FEHILY TIMONEY

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING SAFETY SCHEMES

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report
Batch 2a

Prepared for:

Cork City Council

Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council

Date: **September 2025**

Document No:

P23120-FT-XX-ZZ-RP-Z-0027

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REVISION CONTROL TABLE, CLIENT, KEYWORDS AND ABSTRACT

User is responsible for Checking the Revision Status of This Document

Rev. No.	Description of Changes	Prepared by:	Checked by:	Approved by:	Date:
P01	For Client Review	SB	RM	GF	18/09/2025
P02	For Client Review	SB	RM	GF	22/09/2025
P03	For Client Review	SB	RM	GF	24/09/2025

Client: Cork City Council

Keywords: Appropriate Assessment (AA), AA Screening, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, European (Natura 2000) sites, Pedestrian Crossings, Active Travel Scheme Projects, Cork City, Batch 2a

Abstract: Fehily Timoney and Company is pleased to submit this Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for the proposed pedestrian crossing safety schemes across Cork City.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fehily Timoney and Company (FT) have been commissioned by Cork City Council (CCC) to prepare this Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, for the delivery of 6 no. active travel schemes across suburban and peri-urban locations within Cork City Council's administrative area.

The 6 no. schemes are as follows:

1. Grange Road at Tramore Valley Park
2. Lower Friars Walk at Loretto Park
3. Ballyhooly Road at Gordons Hill
4. Eglantine Park at Ardfallen Estate
5. Blackrock Road at Churchyard Lane
6. Blackrock Road at Barrington's Avenue

A description of each individual scheme is provided in Section 2.

The schemes aim to enhance the safety, accessibility, and quality of pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure, with a particular emphasis on providing safe carriageway crossings for vulnerable road users. The overarching objective is to improve connectivity and encourage the uptake of active travel modes, especially for users commuting between residential neighbourhoods and nearby amenities such as schools, childcare facilities, local services and recreational spaces.

1.1 Methodology

The assessment was conducted in accordance with the following guidance:

- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. Commission Notice (2021) Brussels, 28.9.2021 C(2021) 6913 final (European Commission, 2021)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin (2009, updated 2010) (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010)
- Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission, 2019)
- OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, (Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021)

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Description of Scheme

The proposed Active Travel Schemes seek to enhance pedestrian safety, support increased active travel uptake and provide safer connections between residential areas and key local destinations such as schools, community centres, public transport links, and sports facilities. Each project involves targeted interventions within the existing public road corridor, including new pedestrian crossings, traffic calming measures, and upgrades to associated footpath infrastructure.

A site-specific description for each location is provided below and plan layouts are available on the associated drawings indicated.

1. Grange Road at Tramore Valley Park - (Drawing P23120-FT-ZZ-01-DR-CE-0010)

The proposed section of road is located on Grange Road (R851), at the access point to Tramore Valley Park and adjacent to the Church of the Incarnation. The proposal introduces pedestrian safety improvements through:

- Footpath reconstruction on both sides of the R851
- Installation of a signal-controlled Toucan crossing across Grange Road
- Upgraded road markings on the approach to the crossing

This scheme enhances accessibility and safe pedestrian movement between residential areas, green spaces, and community facilities.

2. Lower Friars Walk at Loretto Park - (Drawing P23120-FT-ZZ-01-DR-CE-0030)

The proposed works are located along Lower Friars Walk, between the junctions with Tory Top Road and Loretto Park. The proposal introduces pedestrian safety enhancements through:

- Installation of a raised table with an integrated zebra crossing
- Upgraded road markings on approaches to the crossing

This scheme improves safety for pedestrians travelling between nearby residential areas and local facilities, encouraging safer crossing and reduced vehicle speeds.

3. Ballyhooly Road at Gordons Hill - (Drawing P23120-FT-ZZ-01-DR-CE-0031)

The proposed site is located at the intersection of Ballyhooly Road and Gordons Hill, near to the Glen River Car Park. The scheme improves safety and connectivity for pedestrians through:

- Installation of a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing on Ballyhooly Road
- Addition of a raised table with integrated uncontrolled crossing on the approach to Ballyhooly Road
- Tightening of the junction from Gordons Hill to Ballyhooly Road
- Replacement of tactile paving and repair of footpaths to match existing gradients
- Provision of a new green area at the corner of the junction

These enhancements reduce crossing distances and vehicle speeds, while improving pedestrian access to local services and amenities.

4: Eglantine Park at Ardfallen Estate - (Drawing P23120-FT-ZZ-01-DR-CE-0037)

The Preferred Option includes traffic calming and pedestrian safety enhancements in a school environment including:

- Installation of a raised table across the Eglantine Park / Ardfallen Estate junction
- Provision of pedestrian zebra crossings of Eglantine Park and Ardfallen Estate, located on the raised table
- Junction tightening of the Eglantine Park / Ardfallen Estate junction and footpath widening.
- Installation of bollards along the west side of Eglantine Park to prevent illegal parking.
- Installation of raised tables to slow traffic on Eglantine Park in advance of the Eglantine Park / Ardfallen Estate junction.

This scheme supports safer travel to and from school and enhances pedestrian facilities at the nearby junction.

5: Blackrock Road at Churchyard Lane - (Drawing P23120-FT-ZZ-01-DR-CE-0035)

Located along Blackrock Road, between Ashcroft and Churchyard Lane, this scheme introduces targeted safety upgrades including:

- Construction of a speed table on Churchyard Lane to slow vehicles approaching the junction
- Installation of a signal-controlled pedestrian crossing on Blackrock Road immediately west of the Churchyard Lane intersection
- Widening of the footpath along Blackrock Road to improve accessibility

These measures provide safe and structured crossing points while reducing vehicle speeds and improving pedestrian access to local amenities, including a supermarket and bus stop.

6. Blackrock Road at Barrington's Avenue - (Drawing P23120-FT-ZZ-01-DR-CE-0015)

The proposed intervention is located at the junction of Blackrock Road, Beaumont Avenue, and Barrington’s Avenue. The proposal introduces traffic calming and pedestrian improvements through:

- Provision of a raised table at the junction to reduce vehicle speeds on approach and through the junction
- Installation of uncontrolled pedestrian crossings on the raised table to facilitate safe crossing movements across Blackrock Road, Beaumont Avenue and Barrington's Avenue

This scheme enhances pedestrian safety and crossing opportunities in a busy junction near local amenities and residential areas.

3. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Introduction

Consideration is given to whether the proposed projects are likely to have a significant effect upon any European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and with each other. The approach to identifying European sites which have potential for significant effects due to the proposed projects follows the approach set out in the AA screening practice note (Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021).

3.2 Identification of relevant European sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model

The practice note (Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021) states that the Zone of Influence (ZoI) must be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model. In this regard, consideration is given to the nature and extent of the proposed works and the characteristics of the immediate environment along with the consideration of potential pathways for connectivity to European sites, which are identified using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping.

3.2.1 Study Area/ZoI

As per CIEEM guidelines (2018)[1], the potential direct and indirect links to sensitive receptors of European sites from the proposed works is considered as follows:

- Impacts on habitats - the potential for biophysical change by disturbance/damage/ degradation is taken as the footprint of the works (including any site clearance) plus 10m beyond (based on Ryan Hanley, 2014)[2].
- The potential disturbance zone for birds was considered having regard to Cutts et al (2013)[3] and was defined as 500 m;
- The potential disturbance zone for mammals follows NRA (2008) Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes which notes a 150m potential disturbance zone.

The projects are located wholly outside of any European site. The closest Natura 2000 sites to the proposed projects are Cork Harbour SPA (1.03 km), Great Island Channel SAC (6.00 km), and Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC (13.67 km). All are outside of the disturbance/impact zones described above.

[1] CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester
[2] Ryan Hanley (2014b) Stage 1: Appropriate Assessment Screening Methodology for the Maintenance of Arterial Drainage Schemes. Prepared by Ryan Hanley Consulting Engineers on behalf of the Office of Public Works
[3] Cutts N, Hemingway K and Spencer J (2013). The Waterbird Disturbance Mitigation Toolkit Informing Estuarine Planning and Construction Projects. Produced by the Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies (IECS). Version 3.2.

While the proposed projects are outside of European Sites, consideration is given to the potential for lands within disturbance and impact ZoIs (as described above) to support the qualifying interests / special conservation interests of any European sites (see Table 3-1**Error! Reference source not found.**). In this regard, an assessment is made as to whether there could be landscape[4] or ecological connectivity[5] to any European site. Consideration was given to existing records for qualifying features in the locality of the proposed projects and an assessment of the potential for mobile qualifying features of European sites to use the lands within the disturbance and impact ZoIs.

[4] Landscape connectivity is a combined product of structural and functional connectivity, i.e. the effect of physical landscape structure and the actual species use of the landscape (Kettunen et al. 2007)
[5] Connectivity is defined as a measure of the functional availability of the habitats needed for a particular species to move through a given area. Examples include the flight lines used by bats to travel between roosts and foraging areas, or the corridors of appropriate habitat needed by some slow colonising species if they are to spread (CIEEM, 2018).

Table 3-1: Source Pathway Receptor Assessment

European Site (Code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest	Distance (km)	Connections (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered further in Screening (Y/N)
Cork Harbour SPA (004030)	Little Grebe (Tachybaptus ruficollis) [A004] Great Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus) [A005] Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017] Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea) [A028] Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048] Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050] Teal (Anas crecca) [A052] Pintail (Anas acuta) [A054] Shoveler (Anas clypeata) [A056] Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) [A069] Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130] Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140] Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141] 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] Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182] Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus) [A183] Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	1.03	The bird species present within this European site are coastal bird species and the lands surrounding the proposed development (which are within the 500m disturbance zone for birds) are not suitable foraging or roosting habitats for these birds, which use coastal mudflat and intertidal habitats. As the proposed schemes are not suitable destinations for foraging or roosting, there is no pathway for effect.	N
Great Island Channel SAC (001058)	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330]	6.00	There are no watercourses on any site that could result in connectivity between the proposed schemes and this SAC. Thus, the SAC	N

European Site (Code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest	Distance (km)	Connections (Source-Pathway-Receptor)	Considered further in Screening (Y/N)
			is outside the ZoI of the proposed development and there is no pathway for effects on the QI.	
Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC (002170)	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095] Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096] Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099] Alosa fallax fallax (Twaite Shad) [1103] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355] Trichomanes speciosum (Killarney Fern) [1421]	13.67	There are no watercourses on any site that could result in connectivity between the proposed schemes and this SAC. Thus, the SAC is outside the ZoI of the proposed development and there is no pathway for effects on the QI. The mobile species associated with the SAC are associated with the aquatic environment. There are no watercourses within the disturbance distances of the proposed projects (as described in Section 3.2.1). As such there is no pathway for effect.	N

3.3 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

The guidance (European Commission, 2021) notes that the significance of the effects will vary depending on factors such as the magnitude of impact, the type, extent, duration, intensity, timing, probability, in-combination effects and the vulnerability of the habitats and species concerned. European site(s) identified are now examined for the potential for likely significant effects.

Table 3-2: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

(a) Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the project under the following headings:	
Impacts:	**Possible Significance of Impacts: (duration/magnitude etc.)**
Construction phase:	There will be alterations to pre-existing artificial surfaces and temporary localised increase in noise for the duration of the works. Given the scale of the proposed schemes, there is no impact to European Sites as all are located outside the ZoI of the proposed schemes and there is no ecological or landscape connectivity to the works locations and any European site.
Operational phase:	The proposed schemes will not affect the current operations of the sites. These sites are pre-existing roads in urban environments and do not support any qualifying interests of any European sites. No significant impact can occur.
In-combination/Other:	Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that: "Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives". It is therefore required that the likely significant effects of the proposed schemes are considered in-combination with any other plans or projects. However, as there are no meaningful pathways for effects identified with respect to European sites - given the nature of the habitats on the sites and the distance from relevant European sites. There are no further considerations required as the S-P-R model has been completed with no potential effects that could arise from the proposed schemes.
(b) Describe any likely changes to the European site:	
	No changes likely given absence of S-P-R connectivity.
(c) Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?	
☐ Yes ☒ No	No mitigation measures are required.

3.4 Screening Conclusion

The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report concludes that, given the scale and nature of the potential sources, there are no likely significant effects identified to any European sites. This process has considered potential effects which may arise during all phases of the proposed projects. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the sources for impacts, taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that there are no likely significant effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interest or the conservation objectives of any designated European site.

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