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COONEY'S LANE PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

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)[1] was commissioned by Cork City Council to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for the improvement of pedestrian facilities along Cooney's Lane in Cork City.

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

1.1 Legislative Context

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

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

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

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] Details on the contributors to this report are provided in Appendix 1.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 Guidance

The assessment was conducted in accordance with the following guidance:

- European Commission. (2021). 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.
- Environment Heritage and Local Government. (2009, updated 2010). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Dublin: National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- European Commission. (2019). Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. Brussels, (2019/C 33/01). OJ C 33, 25.1.2019.
- Office of the Planning Regulator. (2021). OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.

2.1.2 Process

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

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

In the context of this report, a source is any identifiable element of the proposed project that is known to interact with the receiving environment. A receptor is the Qualifying Interests (QI)[2] for an SAC or Special Conservation Interests (SCI)[3] for an SPA or an ecological feature that is known to be utilised by the QI/SCI. In practice, the term Qualifying Interests also applies to SCIs (and is used in this document for simplicity). A pathway is any connection or link between the source and the receptor.

[2] 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.
[3] 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.

The assessment commences with a description of the project, along with a description of the receiving environment and the associated sources for impacts to the receiving environment. All elements of the project are presented including the project location and existing baseline environment. The type of impacts that are likely due to the project (Source) are identified having regard to the spatial and temporal scale of the project, resource requirements and likely emissions. These sources are then used to define the zone of influence (ZoI) of the project as detailed in Section 1. .

The European Commission Notice (2021) on the 'Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, states that in identifying European sites (Natural 2000 sites), which may be affected by the project, the following should be identified:

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

The zone of influence of a proposed development is the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have potential effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. The OPR (2021) practice note states that the Zone of Influence must be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km). Section 5.1 sets out the detailed rationale for the identification of relevant European sites within the ZoI based on the sources of impacts arising from the proposed project. Subsequently, an assessment is undertaken with respect to potential connectivity (Pathways) to European Sites and their qualifying interests/special conservation interests are identified.

The potential for in-combination effects with other plans and projects is examined in Section 1. , having regard to the identified impacts of the project along the ecological pathways identified to European sites.

In section 1. the likelihood of significant effects of the European Sites within the ZoI is examined having regard to the sensitivity of the site with pathways for impacts associated with the project on its own and in combination with other plans and projects.

Having regard to the European Commission Communication on the Precautionary Principle (European Commission, 2021) the:

> *"absence of scientific evidence on the significant negative effect of an action cannot be used as justification for approval of this action. When applied to Article 6(3) procedure, the precautionary principle implies that the absence of a negative effect on Natura 2000 sites has to be demonstrated before a plan or project can be authorised. In other words, if there is a lack of certainty as to whether there will be any negative effects, then the plan or project cannot be approved."*

Where significant effects are determined to be likely, or where there is uncertainty regarding the likelihood of significant effects, the project will be required under law to be subjected to Appropriate Assessment.

This AA screening is based on best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature was conducted. This included a detailed review of the National Parks and Wildlife Website including mapping and available reports for relevant sites and in particular sensitive qualifying interests/special conservation interests described and their conservation objectives.

3. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

This project aims to extend the pedestrian facilities along Cooney's Lane L2461, Grange, Co. Cork. The proposed pedestrian improvement scheme is located in a suburban area encompassing an estimated project area of approximately 2.4ha. The dominant habitat within the Proposed Project is Building and artificial surface (BL3) consisting of existing road, footpaths and residential houses Other habitats include Treelines (WL2), Hedgerows (WL1) and Amenity Grassland (GA2). (Fossitt, 2000). Refer to Figure 3-1 below for the location of the proposed site. The surrounding area primarily consists of residential developments in the immediate vicinity with small pockets of grassland, patches of broadleaved riparian woodland and treelines / hedgerows. Agricultural lands are widespread to the south of the proposed development site. The surrounding area also contains pockets of broadleaved woodland most notably to the southeast and northwest of the site.

The proposed project lies within the River Lee Catchment which flows into Cork Harbour. The Grange 19 IE_SW_19M300900 (116m from the site boundary) flows northwest for 1.52km before flowing into the Douglas (Lee) IE_SW_19M300900 which flow for 1.27km before reaching Cork Harbour SPA 004030. The Donnybrook IE_SW_19M300900 flow east of the proposed project (407m from the site boundary) in a northerly direction before reaching the Douglas (Lee) 1.95km downstream. The Cork Harbour SPA lies 0.32km downstream from this point of convergence.

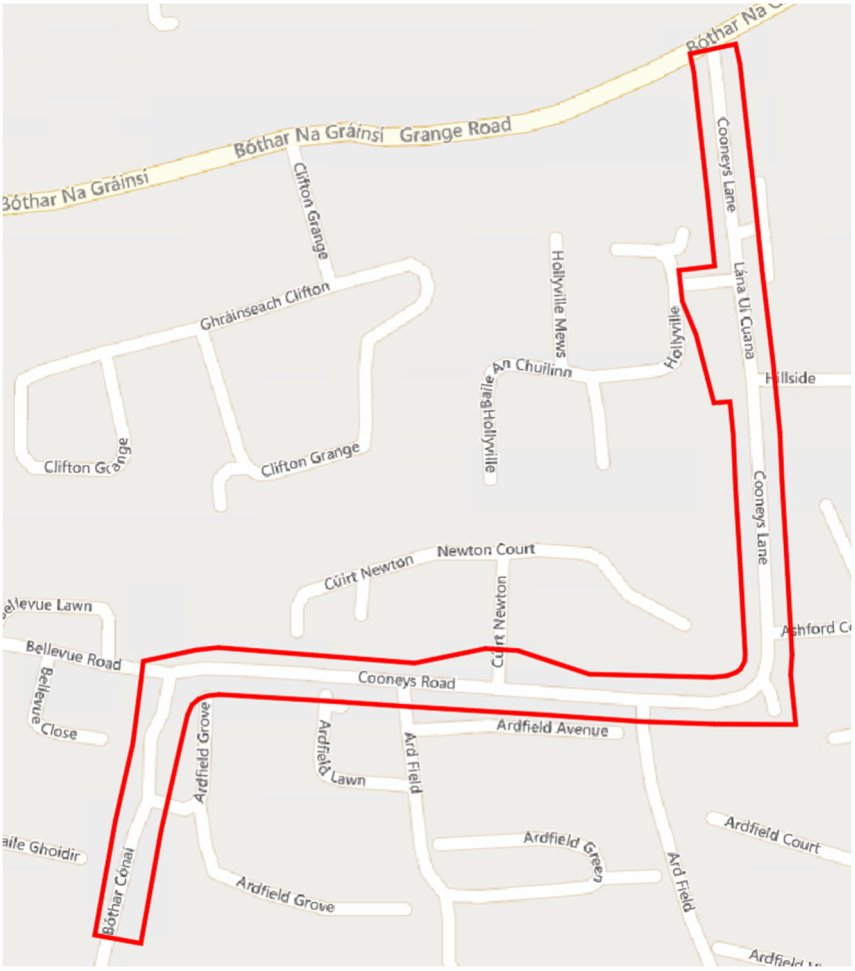

Figure 3-1: Site Location

4. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

4.1 Existing Arrangements

The 0.8km stretch of the Cooney's Lane under consideration is a two-lane, two-way carriageway with a posted speed limit of 50km/h with intermittent footpaths provided on either side. At some locations where there is not enough width to fit a footpath alongside the road, footpaths have previously been provided offset from the road behind hedges / mature trees. There are three locations where footpaths are not currently provided, these locations have created some notable gaps in footpath connectivity, which this scheme aims to resolve.

The existing Cooney's Lane carriageway width varies between approximately 6.50-8.50m, providing opportunity to widen footpaths towards the road, keeping a minimum carriageway width of 6.15m while minimising required property acquisition. Where existing footpath is in place, it is generally less than 2.0m wide, and is less than 1.8m wide in several locations. Some segments of footpath are uneven and pose a trip hazard. The absence of connected, continuous footpaths along Cooney's Lane prevents pedestrians from walking safely and conveniently and increases the likelihood of such short duration trips being undertaken by car.

Table 4-1: Proposed Project Works

STEP 1. Description of the project/proposal and local site characteristics:	
(a) Brief description of the project or plan:	***Project Layout*** A total of three locations have been identified where footpaths are not provided, resulting in significant gaps in pedestrian connectivity along Cooney's Lane. These locations include: • The northern side of Cooney's Lane between Bellevue Road and Ardfield • The southern side of Cooney's Lane between Ardfield Road and Ashford Court • The western side of Cooney's Lane between Ashford Court and Hillside A new residential development is proposed for the northern side of Cooney's Lane, situated between Bellevue Road and Ardfield. As part of the residential development project, a new footpath will be constructed to address the current gap in pedestrian connectivity along this stretch. The existing gap in the footpath network enroute to the school will also be resolved at this location. These works will integrate with the Cooney's Lane Pedestrian Improvement Scheme, ensuring a cohesive and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure. The remaining two locations identified will also be addressed through the Cooney's Lane Pedestrian Improvement Scheme, with new footpaths provided to improve overall connectivity and safety for pedestrians. One key section between Ardfield Road and Ashford Court will require partial property acquisition and the realignment of a property boundary to facilitate the construction of a 1.60m wide footpath and a retaining wall.

This will involve the removal of several trees and hedgerow. The proposed works are illustrated in the Preliminary Design Drawings.

The majority of the scheme is located on public land, with the exception of a small section of third-party land that will need to be acquired to facilitate the construction of the footpath and retaining wall between Ardfield Road and Ashford Court.

The scheme aims to provide footpaths with a typical width of 1.80m where space permits, ensuring a comfortable pedestrian environment. In more constrained areas, a reduced width of 1.60m has been applied. Wider footpaths are prioritised along the roadway close to public open spaces, and where feasible.

The minor junctions will feature tightened kerb radii, tightened to a radius of 6m, and dropped kerbs with tactile paving for improved pedestrian access. Cooney's Lane carriageway width will be reduced to a minimum of 6.15m to accommodate footpath widening.

The junctions at Bellevue Road and Ashford Court will both be converted to raised tables, and the remaining pedestrian crossings across Cooney's Lane will also be converted to raised tables to aid traffic calming through the neighbourhood. This will require the removal of five mature trees on the corner of Bellevue Road. A new raised table will be added at the most southern tie-in point of Cooney's Lane, to introduce traffic calming measures for vehicles travelling on Cooney's Lane. Immediately east of the Bellevue Road junction, a new ramped path will provide an alternative for residents within the Newton Court section of the neighbourhood to bypass the existing stairway up to the existing pedestrian crossing.

The oversized asphalt parking area at Newton Court will be revised, providing footpath closer to the road, incorporating bevelled kerbs at two designated entry and exit points to maintain residential access. Informal parking will be retained to the east and west of Newton Court, directly in front of the residential properties.

The existing informal parking area at Ashford Court will be retained. However, the footpath in front of the residential properties will be reconstructed to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility.

The asphalt infills at Hillside will be converted to widened footpath area to provide more landscaping and reduce the ability of drivers to park on the footpath. Across from Hillside, the concrete stairway will be upgraded chicane gates or similar to be included in advance of the zebra crossing. Footpaths on either side of Hollyville will be maintained, with additional footpaths provided adjacent to Cooney's Lane.

Assessments to-date indicate that improvements will not encroach beyond existing property walls, and the extent of the impact to properties will affect areas in front of property walls and driveways only (apart from one location between Ardfield and Ashford Court where the existing property boundary will need to be set back in order to accommodate a new retaining wall to facilitate provision of a footpath on the southern side of Cooney's Lane). Approximately 8 other properties will be affected, but only within the public-realm outside of the property walls, predominantly impacting driveways. Vegetation and/or tree removal will be necessary as outlined above. This is discussed in more detail in Table 5-1.

Existing traffic signs, public lighting columns, utilities and drainage manholes may need to be relocated or removed as part of the works and new public lighting columns and drainage infrastructure may be required to supplement existing infrastructure.

Scope, size and scale

Generally, the width of the carriageway is being reduced to accommodate widening of footpaths to 1.80m where feasible. The roadway length is 0.8km.

Demolition

Demolition will include removal of street lighting columns, street signs, footpath, asphalt areas, kerb, gullies, stairs. The removal of mature trees, hedgerow and amenity grassland will be required as mentioned above.

Drainage

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

Drainage modifications are only minimal modifications to gullies to accommodate revised kerb lines and new raised tables. Existing gullies will be blocked and new gullies will be implemented where required.

Road Access

No new road access is being proposed.

Waste and Emissions

- Liquid effluent: Concrete washout.
- Solid Waste: Concrete and paving rubble. Electric lighting components.
- Surface Water Disposal: Into existing drainage system.

Working Hours and workforce

All construction work will typically be conducted Monday to Friday 08:00 to 18:00. At the peak of the construction phase for the proposed development approximately 12 people would be working within the site. The construction phase will last for a period of approximately 6 months.

Construction Materials

- Concrete (~360m^3)
- Granular sub-base materials
- Topsoil
- Grass seed/sod

Vehicles and machinery

- Backhoe Loader
- Skid-steer
- Telehandler
- Compact milling machine
- Dumpers
- Compact Paver
- Vibratory Roller
- Plate compactor

	• HGVs (material deliveries) • Concrete truck **Services** The development shall not require any new connections to electricity, communications, natural gas or water supply. The development will modify some existing connections to electricity for the modified street lighting. **Operational Phase/Post Construction** Regular maintenance will include maintaining lighting fixtures, clearing blocked gullies, replacing any damaged road signs and refreshing road striping as necessary. **Decommissioning Phase (if proposed)** There is no set decommissioning phase.
(b) Brief description of site characteristics:	The proposed scheme aims to deliver improved pedestrian facilities, providing enhanced connectivity for pedestrians, safe passage for vulnerable road users to commute and access local amenities, and to encourage lower vehicle speeds within the 50km/h speed zone. The proposed scheme will upgrade the existing sub-standard or non-existent pedestrian facilities, providing improved footpath connectivity, controlled and uncontrolled crossings, public lighting and traffic calming measures along Cooney's Lane.

5. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

5.1 Identification of European Sites using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model

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

CIEEM guidelines (2018) defines the zone of influence (ZoI) of a project as the spatial and temporal scale of potential biophysical changes in the environment which might occur as a result of the development and throughout its lifetime. Consideration must therefore be given to how changes in the environment due to the project could have potential direct and indirect links to sensitive receptors of European sites. These potential direct and indirect links are established using the source-pathway-receptor model (S-P-R) in accordance with the recommendations of OPR guidance note. In this regard, consideration is given to the nature and extent of the proposed scheme and the characteristics of the surrounding environment along with the consideration of potential pathways for connectivity to European sites, which are assessed having regard to available Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, ecological datasets and ecological field studies.

An assessment is made as to whether there could be landscape or ecological connectivity to any European site. Consideration is given to the potential for mobile qualifying features of European sites to use the lands within the impact zone of the proposed rehabilitation works. In determining the potential impact zone and S-P-R connectivity the following was considered:

- Release of pollutants and sedimentation to watercourses with hydrological connectivity to European sites;
- Disturbance bat and bird species may arise due to noise and light pollution.
- Ecological receptors may be impacted by dust emissions during construction phase which can have harmful physical and chemical effects on vegetation.

5.1.1 Defining Zone of Influence

- Consideration is given to European sites potentially hydrologically connected to the project, i.e. whereby there is potential for surface water from the project site to runoff into a watercourse or drain which flows into a European Site.
- The potential zone for biophysical change by disturbance/degradation/loss of habitat during construction and operation is taken as the lands within the footprint of the works (including any temporary works) plus 10m beyond (based on Office of Public Works, 2014)[6].
- The potential zone for hydrogeological impacts on groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE) is taken as 250m beyond any works areas as per SEPA guidelines[7].

[6] Office of Public Works (2014) 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
[7] 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.

- Consideration will be given to potential for dust effects within 50m of the works (based on IAQM guidelines[8]) and with levels likely to be low.
- An assessment of the potential for mobile qualifying features of European sites to use the adjacent lands (for birds, lands within 500m i.e. the bird disturbance zone having regard to having regard to Cutts et al (2013)[9]., and for otter lands within 150m having regard to the NRA (2008) Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters prior to the Construction of National Road Scheme) is undertaken as part of the S-P-R assessment. In this regard 'Scottish Natural Heritage (2016) Guidance on Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs)' was referred to for the core foraging ranges of SPA birds and a 10km range was adopted for consideration. Additionally, for otter, ecological connectivity (e.g. linear habitats / ecological corridors) was taken into consideration namely and Grange and Donnybrook streams.

Table 5-1: Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using the S-P-R model

STEP 2. Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of information on Qualifying Interests and conservation objectives.				
European Site (code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest	Distance from proposed development (km)	Connections (Source-Pathway- Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
Cork Harbour SPA: 004030	Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [A004] Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) [A005] Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) [A017] Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) [A028] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A048] Teal *(Anas crecca*) [A052] Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [A054] Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) [A069] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A130]	1.54km (Direct-Distance) (c. 2.79 km via Grange 19> Douglas (Lee) and 2.25 via Donnybrook>Douglas (Lee)	There are no pollution pathways to the SPA given that the concrete works for the project take place after the existing drainage connection to the Grange and Donnybrook Rivers is broken out and such no pathway for effect. Given the mobile nature of the SCIs, the potential for effects on habitat within 500m of the proposed works was assessed.	N

[8] the Institute of Air Quality Management 'Guidance on the Assessment of dust from demolition and construction' (Institute of Air Quality Management, 2024)
[9] 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.

	Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141] Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A142] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157] Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [A160] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182] Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) [A183] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*) [A855] Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) [A857] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]		As outlined in Section 3. , the habitats within the proposed project and the 500m avian disturbance zone include developed artificial surfaces, hedgerows, treelines, broadleaved riparian woodland, amenity grassland and agricultural grassland which are not preferential to the coastal Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species associated with Cork Harbour SPA. There are abundant available suitable habitats for waders, waterbirds and coastal birds including mudflats, coastal estuaries and saltmarshes, within and in closer proximity to the SPA. Due to the lack of such habitats within the ZoI i.e 500m of the proposed works, no pathway for effects on the SPA and its mobile SCIs have been identified.	
Great Island Channel SAC: 001058	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330]	7.8 km Direct-Distance) (c. 8.47km In-Stream	The QI habitats, for which the Great Island Channel SAC is designated (Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]; Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330]), do not exist within the ZoI outlined in Section 5.1.1 of the proposed project.	N

			There are no pollution pathways to the SAC given that the concrete works for the project take place after the existing drainage connection to the Grange and Donnybrook Rivers is broken out. Therefore, a pathway for effects has not been identified.	

5.2 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

This section of the report explains the metrics used when assessing if the potential effects (previously identified) are likely to be significant on European sites. The EC (2021) guidance document notes that the significance of the effects will vary depending on factors such as the magnitude of impact, the type, extent, duration, intensity, timing, probability, in-combination effects and the vulnerability of the habitats and species concerned.

However, due to the absence of pathways for effects, none of the potential impacts associated with the works will give rise to likely significant effects.

5.3 In-combination/Cumulative 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 potential impacts of the proposed projects are considered in-combination with any other plans or projects within the zone of influence. The consideration of in-combination effects with other plans or projects, focuses on the sources of impacts identified for the proposed project and any ecological pathways to European Sites as per the S-P-R assessment. However, given that there are no meaningful pathways for effects identified with respect to European sites from the proposed project, there can be no in-combination effects. As such, no further consideration is required as the S-P-R model has been completed with no potential effects that could arise.

5.3 Conclusion

The results of the S-P-R assessment identified that - given the scale and nature of the project - there are no likely significant effects identified to any European sites. The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during all phases of the proposed project. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the sources for impacts, taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that there are no likely significant effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interests or the conservation objectives of any designated European site.

6. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1

Statement of Authority

Surveyor	Surveys Completed	Biography
Kate O'Regan	Report Author	Kate O'Regan holds a first-class BSc. in Zoology and first-class MSc in Marine Biology from University College Cork. She has prepared ornithological reports, AA Screenings and desktop studies for renewable energy projects since joining Fehily Timoney and has previous experience in data management, statistical analysis, mapping and technical report writing. Kate has also completed a wide range of surveys including bird, bat, intertidal, subtidal, insect and mammal surveys.
Rita Mansfield	Report reviewer	Rita is a Principal Ecologist and Project Manager with 20 years' previous experience as a technical lead within the environmental and planning services sector. She specialises in statutory consent and environmental assessment for large scale public infrastructure projects in the energy, water (including flood relief schemes) and transport sectors. She is a qualified ecologist with experience in environmental impact assessment, planning applications (conventional and strategic infrastructure development), climate adaptation, Appropriate Assessment, foreshore licensing, Water Framework Directive, integrated catchment management, and stakeholder engagement.

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