FEHILY TIMONEY

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

PROPOSED PHASE 4C WEST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT KNOCKNAHEENY, CORK CITY

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Prepared for:

Cork City Council

Cork City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí

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Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

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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 4C West 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 project, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. If it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site, an appropriate assessment of its implications for the European Site(s) in view of the Site's conservation objectives is required to be carried out.

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[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 project 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 Murphy of FT prepared the report. Conor is a Project Ecologist working in the Circular Economy and Environment Team in FT. Conor has four 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.

Richard Deeney of FT was responsible for reviewing the assessment and 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.

Bernie Guinan was responsible for reviewing and approving the report. Bernie is Director with FT and is a Chartered Waste Manager. She has 25 years' experience in delivering and managing projects and infrastructure delivery for a wide variety of sectors. Bernie has extensive experience in all aspects of strategic management planning and infrastructure development in Ireland, the UK, KSA and UAE. She is an experienced planning policy analyst and strategic planner. She has in-depth knowledge of all environmental and planning policy, legislation and guidance. She has been providing environmental, planning and waste management consultancy services to public bodies for over 25 years. She has a vast amount of experience coordinating EIA, SEA and AA projects, including national, large-scale and complex projects.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Overview of the Project

The proposed development for Phase 4C West consists of 22 no. new units comprising of 3 no. terraced blocks, two of the terraced blocks having 8 no. two storey 3 bed houses, the remaining terraced block consists of 5 no. 2 storey 3 bed houses with 1 no. 2 storey 4 bed house terminating this terrace. The proposed development will include associated site development works including new roads, footpaths, boundary walls, in curtilage and on street parking, a small public green space located to the northeastern end of the scheme. A new access road will be provided to this development via Mark Carroll Drive (western side of the site). This will allow future phases of the CNW[8] Master Plan to be constructed without impacting on this development once completed.

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.

[8] City North West

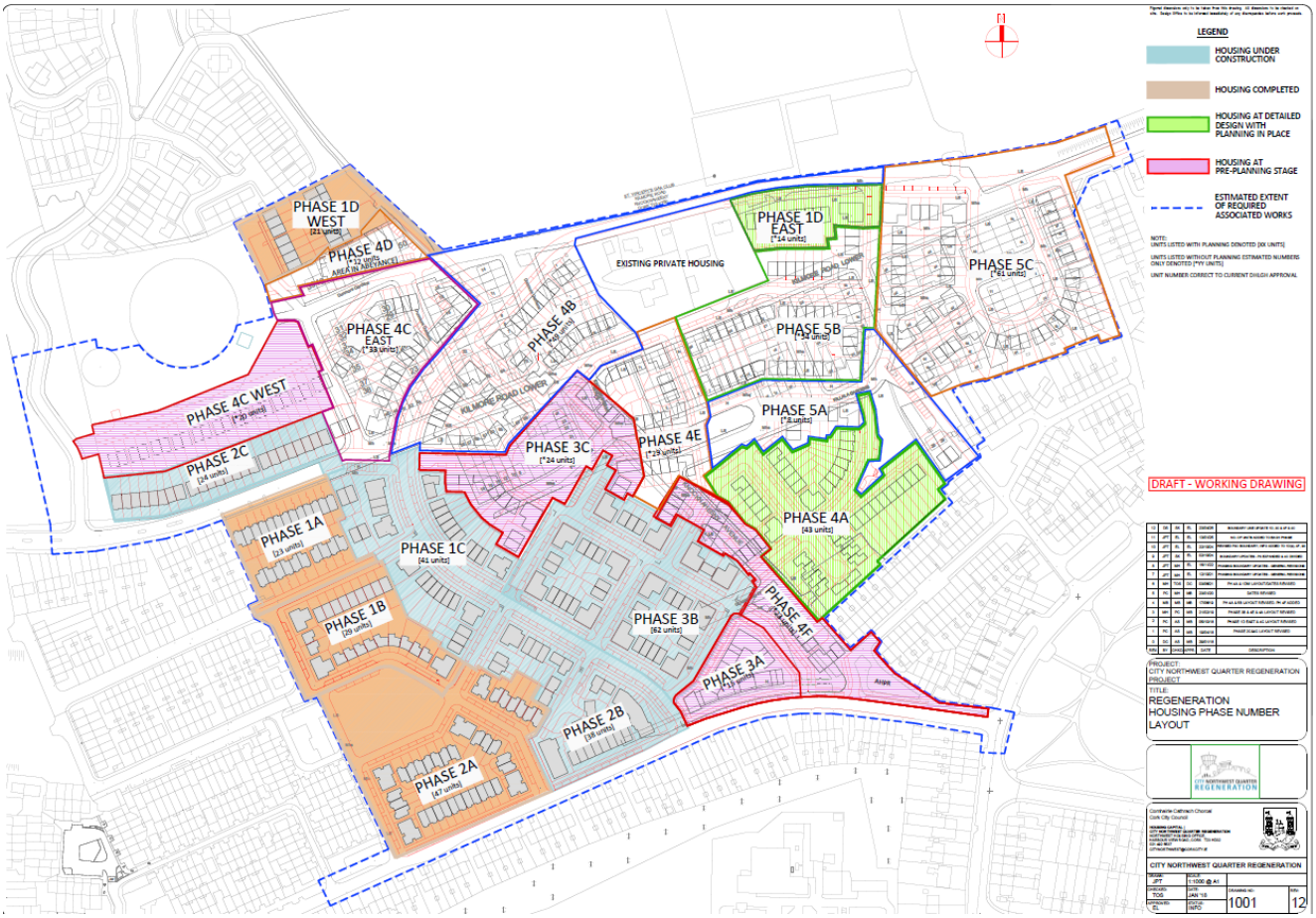


Figure 2-1: CNWQR Masterplan Phases

The adopted masterplan provides for five separate phases of development. However, the regeneration programme has been carried out over multiple phases and subphases to accommodate practical and constructability constraints. Table 2-1 provides details on the current status and the number of units that have been constructed, are being constructed or are planned for construction.

Table 2-1: City Northwest Quarter Regeneration - Phases and Interrelationships with the Proposed Development

Phase	Description	Interrelationships with the Proposed Development
1A	23 units, completed in 2015. A Screening for Appropriate Assessment Document prepared by Cork City Council (dated April 2013) concluded that no likely, significant effects would be posed by the proposed development on the Cork Harbour SPA (00430) and the Great Island SAC (001058) due to the nature of the proposed development and the distance between the proposed development and the designated sites. The sub-threshold EIS screening report concluded that the development, by reasons of its nature, scale and location, would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and accordingly, an EIS was not required to be submitted for the development.	None.

Phase	Description	Interrelationships with the Proposed Development
1B	29 units, consented in 2017 under a Part 8 Application. Completed and tenanted.	None.
1C	41 units, consented in 2021 under a Part 8 Application; currently under construction (estimated time of completion end-2026). The EIA Screening completed for this planning application concluded that the nature or the characteristics of the development was not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment, as the geographic extents of the development was small and there were no impacts identified over the operational phase. The AA Screening carried out for this phase concluded that the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have significant effects on any European Sites.	None.
1D East	14 units, Part 8 Planning application consented. Currently at DHLGH Stage 3 preparation. An EIA and AA Screening have been completed for this phase. The findings of the AA Screening concluded that no significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites will occur. The EIA Screening for this phase has concluded that there will be no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, and an EIA is not required.	None.
1D West	21 units, Completed and tenanted.	None.
2A	47 units, Completed and tenanted. A Screening for Appropriate Assessment Document prepared by Cork City Council (dated October 2016) concluded that no adverse impacts would be posed by the proposed development on the Cork Harbour SPA (00430) and the Great Island SAC (001058) due to the nature of the proposed development and the distance between the proposed development and the designated sites. The sub-threshold EIS screening report concluded that the development, by reasons of its nature, scale and location, would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment, and accordingly, an EIS was not required to be submitted for the development.	None.
2B	38 units, Currently under construction - estimated time of completion end-2026. The EIA Screening completed (July 2018) for this planning application concluded that the nature or the characteristics of the development was not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment, as there were no identified long-term negative impacts and the development would result in a long-term and positive permanent impact through the provision of housing. The AA Screening (July 2018) carried out for this phase concluded that the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have significant effects on any European Sites.	None.

Phase	Description	Interrelationships with the Proposed Development
2C	24 units, Currently under construction - estimated time of completion mid-2026. The EIA Screening completed (April 2018) for this planning application concluded that the nature or the characteristics of the development was not considered likely to have significant effects on the environment, due to the nature or characteristics of the development. The AA Screening (March 2018) carried out for this phase concluded that the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have significant effects on any European Sites.	The proposed development will temporarily connect into drainage / foul water infrastructure constructed for this phase via an existing manhole.
3A	15 units, Future phase, Part 8 pack being designed.	None.
3B	62 units, Consented under Part 8 in 2022 and currently under construction - estimated time of completion Q4 2027; EIA and AA Screenings undertaken for the Part 8 Application conclude that there will be no long-term negative impacts arising from this development, and the potential for any direct or indirect impact on habitats and EU Sites is low due to the lack of receiving watercourses around the site.	• None.
3C	24 units, Currently at 'Part 8' stage, with submission period closing early July 2026.	None.
4A	43 units, Consented under Part 8 in 2022 and currently at tender stage (going to tender in Q3 of 2026); EIA and AA Screenings undertaken for the Part 8 Application conclude that there will be no long-term negative impacts arising from this development, and the potential for any direct or indirect impact on habitats and EU Sites is low due to the lack of receiving watercourses around the site.	None.
4B	49 units, Marked for private housing under the Masterplan. Not yet progressed.	None.
4C East	33 units, Future phase; not yet progressed.	The proposed development will establish a permanent connection with this phase for drainage / foul water infrastructure once constructed, replacing the temporary connection at Phase 2C.
4C West	22 units, Part 8 pack being designed. This assessment pertains to this phase.	Not applicable.
4D	18 units, Marked for private housing under the Masterplan. Not yet progressed.	None.
4E	42 units, Marked for private housing under the Masterplan. Not yet progressed.	None.

Phase	Description	Interrelationships with the Proposed Development
4F	23 units; Currently undergoing Part 8 Planning Process. An EIA and AA Screening have been completed for this phase. The findings of the AA Screening concluded that no significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites will occur. The EIA Screening for this phase has concluded that there will be no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development, and an EIA is not required.	None.
5A	8 units, Marked for private housing under the Masterplan. Not yet progressed.	None.
5B	54 units, Marked for private housing under the Masterplan. Not yet progressed.	None.
5C	61 units, Marked for private housing under the Masterplan. Not yet progressed.	None.

2.2.1 Relationship of the Proposed Development with Other Developments

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

- **Foul Water Infrastructure**: The proposed development will temporarily connect to foul water infrastructure at Phase 2C to the south via an existing manhole. This temporary arrangement will be replaced by a connection to foul water infrastructure at Phase 4C East once it is constructed.
- **Drainage Infrastructure**: The proposed development will temporarily connect to drainage infrastructure at Phase 2C to the south via an existing manhole. This temporary arrangement will be replaced by a connection to drainage infrastructure at Phase 4C East once it is constructed.

The total number of units proposed under the aforementioned phases (inclusive of the proposed development) amounts to 79 no. units. Phase 2C is currently undergoing construction with completion foreseen for mid-2026. Phase 4C East is planned for the Part 8 planning process in the future.

This assessment accounts for these interdependencies between the proposed development and the above development 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 substructures, as outlined in the Stage 2A Report[9], considered for the proposed development are as follows:

- House types A & B external foundations to be 0.9m wide x 0.3m deep with 1-layer A393 mesh
- House types internal foundations to be 0.6m wide x 0.3m deep with 1-layer A393 mesh

Considering the varying levels on the site, various masonry retaining walls will be used to facilitate the build-up of internal and external levels.

The two housing unit types (A and B) are envisaged to be constructed using a traditional loadbearing masonry system, with timber web-joists generally proposed at upper floor levels. Localised steel beams will be incorporated where required to achieve structural spans or support openings. At ground-floor level, suspended precast concrete slabs are proposed, supported by blockwork raising walls. Roof structures are anticipated to comprise prefabricated timber trusses bearing on wall plates located on the inner leaf of the loadbearing masonry walls.

Lateral stability will be provided by Masonry Wall Panels that will form the stair cores. Final lateral stability/Bracing/shear wall requirements and locations will be finalised at the detailed designed stage. Water storage tanks will be required within the attic space of the house types. The loading for the tank has been incorporated into the design of the structure and appropriate structural elements have been designed in to allow for access and maintenance in this area.

The project will be delivered under a Design and Build contract, and the contractor will be able to develop and optimise the structural solution as required. This may include the adoption of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) — precast structure, modular components, or alternative superstructure materials — where such solutions meet the required structural performance, durability, and comply with the planning and employer's requirements.

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

[9] *Civil, Structural, Mechanical & Electrical Stage 2A Report Cork Northwest Regeneration Phase 4C West* (Cork City Council, March 2026)

- 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 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

An Uisce Éireann (UÉ) Pre-Connection Enquiry (Ref. CDS26001502) has been made and a Confirmation of Feasibility (CoF) has been received for the proposed development. The CoF states that a water connection is feasible without infrastructure upgrades, while a wastewater connection may be feasible subject to upgrades of UÉ infrastructure.

The potable water supply for the proposed development has been designed in accordance with the Irish Water Code of Practice and Standard Construction Details. A new 150 mm ductile iron water main will be installed within the proposed road and will connect to the existing main on Meadows Avenue, providing the primary supply to the scheme. This network includes provisions for future phase tie-ins and will deliver metered connections to all proposed dwellings.

A 225 mm diameter foul sewer will run within the proposed road linking Meadows Avenue and Dunmore Gardens Road. The system will initially form a temporary connection between an existing manhole in Phase 1C located south of Phase 4C West. This temporary arrangement will be removed once the Phase 4C East foul network is constructed and the permanent connection is established.

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 entire surface water network will be constructed in accordance with the Greater Dublin Code of Practice for Drainage Works Version 6.0 and the Cork City Council standard details. Surface Water Drainage has been designed in accordance with the Greater Dublin Code of Practice for Drainage Works[10].

Surface water for the proposed development will be collected and discharged under gravity to the storm infrastructure network. Pipe diameters for the surface water drainage system will vary from 225 mm to 300 mm. The system will initially form a temporary connection between an existing manhole at Phase 2C, located south of Phase 4C West. This temporary arrangement will be removed once the Phase 4C East foul network is constructed and a permanent connection is established.

A model of the proposed surface water drainage network for the proposed development has been undertaken with the 'MicroDrainage' tool. The model indicates that the surface water network has adequate capacity for the flows generated by the proposed development and will achieve full-bore self-cleansing velocities.

Overland surface water runoff has been considered for the uneven nature of the site. A minimum cover of 1.2 m has been provided for the proposed surface water network to allow for sufficient cover to the soffit level within road locations, with a minimum slope specified to achieve self-cleansing velocities to reduce drainage depths at the downstream of the site. Steeper gradients have been proposed in the northern section of the drainage by the access road to maintain the minimum 1.2 m cover. Where the desired 1.2 m cover cannot be achieved, an absolute minimum of 900 mm is proposed, and the pipe is to be adequately protected with a concrete surround and protection slab. Proposed levels will allow surface water to fall away and avoid ponding around buildings.

Proposed impermeable areas have been incorporated into the hydraulic model, with 100% of impermeable areas applied to the drainage network. The Phase 4C West roads shall drain via traditional proprietary products such as kerb, gullies and drains to the storm water network.

[10] Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works (Version Draft 6.0). Available at: https://www.sdcc.ie/en/download-it/guidelines/greater-dublin-regional-code-of-practice-for-drainage.pdf (Accessed 10/04/2026)

The proposed surface water drainage network has been designed to provide the following:

- For the overall stormwater network design, a 10% climate change was allowed for all storm events, as per the original masterplan.
- No surcharging in the 1 in 5-year storm event. Pipes immediately upstream of flow control devices may encounter a 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.
- The 4C West site forms part of the wider CNWQ stormwater master plan, and its attenuation strategy is fully integrated into the overall network's hydraulic and environmental performance requirements.

2.5 Existing Environment

The overall development site comprises ca. 0.72 hectare (ha) and is located at a brownfield[11] site in Knocknaheeny, Cork City. The proposed development will occupy undeveloped land north of Kilmore Road Lower and west of Dunmore Gardens.

The proposed development site is situated within a built-up urban area consisting of social housing estates, small businesses and public amenities. Residential properties at Dunmore Gardens, located to the east of the proposed development site, are currently occupied, as are residential units at Kilmore Road Lower to the south of the development site.

2.5.1 Description of Existing Ecological Baseline

2.5.1.1 Desktop Assessment

In April 2026, 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

[11] The definition of a brownfield site has been based on the classification provided by the Concerted Action on Brownfield and Economic Regeneration Network (CABARNET): '*Brownfields are sites that have been affected by the former uses of the site and surrounding land; are derelict and underused; may have real or perceived contamination problems; are mainly in developed urban areas; and require intervention to bring them back to beneficial use.*' (CABERNET, 2005)

- 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 (Accessed April 2026); and
- National Land Cover (2018) dataset (Accessed April 2026).

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 site is bounded by Phase 2C to the south, the water tower reservoir site to the north, and (future) Phase 4C East to the east. The Knocknaheeny Water Tower is located north of the site.

The wider road network includes Kilmore Road Lower and Harbour View Road (L1021) to the south. The N20 is located approximately 2.02 km east of the proposed development site.

The Proposed Development is located within the Ballinhassig East ground water body. The groundwater status is listed as '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: 3rd), located ca. 2.02 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 will connect into planned storm water and foul water networks within the Masterplan area, initially at Phase 2C as a temporary arrangement, and then at Phase 4C East as a permanent connection (See Section 2.4 for further details). Foul water within this catchment is treated at the Carrigrennan Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in Little Island.

As per CORINE land use (2018), the development site is classified as 'Artificial Surfaces'.

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

The development site is underlain by a Locally Important Aquifer, described as 'Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones'. Groundwater vulnerability at the site is classified as 'Extreme'. Soils underlying the site are classified as 'Made'. Majority of the subsoils underlying the site are classified as 'Made', with a strip of 'Bedrock at Surface' at the western end of the site.

The proposed development site is not located within an area designated for flood risk.

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

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[12]. 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)[13] for an SAC/cSAC or Special Conservation Interests (SCI)[14] 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.

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

[13] 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.

[14] 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)[15], 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 because 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 10 m beyond (based on Ryan Hanley, 2014)[16]. There are no European sites located 10 m of the Proposed Development.
- For groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE), regard is had to SEPA guidelines[17] which prescribes a potential hydrogeological effect zone of 250 m from ground works. There are no European sites located 250 m of the Proposed Development.

[15] 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
[16] 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
[17] 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[18] notes a 150 m potential disturbance ZoI for otter for breeding holts and 20 m for non-breeding active holts. As such the study area included the proposed development site plus a 150 m 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)[19] and was defined as 500 m. 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 landscape[20] or ecological connectivity[21] 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)[22] states that for sensitive ecological receptors, sensitivity to dust is 'High' up to 20 m from the source and reduces to 'Medium' over 50 m 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 50 m 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[23] which states that "The recommended [riparian] buffer zone width for larger river channels (>10 m) is 35 m to 60 m and for smaller channels (<10 m) is 20 m 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.

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[18] 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/
[19] 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.
[20] 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.
[21] 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.
[22] Holman et al (2024). IAQM Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction, Institute of Air Quality Management, London.
[23] 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 15 km 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 5.4 km away.

    - Cork Harbour SPA (IE0004030): This SPA is located ca. 5.4 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	5.4	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 5.4 km from the proposed development and is located outside of the core foraging range of all avian SCIs with the exception of Cormorant, gull species and Common Tern. Foraging ranges for Common tern and Cormorant lie between 26.9-33.9 km (Nature Scot, 2023[20]) and theoretically overlap with the proposed development. The proposed development and 500 m disturbance distance does not provide suitable habitat for Common Tern or Cormorant which are predominantly 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[24]) 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	No

[24] 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]	development, 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 built land located to the north of the proposed development. The habitats located within the Zol 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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