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HAZELWOOD ROAD UPGRADE SCHEME

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Prepared for:

Cork City Council



Date: October 2025

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APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

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	JDG	RM	GF	23/09/2024
P02	For Approval	JDG	GF	GF	01/10/2025

Client: Cork City Council

Keywords: Appropriate Assessment (AA), AA Screening, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, European (Natura 2000) sites, Hazelwood Road, Cycle & Pedestrian Infrastructure, Active Travel

Abstract: This document is to inform the Competent Authority in carrying out their statutory obligations relating to the Habitats Directive requirement for Appropriate Assessment for plans and projects seeking consent. Appropriate Assessment is required under Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive for any project or plan that may give rise to significant effects on a European (Natura 2000) site.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fehily Timoney and Company (FT) have been commissioned by Cork City Council (CCC) to provide consultancy services, including the preparation of this Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, for the design of the proposed Hazelwood Road Upgrade in Glanmire, Cork which will comprise upgrade works to a stretch of Hazelwood Road approximately 260m in length.

This report presents an examination of whether the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is based on best available scientific knowledge. This report has been prepared to inform the competent authority in completing their statutory obligations in relation to Appropriate Assessment, as required by Article 6(3) under Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive).

1.1 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The Directive requires that where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, while not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the site, it will be subject to 'Appropriate Assessment' to identify any implications for the European site in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. Specifically, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

"6(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (Natura 2000 sites) but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."

The competent authority must carry out a screening for appropriate assessment to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed project, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. If it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site, an appropriate assessment of its implications for the European Site(s) in view of the Site's conservation objectives is required to be carried out.

The provisions of Article 6(3) do not apply where the proposed plan or project is 'connected with or necessary to the management of the site'. In this case, the proposed project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s).

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Guidance

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) (Environment Heritage and Local Government, 2009).
- Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission (2019). Brussels, (2019/C 33/01). OJ C 33, 25.1.2019.
- Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. (European Commission, 2013)
- OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, (Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021).

1.2.2 Process

The process of determining the likelihood of significant effects from a proposed project on European sites is an iterative process centred around a Source-Pathway-Receptor model as per OPR, 2021. In order for an effect to be established, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect cannot occur.

- Source(s) – e.g. pollutant run-off, noise, removal of vegetation, etc.;
- Pathway(s) – functional link, or ecological pathway e.g. groundwater connecting to nearby qualifying wetland habitats; and
- Receptor(s) – the qualifying habitats and species of European sites and ecological resources supporting those habitats/species.

In the context of this report, a source is any identifiable element of the proposed project that is known to interact with the receiving environment. A receptor is the Qualifying Interests (QI)¹ for an SAC or Special Conservation Interests (SCI)² for an SPA or an ecological feature that is known to be utilised by the QI/SCI. In practice, the term Qualifying Interests also applies to SCIs (and is used in this document for simplicity). A pathway is any connection or link between the source and the receptor.

The European Commission Notice (2021) on the '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', states that in identifying European sites (Natural 2000 sites), which may be affected by the project, the following should be identified:

- Any European sites geographically overlapping with any of the actions or aspects of the plan or project in any of its phases, or adjacent to them;

¹ SACs are areas designated under the Habitats Directive to conserve habitats listed in Annex I of the Directive and plant and animal species listed in Annex II. Collectively these are referred to as the 'Qualifying Interests' or 'QIs' of the SAC.

² SPAs are sites classified under the Birds Directive to protect rare or vulnerable bird species listed in Annex I to the Directive as well as regularly occurring migratory species and wetlands. Wetland habitats that support internationally important populations of migratory birds may be coastal or inland. Collectively, these species and habitats are referred to as the 'Special Conservation Interests' of the SPA.



- Any European sites within the likely zone of influence of the plan or project. European sites located in the surroundings of the plan or project (or at some distance) that could still be indirectly affected by aspects of the project, including as regards the use of natural resources (e.g., water) and various types of waste, discharge or emissions of substances or energy;
- European sites whose connectivity or ecological continuity can be affected by the plan or project.

The ZOI of a proposed project is therefore the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have potential effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site.



2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Project Description

2.1.1 Project Location

The proposed project is located along an approximately 260m stretch of the existing Hazelwood Road (L2966) in the town of Glanmire, Co. Cork.

Along the north side of Hazelwood Road a grass verge separates the footpath from the road and a grass verge lies between the footpath and the boundary wall. The project site is bordered to the north and south by existing residential development. Land use in the wider area is primarily residential with a number of commercial units and a school.

2.1.2 Project Overview

The proposed project involves upgrade works to a stretch of Hazelwood Road approximately 260m in length. The existing traffic lanes will be narrowed to 3m, 2m wide cycletracks will be provided on both sides of the route, the northern footpath will be widened to 2.0m and the southern footpath will be widened to 1.8m. The existing bus stop on the northern side of the road will be upgraded and the existing bus stop on the southern side of the route will be retained. The existing pedestrian crossing at the western end of the route will be upgraded to a new toucan crossing. A new toucan crossing will also be provided at the eastern end of the route. There will be associated ancillary site works such as modifications and improvements to road marking and signs, drainage and public lighting (refer to drawing P23152-FT-XX-ZZ-DR-Z-0007).

There will be low levels of vegetation trimming required along approximately 20m of the proposed project to allow for construction of the bus stop on the northern side of the route.

The proposed project will involve breaking out existing pavement. Waste produced from the construction process will either be reused within the site or recycled/disposed of at an authorised waste facility.

The current road gullies along the road will be decommissioned and new gullies provided set back to the new kerb line, which will be connected into the existing piped drainage network following completion of the works.

The project will require connections to electricity for the proposed traffic signals at the new toucan crossing at the eastern end of the route.

The following vehicles/machinery will be used on site during construction phase:

- Mini excavator
- Tracked excavator
- Dumper
- Concrete transportation vehicle
- Other construction materials transportation vehicle

Following construction, traffic will resume and there may be increased pedestrian and cycle traffic along the improved route.



2.2 Existing Environment

2.2.1 Description of Existing Ecological Baseline

2.2.1.1 *Desktop Assessment*

A desk study was carried out in August 2024 to collate available information on the existing natural environment at the proposed project location. This comprised a review of the following publications, data and datasets:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (on-line map-viewer including the Appropriate Assessment Tool);
- Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government- EIA Portal;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – online European site network information, including site conservation objectives;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – Information on the status of EU protected habitats and species in Ireland (including Article 17 and Article 12 Reports);
- National Biodiversity Data Centre

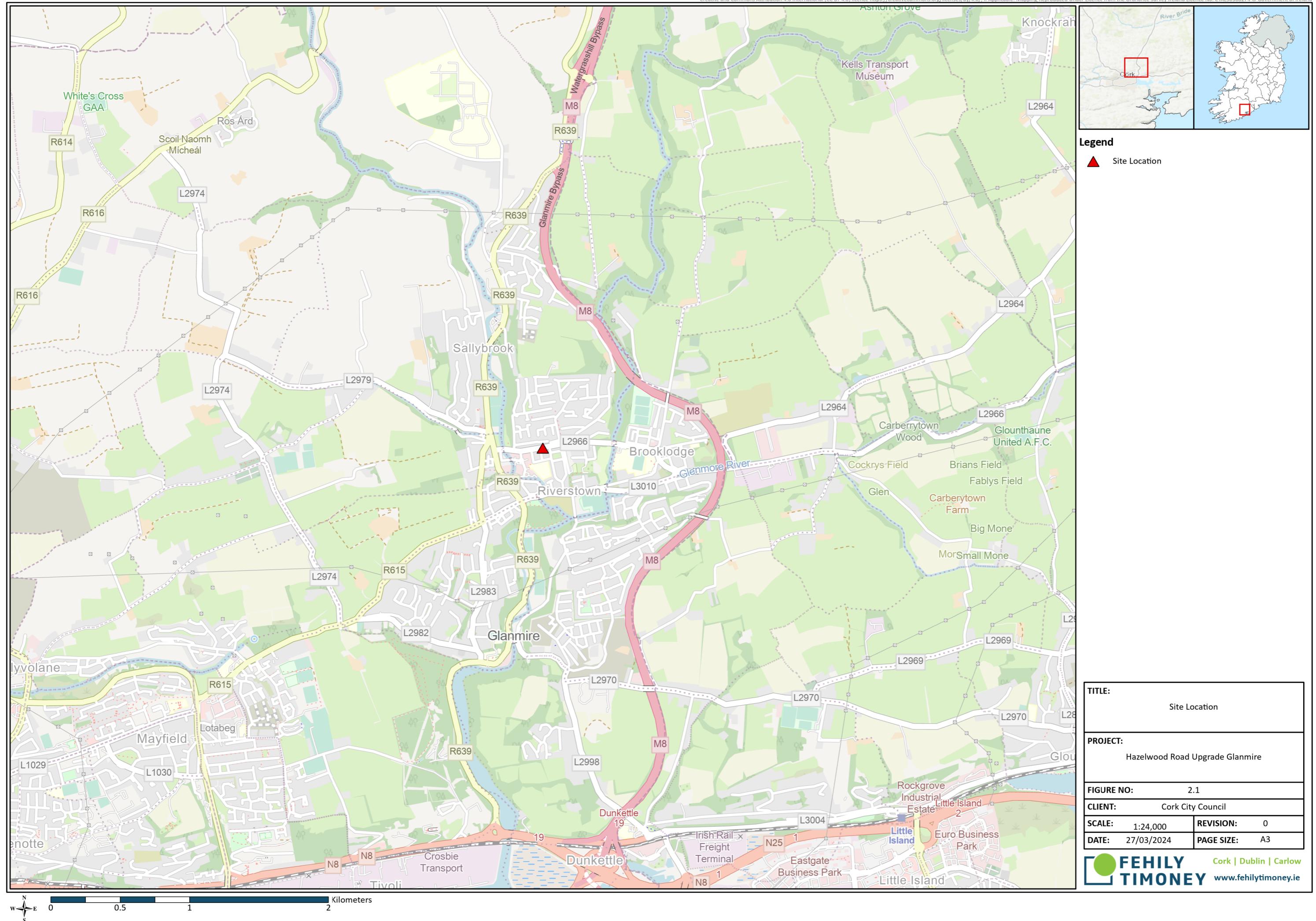
The proposed project site is located along an approximately 260m stretch of the Hazelwood Road in Glanmire. According to the National Land Cover Map, the proposed project site primarily consists of ways (120), with the surrounding environment consisting of hedgerows (460), amenity grassland (520), buildings (110), and other artificial surfaces (130).

The proposed project site is located within the Glashaboy waterbody sub-catchment (Glashaboy[L.Mahon]_SC_010), and is located approximately 130m to the east of the Glashaboy river (IE_SW_19G010600), which flows into the Cork Harbour SPA [004030] approximately 1.6km to the south. The Glashaboy river drains into Lough Mahon (IE_SW_060_0750), at the mouth of the River Lee, approximately 3km to the south. The Butlerstown river (IE_SW_19B060800) is located 380m to the east of the project site. This river drains into the Glashaboy river 500m to the south of the project site.

Otter (*Lutra lutra*) are prevalent in the area, with the nearest NBDC recording located approximately 400m south of the proposed project. Records are located along the Glashaboy and Butlerstown rivers.

There were no records of alien invasive species recorded within the proposed project site.

There were no records of Flora Protection Order species within the proposed project site.





3. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Identification of European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Proposed Project

The OPR (2021) AA Screening practice note states that the Zone of Influence must be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model.

The dominant ecological pathways to consider are:

- Direct physical interactions or changes to the local environment;
- Air dispersal (noise, dust, odour emissions etc.);
- Hydrological interactions; and
- Dispersal patterns of mobile species.

As such European sites for consideration are any which could be:

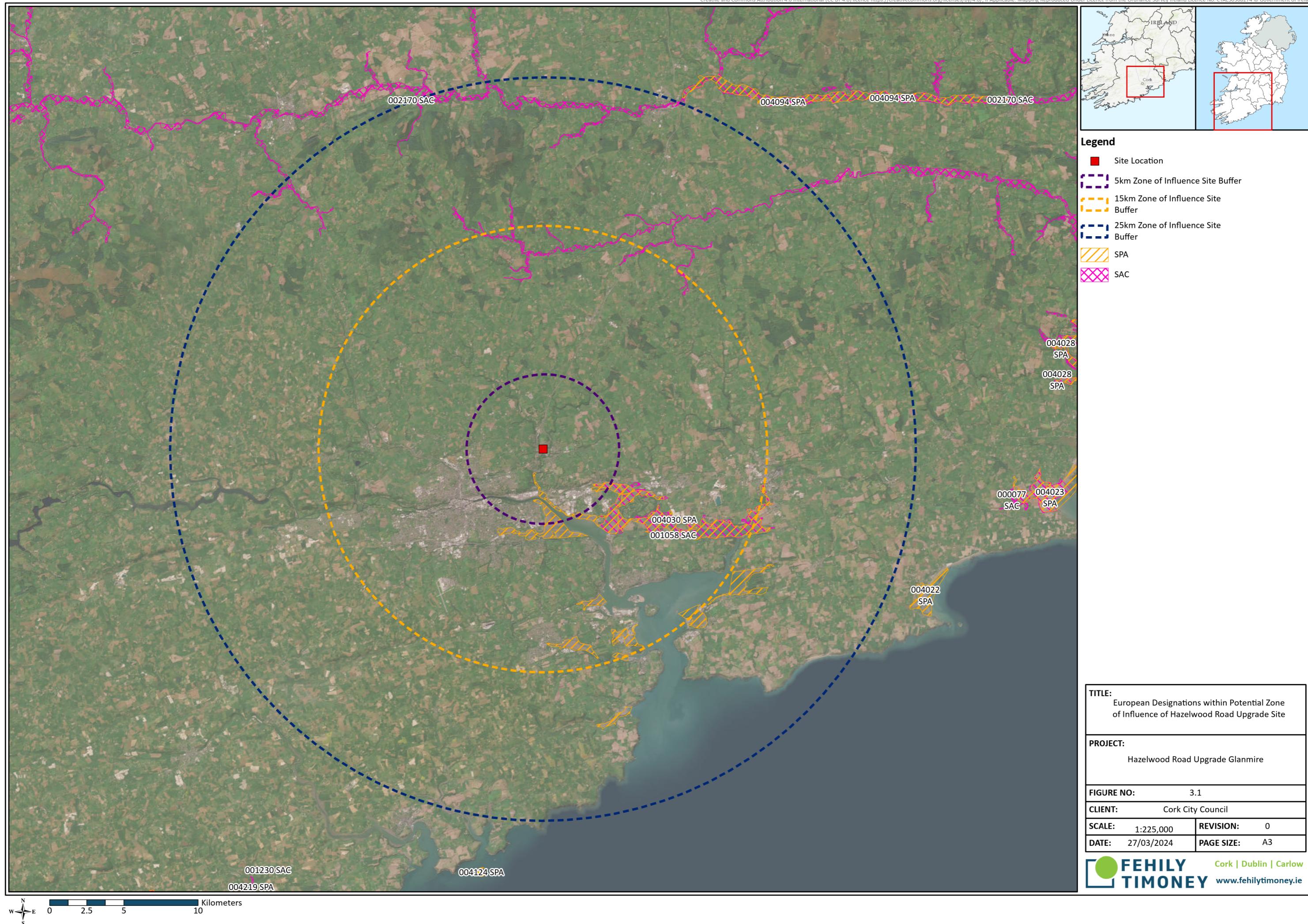
- hydrologically connected to the proposed project;
- designed for species which could use the habitats impacted by the proposed project (i.e. grass verge) and which are in the foraging / commuting range of the project;
- are within a distance of the proposed project such that with potential impacts from habitat loss, noise, lighting, invasive species and dust.

The findings of the Zol assessment are presented in Table 3-1.



Table 3-1: Identification of European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the proposed project

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Features (qualifying interests & special conservation interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects
004030	Cork Harbour SPA	1.61	Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017], Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182], Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028], Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149], Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005], Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157], Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130], Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183], Common tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193], Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141], Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162], Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048], Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052], Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160], Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142], Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140], Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156], Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179], Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050], Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069], Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056], Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054]	The SPA is designated for a range of waterbird species, predominantly associated with coastal wetland habitats. The proposed project site is located approximately 130m from the Glashaboy River, which drains into the SPA approximately 2.5km to the south (in-stream distance). There is no potential pathway for disturbance to SCI species of the SPA by construction stage activities given the distance from the SPA and from suitable habitat to support the SCI species. There are no pollution pathways to the SPA given that the concrete works for the project take place after the existing drainage connection to the Glashaboy River is broken out.	No
001058	Great Island Channel SAC	4.01	Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucococcinellitalia maritimae</i>) [1330], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]	The proposed project is located approximately 130m from the Glashaboy River which drains into Cork Harbour c. 1.8 km downstream. The Great Channel SAC lies within Cork Harbour, in a separate inlet. There are no pollution pathways to the SPA given that the concrete works for the project take place after the existing drainage connection to the Glashaboy River is broken out.	No





3.2 Other plans and projects considered for potential in-combination effects

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 project are considered in-combination with any other plans or projects within the zone of influence.

As there are no meaningful pathways for effects identified with respect to European sites - given the nature of the habitats that will be affected by the project and the distance from relevant SPA location for SCI species. 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 project.

3.3 Screening Conclusion

The results of the S-P-R modelling process identified that - given the scale and nature of the potential sources identified in Table 2.1 - there are **no likely significant effects** identified to any European sites.

The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during all phases of the proposed project. 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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