

AtkinsRéalis



WP-04 Monivea Road Cycle Scheme Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Galway City Council

January 2026

GALWAY CYCLE NETWORK PHASE 1

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1. Introduction

Galway City Council (GCC) as the Contracting Authority and National Transport Authority (NTA), appointed AtkinsRéalis (the Consultant) to provide Engineering-led Multi-disciplinary Consultancy and Design services for the preliminary design and statutory processes of active travel provisions and associated works on the Galway Cycle Network Phase 1 - Work Package 04 (WP-04) Monivea Road.

GCC propose to deliver several high-quality cycle routes within the east side of Galway City. The proposed Galway Cycle Network Phase 1 scheme will aim to deliver a minimum level of service in line with the Cycle Design Manual. The Galway Cycle Network Phase 1 scheme has been commissioned to AtkinsRéalis by GCC under the National Transport Authority's Consultancy Services framework and has been developed in consideration of current GCC policies included in the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS).

GCC have appointed AtkinsRéalis to prepare a Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report for WP-04 Monivea Road of the Galway Cycle Network.

1.1 Project Background

The Galway Cycle Network Phase 1 scheme consists of 5no. routes located to the east of Galway City (Figure 1-1). These 5no. routes are corridors along existing roads and have been identified within the GTS and within the scope of this commission as follows:

- Ballybane Road between Skerrit roundabout and Monivea Road junction, excluding the N6 and Dublin Road junctions (brown).
- Castlepark Road (full extent; turquoise).
- Doughiska Road (North and South) extending between the start of the Sean Bhaile estate to the north and Coast Road to the South, excluding the junction with the Dublin Road (blue)
- Ballyloughane Road (full extent excluding the junction with the Dublin Road) and Renmore Avenue (pink)
- Monivea Road (red) extending from the Ballybane Road and terminating at the start of the ghost island junction to the west of the Clayton Hotel entrance – the subject of this assessment.

Ballyloughane Road & Renmore Avenue is currently on hold and it is unknown at this stage if it will progress forward. For Doughiska Road (South) the construction has been completed and the cyclelane is in operation (progression of Doughiska Road [North] has been paused, due to the overlap of the proposed Galway BusConnects scheme and will not be done as part of this package). Construction for Ballybane Road & Castlepark Road commenced in Feb 2025 and it is expected to be an 18-month construction phase.



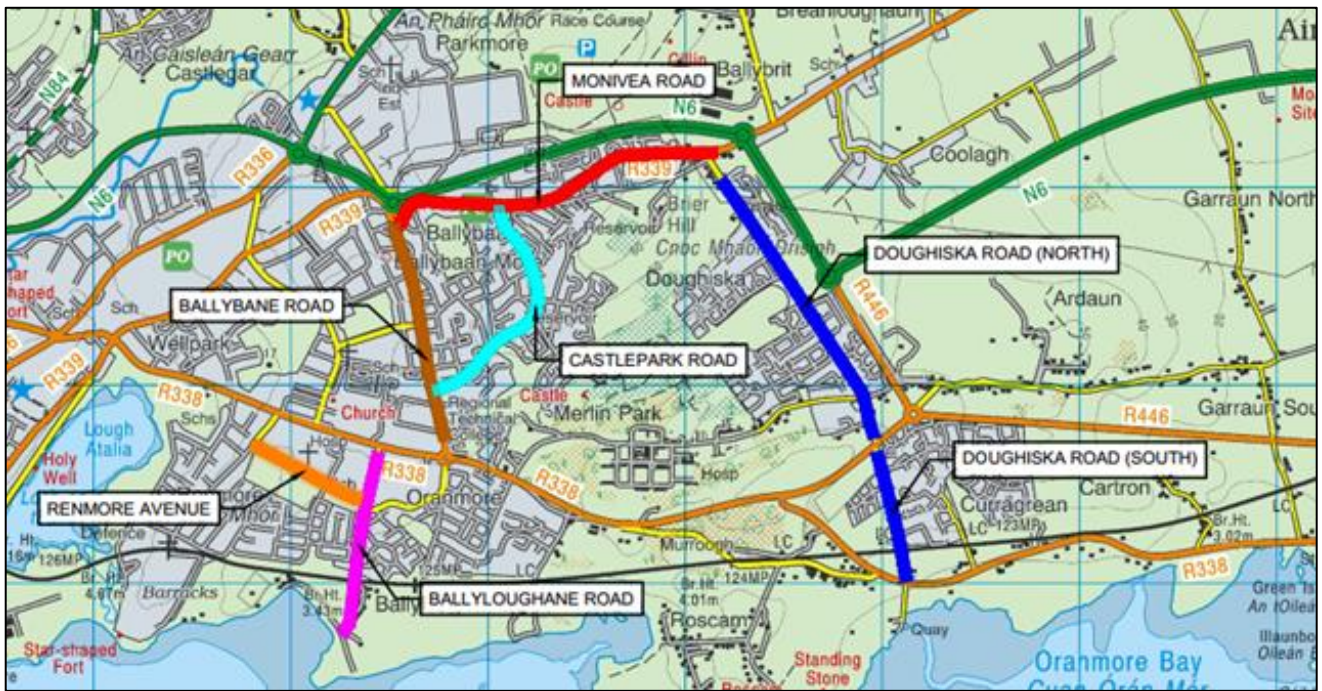


Figure 1-1 - Proposed Galway Cycle Network Phase 1 – All Routes. Monivea Road (WP 04) is shown in red.

1.2 Work Package 4 – Monivea Road

Work Package 04 (WP 04) of the Galway Cycle Network Phase 1 Scheme (the subject of this assessment) is aligned along Monivea Road from the east of the Clayton Hotel to the Ballybane Road junction and is approximately 1.7km in length. The scheme extents is shown in Figure 1-2 with the proposed general arrangement presented in Appendix A.

The proposed cycle route is located entirely within the existing footprint of the road network to the east of Galway City Centre. These lands have historically been sub-urban in nature and have continued to expand as urban development areas within recent times.

The development will consist of:

- The provision of a typically 3m wide two-way cycle track, reducing in places where constraints exist.
- Reduction in road carriageway widths (typically 3.2m wide lanes).
- Junction realignments and the introduction of raised crossings on all side roads to prioritise pedestrian and cyclist movements.
- Straight through cycle lane/track crossings on all side road junctions to prioritise cyclists movements.
- The provision of signalised crossings for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The introduction of pedestrian and shared crossing points at several locations.
- The provision of landscaping along the routes.

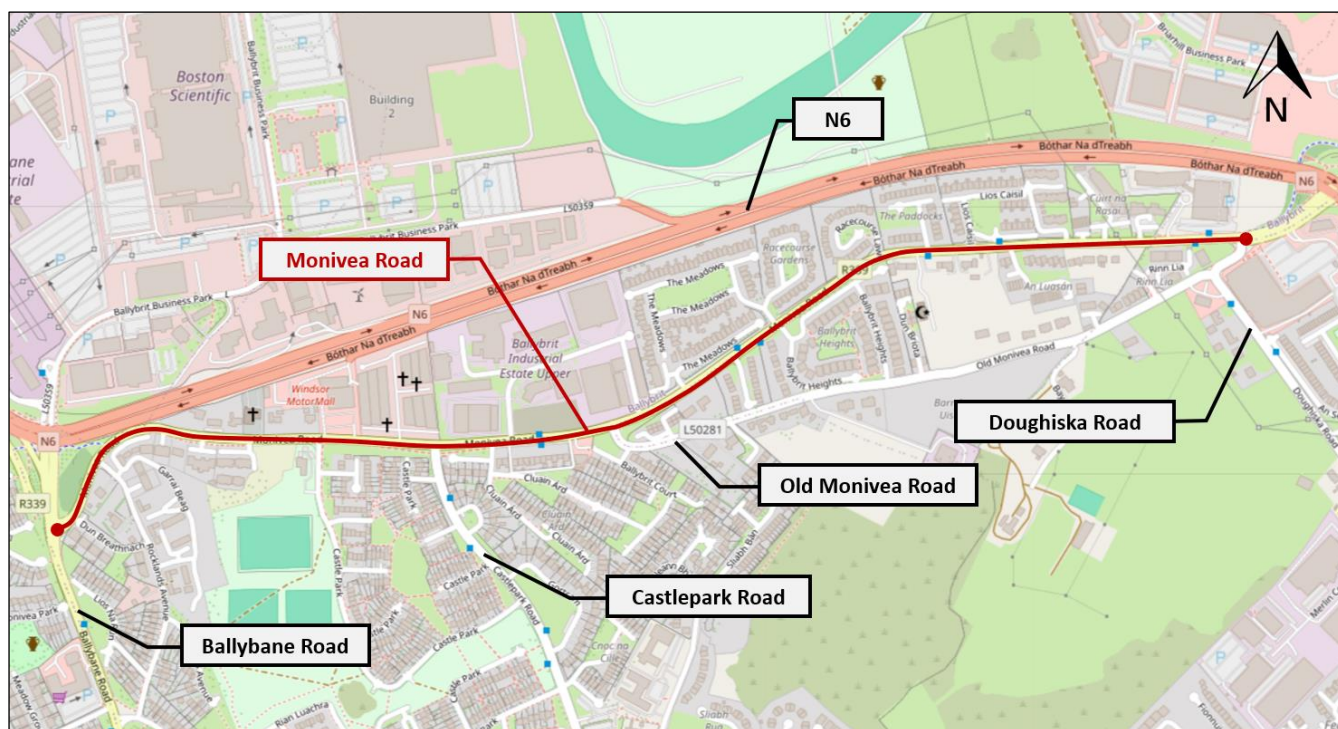


Figure 1-2 - Work Package 4 - Monivea Road Scheme Extents.

1.2.1 Link Design for Monivea Road

The overall proposed cycle network scheme consists of various cycle path or link types such as raised adjacent cycle tracks, raised cycle lanes and shared street facilities.

The link type for Monivea Road is a two-way cycle lane on one side of the road. This option has a physical segregation of 100mm high kerb between the carriageway and the cycle track, and a 60mm high kerb between the cycle track and adjacent footway. The link design is illustrated in Figure 1-3 below.

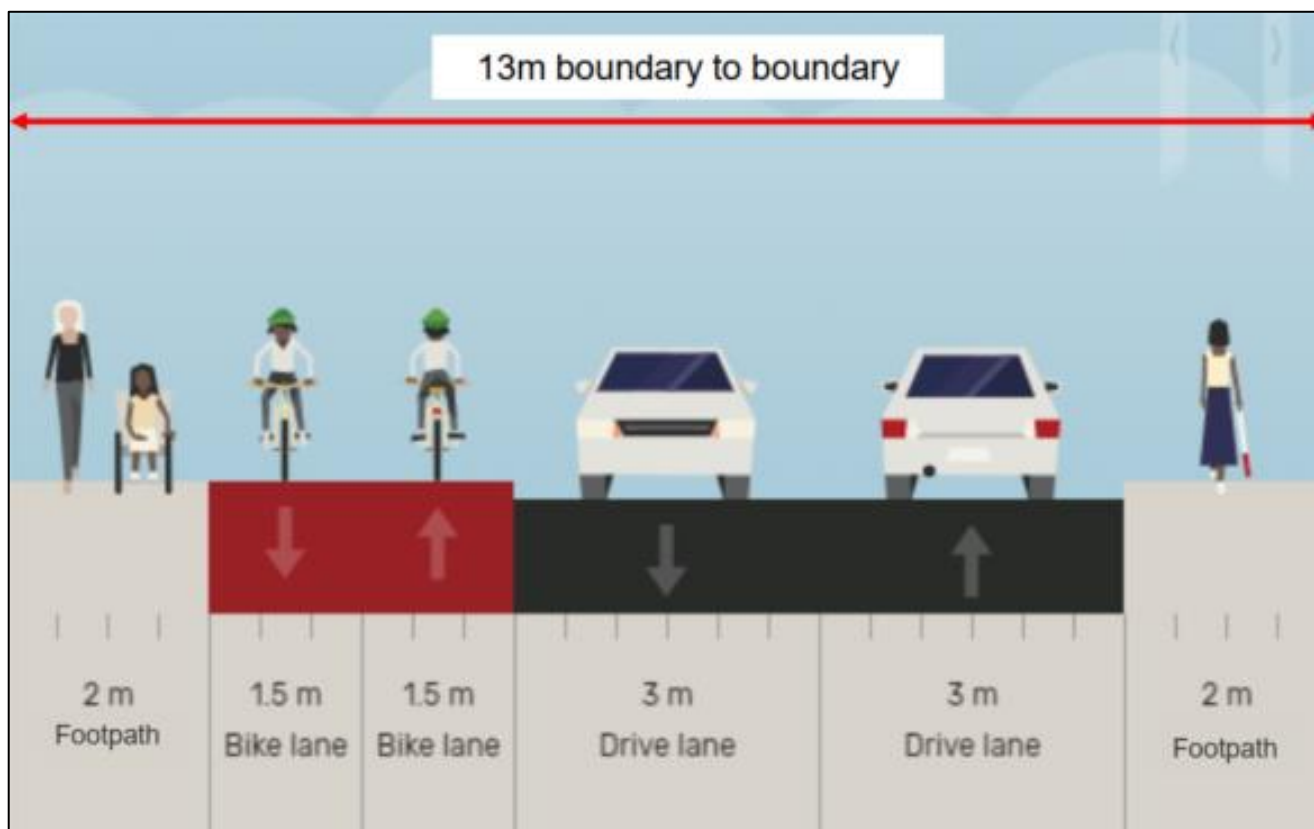


Figure 1-3 - 2-Way cycle lane on one side.

1.3 Construction Details

The construction period for Monivea Road is estimated to be undertaken within the next 12 months.

1.3.1 Cycle path Construction

Works will commence with the clearance and off-site removal of redundant road signage, boundary treatment, road surface materials and topsoil. The works will be undertaken using a combination of operatives using hand tools, mechanical excavators and dumper trucks. To facilitate the main works, underground utilities which conflict with the main works will be uncovered using mechanical excavators and hand digging where appropriate. The need for significant utility diversions is not envisaged as part of the works; instead a 'lower and protect' approach will be favoured. This is likely to be restricted to locations where the walking and cycling facilities cross or interface with public roads.

Following the diversion of utilities, the initial pavement and cycle track construction phase will be undertaken. This will include the excavation and removal of the existing stone, soil, concrete and bitumen materials along the route followed by the installation of new path and track base materials. Excavations will be largely undertaken by mechanical means, with any spoil arising to be removed off site or reused locally where testing confirms its suitability. The proposed scheme involves excavation to facilitate the base layers for the proposed footpaths / pavements and the ducting for the signalling associated with the scheme. The base layers of the pavement and track are to be made of compacted stone materials.

1.3.2 Traffic signals and public lighting

The works will also involve constructing the civil engineering elements required to facilitate the commissioning of the traffic signals and the public lighting elements at the latter stages of construction. Service chambers and underground duct sets will be laid within trenches and backfilled with granular material. Signal poles and public lighting columns will be erected, and ducting connections will be made to the base of each pole unit.

1.3.3 Road Resurfacing

The scheme also involves the resurfacing of the roadways and painting of new road markings within the scheme footprint. The existing road surface course layer will be planed-out throughout the entire scheme extents with plantings being removed off site. The planed-out area will be replaced with Hot Rolled asphalt (HRA) or Stone Mastic Asphalt (SMA) surface course ca. 40mm - 60mm thick. Additional to this, and where required, additional bituminous layers may be replaced in localised areas where there is evidence of pavement failure. It is not envisaged that the foundations layers (i.e. sub-base or capping) will require replacement. Following road resurfacing new road markings will be painted on road surfaces.

1.3.4 Footpath Construction

The construction of the cycleway will also involve relocation and installation of footpaths and kerbs adjacent to the cycleway. Footpaths will be constructed similar to the cycleway; excavation of existing footpath with materials removed off site to a licenced waste facility, excavations along footpath alignment to depths of maximum 500mm, infill of footpath subbase materials (compacted stone) and the pouring of concrete footpaths in shuttered sections. A ca. 60mm high poured concrete kerb will also be installed along the footpath edge.

1.3.5 Drainage

Drainage works, which will run in tandem with the pavement construction phase, are considered to be minimal and restricted to areas where the scheme interfaces with the public road. The drainage works at these locations are limited to the relocation of existing road gullies with the larger existing road drainage infrastructure (i.e. carrier drains) not being altered or adjusted. During these works the main carrier drains will be isolated / blocked off from works activities / work zones to facilitate the relocation of drainage gullies.

Typically, drainage will be provided using new gullies (relocated to alongside the proposed kerb positions) connecting to the existing surface water drainage infrastructure / main carrier drain. The new footpaths and cycle tracks will generally slope towards the road in order to minimise the need for additional drainage collection measures specific for these facilities.

1.3.6 Verge Reinstatement

For soft landscaping areas topsoil profiles will be graded to tie into the new pavement levels followed by grass seeding. The top soiling and seeding will be undertaken using a combination of mechanical excavator, tractor unit drawing a rotavator / rake / seed spreader and also operatives using hand tools for areas where machinery access is unavailable.

1.3.7 Traffic Management

The construction of the scheme will be carried out in short segments (ca.100-200m in length) on one side of the roadway at a time to allow for continued traffic flow and will progress along the roadways, as such individual work zones will be relatively small.



1.3.8 Junctions

All junctions along the scheme will be segregated. This will feature cyclists passing through the junction on their own cycle tracks with dedicated traffic signal phases which are separate to the vehicular phasing and separate to the pedestrian phasing (where applicable). The proposed junctions are to include kerb upstands throughout (except at crossing points), providing vertical segregation and thereby increasing protection to the cycle tracks.

1.3.9 Watercourse Crossings

There are no watercourse/crossings along the scheme.

1.3.10 Compound

The Contractor will determine an appropriate location for the site compound in agreement with GCC. The compound will provide for parking, welfare facilities, canteen, site offices, storage areas and temporary utilities / services. These areas will be fenced to keep the public out of the work area and secured as appropriate to prevent pollution risk. The compound will be located away from sensitive areas such as designated conservation areas (such as Galway Bay European sites), ecologically sensitive areas (such as Merlin Park Woodlands), watercourses, hedgerows / treelines and adjacent private properties. The temporary construction compound will be removed upon completion of the construction phase. Such areas are to be reinstated and all construction waste and / or scrapped building materials are to be removed from site on completion of the construction phase. Oil, fuel etc. storage areas are to be decommissioned on completion of the construction phase. Any remaining liquids are to be removed from site and disposed of at an appropriately licenced facility.



2. Scope of Study

2.1 Legislative Context

2.1.1 Natura 2000

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (“the Habitats Directive”) is a legislative instrument of the European Union (EU) which provides legal protection for habitats and species of Community interest. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of such habitats and species at a favourable conservation status, while Articles 3 to 9, inclusive, provide for the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of special areas of conservation (SACs), known as Natura 2000, which also includes special protection areas (SPAs) designated under Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (“the Birds Directive”). Both SACs and SPAs are commonly referred to as “European sites” or “Natura 2000 sites”.

SACs are selected for natural habitat types listed on Annex I to the Habitats Directive and the habitats of species listed on Annex II to the Habitats Directive. SPAs are selected for species listed on Annex I to the Birds Directive, other regularly occurring migratory species and other species of special conservation interest. The habitats and species for which a Natura 2000 site is selected are referred to as the “*qualifying interests*” of that site and each is assigned a “*conservation objective*” aimed at maintaining or restoring its “*favourable conservation condition*” at the site, which contributes to the maintenance or restoration of its “*favourable conservation status*” at national and European levels.

2.1.2 Appropriate Assessment

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive deals with the management and protection of Natura 2000 sites. Articles 6(3) and (4) set out the decision-making process, known as “*Appropriate Assessment*” (AA), for plans or projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) states:

“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 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.”

The first sentence of Article 6(3) provides a basis for determining which plans and projects require AA, i.e., those “*not directly connected with or necessary to the management of [one or more Natura 2000 sites] but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects*”.

In *Waddenzee* (C-127/02), the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled that significant effects must be considered “*likely*” if “*it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information*”, that they would occur. This clearly sets a low threshold, such that AA is required wherever there is a reasonable possibility of significant effects on a Natura 2000 site. In the same judgment, the CJEU established that the test of significance relates specifically to the conservation objectives of the site concerned, i.e., “*significant effects*” are those which, “*in the light, inter alia, of the characteristics and specific environmental conditions of the site*”, could undermine the site's conservation objectives.

In addition to the effects of the plan or project on its own, the combined effects arising from the plan or project under consideration and other plans and projects must also be assessed (see Section 5.5 for more details).



The last part of the first sentence of Article 6(3) defines AA as an assessment of the “*implications* [of the plan or project] *for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives*”. In the second sentence, Article 6(3) requires that, prior to agreeing to a plan or project, the competent authority must “*ascertain*” that “*it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned*”. In *Sweetman v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-258/11), the CJEU ruled that a plan or project “*will adversely affect the integrity of that site if it is liable to prevent the lasting preservation of the constitutive characteristics of the site that are connected to the presence of a priority natural habitat whose conservation was the objective justifying the designation of the site in the list of sites*”. On that basis, EC (2018) described the “*integrity of the site*” as “*the coherent sum of the site’s ecological structure, function and ecological processes, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitats, complex of habitats and/or populations of species for which the site is designated*”. As such, the “*integrity*” of a specific site is defined by its conservation objectives and is “*adversely affected*” when those objectives are undermined. In *Waddenzee*, the CJEU ruled that the absence of adverse effects can only be ascertained “*where no reasonable scientific doubt remains*”.

The “*precautionary principle*” applies to all of the legal tests in AA, i.e., in the absence of objective information to demonstrate otherwise, the worst-case scenario is assumed. Where the tests established by Article 6(3) cannot be satisfied, Article 6(4) applies (see explanation in Section 2.2 below).

2.1.3 Competent Authority

The requirements of Articles 6(3) and (4) are transposed into Irish law by, inter alia, Part 5 of the European Communities (Birds and Natura Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended) (“the Habitats Regulations”) and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (“the Planning and Development Acts”). As per the second sentence of Article 6(3), it is the “*competent national authorities*” who are responsible for carrying out AA and, by extension, for determining which plans and projects require AA. The competent authority in each case is the body responsible for authorising a plan or project, e.g. local or other public authorities (including TII), An Coimisiún Pleanála, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or a Government Minister. In all cases, it is the competent authority who is ultimately responsible for determining whether or not a plan or project requires AA and for carrying out the AA, where required.

2.2 Appropriate Assessment Process

The AA process can be described as being made up of three distinct stages, as described below, the need to progress to each stage being determined by the outcome of the preceding stage.

Stage 1: Screening – This stage involves a determination by the competent authority as to whether or not a given plan or project required AA. As explained in Section 2.1, AA is required in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site, but for which the possibility of likely significant effects on one or more Natura 2000 sites cannot be excluded. The CJEU’s Judgment on *Eco Advocacy v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-721/21) and the *Opinion* of Advocate General Kokott in the same case set out the principles for identifying any aspects of a plan or project which may constitute what the CJEU termed in *People Over Wind* (C-323/17) “*measures intended to avoid or minimise harmful effects on a Natura 2000 site*” and, as such, cannot be taken into account in making an AA Screening determination. Consideration of the potential for in-combination effects is also required at this stage.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment – This stage involves a detailed assessment of the implications of the plan or project, individually and in combination with other plans and projects, for the integrity of the Natura 2000 site(s) concerned. This stage also involves the development of appropriate mitigation to address any adverse effects and an assessment of the significance of any residual impacts following the inclusion of mitigation. In *Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála* (IEHC 400), the High Court ruled that a lawful AA must contain complete, precise, and definitive findings based on examination and analysis, and conclusions and a final determination based on an evaluation of the findings. In the same judgment, the High Court stressed that, in order for the findings to be complete, precise, and



definitive, the AA must be carried out in light of best scientific knowledge in the field and cannot have gaps or lacunae. In *Holohan v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-461/17), the CJEU clarified that AA must “*catalogue the entirety of habitat types and species for which a site is protected*” (i.e. the qualifying interests of the site) and assess the implications of the plan or project for the qualifying interests, both within and outside the site boundaries, and other, non-qualifying interest habitats and species, whether inside or outside the site boundaries, “*provided that those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site*”. The proposer of a plan or project requiring AA is furnishes the competent authority with the scientific evidence upon which to base its AA by way of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) or Natura Impact Report (NIR). If it is not possible to ascertain that the plan or project will not adversely affect one or more Natura 2000 sites, authorisation can only be granted subject to Article 6(4).

Stage 3: Article 6(4) – If a plan or project does not pass the legal test at Stage 2, alternative solutions to achieve its aims must be considered and themselves subject to Article 6(3). If no feasible alternatives exist, authorisation can only be granted where it can be demonstrated that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) justifying its implementation. Where this is the case, all compensatory measures must be taken to protect the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

The three stages described above are illustrated in Figure 2-1 below.

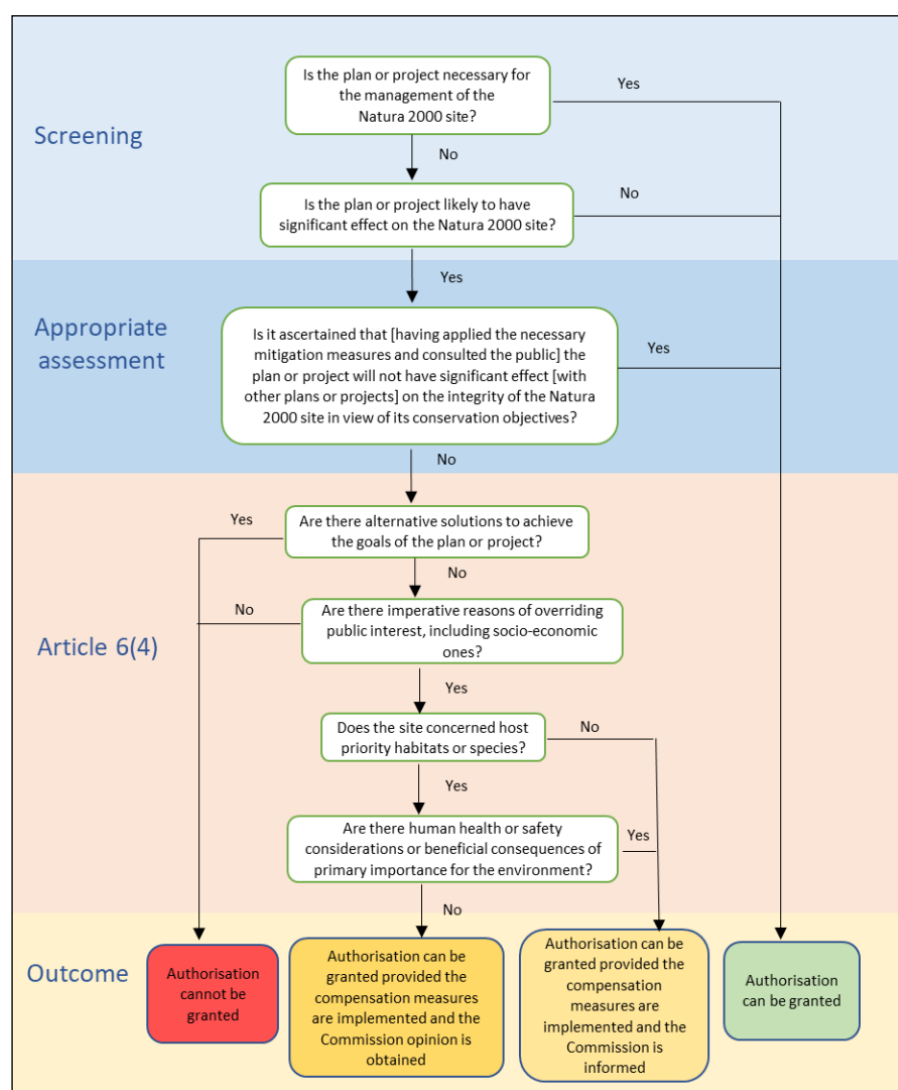


Figure 2-1 - Stages of the Appropriate Assessment process (EC, 2021a)

3. Methods

3.1 Guidance documents

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment was prepared with reference and due consideration to the following documents, guidelines and case law, including but not limited to:

- Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna. *Official Journal of the European Communities* L 206/7-50.
- Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds. *Official Journal of the European Union* L 20/7-25.
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011. S.I. No. 77/2011 (as amended) (“the Habitats Regulations”).
- Planning and Development Act, 2000. No. 30 of 2000 (as amended) (“the Planning and Development Acts”).
- Planning and Development Regulations, 2001. S.I. No. 600/2001 (as amended) (“the Planning Regulations”).
- EC (2019). *Managing Natura 2000 sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, Brussels. *Official Journal of the European Union* C 33/1-62.
- EC (2021a). *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. European Commission, Brussels. *Official Journal of the European Union* C 437/1-107.
- EC (2021b) *Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive*. C(2021) 7301. European Commission, Brussels.
- DG Env (2022) *Guidance document on assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – A summary*. Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission, Brussels. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- DEHLG (2010a) *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Revised 11/02/2010*. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.
- DEHLG (2010b) *Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10. Dated 11/03/2010*. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.
- NPWS (2012) *Marine Natura Impact Statements in Irish Special Areas of Conservation. A Working Document. April 2012*. National Parks & Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin.
- NPWS (2021) *Guidance on the Strict Protection of Certain Animal and Plant Species under the Habitats Directive in Ireland. National Parks & Wildlife Service Guidance Series 1*, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Dublin.
- Mullen, E., Marnell, F. and Nelson, B. (2021) *Strict Protection of Animal Species – Guidance for Public authorities on the Application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive to development/works undertaken by or on behalf of a Public authority. National Parks & Wildlife Service Guidance Series 2*, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Dublin.
- OPR (2021) *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. OPR Practice Note PN01*. Office of the Planning Regulator, Dublin.
- Case law, including *Waddenzee* (C-127/02), *Sweetman v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-258/11), *Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála* (IEHC 400), *Commission v. Germany* (C-142/16), *People Over Wind* (C-323/17), *Holohan v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-461/17), *Eoin Kelly v. An Bord Pleanála* (IEHC 84), *Heather Hill* (IEHC 450) and *Eco Advocacy v. An Bord Pleanála* (C-721/21).
- Sundseth, K. and Roth, P. (2014) *Article 6 of the Habitats Directive – Rulings of the European Court of Justice*. Ecosystems LTD (N2K Group), Brussels.



3.2 Desk Study

Baseline data regarding the receiving environment, including Natura 2000 sites, was gathered through a thorough desk study.

The boundaries of Natura 2000 sites were downloaded from *NPWS: Maps and Data* <<https://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data>>. Information on sites, including their overall structures and functions, qualifying interests, conservation objectives and threats/pressures and activities therein, was found in the Site Synopsis, Natura 2000 Standard Data Form, Conservation Objectives and supporting documents for each site. Spatial data for site-specific conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites, and boundary data for other designated sites, such as Natural Heritage Areas, was also retrieved from *NPWS: Maps and Data*. Reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive (NPWS, 2019a-c; *Article 17 web tool*) and Article 12 of the Birds Directive (NPWS, 2024c; *Article 12 web tool*) provided further information on the habitats and species concerned at the national level.

Information relating to recent and historical records of species was obtained from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) *Biodiversity Maps* <<https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map>>.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) map viewer *EPA Maps (Water)* <<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/Water>> and spatial data for river, lake, canal, transitional and coastal waterbodies downloaded from the *EPA Geoportal* <<https://gis.epa.ie/GetData/Download>> was used to identify any hydrological connection between the proposed works and Natura 2000 sites or connected features. Satellite and aerial imagery from Google Earth, Bing Maps and Tailte Éireann was reviewed to identify hedgerows, treelines and other potential ecological features.

In order to inform the assessment of potential in-combination effects, planning applications from the surrounding area were reviewed using the National Planning Application Database, An Coimisiún Pleanála's online map viewer and the EIA Portal.

Information from the aforementioned data sources was last accessed 11/04/2025.

3.3 Site Visit

Ecological site visits were undertaken along the cycleway route alignment in May 2021. Baseline ecology observed during these site visits has not altered. The findings of the site surveys were used to inform this report. Site photographs are presented below.

Ecological survey methods were in general accordance with those outlined in the following documents:

- *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland* (Fossitt, 2000);
- *Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping* (Smith *et al.*, 2011);
- *Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna during the Planning of National Road Schemes* (NRA, 2009).

Potential sensitive ecological receptors present within the survey area were recorded, including the presence of protected species and habitats or habitats that would support protected species, in addition to noting connectivity to European sites. The presence of non-native invasive species was also recorded. Surveys were undertaken within the seasonally appropriate window to assess the project site for the presence of invasive plant species.



3.4 Statement of Authority

The Screening for Appropriate Assessment report was prepared by Niamh Kelly and Colin Wilson. Eimear Egan provided peer review and support.

Niamh Kelly (AtkinsRéalis) has a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Science with Ecology from Atlantic Technological University Sligo. Her 4th year college dissertation examined the ecological change on three Irish lakes looking at both biological and physiochemical parameters. She has developed ecological surveying skills through aquatic and terrestrial surveys during college as well as vegetation identification experience with Teagasc. Niamh is responsible for aiding the preparation of Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports, Natura Impact Statements and Environmental Impact Assessment – Biodiversity Chapters. Niamh collated background information for this report.

Colin Wilson (Atkins Dublin) has a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Science and is a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). He has over 16 years working in the fields of ecology and environmental management. He is a Senior Ecologist with experience in ecological surveying, environmental assessment, on-site ecological supervision and mitigation. He has experience on multiple infrastructure projects regarding all elements of surface and groundwater management, monitoring, sampling and associated reporting. Colin also has a broad range of experience in invasive species management, biosecurity and control. Colin has prepared AA screening reports, Natura Impact Statements and has also been involved in the development of Environmental Operating Plans and Construction Environmental Management Plans for a number of national infrastructure projects. Colin is the author of this report.

Eimear Egan has a BSc in Environmental Science, a PhD in Ecology and an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law. She has 12 years' experience in environmental and ecological consulting and research in the UK, New Zealand and Ireland in the water and energy sectors. Eimear provided peer review.



4. Existing Environment

4.1 General Overview

The proposed cycle routes are located entirely within the existing footprint of the road network to the east of Galway City Centre. These lands have historically been sub-urban in nature and have continued to expand as urban development areas within recent times. The proposed Monivea Road Cycle Scheme is aligned entirely along roadways and associated pathways and does not encroach into any protected habitats or habitats of high ecological value.



Figure 4-1 - Monivea Road.



Figure 4-2 - Monivea Road East.

4.2 Designated Sites

Natural Heritage Area (NHA) is the basic designation for wildlife sites. These sites are considered to represent important habitats for species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection¹. These sites are protected under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000)².

Additionally, proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) are those which have been published on a non-statutory basis, and have yet to be statutorily designated. These sites are of significance to flora, fauna, and their respective habitats. These sites will be designated on a phased basis over the coming years. Prior to designation pNHAs are subject to limited protection³.

There are no NHAs within 5km of the project site (Figure 4-3). There are 3 no. pNHAs within a 5km radius of the proposed project (Figure 4-3). There is no direct or indirect connectivity to these sites.

¹ <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha>

² <https://www.npws.ie/legislation/irish-law/wildlife-amendment-act-2000>

³ <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha>

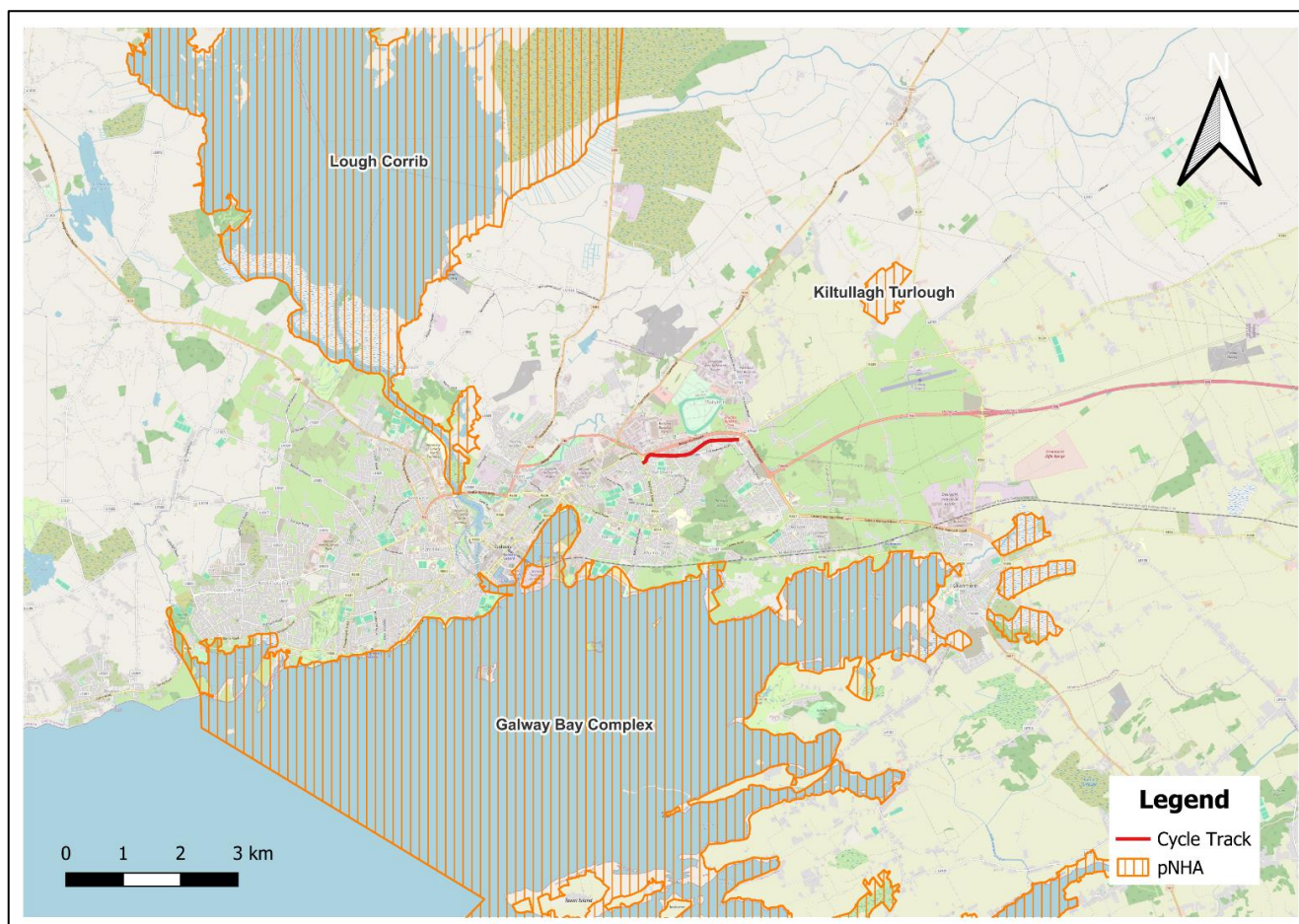


Figure 4-3 - NHAs and pNHAs within 5km of the cycle route.

4.3 Surface Water Features

The proposed project is within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Galway Bay Southeast catchment (29) and Corrib catchment (30). The proposed project is within the Carrowmoneash [Oranmore] subcatchment (SC_010) and Clare [Galway] subcatchment (SC_070).

All surface hydrological features within the vicinity of the project are assumed to follow topography, verified using the flow network and direction layers on EPA Maps and flow in a general southern direction towards the coast.

The project site was reviewed for the presence of watercourses or surface water features. A review of EPA datasets⁴ did not identify any watercourses within the project site. Historically, a review of Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) Spatial Resources⁵ identified an unnamed watercourse, c. 650 southeast of Monivea Road, which appeared to be largely culverted. This watercourse seemed to originate from an enclosed depression on the east side of the N6 Dual Carriageway where it was assumed to flow in a south westerly direction and was entirely culverted under Doughiska Road and neighbouring residential area before reaching Merlin Park Woods. Historically, from GSI mapping, the watercourse terminated at a swallow hole within Merlin Park Woodlands (west of Merlin Park University Hospital). This unnamed watercourse is no longer visible on GSI mapping. The proposed

⁴ <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

⁵ <https://dcenr.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=a30af518e87a4c0ab2fbde2aaac3c228>

Monivea Road Cycle Scheme does not cross this historic watercourse so therefore it is assumed there will be no risk for deterioration in protected sites downstream.

4.4 Groundwater Body

The proposed project is located within the Clarinbridge groundwater body (GWB) (IE_WE_G_0008) and GWDTE-Lough Corrib Fens 3 & 4 (SAC000297) groundwater body (IE_WE_G_0106). These GWBs are of 'Good' WFD status. The route is underlain by a regionally important karstified aquifer.

4.5 Woodlands

Merlin Park Woodlands covers a large area 500m southeast of the project site and this park contains a wide range of habitats including mature broadleaf trees, mixed broadleaf woodland and conifer woodlands, limestone pavement and lowland hay meadows⁶. Protected mammal and bird species have been recorded within Merlin Park.

The proposed route is not within nor does it intersect this area of urban woodland and as such impacts on the habitats found within the woodlands are not anticipated. There will be no significant changes to street lighting levels along the proposed routes in the vicinity of Merlin Parks (some light poles positions may be moved within existing footpaths to accommodate the cycle path) and as such no significant impact on possible foraging routes of bats is anticipated.

4.6 Bird Sites

The Inner Galway Bay I-WeBS bird count site (Site Code: 0G403) is located approximately 2km south of the project route.

Within the Inner Galway Bay count site, records of bird species from the past two counting periods (2018/2019 and 2019/2020) listed on Annex I of the Birds Directive include; whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*), red-throated diver (*Gavia stellata*), black-throated diver (*Gavia arctica*), great northern diver (*Gavia immer*), Slavonian grebe (*Podiceps auritus*), little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), and sandwich tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*).

Records of Red-listed bird species from the past 2 sampling periods (2018/2019 and 2019/2020) on the Birds of Conservation Concern Ireland (BOCCI⁷), other than those listed as Annex I species (above) includes; shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), pochard (*Aythya ferina*), scaup (*Anas marila*), long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), eider (*Somateria mollissima*), common scoter (*Melanitta nigra*), goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), grey plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), knot (*Calidris canutus*), purple sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*), snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*), black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*), curlew (*Numenius arquata*), redshank (*Tringa totanus*), velvet scoter (*Melanitta fusca*), and kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*).

Records of Amber-listed bird species from the past 2 sampling periods (2018/2019 and 2019/2020) on the BOCCI, other than those listed as Annex I species (above) includes; mute swan (*Cygnus olor*), light-bellied brent goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*), shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), wigeon (*Mareca penelope*), gadwall (*Mareca strepera*), teal (*Anas crecca*), mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), pintail (*Anas acuta*), tufted duck (*Aythya fuligula*), red-breasted merganser (*Mergus serrator*), goosander (*Mergus merganser*), great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*),

⁶ Galway City Council City Development Plan (2023-2029).

⁷ <https://birdwatchireland.ie/birds-of-conservation-concern-in-ireland/>



cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*), coot (*Fulica atra*), ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), spotted redshank (*Tringa erythropus*), common sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*), black-headed gull (*Larus ridibundus*), common gull (*Larus canus*), lesser black-backed gull (*Larus fuscus*), herring gull (*Larus argentatus*), and mediterranean gull (*Larus melanocephalus*). Several bird species from the past 2 sampling periods (2018/2019 and 2019/2020) are in such abundance to be considered nationally or internationally important (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1 - Bird species of national and international importance.

Species	Importance
Light-bellied brent goose	International
Shelduck	National
Wigeon	National
Gadwall	National
Teal	National
Pintail	National
Shoveler	National
Red-breasted merganser	National
Great northern diver	International
Little grebe	National
Cormorant	National
Little egret	National
Grey heron	National
Ringed plover	National
Golden plover	National
Grey plover	National
Lapwing	National
Dunlin	National
Bar-tailed godwit	National
Curlew	National
Redshank	National
Greenshank	National
Turnstone	National

4.7 Species

NBDC datasets of rare, protected, and invasive species records of a 500m radius around the proposed project route were examined for the period 2015-2025.



4.7.1 Birds

NBDC datasets record 31no. notable bird species within a 500m radius of the project site. 6no. species are listed under Annex I of the EU Birds Directive; bar-tailed godwit, chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), coal tit (*Periparus ater*), dunlin, little egret, and stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*). 7no. species are noted to be on the red list of the Birds of Conservation Concern Ireland, other than those listed as Annex I species include; common redshank, common scoter, common swift (*Apus apus*), Eurasian curlew, oystercatcher, meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*), and redwing (*Turdus iliacus*). 18no. species are noted to be on the amber list of the BOCCI, other than those listed as Annex I species include; barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), black-headed gull, brent goose, linnet (*Carduelis cannabina*), starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), teal, wigeon, greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*), shag, gadwall, goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*), great cormorant, herring gull, house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), mallard, common gull, ringed plover, willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*).

4.7.2 Mammals

NBDC datasets record 2no. notable mammal species within a 500m radius of the project site. The common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) are protected under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000⁸.

4.7.3 Invasive Species

NBDC datasets record 3no. invasive species within a 500m radius of the project site. 3no. species are noted as medium impact invasive species and are not listed on the third schedule of the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 477/ 2011. The species noted are butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*), common broomrape (*Orobancha minor*), and European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*).

⁸ <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2000/act/38/enacted/en/print>



5. Connectivity to Natura 2000 Sites

5.1 Source-Pathway-Receptor

Appropriate Assessment screening requires a clear and systematic evaluation of whether the scheme may give rise to likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 site. In line with current best practice, including the Office of the Planning Regulator's Practice Note PN01 (2021), the screening process is based on a source–pathway–receptor (SPR) model rather than reliance on predefined geographic distances or broad zones of influence.

Under the SPR model, the screening exercise identifies:

- **Sources** — the elements of the proposed scheme capable of exerting pressures or producing effects (e.g., emissions, habitat loss, noise, lighting, hydrological changes).
- **Pathways** — the mechanisms or connections through which an effect could be transmitted from the source to ecological receptors (e.g., surface water links, groundwater connectivity, air, disturbance pathways, functional ecological linkages).
- **Receptors** — the ecological features that could be affected, specifically the Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives of Natura 2000 sites.

Effects can only arise where all three components of the chain are present. If any one of the links; source, pathway, or receptor is absent or can be objectively ruled out, the potential for significant effects can likewise be excluded.

In establishing which Natura 2000 sites require consideration in AA Screening, the screening process therefore focuses on the existence or absence of viable pathways between the proposed scheme and the features for which each Natura 2000 site is designated. This approach reflects OPR (2021), which notes that reliance on arbitrary distance thresholds (e.g., 15km) is inappropriate unless supported by hydrological, ecological, or functional linkages.

Earlier guidance such as Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2010) identified three broad categories of sites that need to be included in screening. These remain relevant through the SPR approach:

1. Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the scheme area, where there is the potential for direct effects.
2. Natura 2000 sites connected by identifiable pathways, which may include hydrological networks, ecological corridors, or functional linkages for mobile species (e.g., feeding, roosting, or commuting habitats).
3. Any Natura 2000 sites where, applying the precautionary principle, the possibility of significant effects cannot be excluded, for example where hydrological connectivity extends throughout a river catchment or where mobile fauna associated with a Natura site may utilise habitats within or near the proposed scheme site.

The European Commission's (2021) guidance on Article 6(3) further emphasises the need to consider:

- Faunal mobility, whereby species of conservation interest may use areas outside the designated site and could be affected by changes in habitat, disturbance, or severance of ecological linkages.
- Connectivity within and between Natura 2000 sites, including whether a scheme could interrupt functional ecological pathways essential to the achievement of site conservation objectives.

By applying these principles, the screening process identifies all Natura 2000 sites with a potential for significant effects, while avoiding the unnecessary inclusion of sites where no such connections exist.



The proposed scheme does not lie within any Natura 2000 site nor is it adjacent to any Natura 2000 site.

The only potential connectivity from the proposed scheme to any Natura 2000 site is through the following pathway:

- Hydrological – effects from surface water quality; or,

Consideration has also been given to species which may occur at a distance from the SAC or SPA for which they are a Qualifying Interest (QI). For example, many SPA waterbird species have a wide geographical range, therefore, the mobility of QI waterbird species and their potential to range outside of the delineated boundaries of their respective Natura 2000 sites has also been considered as part of this assessment.

Tables 5-1 and 5-2 details all Natura 2000 sites considered in the source–pathway–receptor appraisal and indicate whether any connectivity to the proposed Development exists. Figures 5-1 and 5-2 illustrate the locations of the Natura 2000 sites included in this evaluation.

Due to potential hydrological connectivity from the Proposed scheme site, the following Natura 2000 sites are subject to further assessment in Section 5.4; Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA.



Table 5-1 - Special Areas of Conservation sites assessed for potential connectivity to the Proposed Scheme.

Site Name and Code		Approximate Distance from project location	Qualifying Interests	Connectivity
Galway Complex (000268) ⁹	Bay SAC	1.4km	▪ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] ▪ Coastal lagoons [1150] ▪ Large shallow inlets and bays [1160] ▪ Reefs [1170] ▪ Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] ▪ Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] ▪ <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] ▪ Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] ▪ Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] ▪ Turloughs [3180] ▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] ▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210]	Yes There is no direct overlap or direct connectivity between the proposed project site and Galway Bay Complex SAC. There is existing road drainage infrastructure along Monivea Road and, following a precautionary approach, it is assumed for purposes of this assessment that the road drains outfall to Galway Bay, as such there is potential hydrological connectivity to this SAC from the project site. This SAC is considered further below.

⁹ <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000268>



Site Name and Code	Approximate Distance from project location	Qualifying Interests	Connectivity
		- Alkaline fens [7230] - Limestone pavements [8240] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Harbour Seal) [1365]	
Lough Corrib SAC (000297) ¹⁰	2.5km	- Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110] - Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130] - Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of <i>Chara</i> spp. [3140] - Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] - Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] - Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) [6410] - Active raised bogs [7110] - Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration [7120] - Depressions on peat substrates of the <i>Rhynchosporion</i> [7150]	No There is no direct overlap between the proposed project and Lough Corrib SAC nor is there any hydrological link between the project site and this SAC. The qualifying interest species Lesser horseshoe bats are highly mobile and have the potential to range outside of the SAC site extents. Impacts of bat species associated with the SAC are not anticipated as the cycle paths are aligned along the existing road network and there will be no changes to lighting levels along these urban roadways. The location, scale and duration of proposed project is such that they will not contribute to direct or indirect impacts on habitats and species for which the SAC has been designated and do not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of these habitats and species. This site is screened out and will not be considered further.

¹⁰ <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000297>



Site Name and Code	Approximate Distance from project location	Qualifying Interests	Connectivity
		▪ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] ▪ Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7220] ▪ Alkaline fens [7230] ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] ▪ Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] ▪ Bog woodland [91D0] ▪ <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] ▪ <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] ▪ <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] ▪ <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (Brook Lamprey) [1096] ▪ <i>Salmo salar</i> (Salmon) [1106] ▪ <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303] ▪ <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355] ▪ <i>Drepanocladus vernicosus</i> (Slender Green Feather-moss) [1393] ▪ <i>Najas flexilis</i> (Slender Naiad) [1833]	



Site Name and Code	Approximate Distance from project location	Qualifying Interests	Connectivity
Lough Fingall Complex SAC (000606) ¹¹	12.7km	▪ Turloughs [3180] ▪ Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] ▪ <i>Juniperus communis</i> formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] ▪ Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) [6210] ▪ Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> [7210] ▪ Limestone pavements [8240] ▪ <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]	No There is no direct overlap between the proposed works and Lough Fingall Complex SAC nor is there any hydrological or hydrogeological link between the project site and this SAC. The location, scale and duration of the proposed project is such that it will not contribute to direct or indirect impacts on habitats and species for which the SAC has been designated and does not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of these habitats and species. This site is screened out and will not be considered further.
Rahasane Turlough SAC (000322) ¹²	14.5km	▪ Turloughs [3180]	No There is no direct overlap between the proposed works and Rahasane Turlough SAC nor is there any hydrological or hydrogeological link between the project site and this SAC. The location, scale and duration of the proposed project is such that it will not contribute to direct or indirect impacts on habitats for which the SAC has been designated and does

¹¹ <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000606>

¹² <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000322>



Site Name and Code	Approximate Distance from project location	Qualifying Interests	Connectivity
			not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of these habitats.
			This site is screened out and will not be considered further.



Table 5-2 - Special Protection Areas for birds assessed for potential connectivity to the Proposed Scheme.

Site Name and Code	Approximate Distance from project location	Qualifying Interests	Connectivity
Inner Galway Bay SPA (004031) ¹³	1.4km	▪ Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) [A003] ▪ Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] ▪ Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] ▪ Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] ▪ Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] ▪ Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] ▪ Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] ▪ Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] ▪ Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] ▪ Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] ▪ Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] ▪ Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] ▪ Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] ▪ Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] ▪ Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] ▪ Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] ▪ Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] ▪ Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] ▪ Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>) [A191] ▪ Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193]	Yes Rahasane Turlough SPA is designated for a range of wintering waterbirds and wildfowl that frequent estuarine and coastal habitats. There is no direct overlap between the proposed project and the SPA. There is no connectivity in the form of hedgerows, treelines or watercourses between the project site and this SPA. The works area is sufficiently remote that there is no risk of disturbance to waders and wildfowl using the SPA. However, there is existing road drainage infrastructure along Monivea Road and, following a precautionary approach, it is assumed for purposes of this assessment that the road drains outfall to Galway Bay, as such there is potential hydrological connectivity to this SPA from the project site.

¹³ <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004031>



Site Name and Code	Approximate Distance from project location	Qualifying Interests	Connectivity
Lough Corrib SPA (004042) ¹⁴	4.5km	- Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] - Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) [A051] - Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] - Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) [A059] - Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061] - Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] - Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082] - Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] - Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] - Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] - Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] - Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] - Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] - Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] - Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	No. Lough Corrib SPA is designated for a range of wintering waterbirds and wildfowl that frequent estuarine and coastal habitats. There is no direct overlap between the proposed project and the SPA. There is no connectivity in the form of hedgerows, treelines or watercourses between the project site and this SPA. The works area is sufficiently remote that there is no risk of disturbance to waders and wildfowl using the SPA. The location, scale and operation of the proposed project is such that it will not contribute to direct or indirect impacts on the wintering waterbird species for which the SPA has been designated and does not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of this species. This site is screened out and will not be considered further.

¹⁴ <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004042>



Site Name and Code	Approximate Distance from project location	Qualifying Interests	Connectivity
Cregganna Marsh SPA (004142) ¹⁵	5.4km	Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395]	No. The Cregganna Marsh SPA is designated for Greenland White-fronted Goose. This species can feed within arable and grassland fields in the wider landscape (i.e. away from the SPA); however, the proposed project is aligned within the footprint of the existing road network and associated verges (and occasional private garden) and as such there are no suitable habitats that would provide for suitable field foraging sites for geese. This site is screened out and will not be considered further.
Rahasane Turlough SPA (004089) ¹⁶	14.5km	- Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] - Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] - Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] - Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] - Greenland White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] - Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	No. Rahasane Turlough SPA is designated for a range of wintering waterbirds and wildfowl that frequent estuarine and coastal habitats. There is no direct overlap between the proposed project and the SPA. There is no connectivity in the form of hedgerows, treelines or watercourses between the project site and this SPA. The works area is sufficiently remote that

¹⁵ <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004142>

¹⁶ <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004089>



Site Name and Code	Approximate Distance from project location	Qualifying Interests	Connectivity
			there is no risk of disturbance to waders and wildfowl using the SPA. The location, scale and operation of the proposed project is such that it will not contribute to direct or indirect impacts on the wintering waterbird species for which the SPA has been designated and does not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of this species. This site is screened out and will not be considered further.





Figure 5-1 - SACs assessed for potential connectivity to the Proposed Scheme.

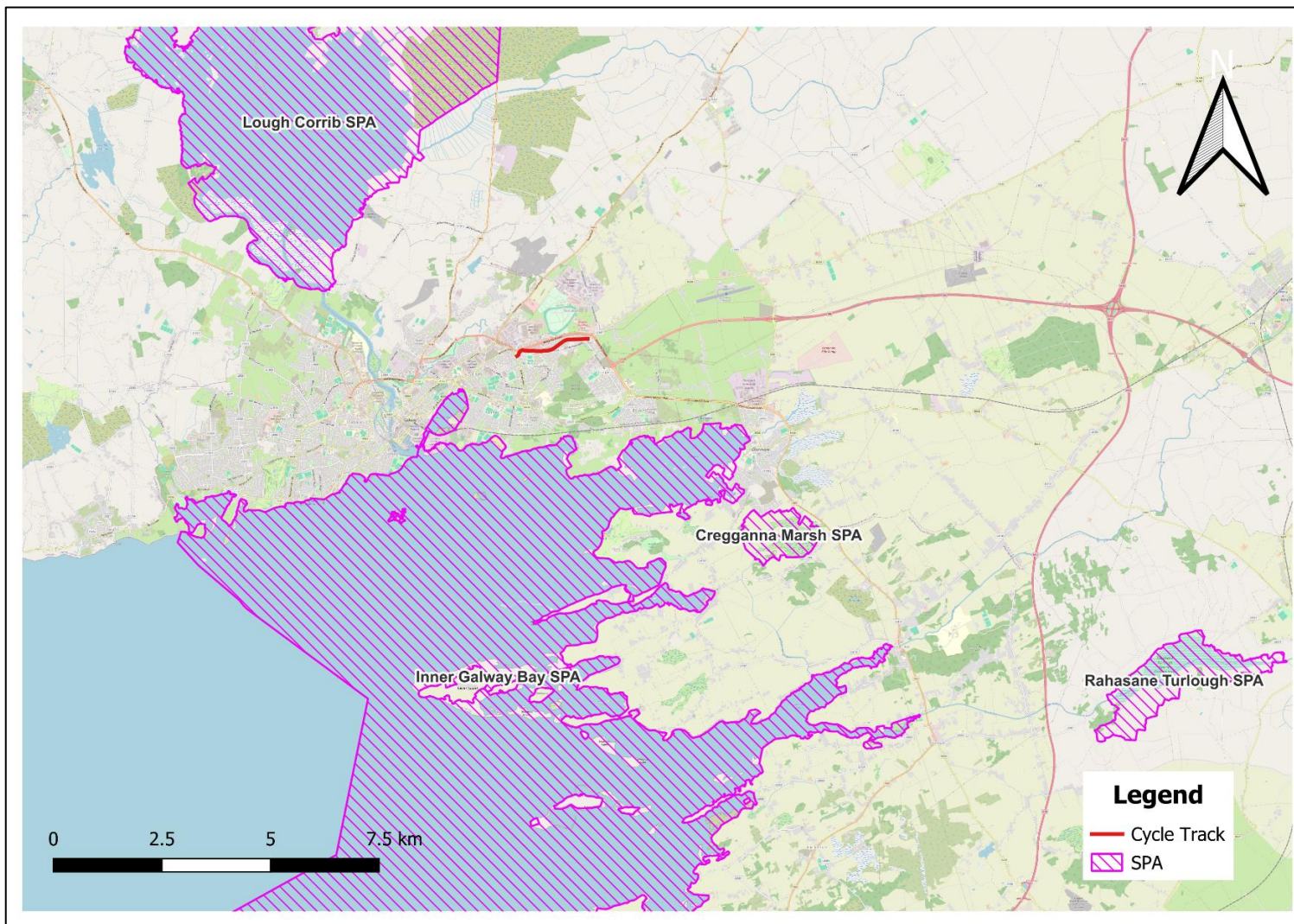


Figure 5-2 - SPAs assessed for potential connectivity to the Proposed Scheme.

5.2 Brief Description of Galway Bay Complex SAC

A synopsis of the SAC, as detailed in the Natura 2000 Standard Data Form, is as follows¹⁷:

“The Galway Bay Complex is a very large, marine-dominated, site situated on the west coast of Ireland. The inner part of the south bay is protected from exposure to Atlantic swells by the Aran Islands and Black Head. Subsidiary bays and inlets (e.g. Poul-na-clough, Aughinish and Kinvara Bays) add texture to the patterns of water movement and sediment deposition, which lends variety to the marine habitats and communities. The terraced Carboniferous (Visean) limestone platform of the Burren sweeps down to the shore and into the sublittoral. West of Galway city, the bedrock geology is granite. The long shoreline is noted for its diversity, with complex mixtures of bedrock shore, shingle beach, sandy beach and fringing salt marshes. Other habitats which occur in small amounts include lagoon, fen, turlough, dry grassland, wet grassland and deciduous woodland.

*The site has very important and good quality examples of large shallow inlets and bays, intertidal mud and sandflats, and reefs. The area has the country’s only recorded example of the littoral community characterized by *Fucus serratus* with sponges, ascidians and red seaweeds on tide-swept lower eulittoral mixed substrata. Sublittorally, the area has Ireland’s only reported piddock bed, an extensive maerl bed of *Phymatolithon calcareum*, an oyster bed, and seagrass beds. A host of rare marine organisms occur, including the sea urchin *Paracentrotus lividus*, the sponge *Mycale contarenii*, the red algae *Phyllophora sicula* and *Rhodomenia delicatula*. Lagoons are particularly well represented and varied in type, size and salinity. Of special importance are the rare karstic rock lagoons, of which the site holds all but one of the examples known from the mainland of Ireland. Good quality salt marshes of both Atlantic and Mediterranean types are well represented and occur along with perennial vegetation of stony banks. A very good, though limited, example of calcareous grassland rich in orchids occurs, and there are examples of alkaline fen and *Juniperus communis* scrub of moderate quality. Two Red Data Book stoneworts occur, *Chara canescens* and *Lamprothamnium papulosum*, and also two Red Data Book vascular plants - *Crambe maritima* and *Hyoscyamus niger*. The site has one of the largest populations of *Phoca vitulina* in the country, and provides optimum habitat for *Lutra lutra*. Galway Bay is a very important ornithological site, with an internationally important wintering population of *Branta bernicla* hrota and regular nationally important populations of a further 16 species, including *Gavia immer*, *Gavia arctica*, *Pluvialis apricaria* and *Limosa lapponica*. Breeding birds of note are *Phalacrocorax carbo*, *Thalasseus sandvicensis* and *Sterna hirundo*.”*

5.2.1 Conservation Objectives of Galway Bay Complex SAC

The conservation objectives for Galway Bay Complex SAC¹⁹, to maintain the favourable conservation for each of the qualifying interests of the site, were published by NPWS (2026) Version 2; 19 Jun 2026.

These were reviewed and considered when preparing this report. The conservation objectives can be broadly summarized as follows: -

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Coastal lagoons in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Large shallow inlets and bays in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs in Galway Bay Complex SAC,

¹⁷ <https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/Natura2000/sdf/#/sdf?site=IE0000268&release=62>

¹⁹ NPWS (2026) Conservation Objectives: Galway Bay Complex SAC 000268. Version 2. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.



- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Perennial vegetation of stony banks in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To restore the Favourable conservation condition of Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of *Salicornia* and other annuals colonizing mud and sand in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows (*Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae*) in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Turloughs in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*) in Galway Bay Complex,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae* in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Alkaline fens in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the Favourable conservation condition of Limestone pavements* in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To restore the favourable conservation condition of Otter in Galway Bay Complex SAC,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Harbour Seal in Galway Bay Complex SAC.

5.2.2 Potential Threats

The threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the SAC²¹ are listed below in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3 - Threats, Pressures, and Activities with impacts on Galway Bay Complex SAC.

Rank	Threats and Pressures
High	Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to agricultural and forestry activities
High	Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to household sewage and waste waters
High	Industrial ports
High	Sea defense or coast protection works, tidal barrages
High	Shipping lanes, ports, marine constructions
Medium	Agricultural intensification
Medium	Hunting, fishing or collecting activities not referred to above
Medium	Invasive non-native species
Medium	Marine and freshwater Aquaculture
Medium	Non intensive cattle grazing
Medium	Non intensive sheep grazing
Medium	Pipe lines

²¹ <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/sites/natura2000/IE0000268>



Medium	Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh
Medium	Removal of beach materials
Medium	Sand and gravel extraction
Low	Bait digging / collection
Low	Disposal of inert materials
Low	Estuarine and coastal dredging
Low	Golf course
Low	Modification of water flow (tidal & marine currents)
Low	Non-motorized nautical sports
Low	Paths, tracks, cycling tracks
Low	Slipways

5.3 Brief Description of Inner Galway Bay SPA

A synopsis of the SPA, as detailed in the Natura 2000 Standard Data Form, is as follows²²:

“Galway Bay SPA is a very large, marine-dominated, site situated on the west coast of Ireland. The inner bay is protected from exposure to Atlantic swells by the Aran Islands and Black Head. Subsidiary bays and inlets (e.g. Poul-na-clough, Aughinish and Kinvarra Bays) add texture to the patterns of water movement and sediment deposition, which lends variety to the marine habitats and communities. The terraced Carboniferous (Viséan) limestone platform of the Burren sweeps down to the shore and into the sublittoral. The long shoreline is noted for its diversity, with complex mixtures of bedrock shore, shingle beach, sandy beach and fringing salt marshes. Intertidal sand and mud flats occur around much of the shoreline, with the largest areas being found on the sheltered eastern coast between Oranmore Bay and Kinvarra Bay. Seagrass beds lie off Finavarra Point. A number of small islands composed of glacial deposits are included, such as Deer Island, along with some rocky islets.

*Galway Bay is one of the most important ornithological sites in the western region. It supports internationally important wintering populations of *Gavia immer* and *Branta bernicla hrota* and regularly occurring nationally important populations of an additional 16 species, most notably *Mergus serrator* (6.7% of national total), *Charadrius hiaticula* (3.3% of total), *Spatula clypeata* (2.9% of total) and *Limosa lapponica* (2.5% of total). It supports the largest and the most regular population of *Gavia arctica* in the country. The bay is an important wintering site for gulls, and is of national significance for at least *Larus canus*. Breeding birds of note are *Phalacrocorax carbo*, *Thalasseus sandvicensis* and *Sterna hirundo*. The site provides both feeding and roost sites for most of the species, though some birds commute to areas outside of the site. The birds of Galway Bay have been monitored annually since 1980/81. The site has one of the largest populations of *Phoca vitulina* in the country.”*

²² <https://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/Natura2000/sdf/#/sdf?site=IE0004031&release=62>



5.3.1 Conservation Objectives of Inner Galway Bay SPA

The conservation objectives for Inner Galway Bay SPA, to maintain the favourable conservation for each of the qualifying interests of the site, were published by NPWS (203) Version 1; 01 May 2013.

These were reviewed and considered when preparing this report. The conservation objectives can be broadly summarized as follows: -

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Great Northern Diver in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Cormorant in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Grey Heron in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Light-bellied Brent Goose in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Wigeon in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Teal in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Shoveler in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Red-breasted Merganser in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Ringed Plover in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Golden Plover in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Lapwing in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Dunlin in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Bar-tailed Godwit in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Curlew in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Redshank in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Turnstone in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Black-headed Gull in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Common Gull in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Sandwich Tern in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Common Tern in Inner Galway Bay SPA,
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetland habitat in Inner Galway Bay SPA.

5.3.2 Potential Threats

The threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the SPA²⁴ are listed below in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4 - Threats, Pressures, and Activities with impacts on Inner Galway Bay SPA.

Rank	Threats and Pressures
High	Discharges
High	Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh
High	Urbanised areas, human habitation
Medium	Dykes, embankments, artificial beaches, general
Medium	Fertilisation

²⁴ <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/sites/natura2000/IE0004031>



Medium	Industrial or commercial areas
Medium	Leisure fishing
Medium	Marine and Freshwater Aquaculture
Medium	Nautical sports
Medium	Roads, motorways
Medium	Walking, horse riding and non-motorised vehicles
Low	Grazing
Low	Hunting

5.4 Identification of Potential Impacts on European Sites

There are 2no. European sites within the ZOI of the proposed project site's red line boundary namely; Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA. The potential for these sites to be impacted either directly or indirectly by the proposed project during construction and operational phases has been considered. The possible sources, receptors, and pathways for impacts are discussed below.

5.4.1 Direct Impacts

The proposed cycleway route alignment avoids intersecting with Galway Bay Complex SAC. The alignment of the proposed cycleway route does not encroach into any of the qualifying interest habitats associated with the SAC nor does it encroach on any habitats that would be utilised by otters or seals. As such there will be no direct impacts as a result of the construction of the cycleway on the qualifying interest habitats and species of Galway Bay Complex SAC.

Inner Galway Bay SPA is designated for a range of wintering waterbirds and wildfowl that frequent estuarine and coastal habitats. There is no overlap of the proposed cycle routes with the Inner Galway Bay SPA site and as such direct impacts on the foraging or roosting sites within the SPA are not anticipated.

5.4.2 Indirect Impacts

For the purposes of this assessment it is assumed there is hydrological connectivity from the proposed project site to Galway Bay Complex SAC via the road drainage infrastructure within works areas which is assumed to outfall to the bay. The potential for scheme construction works to produce contaminated surface water run-off (e.g. silt-laden waters), which could in turn result in effects qualifying interest habitats and species of Galway Bay Complex SAC, has been considered.

During the construction phase of the proposed project, there will not be an increase in surface water (rainfall) runoff levels from the local roadways and paths forming the project site compared to the current baseline conditions, as such there will be no change to the hydrological regime (flows) of surface water runoff discharging to Galway Bay. It is considered during the construction phase that, during periods of heavy rainfall, there is the potential small amounts of silt laden run-off to enter the road drainage network, however, there are only very limited excavations of soils required (e.g. roadside verges) and given the project area is comprised of existing hardstanding surfaces and the bulk of the works will only involve the change of surface materials (new bitumen, new road markings etc.) no significant amounts of pollutants can possibly be generated as a result of works activities. Also, the works



(construction of the cycleway, pathways, road resurfacing etc.) will be undertaken in short 100-200m sections at any one time limiting the amount of any potential run-off. In addition, works will not involve the use of any significant amounts of contaminating materials that could run off to the drainage network (such as cement or hydrocarbons). Potential contaminants are limited to small-scale silt laden run-off from works areas during periods of heavy rainfall and the potential adverse effects on surface water run-off quality, should they occur, are limited to minor siltation, short term in duration, over a relatively short distance. As such significant adverse water quality impacts within the drainage network are not anticipated. Given the small scale and nature of the works and the potential levels of contaminated run off the proposed works could possibly generate and also considering the dilution, dispersal and attenuation that would occur through the drainage network, it can be safely concluded that the proposed works do not have the potential to result in adverse water quality impacts that could affect the conservation status of Galway Bay Complex SAC. When the new cycleways and footpaths are in use, rainfall / surface water run-off from the hardstanding areas does not have the potential to affect the water quality within the drainage network given there will be no polluting substances generated from cycling and walking activities. As such, it can be safely concluded that there will be no likely significant effects on Galway Bay Complex SAC or Inner Galway Bay SPA via the hydrological pathway of the road drainage infrastructure.

The construction of the cycle route may result in an increase in numbers of cyclists trafficking the coastal area of Galway Bay, this increase in numbers of people in the general area of the project site is considered unlikely to have any significant impact on Galway Bay Complex SAC as the route is remote from any qualifying interest habitats and species.

The proposed footprint of the cycle network does not accommodate suitable foraging habitats, such as open waters, sand flats or mudflats, which the majority of the Inner Galway Bay SPA bird species forage within. Certain bird species associated with the SPA, such as Light-bellied Brent Geese and Lapwing, do on occasion feed in arable and grassland fields within the wider landscape; however, the proposed project is located entirely within the urban fabric of the road network in Galway City and as such there are no greenfield sites within the project site suitable for field foraging bird species. Common tern and Sandwich tern have nesting colonies within Galway Bay which are remote from the alignment of the route and as such no impacts on SPA nesting birds is anticipated.

Summary

Given the nature, scale and location of the proposed cycleway route it is considered that the construction and operation of the proposed project will not have a likely significant effect on the qualifying interest habitats and species of Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA.



6. In-combination Effects

6.1.1 Requirement for Assessment

The requirement for AA arising out of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive covers plans and projects that, “*either individually or in combination with other plans or projects*”, are likely to have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 sites. This means that AA is required for any plan or project that, in combination with other plans or projects, would have a significant effect on one or more Natura 2000 sites, irrespective of the presence or absence of such effects from that plan or project on its own. Therefore, regardless of the significance of the effects of the plan or project individually, the potential for significant effects in combination with other plans and projects must be considered in all cases.

6.1.2 Approach and Methodology

The objective of this requirement is to capture significant effects potentially arising from the cumulation or other interaction of non-significant effects from multiple plans and projects. Consequently, the assessment of potential in-combination effects is not a pair-wise assessment, rather, it considers the totality of the effects arising from all plans and projects affecting the Natura 2000 sites in question. In identifying the plans and projects to be included in this assessment, it is important to define an appropriate geographical scope and timescale over which potential in-combination effects are to be considered and the sources of information to be consulted, as described below. It is also important to consider the nature of the interactions between effects, which may be additive, antagonistic, synergistic or complex.

6.1.3 Geographical Scope

In defining the geographical scope for identifying potential in-combination effects, it is important to remember that effects are evaluated in view of the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites concerned. As such, two or more effects relating to the same conservation objective for a given Natura 2000 site would combine even if their geographical extents did not overlap. For example, the loss of a small area of an Annex I habitat type listed as a qualifying interest of a Natura 2000 site would combine with the loss of an entirely unconnected area of the same habitat type from a remote part of the same site to produce an in-combination effect, the significance of which would need to be evaluated in view of the relevant conservation objective. On that basis, the scope of the assessment of in-combination effects extends to all plans and projects affecting the same conservation objectives as the plan or project under consideration, irrespective of whether those effects are significant or not.

In this case, however, given the scale of the proposed project and sensitivities of the Natura 2000 sites in its ZoI, it was deemed most appropriate to include areas in close proximity to the proposed project and its ZoI (as described in Section 5.1) within the geographical scope for identifying potential in-combination effects.

6.1.4 Timescale

The timescale over which potential in-combination effects were considered in this case covered plans and projects from 5 years ago (i.e. 2021) to the present and all reasonably foreseeable future plans and projects, i.e. published draft plans and projects which are already in the planning system or have received planning permission.

6.1.5 Sources of Information

The following sources of information were consulted to gather information on other plans and projects:



- Galway City Council Planning Data viewed through; <https://www.galwaycity.ie/planning/online-planning-system>
- An Coimisiún Pleanála Planning Applications viewed through; <https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/map-search>
- Galway City Development Plan (2023-2029)²⁵
- Galway County Development Plan (2022-2028)²⁶
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland²⁷
- Irish Water²⁸

The threats, pressures and activities with negative impacts on the Galway Bay Complex SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA were used to identify plans and projects which, by their nature, are likely to give rise to potential impacts on the sites concerned.

6.1.6 Assessment

Plans

Galway City and Galway County Development Plans (CDPs) set out policies and objectives for the development of the city and county. The CDPs aims to promote the sustainable development and improvement of the economic, environmental, cultural and social aspects of Galway. The CDPs also requires that any developments must be subject to AA process and that permitted developments comply with the requirements of the WFD, the relevant River Basin Management Plans and the Habitats Directive. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was prepared for each of the CDPs and they went through the AA process. The findings of which were integrated into the objectives of the CDPs resulting in a plan that affords high levels of protection to the environment and Natura 2000 sites.

Projects

A review of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) publicly available planned projects²⁹ did not identify any major road projects within 10km of the proposed project.

A review of Uisce Éireann (Irish Water) projects³⁰ identified 1 no. water project in the vicinity of the proposed project. This project is detailed in Table 6-1 below.

A search of Galway City Council planning and An Coimisiún Pleanála planning applications has been undertaken for applications submitted within the last 5 years in the vicinity the proposed project (last accessed 03/04/2025). Near the proposed works, projects that have been granted planning permission include retention of existing developments, typical extensions to domestic dwellings or the construction of new domestic dwellings. Regarding potential impacts to water quality, these projects will have to comply with the EPA's Code of Practice for Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (EPA, 2021). These developments have conditions attached to their planning permission relating to sustainable development, such as siting of septic tanks, foul surface water and effluent drainage facilities, and clean surface water run-off drainage facilities. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the developments that have been granted permission will have any significant effects in combination with the proposed project.

²⁵ <https://www.galwaycity.ie/services/planning/development-plan-2023-2029>

²⁶ <https://consult.galway.ie/en/consultation/adopted-galway-county-development-plan-2022-2028>

²⁷ <https://www.tii.ie/projects/>

²⁸ <https://www.water.ie/projects/>

²⁹ <https://www.tii.ie/public-transport/projects-and-improvements/>

³⁰ <https://www.water.ie/projects/?map=our-projects&id=627>



Key developments which shall be considered are large-scale developments in the region of the proposed project, there is 1 no. of these developments which have been further assessed in terms of in-combination effects with the proposed project and are presented in Table 6-1 below.

It is considered that there are no An Coimisiún Pleanála or Council approved developments or projects that will act in combination with the proposed project to give rise to significant in-combination effects on the Galway Bay Complex SAC or Inner Galway Bay SPA.



Table 6-1 - Planning applications near the proposed project site.

Ref. No.	Project/Applicant	Project Summary	In-combination Assessment
2460279	Galway Race Committee Trust	Demolition of temporary stables, construction of permanent stables, pavilion, machinery and maintenance sheds, pre-parade rings and ancillary site works.	This project has been subject to the Appropriate Assessment process which concluded: <i>'the Project will not adversely affect (either directly or indirectly) the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and there is no reasonable scientific doubt in relation to this conclusions.'</i> – Scott Cawley Based on the scale and nature of this project, in-combination effects associated with the proposed project on the European sites will not occur.
No planned	ref, Uisce Éireann	Upgrade of existing water mains and construction of new watermains in the Ballybrit area.	The works are currently at early design stage and therefor will provide no in-combination effects.
ABP 2022166	Galway City Council	BusConnects Galway (Cross City Link – University Road to Dublin Road) Scheme consisting of the alteration of existing road layouts, including junction layouts, footpaths, signalling, pedestrian crossings, drainage and other associated works.	This project has been subject to the Appropriate Assessment process which concluded: <i>'It is the conclusion of this NIS, on the basis of the best scientific knowledge available, and subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures set out under Section 3.6, that the possibility of any adverse effects on the integrity of the European Sites considered in this NIS, or on the integrity of any other European Site (having regard to their conservation objectives), arising from the Proposed Scheme, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, can be excluded beyond a reasonable scientific doubt.'</i> Based on the scale and nature of this project, in-combination effects associated with the proposed project on the European sites will not occur.
GCC 20332	Ref: Aldi Stores (Ireland) Ltd	Permission for development which will consist of the construction of a two-storey (above	This project has been subject to the Natura Impact Statement process which concluded:



Ref. No.	Project/Applicant	Project Summary	In-combination Assessment
		ground) discount foodstore (to include off licence use) with a gross floor area of 2,019sqm (net retail area: 1,254sqm). The development includes the erection of 2 no.free standing double sided illuminated signs, 1 no.illuminated gable sign, 1 no.entrance sign, 1 no. external sculpture and the provision of roof mounted solar panels. The proposed development will be served by 80 no. car parking spaces provided at surface level and in a basement car park. The proposed development also includes for the provision of a bus stop and pedestrian crossing, removal of existing boundary wall as well as all landscaping, boundary treatments and site development works, connection to existing services and all other works necessary to facilitate the proposed development.	<i>"Where the potential for any adverse effect on any European Site has been identified, the pathway by which any such effect may occur has been robustly blocked through the use of avoidance, appropriate design and mitigation measures as set out within this report and its appendices. The measures ensure that the construction and operation of the proposed development does not adversely affect the integrity of European Sites. Therefore, it can be objectively concluded that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site."</i> Based on the scale and nature of this project, in-combination effects associated with the proposed project on the European sites will not occur.
GCC 2560329	Ref: Martin Tolan	Permission for development which consists of: the construction and operation of a development consisting of an energy centre building, heat network pipeline, landscaping works, roof mounted solar PV and all other associated ancillary infrastructure at the Merlin Park Industrial Estate and Doughiska Road. The Galway City East Energy Centre building will integrate multiple low carbon energy technologies. The proposed development will also include a heat pipeline network consisting of 2no. pipes, with a	This project has been subject to the Appropriate Assessment process which concluded: <i>"...the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the QIs, SCIs or conservation objectives of any European Site, either individually or in combination with other projects or plans. It is concluded, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that there is no likelihood of significant effects on any European Site."</i> Based on the scale and nature of this project, in-combination effects associated with the proposed project on the European sites will not occur.



Ref. No.	Project/Applicant	Project Summary	In-combination Assessment
		maximum diameter of 450mm each, spanning a distance of circa. 2390m in an underground trench, from the proposed energy centre building to Doughiska Road, along the length of Doughiska Road, crossing Monivea Road to the north, terminating outside the Clayton Hotel, and crossing Old Dublin Road to the south, terminating outside the Castlegar GAA Club, linking the proposed Galway City East Energy Centre building	
ACP 318220	Ref: Galway County Council	N6 Galway City Ring Road	This project has been subject to the Natura Impact Statement process which concluded: <i>“...the Project will not adversely affect (either directly or indirectly) the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and there is no reasonable scientific doubt in relation to this conclusion.”</i> Based on the scale and nature of this project, in-combination effects associated with the proposed project on the European sites will not occur.



7. Likelihood of Significant Effects on Natura 2000 Sites

The proposed scheme is not located within or adjacent to any European sites and as such there will be no direct impacts on any European sites.

There is assumed hydrological connectivity from the project site to the European sites Galway Bay via the existing road drainage infrastructure on Monivea Road. The potential for the construction and/or operational phase of the project to result in adverse water quality impacts within the drainage network that could affect Galway Bay Complex SAC or Inner Galway Bay SPA has been assessed. The assessment has concluded, given the nature, location and scale of the project, that the proposed project does not have the potential to generate any pollutants that could affect the Europeans sites via this hydrological pathway.

The proposed project does not proffer any habitats suitable for ex-situ qualifying interest species from Inner Galway Bay SPA and as such there will be no likely significant effects on the qualifying interest waterbirds of this SPA.

8. Conclusion

On the basis of objective information and in view of best scientific knowledge and applying a precautionary principle, it is concluded by the authors of this report that with the absence of any mitigation measures the proposed project, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not result in likely significant effects on Galway Bay Complex SAC or Inner Galway Bay SPA or any other European site. Thus, it is recommended that it is not necessary for the scheme to proceed to Appropriate Assessment.

Should the scope, nature or extent of the proposed scheme change, a new assessment (AA Screening Report or AA Screening Addendum Report) would be required.



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Appendix A. General Arrangement Drawings



A1

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MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Risk Level	X	Atkins Base Line - Low Risk
		Atkins Sensitive - Medium Risk
		Atkins Private - High Risk
		Client Critical - Already Marked



Rev	Description	By	Date	Chk'd	Rev'd	Auth
CO1	ISSUED FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION	XX	22.05.26	XX	XX	XX



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Tel (+353) 091 786 050 Fax (+353) 091 779 830

Client
GALWAY CITY COUNCIL
Project
MONIVEA ROAD (EAST)
ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

GENERAL NOTES

- ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE
- ONLY WRITTEN DIMENSIONS SHALL BE USED. NO DIMENSIONS SHALL BE SCALED FROM THE DRAWINGS
- ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES AND ARE TO MALIN HEAD DATUM
- ALL COORDINATES ARE IN METRES AND ARE TO IRISH TRANSVERSE MERCATOR
- DRAWINGS ARE TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SPECIFICATION

LEGEND:

- SITE BOUNDARY
- EXISTING KERBLINE TO BE RETAINED
- 6mm CONCRETE KERB
- 60mm CONCRETE KERB
- 60mm BEVELLED KERB
- 100mm CONCRETE KERB
- KASSEL KERB
- FLUSH KERB
- EDGING KERB
- CARRIAGEWAY
- PROPOSED FOOTPATH
- PROPOSED SHARED SPACE
- PROPOSED SHARED CYCLE TRACK / LANE
- PROPOSED ON ROAD CYCLE LANE
- PROPOSED RAISED TABLE / ENTRY TREATMENT
- PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (CONTROLLED)
- PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (UNCONTROLLED)
- PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (LADDER/TRAMLINE)
- PROPOSED GRASS VERGE
- EXISTING GRASS VERGE TO BE RETAINED
- EXISTING FOOTWAY / CYCLEWAY
- PROPOSED CYCLE RAMP
- PROPOSED SINGLE PANEL BUS SHELTER
- DELINEATOR POST
- TRAFFIC SIGNAL POST

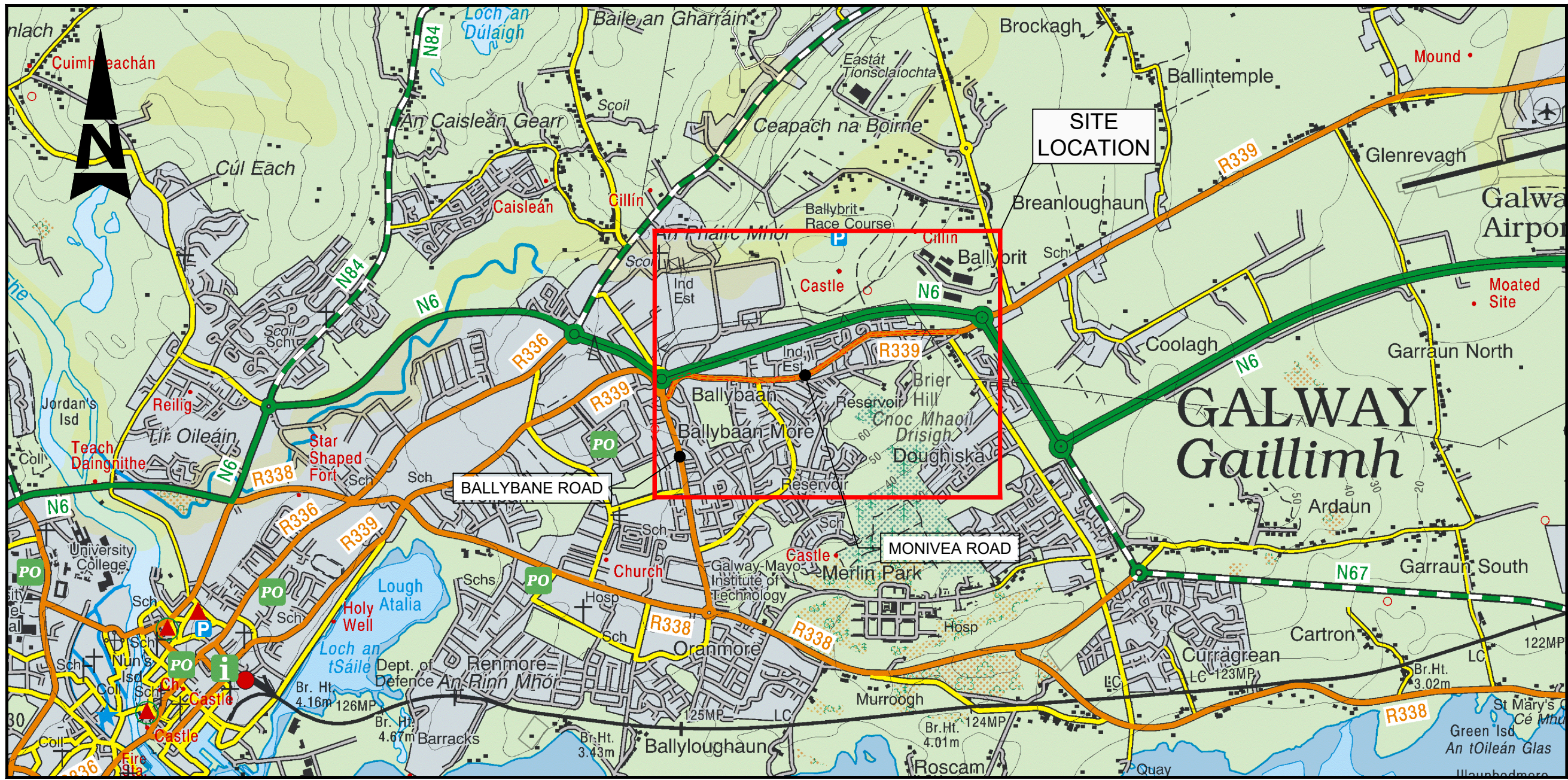
NOTES:

- DO NOT SCALE FROM DRAWING.

Purpose
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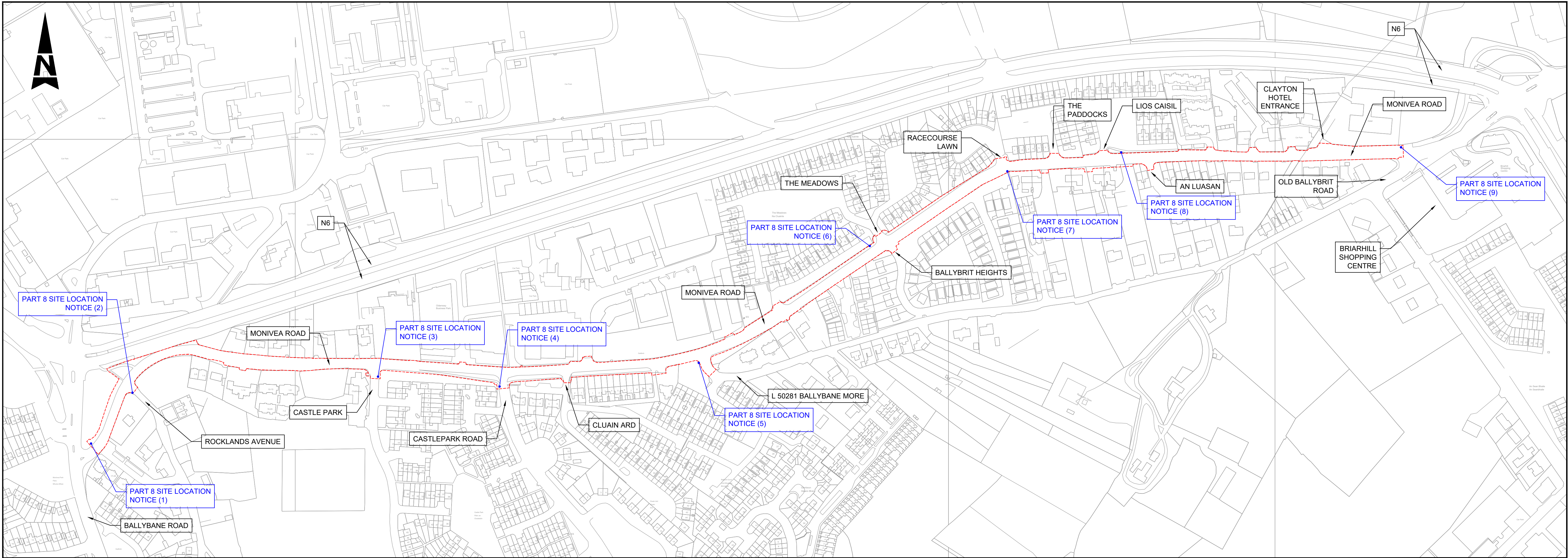
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MONIVEA ROAD (EAST)
KEY PLAN

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Status A2	Drawing Number 5193732-ATK-04-XX-DR-CE-900002	Rev C01		



SITE MAP - MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Scale at A1 1:25,000
Scale at A3 1:50,000



SITE LOCATION MAP - MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Scale at A1 1:2500
Scale at A3 1:5000

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MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Risk Level	X	Atkins Base Line - Low Risk
		Atkins Sensitive - Medium Risk
		Atkins Private - High Risk
		Client Critical - Already Marked



Rev	Description	By	Date	Chk'd	Rev'd	Auth
C02	ISSUED FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION		XX 13.07.26	XX	XX	XX
C01	DRAFT FOR PART 8		XX 22.05.26	XX	XX	XX



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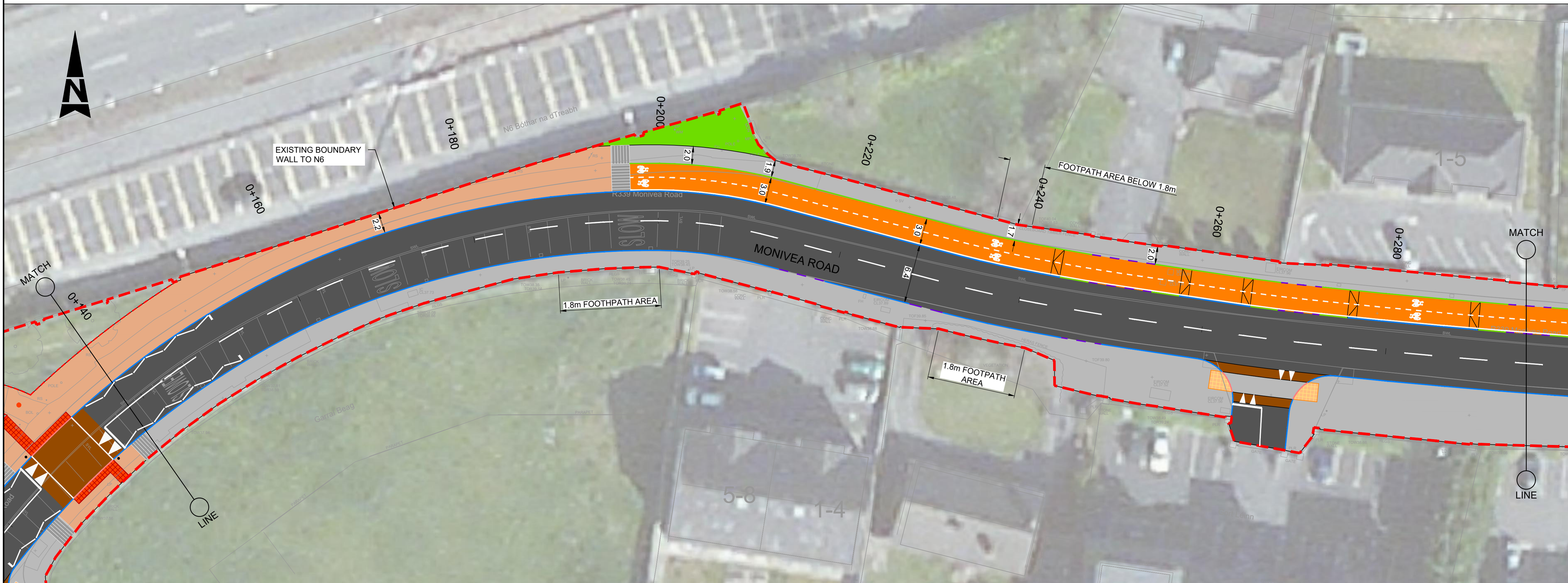
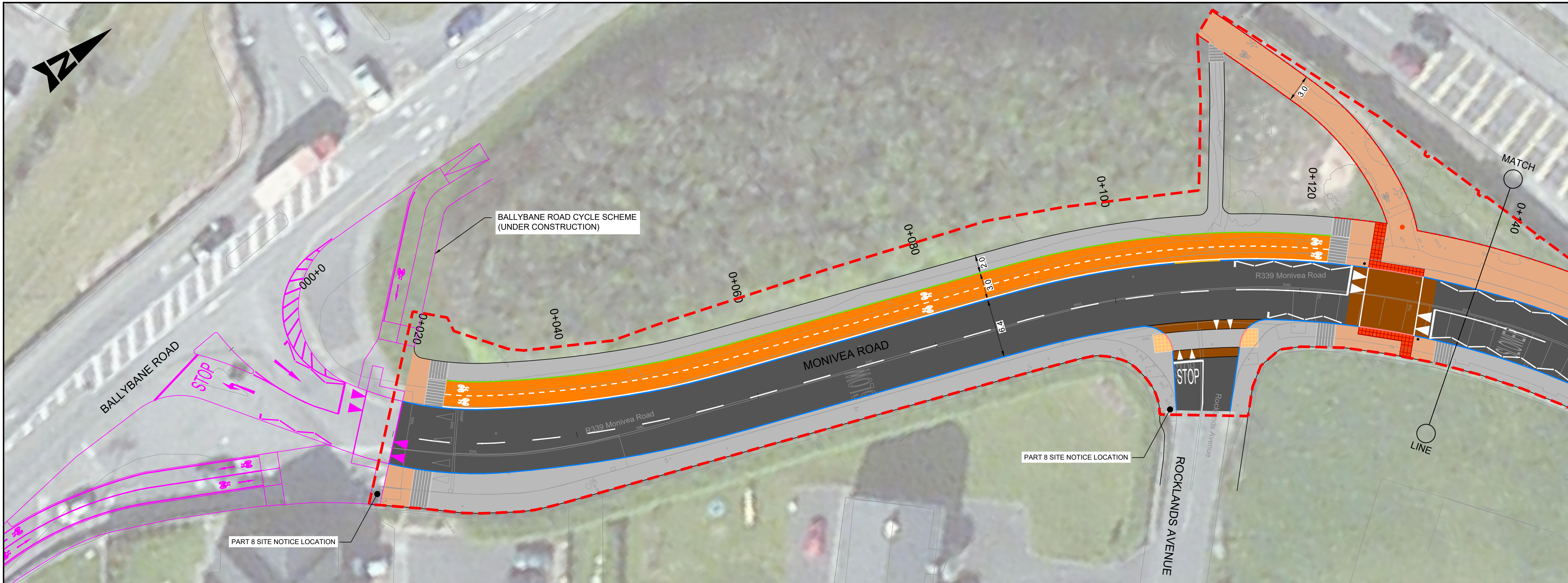
Project
MONIVEA ROAD (EAST)
ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Purpose
FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION

Title
MONIVEA ROAD (EAST)
SITE CONTEXT AND SITE LOCATION MAP

Original Scale AS SHOWN	Drawn XX Date 22.05.26	Checked XX Date 22.05.26	Reviewed XX Date 22.05.26	Authorised XX Date 22.05.26
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Status A2	Drawing Number 5193732-ATK-04-XX-DR-CE-900003	Rev C02
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- GENERAL NOTES
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 2. ONLY WRITTEN DIMENSIONS SHALL BE USED. NO DIMENSIONS SHALL BE SCALED FROM THE DRAWINGS
 3. ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES AND ARE TO MALIN HEAD DATUM
 4. ALL COORDINATES ARE IN METRES AND ARE TO IRISH TRANSVERSE MERCATOR
 5. DRAWINGS ARE TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SPECIFICATION

- LEGEND:
- SITE BOUNDARY
 - EXISTING KERBLINE TO BE RETAINED
 - 6mm CONCRETE KERB
 - 60mm CONCRETE KERB
 - 60mm BEVELLED KERB
 - 100mm CONCRETE KERB
 - KASSEL KERB
 - FLUSH KERB
 - EDGING KERB
 - CARRIAGEWAY
 - PROPOSED FOOTPATH
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 - PROPOSED RAISED TRACK / LANE
 - PROPOSED ON ROAD CYCLE LANE
 - PROPOSED RAISED TABLE / ENTRY TREATMENT
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (CONTROLLED)
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (UNCONTROLLED)
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (LADDER/TRAMLINE)
 - PROPOSED GRASS VERGE
 - EXISTING GRASS VERGE TO BE RETAINED
 - EXISTING FOOTWAY / CYCLEWAY
 - PROPOSED CYCLE RAMP
 - PROPOSED SINGLE PANEL BUS SHELTER
 - DELINEATOR POST
 - TRAFFIC SIGNAL POST

- NOTES:
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MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Risk Level	Atkins Base Line - Low Risk
X	Atkins Sensitive - Medium Risk
	Atkins Private - High Risk
	Client Critical - Already Marked



C03	ISSUED FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION	XX	10.07.26	XX	XX	XX
C02	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	11.06.26	XX	XX	XX
C01	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	22.05.26	XX	XX	XX
Rev	Description	By	Date	Chk'd	Rev'd	Auth

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Client: GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

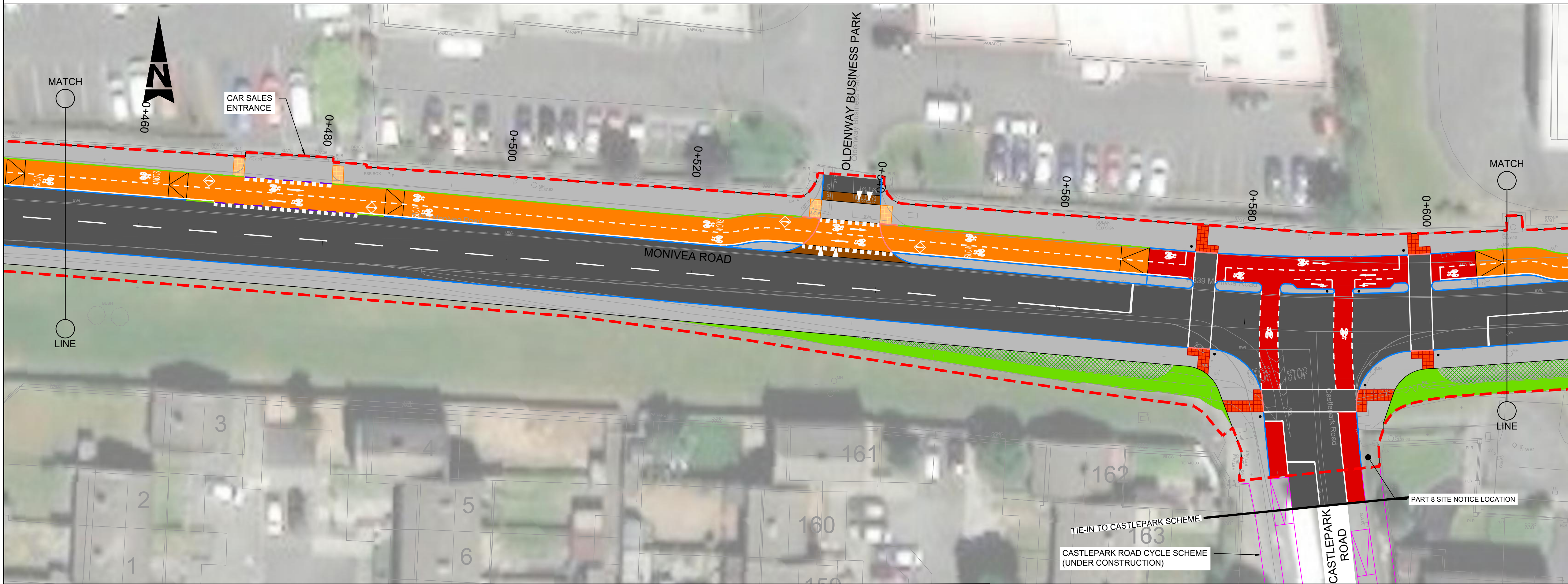
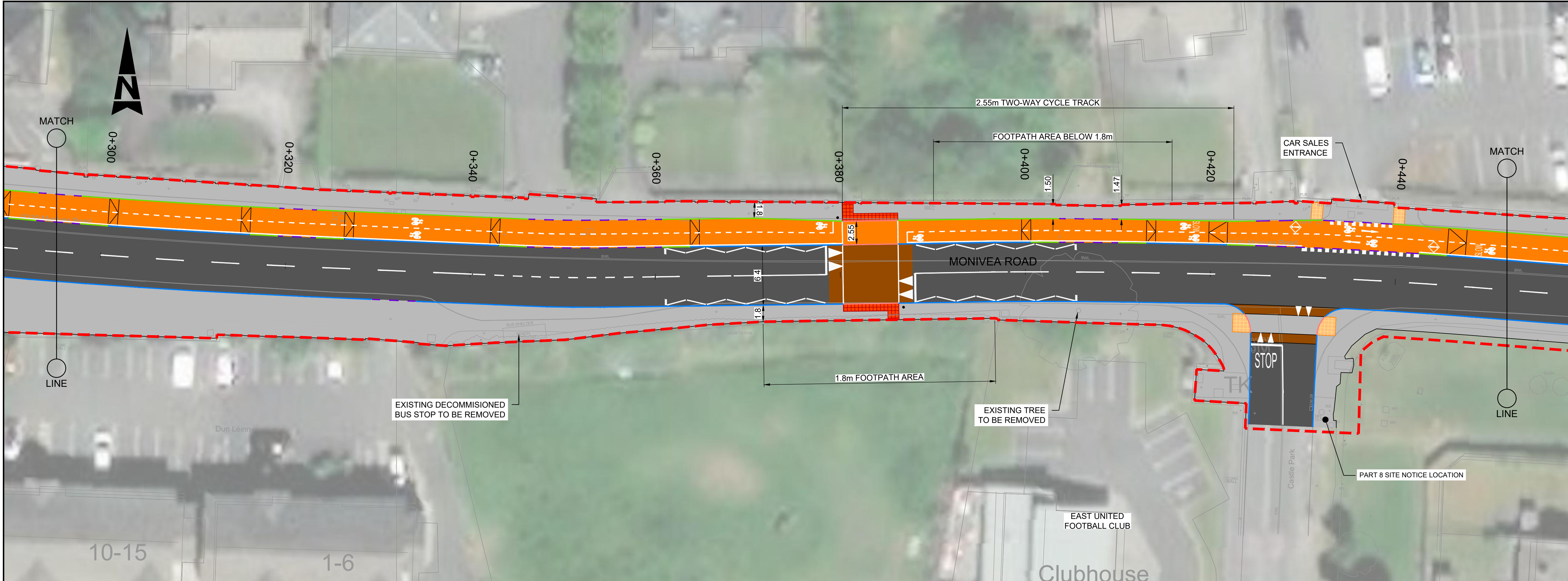
Project: MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

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Status: A2	Drawing Number: 5193732-ATK-04-XX-DR-CE-900121	Rev: C03	Authorised: XX Date: 22.05.26

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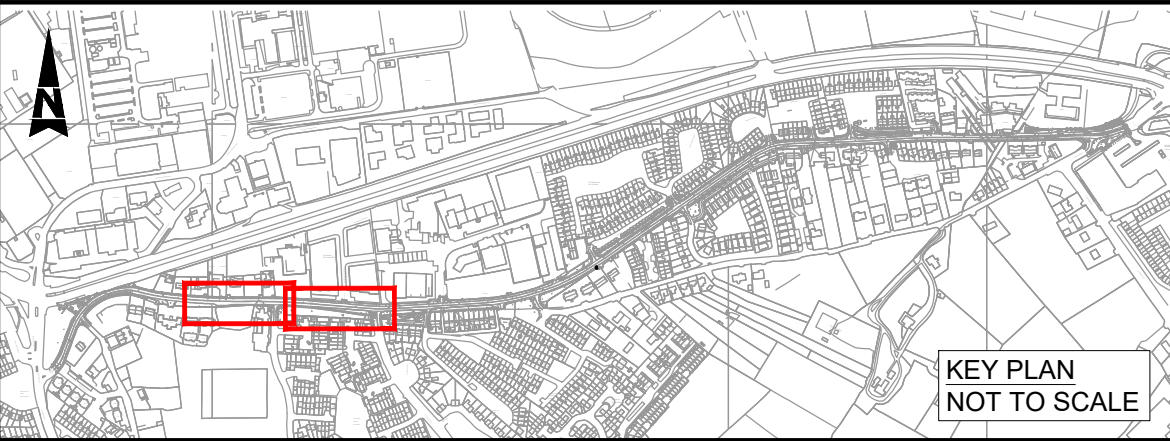
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MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Risk Level	Atkins Base Line - Low Risk
X	Atkins Sensitive - Medium Risk
	Atkins Private - High Risk
	Client Critical - Already Marked



Rev	Description	By	Date	Chk'd	Rev'd	Auth
C03	ISSUED FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION	XX	10.07.26	XX	XX	XX
C02	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	11.06.26	XX	XX	XX
C01	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	22.05.26	XX	XX	XX

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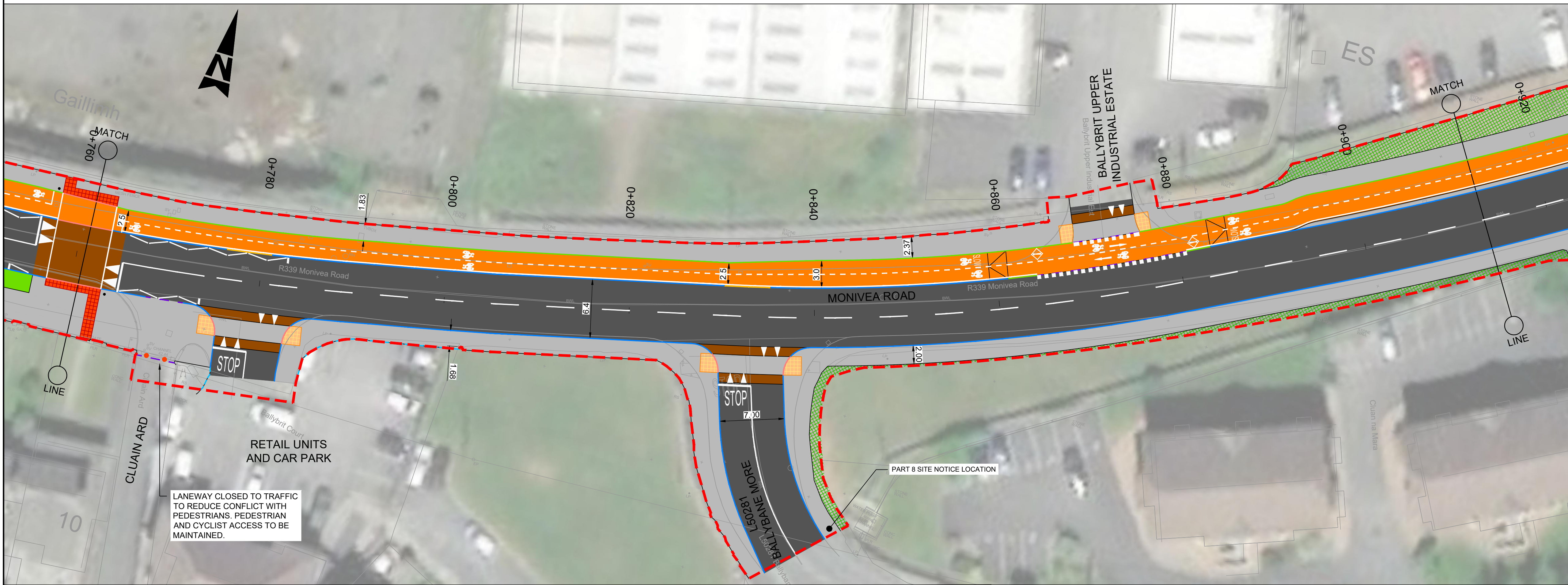
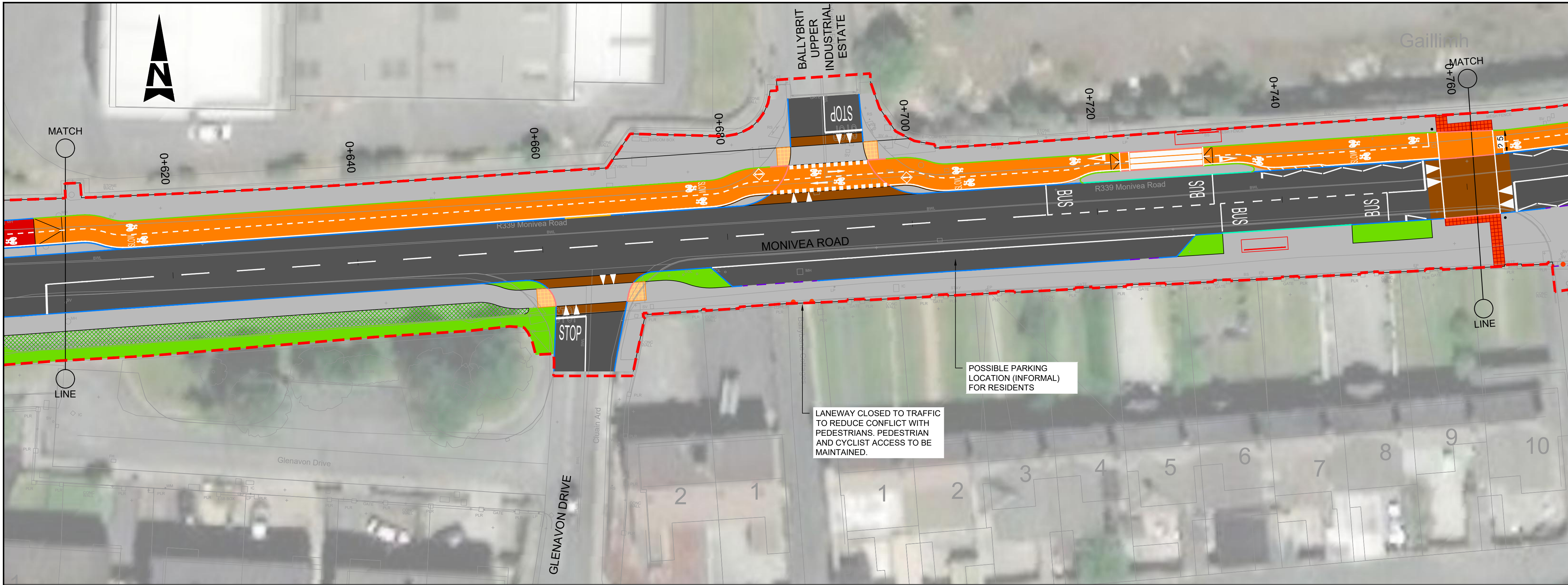
Client
GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

Project
MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Purpose FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION		Title GENERAL ARRANGEMENT SHEET 2 OF 6			
Original Scale 1:250 @ A1 1:500 @ A3	Drawn XX Date 22.05.26	Checked XX Date 22.05.26	Reviewed XX Date 22.05.26	Authorised XX Date 22.05.26	
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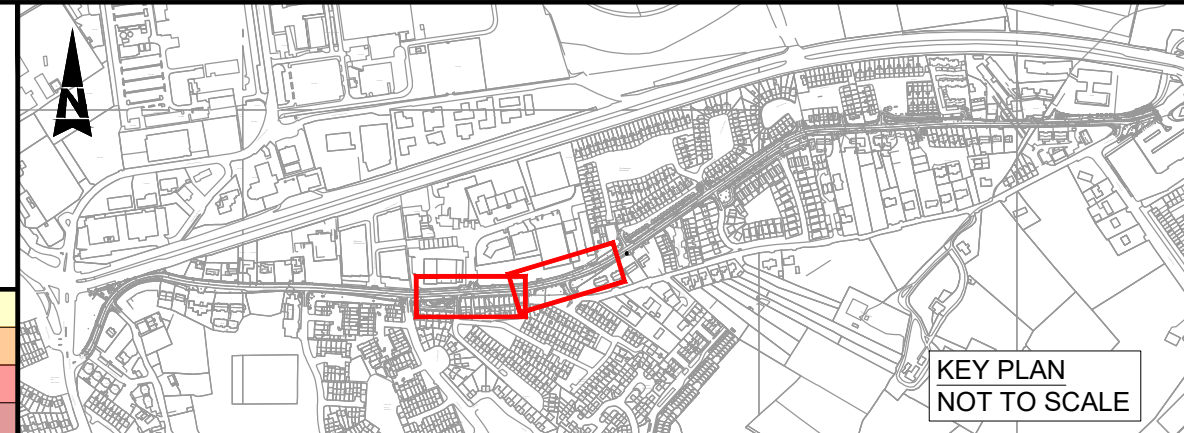
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MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Risk Level	X	Atkins Base Line - Low Risk
		Atkins Sensitive - Medium Risk
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		Client Critical - Already Marked



Rev	Description	By	Date	Chk'd	Rev'd	Auth
C03	ISSUED FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION	XX	10.07.26	XX	XX	XX
C02	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	11.06.26	XX	XX	XX
C01	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	22.05.26	XX	XX	XX

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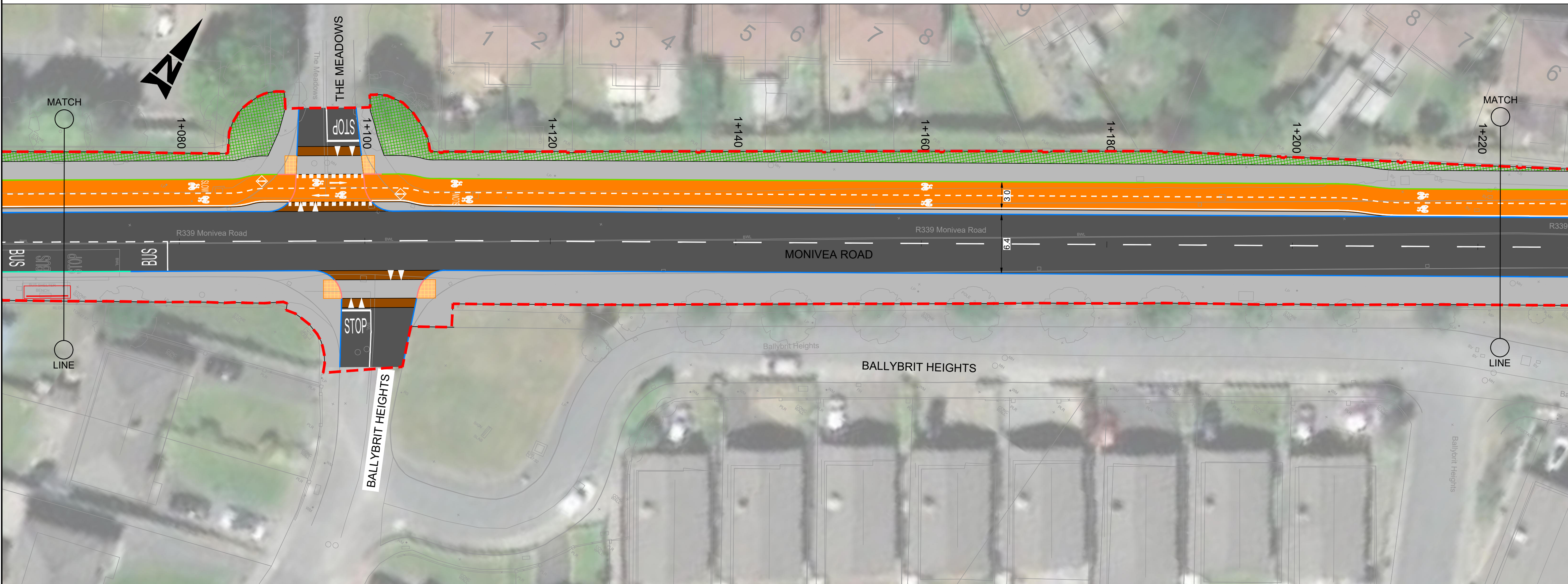
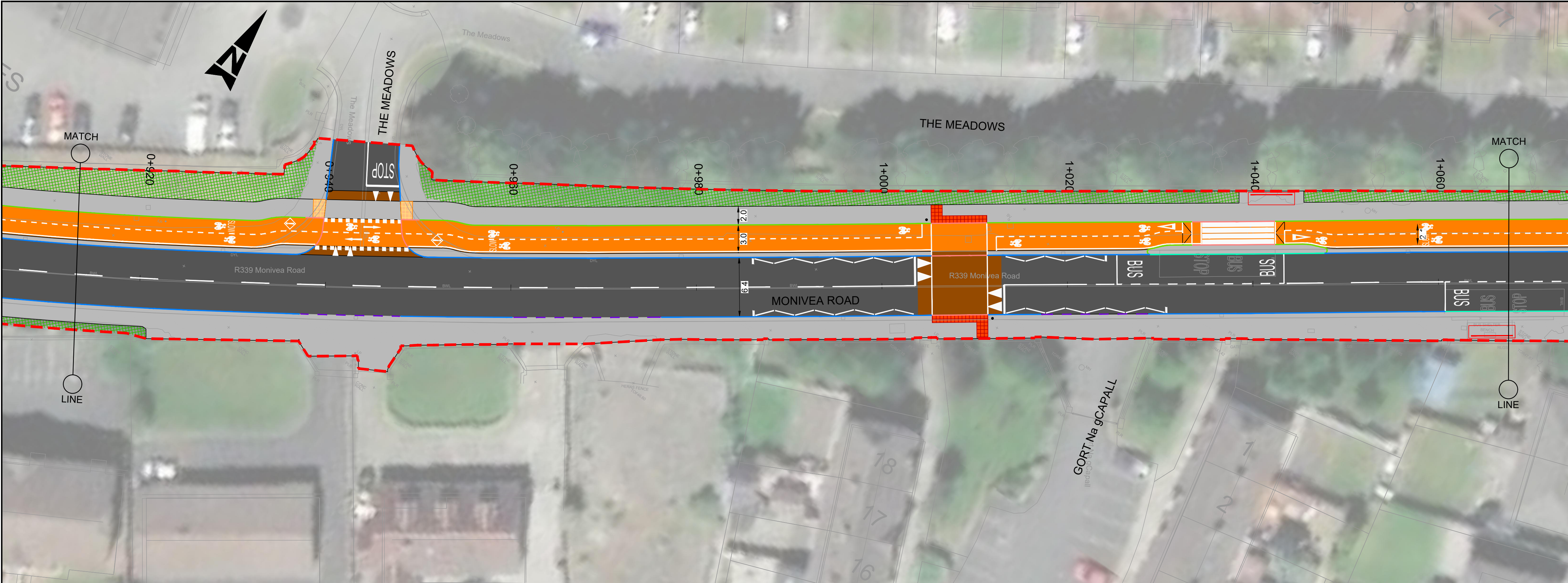
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Project	MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Purpose	FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION
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Checked	XX
Reviewed	XX
Authorised	XX
Date	22.05.26
Date	22.05.26
Date	22.05.26
Date	22.05.26
Status	A2
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Rev	C03

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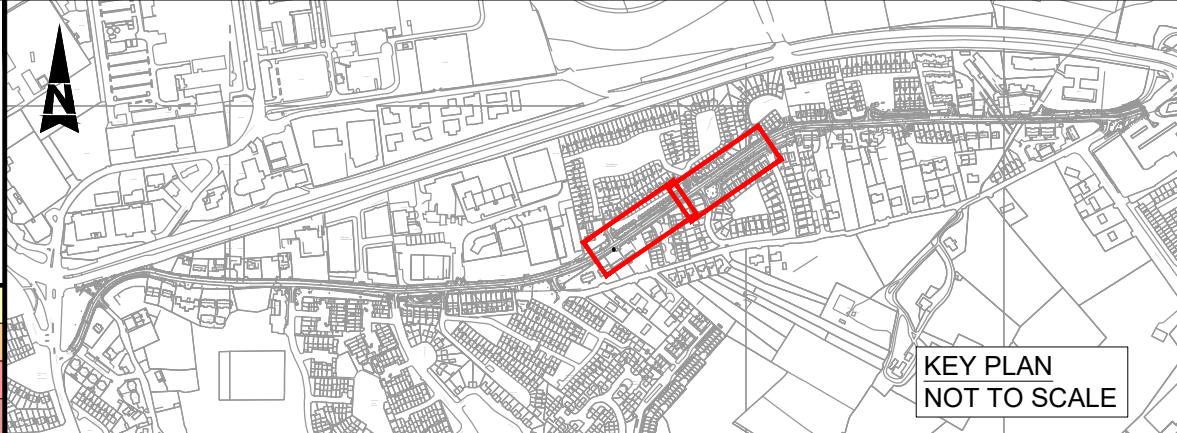
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Risk Level	Atkins Base Line - Low Risk
Atkins Sensitive - Medium Risk	
Atkins Private - High Risk	
Client Critical - Already Marked	



Rev	Description	By	Date	Chk'd	Rev'd	Auth
C03	ISSUED FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION	XX	10.07.26	XX	XX	XX
C02	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	11.06.26	XX	XX	XX
C01	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	22.05.26	XX	XX	XX

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Fax (+353) 021 429 0360

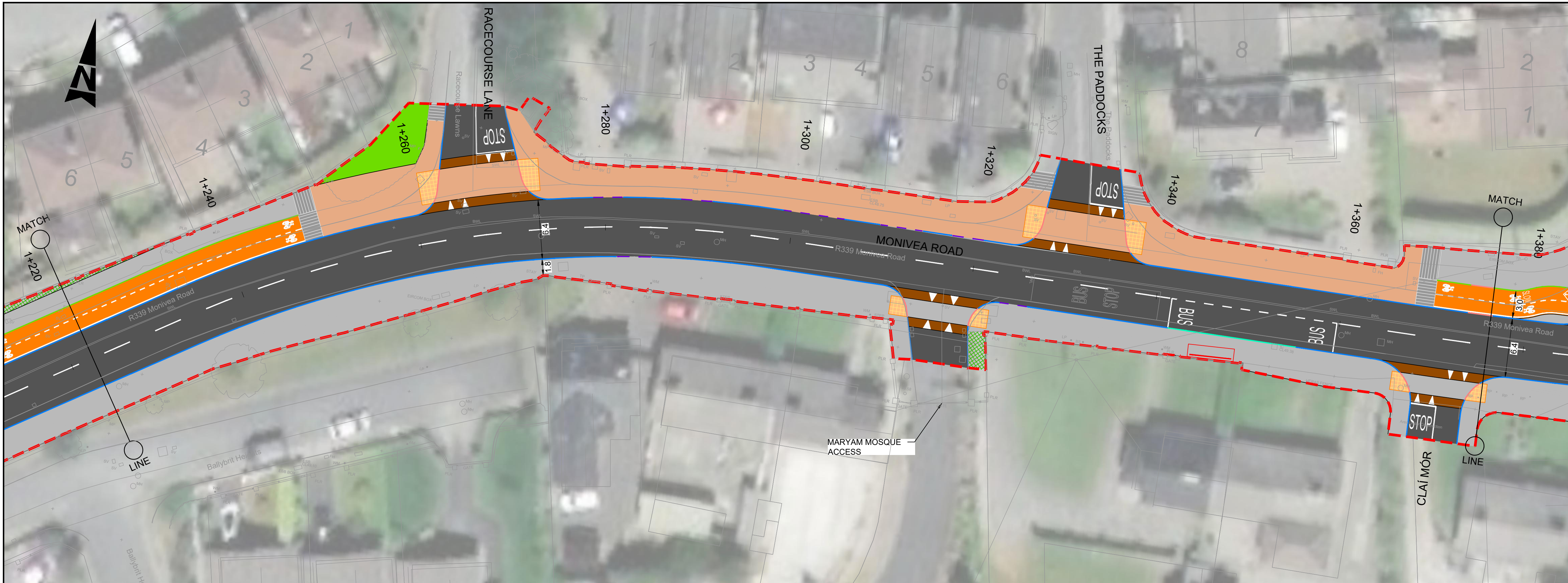
1st Floor Technology House Parkmore Technology Park, Galway
Tel (+353) 091 786 050
Fax (+353) 091 779 830

Client	GALWAY CITY COUNCIL	
Project	MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME	

Purpose		FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION			
Title		GENERAL ARRANGEMENT SHEET 4 OF 6			
Original Scale		1:250 @ A1	1:500 @ A3		
Status		Drawn XX	Checked XX	Reviewed XX	Authorised XX
Drawing Number		Date 22.05.26	Date 22.05.26	Date 22.05.26	Date 22.05.26
A2	5193732-ATK-04-XX-DR-CE-900124	C03			

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A1

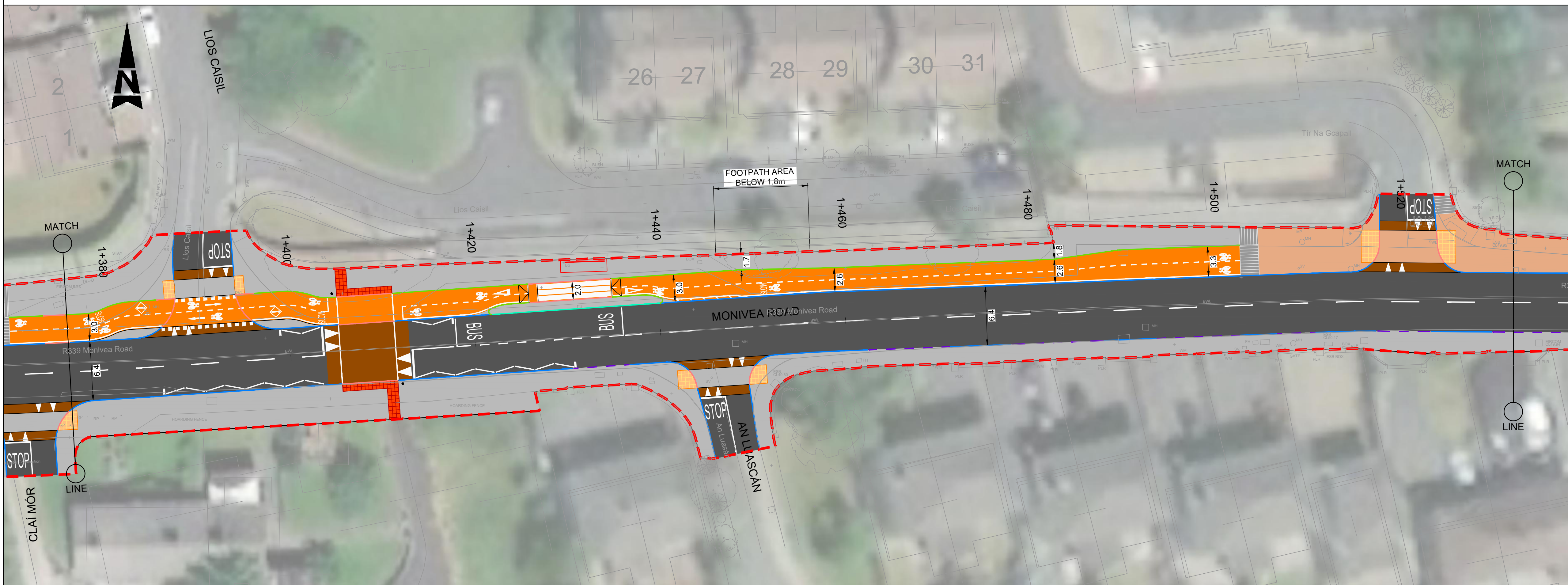
DO NOT SCALE



- GENERAL NOTES
1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN MILLIMETRES UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE
 2. ONLY WRITTEN DIMENSIONS SHALL BE USED. NO DIMENSIONS SHALL BE SCALED FROM THE DRAWINGS
 3. ALL LEVELS ARE IN METRES AND ARE TO MALIN HEAD DATUM
 4. ALL COORDINATES ARE IN METRES AND ARE TO IRISH TRANSVERSE MERCATOR
 5. DRAWINGS ARE TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SPECIFICATION

- LEGEND:
- SITE BOUNDARY
 - EXISTING KERBLINE TO BE RETAINED
 - 6mm CONCRETE KERB
 - 60mm CONCRETE KERB
 - 60mm BEVELLED KERB
 - 100mm CONCRETE KERB
 - KASSEL KERB
 - FLUSH KERB
 - EDGING KERB
 - CARRIAGEWAY
 - PROPOSED FOOTPATH
 - PROPOSED SHARED SPACE
 - PROPOSED RAISED CYCLE TRACK / LANE
 - PROPOSED ON ROAD CYCLE LANE
 - PROPOSED RAISED TABLE / ENTRY TREATMENT
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (CONTROLLED)
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (UNCONTROLLED)
 - PROPOSED TACTILE PAVING (LADDER/TRAMLINE)
 - PROPOSED GRASS VERGE
 - EXISTING GRASS VERGE TO BE RETAINED
 - EXISTING FOOTWAY / CYCLEWAY
 - PROPOSED CYCLE RAMP
 - PROPOSED SINGLE PANEL BUS SHELTER
 - DELINEATOR POST
 - TRAFFIC SIGNAL POST

- NOTES :
1. DO NOT SCALE FROM DRAWING.



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MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Risk Level	X	Atkins Base Line - Low Risk
		Atkins Sensitive - Medium Risk
		Atkins Private - High Risk
		Client Critical - Already Marked



C03	ISSUED FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION	XX	10.07.26	XX	XX	XX
C02	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	11.06.26	XX	XX	XX
C01	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	22.05.26	XX	XX	XX
Rev	Description	By	Date	Chk'd	Rev'd	Auth

Atkins House, 150-155 Ainslie Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin
Tel (+353) 01 810 8000
Fax (+353) 01 810 8001

Unit 2B, 2200 Cork Airport Business Park, Cork
Tel (+353) 021 429 0300
Fax (+353) 021 429 0360

1st Floor Technology House Parkmore Technology Park, Galway
Tel (+353) 091 786 050
Fax (+353) 091 779 830

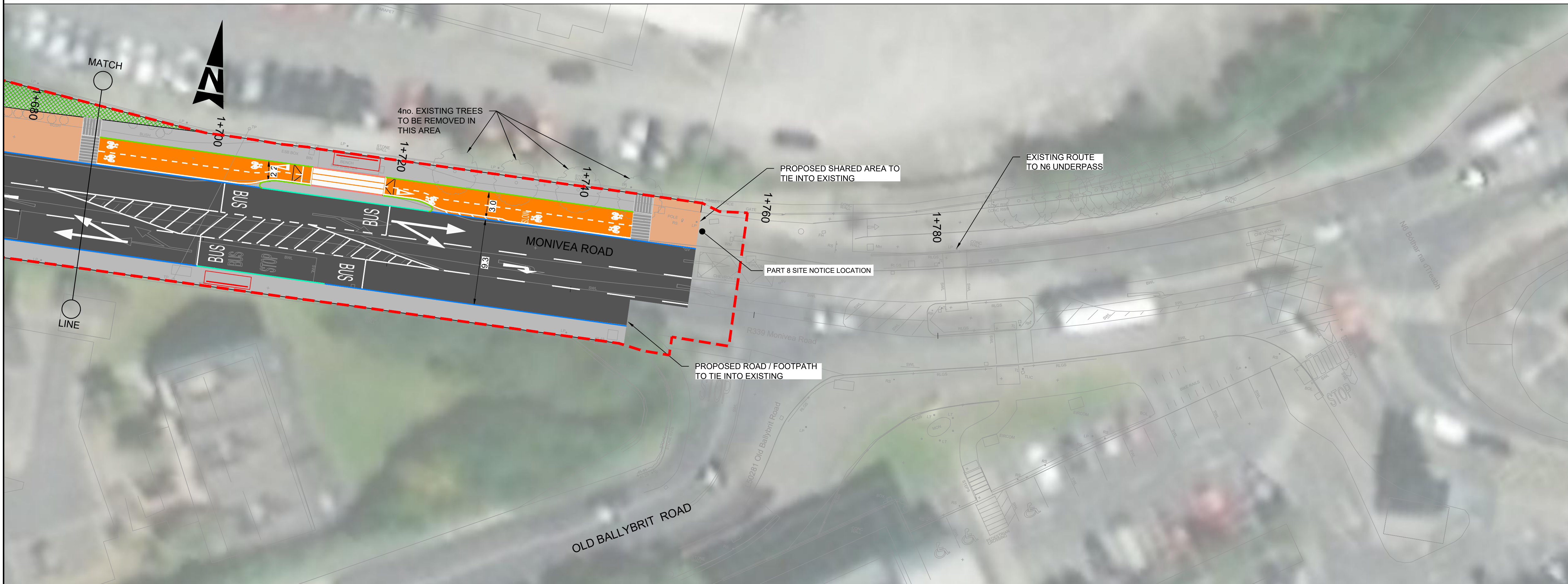
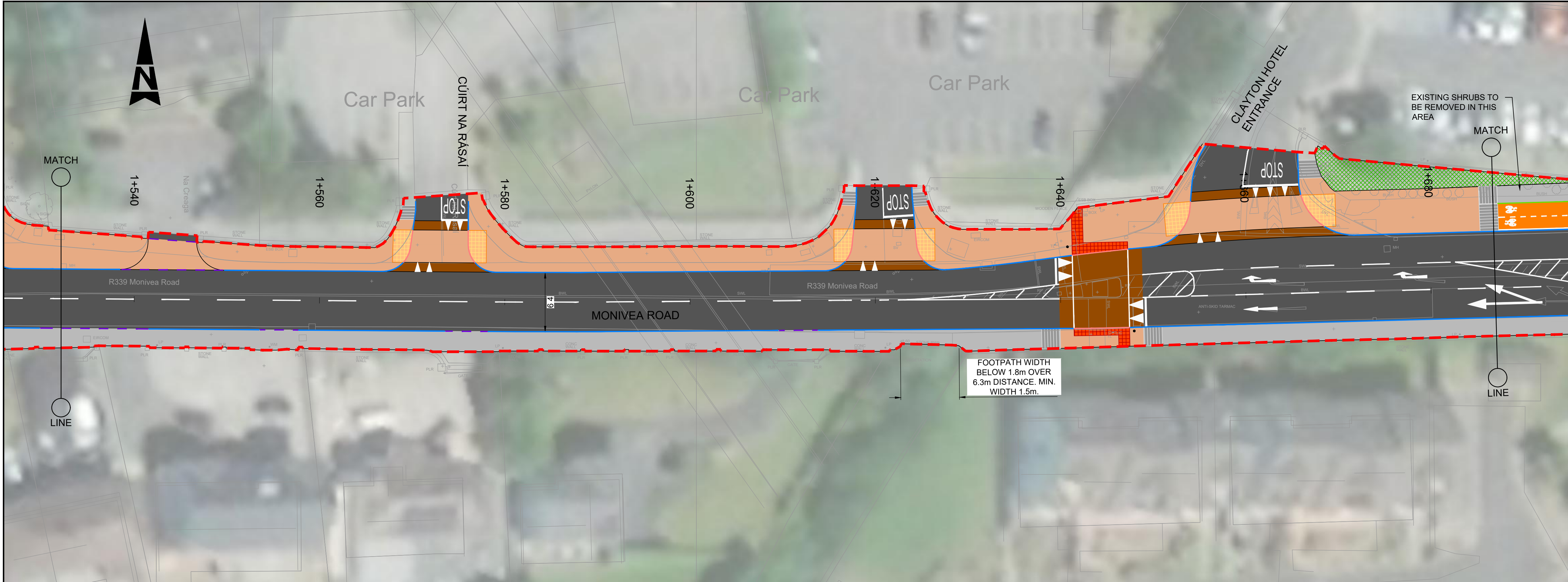
Client
GALWAY CITY COUNCIL

Project
MONIVEA ROAD (EAST)
ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Purpose FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION		Title GENERAL ARRANGEMENT SHEET 5 OF 6			
Original Scale 1:250 @ A1 1:500 @ A3	Drawn XX Date 22.05.26	Checked XX Date 22.05.26	Reviewed XX Date 22.05.26	Authorised XX Date 22.05.26	
Status A2	Drawing Number 5193732-ATK-04-XX-DR-CE-900125			Rev C03	

A1

DO NOT SCALE



- GENERAL NOTES
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- NOTES:
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MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME

Risk Level	X	Atkins Base Line - Low Risk
		Atkins Sensitive - Medium Risk
		Atkins Private - High Risk
		Client Critical - Already Marked



Rev	Description	By	Date	Chk'd	Rev'd	Auth
C03	ISSUED FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION	XX	10.07.26	XX	XX	XX
C02	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	11.06.26	XX	XX	XX
C01	DRAFT FOR PART 8	XX	22.05.26	XX	XX	XX

AtkinsRéalís

Atkins House, 150-155 Ailside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin
Tel (+353) 01 810 8000 Fax (+353) 01 810 8001
Unit 2B, 2200 Cork Airport Business Park, Cork
Tel (+353) 021 429 0300 Fax (+353) 021 429 0360
1st Floor Technology House Parkmore Technology Park, Galway
Tel (+353) 091 786 050 Fax (+353) 091 779 830

Client	GALWAY CITY COUNCIL	
Project	MONIVEA ROAD (EAST) ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEME	

Purpose		FOR PART 8 SUBMISSION			
Title		GENERAL ARRANGEMENT SHEET 6 OF 6			
Original Scale		1:250 @ A1	1:500 @ A3		
Status		Drawn XX	Checked XX	Reviewed XX	Authorised XX
Drawing Number		Date 22.05.26	Date 22.05.26	Date 22.05.26	Date 22.05.26
A2	5193732-ATK-04-XX-DR-CE-900126	C03			

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AtkinsRéalis Ireland Limited
150-155 Airside Business Park
Swords
Co. Dublin
K67 K5W4

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