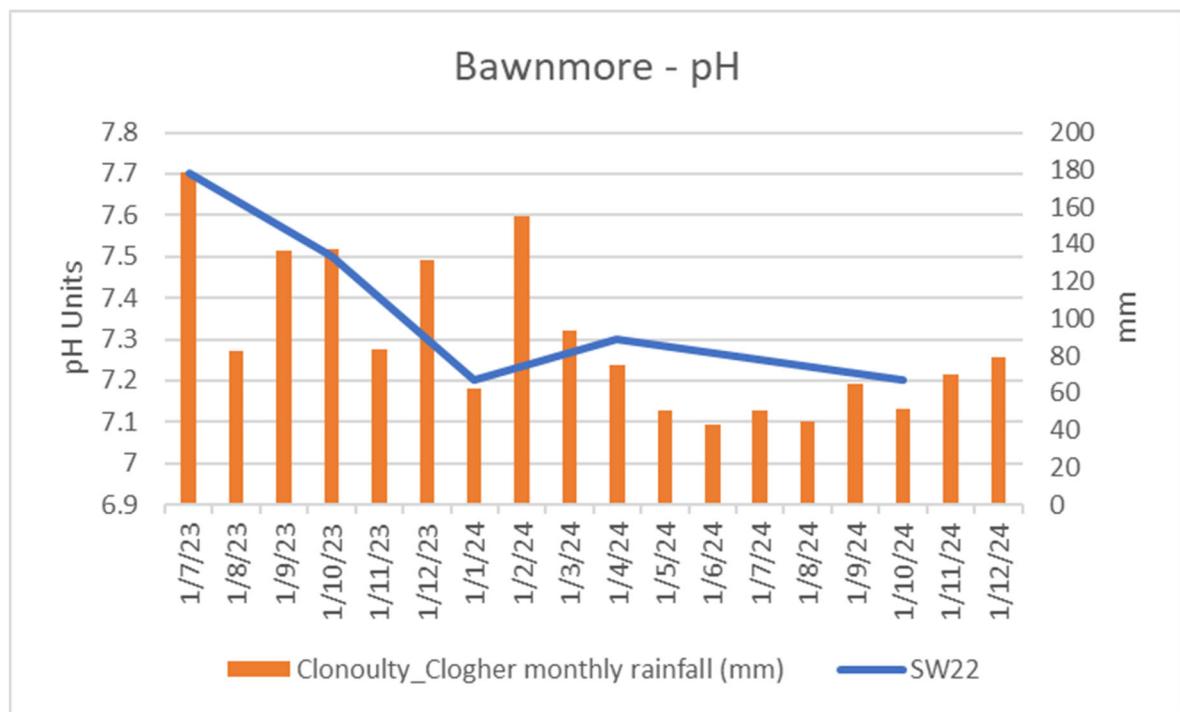
## 2) Records

Revision Index			
Revision	Date	Description of change	Approved
1	13/19/2020	First release	EMcD
2	13/08/2024	Second release	EMcD

Draft

## APPENDIX XIV: WATER QUALITY MONITORING RESULTS FOR BAWNMORE BOG





PCAS SW Sampling Scheme				Suspended Solids												Suspended Solids														
Bog Group	Licence No	Bog Name	SW Code -GIS	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	
Littleton Group	P0499-01	Bawnmore	SW22	<2				<2				3				<2														
Clonoulty	Clogher monthly rainfall (mm)			178.5	82.5	136.2	137	83.7	131.3	62.1	155	93.9	74.9	50.9	42.8	50.7	44.7	64.6	51.5	70.3	79.6									
	Suspended solids ELV			35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35		
PCAS SW Sampling Scheme				Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour	Colour		
Bog Group	Licence No	Bog Name	SW Code -GIS	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co	mg/l Pt Co		
Littleton Group	P0499-01	Bawnmore	SW22	212		167			231			256																		
Clonoulty	Clogher monthly rainfall (mm)			178.5	82.5	136.2	137	83.7	131.3	62.1	155	93.9	74.9	50.9	42.8	50.7	44.7	64.6	51.5	70.3	79.6									
PCAS SW Sampling Scheme				COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD	COD		
Bog Group	Licence No	Bog Name	SW Code -GIS	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	
Littleton Group	P0499-01	Bawnmore	SW22	54		50			56			90																		
Clonoulty	Clogher monthly rainfall (mm)			178.5	82.5	136.2	137	83.7	131.3	62.1	155	93.9	74.9	50.9	42.8	50.7	44.7	64.6	51.5	70.3	79.6									
	COD Trigger level			100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100		
PCAS SW Sampling Scheme				pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH	pH		
Bog Group	Licence No	Bog Name	SW Code -GIS	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units	pH Units		
Littleton Group	P0499-01	Bawnmore	SW22	7.7		7.5			7.2			7.3																		
Clonoulty	Clogher monthly rainfall (mm)			178.5	82.5	136.2	137	83.7	131.3	62.1	155	93.9	74.9	50.9	42.8	50.7	44.7	64.6	51.5	70.3	79.6									
PCAS SW Sampling Scheme				TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P	TP as P			
Bog Group	Licence No	Bog Name	SW Code -GIS	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	
Littleton Group	P0499-01	Bawnmore	SW22	<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		<0.05		
Clonoulty	Clogher monthly rainfall (mm)			178.5	82.5	136.2	137	83.7	131.3	62.1	155	93.9	74.9	50.9	42.8	50.7	44.7	64.6	51.5	70.3	79.6									
PCAS SW Sampling Scheme				TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS	TS		
Bog Group	Licence No	Bog Name	SW Code -GIS	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	
Littleton Group	P0499-01	Bawnmore	SW22	246		434			217			202																		
Clonoulty	Clogher monthly rainfall (mm)			178.5	82.5	136.2	137	83.7	131.3	62.1	155	93.9	74.9	50.9	42.8	50.7	44.7	64.6	51.5	70.3	79.6									
PCAS SW Sampling Scheme				Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N	Ammonia as N			
Bog Group	Licence No	Bog Name	SW Code -GIS	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	
Littleton Group	P0499-01	Bawnmore	SW22	0.136		0.048			0.169			0.102																		
Clonoulty	Clogher monthly rainfall (mm)			178.5	82.5	136.2	137	83.7	131.3	83.1	91.9	117.3	97	57.1	49.4	65.6	82.7	47.5	59.9	75.2	64.8									
	Ammonia Trigger level			4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53	4.53			
PCAS SW Sampling Scheme				DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC	DOC		
Bog Group	Licence No	Bog Name	SW Code -GIS	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	mg/l	
Littleton Group	P0499-01	Bawnmore	SW22	19		18.8			24.3			20.1																		
Clonoulty	Clogher monthly rainfall (mm)			178.5	82.5	136.2	137	83.7	131.3	62.1	155	93.9	74.9	50.9	42.8	50.7	44.7	64.6	51.5	70.3	79.6									

Blank spaces - No results available during times of the year when rivers are in flood or during extended dry spells

## APPENDIX XIII: STOCKPILE DECOMMISSIONING PROCEDURE

### Scope

All IPC licensed peatlands with residual peat stockpiles requiring decommissioning and rehabilitation, as required by Condition 10.

The aim of this Stockpile Decommissioning Procedure is to stabilise any remaining stockpiles by depositing the peat in the two drains located immediately adjacent to the stockpile field, enabling the re-shaping of the stockpile to facilitate stabilization and revegetation.

### Condition 10:

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.

### Procedure:

1. Strip any remaining stockpile protection and remove using the poly wrapper for recycling.
2. Ensure the silt pond servicing this pile field catchment has been cleaned within the last six months as per condition 6.8, and visually inspected as per condition 6.7, prior to any pile decommissioning.
3. Where stockpiles occur within areas planned for rehabilitation, such planned rehabilitation measures (regular drain blocking) will be implemented in advance of any stockpile decommissioning, with priority given to the required adjacent stockpile field drains.
4. Once the rehabilitation measure above has been completed, proceed to reprofile the stockpile as per below.
5. Using suitable available excavator/dozer to make a safe ramp up onto the end of the pile.
6. Track up onto the pile and establish a safe level base.
7. Using the machine to reduce and reprofile the pile height and deposit into the adjoining pile field drains. The residual height to be determined based on stockpile size and area required to reprofile.
8. Work along the pile using this method until reaching the pile end.
9. Using a suitable machine, track the peat into the pile field drain along both sides of the pile, ensuring the final level is below the existing drain blocks and any damage to existing drain blocks avoided.
10. If required, use a suitable machine to track along the top of the reprofiled stockpile to level and flatten the profile to reduce the runoff gradient.
11. Fertiliser application and any grass seed mix should be applied to each stockpile following completion of the above steps, to accelerate the stabilisation.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Bawnmore/Inch Bog GIS Map Book 2025**



**Bawnmore/Inch Bog  
Rehab Plan  
GIS Map Book  
2025**



## Document Control Sheet

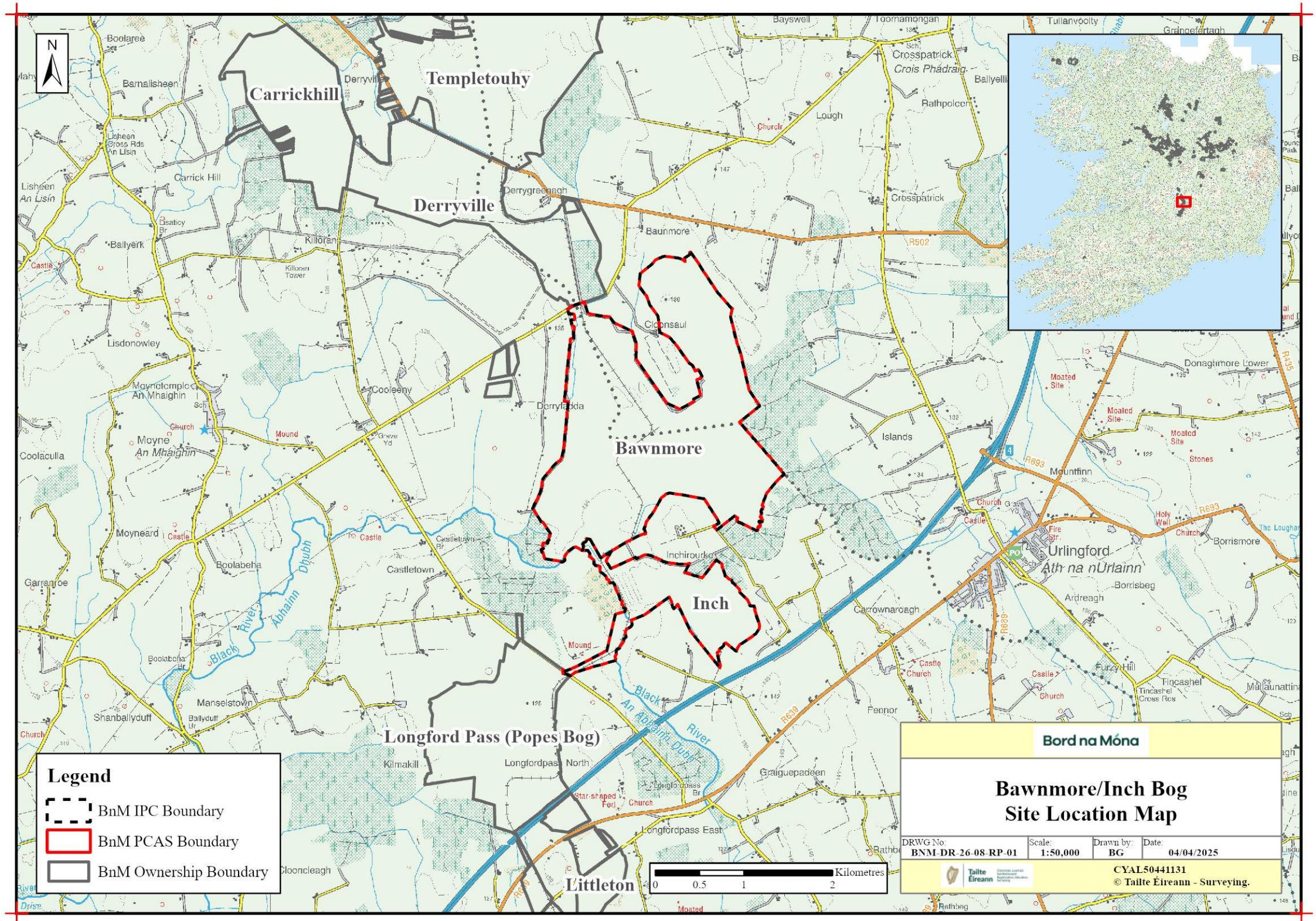
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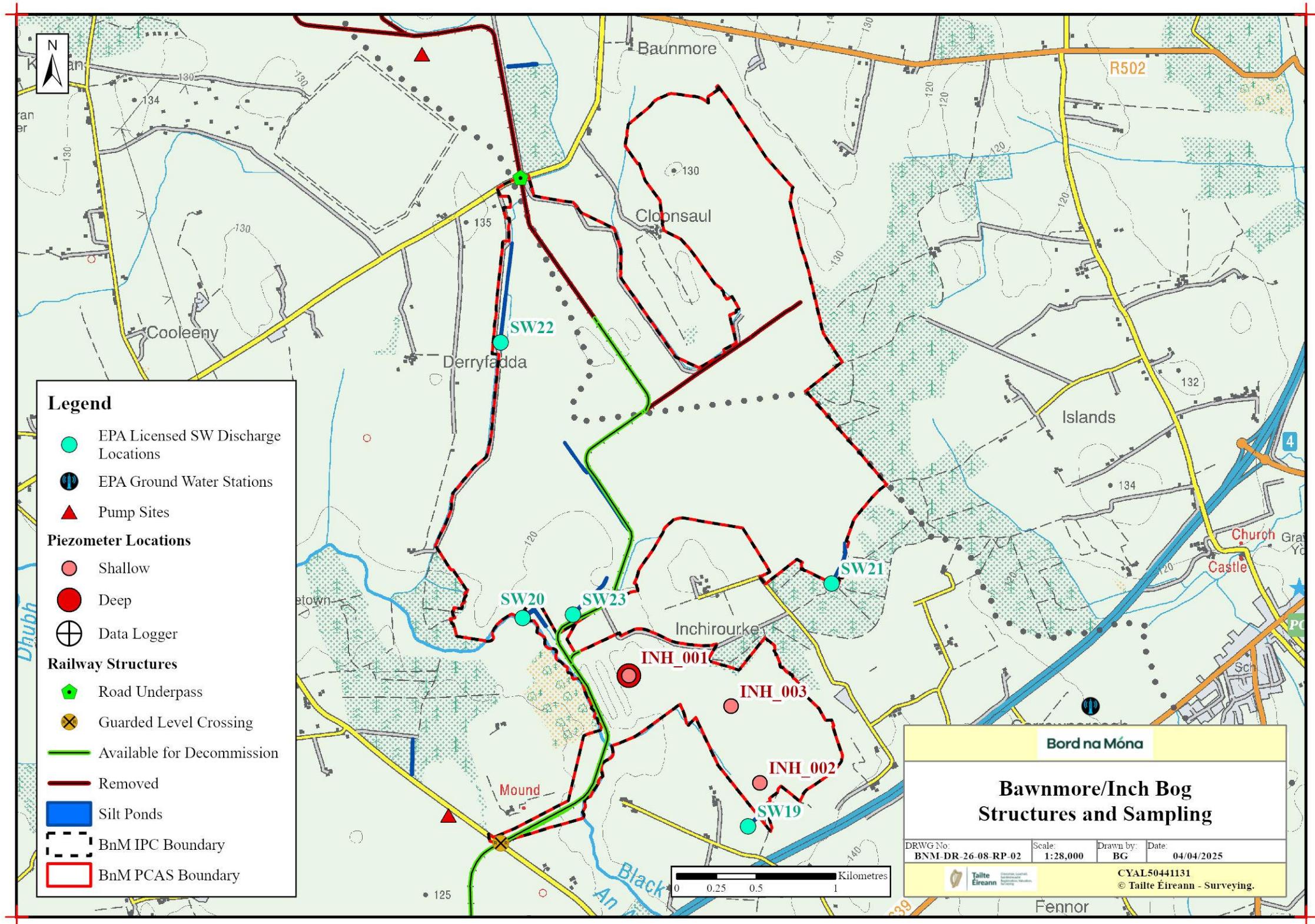
*Bord na Móna would like to thank and acknowledge RPS Consultants for their input into this document and the provision of data for inclusion in these maps.*

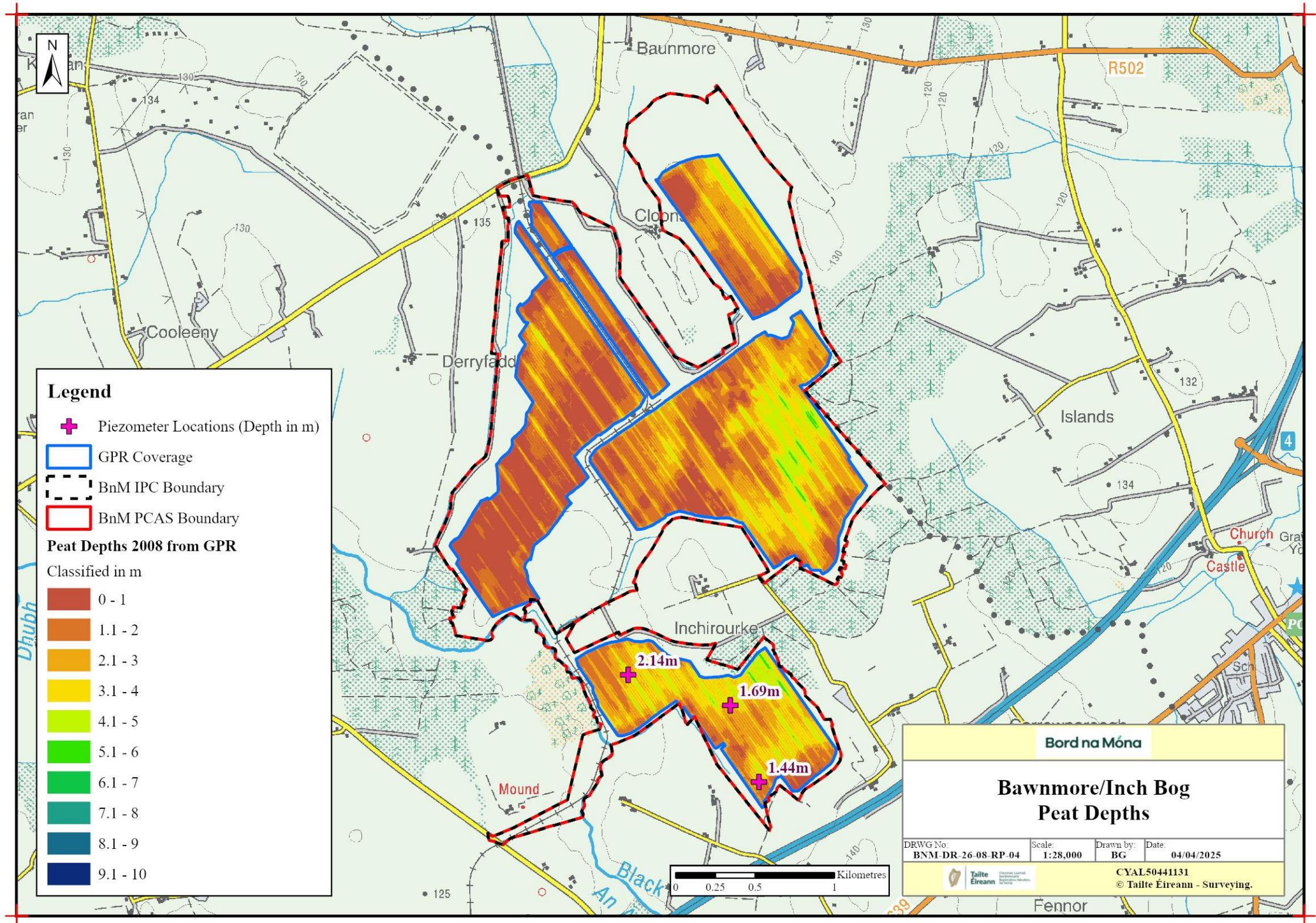
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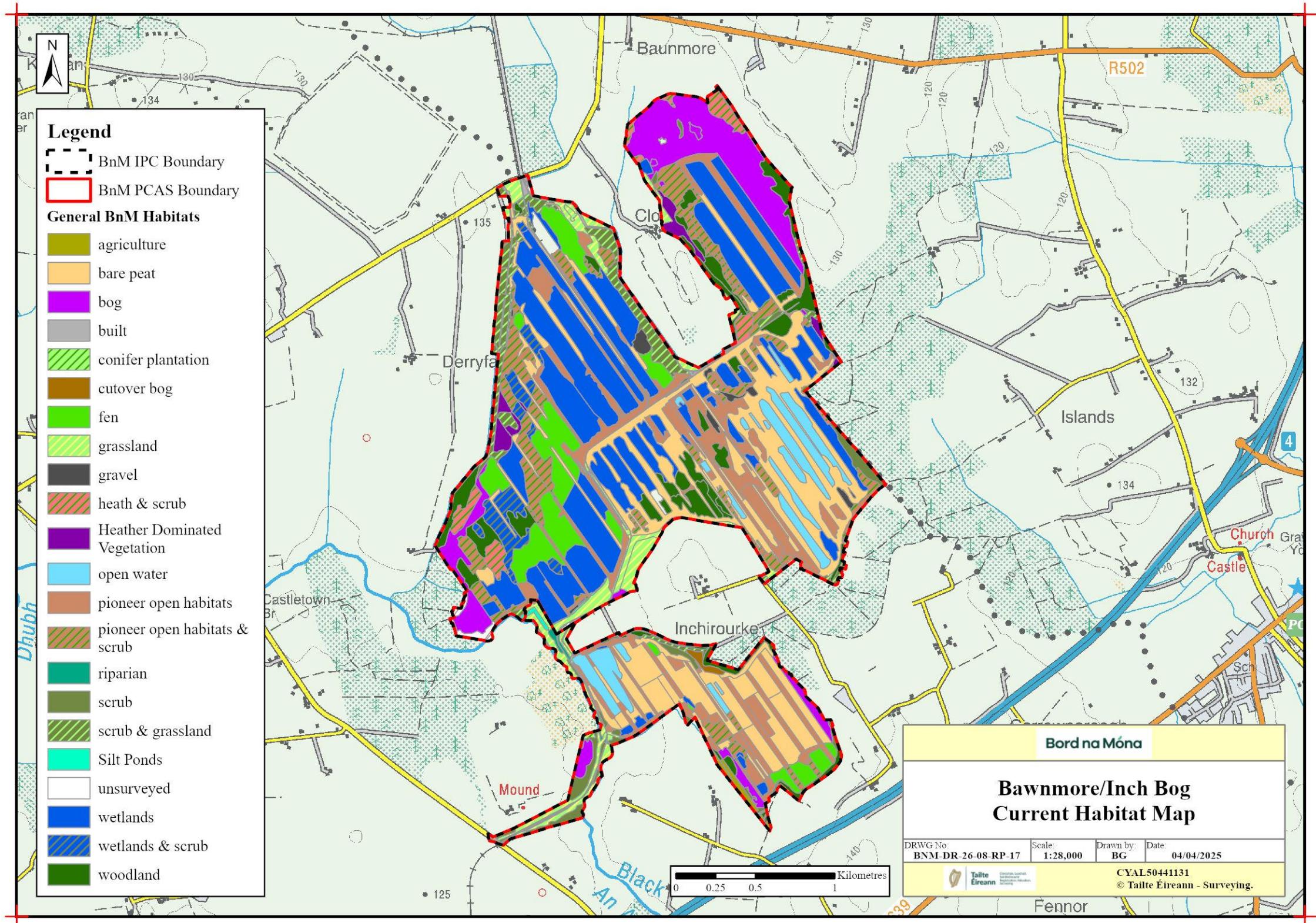
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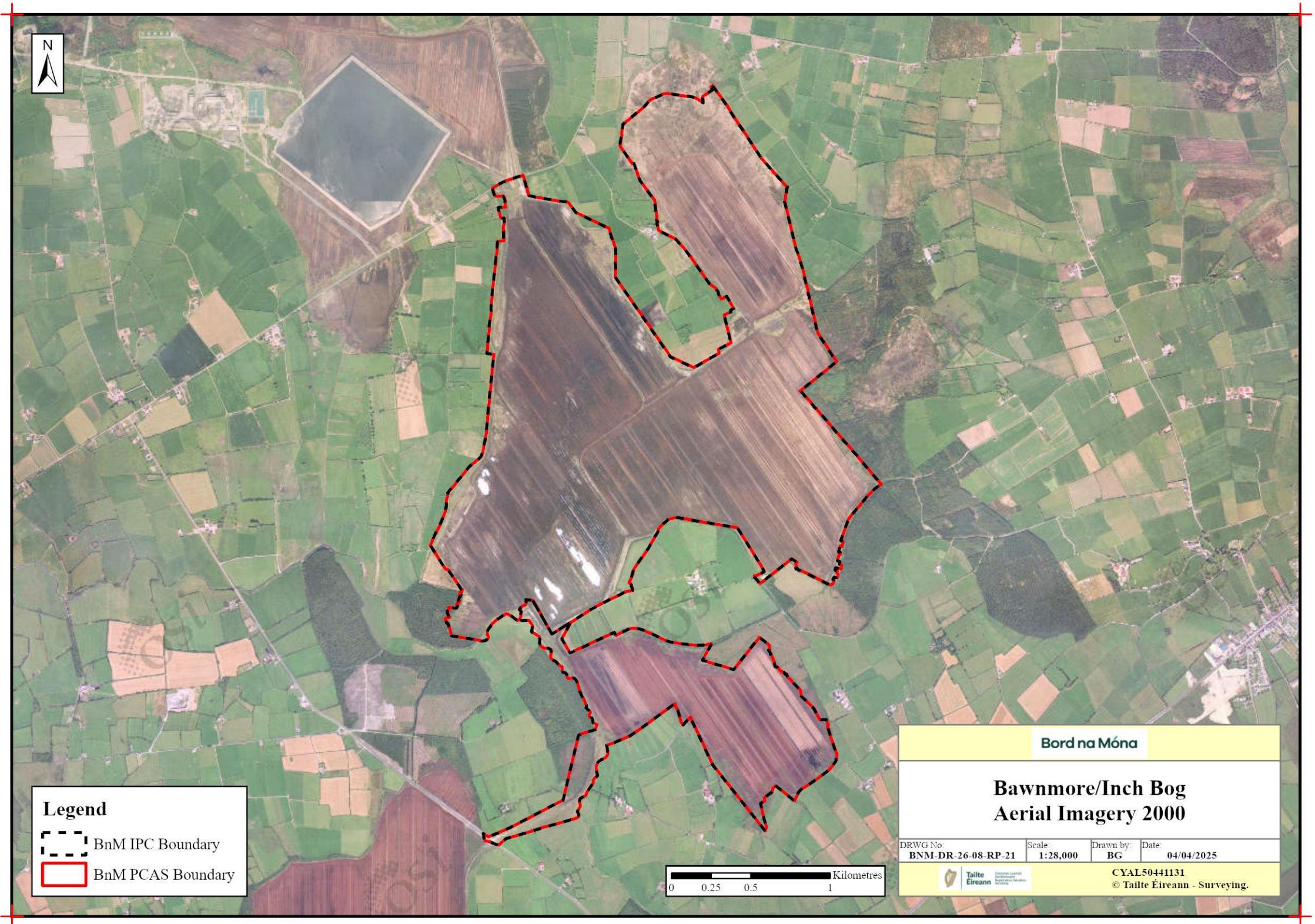
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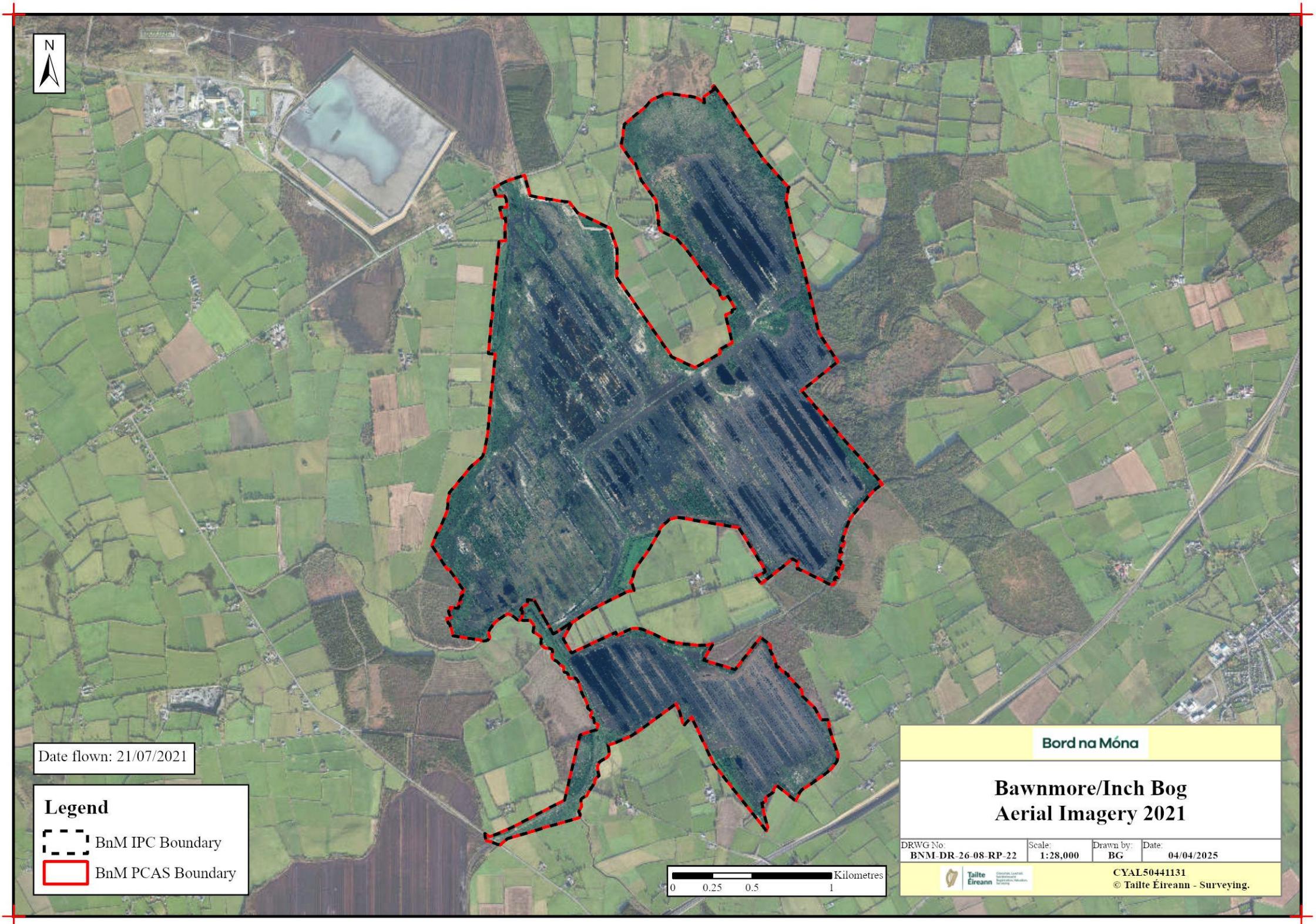


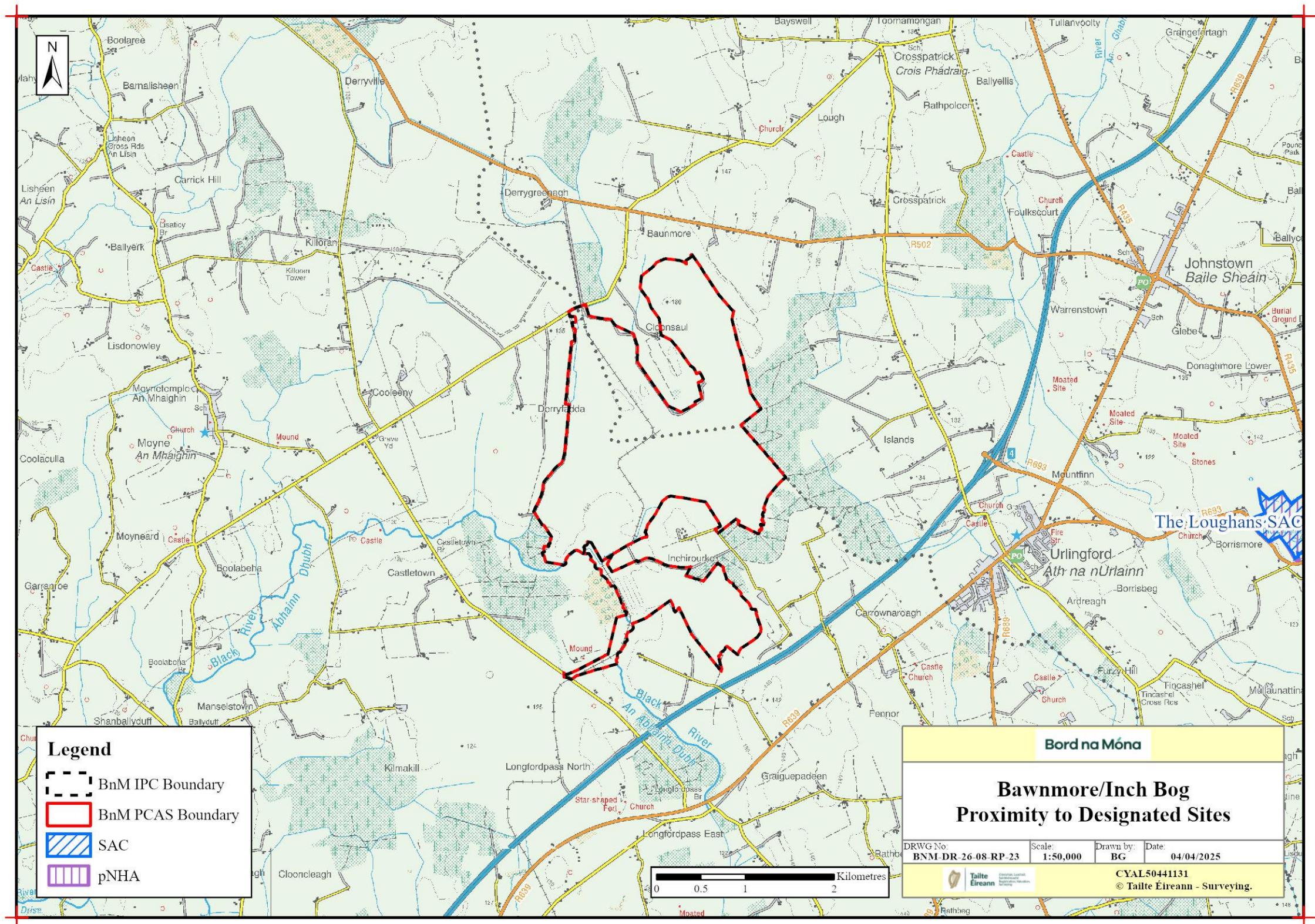


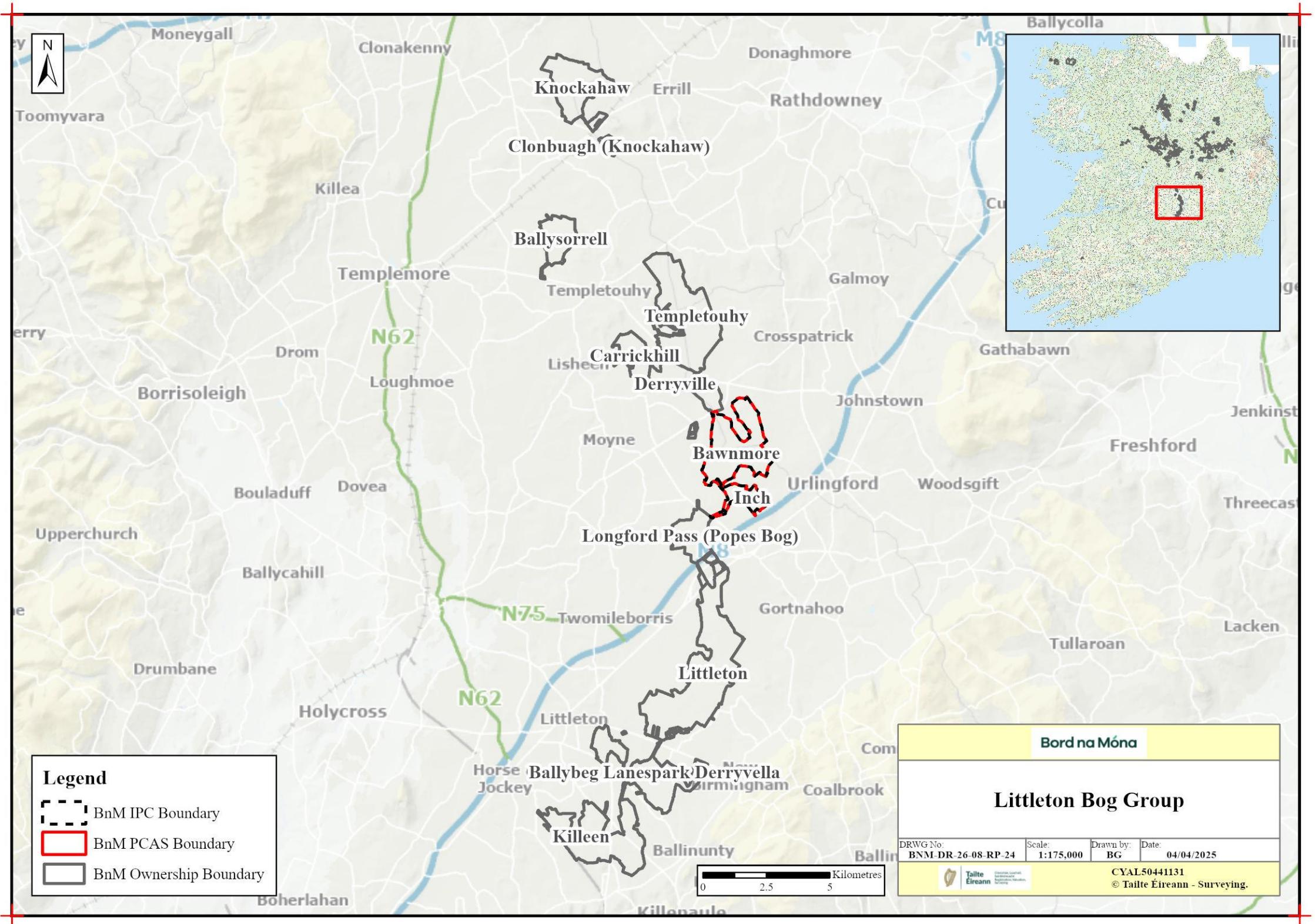


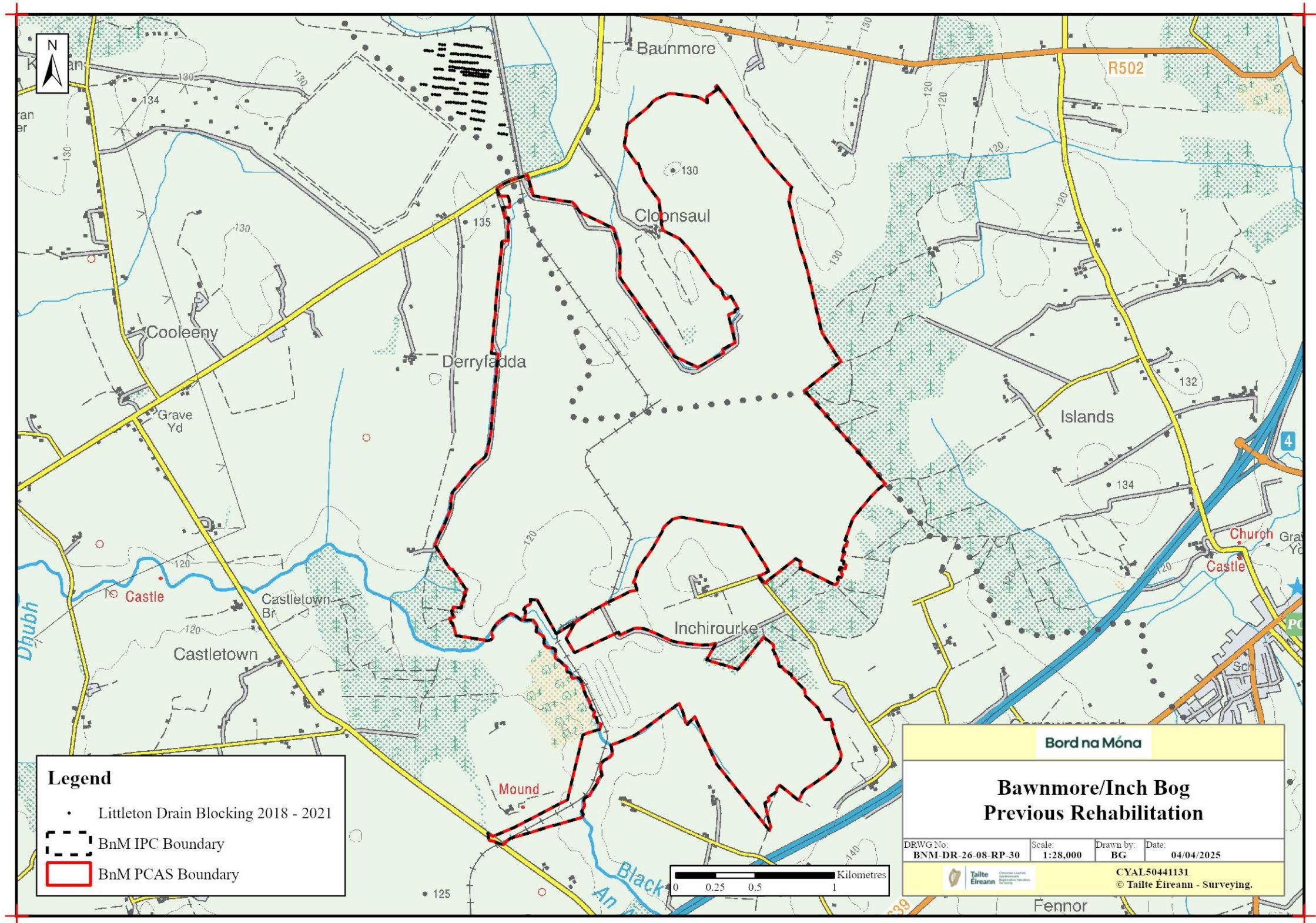




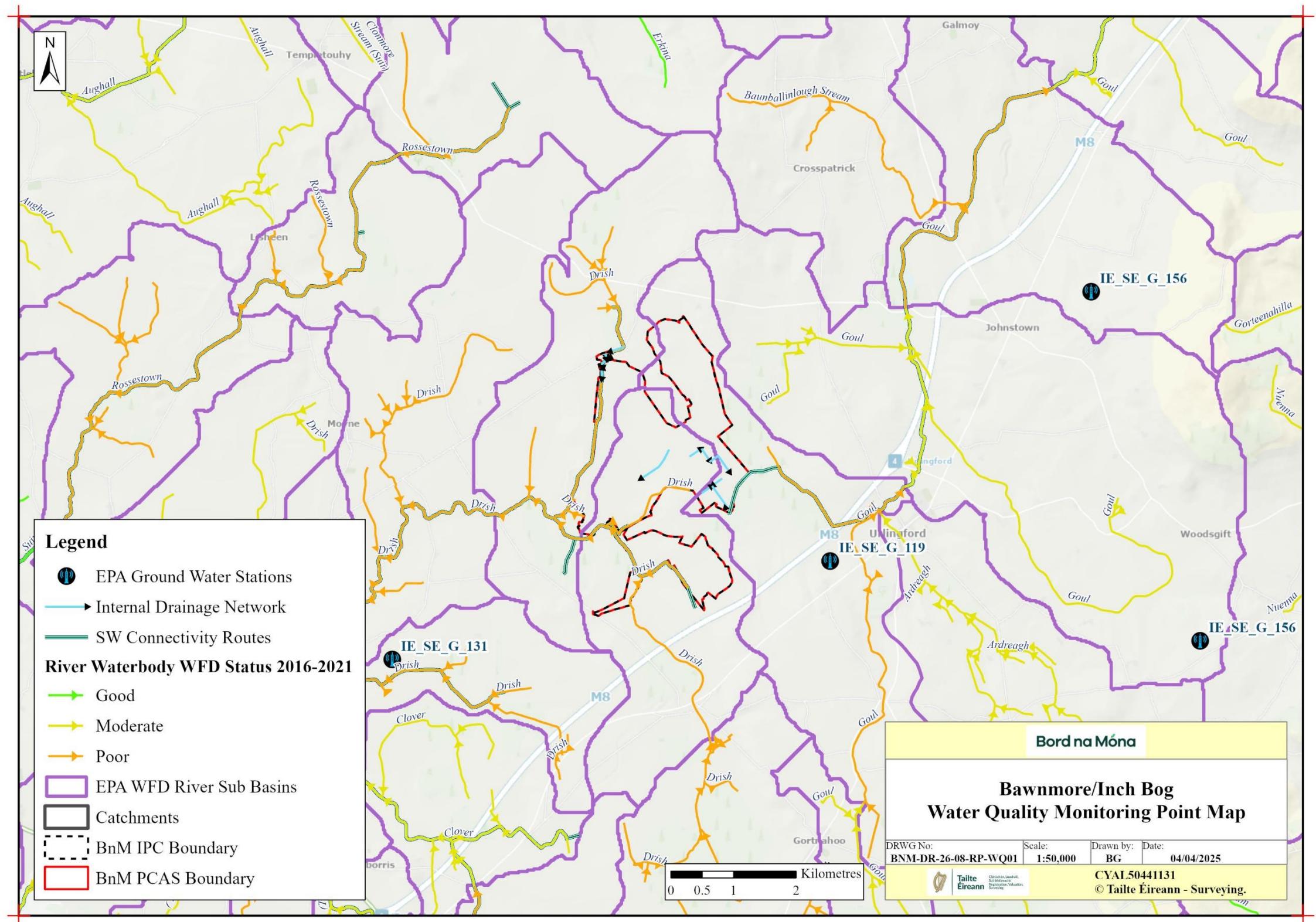


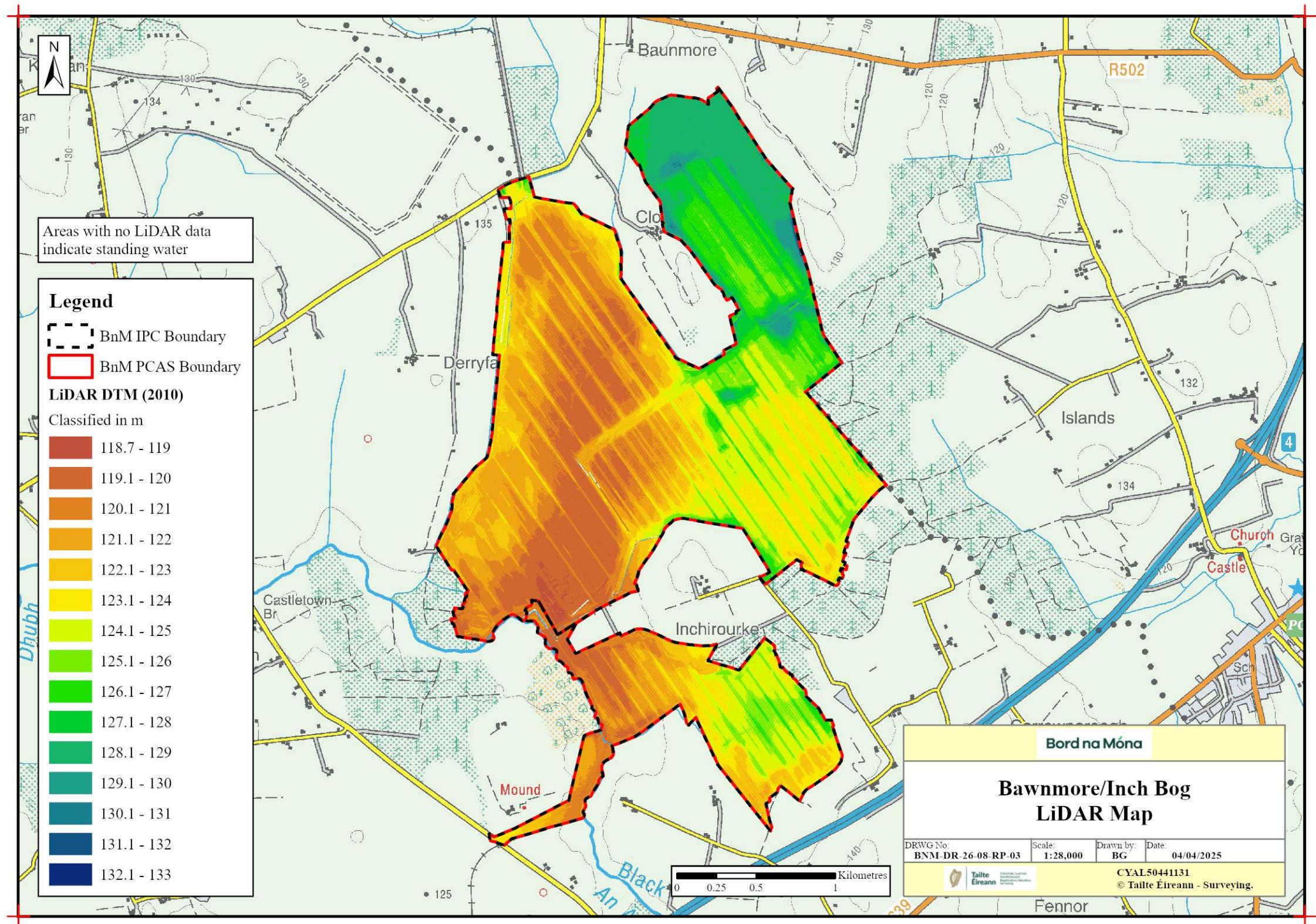


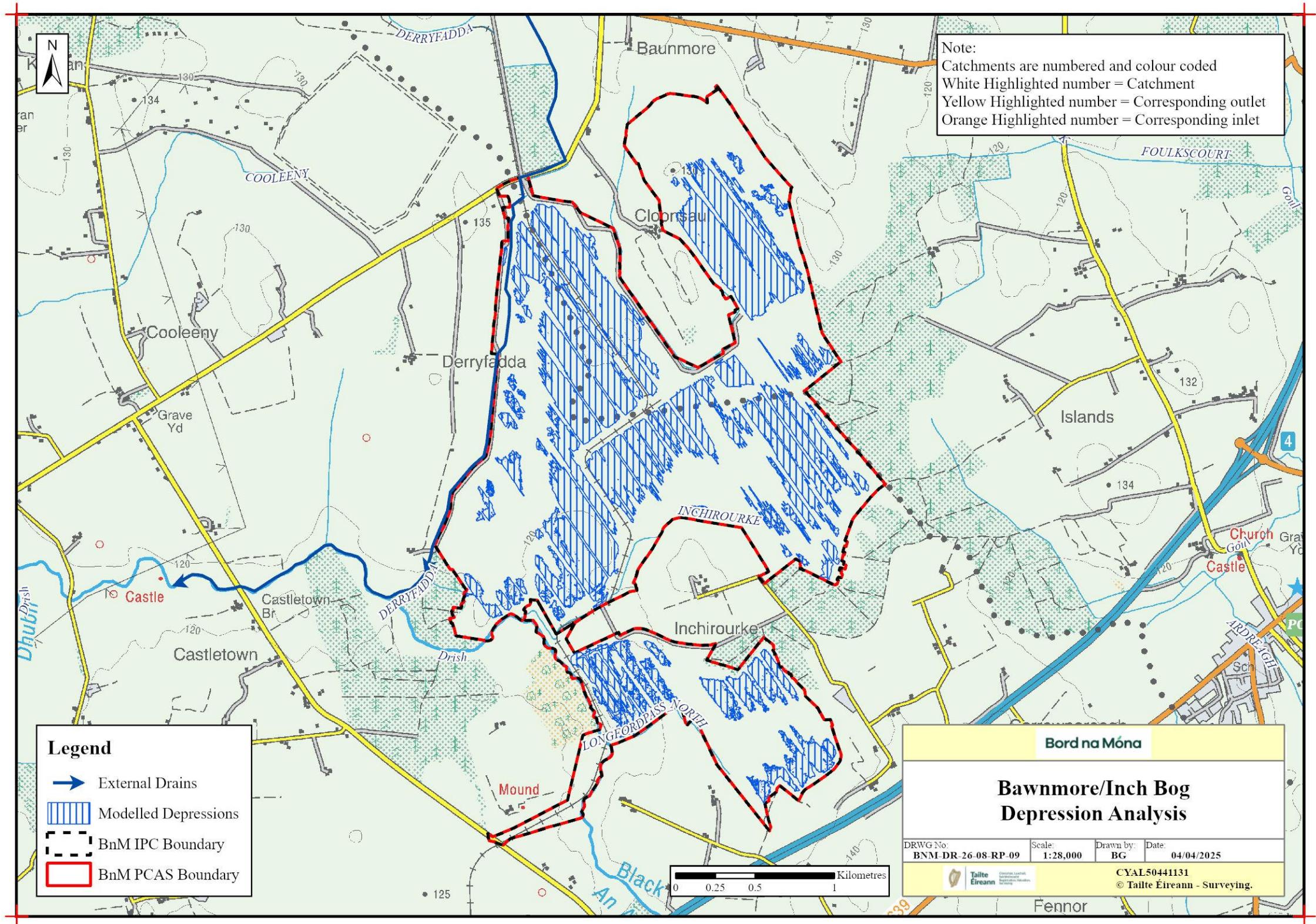


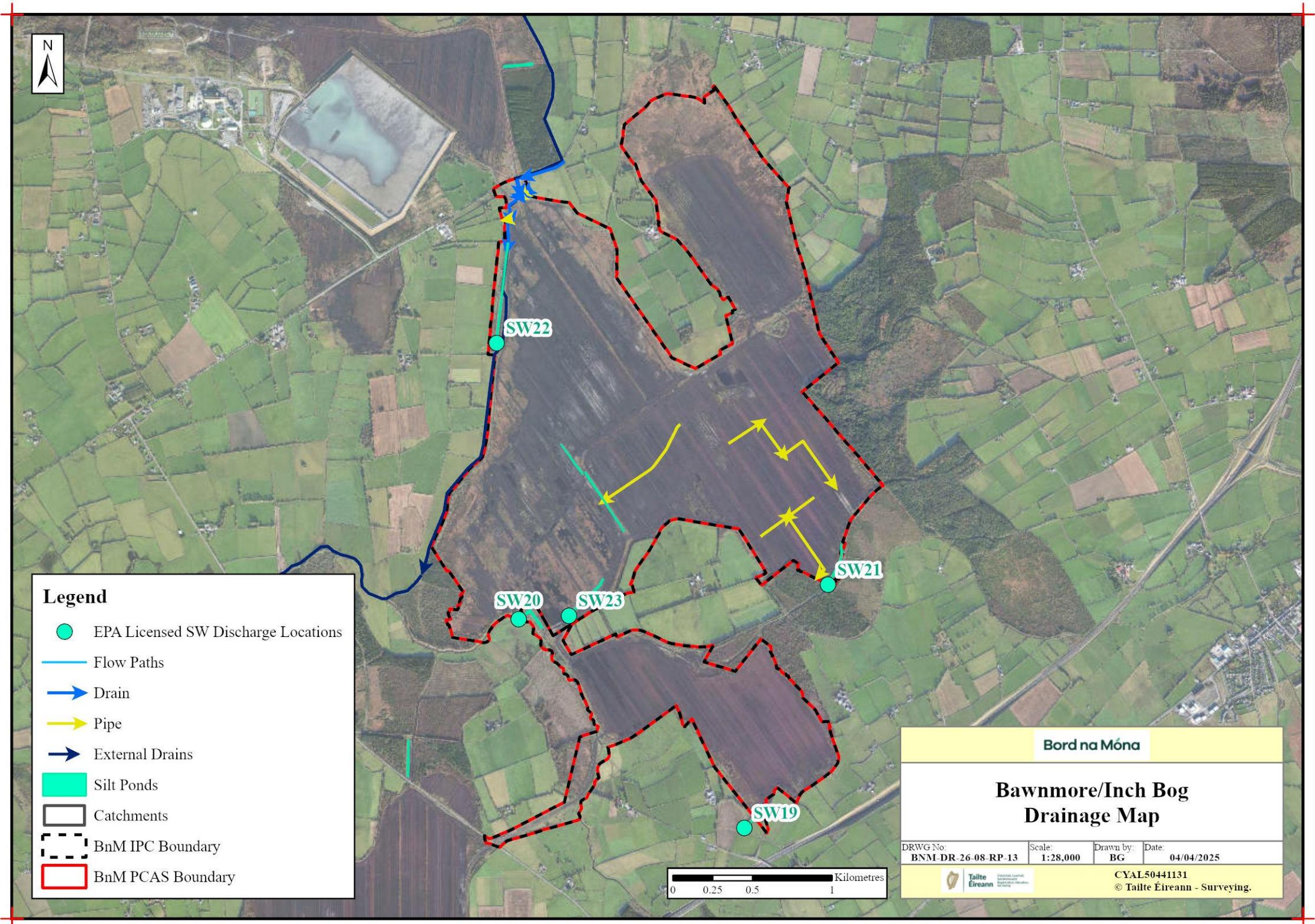


# Hydrology / Topography Maps

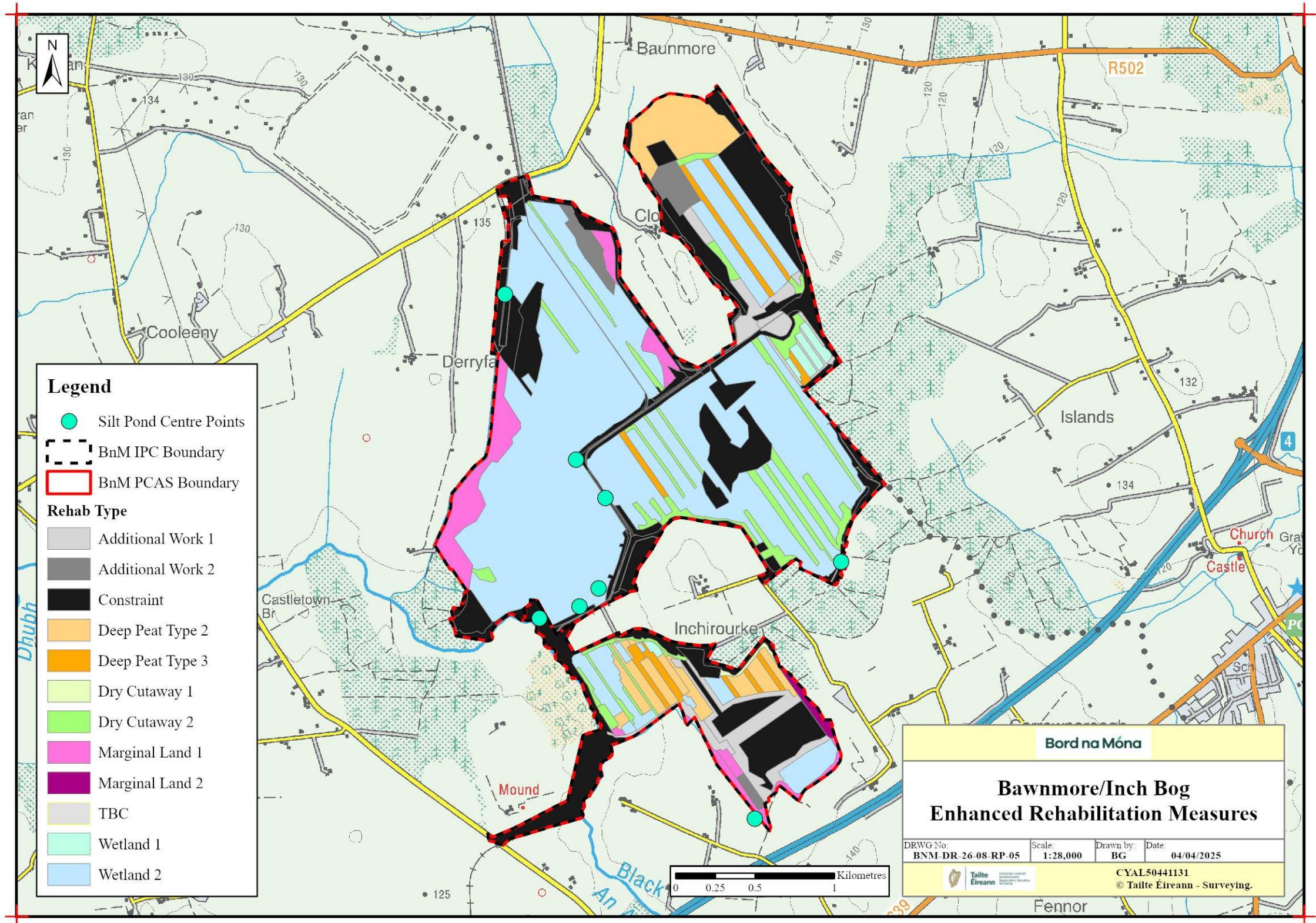


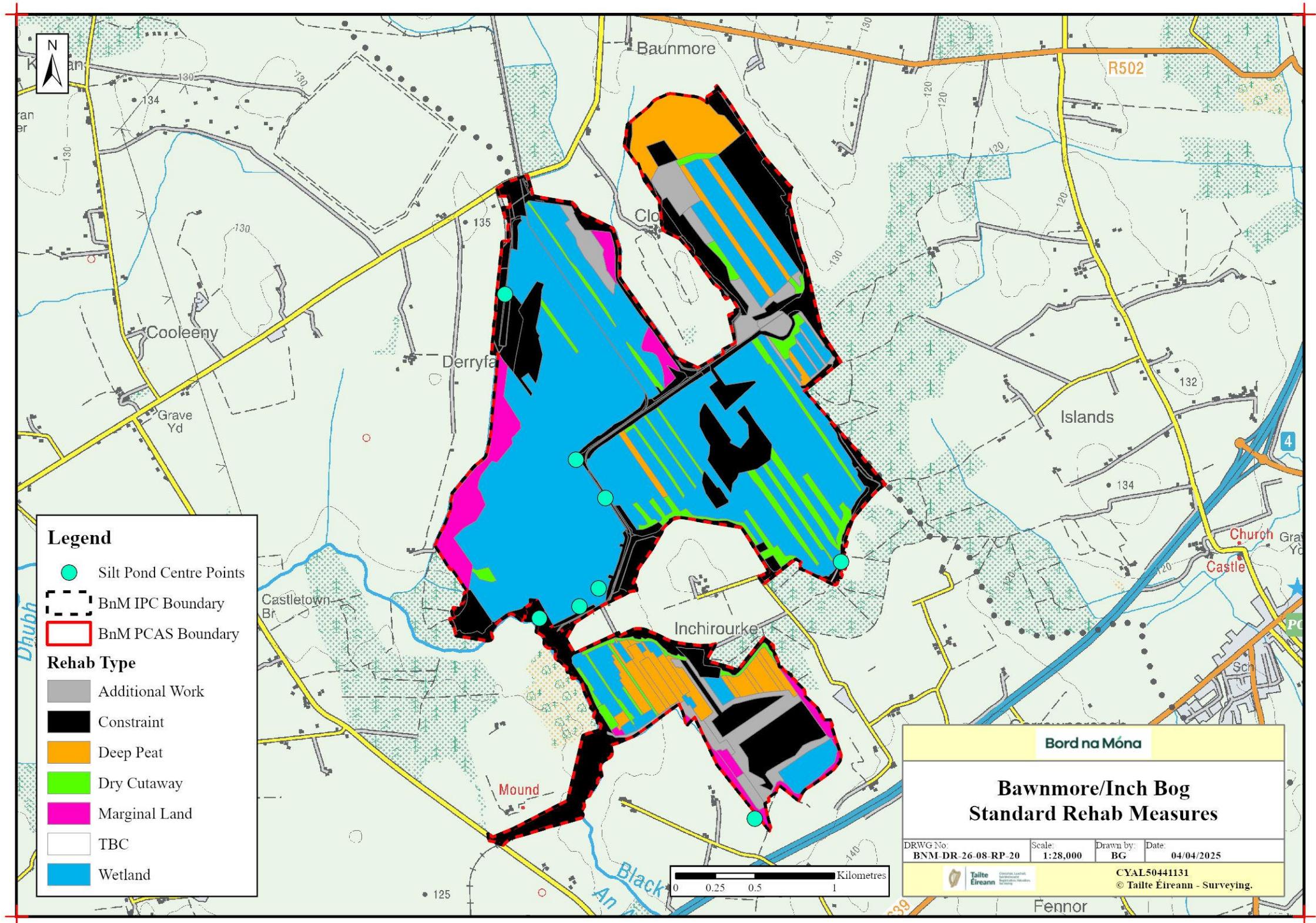






# Rehabilitation Maps







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