



Draft National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)

Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

In order to comply with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and with Regulation 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended, (“the Birds and Habitats Regulations”) the process of screening for Appropriate Assessment was undertaken at an early stage in the preparation of the Draft National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). The AA Screening assessed whether the Draft NMPF was likely to have significant effects on any European Sites within the Natura 2000 network, either by itself or in combination with other plans and projects.

The screening for Appropriate Assessment was carried out by ecologists at RPS Consulting on behalf of the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government. The screening concluded that an Appropriate Assessment of the Draft NMPF was required for the following reasons:

- (a) the plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites as European Sites, and
- (b) it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the plan, by itself or in combination with other plans and projects, will have a significant effect on a European Site.

Therefore, adopting the precautionary principle, it was concluded that a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) should be prepared. An NIS was prepared by RPS Consulting on behalf of the Minister and is being made available as part of the public consultation on the Draft NMPF. The NIS considers the potential for the Draft NMPF to adversely effect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site(s), with regard to their qualifying interests, associated conservation status, the structure/function of the site(s), and the overall integrity of the site(s).





If, following public consultation, modifications are made to the Draft NMPF the NIS will be amended as required following consideration of the modifications and the potential for the modified NMPF to adversely effect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site(s), with regard to their qualifying interests, associated conservation status, the structure/function of the site(s), and the overall integrity of the site(s).

A final NIS, with a conclusion statement, and an Appropriate Assessment Determination will be prepared and published alongside the final NMPF to be adopted in late 2020.

Padraic Dempsey
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