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MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONSULTING ENGINEERS

## C1071: CORK NORTH DOCKS PUBLIC REALM AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

# AA SCREENING REPORT

**For**
**Cork City Council**

**26 May 2025**

# NOTICE

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PROJECT CONTRACTUAL BASIS & PARTIES INVOLVED

This report has been prepared by O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates Ltd. (OCSC) at the request of their Client, Cork City Council. The Cork City Docks are undergoing a regeneration scheme with the aim to support the predicted population growth in Cork City in the coming years. The redevelopment of the City Docks area aims to create a new sustainable neighbourhood in the centre of Cork City. This project specifically relates to a new road and public realm. The regulatory authority for the site is Cork City Council. The site location is shown below in Figure 1.1.

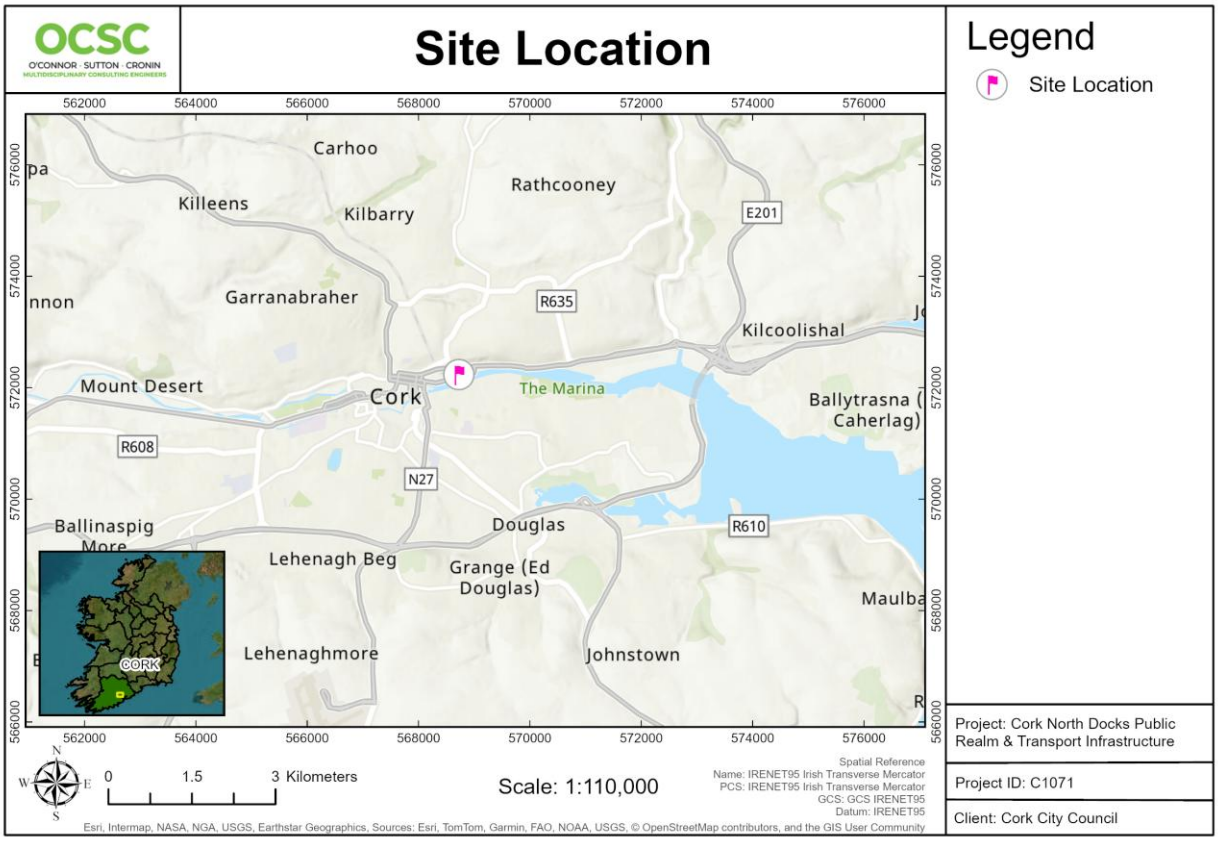


*Figure 1.1: Regional Site Location (Source: OCSC, 2025)*

## 1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Natura 2000 network is a European network of important ecological sites, as defined under Article 3 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, which comprises both Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). SACs are natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive and are established under the Habitats Directive itself. SPAs are established

under Article 4 of the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC for the protection of endangered species of wild birds. The aim of the network is to aid the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect such sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA. These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning Development Act 2000 (as amended). The process of appropriate assessment involves several stages, as outlined in the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations and summarised below:

**Stage One: Screening**

The process identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

Screening is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3):

i. whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the Natura 2000 site and
ii. whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA). Screening should be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation measures. If potential impacts are clearly avoided through the modification or redesign of the plan or project—where such changes are integral to the project and not intended solely to mitigate effects on a European site—the screening process should be repeated on the altered plan. The greatest level of evidence and justification will be needed in circumstances when the process ends at screening stage on grounds of no impact.

**Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment**

This stage considers whether the plan or project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site and includes any mitigation measures necessary to avoid, reduce, or offset negative effects. The proponent of the plan or project will be required to submit a Natura Impact Statement, i.e. the report of a targeted professional scientific examination of the plan or project and the relevant Natura 2000 sites, to identify and characterise any possible implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. This should provide information to enable the competent authority to carry out the appropriate assessment. If the assessment is negative, i.e. adverse effects on the integrity of a site cannot be excluded, then the process must proceed to Stage 3. However, if an alternative solution cannot be determined a Stage 4 must proceed or the plan or project should be abandoned. The AA is carried out by the competent authority and is supported by the NIS.

**Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions**

This stage examines any alternative solutions or options that could enable the plan or project to proceed without adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. The process must return to Stage 2 as alternatives will require appropriate assessment in order to proceed. Demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives have been considered and assessed, and that the least damaging option has been selected, is necessary to progress to Stage 4.

**Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.**

Stage 4 is the main derogation process of Article 6(4) which examines whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project that will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site to proceed in cases where it has been established that no less damaging alternative solution exists. The extra protection measures for Annex I priority habitats come into effect when making the IROPI case. Compensatory measures must be proposed and assessed. The Commission must be informed of the compensatory measures. Compensatory measures must be practical, implementable, likely to succeed, proportionate, and enforceable, and they must be approved by the Minister.

## 1.3 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The AA Screening has been prepared taking into account the aforementioned and following legislation and guidance:

- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. OPR Practice Notes (PN), March 2021.
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government, 2009; 11 February 2010 revision.
- Commission Notice: Managing Natura 2000 sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2018.
- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission Environment DG, 2002.
- Managing Natura 2000 sites: the Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2000. January 2019 revision.

The above documents have been used to carry out a desktop AA Screening based on the best available guidance and operating within the applicable legislation.

## 1.4 SCOPE OF WORKS

To meet the project objectives, the following scope of works was completed:

- Present a discussion of the proposed works and its potential effects on its receiving environment;
- Present a discussion of the current site status and key environmental influences around the site;
- Undertake and present a review of European sites in the region of the proposed works;

- Conduct and present a discussion on the screening of the identified European sites in relation to the potential effects arising from the project;
- Undertake a site survey, and inspect the surrounding habitat around the site;
- Provide a conclusion as to whether or not the proposed works is likely to, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, have a significant effect on any European site.

## 1.5 LIMITATIONS

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared for the sole use of Cork City Council ("the Client"). No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by OCSC.

This assessment is based on a review of available historical information, environmental records, consultations, relevant guidance information, and reports from third parties. All information received has been taken in good faith as being true and representative.

This report has been prepared in line with the best industry standards. The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by OCSC in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The assessment undertaken by OCSC and described was conducted in February 2025 and is based on the information available during that period. The scope of this report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

OCSC disclaim any undertaking or obligation to advise any person of any change in any matter affecting the Report which may come or be brought to OCSC's attention after the date of the Report.

The conclusions presented in this report represent OCSC's best professional judgement based on a review of the relevant information available at the time of writing. The opinions and conclusions presented are valid only to the extent that the information provided was accurate and complete.

# 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

## 2.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening report has been prepared for the proposed works to Cork City North Dock. The Cork City Docks (comprising the North Docks, South Docks, Marina Park, Custom House, and the River Channel) are undergoing a regeneration scheme with the aim to support the predicted population growth in Cork City. The redevelopment of the City Docks area aims to create a new sustainable neighbourhood in the centre of Cork City. This report relates solely to the proposed works at Cork North Docks. These works include the addition of a greenspace which will increase nesting opportunities for birds and possible habitats for other species (e.g. invertebrates and mammals).

The proposed works include:

- Realignment of the N8 national road between Lower Glanmire Road and Alfred Street to a new alignment closer to the rear of Kent Station, removing road traffic from Horgan's Quay. The realigned road will be approximately 720m long and will comprise two traffic lanes, a bus lane, footpaths and planted verges.
- Demolition of single-storey dockside shed on Horgan's Quay (Dowdall Building).
- The partial demolition of the single-storey shed in Kent Railyard.
- Creation of a new promenade on the waterfront along Horgan's Quay. The new promenade will be approximately 690m long and will include pedestrian and cycling infrastructure along the waterfront. The promenade will comprise new surface finishes, feature structures, recreational amenities, seating areas and planted landscape areas.
- Creation of a new public park of 6000m2 in area. The new public park will comprise new surface finishes, a water feature, recreational amenities, seating areas, feature structures and planted landscape areas.
- The water feature will require a recirculation tank and pump equipment. It will be in underground chamber 4.5m x 2.5m x 2.4m deep, which will require excavation.
- Creation of a new gateway public park along Water Street, providing a landscaped pedestrian link from Lower Glanmire Road to the new waterfront promenade.
- Other associated works, including public lighting, surface water drainage, signage and road markings.

There are no areas of general excavation or reduction in ground levels. In general, levels will be raised above existing ground level, constrained by existing levels around the edges of the scheme. There are some elevated platforms and areas within the Irish Rail compound that will be brought down to existing/proposed levels. At tie-in areas, existing road surfaces will be planed for resurfacing, existing footpaths will be taken up, etc. These activities will generate arisings that may need to be disposed of offsite if they cannot be recycled on site.

## 2.2 SITE SETTING AND LOCATION

The site is located within Cork City, County Cork. The regional site location is shown in Figure 1.1, and the study area is shown in Figure 2.1.

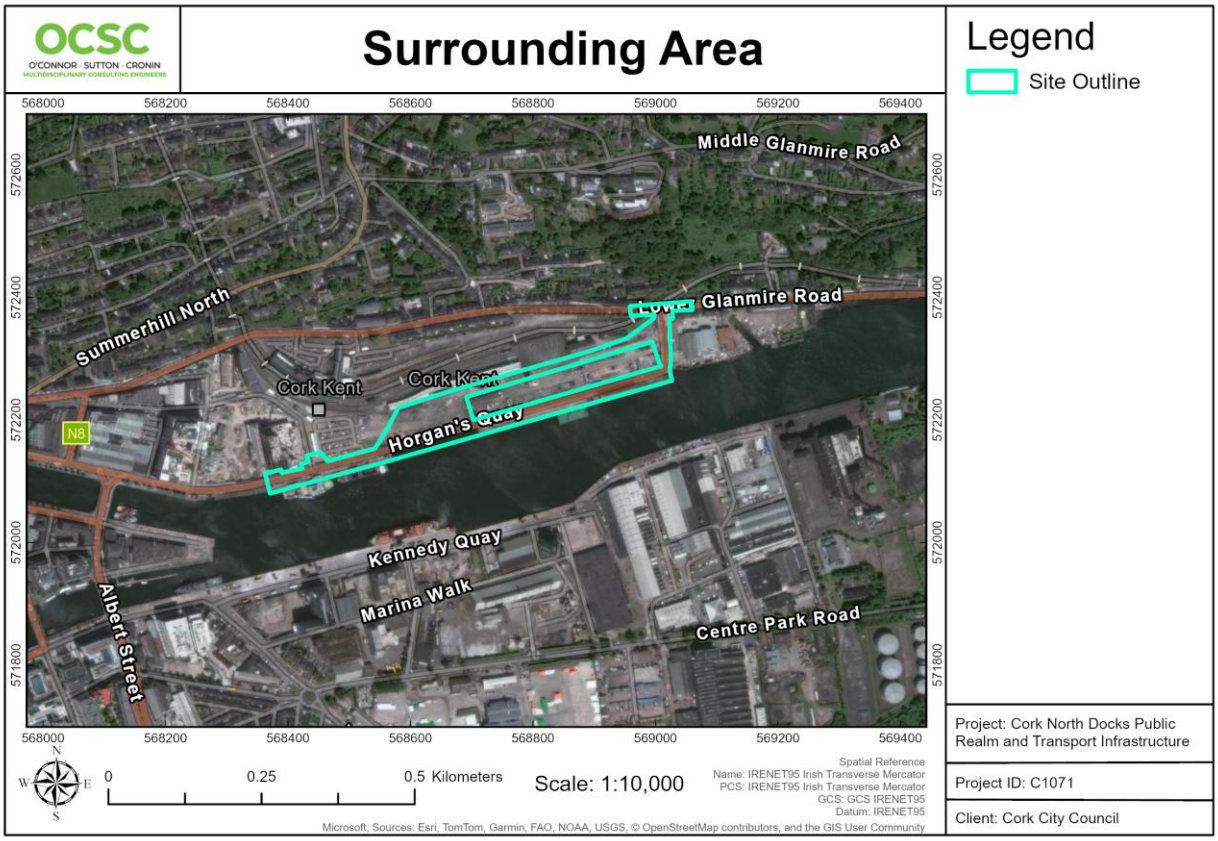


*Figure 2.1: Surrounding Land Use (Source: OCSC, 2025)*

## 2.3 SURROUNDING LAND USE

The site is located in a busy area of Cork City with numerous commercial and industrial buildings in the vicinity of the site and well as nearby residential dwellings as shown in Figure 2.1. Kent Railway Station is located immediately to the north of the site boundary with Penrose Wharf and Horgan's Quay located to the west. To the south is the River Lee with McMahons Building Providers to the east.

## 2.4 HYDROLOGY

The nearest surface waterbody is the River Lee (IE_SW_060_0900), located directly south of the site. In the vicinity of the proposed site, the river is a transitional waterbody with tidal influence. The River Lee flows in an easterly direction past the site into Lough Mahon and eventually into Cork Harbour.

Based on the most recent water quality information (2016-2021), the River Lee has an overall Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of 'Moderate as shown in Figure 2.2.

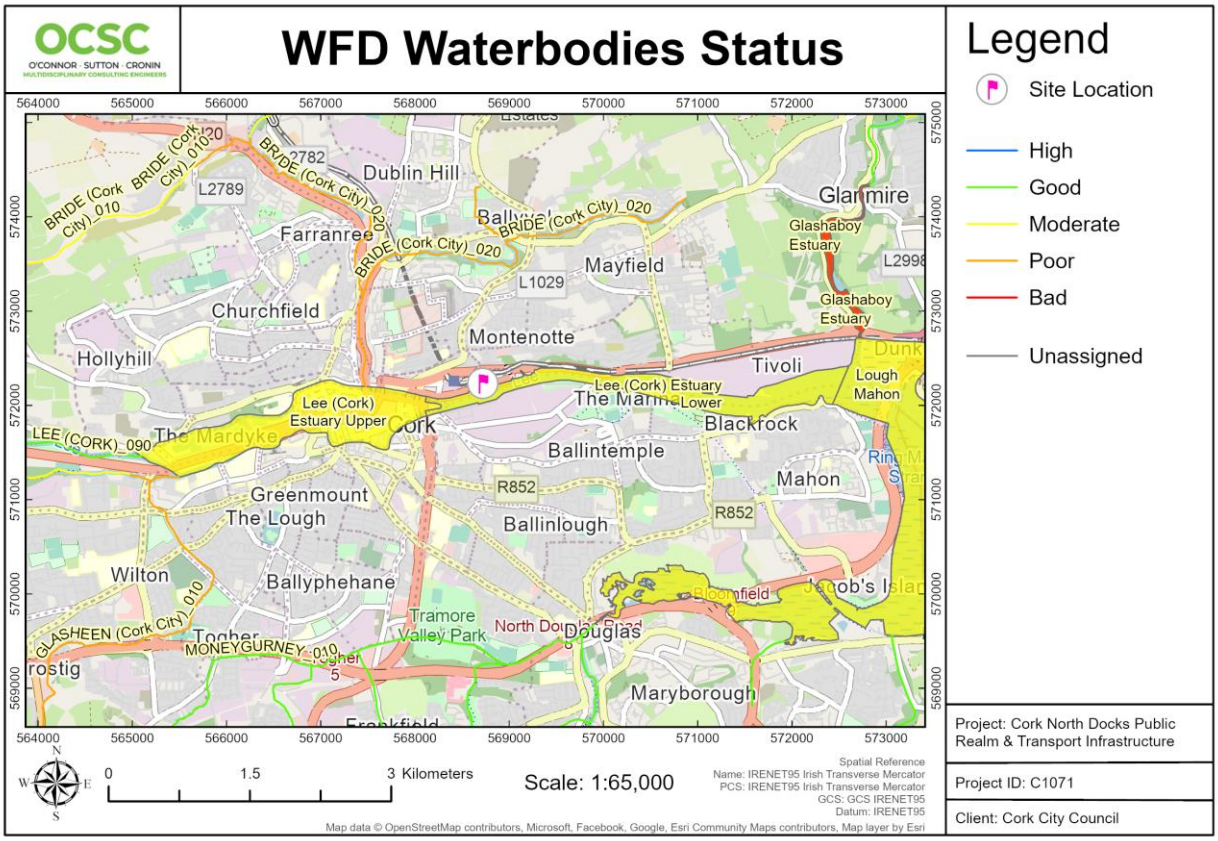


*Figure 2.2: River Waterbodies Status (Source: OCSC, 2025)*

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) spatial dataset indicates that the River Lee is at risk of failing to meet its WFD objectives by 2027 (EPA, 2025) as shown in Figure 2.3. WFD information for this waterbody is summarised in Table 2.2.

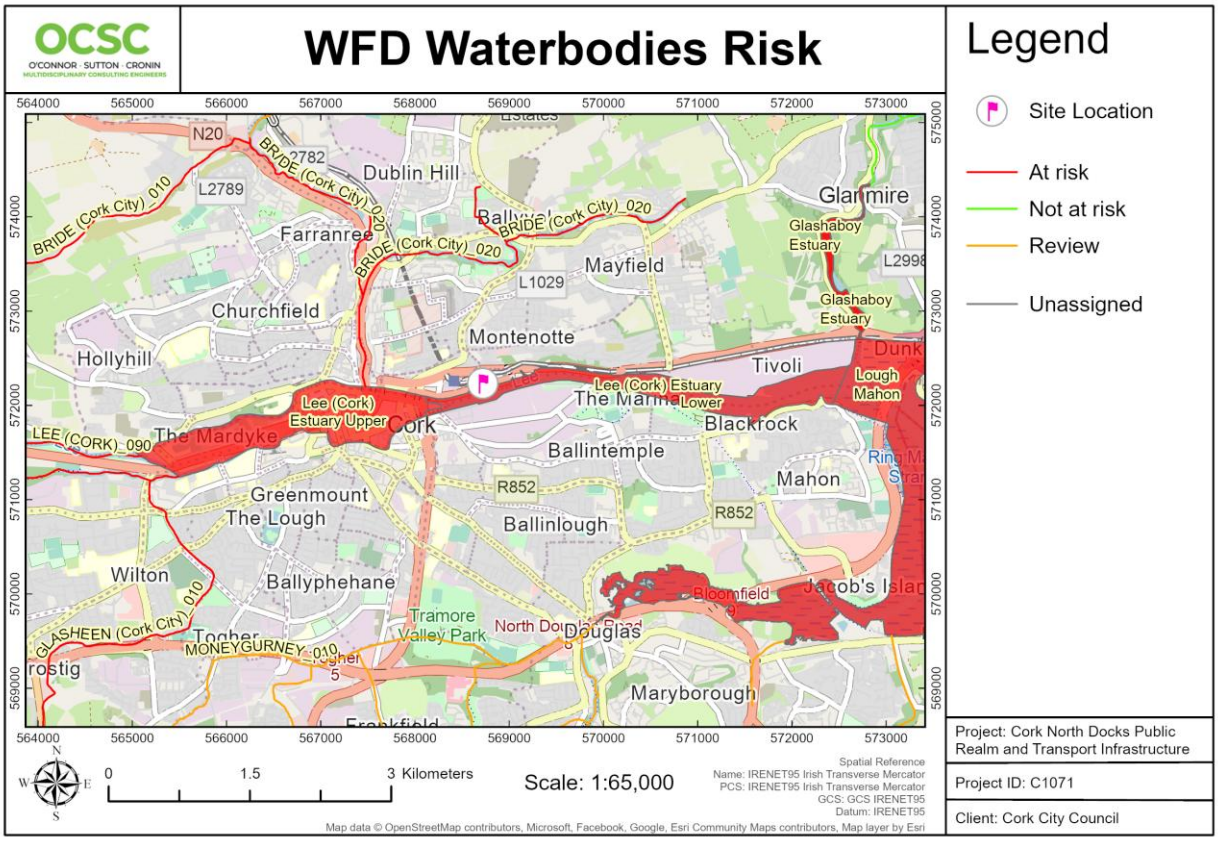


*Figure 2.3: River Waterbodies Risk (Source: OCSC, 2025)*

*Table 2.1: WFD Summary Information*

| WFD Summary Information | |
|---|---|
| **Name** | Lee (Cork) Estuary Lower |
| **Waterbody Code** | IE_SW_060_0900 |
| **Waterbody Type** | Transitional River |
| **Iteration** | 2016-2021 |
| **Status** | Moderate |
| **Risk** | At Risk |

# 3 SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

## 3.1 SCREENING PROCESS

This stage of the process identifies any likely significant effects to European sites from a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The screening phase was progressed in stages during which a series of questions were asked to determine:

- Whether a plan or project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site.
- Whether the project will have a potentially significant effect on a European Site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives or if residual uncertainty exists regarding potential impacts.

An important element of the AA process is the identification of the "'conservation objectives", "Qualifying Interests" (QIs), and/ or "Special Conservation Interests" (SCIs) of European sites requiring assessment. QIs are the habitat features and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive for which each European Site has been designated and afforded protection. SCIs are wetland habitats and bird species listed within Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive. It is also vital that the threats to the ecological/environmental conditions that are required to support QIs, and SCIs are considered as part of the assessment.

Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) have been designed to define favourable conservation status for a particular habitat or species at that site. Paragraph 4.6(3) of the European Commission interpretation document 'Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC' states:

> *"The significant effects on any European Site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, involves its ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the site's conservation objectives."*

Favourable conservation status of habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing;
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

This AA screening is based on the best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature and 'grey' literature was conducted. This included a detailed review of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website, including mapping and available reports for relevant sites and, in particular, sensitive QIs/SCIs described and their conservation objectives. The EPA EnVision map viewer (EPA 2024) and available reports were also reviewed, as was the NPWS (2019) publication "The Status of Protected EU Habitats and Species in Ireland".

## 3.2 IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES

Appropriate Assessment screening of potential effects on European sites is conducted following a standard source-pathway-receptor model where all three elements of this mechanism must be in place for an effect to be established. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect is not of any relevance or significance. The elements of this model consist of the following:

*Table 3.1: Source(s)*

| **Source(s)** | |
|---|---|
| Identify the characteristics of the proposed works such as the nature, size, and location and the type of impacts | |
| **Examples:** | |
| **Direct Impacts:** | **Indirect Impacts:** |
| • Direct emissions (water, air, noise, or light).<br>• Loss of habitat (including breeding or foraging habitats). | • Loss of breeding or foraging habitat outside the European site.<br>• Impact on a non-QI habitat or species within the European site that is ecologically linked to the conservation objectives/QI.<br>• Barriers to movement e.g. aquatic species, otter, bats, bird species.<br>• Collision risk.<br>• Loss of breeding or foraging for a prey species. |

*Table 3.2: Pathway(s)*

| **Pathway(s)** | |
|---|---|
| Identify the existence and characteristics of the pathways that could link European sites and their Qualifying Interests to the proposed works. | |
| **Examples:** | |
| **Direct Pathways:** | **Indirect Pathways:** |
| • Proximity (i.e. location within the European site).<br>• Water bodies (rivers/streams, marine, lakes, groundwater).<br>• Air (for both air emissions and noise impacts). | • Disruption to migratory paths, e.g. bird species, aquatic species, bats.<br>• 'Sightlines' where noisy or intrusive activities may result in disturbance to shy species. |

*Table 3.3: Receptor(s)*

| Receptor(s) |
| --- |
| Qualifying species and habitats which may be linked to sources of impact via identified pathways. The location, nature, and sensitivities of these potential receptors must be established along with the ecological conditions underpinning their survival and the conservation objectives specified to maintain or restore favourable conservation status. |
| **Examples:** |
| • Freshwater Pearl Mussels' extreme sensitivity to siltation in water.<br>• Lesser Horseshoe Bats' sensitivity to noise and light.<br>• Turloughs' sensitivity to changes in groundwater levels. |

Screening for Appropriate Assessment is comprised of the following steps:

- Describe the details of the proposed works and the characteristics of the receiving environment
- Identify all the potential impacts of the proposed works
- Define the zone of influence using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model.
- Identify the European site(s) within the zone of influence of the proposed works along with their Qualifying Interests and conservation objectives
- Determine whether the proposed works is directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of, any European site(s)
- Assess the potential effects on European sites
- Assess the likely significant direct and indirect effects on the conservation objectives of the site(s) in relation to the project alone and in-combination with other plans and projects
- Conclusions of screening assessment process: determine if the project, in the absence of mitigation measures, will undermine the conservation objectives of the site(s) and give rise to likely significant effects.

The zone of influence (ZOI) for this project has been determined to be 15km. The only pathway identified linking the proposed site to protected areas is the River Lee, adjacent to the proposed location. The river facilitates a hydrological connection to downstream protected sites, Cork Harbour SPA located 2.25km and Great Island Channel SAC located 7.28km downstream of the proposed works.

Based on the small scale of the project, the nature of the works and the limited potential for significant negative effects to arise as a result of the construction phase, protected sites outside of this 15km zone of influence are not considered within this report.

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- Conservation objectives that have been considered by this assessment are included in the following NPWS documents:
- NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC 002170. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (201) Conservation Objectives: Great Island Channel SAC 001058. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

- NPWS (201) Conservation Objectives: Cork Harbour SPA 004030. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
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The locations of relevant European sites are shown on Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2. Natura sites within 15km of the site and details and distances of these from the site are included in Table 3.4.

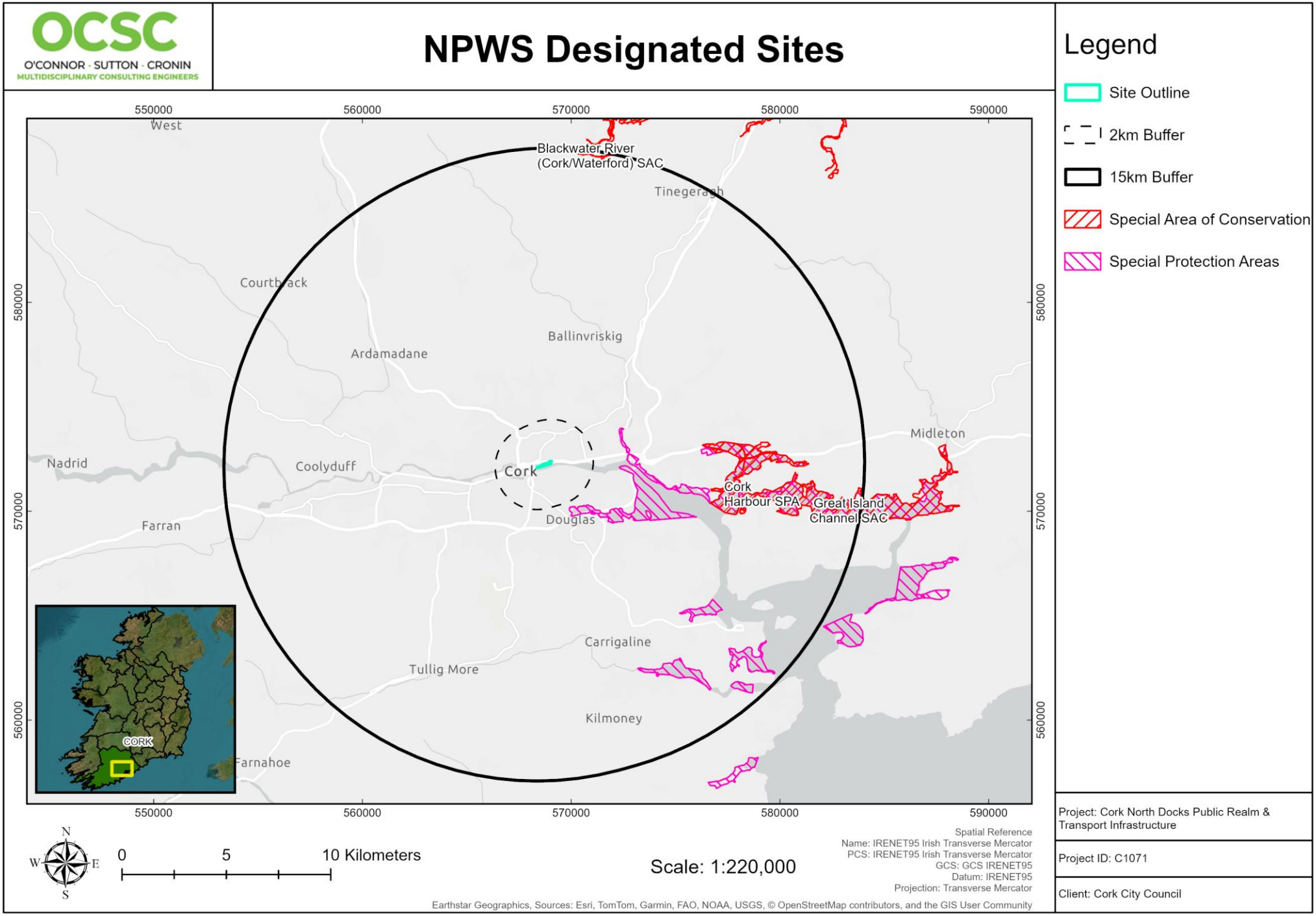



*Figure 3.1: NPWS Designated Sites (Source: OCSC, 2025)*

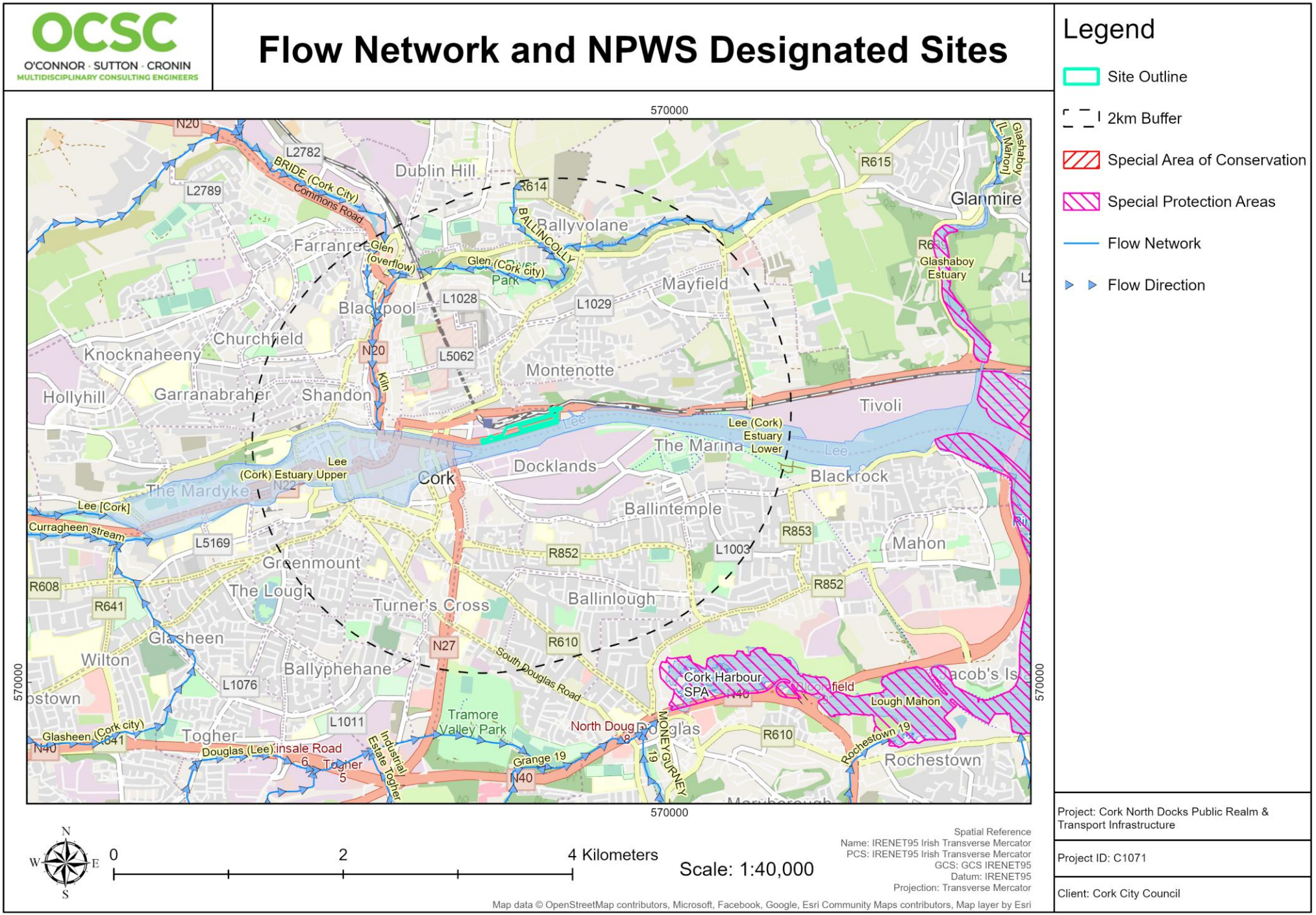



*Figure 3.2: European Sites and EPA Rivers near the study area (Source: OCSC, 2025)*

*Table 3.4: European Sites Within 15 km of the Proposed Works (NPWS, 2025)*

| Site Code | Site Name | Distance (km) | Sensitive Receptors | Site Synopsis |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **004030** | Cork Harbour SPA | 2.25 SE | Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [A004]<br>Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) [A005]<br>Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) [A017]<br>Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea)* [A028]<br>Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A048]<br>Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [A050]<br>Teal *(Anas crecca*) [A052]<br>Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [A054]<br>Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) [A056]<br>Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) [A069]<br>Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus)* [A130]<br>Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140]<br>Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141]<br>Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A142]<br>Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149]<br>Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [A156]<br>Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157]<br>Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [A160]<br>Redshank (*Tringa totanus)* [A162]<br>Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179]<br>Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182]<br>Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) [A183]<br>Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193]<br>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] | Cork Harbour is a large, sheltered bay system, with several river estuaries - principally those of the Rivers Lee, Douglas, Owenboy and Owennacurra.<br><br>The SPA site comprises most of the main intertidal areas of Cork Harbour, including all of the North Channel, the Douglas River Estuary, inner Lough Mahon, Monkstown Creek, Lough Beg, the Owenboy River Estuary, Whitegate Bay, Ringabella Creek and the Rostellan and Poulnabibe inlets.<br><br>The site is an SPA under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Shelduck, Wigeon, Teal, Mallard, Pintail, Shoveler, Red breasted Merganser, Oystercatcher, Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Lapwing, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Redshank, Greenshank, Black headed Gull, Common Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Common Tern. The site is also of special conservation interest for holding an assemblage of over 20,000 wintering waterbirds. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds. A range of passage waders occurs regularly in autumn, including such species as Ruff (5-10), Spotted Redshank (1-5) and Green Sandpiper (1-5). Numbers vary between years and usually a few of each of these species over-winter. Cork Harbour has a nationally important breeding colony of Common Tern (102 pairs in 1995). The birds have nested in Cork Harbour since about 1970, and since 1983 on various artificial structures, notably derelict steel barges and the roof of a Martello Tower. The birds are monitored annually, and the chicks are ringed.<br><br>Cork Harbour is of major ornithological significance, being of international importance both for the total numbers of wintering birds (i.e. > 20,000) and also for its populations of Black-tailed Godwit and Redshank. In addition, it supports nationally important wintering populations of 22 species, as well as a nationally important breeding colony of Common Tern. Several of the species which occur regularly are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, i.e. Whooper Swan, Little Egret, Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruff, Mediterranean Gull and Common Tern. The site provides both feeding and roosting sites for the various bird species that use it. Cork Harbour is also a Ramsar Convention site and part of Cork Harbour SPA is a Wildfowl Sanctuary. |
| **001058** | Great Island Channel SAC | 7.28 E | Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]<br>Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330] | The Great Island Channel stretches from Little Island to Midleton, with its southern boundary being formed by Great Island. It is an integral part of Cork Harbour which contains several other sites of conservation interest. Geologically, Cork Harbour consists of two large areas of open water in a limestone basin, separated from each other and the open sea by ridges of Old Red Sandstone. Within this system, Great Island Channel forms the eastern stretch of the river basin and, compared to the |

| Site Code | Site Name | Distance (km) | Sensitive Receptors | Site Synopsis |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | rest of Cork Harbour, is relatively undisturbed. Within the site is the estuary of the Owennacurra and Dungourney Rivers. These rivers, which flow through Midleton, provide the main source of freshwater to the North Channel.<br><br>The main habitats of conservation interest in Great Island Channel SAC are the sheltered tidal sand and mudflats and the Atlantic salt meadows. Owing to the sheltered conditions, the intertidal flats are composed mainly of soft muds. The saltmarshes are scattered through the site and are all of the estuarine type on mud substrate.<br><br>The site is extremely important for wintering waterfowl and is considered to contain three of the top five areas within Cork Harbour, namely North Channel, Harper's Island and Belvelly-Marino Point. Shelduck is the most frequent duck species with 800-1,000 birds centred on the Fota/Marino Point area. There are also large flocks of Teal and Wigeon, especially at the eastern end. The site is an integral part of Cork Harbour which is a wetland of international importance for the birds it supports. Overall, Cork Harbour regularly holds over 20,000 waterfowl and contains internationally important numbers of Black-tailed Godwit (1,181) and Redshank (1,896), along with nationally important numbers of nineteen other species. Furthermore, it contains large Dunlin (12,019) and Lapwing (12,528) flocks. All counts are average peaks, 1994/95 – 1996/97. Much of the site falls within Cork Harbour SPA, an important bird area designated under the E.U. Birds Directive. The site is of major importance for the two habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, as well as for its important numbers of wintering waders and wildfowl. It also supports a good invertebrate fauna. |
| **002170** | Blackwater River (Cork/ Waterford) SAC | 14.59 N | Estuaries [1130]<br>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]<br>Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]<br>*Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]<br>Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330]<br>Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) [1410]<br>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation [3260]<br>Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0] | The River Blackwater is one of the largest rivers in Ireland, draining a major part of Co. Cork and five ranges of mountains.<br><br>The site supports several Red Data Book plant species, i.e. Starved Wood-sedge (Carex depauperata), Killarney Fern (Trichomanes speciosum), Pennyroyal (Mentha pulegium), Bird's-nest Orchid (Neottia nidus-avis), Golden Dock (Rumex maritimus) and Bird Cherry (Prunus padus). The first three of these are also protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 2015, while the Killarney Fern is also listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive.<br><br>The site supports many of the mammal species occurring in Ireland. Those which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book include Pine Marten, Badger and Irish Hare. The bat species Natterer's Bat, Daubenton's Bat, Whiskered Bat, Brown Long-eared Bat and Pipistrelle, can be seen feeding along the river, roosting under the old bridges and in old buildings. Common Frog, a Red Data Book species that is also legally protected (Wildlife Act, 1976), occurs throughout the site. The rare bush cricket Metrioptera roselii (Order Orthoptera) has been recorded in the reed/willow vegetation of the river |

| Site Code | Site Name | Distance (km) | Sensitive Receptors | Site Synopsis |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and F*raxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]<br>*Margaritifera margaritifera* (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]<br>*Austropotamobius pallipes* (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]<br>*Petromyzon marinus* (Sea Lamprey) [1095]<br>*Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey) [1096]<br>*Lampetra fluviatilis* (River Lamprey) [1099]<br>*Alosa fallax fallax* (Twaite Shad) [1103]<br>*Salmo salar* (Salmon) [1106]<br>*Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]<br>*Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern) [1421] | embankment on the Lower Blackwater River. The Swan Mussel (Anodonta cygnea), a scarce species nationally, occurs at a few sites along the freshwater stretches of the Blackwater.<br><br>Several bird species listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive are found on the site. Some use it as a staging area, others are vagrants, while others use it more regularly. Internationally important numbers of Whooper Swan (average peak 174, 1994/95-95/96) and nationally important numbers Bewick's Swan (average peak 5, 1996/97-2000/01) use the Blackwater Callows. Golden Plover occur in regionally important numbers on the Blackwater estuary. Three breeding territories for Peregrine Falcon are known along the Blackwater Valley. This, the Awbeg and the Bride River are also thought to support at least 30 pairs of Kingfisher.<br><br>The site holds important numbers of wintering waterfowl. Both the Blackwater Callows and the Blackwater Estuary Special Protection Areas (SPAs) hold internationally important numbers of Black-tailed Godwit. |

## 3.3 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

### 3.3.1 EXCLUSION FROM APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

As set out in the provisions of the Habitats Directive, plans or projects that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site do not require AA. For this exception to apply, management is required to be interpreted narrowly as nature conservation management in the sense of Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive. This refers to specific measures to address the ecological requirements of annexed habitats and species (and their habitats) present on a site(s). The relationship should be shown to be direct and not a by-product of the plan, even if this might result in positive or beneficial effects for a site(s).

In this case, the regeneration scheme is neither necessary for nor directly connected with the management of a European Site. As such, the proposed works cannot be excluded from AA.

### 3.3.2 ELEMENTS OF THE WORKS WITH THE POTENTIAL TO GIVE RISE TO EFFECTS

The construction phase of the proposed works has the potential to introduce effects such as disturbance due to noise and vibrations, surface water run-off, sedimentation, and pollution due to accidental spills or releases. These effects are examined in detail in relation to the sensitive receptors of each of the relevant European sites identified with regard to the conservation objectives and the potential pathways for effects.

### 3.3.3 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS AND SCREENING OF SITES

This section documents the final stage of the screening process. It uses the information collected on the sensitivity of each relevant European Site and describes any impact to have likely significant effects on the European Site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, resulting from the proposed works. This assessment assumes the absence of any controls, conditions, or mitigation measures. In determining the potential for effects, a number of factors have been considered including the sensitivity and reported threats to the European Site and the individual elements of the proposed works and the potential effect they may cause to the site.

Sites are screened out based on one or a combination of the following criteria:

- Where it can be shown that there are no significant pathways such as hydrological links between activities of the proposed works and the site to be screened;
- Where the site is located at such a distance from proposed works that effects are not foreseen; and/ or
- Where it is that known threats or vulnerabilities at a site cannot be linked to potential impacts that may arise from the proposed works.

## 3.4 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Assessment is the process of evaluating the importance or significance of project/plan effects (whether negative or positive). The following parameters are described when characterising impacts (following guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, the EPA, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland/ National Roads Authority (TII/NRA)):

***Direct and Indirect Impacts –*** An impact can be caused either as a direct or as an indirect consequence of proposed works.

***Magnitude -*** Magnitude refers to size, amount, intensity, and volume. It should be quantified if possible and expressed in absolute or relative terms (e.g., the amount of habitat lost, percentage change to habitat area, percentage decline in a species population). Magnitude measures the size of an impact which is described as high, medium, low, very low, or negligible.

***Extent -*** The extent is the spatial or geographical area over which the impact/effect may occur under a suitably representative range of conditions (e.g. noise transmission underwater).

***Duration -*** The time for which the effect is expected to last prior to recovery or replacement of the resource or feature.

- Temporary: the effects would take up to 1 year to be mitigated;
- Short Term: the effects would take 1-7 years to be mitigated;
- Medium Term: the effects would take 7-15 years to be mitigated;
- Long Term: the effects would take 15-60 years to be mitigated; and
- Permanent: the effects would take 60+ years to be mitigated.

***Likelihood –*** The probability of an impact/effect occurring taking into account all available information.

- Certain/Near Certain: >95% chance of occurring as predicted;
- Probable: 50-95% chance as occurring as predicted;
- Unlikely: 5-50% chance as occurring as predicted; and
- Extremely Unlikely: <5% chance as occurring as predicted.

The document 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Commission Environment DG, 2001' outlines the types of effects that may impact European sites. These include effects from the following activities:

- Land take
- Resource requirements (drinking water abstraction, etc.)
- Emissions (disposal to land, water, or air)
- Excavation requirements
- Transportation requirements
- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

In addition, the guidance outlines the following likely changes that may occur at a designated site which may result in significant effects on any European Site and its function, in view of its conservation objectives:

- Reduction of habitat area
- Disturbance to key species
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Reduction in species density
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality, etc.)
- Climate change

The elements detailed above were considered with reference to each of the European sites identified in as having a potential pathway link to the site.

### 3.4.1 LAND TAKE/HABITAT LOSS

As there is no spatial overlap between the site and any European site, there is no anticipated land take or habitat loss posed to European sites from the proposed works.

### 3.4.3 DURATION OF WORKS

The construction phase of the proposed works is anticipated to be short-term, approximately 18 months in duration. Given the nature and the duration of the works and the distance to the nearest designated site (Cork Harbour SPA located 2.25km direct and downstream), this proposed project is unlikely to impact on nearby European sites.

### 3.4.4 EMISSIONS (DISPOSAL TO LAND, WATER OR AIR)

Construction Phase:

Potential water quality impacts during construction phase include increased siltation and turbidity to surface runoff as well as pollution from surface runoff due to accidental spillages of oils or fuels from machinery, concrete/cement, paint, etc. Due to the scale of the proposed project and the distance from the site to nearby designated sites, impacts to Natura 2000 are predicted to be temporary, unlikely, and negligible.

Construction phase elements of the plan may give rise to increased temporary effects such as noise or dust. However, due to the due to the small scale and short duration of the project and the distance to the nearest designated sites, these impacts are predicted to be unlikely and imperceptible.

Operational Phase:

Due to the nature of the site usage during the operational phase, no significant impacts to designated sites are predicted.

### 3.4.5 EXCAVATION REQUIREMENTS/EROSION/SEDIMENTATION

The proposed project does not require significant excavation works. The majority of the works will entail raising levels rather than excavation. Therefore, given short-term nature and the scale of the proposed works and the distance to the nearest European designated sites, the impacts arising from excavation, erosion, and sedimentation are considered to be temporary, unlikely, and negligible.

### 3.4.6 TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

There will be a small to moderate, short-term increase in construction traffic during the construction phase. These effects are considered not significant with regard to European sites due to the scale of the construction works and the distance to the nearest designated sites.

### 3.4.7 DURATION OF CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, DECOMMISSIONING

The construction phase of the proposed project is short term and will have no significant effects on European sites given the scale of the works and the distance to designated sites. The regeneration of the docks will be a permanent feature with no decommissioning phase and is predicted to have no significant effects on European sites during its operational phase due to the nature of its use and the distance to the nearest designated sites.

### 3.4.8 HABITAT REDUCTION

The nearest European site or qualifying habitat feature (Cork Harbour SPA) is located 2.25km direct from the site. As such, there will be no reduction of the habitat of European sites resulting from the proposed development.

### 3.4.9 SPECIES DISTURBANCE

The nearest European site is the Cork Harbour SPA which is located 2.25km east of the site at its nearest point. As such, disturbance from noise, vibrations, lighting, etc. are not a valid link. Therefore, no species disturbance is predicted as a result of the proposed works.

### 3.4.10 HABITAT OR SPECIES FRAGMENTATION

Given the scale, duration, and nature of the construction phase and the distance to the nearest European sites, the project is predicted to have no potential effects on any European site with regard to habitat or species fragmentation.

### 3.4.11 CLIMATE CHANGE

Due to the nature and scale of the proposed work, the effects of the proposed works on climate and Ireland's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol are not anticipated to be significant.

### 3.4.12 COMBINATION EFFECTS WITH OTHER PROJECTS

Grants of planning in the vicinity of the site were reviewed to identify works of a significant scale which may produce in-combination effects with the proposed works. The following planning grants of larger than single domestic scale were identified:

- **Planning Application Reference: 1636704** - For the demolition of the warehouse (c.4,000m2) and conveyor and ship loading system (c.250m) that were developed under planning Ref. No. 97/21738 for the storage and transhipment of lead and zinc ore concentrate
- **Planning Application Reference: 1636952 -** extension to existing graveyard and associated works, located at Ardfoyle Convent Ballintemple
- **Planning Application Reference: 1938589 -** Planning permission is sought by Tower Development Properties Ltd for: Redevelopment of the Custom House site at North Custom House Quay and South Custom House Quay, Custom House Street, Cork City to provide a 240-bedroom hotel, 25 no. hotel serviced suites, and a range of commercial uses including retail, office, food and beverage, distillery, tourism and leisure. The redevelopment will have a gross floor area of approximately 31, 604m2. The proposed development consists of the carrying out of works to Protected Structures PS060, PS818 and PS163. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the application. A Natura Impact Statement will be submitted to the Planning Authority with the application.
- **Planning Application Reference: 2342494 -** For retention of alterations to the permitted roof configuration and elevations at Southern Milling, Marina Mills in the City Docklands, Cork City consisting of (1) Raising the roof over the warehouse area by 8.1 metres; (2) Raising the roof over the blending bins by 10.55 metres; (3) Extending the roof over the bulk out loading bins by 4.9 metres to facilitate structural, mechanical and electrical alterations and improvements within the permitted building footprint.
- **Planning Application Reference: 2342106 –** For a 10-year planning permission for a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) at the Goulding's Site, Centre Park Road and Monahan Road, Cork. The proposed development consists of the demolition of the existing on-site buildings and structures and site clearance to facilitate the construction of 1325 no. residential units including apartments and duplexes in 10 no. buildings. A standalone 2 storey creche of 665 sq.m with associated outdoor amenity space is also proposed. The development ranges in height from 2 to 14 storeys over a single basement. There are some mixed uses proposed at ground floor level across the development including: 4 no. cafes/ restaurants with outdoor seating areas (c. 631 sq.m); 5 no. service retail units (c. 561 sq.m); 1 no. convenience retail store which will provide for the sale of alcohol (c. 286 sq.m); and 4 no. offices/ retail offices (c. 323 sq.m). It is requested that where the ground floor uses across the proposed development are indicated as either café or restaurant/ service retail/ retail/ office/ retail office, the use be confirmed subject to first occupation. The development will provide 658 no. 1 bed units, 465 no. 2 bed units and 202

no. 3 bed units, as follows: Block G1 is a 5-8 storey block comprising 182 units (87 no. 1 bedroom units; 62 no. 2 bedroom units; and 33 no. 3 bedroom units). Block G2 is a 5-8 storey block comprising 273 units (134 no. 1 bedroom units; 95 no. 2 bedroom units; and 44 no. 3 bedroom units). Block G3A is a 6-8 storey block comprising 103 units (63 no. 1 bedroom units; 24 no. 2 bedroom units; and 16 no. 3 bedroom units). Block G3B is a 7-8 storey block comprising 77 units (44 no. 1 bedroom units; 20 no. 2 bedroom units; and 13 no. 3 bedroom units). Block G4A is a 3-7 storey block comprising 115 units (52 no. 1 bedroom units; 46 no. 2 bedroom units; and 17 no. 3 bedroom units). Block G4B is a 7-storey block comprising 60 units (21 no. 1 bedroom units; 39 no. 2 bedroom units). Block G5 is a 3-7 storey block comprising 162 units (75 no. 1 bedroom units; 54 no. 2 bedroom units; and 33 no. 3 bedroom units). Block G6 is a 3-7 storey block comprising 172 units (83 no. 1 bedroom units; 58 no. 2 bedroom units; and 31 no. 3 bedroom units). Block G7 is a 3-7 storey block comprising 91 units (50 no. 1 bedroom units; 26 no. 2 bedroom units; and 15 no. 3 bedroom units). Block G8 is a 14-storey block comprising 90 units (49 no. 1 bedroom units; 41 no. 2 bedroom units).

- **Cork Docklands to City Centre Road Network Improvement Scheme:** The projects primary objectives are as follows:
    - To improve access between South Docklands and the City Centre in terms of convenience, safety and capacity across all modes but with emphasis on sustainable modes of transportation (walking, cycling and public transport).
    - To provide a high-quality public realm aligned with the ambitious redevelopment plans for the area and respectful of the existing community within Docklands. The public realm will seek to achieve the correct balance between hard & soft landscaping, uniqueness and sustainability while also embracing the riverside amenity potential of the area.
    - The findings of the AA screening noted that no significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites is likely, and it was not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process. The finding from the EIA Screening has been concluded that there will be no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and an EIA is not required.
- **Glanmire to City Cycle Route (Phase 2):** Glanmire to City Cycle Route (Phase 2) is a proposed 4.9km scheme with 1.4km of two-way segregated cycle track and 3.5km of shared areas. It's facilities will provide on the southern side of the roadway from Penrose Quay to the entrance to the Port of Cork. From here the facility crosses to the northern side of the Port of Cork Tivoli Estate Road before crossing the railway line and terminating at the Dunkettle roundabout. Minimum two-way cycle track width of 2.75m. The proposed facility will provide a safe pedestrian and cycle route that extends from the City Centre to Glanmire, Little Island, Carrigtwohill and the surrounding area. The proposed facility will eventually form part of the Inter-urban greenway that will link Cork and Waterford cities.

  The findings of the AA screening noted that no significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites is likely, and it was not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process. The finding from the EIA Screening has been concluded that there will be no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and an EIA is not required.

None the large grants of planning identified above, or any other significant projects are proposed or currently under construction that could potentially cause in-combination effects on European sites. Therefore, it is considered that in-combination effects with other existing and proposed works in proximity to the application area would be unlikely, neutral, not significant, and localised. It is concluded that effects on European sites as a result of the project, either alone or combination with other projects, are predicted to be negligible and unlikely.

*Table 3.5: Screening assessment of the potential effects arising from the proposed works (Natura 2000 Viewer, 2025).*

| Site Code | Site Name | Distance (km) | Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature] | Characterisation of Potential Effects | Potential Significant Effects | Potential In-Combination Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **004030** | Cork Harbour SPA | 2.25 | Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [A004]<br>Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) [A005]<br>Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) [A017]<br>Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea)* [A028]<br>Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A048]<br>Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [A050]<br>Teal *(Anas crecca*) [A052]<br>Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [A054]<br>Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) [A056]<br>Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) [A069]<br>Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus)* [A130]<br>Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140]<br>Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141]<br>Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A142]<br>Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149]<br>Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [A156]<br>Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157]<br>Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [A160]<br>Redshank (*Tringa totanus)* [A162]<br>Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179]<br>Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182]<br>Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) [A183]<br>Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193]<br>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] | Threats to the site include: Marine and Freshwater Aquaculture, Eutrophication (natural), Fertilisation, Grazing, Invasive non-native species, Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh, Roads, motorways, Urbanised areas and human habitation.<br><br>There is no spatial overlap between the site and the protected area. Although a hydrological connection exists between the site and the SPA, the separation distance is such that both direct and indirect impacts are unlikely to result in significant effects on the SPA's conservation objectives. Based on the scale and nature of the works, construction phase effects such as dust will be localised and unlikely to cause an impact on the SPA. | Unlikely | Unlikely |
| **001058** | Great Island Channel SAC | 7.28 | Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]<br>Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330] | Threats to the site include: Industrial or commercial areas, Dispersed habitation, Fertilisation, Leisure fishing, Marine and Freshwater Aquaculture, Nautical sports, Port areas, Roads, motorways, Shipping lanes, Skiing, off-piste, Urbanised areas, human habitation, Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles. | Unlikely | Unlikely |

| Site Code | Site Name | Distance (km) | Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interest & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature] | Characterisation of Potential Effects | Potential Significant Effects | Potential In-Combination Effects |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | . Although a hydrological connection exists between the site and the SPA, the separation distance is such that both direct and indirect impacts are unlikely to result in significant effects on the SAC's conservation objectives.<br><br>Based on the scale and nature of the works, construction phase effects such as dust will be localised and unlikely to cause an impact on the SAC. | | |
| **002170** | Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC | 14.59 | Estuaries [1130]<br>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]<br>Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]<br>*Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]<br>Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330]<br>Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) [1410]<br>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation [3260]<br>Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0]<br>Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and F*raxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]<br>*Margaritifera margaritifera* (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]<br>*Austropotamobius pallipes* (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]<br>*Petromyzon marinus* (Sea Lamprey) [1095]<br>*Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey) [1096]<br>*Lampetra fluviatilis* (River Lamprey) [1099]<br>*Alosa fallax fallax* (Twaite Shad) [1103]<br>*Salmo salar* (Salmon) [1106]<br>*Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]<br>*Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern) [1421] | Threats to the site include: Fertilisation, Grazing, Mowing / cutting of grassland, Industrial or commercial areas, Invasive non-native species, general, Leisure fishing, Sylviculture, forestry, Urbanised areas, human habitation, Disposal of household / recreational facility waste, Erosion, Landfill, land reclamation and drying out, general, Nautical sports, Railway lines, TGV, Roads, motorways, Sand and gravel extraction, Sport and leisure structures.<br><br>There is no spatial overlap or hydrological link between the site and the protected area. Due to the distance from the site and lack of hydrological connection, direct and indirect impacts do not pose a significant risk to the SAC.<br><br>Based on the scale and nature of the works, construction phase effects such as dust will be localised and unlikely to cause an impact on the SAC. | Unlikely | Unlikely |

# 4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## 4.1 SUMMARY

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance and establishes the requirement for an AA. This AA screening is based on best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature and 'grey' literature was conducted.

This stage 1 screening for AA has been prepared for the redevelopment of the Cork North Dock. The redevelopment of the Docks area aims to create a new sustainable neighbourhood in the centre of Cork City.

There is no spatial overlap between the study area and any European designated sites. Due to the small scale, short duration, and nature of the works (no in-stream works) and the distance to the nearest European designated site, Cork Harbour SPA located 2.25km direct and downstream to the east, impacts to Natura sites and their qualifying species and habitats arising from the proposed works are predicted to be imperceptible.

*Table 4.1: Significant Impacts Checklist.*

| Does the project have the potential to | Yes/No |
|---|---|
| Reduce the area of key habitats? | No |
| Reduce the populations of key species? | No |
| Change the balance between key species? | No |
| Reduce diversity of the site? | No |
| Result in disturbance that could affect population size or density or balance between key species? | No |
| Result in fragmentation? | No |
| Result in loss or reduction of key features? | No |
| Cause delays in progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site? | No |
| Interrupt progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site? | No |
| Disrupt factors that help to maintain the favourable conditions of a Natura 2000 site? | No |
| Interfere with the balance, distribution, and density of key species that are indicators of the favourable conditions of a Natura 2000 site? | No |
| Cause changes to the vital defining aspects of a Natura 2000 site? | No |
| Change the dynamics of the relationships that define the structure and/or function of a Natura 2000 site? | No |
| Interfere with predicted or expected natural changes to a Natura 2000 site such as water dynamics? | No |

## 4.2 CONCLUSION

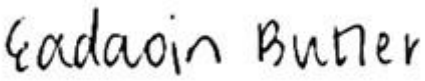
This stage 1 screening for Cork North Docks redevelopment concludes that the works are unlikely to impact the nearest Natura site, Cork Harbour SPA due to the scale, nature, duration of the works. Although there is a hydrological connection between the site and the SPA (2.25km downstream), no in-stream works are required. Therefore, negative impacts to the SPA are unlikely subject to works being carried out under standard construction practice methods.

The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the project characteristics, taking into account the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that the works are unlikely to impact these sites in terms of the potential for adverse effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interests, or the conservation objectives of these sites with an imperceptible effect.

This evaluation is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. Consequently, a Stage Two Appropriate Assessment is **NOT** required for the project.

# 5 VERIFICATION

This report was compiled by Eadaoin Butler, BSc, Consultant Ecologist; reviewed by Luis Iemma, BSc, MSc, PhD, CEcol, MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist, and Glenda Barry, BSc, MSc, PGeo, EurGeol, Principal Consultant; and approved by Eleanor Burke, BSc, MSc, DAS, MIEnvSc, CSci, OCSC Director (Environmental).



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