STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SCREENING STATEMENT

MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

OF

COASTAL PROTECTION SCHEMES

UNDER THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE

OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS

ENGINEERING SERVICES

OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS

OCTOBER 2012

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1. Absence of a Plan / Programme

Under the Coastal Protection Act 1963, there is a statutory requirement on the Office of Public Works to carry out Maintenance works on Coastal Protection Schemes that were constructed under this Act, to maintain these Schemes in 'proper repair and effective condition'. OPW are responsible for the Maintenance of six Coastal Erosion Schemes nationally as follows:

The Murrough, Co. Wicklow
Youghal, Co. Cork
Inishcrone, Co. Sligo
Strandhill, Co. Sligo
Rossnowlagh, Co. Donegal
Moville, Co. Donegal

There is no statutory requirement under the Coastal Protection Act 1963 for the production of a 'Plan or Programme' or other type of formal schedule for Maintenance of these Schemes. Maintenance is carried out by the Office Public Works on a site by site basis as required to maintain 'proper repair and effective condition'. There is no defined interval between Maintenance works as the requirements are site specific, depending on the construction characteristics of the original Scheme and its wave / tidal exposure. Some of the Schemes have had little or no Maintenance in the past decades with some Schemes having some minor repair works every number of years. Maintenance Activities are confined to the original Scheme and typically are a few days to a few weeks work in duration.

The statutory responsibility for Maintenance of Coastal Protection Schemes has moved between Government Bodies over the decades and in 2009 this function was transferred from the then Dept. of Agriculture, Food and Marine to the Office of Public Works.

There is no formal Plan / Programme for the Maintenance of OPW Coastal Protection Schemes that is readily applicable to the SEA process. However, it is recognised that from time to time, there are Maintenance works carried out on existing Coastal Erosion Schemes, and in the interest of demonstrating compliance with the SEA legislation, OPW are carrying out this SEA Screening exercise. While there is no Plan/Programme,

for the purposes of this screening, the activities been considered are called the Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities.

2. Screening of Coastal Protection Schemes Maintenance Activities

2.1 Screening Process

This Screening process has been carried out with reference to:

(a) SEA Directive 2001/42/EC

(b) European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 to 2011

(c) P. Scott & P. Marsden, 2003. *Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland. Synthesis Report.* Published by the EPA.

(d) *SEA Process Checklist*. Published by the EPA.

(e) *SEA Screening Assessment Worksheet.* Published by the EPA.

2.2 Stage 1: Pre-Screening

The pre-screening check was applied using the decision-tree from P. Scott & P. Marsden, 2003, amended slightly to account for changes due to the SEA Regulations 2011. The pre-screening check is based on questions of an administrative nature, which can be rapidly checked by the authority to determine whether the P/P should be taken to the second screening stage.

In applying the decision tree for the pre-screening checks, it can be concluded at a number of steps that Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities are screened out. Notwithstanding this fact, in the interest of clarification and to assist stakeholders understand the application of SEA, all steps were carried out as follows:

Step 1

Is the P/P subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority?

or

Preparation by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure by Parliament or Government?

There is no prescribed list of Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities that are formally prepared or require formal adoption by OPW's Management Advisory Committee. There is no legislative procedure by Government requiring formal preparation of a list of Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities by OPW or other statutory authority.

In accordance with Step 1 requirements, Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities are screened out.

Step 2

Is the P/P required by legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions?

Under the Coastal Protection Act 1963, there is a legislative obligation for the OPW to carry out Maintenance works on the existing Coastal Protection Schemes. There is no specific legislative or regulatory requirement for a list of proposed Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities. The criteria of an *administrative provision* is of a less defined nature but is interpreted as encompassing any formal administrative requirements prescribed by other adopted policy or strategies. There is no formal administrative requirement for a list of proposed Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities.

In accordance with Step 2 requirements, Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities are screened out.

Step 3

Is the sole purpose of the P/P to serve national defence or civil emergency, or is it a financial or budget P/P, or is it co-financed by the current Structural Funds or European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund programmes?

Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities are not for national defence or civil emergency, they are not a financial plan and not co-financed under the SF or EAGGF programmes.

In accordance with Step 3 requirements, Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities would move to Step 4.

Step 4

Is the P/P prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use?

Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities are part of the water management sector.

In accordance with Step 4 requirements, Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities would move to Step 5.

Step 5

Does the P/P set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive?

European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1989 to 2001, schedules coastal work to combat erosion where the length would exceed 1km as an EIA scale infrastructural project. Maintenance and reconstruction of such works are specifically excluded as an EIA scale project. Maintenance Activities for each of the six existing coastal protection schemes are judged to be sub-threshold EIA works, accordingly there are no EIA scale projects stemming from the Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities.

In accordance with Step 5 requirements, Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities is not setting the framework for future development consent of EIA scale projects and in accordance with P. Scott & P. Marsden, 2003, are screened out.

Stage 1 Pre-Screening Conclusion

In accordance with Stage 1 Pre-Screening, the Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities are screened out at a number of steps, therefore, an SEA is not required.

2.3 Stage 2: Screening

The Stage 1 Pre-Screening checks have concluded that Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities are screened out but it is recognised that the pre-screening questions are more administrative in nature and are based upon the status of the P/P in question. In light of the fact that there is no P/P which is truly applicable to the SEA process and as stated in Stage 1 above, in the interest of clarification and to assist stakeholders understand the application of SEA, the steps in Stage 2 Screening are also carried out. Stage 2 screening is to assess if the P/P is likely to have significant effects on the environment and consists of a series of criteria to be considered as follows:

a) The characteristics of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, having regard, in particular, to:

the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,

The Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities consist of site specific works repairing existing infrastructure. These Activities have no dependent projects and have no role in setting a framework for other projects. Activities are highly localised and confined to the length of the existing Coastal Erosion Scheme, do not set operating conditions for any other P/P and have very limited resources allocated, just materials and workmanship for the Maintenance Activity itself.

the degree to which the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, influences other plans including those in a hierarchy,

The six Coastal Protection Schemes were historically carried out under the Coastal Protection Act 1963 and with a statutory Maintenance responsibility remaining. These is no historical hierarchy P/P for the works carried out under the Coastal Protection Act

1963. The Maintenance Activities are site specific works and have no role in influencing other plans.

the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,

The Maintenance Activities are for repairs to the existing Coastal Protection Schemes. The coastal protection benefit or any contribution to sustainable development from this infrastructure is already achieved with the Maintenance Activities function to maintain this status quo. Maintenance Activities have no new or direct contribution to promoting sustainable development.

environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme,

With the Maintenance Activities consisting of site specific works repairing existing infrastructural Schemes, there is no new works, hence limited potential for environmental problems. There are no significant natural resources applied for Maintenance Activities, limited waste management considerations, very confined carbon footprint and no ongoing emission or effluent discharge.

the relevance of the plan or programme, or modification to a plan or programme, for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste management or water protection).

Maintenance Activities are site specific with no true strategic aspect to bring about more widespread implementation of EU environmental legislation. Similar to any project, each individual Maintenance Activity will comply with relevant EU environmental legislation within the scope of the actual works.

b) Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,

In accordance with the Coastal Protection Act 1963, Maintenance is carried out on the basis of the requirement to maintain the six Coastal Protection Schemes in “proper

repair and effective condition". Some of the Schemes have had little or no Maintenance in the past decades with some Schemes having some minor repair works every number of years. Maintenance Activities are confined to the original Scheme and typically a few days to a few weeks work. Maintenance Activities will have little influence on the reversibility of any effects. Any effects of the Coastal Protection Scheme are now historical and would have occurred with the construction of the original Schemes.

the cumulative nature of the effects,

The total length of coastline defended by the six Coastal Protection Schemes is approximately 2km, spread nationally around the Irish coastline of 5840km. There is no potential for a cumulative effect between the Maintenance of the Schemes. Where new Coastal Protection Schemes were to adjoin existing Schemes, cumulative effects would have to be considered on a site specific basis as part of the proposals of the new Coastal Protection Scheme. Maintenance Activities will not alter this requirement.

the transboundary nature of the effects,

All six Coastal Protection Schemes are located within the Republic Of Ireland and no Scheme is in close proximity to an international territory. Maintenance Activities have no pathway to create transboundary effects.

the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),

The six Coastal Protection Schemes are historically completed infrastructural projects and any risks to human health or the environment due to accidents or other once off incidents are in respect of a historical structure. Maintenance Activities will not change the presence of the structure and will not alter risks to human health or the environment. Similar to any project at works stage, each individual Maintenance Activity will have due regard to health and safety requirements and environmental good practice for construction type works.

the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected),

The total length of coastline defended by the six Coastal Protection Schemes is approximately 2km, spread nationally around the Irish coastline of 5840km. On a

national spatial scale, the works are extremely confined. Individual Coastal Protection Schemes typically defend an adjoining area or road infrastructure and would be an important infrastructural defence for the local people.

the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage,

(b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,

(c) intensive land-use,

Maintenance Activities consist of site specific works repairing existing infrastructural Schemes. There are no new works, hence little potential for impacts on special natural characteristics or cultural heritage. With Maintenance Activities being of a very site specific scale, little natural resources are required, they do not create any form of an ongoing emission or effluent, and there is little potential for exceeding environmental quality standards. In terms of intensive land-use, any changes to land use would have resulted from the original Coastal Protection Scheme, hence Maintenance Activities will not cause an alteration in the reliant land-use.

the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

Activities can be within scenic coastal areas but there is limited landscape and visual effects as the main changes are in existence with the construction of the original Coastal Protection Schemes. Activities can also be in close proximity to international protection areas such as Natura Sites. The potential effect on Natura Sites are considered in more detail in Section 4 Appropriate Assessment Screening, which concludes that an Appropriate Assessment is not required as there are unlikely to be significant effects on any Natura Sites.

Stage 2 Screening Conclusion

In accordance with Stage 2 Screening, the Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities are not likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore, an SEA is not required.

3 Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities

3.1 Geographical Scale

These Maintenance Activities entail six Schemes which have an average length of over 300metres and have a total combined length of under 2km. In accordance with ECOPRO 1996, *Code of Practice - Environmentally Friendly Coastal Protection*, there are 6500km of coastline around the island of Ireland with circa 5840km coastline around the Republic of Ireland. These Maintenance Activities are concerned with 2km out of 5840km i.e. 0.03% of the national coastline, hence are of a negligible scale in a national context.

3.2 Description of Individual Coastal Protection Schemes

There are six such schemes for which OPW have maintenance responsibility. The scheme locations are as follows:

The Murrough, Co. Wicklow
Youghal, Co. Cork
Inishcrone, Co. Sligo
Strandhill, Co. Sligo
Rossnowlagh, Co. Donegal
Moville, Co. Donegal

Aerial photographs, location plans and a brief description of each Scheme is outlined below.

The Murrough, Co. Wicklow

The Murrough Coastal Protection Scheme is located north of Wicklow Harbour and comprises of a rock armoured revetment /apron structure and concrete retaining wall. It was constructed in the mid seventies and extends over a length of approximately 325 metres of coast.

Figure 1.1: The Murrough - Location Plan & Aerial Photo of Scheme @ Southern Limit

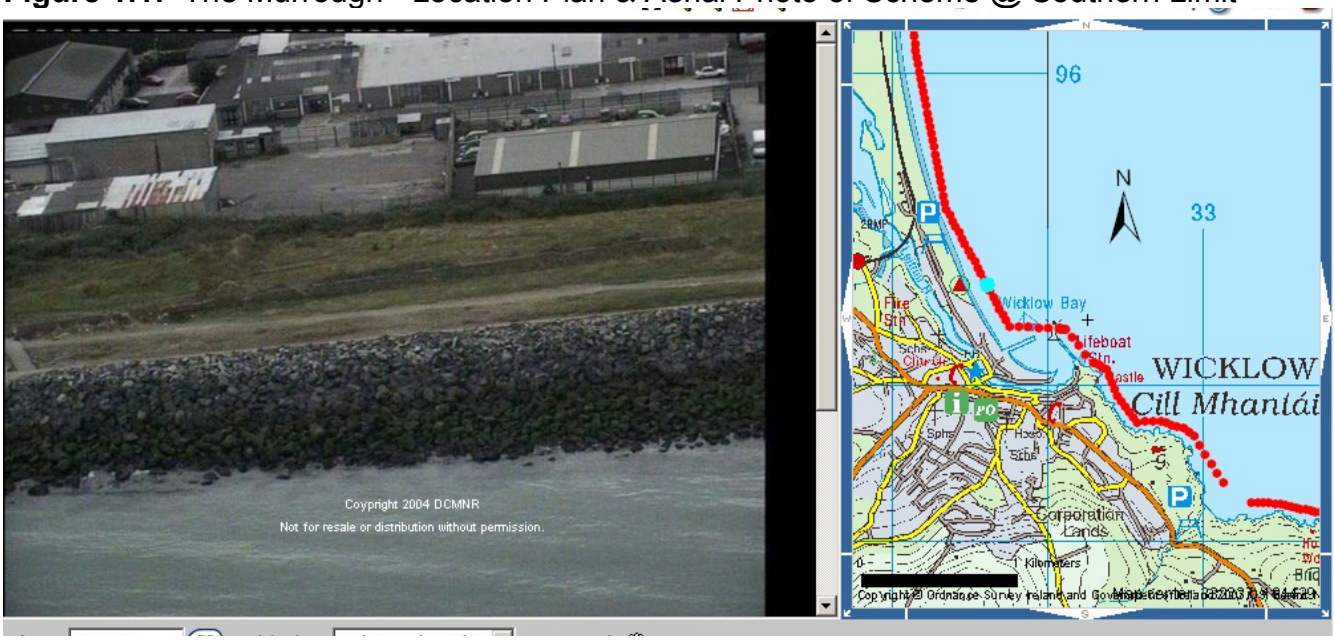
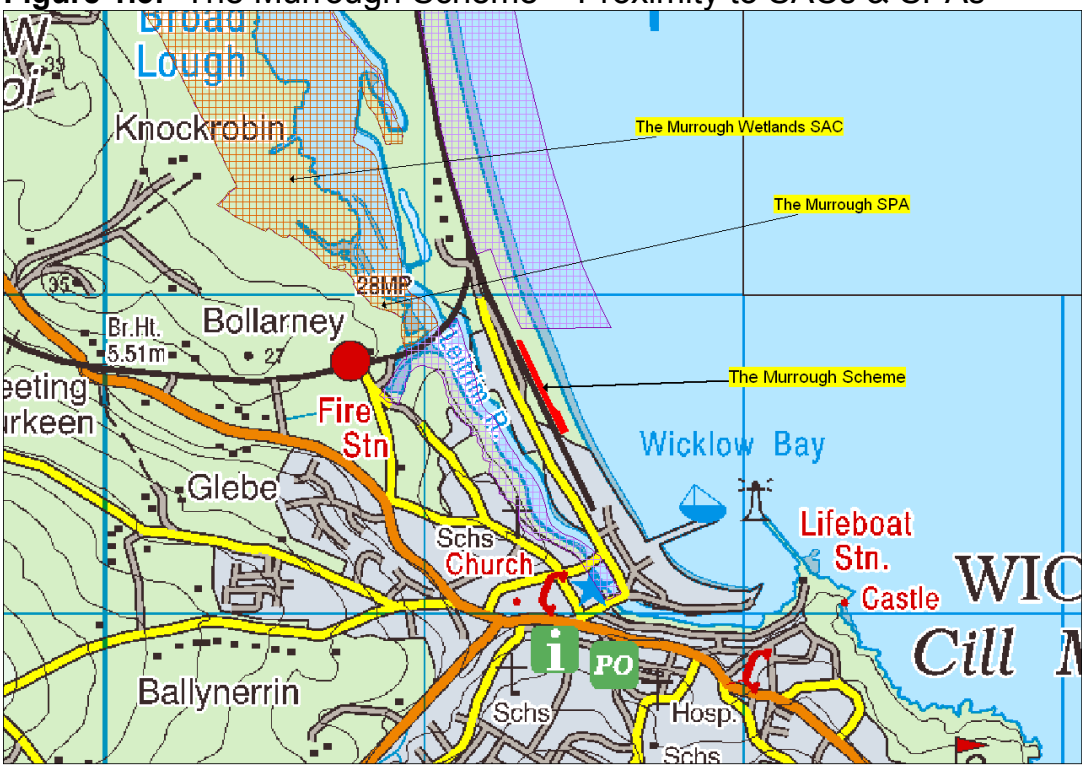


Figure 1.2: The Murrough - Extents of Scheme Maintenance responsibility

Figure 1.3: The Murrough Scheme – Proximity to SACs & SPAs



Youghal, Co. Cork

The Youghal Coastal Protection Scheme is located directly south west of Youghal Harbour and comprises of concrete and timber groynes, concrete stepped seawall and promenade and rock revetment / apron structure. It was constructed in the mid seventies and extends over a length of approximately 330 metres of coast.

Figure 3.1: Youghal - Location Plan & Aerial Photo of Scheme @ Northern Limit

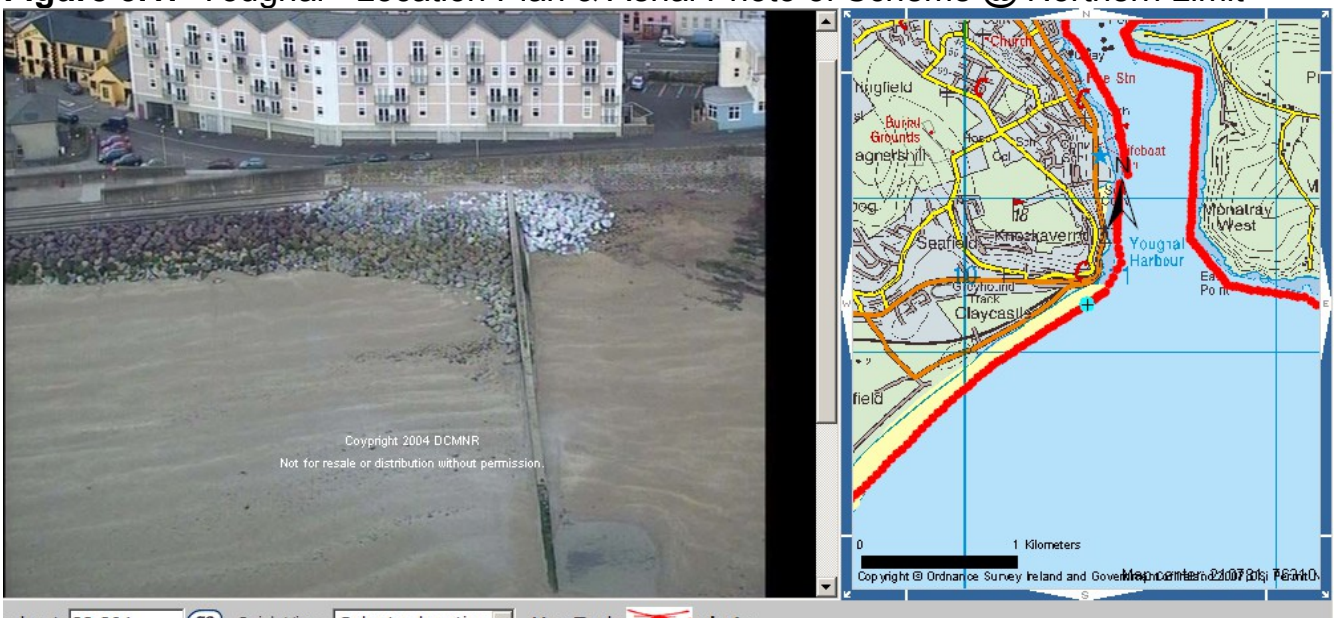
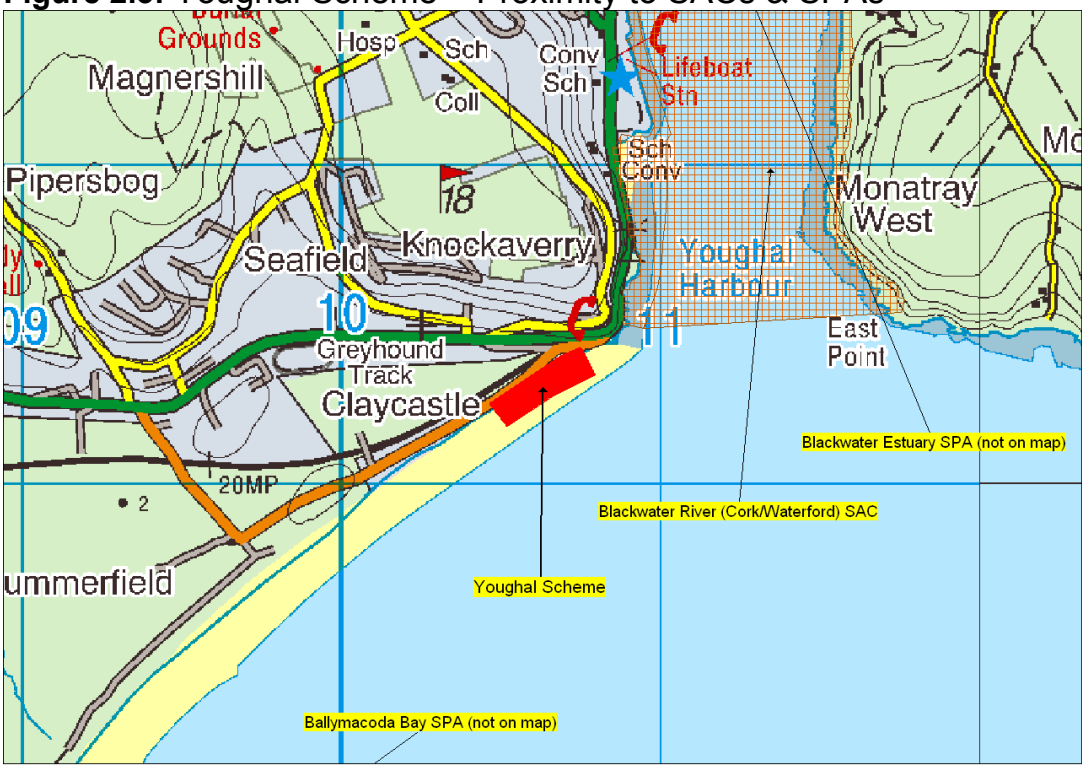


Figure 3.2: Youghal - Extents of Scheme Maintenance responsibility

Figure 2.3: Youghal Scheme – Proximity to SACs & SPAs



Inishcrone, Co. Sligo

The Inishcrone Coastal Protection Scheme is located in Inishcrone, Co. Sligo and comprises of a concrete stepped seawall with upper and lower promenade, concrete retaining wall and sloped fill together with localised rock armour / apron structure. It was constructed in the early eighties and extends over a length of approximately 350 metres of coast.

Figure 3.1: Inishcrone - Location Plan & Aerial Photo of Scheme @ Southern Limit

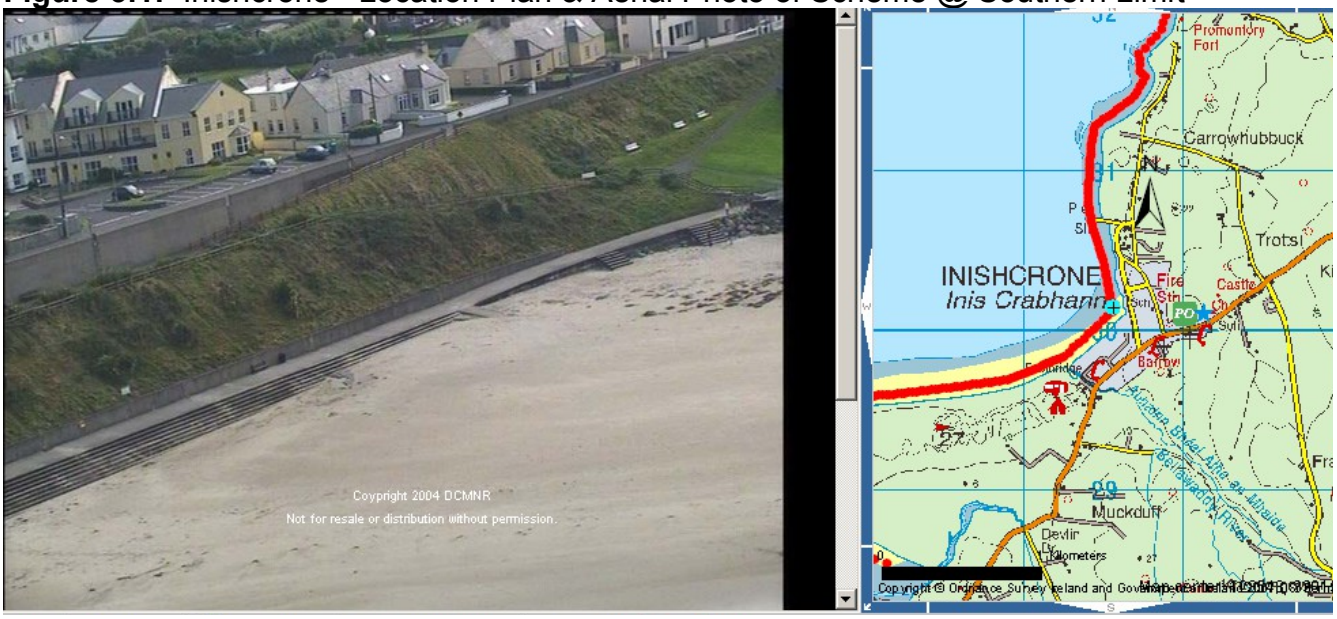
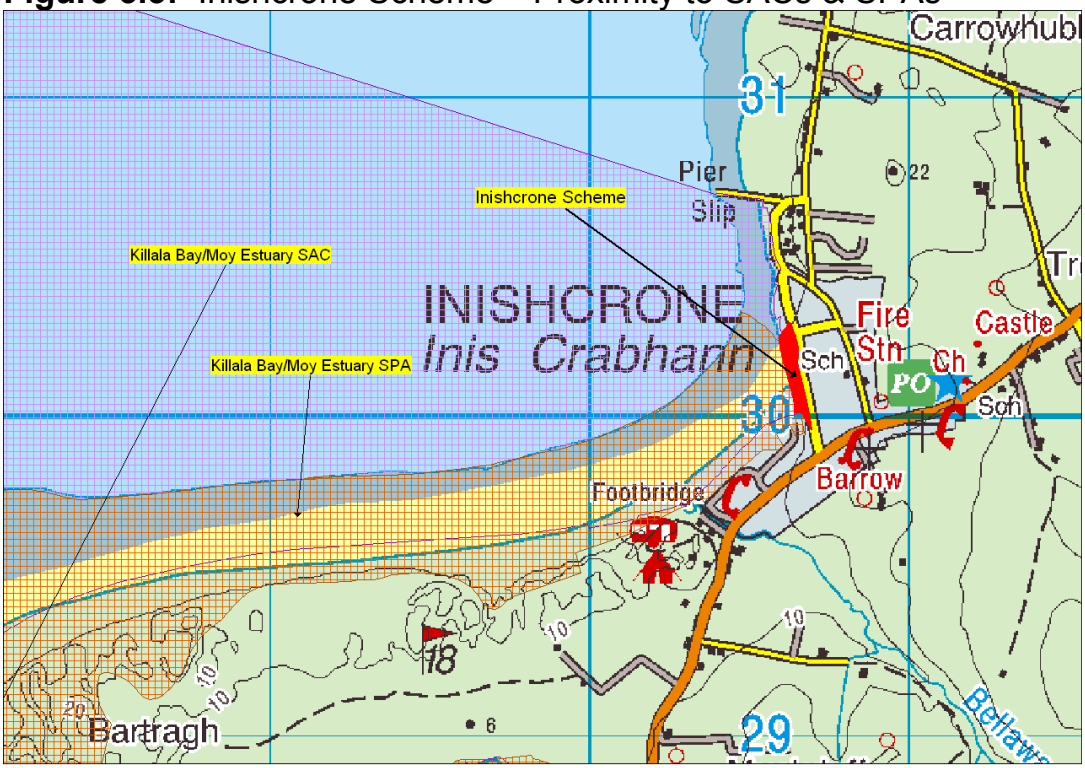


Figure 3.2: Inishcrone - Extents of Scheme Maintenance responsibility

Figure 3.3: Inishcrone Scheme – Proximity to SACs & SPAs



Strandhill, Co. Sligo

The Strandhill Coastal Protection Scheme is located at Strandhill, Co Sligo and comprises of a rock armoured revetment structure and concrete steps. It was constructed in the early seventies and extends over a length of approximately 120 metres of coast.

There have been significant erosion events in 2011 which have been widely reported in the Press. Sligo County Council are currently completing a Coastal Erosion Report on Strandhill Beach which will include hydraulic modelling analysis and recommendations for coastal erosion measures. This study has been funded under OPW's Minor Works Scheme mechanism and similarly, future measures proposed by Sligo County Council maybe funded under the Minor Works mechanism subject to fulfilling the standard criteria. The Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities involve only the maintenance of a 120metre stretch of rock revetment. The Maintenance of the extended rock revetments and other measures for the current erosion difficulties will be led by Sligo County Council.

Figure 4.1: Strandhill - Location Plan & Aerial Photo of Scheme @ central location

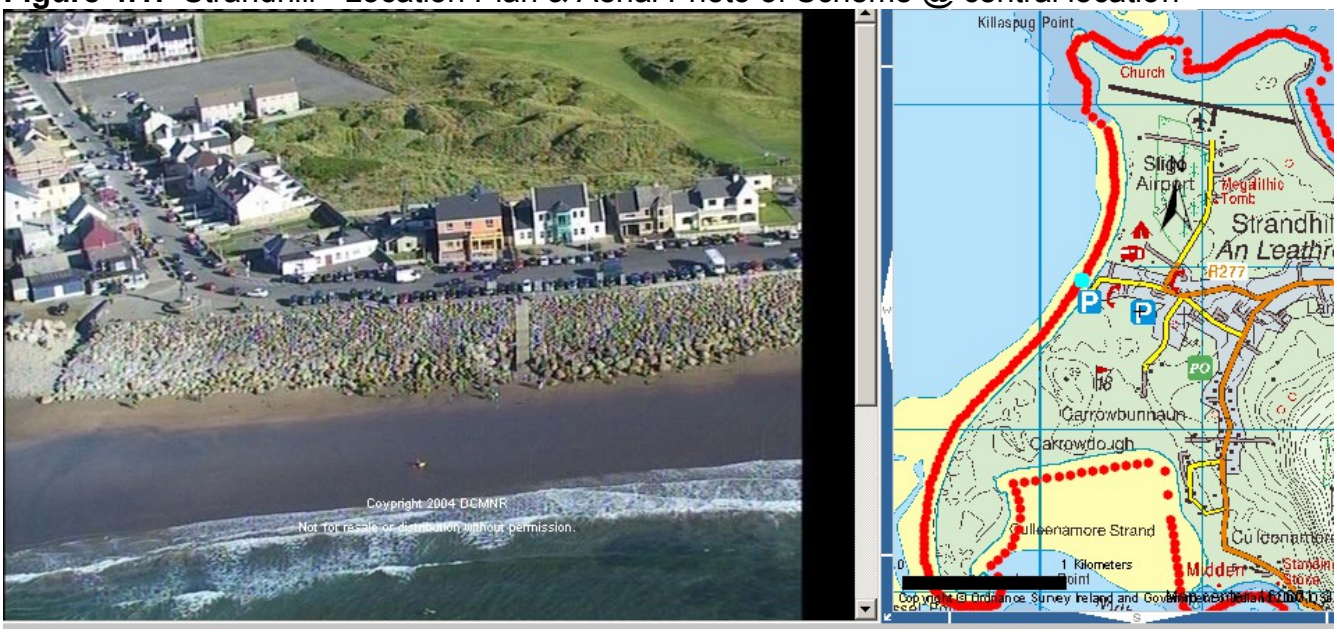
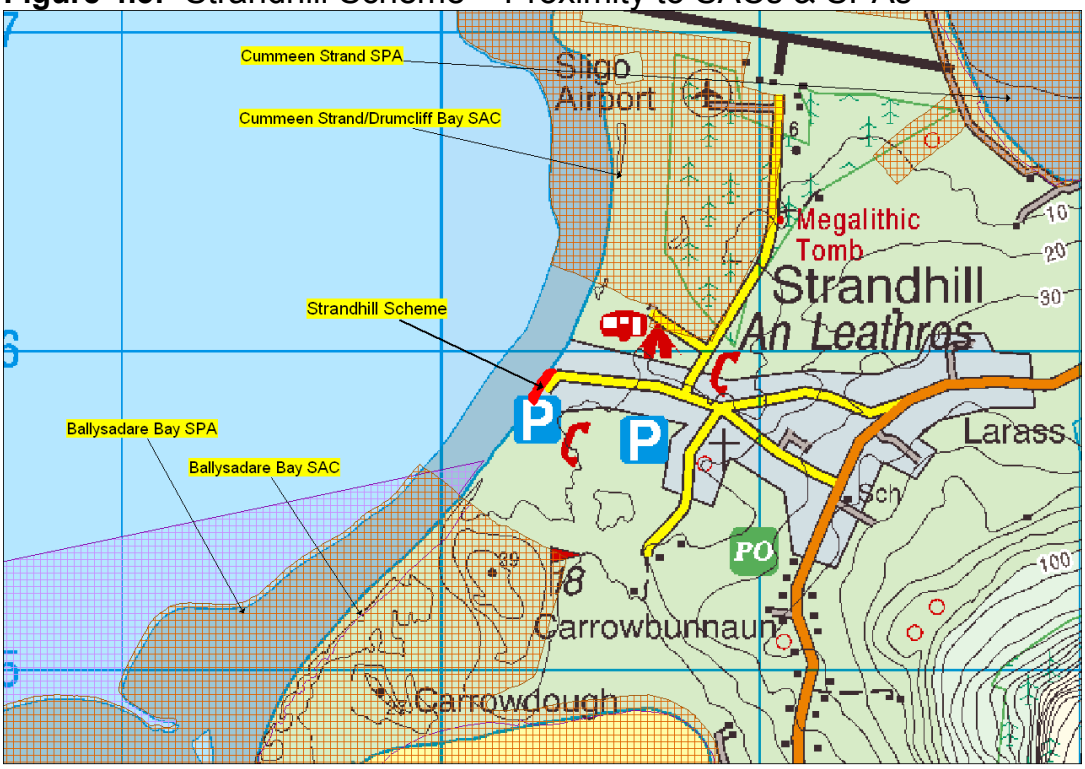


Figure 4.2: Strandhill - Extents of Scheme Maintenance responsibility

Figure 4.3: Strandhill Scheme – Proximity to SACs & SPAs



Rossnowlagh, Co. Donegal

The Rossnowlagh Coastal Protection Scheme is located at Rossnowlagh, Co Donegal and comprises of a rock armoured revetment structure with masonry parapet wall. It was constructed in the mid seventies and extends over a length of approximately 220 metres of coast.

Figure 5.1: Rossnowlagh - Location Plan & Aerial Photo of Scheme @ Northern Limit

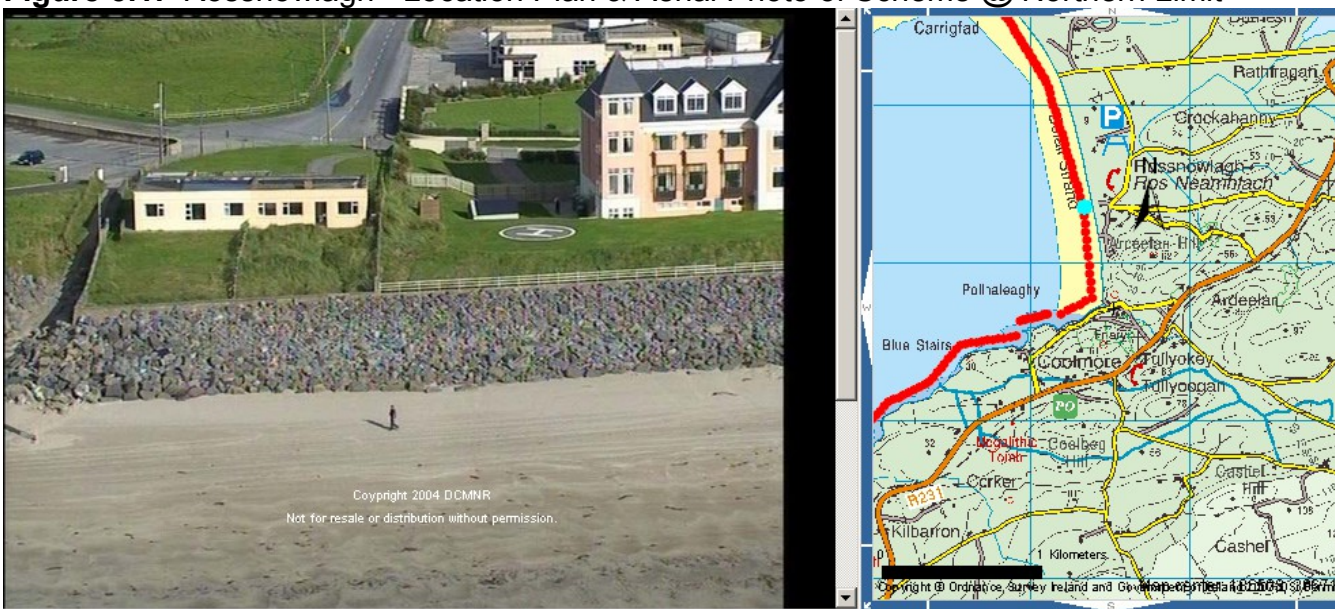


Figure 5.2: Rossnowlagh - Extents of Scheme Maintenance responsibility

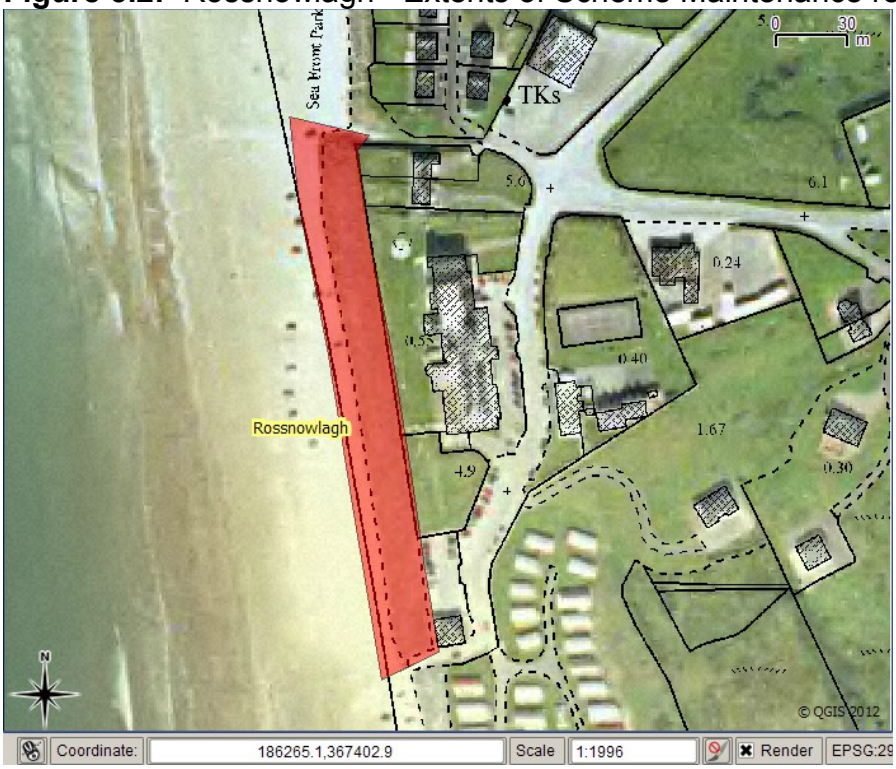
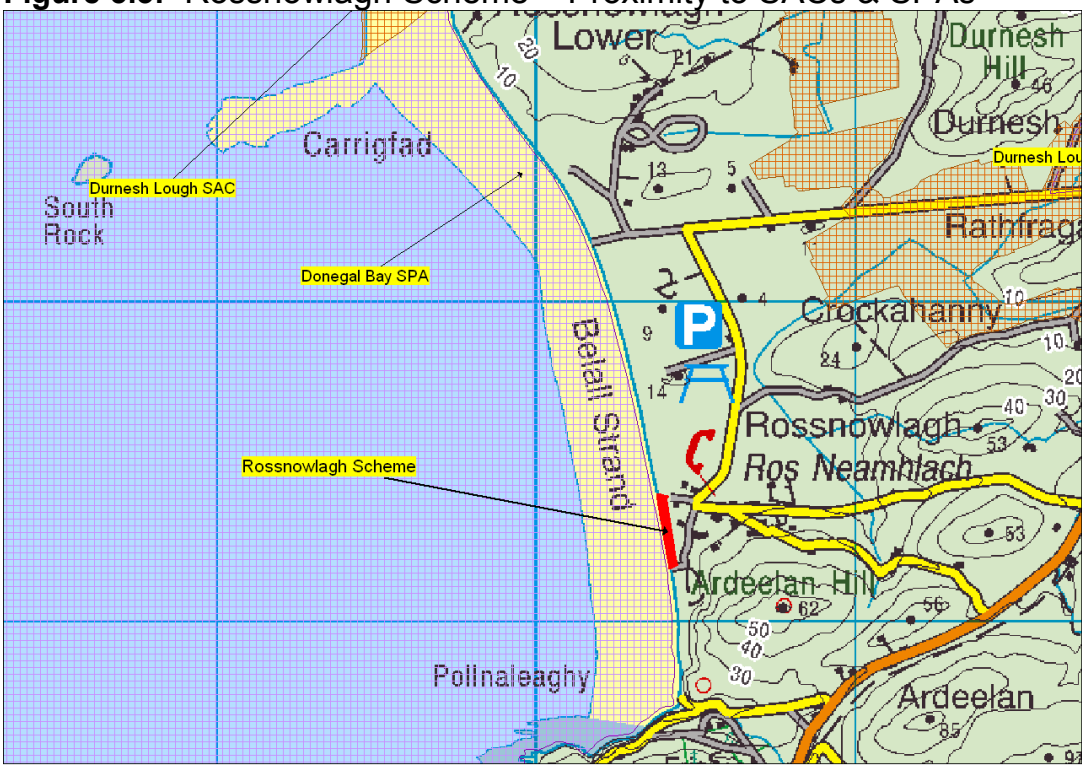


Figure 5.3: Rossnowlagh Scheme – Proximity to SACs & SPAs



Moville, Co. Donegal

The Moville Coastal Protection Scheme is located at Moville, Lough Foyle, Co. Donegal and comprises of a rock armoured revetment structure with masonry wall, localised concrete pavement and concrete splash wall. It was constructed in the early seventies and extends over a length of approximately 550 metres of coast.

Figure 6.1: Moville - Location Plan & Aerial Photo of Scheme @ Eastern Limit

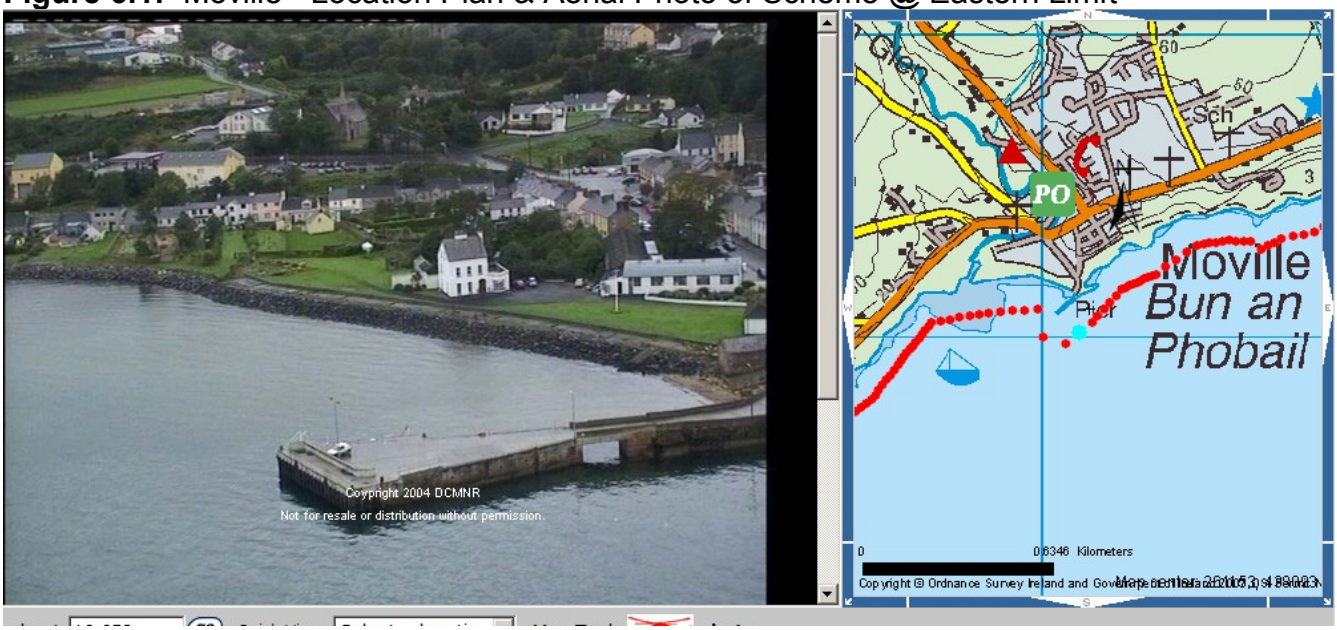
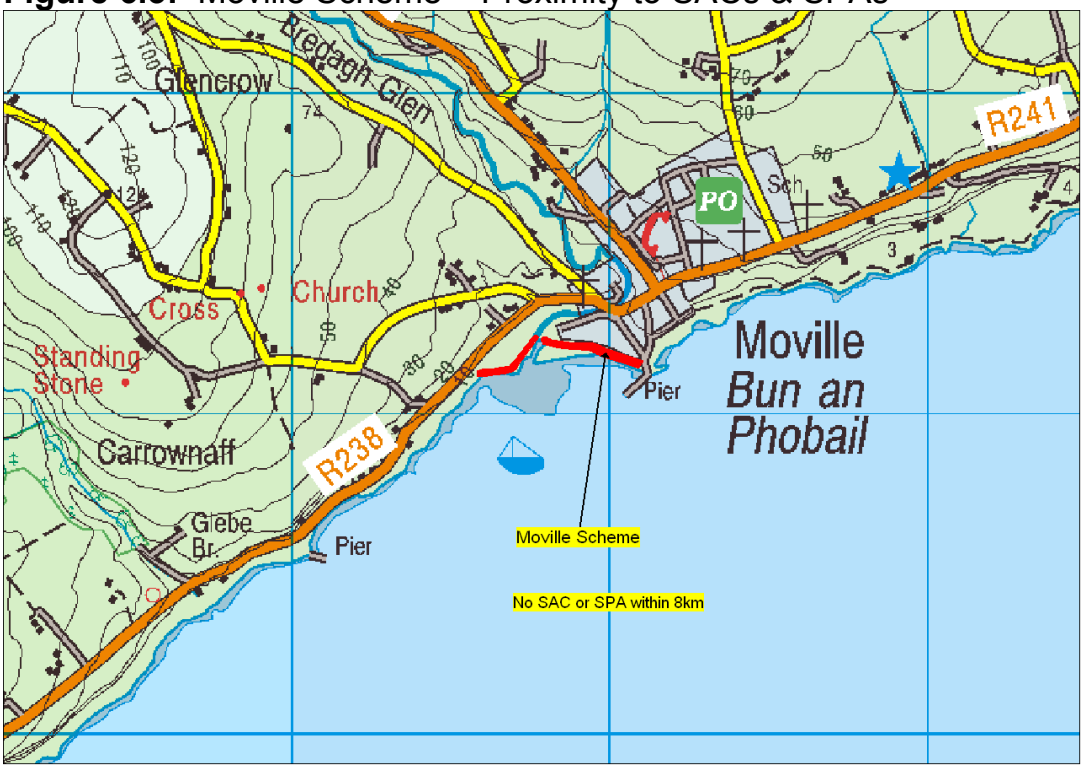


Figure 6.2: Moville - Extents of Scheme Maintenance responsibility

Figure 6.3: Moville Scheme – Proximity to SACs & SPAs



Rosslare Strand, Co. Wexford

Rosslare Strand, Co. Wexford is an exceptional scenario and warrants specific comment. Within the Coastal Protection Act 1963, there is one Scheme which has a specific provision integrated into the Act i.e. Rosslare Strand, Co. Wexford. In accordance with Section 26 Coastal Protection Act 1963, provision has been made for the maintenance of these works by OPW which was a Scheme that was 'commenced by the Commissioners in the year 1957'. There is not a statutory obligation for OPW to maintain these works but is a statutory provision for the OPW to carry out maintenance works if required. At present, there are no proposals for Maintenance works to the Rosslare Strand and this scheme is not included in OPW's Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities.

3.3 Relevant OPW Coastal Studies & Activities

CFRAM

OPW commenced the national Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme in 2011 which is to implement the core components of the National Flood Policy 2004 and the EU Floods Directive 2007. As well as consideration

of freshwater flood management, the CFRAM framework takes account of coastal flooding and will take account of coastal erosion where that erosion could lead to flooding. The CFRAM process will prepare a strategic Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) and associated SEA that sets out the measures and policies to achieve the most cost effective and sustainable management of these flood risks.

There has been a significant volume of information gathered in recent years through the Irish Coastal Protection Strategy Study (IPCC) which has developed data on extreme coastal water levels and associated flood hazards. This strategic level of national data will feed into the CFRAM process which will carry out the detailed analysis of measures options and appraisal. Similarly, any flood risk information from previous Coastal Protection Studies will also feed into the CFRAM process and will assist inform the assessment of the flood risks and the identification of management measures.

Minor Works Scheme Funding

OPW operate a mechanism for the funding of Local Authorities under a Minor Works Scheme which includes Flood Risk Management and Coastal Erosion Risk Management. It is a matter for relevant Local Authorities to identify the priority areas of their respective coastlines considered to be under significant threat from erosion and to put forward proposals to OPW for funding of the appropriate erosion management measures. Applications for funding are made by Local Authorities which follow a published process of Guidelines and Cost Benefit methodology. In accordance with OPW's '*Guidelines for Coastal Erosion Risk Management Measures and Funding Applications under the Minor Works Scheme*', proposals and funding applications for structural measures to prevent or mitigate erosion should be done in conjunction with an appropriate coastal erosion risk management study, which fully investigates, substantiates and demonstrates the merits of any measures being proposed. Such measures, in general require the investment of substantial amounts of public funding and in order to ensure value for money, it would be considered best practice that a study be undertaken in advance of undertaking any measures. In addition, a study will ensure all options are considered.

4 Appropriate Assessment Screening

Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities are not directly connected to or necessary for the management of any Natura Sites, hence an Appropriate Assessment maybe required if these Activities alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives. The Screening involves the following:

- Description of the proposed Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities.
- Characteristics of the relevant Natura 2000 sites.
- Assessment of Significance of the proposed works on the Natura 2000 sites.

Description of the proposed Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities:

These Activities consist of 2km out of 5840km i.e. 0.03% of the national coastline and are composed of six individual Coastal Protection Schemes spread geographically from Donegal to Wicklow. The Activities are described in detail in Section 3, with the works extents, aerial photographs and maps provided for each individual scheme.

Characteristics of the relevant Natura 2000 sites:

Section 3 provides maps of each Coastal Protection Scheme denoting the closest Natura Sites and the table below shows the six Scheme locations and describes the proximity of these Natura Sites:

Coastal Protection Scheme	Closest Natura Sites	Proximity
The Murrough, Co. Wicklow	The Murrough SPA 4186 The Murrough Wetlands SAC 2249	Scheme at the southern boundary of the The Murrough SPA. The Murrough Wetlands SAC is 300m north.
Youghal, Co. Cork	Blackwater Estuary SPA 4028 Ballymacoda Bay SPA 4023 Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC 2170	Blackwater Estuary SPA is 1.8km north. Ballymacoda Bay SPA is 2.5km south. Blackwater River SAC 200m

		east.
Inishcrone, Co. Sligo	Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SPA 4036 Killala Bay/Moy Estuary SAC 0458	Scheme on the eastern boundary of both the Killala. Bay/Moy Estuary SPA and SAC.
Strandhill, Co. Sligo	Ballysadare Bay SPA 4129 Ballysadare Bay SAC 0622 Cummeen Strand SPA 4035 Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay SAC 0627	Ballysadare SAC & SPA is 350m north. Cummeen Strand SAC & SPA is 350m south.
Rossnowlagh, Co. Donegal	Donegal Bay SPA 4151 Durnesh Lough SAC 0138	Scheme on the eastern boundary of the Donegal Bay SPA. Durnesh Lough SAC is 1.7km north.
Moville, Co. Donegal	Lough Foyle SPA 4087 North Inishowen Coast SAC 2012	Lough Foyle SPA is 8km south. North Inishowen Coast SAC is 9km north.

The SAC Qualifying Interests and SPA Features of Interest are setout in Appendix 1. The majority of the Natura Sites are large coastal areas and while some of the Natura Sites such as the Blackwater River have a freshwater element, it is only the coastal components of the Natura Site that are in proximity to the Coastal Protection Schemes. Accordingly, the most relevant SAC qualifying interests consist of coastal habitats such as Shifting Dunes and coastal species such as the Common Seal (*Phoca vitulina*).

The majority of the bird species which are Features of Interest for the SPAs, use coastal habitat to a greater or lesser extent such as Turnstones and Teal. A number of these birds are considered either rare and vulnerable such as the Golden Plover and Bar-Tailed Godwit. With the majority of the SPAs being large coastal areas including bays and estuaries, they all support large migratory bird numbers and are important wintering and breeding grounds for a range of species of ducks, geese and waders.

Assessment of Significance of the proposed works on the Natura 2000 sites:

The ultimate conservation objective for all SACs is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of the Annex I habitats and Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected. Similarly for SPAs, the objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of the bird species selected as Features of Interest for the SPA.

As described in Section 3, these Maintenance Activities entail six Schemes which have an average length of over 300metres. Taking these Activities in a national context for the purposes of strategically assessing the environmental elements, these Activities have a total combined length of under 2km, equating to 0.03% of the national coastline. Section 2.3 sets out a series of descriptions which has determined that these Activities are not likely to have significant effects on the environment. These descriptions also apply in considering likely significant impacts on Natura Sites.

As iterated in Section 2.3, these Activities have a series of characteristics which negates potential impacts on Natura Sites. Maintenance Activities are confined to the original Scheme and are typically only a few days to a few weeks work duration. The Activities are highly localised and confined to the length of the existing Coastal Erosion Scheme, with very limited resources allocated, just materials and workmanship for the Maintenance Activity itself. There are no new works, hence limited potential for new impacts on Natura Sites. There are no significant natural resources applied, limited waste management considerations, a very confined carbon footprint and no ongoing emission or effluent discharge. Maintenance Activities will have little influence on the reversibility of any effects, as any effects of a Coastal Protection Scheme is now historical and would have occurred with the construction of the original Scheme. The Activities will not cause an alteration to the reliant land-use. On a national spatial scale, the works are extremely confined and there is no potential for a cumulative effect between the Maintenance of individual Schemes. Where new Coastal Protection Schemes were to adjoin existing Schemes, cumulative effects would be considered on a site specific basis as part of the proposals of the new Coastal Protection Scheme.

There is very limited potential for impacts on the Annex I habitats, Annex II species or Birds, whether in terms of reduction in habitat areas, fragmentation, disturbance, species population densities, water resources, water quality or cumulative impacts with other plans.

AA Screening Conclusion:

It is predicted that there is unlikely to be any significant effect on the conservation objectives of any Natura Sites due to these Maintenance Activities.

However as precautionary recommendation, as some of these Maintenance Activities will be in close proximity to Natura Sites, these works when proposed, will complete a project level screening for Appropriate Assessment. Due to the nature of Maintenance Activities to maintain existing infrastructure, with no significant change to the already present infrastructure, it's likely that these Maintenance Activities will be screened out as not requiring an Appropriate Assessment. However, if some form of site specific complication was present, this will be detected at the project level AA screening stage. If the effects are deemed likely to be potentially significant or there is uncertainty, then an Appropriate Assessment will be carried out for the specific Maintenance Activities.

5 Environmental Authority Consultations

In accordance with European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 to 2011, the Draft Screening Statement was issued to all Environmental Authorities for consultation i.e. Environmental Protection Agency; Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine; Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Correspondence inviting comments was issued to all Environmental Authorities on 31st August 2012 with a closing date for consultations on 15th October 2012.

A submission was received from the EPA, dated the 11th October, a copy of which is incorporated in Appendix 2. The EPA made observations under seven headings, noting certain points of information and highlighting a series of general obligations for OPW

around the SEA process. All observations were considered and integrated with the final Screening Statement as appropriate.

6 Screening Decision

Having regard to the description of Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities, the conclusion that these Activities are screened out at Pre-Screening stage, the conclusion that these Activities are unlikely to have significant effects on the environment due to the characteristics of the Activities or the characteristics of the effects, and the consultations from the EPA, it is decided that a SEA is not required.

Notification of this decision, together with a copy of this Screening Statement will be issued directly to the Environmental Authorities. This Screening Statement will also be made available for public inspection in the offices of Environment Section OPW, it will be available through the OPW website and will be advertised in the national press.

Appendix 1

Natura Sites Qualifying Interests

SAC Site Name	Qualifying Interests
The Murrough Wetlands 002249	Annual vegetation of drift lines Perennial vegetation of stony banks Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) Alkaline fens Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) davallianae
Blackwater River 002170 (Cork/Waterford)	Estuaries Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) Perennial vegetation of stony banks Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in British Isles Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles Petromyzon marinus Lampetra planeri Lampetra fluviatilis Alosa fallax Salmo salar Margaritifera margaritifera Austropotamobius pallipes Lutra lutra Trichomanes speciosum
Killala Bay/Moy Estuary 000458	Estuaries Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide Embryonic shifting dunes line with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) Humid dune slacks Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) Annual vegetation of drift lines Petromyzon marinus Vertigo angustior Phoca vitulina
Ballysadare Bay 000622	Estuaries Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide Embryonic shifting dunes Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) line with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) Humid dune slacks Vertigo angustior Phoca vitulina
Cummeen Strand/Drumcliff Bay	Estuaries Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide Embryonic shifting dunes Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) line with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous

	Petromyzon marinus Lampetra fluviatilis Vertigo angustior Phoca vitulina
Durnesh Lough 000138	Coastal lagoons Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden
North Inishowen Coast 002012	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts Perennial vegetation of stony banks Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) Machairs (* in Ireland) European dry heaths Lutra lutra Vertigo angustior

SPA Site Name	Features of Interest
The Murrough 004186	Red-throated Diver (Gavia stellata) [A001] Greylag Goose (Anser anser) [A043] Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046] Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050] Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A184] Little Tern (Sterna albifrons) [A195] Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]
Blackwater Estuary 004028	Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]
Ballymacoda Bay 004023	Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050] Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142] Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Turnstone (Arenaria interpres) [A169] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182] Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus) [A183] Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]
Killala Bay/Moy Estuary 004036	Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]

	Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141] Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]
Ballysadare Bay 004129	Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046] Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]
Cummeen Strand 004035	Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046] Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]
Donegal Bay 004151	Great Northern Diver (Gavia immer) [A003] Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046] Common Scoter (Melanitta nigra) [A065] Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144] Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]
Lough Foyle 004087	Red-throated Diver (Gavia stellata) [A001] Great Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus) [A005] Bewick's Swan (Cygnus columbianus) [A037] Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038] Greylag Goose (Anser anser) [A043] Light-bellied Brent Goose (Branta bernicla hrota) [A046] Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048] Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050] Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) [A053] Eider (Somateria mollissima) Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) [A069] Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142] Knot (Calidris canutus) [A143] Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157] Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160] Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182] Herring Gull (Larus argentatus) [A184] Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]

Appendix 2

Environmental Authority Submissions

Mr Nathy Gilligan
Head of Environment Section
Office of Public Works
Headford
Co. Galway

11th October 2012 Our Ref: 120903.1

Re. SEA Screening – Coastal Protection Scheme Maintenance Activities

Dear Mr Gilligan,

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) acknowledges your notice, dated 31st August 2012, regarding the above and notes its contents.

SEA Determination
Your position with regard to the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Maintenance Scheme, hereafter referred to as 'the Scheme', is noted.

Future Amendments to the Draft Scheme
You are reminded that it is a matter for the Office of Public Works to determine whether or not any future proposed Amendments/Variations of the Scheme would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This assessment should take account of the SEA Regulations Schedule 1 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004) and should be subject to the same method of assessment as undertaken in the "environmental assessment" of the Draft Scheme.

Appropriate Assessment
You should consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) with regard to screening of the Scheme for Appropriate Assessment. Where Appropriate Assessment is required, any findings or recommendations should be incorporated into the SEA and Scheme, as appropriate.

Obligations with respect to National Plans and Policies and EU Environmental Legislation
You are referred to your responsibilities and obligations in accordance with all national and EU environmental legislation. It is a matter for the Office of Public Works to ensure that, when undertaking and fulfilling their statutory responsibilities; they are at all times compliant with the requirements of national and EU environmental legislation.

Updated SEA Regulations / Circular
Your attention is brought to the amended SEA Regulations, which should be referenced and integrated into the Plan and SEA process.

Amending SEA Regulations were signed into Irish law on the 3rd May 2011, amending the original SEA Regulations:

- European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011, (S.I. No. 200 of 2011), amending the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004).

European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011

You are also referred to the requirements of the recent European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), which should be taken into account in implementing the Plan. These Regulations consolidate the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 to 2005 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) (Control of Recreational Activities) Regulations 2010, as well as addressing transposition failures identified in the CJEU judgements.

Environmental Authorities

You are reminded of the requirement, where appropriate under the SEA Regulations, and as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, to give notice to the following:

- The Environmental Protection Agency
- The Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government
- Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, and the Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources, where it appears to the planning authority that the plan or programme, or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment
- where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme, or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs.

You are further reminded that a copy of your decision regarding the determination should be made available for public inspection at your offices, local authority website and should also be notified to any Environmental Authorities already consulted.

Should you have any queries or require further information in relation to the above please contact the undersigned. I would be grateful if an acknowledgement of receipt of this submission could be sent electronically to the following address: sea@epa.ie.

Yours sincerely,

Tadhg O'Mahony
Senior Scientific Officer
SEA Section
Office of Environmental Assessment
Environmental Protection Agency
Regional Inspectorate
Inniscarra, County Cork