APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT
Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

Cork City Council
Strategic Planning and
Economic Development

1. EUROPEAN SITE DATA

Great Island Channel candidate Special Area Of Conservation (site code 001058)	
Conservation objective	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.
Qualifying interests	Annex I listed habitats: mudflats, sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, estuaries, spartina swards, Atlantic salt meadows.
References and further information	*Conservation Objectives for Great Island Channel SAC [001058]* (NPWS), *Natura 2000 Standard Data Form* (NPWS), *Site Synopsis Great Island Channel Site Code 001058* (NPWS) (see www.npws.ie for further details)

Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (site code 004030)	
Conservation objective	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as special conservation interests for this SPA.
Qualifying interests	Annex I-listed bird species: bar-tailed godwit, common tern (breeding), golden plover, ruff, whooper swan. Other birds of special conservation interest include black-headed gull, black-tailed godwit, common gull, curlew, dunlin, great crested grebe, grey heron, grey plover, lapwing, lesser black-backed gull, little grebe, oystercatcher, pintail, red-breasted merganser, redshank, shelduck, shoveler, teal, and widgeon. This site is an internationally important wetland site supporting > 20,000 wintering waterfowl.
References and further information	*Conservation Objectives for Cork Harbour SPA [004030]* (NPWS), *Natura 2000 Standard Data Form* (NPWS), *Site Synopsis Cork Harbour SPA Site Code 004030* (NPWS) (see www.npws.ie for further details)

2. DETAILS OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Reference no.	P8.HCP.26.09 – CNWQR PHASE 3C
Development consent type	Part 8 Application
Development location	Kilmore Rd Lower, Knocknaheeny, Cork City.
Description of development	The construction of a residential development consisting of 24 no. dwellings and all ancillary site works.
Distance from cSAC	N/A
Distance from SPA	5.2km
Relevant strategies or policies	Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028
EIS submitted?	EIA Screening report submitted

3. ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY DIRECT, INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

		Yes / No
1.	Is the proposed development directly connected to or necessary for the conservation management of the SPA and/or cSAC? *(If yes, no further assessment required. If no, screening required.)*	no
2.	Is the proposed development located within or partly within the SPA?	no
3.	Is the proposed development located within 100m of the SPA?	no
4.	Does the proposed project involve the development, extension or upgrade of a cycleway or walkway within 200m of the SPA?	no
5.	Does the proposed development involve development in the intertidal or coastal zone within the potential impact zone of the SPA?	no
6.	Could the proposed project increase the level of recreational or other use of marine or intertidal areas within the potential impact zone of the SPA?	no
7.	Does the proposed development involve the excavation of previously undeveloped land within an area that has been identified to be at risk of flooding within the potential impact zone of the SPA?	no
8.	Does the proposed development involve the removal of significant amounts of topsoil within 100m of the SPA?	no
9.	Does the existing wastewater treatment system have the capacity to treat any additional loading?	yes
10.	Would the proposed development result in direct surface water or other discharge to water bodies in or feeding into the SPA or cSAC? Would it result in additional storm flows into a combined sewer and subsequently into a combined sewer overflow (CSO), resulting in increased frequency, quantity and/or duration of overflow from the CSO to watercourses feeding into the European sites?	no
11.	Would the proposed development involve dredging or could it result in the mobilisation of marine sediments in the Harbour area?	no

3. ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY DIRECT, INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

		Yes / No
12.	Could the proposed development give rise to increased risk of oil or chemical spillage or leaks within the marine environment or watercourse within the potential impact zone for the SPA or cSAC?	no
13.	Are there relevant plans or projects which, in combination with the proposed development, are likely to give rise to any cumulative effects?	no

Comments or notes

No additional notes.

4. SCREENING CONCLUSION STATEMENT

In view of the above it is considered that *(tick one box only):*

☐ **Appropriate Assessment is not required**
The proposed development is directly connected / necessary to the conservation management of a site.

☒ **Appropriate Assessment is not required**
It can be excluded through screening that the proposed development will have significant effects on the sites.

☐ **Further information is required**
Potential impacts have been identified through initial screening and/or there is insufficient information to enable the planning authority to screen out impacts, but on balance it is determined that the issues could be resolved through minor modifications to the proposed development or by appropriate conditions. The information required is specified below.

☐ **Appropriate Assessment is required**
Significant issues have been identified and/or significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain, and the submission of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is required, or the proposed development must be rejected.

Further information required / Comments or Notes

In accordance with the Habitats Directive, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been carried out on the project, in relation to any potential impacts upon the Cork Harbour Special Protection Area [Site No. 004030] and the Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation [Site No. 001058]. 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.

Please refer to Appendix A for report titled; CNWQR Phase 3C AA Screening Report prepared by Fehily Timony dated January 2026.

Name:	Martina Broderick
Position:	A/Director of Services - Housing
Date:	4/3/26

Appendix A

Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

FEHILY TIMONEY

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

CORK CITY NORTHWEST QUARTER PHASE 3C HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Prepared for:
Cork City Council

Cork City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí

Date: January 2026

Document No:
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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:
0	Final Issue	CM/KB/NSC	DOH	BG	27/01/2026

Client: Cork City Council

Keywords: Appropriate Assessment (AA), AA Screening, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, European (Natura 2000) sites, Knocknaheeny, Phase 3C, Housing Development, Cork City Council

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 prepare this Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, for the proposed Cork City Northwest Regeneration Masterplan Phase 3C housing development at Knocknaheeny, Cork City.

The proposed development is herein referred to as the 'proposed development'.

The proposed development is a component of the Cork City Northwest Regeneration Masterplan, 2011 ('The Masterplan'). The Masterplan details a phased programme of relocation, demolition and construction of replacement buildings within the Knocknaheeny Regeneration Area in Knocknaheeny, Cork City.

This report presents an examination of whether the proposed works are 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].

1.1 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive)[2] 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 development, 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 development, 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.

[1] European Commission. (2021). Commission notice- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Issue 2021/C 437/01).
[2] European Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive).

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 development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s).

1.2 Methodology

The purpose of appropriate assessment is to assess the implications of a plan or project on European site in view of that site's conservation objectives, individually and in combination with other plans or projects.

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)[3].
- 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)[4].
- 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[5].
- Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. (European Commission, 2013)[6].
- OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, (Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021)[7].

[3] European Commission. (2021). Commission notice- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Issue 2021/C 437/01).
[4] Environment Heritage and Local Government. (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities.
[5] European Commission. (2019). Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
[6] European Commission. (2013). Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. EUR 28.
[7] Office of the Planning Regulator. (2021). OPR Practice Note PN01. Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.

1.3 Relevant Experience and Expertise of Assessor and Reviewer

Conor of FT was responsible for preparing the report. Conor is a Project Ecologist working in the Circular Economy and Environment Team in FT. Conor has three years' postgraduate experience and holds a BSc. (Hons) in Zoology from University of Galway (formerly National University of Ireland, Galway) and a MSc. in Wildlife Conservation and Management (1st Class Hons) from University College Dublin. Conor has in-depth knowledge of environmental policy, legislation and assessment procedures. Conor has an in-depth knowledge of the AA process and understanding of the legislation governing AA practice in Ireland and the EU.

Donna O'Halloran of FT was responsible for reviewing, checking and finalising the report. Donna is a Senior Ecologist working as part of the Circular Economy and Environment Team at FT. Donna holds a MSc. First Class Honours in Ecological Assessment, a MSc. First Class Honours in Environmental Resource Management, a BSc (Hons) in Landscape Horticulture and a National Diploma in Horticulture. Donna has over 10 years' experience preparing Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports and Natura Impact Statements (NIS) for energy, circular economy and infrastructure projects. Donna has experience undertaking Appropriate Assessment (AA) of forestry related applications on behalf of the Minister of Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Donna also has experience assisting County Councils and Government Departments in their delivery and implementation of planning services, reviewing the Ecological Impact Assessments (EcIAs), AA Screening Reports and NIS Reports of received planning applications. Donna has an in-depth knowledge of the AA process and has an in-depth understanding of the legislation and up-to-date case law governing AA practice in Ireland and the EU.

Richard Deeney of FT was responsible for reviewing, checking and approving the report. Richard is a Principal Environmental Scientist working as part of the Circular Economy and Environment Team at FT. Richard holds a B.Sc. First Class Honours degree in Environmental Management from Technological University Dublin (formerly Dublin Institute of Technology) and an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law with the Honorable Society of King's Inns. Richard is a Chartered Environmentalist with the Society for the Environment and has 14 years' experience. Richard has an in-depth knowledge of the AA process and has an in-depth understanding of the legislation and up-to-date case law governing AA practice in Ireland and the EU.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Overview of the Project

The proposal for Phase 3C consists of:

- The proposal is to develop a 24-unit development on the site which will include 12 houses and 4 duplex blocks, each of the latter comprising 3 units.
- The development will include associated site development works including new roads, footpaths, boundary walls, on street parking, a public green space centrally located within the scheme and the construction of a temporary road from Kilmore Rd to Killala Gardens to facilitate access to existing houses in the immediate area.

The development footprint is currently occupied by existing housing which will be demolished under a separate contract prior to the commencement of this development. Furthermore, Phase 3C has a functional relationship with other phases of the Masterplan (1C, 2B, 3B and 4F) for ancillary infrastructure such as water mains, drainage and foul water infrastructure. Further details of this can be found in Sections 5.1 and 6.3 of the accompanying EIA Screening Report.

2.2 The City Northwest Quarter Regeneration (CNWQR) Masterplan

Cork City Council prepared and adopted the Cork City Northwest Regeneration Masterplan and Implementation Report (Masterplan), which is intended to provide for the regeneration and sustainable development of the Knocknaheeny and Hollyhill residential suburbs located in the north-western fringe of Cork City. The Masterplan, presented in Figure 2-1, established a strategy for the delivery of new residential neighbourhoods, retail and public open spaces for recreational and amenity purposes on a phased basis. This is proposed to be done on a phased programme of relocation, demolition and construction of replacement housing across the lands.

Figure 2-1: CNWQR Masterplan Phases

2.2.1 Relationship of the Proposed Development with Other Developments

The proposed development is reliant on the following phases for ancillary infrastructure:

- **Watermains**: The proposed development will be connected to the water mains infrastructure of Phases 3B and 4F.
- **Foul water infrastructure**: The proposed development will be connected to the foul water infrastructure constructed as part of 2B and 3B to the south of the development.
- **Drainage Infrastructure**: The proposed development will be connected into storm water infrastructure network as adopted under the masterplan design and constructed under Phases 1C, 2B and 3B works.

The total number of units proposed under the aforementioned phases (inclusive of the proposed development) amounts to 188 units. Phases 1C, 2B, 3B are currently undergoing construction with completion planned for 2026 and 2027. Phase 4F is planned for the Part 8 planning process in the near future.

This assessment will account for the interdependencies of the proposed development on the above phases.

2.3 Construction Phase of the Proposed Development

2.3.1 Overview of Proposed Construction Works

The following construction sequence is expected to be carried out for the proposed development:

- Installation of temporary construction site area
- Breaking of hard-standing areas, as required
- Excavation to formation levels – excavated material will be reused on site or dispatched to an appropriate waste management facility.
- Laying of building foundations
- Backfilling of excavated material and any imported fill required will be carried out
- Construction of residential units
- Construction/installation of ancillary site infrastructure, including boundary treatments, roadways, paths, on-street parking, landscaping, surface water and wastewater drainage systems, lighting, boundary structures, and electrical connections.
- Site clean-up and commissioning.

The four-house unit types will be constructed using traditional loadbearing masonry construction with timer web-joists. Discrete steel/beams will be used as required. The roofs will be formed using timber trusses supported on wall plates on the inner leaf of loadbearing masonry walls. Pre-fabricated roof trusses are proposed.

The apartment blocks will be constructed using traditional loadbearing masonry with precast concrete floor slabs in the upper floor levels. Discrete steel beams will be used as required. Suspended precast slabs are also proposed at ground floor level, which will bear onto the proposed ground beam. The roofs will be formed using timber trusses supported on wall plates on the inner leaf of loadbearing masonry walls. To facilitate ease of construction on site, prefabricated roof trusses are proposed. Where spans are particularly long, the roof truss will have an internal support on steel beams.

The design and specification of the scheme shall comply with the following:

- Current Building Regulations and all relevant updates
- The DHLGH Design Manual for Quality Housing
- The DHLGH Employer's Requirements for Detail Design of Quality Housing
- The DHLGH Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets
- The 2011 City Northwest Quarter Regeneration Masterplan
- The 2016 CNWQR Design Code & Public Realm Strategy
- The 2024 Housing Agency's Guide for use of PW-CF2 Public Works Contract Designed by the Contractor'
- Universal Design Guidelines

2.3.2 Construction Programme

The construction phase will last for approximately 12-18 months.

Hours of construction shall be as follows:

- 0800 to 1800 hours Monday to Friday
- 0800 – 1600 hours Saturday

2.3.3 Environmental Management during Construction

The construction works will be undertaken in accordance with a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). This CEMP will cover the following aspects:

- Environmental Management System (EMS) requirements.
- Pollution Prevention
- Management of Noise, Vibration and Dust
- Surface Water Management
- Soil Management
- Emergency Response

The Contractor responsible for the construction works will be required to develop and implement a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to manage safe access and egress of construction vehicles from the site and the movement of plant and vehicles around the site.

A Construction Stage Health and Safety Plan (CSHSP) will be adopted and adhered to by the Contractor to ensure minimal risk in terms of human health and the environment due to the construction works.

2.4 Operational Phase of the Proposed Development

2.4.1 Utilities

Watermains infrastructure will be provided for the phase, encompassing 150mm diameter, 100mm diameter and 63 mm diameter lines. The water main infrastructure will take into account tie-in locations for future phases in line with the Masterplan. The phase will be connected to the water infrastructure of Phase 3B and Phase 4F.

An Irish Water Pre-Connection Enquiry (ref. DS25006834) has been submitted to Irish Water for the proposed water demand. A Confirmation of Feasibility (CoF) letter, dated 13th November 2025, has been received for the phase. The CoF confirms that a water connection is feasible without infrastructure upgrade by Uisce Eireann.

Phase 3C will tie directly into the new foul infrastructure constructed as part of Phase 2B and 3B to the south. There has been an allowance made for the tie in of future phases in line with the masterplan. The MicroDrainage model undertaken indicates that the proposed foul network has adequate capacity for the flows that will be generated from the proposed development and will achieve self-cleansing velocities. The CoF confirms that a foul water connection is feasible without infrastructure upgrade by Uisce Eireann.

2.4.2 Energy

All residential units will be 'Nearly Net Zero' in accordance with NZEB buildings standards and will be designed to achieve an A1 Building Energy Rating. Specifics on how this will be achieved will be explored with the Mechanical & Electrical Engineer once appointed post planning.

2.4.3 Drainage Strategy

The proposed development will collect surface water runoff and discharge the flow under gravity conditions into the storm infrastructure network as adopted under the masterplan design and constructed under Phases 1C, 2B and 3 B works.

Pipe diameters will vary from 225mm to 675mm, allowing all tie in location invert levels to future phases to be maintained as per the Masterplan design.

The Phase 3C roads shall drain via traditional proprietary products such as kerb, gullies and drains to the storm water network. The proposed surface water design was designed to provide the following:

- For the overall stormwater network design, a 10% climate change was allowed for all storm events, as per original masterplan
- For the sizing of the Ascension Heights attenuation tank, a 20% climate change was allowed.
- No surcharging in the 1 in 5-year storm event. Pipes immediately upstream of flow control devices may encounter small amount of surcharging due to the flow being throttled accordingly.
- No Flooding in the 1 in 30-year storm event.
- No flooding against a 1 in 100-year storm event or controlled flooding allowing the volume to be contained on site and not impact the surrounding infrastructure.

2.5 Existing Environment

The proposed development is ca. 0.63 ha and is located at a brownfield site in Knocknaheeny, Cork City. The proposed development will occupy land historically used for residential housing (social housing) at Fota Lawn and Kilmore Road Lower. Approximately 22 no. residential units are currently occupied at Fota Lawn and Kilmore Road Lower. These existing structures are to be demolished under a separate contract prior to the commencement of the proposed development.

The proposed development is situated within a built-up urban area consisting of social housing estates, small businesses and public amenities. Development of residential units under Phases 1C and 3B of the Masterplan is currently ongoing to the west and south of the proposed development, respectively.

The application site's topography rises from the south to north by approximately 3-4 m. There are significant level differences along the western boundary with adjacent Masterplan Phase 1C of up to 2 m in places. There is a history of poor ground conditions in the area.

Access to the proposed development will be provided via Aspen Rise and Aspen Way (currently under construction). All routes ultimately connect to Bóthar Na Slíní and Harbour View Road at the south.

The existing water services serving the current units within the proposed development will be dug up and removed as part of the demolition contract, prior to Phase 3C contract.

2.5.1 Description of Existing Ecological Baseline

2.5.1.1 Desktop Assessment

In December 2025, a desk study was carried out to collate available information on the existing natural environment at the location of the proposed development. This comprised a review of the following publications, data and datasets:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (on-line map-viewer including the Appropriate Assessment Tool);
- Aerial imagery of the proposed development and surrounding lands
- Tailte Éireann National Land Cover Map
- OSI Aerial photography and 1:50000 mapping
- Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) maps and data
- 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 (NBDC) Biodiversity Maps viewer; and
- National Land Cover (2018) dataset.

According to the National Land Cover mapping, the proposed development comprises Bare Soil and Disturbed Ground (240), Hedgerows (460), Amenity Grassland (520), Buildings (110), Other Artificial Surfaces (130) and Ways (120). Examination of orthophotography rules out the presence of hedgerow. The surrounding environment comprises Other Artificial Surfaces, Wet Grassland (540), Amenity Grassland, Buildings and Ways with interspersed areas of Improved Grassland (510), Scrub (450) and Coniferous Forest (410).

The area surrounding the development is urban in nature, consisting of brownfield sites previously occupied by social housing developments that have been demolished in recent years, small businesses, community facilities, occupied social housing estates and private residential units. The proposed development is bounded by Kilmore Road Lower to the north, Masterplan Phase 1C to the west (completed development), brownfield site (demolished social housing developments) to the south and Knocknaheeny Avenue to the east.

The wider road network includes Kilmore Road Lower to the north and Harbour View Road (L1021) to the south. The N20 is located approximately 1.8 km east of the proposed development site.

The Proposed Development is located within the Ballinhassig East ground water body. The groundwater status is 'Good'.

The proposed development is located within the Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay (Catchment id: 19), WFD Sub-Catchment Kiln_SC_010 and WFD Sub-basin BRIDE (Cork City)_020. The closest waterbody located within the same sub-basin as the proposed development is the Kiln River (Segment code: 19_2233, order: 3), located ca. 1.7 km to the east of the proposed development. The Kiln River flows into the Lee (Cork) Estuary Upper and enters coastal waters at Cork Harbour. The receiving Kiln River is of 'Poor' biological status (2019-2024) and is at risk of failing to meet 'Good' status.

The proposed development is underlain by a Locally Important Aquifer, described as 'Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones'. Groundwater vulnerability at the proposed development is classified as 'Extreme'. Soils underlying the proposed development are classified as 'Made'. Subsoils underlying the proposed development are classified as 'Made'.

There were no records of alien invasive species documented within the proposed development.

3. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report examines whether the proposed works are likely to have a significant effect upon European Sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

NOTE: It is to be noted that SuDs that have been considered as part of the proposed development are not included within the design to avoid or reduce any potential harmful effects to any European Sites but are included for alignment with County and Regional Development Policies. This screening for Appropriate Assessment does not take SuDS into consideration in determining whether the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on European Sites.

Furthermore, this screening for Appropriate Assessment does not take the measures provided in Section 2.3.3 'Environmental Management during Construction' into consideration in determining whether the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on European Sites.

3.2 Identification of European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development

The process of determining the likelihood of significant effects from a Proposed Development on European sites is an iterative process centred around a Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) model as per OPR, 2021[8]. 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. watercourse flowing into a downstream SAC; 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 Development that is known to interact with the receiving environment. A receptor is the Qualifying Interests (QI)[9] for an SAC/cSAC or Special Conservation Interests (SCI)[10] for an SPA/cSPA or an ecological feature that is known to be utilised by the QI/SCI. In practice, the term QI 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.

[8] Office of the Planning Regulator. (2021). OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management

[9] 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 / cSAC.

[10] 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 / cSPA.

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 proposed development in any of its phases, or adjacent to them;
- Any European sites within the likely zone of influence (ZoI) of the proposed development. European sites located in the surroundings of the proposed development (or at some distance) that could still be indirectly affected by aspects of the proposed development, 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 proposed development.

There are no European sites geographically overlapping with any of the actions or aspects of the proposed development. As such, further consideration is given to the 'likely zone of influence' and 'connectivity or ecological continuity'.

3.3 Zone of Influence

As per CIEEM guidelines (2018)[11], the ZoI for a proposed development is defined having regard to the spatial and temporal scale of potential biophysical changes in the environment which might occur as a result of the development and throughout its lifetime. In considering such potential biophysical changes, the following was considered:

- Impacts on habitats - the potential for biophysical change by disturbance/damage/ degradation is taken as the footprint of the works (including site clearance) plus 10m beyond (based on Ryan Hanley, 2014)[12]. There are no European sites located 10m of the Proposed Development.
- For groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE), regard is had to SEPA guidelines[13] which prescribes a potential hydrogeological effect zone of 250m from ground works. There are no European sites located 250 m of the Proposed Development.

[11] CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.3. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester
[12] 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
[13] Scottish Environment Protection Agency (2014) Land Use Planning System SEPA Guidance Note 31. Guidance on Assessing the Impacts of Development Proposals on Groundwater Abstractions and groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems.

- The NRA (2006) Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes[14] notes a 150m potential disturbance ZoI for otter for breeding holts and 20m for non-breeding active holts. As such the study area included the proposed development site plus a 150m buffer to assess habitat suitability for otter and potential association with an SAC population. The proposed development is not located within 150 m from an SAC. Furthermore there is no connections between the proposed development and any surface waterbody, therefore indirect connections can be ruled out.
- The potential disturbance ZoI for birds beyond the footprint of the proposed development was considered having regard to Cutts et al (2013)[15] and was defined as 500m. Consideration of connectivity or ecological continuity for birds is set out in Section 3.3.1.

3.3.1 Connectivity or Ecological Continuity

Connectivity or ecological continuity refers to the degree to which different parts of a landscape, ecosystem, or habitat are physically or functionally linked, allowing the movement of organisms, nutrients, energy, or ecological processes across space. Consideration is therefore given to whether there could be landscape16 or ecological connectivity[17] to any QI or SCI species. In considering connectivity or ecological continuity the following is noted:

- None of the terrestrial habitats that will be lost, damaged or degraded as a result of the proposed development are integral to the maintenance of the structure or function of any other habitats within any European sites and do not form continuity with any such habitats.
- The Institute of Air Quality Management (Holman et al, 2024)[18] states that for sensitive ecological receptors, sensitivity to dust is 'High' up to 20m from the source and reduces to 'Medium' over 50m from the source. The guidelines also stipulate that dust deposition from construction typically occurs up to 500 m from large sites, 200 m from medium sites and 50 m from small sites. A 50m ZoI for dust is adopted given the small scale of the proposed development. There are no European sites located within the ZoI of dust deposition and there are no surface waterbodies located within the ZoI for dust deposition. S-P-R connectivity is ruled out.
- For potential for impacts on surface waters, regard is had to IFI (2020) guidelines[19] which states that "The recommended [riparian] buffer zone width for larger river channels (>10m) is 35m to 60m and for smaller channels (<10m) is 20m or greater". There are no surface waters located within the ZoI. There are also no indirect connection between the proposed development and any surface waterbody.

[14] NRA, 2006. Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes. Dublin: National Roads Authority. Available at: http://www.nra.ie/Environment/
[15] 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.
[16] 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.
[17] 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.
[18] Holman et al (2024). IAQM Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction, Institute of Air Quality Management, London.
[19] Inland Fisheries Ireland (2020) A Guide to the Protection of Watercourses through the use of Buffer Zones, Sustainable Drainage Systems, Instream Rehabilitation, Climate / Flood Risk and Recreational Planning.

- In terms of birds there are no SPAs within the 500 m potential disturbance ZoI for birds. There is also no S-P-R connectivity for significant effects on the supporting/wetland habitat of SPAs. In order to assess potential connectivity between the proposed development and mobile SCIS, regard was had to the SNH guidelines for the core foraging ranges of SPA birds, and a 15 km range was adopted for consideration. That is, an assessment was made as to whether the habitats within the ZoI of the proposed development could act as foraging or roosting habitat for any avian SCIs of SPAs which are located within 15km of the proposed development, having regard to the conservation objective backing documents for each SPA. Cork Harbour SPA (IE0004030) is the only SPA located within 15 km of the proposed development; located 5.2 km away.
    - Cork Harbour SPA (IE0004030): This SPA is located ca. 5.2 km from the proposed development. The proposed development is located outside of the core foraging range of all avian SCIs with the exceptions of Cormorant, Common Tern, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull. This SPA is considered further in terms of potential S-P-R connectivity and potential for significant effects in Table 3-1.

Based on the above, the following European sites are considered further in terms of potential S-P-R connectivity and potential for significant effects (see Table 3-1):

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

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Features (QIs and SCIs)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects
004030	Cork Harbour SPA	5.2	Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [A004] Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) [A005] Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) [A017] Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) [A028] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A048] Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052] Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [A054] 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]	The SPA is located outside of the ZoI of the proposed development and as such there is no potential for direct impacts on the SPA. However, consideration is given to potential for landscape/ecological connectivity. This SPA is located 5.2 km from the proposed development and is located outside of the core foraging range of all avian SCIs except for Cormorant, gull species and Common Tern. Foraging ranges for Common tern and Cormorant lie between 26.9-33.9 km (Nature Scot, 2023[17]) and theoretically overlap with the proposed development. The proposed development and 500 m disturbance distance do not provide suitable habitat for Common tern or Cormorant which are largely marine species. There is no S-P-R connectivity for significant effects on SCIs Common term or Cormorant. Core foraging ranges for Black-headed Gull, Common Gull and Lesser Black-backed Gull lie between 18.5-236 km (Nature Scot, 2023[20]) and theoretically overlap with the proposed development. Birdwatch Ireland indicates that these species forage on terrestrial invertebrates and insects, with Black-headed Gull foraging in arable fields in coastal and inland habitats. Examination of NBDC records reveal that none of these gull species have been recorded within 500 m of the proposed development,	No

[20] Nature Scot (2023) Guidance Note 3: Guidance to support Offshore Wind applications: Marine Birds - Identifying theoretical connectivity with breeding site Special Protection Areas using breeding season foraging ranges. Version 1: January 2023. Nature Scot, Scotland's Nature Agency

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Features (QIs and SCIs)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects
			Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) [A183] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*) [A855] Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) [A857] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	however, there are records of them using the wider landscape. The proposed development and area within 500 m of the proposed development comprises built environment and disturbed, amenity grassland with farmed grassland north of the proposed development. The habitats located within the ZoI of disturbance are largely sub-optimal. These gull species are generalist feeders and opportunistic. There will be no significant effects on SCIs Black-headed Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull and Common Gull.	

3.4 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 development are considered in-combination with any other plans or projects within the ZoI.

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 proposed development 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 development.

3.5 Screening Conclusion

The results of the S-P-R modelling process identified that - given the scale and nature of the potential sources identified in Section 3.3 - 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 development. 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 QIs, SCIs or the conservation objectives of any designated European site.

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