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SCOIL OILIBHÉIR ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

SORS-CCC-S10-RP-AA-0001



Client: Cork City Council
Date: 29/09/2026

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1. Introduction

This Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening report is being undertaken to satisfy the legal requirements set out in Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (EC 92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, the associated Birds Directive (79/409/EEC), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (Amended 2010), and the European Communities (Habitats and Birds) Regulations 2011. The subject of assessment is the Scoil Oilibhéir Road Safety Improvement Scheme.

The objective of this screening exercise is to identify any significant impacts of the proposed works on the conservation objectives of any sites in the Natura 2000 network. The report comprises a desktop assessment of current ecological status of the study area and any potential impacts of the project on the ecological integrity of the site.

Appropriate Assessment is the mechanism in which a Competent Authority determines whether a plan or project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on any European Designated Site. The process informs the statutory approval process required for certain projects: an AA screening is required for any proposal which constitutes a “plan or project”, within the meaning of the Habitats Directive and which is not “directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site”. The screening stage (Stage 1) informs the determination of the Competent Authority (in this case, Cork City Council) by examining the likelihood of a plan or project having a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (European Designated Site). If likely significant effects cannot be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, the plan or project must undergo subsequent stages of Appropriate Assessment. Failure to carry out an AA screening (if required) will leave the project, and its proponents open to challenge.

Ireland has obligations under the Birds and Habitats Directive and Habitats to designate sites with high conservation value and/or sites that are threatened or vulnerable, with respect to key species and/or habitats. To date, Ireland has designated 5,970 square kilometres to the protection of bird species, and 13,500 square kilometres of land and sea to the protection of habitats. In assessing potential impacts on these Designated Sites, the Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives of the given site(s) must be considered. Call-out box.1 below defines these terms. Section 2.2. below describes in further detail, Irelands Natura 2000 network.

Table 1: Definition of terms to be considered in the assessment of the proposed scheme on Designated Sites

Relevant Natura 2000 Site Considerations	
Term	**Definition**
Qualifying Interest (QI)	The conservation features for which the site is designated (Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland, DEHLG, 2009)
Conservation Objective (CO)	Defines favourable conservation conditions of a particular habitat or species at a protected site (Article 4(4) Habitats Directive (EC 92/43/EEC))
Likely Significant Effect (LSE)	An indirect/direct effect of a plan/project that undermines the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site.

2. AA Screening Background

2.1 Legislative context

The EU Birds and Habitats Directive seeks to restore and maintain habitats and species that are of special interest. It does so by providing a comprehensive framework guiding sound, scientific assessments of regional, national, and trans-boundary areas that must prioritise valuable, rare and/or vulnerable species and habitats. Failure to comply with these requirements results in infringement proceedings at the European Court of Justice and financial penalties.

The Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive are transposed into Irish law through Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act (2000). The legislative provisions for Appropriate Assessment Screening for planning applications are set out in Section 177 of the 2000 Act. The assessment process of Natura 2000 sites area outlined in Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Directive. Briefly, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that if the management of a Natura 2000 site is not dependant on the proposed plan or project, but the plan is likely to have a significant individual or combined effect on the integrity of the site, then an Appropriate Assessment is required. Article 6(4) follows on from this paragraph, stating that if an Appropriate Assessment concludes that a project may impact a Natura 2000 site, but must be carried out regardless for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), then the project must take all compensatory measures to preserve the overall integrity of the site. As per paragraph 4, it is the responsibility of the proponent of the project to ensure that sufficiently reliable information is provided to the competent authority, who will utilise the information to screen for the need to undertake a full AA.

The AA process is sub-divided into four stages (Figure 1). The conclusion of the previous stage will determine if it is necessary to continue to subsequent stages, as such that the initial screening (Stage 1) will conclude whether the proposed works have potential to significantly impact a Natura 2000 site, and subsequently whether a full AA (stage 2) is required. The four stages of the AA process are illustrated below:

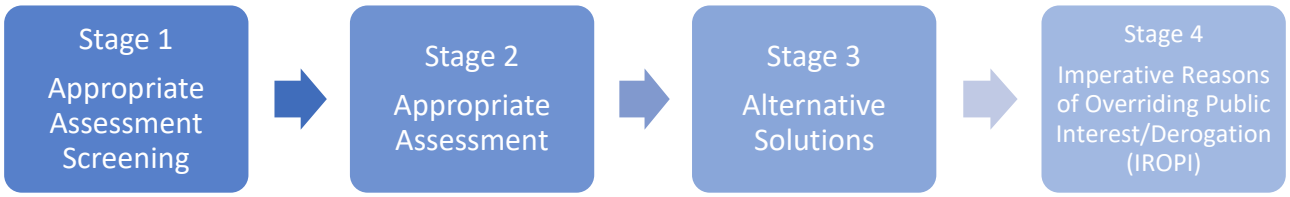


Figure 1: The four stages of the Appropriate Assessment process, outlined in Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive.

Stage 1: Screening for AA

Article 42 of the Habitats Regulations states that:

"A screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project for which an application for consent is received, or which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt, and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site, shall be carried out by the public authority…"

In some cases, an active travel scheme may not be defined as a "plan" or "project", as per the definitions set out in the Planning and Development Act. However, if the scheme is in close proximity to a European Site or could potentially impact on a European Site for any reason, the precautionary principle should be employed, and an AA screening exercise should be undertaken.

The first stage of the AA process determines the requirement for a full AA, by providing scientific justification in the form of an AA screening report (this report). The Office of Planning Regulator's guidelines on Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (2021) sets out the contents that should be included in the AA screening report (this report) in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Steps included in the compilation of a Stage 1 AA screening report (OPR note, 2021).

Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening Report
Describe the proposed development and local site characteristics
Identify the relevant European Sites and compile information on its ecological significance: Identify all European Sites that might be affected using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model Identify the Qualifying Interests of the site concerned and the Conservation Objectives Determine which of those Qualifying Interests/Conservation Objectives could be affected by the proposed development.
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
Screening determination: in the absence of mitigation measures, determine if the project alone or in-combination with other plans and projects could undermine the Conservation objectives of the site(s) and give rise to likely significant effects.

This report will satisfy the above steps of the Appropriate Assessment process, as legislated in the EU Habitats and Bird Directives, transposed into Irish law by the Planning and Development Act 2000 and Habitats Regulations 2011. The process is guided by national guidance provided by the Office of Planning Regulator, Dept. of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and National Transport Authority. A full list of supporting documents is provided in the reference section, Section 2.3, below. Ultimately, this report will inform a determination by the Competent Authority (Cork City Council), whether:

1) **There is no likelihood of significant effects on Designated Sites as a result of the proposed plan or project:** A full Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2) and resulting Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is not required.
2) **Significant effects cannot be excluded:** A full Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2) is required, and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) will have to be prepared

2.2 Case Law

The European Court of Justice has made a number of relevant rulings in relation to when an Appropriate Assessment is required and its purpose. A list of relevant rulings is provided in Table 3 below:

Table 3. Case law relevant to the AA Screening for the Proposed Development

Case	Ruling
People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17)	The ruling of the CJEU in this case requires that any conclusion of 'no Likely Significant Effect' on a European site must be made prior to any consideration of measures to avoid or reduce harm to the European site. The determination of Likely Significant Effects should not, in the opinion of the CJEU, constitute an attempt at detailed technical analyses. This should be conducted as part of the AA.

Case	Ruling
Waddenzee (C-127/02)	The ruling in this case clarified that AA must be conducted using best scientific knowledge, and that there must be no reasonable scientific doubt in the conclusions drawn. The Waddenzee ruling also provided clarity on the definition of 'significant effect', which would be any effect from a plan or project which is likely to undermine the conservation objectives of any European site.
Holohan and Others v An Bord Pleanála (C-461/17)	The conclusions of the Court in this case were that consideration must be given during AA to: • effects on qualifying habitats and/or species of an SAC or SPA, even when occurring outside of the boundary of a European site, if these are relevant to the site meeting its conservation objectives; and, • effects on non-qualifying habitats and/or species on which the qualifying habitats and/or species depend and which could result in adverse effects on the integrity of the European site.
T.C Briels and Others v Minister van Infrastructuur en Milieu (C-521/12)	The ruling of the CJEU in this case determined that compensatory measures cannot be used to support a conclusion of no adverse effect on site integrity.

2.3 Guidance

This report has been prepared with regard to the following guidance documents on Appropriate Assessment, where relevant:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision);
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- 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 Directorate-General, 2001 and updates April 2015 and September 2021). The guidance within this document provides a non-mandatory methodology for carrying out assessments required under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive;
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2018); and
- Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000).
- OPR (2021) Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. Practice Note PN01. Office of the Planning Regulator. March 2021.
- NTA Guidance for EIA and AA screening of Active Travel Projects, October 2023

2.4 Natura 2000 Network

The Natura 2000 is the largest coherent collection of protected areas in the world, covering 18% of the EU's land mass and 8% of its marine territories. The areas within the network are primarily core

breeding or resting sites for rare and threatened species and habitat types that are of high ecological importance (EC, 2008). The goal of the network is to ensure the survival and long-term preservation of Europe's most vulnerable species and habitats, listed under the Birds Directive (2009/147/EEC) and the Habitats Directive. Habitat types that are listed in Annex I, and species that are listed in Annex II, must be prioritised for conservation. Their presence within a given area aids in qualifying the area as a Designated Natura 2000 Site.

There are two types of sites designated for the conservation in Ireland:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's),
- Special Protection Areas (SPA's),

SAC's and SPA's comprise the Natura 2000. The designation of SAC's and SPA's is legally required for all Member States under the EU Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended. Taken together, Irelands Natura 2000 network covers 14,697 square kilometres.

SAC's are nationally and internationally important wildlife conservation areas, containing valuable and/or threatened habitats. The Habitats Directive lists certain habitats and species that must be protected within SAC's for each Member State. In Ireland, this includes blanket and raised bogs, turloughs, sand dunes and machair, amongst others. Many SAC's are designated for the protection of habitats that support rare, threatened or valuable species. There are a total of 25no. species that must be afforded protection in Ireland, including Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), European otter (*Lutra lutra*) and freshwater pearl mussel (*Margeritifera margaritifera*).

SPA's are designated for the protection of rare and vulnerable bird species, regularly occurring migratory species, and wetlands and habitats that support the nesting, breeding and foraging of threatened bird species. The SPA network in Ireland covers approx. 597,000 hectares of marine and terrestrial habitats.

Each Member State must monitor and report on the condition of their Designated Sites to the European Commission every six years. Each site has associated conservation objectives, and some require conservation management plans. The National Parks and Wildlife Services is the executive agency governing the implementation of national and European legislation, including the EU Habits and Birds Directives, and the designation and protection of habitats and species identified for natural conservation (NHA's, SAC's and SPA's).

3. Methodology

3.1 Desktop Assessment

The data used in this report were obtained from public archives and comprise the desktop assessment of the study area. The objective of this stage was to investigate the ecological, anthropogenic, hydrological, and physical components of the study area.

3.2 Data Availability

Data were collected from the following sources:

- NPWS Protected Species Database and Online Maps
- The National Biodiversity Data Centre Species Distribution Maps
- The Geological Survey of Ireland
- Office of Public Works Flood Maps

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA Maps and AA tool)
- Cork City Development Plan (2022-2028)

3.3 SPR Model

The source-pathway-receptor (model) is often applied to risk assessment mapping (i.e., flood risk). However, in an ecological context, it can provide a framework for assessing the risk of an impact. To first determine if there is a risk of impact, a source (e.g., site of works), an environmental receptor (i.e. a lake), and a pathway between the two, must be identified (i.e., river or stream). The model may determine that there is potential for environmental impact, however, both the significance and the likelihood of that impact being significant must be considered further. In other words, the possibility of the impact occurring must be put into context by the magnitude of the impact, which is proportional to the nature and exposure of the environment to the impact, and the characteristics of the environment. The SPR model offers a framework in which each component of risk assessment can be determined, to understand the actual risk of an impact significantly effecting the receiving environment. In the context of this AA exercise, the source is the proposed active travel scheme, and the receptor is any Natura 2000 site within the area of proposed works. A pathway must be identified, in order to identify potential relationships between the source and receptor.

3.4 Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence (ZoI) is defined as the geographical area, relative to the subject development, over which it could have potentially significant effects on the Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests of a given Natura 2000 site. The use of an arbitrary 15km zone of influence was common in Appropriate Assessment screenings, however, the ZoI is now being defined on a case-by-case basis, using own judgement and the Source-Pathway-Receptor model.[1] The ZoI is established and informed by the nature of the subject development, connectivity to Natura 2000 sites, and the receptors involved, i.e., the QIs and SCIs of Natura 2000 sites, their supporting habitats, and their sensitivities and pressures.

4. Screening of Designated Sites

4.1 Background

The road safety improvement scheme in the context of a National School aims to satisfy demand for support for schools to increase walking and cycling to school. The aims of the programme are to improve safety at the school gate by providing 'front of school' treatments to alleviate congestion and improve access routes to school by improving walking and cycling infrastructure and increase the number of students who cycle to school by expanding the amount of cycle parking. The works are categorised into two groups: front of school measures and routes to school measures and can include visibility improvements in the School Zone and Gateway Areas, new/upgraded walking and cycling infrastructure, safer pedestrian crossing points, junction treatments, upgrades to existing school entrances, and improvements to permeability links.

This report deals with Scoil Oilibhéir, in Ballyvolane, Cork City, Co. Cork, which is subject to modification. The school location is shown in Figure 2 below.

[1] Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR, 2021)

4.2 Site Location

Scoil Oilibhéir is situated in the townland of Ballyvolane (Baile Uí Mhaoláin), on the Ballincollie Road, in the northern suburbs of Cork City, approximately 3km north of Cork City Centre. Ballyvolane is identified in the Cork City Development Plan 2022–2028 as a key suburban area, with the Ballyvolane Urban Expansion Area (UEA) designated as the main area for future growth within this part of the city, through a mix of housing, employment, and commercial uses. The scheme involves the modification of the school fronts and general area surrounding the school. The works proposed are discussed in further detail in Section 4.5.



Figure 2. School location in Ballyvolane, Co. Cork

4.3 Identification of Natura 2000 Sites

Scoil Oilibhéir is located proximate to a number of protected sites. Cork Harbour SPA (004030) is located approximately 3.9km east and Great Island Channel SAC (001058) approximately 8km east from the proposed scheme. Blackwater River (Cork / Waterford) SAC (002170) is located 12.5km north of the school. There a numerous pNHAs located within 15km of the proposed scheme, with 5 pNHAs located within 5km of the school; Glanmire Wood, Dunkettle Shore, Douglas River Estuary, Cork Lough and Blarney Bog.

Table 4 below summarises Designated Sites relevant to the scheme. The potential impacts of the proposed works on the ecological integrity of these sites, are discussed further in Section 5 below. Table 5 below lists the Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives of the identified relevant Natura 2000 sites.

Table 4. Protected sites relevant to the proposed scheme and considered in this assessment.

Site Name / Code	Designation	Distance from Scheme	Connection to Scheme
Blarney Lake (001798)	pNHA (non-statutory)	7.3km	No connection
Blarney Bog (001857)	pNHA (non-statutory)	4.8km	No connection
Cork Lough (004031)	pNHA (non-statutory)	3.8km	No connection
Lee Valley (000094)	pNHA (non-statutory)	5km	No connection
Ballincollig Cave (001249)	pNHA (non-statutory)	10.5km	No connection
Shournagh Valley (000103)	pNHA (non-statutory)	9.4km	No connection
Blarney Castle Woods (001039)	pNHA (non-statutory)	7.2km	No connection
Ardamadane Wood (001799)	pNHA (non-statutory)	7km	No connection
Bride/Bunaglanna Valley (000079)	pNHA (non-statutory)	14.5km	No connection
Leamlara Wood (001064)	pNHA (non-statutory)	14.6km	No connection
Glanmire Wood (001054)	pNHA (non-statutory)	3.9km	No connection
Douglas River Estuary (001046)	pNHA (non-statutory)	4.4km	No connection
Great Island Channel (001058)	pNHA (non-statutory)	7.5km	No connection
Monkstown Creek (001979)	pNHA (non-statutory)	11.4km	No connection
Owenboy River (001990)	pNHA (non-statutory)	13.1km	No connection
Lough Beg (Cork) (001066)	pNHA (non-statutory)	14km	No connection
Dunkettle Shore (001082)	pNHA (non-statutory)	4.6km	No connection
Rockfarm Quarry, Little Island (001074)	pNHA (non-statutory)	7.8km	No connection

Site Name / Code	Designation	Distance from Scheme	Connection to Scheme
Cuskinny Marsh (001987)	pNHA (non-statutory)	14km	No connection
Cork Harbour SPA (004030)	SPA	3.9km	No connection
Great Island Channel SAC (001058)	SAC	8km	No connection
Blackwater River (Cork / Waterford) SAC (002170)	SAC	12.5km	No connection

Natura 2000 sites are designated for species or habitats listed as a Special Conservation Interest (SCI). Some species are known to utilise isolated / ex-situ resources across the landscape (i.e., for foraging and or roosting outside of the designated SPA boundary), and thus, comes under the remit of this assessment. The Qualifying Interests and Conservation objectives of Natura 2000 Sites connected to the scheme are considered further in Table 5 below. Sites with a national or a non-statutory designation are not included in this assessment. Likely Significant Effects of the proposed works on the identified Natura 2000 sites above are discussed further in Section 5 below.

Table 5. Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives of Designated Sites relevant to the proposed scheme

Site Name /Code	Qualifying Interests	Conservation Objectives	Distance from Scheme (km)
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] 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]	To restore/maintain the favourable conservation conditions of [all species listed as Qualifying Interests] in Cork Harbour SPA. For more details, see https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004030.pdf	3.9km

Site Name /Code	Qualifying Interests	Conservation Objectives	Distance from Scheme (km)
	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] Wigeon (Mareca penelope) [A855] Shoveler (Spatula clypeata) [A857] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]		
Great Island Channel SAC (001058)	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330]	To restore/maintain the favourable conservation conditions of [all species and habitats listed as Qualifying Interests in Great Island Channel SAC. For more details, see https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO001058.pdf	8km
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-	To restore/maintain the favourable conservation conditions of [all species listed as Qualifying Interests] in Blackwater River (Cork / Waterford) SAC. For more details, see https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002170.pdf	12.5km

Site Name /Code	Qualifying Interests	Conservation Objectives	Distance from Scheme (km)
	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] Vandenboschia speciosa (Killarney Fern) [6985] Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles [91J0]		

4.4 Receiving Environment

4.4.1 Habitats

BL3 – Buildings and artificial surfaces

Encompasses areas of built land, including agricultural, commercial, industrial, and residential land use. It excludes derelict stone buildings, polythene tunnels and refuse dumps.

WL2 – Treelines

A narrow row or single line of trees that is greater than 5 m in height and typically occurs along field or property boundaries. This category includes tree-lined roads or avenues, narrow shelter belts with no more than a single line of trees. Most treelines are planted and trees are often regularly spaced.

GS2 – Dry meadows and grassy verges

Grassy roadside verges, neglected fields and gardens. Occasionally mowed with little or no grazing or fertiliser application. This pattern of management produces grasslands with a high proportion of tall, coarse and tussocky grasses

GA2 – Amenity grassland

This type of grassland is improved, or species-poor, and is managed for purposes other than grass production. It includes amenity, recreational or landscaped grasslands, often reseeded and are regularly mown to maintain very short swards

WD5 – Scattered trees and parkland

Scrub/parkland grassland with scattered trees, where tree cover is less than 30% of the total area but a prominent feature.

4.4.2 Surface Water

The scheme is located in the Kiln sub catchment (SC_010, ID: 19_1), within the larger Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay catchment (ID: 19). The catchment encompasses the area drained by the River Lee all streams entering tidal water in Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay and between Knockaverry and Templebreedy Battery, Co. Cork, draining a total of 2153 km^2. This catchment underlies Cork City and includes key urban centres including Ballincollig, Macroom, Carrigaline, Crosshaven, Blarney, Glanmire, Midleton, Carrigtwohill, Cobh and Passage West.

Figure 3 below maps the surface water in the vicinity of the scheme. Scoil Oilibhéir is located approx. 780m north of the River Lee Estuary. Moreover, the culverted Ballincolly Stream (segment code: 19_1133) runs 270m southeast of the proposed scheme, in a southwardly direction towards the Glen River. The River Bride runs ca. 800m from the proposed scheme, connecting with the Glen River and flowing into the Upper Lee Estuary ca. 2.3km away.



Figure 3. Watercourses and flood risk mapped in the locality of the scheme.

Assessments of water quality and risk of not meeting environmental objectives are obligated to be undertaken on inland, transitional, and coastal surface waters, and groundwaters, under the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). The latest quality and risk assessments for the waterbodies in vicinity of the scheme are summarised below:

Table 6. Water quality status and contamination risk of watercourses adjacent to scheme

Water Framework Directive – Surface and Ground Waters Status and Risk				
Watercourse	Type	Quality Status	Risk	Pressure type
BRIDE (Cork City) _020 (IE_SW_19B140300)	River	Poor	At Risk	Nutrients, Organic
GLENNAMOUGHT TRIB BRIDE_010	River	Moderate	Under Review	Unknown
GLASHABOY (LOUGH MAHON)_030	River	Good	Not at risk	N/A
Lee (Cork) Estuary Upper	Transitional Waterbody	Moderate	At Risk	Nutrients, Organic
Lee (Cork) Estuary Lower	Transitional Waterbody	Poor	At Risk	Nutrients, Organic
Ballinhassig East (IE_SW_G_004)	Groundwater aquifer	Good	Not at risk	N/A

4.4.3 Flooding

Fluvial flooding is the principal source of flood risk in the area, however, only the surrounding riverbanks the Glen River is at risk of flooding. An area along the North Ring Road (R635), ca. 850m south of the school, experiences recurring flooding, following periods of heavy rainfall causing the River Glen to overflow. Moreover, there is no proximate coastal flood risk modelled by national flood risk programmes (National Indicative Flood Mapping, Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM).

A review of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) prepared for the Cork City Development Plan did not identify Ballyvolane as an area at risk of significant flooding. NIFM models flood risk in a number of scenarios: present day scenario, low risk future scenario, moderate risk future scenario and high-risk future scenario. The present-day scenario models a moderate (AEP 1% = Annual Exceedance Probability, or 1-in-100-year chance of occurrence) flood risk from fluvial flooding of the Glen River, however, the extent of this is localised to the area surrounding the river. Figure 3 above shows flood extents modelled by NIFM.

4.4.4 Groundwater

Aquifers are underground layers of permeable or fractured rock/sediment that contains and transmits groundwater. Groundwater serves an important purpose of drinking water in Ireland (30% of the national supply) and helps to regulate flow to and from rivers and lakes. However, groundwater can be vulnerable to pollution from a number of sources, including, agricultural, industrial, and urban run-off. Aquifer vulnerability is a measure of the sensitivity of groundwater from an imposed contaminant load, and is a function of subsoil permeability, and the physical features of the aquifer that determine the ease at which contaminants can enter groundwater. Aquifer types are classified by Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) based on their resource potential, which, in combination with subsoil permeability and physical bedrock characteristics, may exacerbate or limit the flow of contaminants to groundwater.

The aquifer underlying the site of proposed works is classified as being ‘Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones’. Aquifer vulnerability directly underfoot of the school is ‘extreme’, and adjacent, groundwater supplies are considered to be ‘high’, increasing

the risk of contamination from overland flow. Table 6 above summarises water quality and risk in aquifer units underlying the scheme.

4.4.5 Breeding Birds

Low abundances of breeding birds are found in built up environments, particularly along heavily trafficked road corridors, such as the site of proposed development. However, the school is located close to agricultural land, which could prove important for breeding, nesting and feeding for birds. Species distribution maps record the following species in the locality of the scheme:

- Blackbird (*Turdus merula*)
- Buzzard (*Buteo buteo*)
- Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*)
- House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)
- Magpie (*Pica pica*)
- Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*)
- Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)
- Woodpigeon (*Columba palumbus*)

Noise and vibrational disturbance during construction may impact bird species nesting, breeding and feeding. Removal of vegetation may also impact on nesting and breeding sites. Recommended buffer zones that limit disturbance to bird species proximate to a development varies by species. In general, safe working distances for common Irish bird species range between 300 – 750m (Ruddock & Whitfield, 2007). The scheme is a Rapid Implementation Scheme and thus, there is no excavation or heavy machinery required to carry out the works, resulting in minimal noise and vibration disturbance. Therefore, a dedicated bird survey is not required.

4.4.6 Amphibians

A review of collated data from the National Biodiversity Data Centre showed Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) within a 10km grid square surrounding the scheme. The proposed scheme is located within the urban built environment and is not directly adjacent to any wetlands or watercourses.

4.4.7 Mammals

The location of the school in a heavily trafficked area suggests that mammalian habitats in the direct vicinity are low in abundance. Small mammals such as otters, shrews and badgers may occur within hedges and shrubs on roadsides adjacent to grassland and patches of trees. The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) does note red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) and the invasive greater, white-toothed shrew (*Crocidura russula*) within an approximate 1km grid around the scheme. However, there is suitable bat roosting habitat in the area, given the number of stone walls and mature trees.

The modification of the school, as is proposed in this scheme, is not likely to affect any mammalian habitat or behavioural patterns. The works involved are low in scale and magnitude, and any impacts would be localised and temporary. The built-up area surrounding the scheme is already highly modified and subject to existing anthropogenic pressures, including traffic, artificial lighting, noise, and human activity, all of which have likely displaced or disturbed mammal populations in the locality prior to any impacts arising from the scheme itself.

4.4.8 Invertebrates

There are no records of ecologically significant invertebrate species in this study area.

4.4.9 Invasive Species

National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) show record of Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Greater White-toothed Shrew (*Crocidura russula*) within a 1km grid square surrounding the scheme. Japanese Knotweed poses the greatest threat of all land-based invasives in Ireland. It has the ability to grow through tarmacadam, floors and walls, and plants can regenerate themselves from tiny fragments of stem or rhizome. The greater white-toothed shrew, a non-native invasive species first recorded in Ireland in the mid-2000s, has spread progressively across the country and is considered a significant ecological concern due to its potential to outcompete the native pygmy shrew (*Sorex minutus*) for food resources and habitat.

According to the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (No 1143/2014), it is illegal to intentionally keep, breed, transport to, and or, from the European Union, place on the market, use or exchange, reproduce, grow, cultivate, or release invasive species into the environment. This is particularly relevant to species listed on the First Schedule of the EU (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 374 of 2024). Violation of the regulations could result in a conviction leading to a fine and/or a term of imprisonment. If during subsequent site visits, or during construction etc., invasive alien species are recorded, appropriate treatments should be applied, under the guidance of an expert.

4.5 Proposed works

Drawings of the proposed scheme at each of the schools are contained in **Appendix A.**

The RSIS aims to encourage an uptake in active travel modes by children commuting to school, through the provision of safe and sustainable cycling/pedestrian infrastructure. Scoil Oilibhéir is well served by footpaths through the village. However, the wide footpaths opposite the school are used by parents to park during school pick up/drop off, which creates a dangerous environment for children crossing the road. Measures to reduce speed and provision of safe crossing points are likely requirements for this scheme as well as parking enforcement while opportunities for park and stride might be available with adjacent businesses, sports clubs and residential areas.

The proposed works will address these issues, and ultimately improve safety for school-goers by implementing the following measures at Scoil Oilibhéir:

- Upgrade of existing uncontrolled crossing to a raised controlled pedestrian crossing
- Inclusion of gateway element road markings to warn drivers of approaching school

4.6 Nature of Works, Site Characteristics & Potential Risks to the Environment

The primary risks posed by this project is surface water discharge from the site during the construction phase, and noise and vibrational disturbances to bird life. Run-off from construction may include silt, hydrocarbons and concrete, and would thus reduce water quality in a waterbody directly and indirectly linked to Designated Sites. Moreover, construction activities may disturb the species that are directly dependant on the adjacent Designated Sites. Despite identifying these activities as being harmful to Designated Sites, there is no discernible pathway between source and receptor. There is no connection between the proposed scheme and any Designated Site, despite proximity (3.9km) to Cork Harbour SPA and 8km to the Inner Great Island Channel SAC. The scheme is to be delivered as a Rapid Implementation Scheme and thus, does not require heavy plant or excavation to accommodate designs. The potential for disturbance to ex-situ species utilising the

area surrounding the scheme is considered. There are no sites identified as being particularly significant for such species. Ultimately, there is no potential for the proposed works to undermine the conservation objectives of these Designated Sites, by significantly affecting the qualifying interests of Natura 2000 sites.

Table 7. Potential impacts, effects, and their zone of influence

Potential Impact and Effect	Description	Zone of influence
Surface run-off	Construction effluent entering sensitive or vulnerable waterbodies, reducing water quality for water-dependant species/habitats	Sensitive waterbodies that are hydrologically connected/proximate to water-dependant Designated Sites.
Noise/vibrational disturbance	The excavation and construction of the active travel scheme may cause temporary noise and vibrational disturbance to key species, particularly on vulnerable species utilising the site for breeding/nesting.	All Designated Sites in proximity to the works.

The proximity of the scheme to Designated Sites in the Natura 2000 network is recognised. Changes in water quality due to the release of pollutants into water bodies are recognised as a significant effect. The potential for indirect impact is considered, whereby the project would result in a significant detrimental change in water quality either alone or in combination with other projects or plans as a result of indirect pollution of surface water. The effect would have to be considered in terms of changes in water quality which would affect the habitats or species for which the connected Natura Sites are designated. This is discussed further in Section 5.

The potential for noise and vibrational disturbance is also considered, given the proximity of the scheme to Designated Sites. Species utilising the site may be impacted, particularly those utilising the area for ex-situ foraging and roosting. However, no habitat of significance for ex-situ foraging were identified within the immediate scheme area. Moreover, the scheme is located in an area where there is already a degree of disturbance from vehicular/foot traffic.

The potential impacts listed above are addressed further in Section 5, however, despite the potential impact on Designated Sites, their likelihood of occurring is low, due to the following:

- The scale of the works involved in the development (Rapid Implementation Scheme)
- The short-term nature of the works (impacts constrained to construction phase)
- The spatial range of potential impacts i.e., unlikely downstream impacts (noise impacts localised to immediate site location)

4.7 Zone of Influence

Considering the receiving environment (described in Section 4.3 above) of the proposed scheme, the small-scale nature of the proposed scheme (described in Section 4.4 above), connectivity to the surrounding landscape and proximity to watercourses, a ZoI for potential effects is estimated to be contained within 5km of the proposed scheme. Nonetheless, all Natura 2000 sites that are connected to the proposed scheme are considered in this assessment, despite their location outside of the ZoI, although the likelihood of significant impact is greatly reduced.

Regarding the receiving environment, the scheme is located in a suburban setting, proximate to agricultural land and watercourses. The existing regional and local road network, residential and commercial land uses and population density indicate that the area is already subject to a high degree of disturbance. The landscape beyond Ballyvolane is largely improved agricultural. The

nature of the works is such that surface water run-off and noise and vibration impacts are the primary concern. However, no downstream impacts are likely to arise from noise and vibration sources, and therefore, the ZoI is limited to a shorter distance. The impact of run-off on the areas' ecological integrity is minimal, given the nature and scale of the works. The main pathway for impact is overland flow of contaminants following heavy rainfall or flooding. Moreover, dilution effects are likely to minimise the impact on water further.

Regarding the nature and scale of the proposed scheme, the development of safe pedestrian/cyclist facilities/features to improve commuter safety, will be entirely within the existing infrastructural framework. Therefore, the magnitude of any potential impact is limited.

Regarding hydrology, considering the nature of the proposed scheme and surrounding landscape, and the location of the proposed scheme on the Lee Estuary, the ZoI for hydrology is considered to extend to a 5km radius, and the Natura 2000 sites therein.

Similarly, regarding in-combination effects, considering the nature of the proposed scheme and the development of other schemes, the ZoI for consideration of in-combination effects is considered to extend to the same 5km radius, and the Natura 2000 sites therein.

Natura 2000 sites that have been identified to occur within or adjacent to these ZoI's are listed and analysed in Section 5 later within this report.



Figure 4: Natura 2000 Sites adjacent to the scheme.

Figure 4above visualise the Designated Sites within or near the ZoI of the proposed scheme, and Table 8 below assesses potential impacts on these sites, with respect to their Qualifying Interests (QI's) and Conservation Objectives (CO's).

5. Assessment criteria

5.1 Is the development necessary to the management of Natura 2000 sites?

Under the Habitats Directive, projects that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site require Appropriate Assessment (AA). The proposed scheme is not considered to be connected to or necessary for the management of Natura 2000 Designated Sites. There is sufficient distance of ca. 3.9km from Cork Harbour SPA (004030) and ca. 8km from Great Island Channel SAC (001058) to preclude impacts, given the small scope of works.

5.2 Characterising Likely Significant Effects

To characterise the potential effects of the proposed scheme, information on the qualifying features, known vulnerabilities and threats pertaining to any potentially affected Natura 2000 sites has been collated and reviewed.

The Habitats Directive sets out its requirement that the focus of the assessment at the AA screening stage should be on the integrity of the site as indicated by its Conservation Objectives.

Site specific Conservation Objectives have been prepared for all Designated Sites in Ireland, including Cork Harbour SPA (004030) and Great Island Channel SAC (001058). They aim to define favourable conservation condition for the qualifying habitats and species at that site by setting targets for appropriate attributes which define the character habitat. The maintenance of the favourable condition for these habitats and species at the site level will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

5.3 Identification of potential significant effects of the proposed scheme

Elements of the proposed scheme with potential to introduce sources for effects on ecological processes for both the construction and operational phases are identified in Section 4.6 above and discussed further in Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 below. The elements will be considered with respect to their likelihood of significant effects in view of the Special Conservation Interests, and Qualifying Interests of the Natura 2000 sites, and their sensitivities, summarised in Table 8.

The likelihood of significant effects on Natura 2000 sites (if any) will then be summarised in Table 8 below. The analysis considers potential for effects on the site-specific conservation objectives of each of the sites within the identified ZOI's. Because each site-specific conservation objective is set to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the QIs/SCIs of each site, the screening process concentrates on assessing the potential effects of the proposed scheme against the QIs/SCIs of each site and their site-specific conservation objectives.

5.3.1 Construction phase

There will be no direct interaction with any of the adjacent watercourses during the proposed scheme's construction phase. However, there is potential for disturbance effects within the construction phase through noise and vibration, and surface run-off via overland flow. Materials related to shallow excavation and the re-paving of the road surface have potential to enter adjacent wetlands and surface waters. Flooding or rainfall events during construction have the potential to mobilise loose materials and enter the drainage system and/or adjacent watercourses. However, the proposed scheme is a Rapid Build Scheme and will not involve any deep excavation. Moreover,

there is sufficient distance between the scheme and any moving water body with potential to carry contaminants to any Designated Sites.

Noise and vibration from heavy machinery and excavation works during construction has the potential to disturb sensitive species related to the nearby SPA. The sensitivity of the species to noise and vibration may vary depending on time of year i.e. breeding season. Nonetheless, the scheme in question is a Rapid Implementation Scheme and does not require the use of heavy machinery for excavation.

The construction phase will be localised, small-scale and temporary, set in a heavily modified suburban area. The scale of the proposed scheme, and the temporary nature of impacts (i.e. noise and vibration during construction) indicates that there is no likelihood for significant effect to Natura 2000 sites from construction related dust, noise or surface run off as a result of the construction phase of the proposed scheme. The only discernible pathway for construction effluent to enter surface/groundwaters during construction is overland flow following heavy rainfall/flood event. However, there is sufficient distance between the proposed scheme and nearby Designated Sites.

5.3.2 Operational phase

The proposed scheme aims to improve uptake of more sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling for school commuters. Therefore, an increased level of pedestrian and cyclist traffic in the area throughout the operational phase is anticipated. Effects arising from the operational phase of the scheme are expected to be negligible as the usage will be generally unchanged. The works are unlikely to increase the number of road users overall but rather encourage vehicular users to choose cycling or walking as a safe and healthy alternative to vehicular modes of transport. In this way, the scheme has potential to reduce vehicular traffic in proximity to protected sites.

5.3.3 Summary of likely significant effects

There are two potential likely significant effects arising from either the construction or operational phases of the proposed scheme to Natura 2000 sites: surface run-off and noise/vibrational disturbance.

The potential effects outlined and considered above will be further discussed with specific reference to each Natura 2000 site considered in this report, in view of their Conservation Objectives.

5.3.4 Other potential effects

Other potential effects which may affect Natura 2000 sites include those effects arising from land take, resource requirements, emissions, excavation requirements, transportation requirements as well as duration of construction, operation and decommissioning.

Changes on a site which can result in effects include reduction of habitat area, disturbance to key species, habitat or species fragmentation, reduction in species density, changes in key indicators of conservation value and climate change.

These activities and changes are considered for relevant Natura 2000 sites.

Loss/reduction of habitat area

There are no Natura 2000 sites that border the proposed scheme boundary, and there is no direct interaction between the scheme and any designated sites. There will be no requirement to remove vegetation within this site. There are no Annex I habitats or supporting habitat for Annex II species identified on site. Therefore, there will be no effects posed regarding loss of reduction of habitat area of any Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed scheme.

Habitat fragmentation

The proposed scheme area is comprised of a majority of artificial hard surfaces within an existing road corridor. It is anticipated that no vegetation will need to be removed to facilitate the implementation of the scheme, and thus there will be no impact to habitat connectivity, for species utilising vegetation for foraging/nesting etc. The majority of vegetation in the area is already subject to a degree of disturbance, given its location in within a built-up suburban environment. Therefore, there will be no (full or partial) loss of habitat which supports or contributes to the QIs of Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed scheme.

There are no functional pathways to Natura 2000 sites that will be interrupted by the proposed scheme. Moreover, the scheme is located outside of any Designated Sites.

Regarding the construction phase, given the minor and localised nature of the proposed scheme works, and the dilution factor involved for a small-scale project it is not foreseen that there is any potential for significant effects introduced regarding hydrological interactions as a result of the construction phase of the proposed scheme. Therefore, there will be no effects posed to Natura 2000 sites regarding habitat or species fragmentation.

Disturbance to key species

Due to the small scale of the proposed scheme in the context of the developed nature of the scheme surroundings, disturbance effects due to noise or lighting etc. during the construction phase are not present as species in the area would already exhibit a degree of habituation to such effects.

Noise and vibration pollution would typically have the potential to impact key species within an SPA The Qualifying Interests of the nearby SPA (Cork Harbour SPA) are waterbird and wintering bird species. Given that there is sufficient distance between the proposed scheme and the nearby SPA, and taking into consideration the scale of the works involved the scheme, there is no potential for noise and vibration to impact species protected under the SPA designation. The location of the school in a built-up area adjacent to a major city indicates that the area is already subject to a degree of traffic-related disturbance. Thus, the impact is not likely to be significant.

Where there is potential for impact, the impact would not result in any subsequent impacts downstream or elsewhere in the SPA. The impact would be short in duration and would be confined to the construction phase. The magnitude of the impact may vary depending on time of year (i.e. breeding season). However, it should also be noted that the scheme is to be delivered as a Rapid Implementation Scheme, and there is no requirement for heavy plant or excavation to facilitate designs. Thus, there is no pathway and no source for impact identified.

The habitats present (notwithstanding the area under the SPA designation) within the scheme area are not identified to be sufficient or capable of supporting ex-situ foraging for the SCI species of the SPA identified; therefore, no effects are identified in this regard. The operational phase will be in keeping with the current level of noise, urban activity and use, with a slight decrease in vehicular use predicted due to the nature of the proposed scheme.

Any potential for effects from the operational phase of the proposed scheme due to changes in numbers of visitors to Natura 2000 sites are negligible, because the nearby Designated Sites are located adjacent to urbanised areas (Cork City, Midleton, etc.), thus is already subject to a degree of disturbance. Moreover, it is not likely that the scheme would significantly increase the number of road users but rather will encourage vehicular users to choose cycling or walking by improving infrastructure to enable safer school commuting by such means within the settlement. This would ultimately reduce traffic-related disturbance to species.

Therefore, there are no potential sources for significant effects regarding disturbance to key species as a result of the proposed scheme.

Changes of indicators of conservation value

The proposed scheme is small and localised in scale, and the construction phase is temporary, with negligible potential for effects identified in this regard to Natura 2000 sites.

The proposed scheme is not connected in any way to any Designated Sites and there is sufficient distance between the scheme and nearby sites such that impacts are precluded. Moreover, given the minor and localised nature of the proposed works, there is no potential for significant effects identified with regard to water quality during the construction phase. There is no potential for surface water contamination to undermine the conservation objectives of this site, given the lack of source for impact and pathway between source and receptor. The proposed scheme will not generate excessive construction-related dust and noise, or effluent. Table 8 below discusses specific impacts on QI's of the nearby Designated Sites. The construction phase is localised and small in scale and at a sufficient distance from Natura 2000 Sites, as such that impacts are minimised.

Regarding the operational phase, there are no potential sources for significant hydrological effects identified as there will be no changes to surface or storm water drainage around the proposed scheme area as a result of the proposed scheme. Similarly, there will be no change to hard surface area as a result of the proposed scheme, therefore surface and storm water runoff over hard surface present no potential for effects as a result of the proposed scheme. Traffic related noise is expected to reduce or remain the same around the school area, once operational, and therefore there will be no significant effects on the SPA's QIs.

Therefore, there are no sources for effects with pathways that will affect any conservation indicators related to Natura 2000 sites.

Climate change

The proposed scheme is not likely to cause any increase in greenhouse gas emissions during the operational phase. It is possible there will be a decrease in local emissions. The construction phase works are likely to cause increased localised temporary emissions; however, given the small scale of the proposed scheme and timescales involved, these are determined to be negligible. Such minor effects upon greenhouse gas emissions will not affect changes projected to arise from climate change to the degree that it would affect the QI's or SCI's of the Natura 2000 sites considered in this assessment.

Table 8. Screening assessment of the potential effects arising from the proposed active travel scheme.

Site Name / Code	Distance (km)	Qualifying Interests	Analysis for potential effects	Likelihood of significant effects	Likelihood of in-combination effects
Cork Harbour SPA (004030)	3.9km	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]	This SPA is sensitive to habitat and species disturbance. The scheme is located outside of the European site. Considering the QIs of this SPA, and the nature of the works involved, there is no likelihood for either surface water discharge or noise disturbance to impact this SPA. If there was a likelihood, it would be a localised effect with no downstream impacts and therefore, would not be considered significant. Regarding the operational phase and considering the QIs of this SPA, there are no sources with pathways regarding habitat disturbance for significant effects foreseen in the operational phase of the proposed scheme to European sites. Therefore, no further assessment is required.	NO	NO

Site Name / Code	Distance (km)	Qualifying Interests	Analysis for potential effects	Likelihood of significant effects	Likelihood of in-combination effects
		Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179] Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182] Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus) [A183] Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193] Wigeon (Mareca penelope) [A855] Shoveler (Spatula clypeata) [A857] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]			
Great Island Channel SAC (001058)	8km	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330]	The primary concerns to these qualifying interests are water quality impacts from wastewater and surface water discharges, physical disturbance to intertidal sediment communities, and encroachment from urban expansion. The proposed scheme involves no works within or adjacent to the SAC boundary, no discharge to watercourses connecting to Cork Harbour, and no land reclamation or coastal works. There are no sources for these effects as a result of the scheme, and the scheme area is outside of the European site. There is no hydrological pathway between the proposed scheme and the SAC, and moreover, minimal effluent is expected from a Rapid Implementation Scheme of this nature. Regarding the construction phase and considering the QIs of this SAC; given the localised and small-scale nature of the proposed scheme, there is no potential for significant effect to this SAC as a result of the construction phase.	NO	NO

Site Name / Code	Distance (km)	Qualifying Interests	Analysis for potential effects	Likelihood of significant effects	Likelihood of in-combination effects
			Regarding the operational phase and considering the QIs of this SAC; as there are no changes in drainage, and no changes in hard surface area, there are no sources with pathways regarding habitat disturbance or increased pollution foreseen in the operational phase of the proposed scheme to European sites.		
Blackwater River (Cork / Waterford) SAC (002170)	12.5km	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]	The primary sensitivities of this SAC relate to water quality degradation, sedimentation, physical disturbance to intertidal and riparian habitats, and hydrological changes that could affect the migratory species and freshwater habitats for which the site is designated. The scheme is located outside of the European site, at great distance and not hydrologically connected. Considering the QIs of this SAC, and the nature of the works involved, there is no likelihood for either surface water discharge or noise disturbance to impact this SAC. If there was a likelihood, it would be a localised effect with no downstream impacts and therefore, would not be considered significant. Regarding the potential for contamination of nearby waterbodies, there is no likelihood that this would result in impacts to this SAC, given the small-scale nature of the works, and the location of the SAC at a sufficient distance from the scheme. Regarding the operational phase and considering the QIs of this SAC, there are no sources with pathways regarding habitat disturbance for significant effects foreseen in the operational phase of the proposed scheme to European sites. Therefore, no further assessment is required.	NO	NO

Site Name / Code	Distance (km)	Qualifying Interests	Analysis for potential effects	Likelihood of significant effects	Likelihood of in-combination effects
		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] Vandenboschia speciosa (Killarney Fern) [6985] Taxus baccata woods of the British I sles [91J0]			

5.4 Other plans and projects

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other plans or projects that might, in combination with the plan or project, have the potential to have significant effects on European sites.

A review of the National Planning Application Database was conducted to identify other developments within the study area. Projects ranged from small scale use changes, addition of signage and lighting systems, to demolition and construction of new buildings.

Cork City Council have received funding for a number of Active Travel projects in Cork City, including the Marina Promenade pedestrian-and-cycle facilities, the development of the Glanmire-to-city cycle route, and a number of projects within the Douglas area. As part of an NTA Safe Routes to School Programme, a number of schemes are being progressed throughout Cork City. There are no schemes identified within a relevant distance to the works at Scoil Oilibhéir, that have the potential to result in cumulative impacts.

Cumulative impacts can be either additive or synergistic and could arise from multiple insignificant impacts that can become significant due to their proximity in time and space. Moreover, a cumulative impact may have more indirect effects, by making habitats and species more vulnerable to change over time. In Cork City, where a suite of developments are underway or in planning stages, the potential for cumulative impacts must be considered. The nature and scale of the proposed project is such that no cumulative impacts with other projects are anticipated. Nonetheless, long term cumulative impacts on the receiving environment are expected to be positive, given the improvement to the safety and sustainability of the school commuter network.

6. Conclusion

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has considered potential effects within the Zone of Influence which may arise during the construction and operational phases as a result of the implementation of the proposed active travel scheme. Through an assessment of the potential sources and potential pathways for significant effects; an evaluation of the project characteristics; taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from Natura 2000 sites, it has been evaluated by this report, that there is no likelihood of potential significant effects occurring to the Qualifying Interests, Special Conservation Interests or the Conservation Objectives of any designated Natura 2000 site as a result of the implementation of the proposed active travel scheme.

Given the small, localised scale of the proposed scheme, and the nature of the proposed scheme in the context of the local urbanised environment, plans and projects; the proposed scheme will not lead to any significant effects in-combination with effects arising from any other plans or projects. Table 9 overleaf summarises the AA screening determination.

Table 9. Summary of AA screening determination

Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Determination	
Can it be excluded, in view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information that the plan or project, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on any European Site(s) in view of the Conservation Objectives of those site(s)?	
☒ **If yes, an AA is not required**	☐ If no, a Natura Impact Statement must be prepared, and an Appropriate Assessment is required

It is concluded by this AA Screening Report that the proposed scheme is not foreseen to have any likelihood of significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects – and therefore any potential for significant effects on any European site as a result of the proposed scheme can be ruled out. This conclusion is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. Consequently, the proposed scheme does not need to be subject to Stage Two Appropriate Assessment and a Natura Impact Statement is not required.

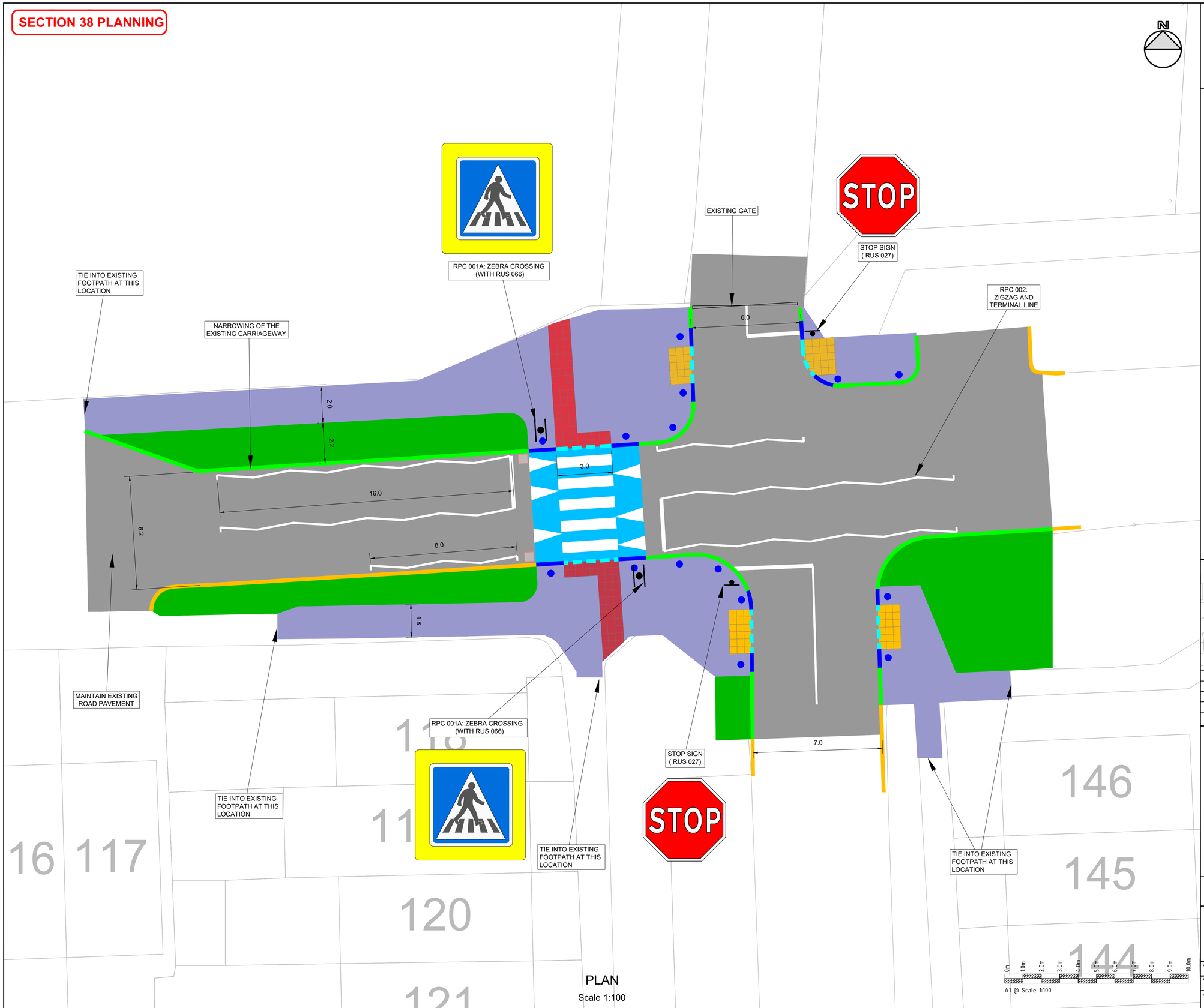
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APPENDIX A - SCHEME DRAWINGS



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SECTION 38 PLANNING



PLAN
Scale 1:100

NOTES

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LEGEND

- EXISTING KERB TO BE RETAINED
- KERB HALF BATTERED
- KERB TRANSITION
- KERB (DROP 0-6mm)
- CARRIAGEWAY
- FOOTPATH
- PROPOSED SOFT LANDSCAPING
- TACTILE PAVING TO TII-SCD SCD-05136
- TACTILE PAVING TO TII-SCD SCD-05137
- RAISED UNCONTROLLED CROSSING
- IPL PENCIL BOLLARDS
- PROPOSED NEW GULLY
- PROPOSED SINGLE SIGN PLATE
- DOUBLED SIDED SIGN PLATE

KEY PLAN



REV	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	CHK	APD
P01	23/07/2026	FOR INFORMATION	CL	IOS	TM
P00	15/06/2026	FOR INFORMATION	CL	IOS	TM

CLIENT / CONSULTANT

Comhairle Chorcaí Cheantar Cork City Council

CLANDILLON
CIVIL CONSULTING

PROJECT

SCOIL OILIBHÉIR ROAD SAFETY SCHEME

DRAWING TITLE

GENERAL ARRANGEMENT
SCOIL OILIBHEIR
SHEET 1 OF 1

PURPOSE OF ISSUE	STATUS/SUITABILITY	
SECTION 38 PLANNING	S3 - SUITABLE FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT	
DATE	SCALE	SHEET SIZE
29/09/2026	1:100	A1

DRAWING NUMBER

SORS-CCC-S10-GA-DR-C-0001

REVISION

P01

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