Notice

This document and its contents have been prepared and are intended solely for Cork County Council’s information and use in relation to Appropriate Assessment Screening of the proposed Midleton to Youghal Greenway, Co. Cork.

WS Atkins assumes no responsibility to any other party in respect of or arising out of or in connection with this document and/or its contents.

Document history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job number: 5142879</th>
<th>Document ref: 5142879DG02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revision</td>
<td>Purpose description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev 1.0</td>
<td>AA Screening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev 1.1</td>
<td>AA Screening [Final]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev 1.2</td>
<td>AA Screening [Minor Corrections]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev 1.3</td>
<td>Final Report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Context</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Drawings</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Works</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Description of the Proposed Development Site &amp; Outline of proposed works</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1 - Midleton Station Environs to Mogeely</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 2 – Mogeely Station to Killeagh Station</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3 – Killeagh Station to Youghal Station</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Principal Features of Proposed Development</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Clearance &amp; Preparation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Path</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sealed Surface Path</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boardwalk</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culverts</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drainage</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Parking, Access Points and Lighting</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Crossings</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Crossings</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundary Treatment</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boundary Treatment with Agricultural Property</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boundary with Residential Property</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dwelling within 10m of Railway</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dwelling within 50m of Railway</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boundary with Commercial or Other Property</strong></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ducting</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Access &amp; Temporary Construction Compounds</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscaping and Ancillary Facilities</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway Buildings</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Control</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and Management</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding and Timing of Development</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of the Greenway</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilisation and Securing of the Site</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage / Stockpiling of Materials</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Measures</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Appropriate Assessment Process</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims of the Report</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislative Context</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Assessment Process</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 1 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3 - Alternative Solutions</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4 – IROPI</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **Methods**
   - Desk Study
   - Site visit
   - Consultation
   - Statement of Authority

4. **Appropriate Assessment Screening**
   - Conservation Objectives
   - Natura 2000 Sites
   - Connectivity of the Works Area to Natura 2000 Sites
   - Features of Interest
   - Likelihood of Potential Impacts on Natura 2000 Sites
   - Special Areas of Conservation
   - Conclusions
   - Special Protection Areas for birds
   - Conclusions
   - Cumulative impacts
   - Likelihood of Significant Effects on Natura 2000 Sites
   - Consideration of Findings

**Figures**

**Appendices**

**Appendix A.** **Design Drawings**

- Overall Layout
- Standard Details
Tables

Table 1.1 Summary of structures along the proposed Greenway.
Table 4.1 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) located within 15 km of the proposed Greenway.
Table 4.2 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) – site description and details of connectivity.
Table 4.3 Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs) located within 15 km of the proposed Greenway.
Table 4.4 Special Protection Areas of for birds (SPAs) - site description and details of connectivity.
Table 4.5 Screening of SPAs within 15km of the proposed Greenway.

Figures

Figure 1 Site Location.
Figure 2 Special Areas of Conservation.
Figure 3 Special Protection Areas for birds.
Figure 4 Surface water pathways to Natura 2000 Sites.

Plates

Plate 1.1 Disused railway corridor, Broomfield Bridge on the R627.
Plate 1.2 Disused railway corridor showing overgrown character and existing agricultural crossing.
Plate 1.3 Disused railway station at Mogeely showing level crossing and disused station building.
Plate 1.4 Existing disused railway corridor at Mogeely.
Plate 1.5 Existing railway corridor between Mogeely and Killeagh.
Plate 1.6 Disused Killeagh Station area looking west (left) and east (right).
Plate 1.7 Disused railway corridor looking east from Killeagh; showing existing railway bridge (centre).
Plate 1.8 Disused railway corridor at Ballyvergan looking east and showing Bog Road.
1. Introduction

Background

1.1. Cork County Council is proposing to develop a Greenway along the now disused railway line from Midleton to Youghal, via the villages of Mogeely and Killeagh in east Cork. The proposed Greenway will be primarily for recreational / tourism use, but may also be used as an alternative sustainable transport route for commuters to Midleton with onward rail links to Cork City. The new greenway (walk / cycle track) will be widened to a desirable surfaced width of 4.0m and a minimum width of 3.0m and have an overall length of approximately 22.3 km; through Ballyvergan Marsh the Greenway will run along a 4.5m raised boardwalk. The location of the proposed Greenway is shown in Figure 1.

1.2. Atkins was commissioned by Cork County Council to prepare an Appropriate Assessment screening report for the proposed greenway between the towns of Midleton and Youghal, Co. Cork. A separate preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the proposed Greenway was also prepared by Atkins for Cork County Council which should be read in conjunction with this report.

Site Context

1.3. The proposed Greenway route follows the disused rail line (Great Southern & Western Railway; Youghal Branch) between the towns of Midleton and Youghal, Co. Cork. The proposed Greenway runs from the north-eastern corner of Midleton to the old railway station at Youghal in east Cork. It passes through the villages of Mogeely and Killeagh along its route to Youghal (Figure 1).

1.4. The proposed Greenway crosses a number of rivers, streams and drainage ditches along its length. The two main rivers crossed being the Dungourney River to the west and the Womanagh River and 9 of its tributaries between Mogeely and Youghal (Figure 4.). The Dungourney River enters Cork Harbour at Midleton; while the Womanagh River enters the sea at Ballymacoda Bay. In addition the proposed greenway also runs through Ballyvergan Marsh, a proposed Natural Heritage Area, to the east before arriving at the old train station at Youghal.

1.5. The proposed greenway is set in a landscape which is under intensive agricultural use including dairying, dry stock, arable and forestry. In addition, a number of semi-natural woodlands are located in the wider landscape which are linked by a network of treelines and hedgerows that serve as field boundaries. Near its eastern terminus the greenway passes through a large wetland complex at Ballyvergan Marsh.

1.6. There are a number of Natura 2000 sites (Special Area of Conservation / Special Protection Area for birds within 15km of the proposed Greenway (see Figure 2 & 3). These are discussed in more detail in Section 3 below.

1.7. A number of proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) are located in the surrounding landscape. The proposed Greenway runs through Ballyvergan Marsh pNHA (000078) and adjacent to Ballyquirk Pond pNHA (001235).

- Ballyvergan Marsh is of ecological importance because it contains the largest freshwater coastal marsh in Co. Cork, exhibiting well developed plant communities and holding a sizeable breeding population of Reed Warblers (*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*). Adding to the importance of the site is Wild Clary (*Salvia verbenaca*), a Rare Red Data Book species.

- Ballyquirk Pond and its associated wetlands were of ecological interest due to the presence of the Red Data book species Penny Royal (*Mentha pulegium*) and the rare Orange Foxtail...
1.8. While pNHAs are designated for nature conservation they are not included within the Natura 2000 network and are therefore outside of the scope of an Appropriate Assessment Screening.

**Planning Drawings**

1.9. A full set of design drawings is included with the Part 8 planning application package. The Appropriate Assessment screening report should be read in conjunction with these drawings. Key design drawings are as follows:

- SC-17-075-01 Overall Sheet Layout Plan
- SC-17-075-02 to 14 Key Plan (Sheet 1-13)

1.10. The Site Layout Plan illustrates the proposed works along the Greenway, including the location of screening planting; rail overbridges; rail underbridges; existing culverts; agricultural crossings; and at grade crossings. The overall Sheet Layout and Standard Details are included in Appendix A.

**Proposed Works**

**General Description of the Proposed Development Site & Outline of proposed works**

1.11. The disused railway located between Midleton and Youghal provides the ideal corridor for constructing a Greenway to be enjoyed by cyclists, walkers, runners and many other users. This disused rail corridor is well suited due to its segregation from live traffic for the majority of its 22.75km length and the generally gentle gradient of the route.

1.12. The Greenway was assessed as a series of subsections in terms of existing characteristics, route alignment and design options. The route of the proposed Greenway can be subdivided into three sub-sections for the purposes of description:

- Midleton Train Station and environs to the disused Mogeely Station;
- The disused Mogeely Station to the disused Killeagh Station; and
- The disused Killeagh Station to the disused Youghal Station.

1.13. The following description will describe the existing character of the proposed development site and outline in general terms the typical scope of the proposed scheme within each of the above three sub-sections. A description of the principal features of the proposed scheme is set out below and illustrated in the Part 8 Planning Drawings. The route will be widened to a desirable surfaced width of 4.0m and a minimum width of 3.0m. In order to accommodate the works there will be scrub and vegetation clearance works along the old line.

**Section 1 - Midleton Station Environs to Mogeely**

1.14. This section of the proposed development site is approximately 8.3km in length and extends from just outside the northern entrance to Midleton Train Station to the disused Mogeely Station.
1.15. The proposed development site commences on Council owned lands contiguous to the northern entrance to Midleton Train Station. In the vicinity of the Midleton Train Station complex, the proposed development site is adjoined to the north and south by residential development and, in the eastern portion of the railway complex, the Midleton Rugby Football Club adjoins the railway property to the south. The proposed greenway corridor will be located outside the operational area of the railway on lands that are currently overgrown or under scrub vegetation within the northern portion of the railway property. The proposed greenway connects to the original railway alignment on the western approach to Broomfield Bridge. To the west of Broomfield Bridge, the Irish Distillers complex is located to the south of the original railway corridor.

1.16. Eastward from Midleton, land use adjoining the railway corridor is predominantly agricultural with a mixture of agricultural activities present. A number of established operational agricultural crossings are evident along the length of this section of the railway corridor.

1.17. A farmhouse and associated yard adjoins the railway property on the approach to Mogeely. At Mogeely, the disused railway complex is overgrown in parts. The railway station building remains as does the level crossing at the junction with the public road. No works to these structures are proposed as part of the scheme. An industrial land use adjoins the disused railway complex to the south.

1.18. The disused railway corridor is largely overgrown throughout the section between Midleton and Mogeely and the project will entail site clearance to accommodate the proposed linear greenway amenity. Existing planted boundaries and hedgerow will be retained where possible. Existing culverts and bridge structures will be subject to full assessment at detailed design stage, however the objective will be to retain and repair with modifications or replacement only being considered in limited circumstances where necessary in the interests of safety or structural need.

1.19. Existing road crossings will be maintained and proposals are shown in the Part 8 Planning Drawings. Existing established agricultural crossings will be maintained in accordance with the principles set out in Section 4. Key elements of the scheme include the provision of a shared use path for walkers and cyclists and the provision of signage and user amenities such as seating and cycling stands. A small car park is proposed to the north of the existing northern entrance to Midleton Train Station and a second car park is proposed to the east of the existing northern station car park, access to which will be via the existing station car park. Car parking is also proposed adjoining the former station at Mogeely. The principal features of the scheme are set out below and illustrated in the Part 8 Planning Drawings.

Plate 1.1. Disused railway corridor, Broomfield Bridge on the R627.
Plate 1.2 Disused railway corridor showing overgrown character and existing agricultural crossing.

Plate 1.3 Disused railway station at Mogeely showing level crossing and disused station building.

Section 2 – Mogeely Station to Killeagh Station

1.20. This section of the proposed route extends from the disused Mogeely Station to the disused Killeagh Station, a distance of approximately 4.6 km.

1.21. In Mogeely, to the east of the L-3805 road, a residential property and co-op store adjoin the railway corridor to the south with a church and playing fields located immediately to the north. Between Mogeely and Killeagh, the railway corridor is substantially overgrown. Within this section, the lands immediately adjoining the railway corridor are typically in agricultural use with a number of existing agricultural crossings in place and occasional farmyards, farmhouses, and residential properties in the vicinity. Adjoining the disused Killeagh Station, the disused Station Master’s House is in private residential use and two other residential properties adjoin the railway property to the north.
1.22. Between Mogeely and Killeagh, vegetation clearance will be required to accommodate the proposed development; however the objective will be to retain boundary planting where possible. The scheme includes the provision of a shared use path for walkers and cyclists as well as related user amenities such as seating and signage.

1.23. Existing road crossings will be retained as detailed in the Part 8 planning drawings and proposals for the accommodation of existing agricultural crossings will be developed in accordance with the principles set out below and shown on the Part 8 drawings. It is proposed that existing railway structures (bridges, culverts etc.) will be fully assessed at detailed design stage with the intention to retain and repair throughout - replacement will only be considered where required in the interests of safety or structural necessity. A minor deviation from the original alignment of the railway property is proposed at Ballyquirk where the former railway cottage is occupied. The principal features of the scheme are set out below and illustrated in the Part 8 Planning Drawings.
Section 3 – Killeagh Station to Youghal Station

1.24. This section extends from the disused station at Killeagh to the disused station in Youghal, a distance of approximately 10.1 km.

1.25. To the east of the disused station area in Killeagh, an existing residential development is located immediately to the north of the railway corridor and a single private residence and yard adjoin the railway to the south. Continuing east from Killeagh, land use on either side of the railway corridor is chiefly agricultural with a number of agricultural crossings visible. The railway corridor between Killeagh and Youghal is generally overgrown. Occasional farmyards, farmhouses and residential properties are located adjacent to the railway corridor within this section. The landscape and agricultural character of this area changes on the approach to Ballyvergan where there is some forestry and more marginal wetland or marsh land adjoining the line.

1.26. On the approach to Youghal, the railway is adjoined to the north by Seafield Caravan Park and to the south by a private residential property and Claycastle Pitch and Putt Club. Further east, a residential property is located to the north of the railway line with a gated access from the public road via a level crossing of the railway corridor. At Front Strand, a group of detached and semi-detached dwellings adjoin the railway property to the south.

1.27. The lands contiguous to the proposed scheme at the disused Youghal Station area are generally undeveloped. An existing public car park adjoins the disused train station area to the south and the original railway turntable remains in situ but is overgrown.

1.28. Between Killeagh and Youghal the proposed shared use path for walkers and cyclists will be accommodated on the disused railway line following clearance. As outlined in Section 4, the path will typically take the form of a sealed surface bituminous finish with the exception of an approximately 2.5km section in the vicinity of Ballyvergan where the greenway will be accommodated on boardwalk. The remainder of the path from the Railway Bridge to Youghal Station will have a sealed surface finish.

1.29. As shown in the Part 8 Planning Drawings, existing road crossings will be retained throughout. Existing established operational agricultural crossings will be maintained as outlined in Section 4. Access to the existing residential property to the north of the railway line at Claycastle will be maintained. Throughout the section between Killeagh and Youghal, existing railway structures (bridges, culverts etc.) will be assessed in full at detailed design stage where the objective will be to retain and repair with modifications or replacement only provided where so required in the interests of safety or structural need.
Plate 1.7  Disused railway corridor looking east from Killeagh; showing existing railway bridge (centre).

Plate 1.8  Disused railway corridor at Ballyvergan looking east and showing Bog Road.
Description of Principal Features of Proposed Development

1.30. The following paragraphs describe the principal features of the proposed scheme and should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Part 8 Planning Drawings.

Site Clearance & Preparation

1.31. Clearance will be undertaken to remove existing vegetation and organic material but vegetation clearance will be kept to a minimum during the construction phase. Hedgerows and tree lines will be maintained where possible however the removal of overgrown and encroaching vegetation on the disused railway will be necessary for site access and construction on all sections of the greenway.

1.32. Some of the railway track was removed a number of years ago. It is proposed that the remaining track will be lifted and both track and sleepers will be salvaged where possible. The existing track would not be suitable for future reuse as railway track. The existing ballast will remain in position to act as part of the foundation layer for the proposed path.

Proposed Path

1.33. The proposed path will largely be formed using a sealed bituminous surface with the exception of an approximately 2.5km section in the vicinity of Ballyvergan on the approach to Youghal.

Sealed Surface Path

1.34. The railway corridor was constructed to accommodate a single track. The track line is generally located in the centre of the corridor but does shift in position on approaches to bends. It is proposed to generally position the proposed path on top of the existing track line.

1.35. The proposed path is to have a desirable maximum width of up to 4m and a minimum width of 3m, made up of 40mm bituminous surface laid on 150mm of crushed stone sub-base. Localised exceptions to this may arise, for example, at existing bridges or in similar situations.

1.36. As stated, the proposed path will be generally constructed on the existing line and the existing ballast will be retained to form part of the foundation layer. An indicative section detail for the proposed path is provided in the Part 8 Planning Drawings. The full details for the path construction will be specified at detailed design stage. Where the proposed path is located on an embankment, additional fencing may be used to confine users to the path. There will be a cross fall of 3% on the surface of the finished path.

Boardwalk

1.37. Between Ch. 1200 and Ch. 3800 as shown in the Part 8 Planning Drawings, the proposed path will be constructed as a boardwalk. The boardwalk will be constructed of either a raft foundation or similar system which will be specified at detailed design stage. The boardwalk deck will be constructed of either timber or composite material, subject to specification at detailed design stage. As the boardwalk will be elevated above the surrounding ground levels, railings will be provided on the boardwalk edges to 1.4m in height. This section of the proposed path will follow the alignment of the railway line and will be up to 4m in effective width, subject to full specification at detailed design stage.

Bridges

1.38. A number of existing railway bridges over local roads and/or watercourses will require retrofitting to accommodate the proposed path. The bridges are in varying states of repair with some bridge decks and/or parapets in poor condition.
1.39. Works to upgrade or repair bridges will include remedial works or the provision of a new concrete deck. No earthworks, remedial works, construction or in-stream works outside the existing railway corridor are required as part of the proposal. Railings will be installed on over-bridges to provide 1.4m high protection for users.

Culverts

1.40. Works to upgrade or repair culverts will include remedial works or the provision of a new concrete box culvert. No earthworks, remedial works, construction or in-stream works outside the existing railway corridor are required as part of the proposal. Railings may be installed on culverts where required to provide 1.4m high protection for users.

Drainage

1.41. The existing drainage paths and culverts which are located along the railway are to be retained. A proposed cross fall of 3% will direct runoff towards the existing drainage ditch adjacent to the disused railway.

1.42. Drainage ditches will be maintained in their present condition. As the runoff from the proposed path will be limited, the existing drainage ditches will be more than capable of providing sufficient drainage capacity for the proposed greenway path. An additional closed drainage pipe system may be required where the condition of the existing drainage ditches warrant replacement. The full details of the construction will be specified at detailed design stage. Run-off from car parking facilities will connect to existing storm water services or soakways where none are present.

1.43. The provision of a boardwalk through the Ballyvergan area will not impact on existing drainage as the path will be above existing ground levels.

1.44. A Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared and is contained under separate cover within the Part Planning Document. This report concludes that the proposed development is defined as a ‘water-compatible development’ and therefore its construction is acceptable. While there is potential for parts of the path to be inundated during a flooding event, this is acceptable provided that the path design takes this into consideration.

Car Parking, Access Points and Lighting

1.45. The Part 8 Planning Drawings show indicative layouts for proposed car parking arrangements which will be further developed at detailed design stage. Ducting and public lighting at the car parks will be provided however the greenway is not proposed to be lit.

1.46. Access points to car parking facilities are shown in the scheme drawings. Vegetation and tree removal will be required to facilitate access and sight lines. Vehicular access to the greenway at car parks and road crossings shall be permitted for maintenance and emergency use only.

Road Crossings

1.47. A number of at-grade road crossings exist along the existing railway corridor which will be retained as part of the scheme but may require some works to provide a safe crossing point for pedestrians and cyclists and in the interests of the safety of road users. Proposed works at these locations may include additional road markings, signage and other traffic calming measures on the local road. The level of traffic calming will depend on the level of vehicular traffic on the local roads which are to be crossed as well as visibility at the crossings. Signage and access controls will also be required on the greenway to alert walkers and cyclists of approaching road crossings. All relevant approvals and liaison with the Area Roads Engineer will be adhered to for any traffic calming proposals which fall under this project.
1.48. The treatment of road crossings will vary from where the greenway path crosses a public road within a town/village and where it crosses a public road in a rural area. In built up areas, the crossings will include provision of traffic calming measures and additional public lighting. All crossing points will incorporate staggered gates, advanced warning signage for both the path users and advance warning signage for road users. Walkers and cyclists will be required to yield to road users. Crossings will be at grade and may include antiskid surfacing treatment as appropriate.

Agricultural Crossings

1.49. The accommodation of existing established agricultural crossings will be provided for as part of the scheme and will generally take the form of a level at-grade crossing with agricultural gates on either side of the corridor providing the individual landowner with access. A concrete pad will be provided between the agricultural gates and existing agricultural services (e.g. water and/or electricity) will be maintained. The accommodation works at the crossing point will be agreed in consultation between Cork County Council and the landowner at detailed design stage, however it will typically consist of a gated arrangement, as described, which will separate the greenway path from the farm. When the land owner wishes to use the crossing point, gates will be utilised to temporarily close the greenway path until the farmer completes his/her crossing. Surface water runoff from the greenway path will be piped to a drain to prevent water accessing lands via the crossing point. Equally water will not run off crossing points to the greenway path surface. Advance signage will be put in place on the approach to at-grade agricultural crossings to alert path users of potential agricultural activity on the path.

1.50. In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to the provision of a cattle under/over pass. The provision of a cattle under/over pass will only apply in a limited number of situations where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council that the individual landowner has an existing, contiguous and substantial landholding on both sides of the railway corridor and that the land owner is currently engaged in a dairy farming operation on these contiguous lands that necessitates the movement of animals across the existing railway corridor via an established crossing on a regular basis. It is envisaged that a maximum of one single cattle under/overpass will apply per individual land owner. In such applicable circumstances, consideration will be given to the provision of an individual cattle under/overpass at or in the vicinity of an existing established agricultural crossing, the details of which will be subject to full assessment and to the site specific circumstances and conditions as well as consultation with the individual landowner at detailed design stage.

Boundary Treatment

1.51. The following paragraphs set out proposals for boundary treatment for property adjoining the disused railway corridor.

Boundary Treatment with Agricultural Property

1.52. Existing vegetation and robust natural boundaries within the railway corridor will be retained where possible. Prior to the commencement of development, an assessment of existing boundaries will be undertaken with a view to developing and implementing a Landscape Masterplan and maintenance regime.

1.53. Where there is no boundary, it is proposed to re-establish the original boundary. The type of boundary will be agreed with the adjoining landowner and will take the form of either a concrete post-and-wire fence with planting or stock proof fencing with planting. Existing drainage and/or ducting will be maintained.

1.54. In general terms, it is proposed that Cork County Council will provide fencing to protect farmer’s vulnerable livestock. It is proposed that the fence will be erected on the farmer’s holding. Arrangements for the provision of the fence will be agreed with the farmer. It is proposed that the
Council will take responsibility for the materials and the erection of the fence and that the farmer will be responsible for its maintenance.

**Boundary with Residential Property**

1.55. A number of residential properties are located adjacent to the existing railway corridor. Screening may be required in certain areas to protect the privacy of residents however the method of screening may vary dependent on factors including proximity of the dwelling, existing boundary planting, ground levels and ground conditions etc. Consultation with landowners will be undertaken at the detailed design stage of the project to agree site specific proposals. As a general principle, the following provisions will apply to the provision of boundary treatment at the residential curtilage of a dwelling, subject to need, site-specific considerations including ground levels and conditions and agreement with the relevant landowner:

**Dwelling within 10m of Railway**

1.56. Where a dwelling is within 10m of the boundary of the railway corridor and the curtilage of the dwelling directly adjoins the railway corridor, up to a maximum 2m high woven and lap boarded panel fence will be constructed and supplemented where possible on the scheme side with a natural hedgerow to future proof the fencing. In exceptional circumstances, a capped and rendered concrete block wall may be erected (to a maximum 2m height). Full details of boundary screening will be developed where required at detailed design stage. Such details will be dependent on site-specific considerations, including existing boundary planting, ground levels and conditions, and reflect consultations with the individual land owner.

1.57. As an exception to the above provisions, it should be noted that the existing disused railway corridor adjoins a number of residential properties at the Front Strand area in Youghal; these individual properties are Protected Structures and are located within an Architectural Conservation Area. These dwellings are separated from the railway property by an existing wall. No additional boundary works are proposed at this location.

**Dwelling within 50m of Railway**

1.58. Where a dwelling is within 50m of the boundary of the railway corridor and where the existing boundary is not sufficient to protect the privacy of the land owner, up to a maximum 2m high woven and lap boarded panel fence will be constructed and supplemented where possible on the scheme side with a natural hedgerow to future proof the fencing. Full specifications for boundary treatment in such circumstances will be developed where required at detailed design stage. Such details will be dependent on site-specific considerations, including existing boundary planting, ground levels and conditions and consultations with the individual land owner.

1.59. As an exception to the above provisions, it should be noted that the existing disused railway corridor adjoins a number of residential properties at the Front Strand area in Youghal; these individual properties are Protected Structures and are located within an Architectural Conservation Area. These dwellings are separated from the railway property by an existing wall. No additional boundary works are proposed at this location.

**Boundary with Commercial or Other Property**

1.60. Where the railway corridor directly adjoins an existing commercial, industrial or other land use, consideration of options for boundary treatment where required will be developed at detailed design stage to reflect the nature of the adjoining land use, existing boundary treatment, ground levels and conditions, site-specific considerations and consultation with the relevant land owner.
Ducting

1.61. Ducting will be provided along the route to allow for the potential to run services such as e fibre, telecoms or similar future services.

Construction Access & Temporary Construction Compounds

1.62. Access for construction purposes will make use of existing public roads and land. It is envisaged that an area of the proposed car park locations will serve as a temporary construction compound during the construction phase. Access for construction purposes will be also be primarily via the proposed car park locations. Construction machinery (e.g. excavators, dumpers and pavers) will be used in the construction of the proposed greenway path.

Signage

1.63. Signage will incorporate visitor information, way-finding information, heritage information and advisory/regulatory information in proximity to road/ agricultural crossings. All signage will be subject to full specification at detailed design in project in accordance with national technical standards and guidance.

Landscaping and Ancillary Facilities

1.64. Existing boundary hedgerow will be retained where possible although overgrown and encroaching vegetation will need to be removed to facilitate the proposed scheme. A Landscape Masterplan will be developed for the overall scheme at detailed design stage and will incorporate proposals for compensatory planting. The Landscape Masterplan will identify opportunities for enhancement and include proposals for rest areas consisting of seating and cycle stands, for example. The Landscape Masterplan will be required to reflect the ecology of the area, the local environment, local history and the railway heritage in the materials, planting and other details.

Railway Buildings

1.65. A number of existing disused railway buildings are located along the route of the proposed linear greenway park however the current Part 8 application does not include proposals for any works to these structures. It is acknowledged that these structures may have potential for appropriate reuse at a future date, for example for tourism related purposes or for visitor facilities. Any proposed works in the future would be subject to the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2001 (as amended).

Dog Control

1.66. Dogs will be required to be kept on a lead and appropriate regulation, signage and promotion of this arrangement will be undertaken by Cork County Council.

Maintenance and Management

1.67. Cork County Council is the promoter of the proposed greenway and, subject to Part 8 planning consent being approved, a licence will be sought from Coras Iompair Éireann and Iarnrod Éireann. Under this licence agreement, Cork County Council would be responsible for the development, maintenance and public liability of the greenway.

1.68. Cork County Council will prepare a detailed plan to provide for the ongoing maintenance and management of the proposed greenway at detailed design stage.
Funding and Timing of Development

1.69. The implementation of the proposed scheme will be dependent on the availability of funding. As such, the delivery of the scheme may be achieved in a whole stage or on a phased basis, depending on funding. Subject to Part 8 planning consent being secured, Cork County Council will seek funding from all relevant potential funding sources to secure the delivery of the project.

1.70. The sequence and timing of the works will be structured to allow environmental factors to be accommodated.
Construction of the Greenway

1.71. Cork County Council will brief the appointed Contractor; provide them with Scope of Works and with a copy of both this assessment and the ecological impact assessment.

1.72. Cork County Council and / or the Contractor must inform Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) and National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) of the commencement of proposed works. Prior to commencing works Cork County Council must confirm that works are in line with feedback from bodies consulted.

1.73. The contractor will identify and name a project manager / site manager / site foreman to Cork County Council. The site manager / site foreman will supervise all activities and ensure compliance with measures, such as maintenance of a protective buffer zone, to protect the receiving environment.

1.74. The site manager / site foreman will be responsible for ensuring all site workers are informed of the approach to good working practice on site and any additional measures they may wish to employ to protect the receiving environment.

Mobilisation and Securing of the Site

1.75. The lands made available for works must be clearly identified and made known to the Contractor and all site staff. The Contractor will establish the site area, including site compound, set down area for vehicles, works areas, temporary set-down areas for material removed etc. prior to commencing work on the development. These areas will need to be fenced / secured to keep the public out of the work area and should be secured as appropriate to prevent pollution risk. Site compounds are to be located at proposed parking site locations at Midleton, Mogeely, Killeagh and Youghal.

1.76. The risk of surface water runoff from the compound to receiving waters must be assessed and appropriate control measures such as silt fences or gravel berms erected between any watercourses and the works. As part of this process the Contractor / Environmental Manager must identify potential pollution risks and pollution pathways between the site compound and / or works area and receiving waters.

1.77. The following measures should be implemented in relation to oil storage/ refuelling during the construction phase:

- All fuel stored on site for construction vehicles will be kept in a locked and bunded area.
- All re-fuelling will take place well away from all existing waterbodies. The fuelling system must have a flow limitation function attached to the nozzle as well as an emergency cut off so it cannot accidentally be left running, as well as a drip tray to prevent loss of fuel to surface water, soil or groundwater at the refuelling point.
- Each area of work will have a designated fuelling area, which shall be as far as practicable from any waterbodies. The Contractor shall identify these areas to their plant operatives.
- All mobile plant, such as excavators, dumpers etc. shall be refuelled at least 15m from any adjacent waterbody.
- All temporary construction fuel tanks will also be located in a suitably bunded area and all tanks will be double skinned. In addition, emergency spill kits including oil absorbent materials must be kept on site in close proximity to any fuel storage tanks or bowsers during proposed site development works.
- In the absence of fuelling on site these measures will not be required.

1.78. The production, transport and placement of all cementitious materials will be strictly planned and supervised. Site batching/production of concrete will not be carried out on site and therefore these aspects will not pose a risk to the waterbodies present in the vicinity of the site.

1.79. With regard to measures to be taken where cast in place concrete is to be used the following measures will be put in place (the need for cast in place will be determined at detailed design):

- All concrete pours should be planned.
- Full washing out of trucks will occur back at the batching plant.
- Shutters will be designed to prevent failure. Grout loss will be prevented from shuttered pours by ensuring that all joints between panels achieve a close fit or that they are sealed.
- Chemicals used will be biodegradable where possible.
- Any spillages will be cleaned up and disposed of correctly.
- Where concrete is to be placed by means of a skip, the opening gate of the delivery chute will be securely fastened to prevent accidental opening.
- Where possible, concrete skips, pumps and machine buckets will be prevented from slewing over water when placing concrete.
- Surplus concrete will be returned to batch plant after completion of a pour.

1.80. Under no circumstances should water be taken from, or discharged to neighbouring watercourses during the Construction phase.

**Storage / Stockpiling of Materials**

1.81. Temporary stockpiling of native soils and made materials onsite should take place at least 15m away from watercourses, to prevent the release of sediment into the watercourse.

- Stockpiled materials should be covered to prevent it spilling over/blowing onto areas of environmental interest or semi-natural vegetation outside the agreed lands.
- Stockpile of materials to be kept to an absolute minimum, and where possible, stockpiled for as short a time as possible prior to use.
- Any stockpiled materials will be stored in low mounds where possible and they will be located as far as possible from all existing waterbodies.
- Slopes of material should be stable, and the side slopes compacted down and stabilised, with regular checks by the Contractor.
- Stockpiles of materials not suitable for onsite re-use should be removed as soon as is practicable in accordance with applicable waste management legislation, and under no circumstances to be stockpiled in sensitive ecological areas.
- The Contractor should develop a contingency plan for temporary covering of stockpiles during adverse weather conditions, or other measures as deemed necessary in order to minimise risk of sediment release to watercourses.
- The Contractor should comply with best practice when sourcing imported materials for site works, including NRA (2006) *A Guide to Landscape Treatments*.

- If imported material is required, it must be checked prior to stockpiling for potential presence of invasive species.

- And fuel containers or other potential liquid contaminants should be stored in a bund of 110% of the capacity of the container.

- In all cases building materials must be stored away from receiving waters with no storage of materials on or near the riverbanks.

**General Measures**

- **Water Quality**: With respect to all proposed works the appointed contractor will be required to protect water quality and aquatic ecology; e.g. to prevent escapement of silt laden waters from the works area to neighbouring watercourses (note in particular; IFI, 2016).

- **Lighting**: It is not anticipated that construction lighting will be required. However, should the programme result in any such lighting being needed on site, only the works area should be lit, no spillage of light allowed over areas of adjoining semi-natural habitat or watercourses. Where health and safety allows, lighting should not be left on overnight.

- **Dust**: Standard measures should be taken which will minimise dust from construction activities, at a minimum adhering to standard good practice which includes the Building Research Establishment (BRE) document entitled ‘*Control of Dust from Construction and Demolition Activities*’. Dust minimisation measures should include, but are not limited to, the following actions:
  - Site access shall be regularly cleaned and maintained using road sweepers as required.
  - Dampening down of areas where dust may arise, as required, during dry and/or windy conditions; this also applies to vehicles delivering material with dust potential.
  - Any stockpiling of materials shall be designed and laid out to minimise exposure to wind, and potential for dust nuisance.
  - Any surplus soils removed from site shall be appropriately covered during transport to the relevant permitted / licenced disposal facility.

- **Biosecurity**: Advice on Biosecurity measures can e.g. be found on Inland Fishery Ireland's webpage. Note in particular the IFI publication *Biosecurity Protocol for Field Survey Work*. All necessary precautions will be taken to avoid the introduction and / or spread of invasive plant species (see Ecology Report).

- **Waste management**: It will be the responsibility of the Contractor to ensure that all works are to be undertaken in compliance with national legislation, including the Waste Management Act, 1996 as well as the *Guidelines for the Management of Waste from National Road Construction Projects* (NRA, 2008). Waste prevention and minimisation should be a primary driver of the waste management system during the construction phase. The potential for contaminated land to be encountered during the construction works should be fully addressed by the Contractor within the Waste Management Plan.

---

1 http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Biosecurity/biosecurity.html
2. **Appropriate Assessment Process**

2.1. The purpose of Screening for AA is to determine the likelihood of significant effects, if any, that construction and operation of the proposed Greenway could have on Natura 2000 sites.

### Aims of the Report

2.2. The aim of this report is to provide supporting information to assist the competent authority, in this case Cork County Council, to carry out a Screening for Appropriate Assessment in respect of the proposed works to construct and operate a Greenway between Midleton and Youghal.

### Legislative Context

2.3. Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora, known as the ‘Habitats Directive’ provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of European Community interest, at a favourable conservation status. Articles 3 – 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservations of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000 sites. Natura 2000 sites are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

2.4. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans or projects that could potentially affect Natura 2000 sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment; -

> “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. 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.”

2.5. Article 6 (4) deals with the steps that should be taken when it is determined, as a result of Appropriate Assessment, that a plan or project will adversely affect a European site. Alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) and compensatory measures need to be addressed in this case. Article 6(4) states: -

> “If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.”

### Appropriate Assessment Process

2.6. Guidance on the AA process was produced by the European Commission (EC, 2001), which was subsequently used to develop guidance for Ireland by the Department of Environment, Heritage
and Local Government in 2009 (DEHLG, 2009). These guidance documents set out a four-staged approach to complete the AA process and outlines the issues and tests at each stage.

Text Figure 2-1  Appropriate Assessment Process (Source: DEHLG, 2009).

2.7. The stages outlined below are taken from the guidance document Appropriate Assessment of Planes and Project in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2009).

**Stage 1 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment**

2.8. Screening is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3): -

i. Whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site, and

ii. Whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

2.9. If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA).

**Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment**

2.10. This stage considers whether the plan or project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, and includes any mitigation measures necessary to avoid, reduce or offset negative effects.

2.11. The competent authority can only agree to the plan or project after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site(s) concerned. If this cannot be determined, and where mitigation cannot be achieved, the alternative solutions need to be considered and the process proceeds to Stage 3.

**Stage 3 - Alternative Solutions**

2.12. This stage examines any alternative solutions or options that could enable the plan or project to proceed without adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. The process must return to Stage 2 as alternatives will require appropriate assessment in order to proceed. Demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives have been considered and assessed, and that the least damaging option has been selected, is necessary to progress to Stage 4.

**Stage 4 – IROPI**

2.13. Stage 4 examines whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for allowing a plan or project that will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site to proceed in cases where it has been established that no less damaging alternative solution exists. Compensatory measures must be proposed and assessed, of which the Commission must be informed.

2.14. The AA process only progresses through each of the four stages for certain plans and projects. For example, for a project not connected with the management of a site and where no likely significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives are identified, the process stops at Stage 1, Screening for AA. Throughout the process the precautionary principle
must be applied, which requires that the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 should prevail where there is uncertainty (EC, 2001).

2.15. This report is for Stage 1 of the process, Screening for Appropriate Assessment.
3. **Methods**

3.1. The aim of this screening report is to provide supporting information to assist the competent authority to carry out an appropriate assessment screening of the proposed Midleton to Youghal Greenway, Co. Cork. The proposed route commences within the area around Midleton Station in the townland of Townparks; the route follows the disused rail line (Great Southern & Western Railway (Youghal Branch)) and terminates at the former Youghal railway station within the Claycastle townland, Youghal, Co. Cork (Figure 1.).

3.2. The Appropriate Assessment process begins with Stage 1 - Screening to determine if a plan or project is likely to have an impact on a Natura 2000 site. The methodology used to complete the Appropriate Assessment screening follows best practice guidance, including:

- European Commission (2001). Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- Case C-323/17 People Over Wind & anor. V. Coillte.
- Case C-461/17 Brian Holohan and Other v An Bord Pleanála, other party to proceedings: National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

**Desk Study**

3.3. Locations and boundaries of all Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence of the proposed works were identified and reviewed using the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) online map viewer. Boundary shapefiles were also downloaded from this site to facilitate the preparation of project graphics.

3.4. Desktop information on relevant Natura 2000 sites in the vicinity of the proposed works were reviewed on the NPWS website, including the site synopsis for each SAC/SPA, the conservation objectives, the site boundaries as shown on the NPWS online map viewer, the standard Natura 2000 Data Form for the SAC/SPA which details conditions and threats of the sites, and published information and unpublished reports on the relevant Natura 2000 sites. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and NBDC online databases were consulted concerning Natura 2000 sites and their features of interest in the vicinity of the Site.

3.5. This screening assessment is based on a desk study in which the potential of the proposed works to impact on Natura 2000 sites was evaluated. The Site and the surrounding area was viewed...
using Google Earth, Google maps\(^2\) and Bing maps\(^3\). The Cork County Council planning portal was accessed for information on other planning applications within the Site and immediate area (last accessed 15\(^{th}\) December 2017). The watercourse datasets accessed through the EPA were also used to complement the information available from the NPWS system.

**Site visit**

3.6. A habitat survey was carried out on a number of days in late August and September 2015 following Fossitt (2000\(^4\)) and Smith *et al.*, (2011\(^5\)). The objective was to survey and map all semi-natural habitats to Fossitt level 3; as per habitat classification set out in *Guide to Habitats in Ireland* (Fossitt, 2000). The survey was conducted within the recommended survey time for habitat and botanical mapping as defined by the Heritage Council’s *Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping* (i.e. April to the end of September). All habitats are mapped as either polygons or polylines, with any small, but notable features noted on site recorded as point features.

3.7. Whilst surveying due consideration was also given to the possible occurrence of non-native invasive species, such Japanese knotweed. The location of any such plants was recorded.

3.8. While summer is not an ideal time for surveying for mammals due to dense vegetation growth, any mammal signs, such as faeces, paw prints, tracks and/or trails, etc., noted during the course of habitat mapping survey work were also recorded. A targeted search for mammal dwellings (such as e.g. rabbit warrens, badger setts, otter holts etc.) was also undertaken within areas of suitable habitat / ground conditions; such as in embankments, hedgerows, areas of scrub, woodland and along the berm / overburden areas located around the periphery of the railway corridor. While, the recording of any structures such as badger setts, otter holts and bat roosts were of primary concern; evidence of suitable feeding and commuting areas for these species was also noted. Habitats present on the site were assessed as to their suitability for supporting mammals. This was supplemented by desktop research and consultation.

3.9. Consideration was also given to the role of the railway line as an ecological corridor, in particular its role in allowing the habitat to allow the movement of species through an intensively agricultural landscape.

3.10. Any other taxa of conservation importance, or the suitability of habitats for such taxa, are also discussed. On site observations were supplement with appropriate desktop literature review and consultation.

**Consultation**

3.11. Detailed consultation was outside the scope of the current study and will be returned to when design proposals have been further developed. Some preliminary consultation was, however, undertaken as part of ecological assessment, both to identify ecological concerns and collate relevant data. Parties consulted to date were as follows: -

- Sharon Casey, Heritage Office, Cork County Council;
- Cyril Saich, National Parks & Wildlife Service (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht)
- Pat Smiddy, former National Parks & Wildlife Service (DAHG) Conservation Ranger for east Cork;

---

\(^2\) https://www.google.ie/maps including Google Street view.

\(^3\) http://www.bing.com/maps/


- Michael McPartland, Inland Fisheries Ireland (consulted directly by Cork County Council);
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

3.12. A formal data request was also issued to National Parks & Wildlife Service (DAHG) via the Data Request Office - http://www.npws.ie/maps-and-data/request-data.

**Statement of Authority**

3.13. The appropriate assessment screening report was prepared by Paul O'Donoghue and Owen Twomey.

3.14. Paul O'Donoghue has a BSc (Zoology), MSc (Behavioural Ecology) and a PhD in avian ecology and genetics. His is a chartered member of the Society for the Environment (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). Paul has over 18 years’ experience in ecology; including extensive experience in the preparation of Habitat Directive Assessments / Natura Impact Statements (i.e. Appropriate Assessment under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive). Paul carried out the site visit and prepared this report.

3.15. Owen Twomey is an ecologist with a BSc in Environmental Sciences (Zoology) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Ecological Assessment. Owen has worked in ecological consultancy since 2016 and has been involved on a number of projects across a broad range of areas. The focus of his work has been on the ecological applications of GIS, such as habitat mapping and spatial analytics, as well as studies on invasive floral species. Owen also has experience in habitat surveying (phase 1&2), river/water quality assessments, animal behaviour analysis and EIA screening reports, and has worked in a support role in the preparation of Appropriate Assessment screening reports and Natural Impact Statements. Owen assisted with preparation of the assessment and carried out the technical review.
4. Appropriate Assessment Screening

Conservation Objectives

4.1. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them.

4.2. Favourable conservation status of habitats is defined when a habitat(s) displays the following characteristics:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long term maintenance exist and
- are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

4.3. Favourable conservation status of species is defined as when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitat, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced, nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is and probably will continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Natura 2000 Sites

Connectivity of the Works Area to Natura 2000 Sites

4.4. The ‘zone of influence’ for a project is the area over which ecological features may be subject to significant effects as a result of the proposed project and associated activities. This is likely to extend beyond the project site, for example where there are ecological or hydrological links beyond the site boundaries. The zone of influence will vary for different ecological features depending on their sensitivity to an environmental change (CIEEM, 2016).

4.5. A distance of 15 km is currently recommended in the case of plans, as a potential zone of influence, and this distance is derived from UK guidance (Scott Wilson et al., 2006). For projects, the distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but National Parks and Wildlife Service guidance advises that this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in-combination effects.

4.6. It follows that given the nature of the proposed works being largely confined within disused rail lines the potential zone of influence of the proposed greenway will be limited to Natura 2000 sites closest to the development or connected via hydrological pathways (ground or surface water).

---


Features of Interest

4.7. The features of interest for each Natura 2000 site are listed in Tables 4.1 for Special Areas of Conservation and in Table 4.3 for Special Protection Areas of birds. In each case the source for this information is quoted.

Likelihood of Potential Impacts on Natura 2000 Sites

4.8. The available information on the Natura 2000 sites deemed to be inside of the potential zone of influence (see Table 3.2) were reviewed in detail to establish whether the development of the proposed greenway between Midleton and Youghal along the disused rail line is likely to have a significant effect on their conservation objectives. The likelihood of impacts on the features of the sites identified in this report are based on information collated from the desk study, the site visit, the nature of proposed works and the detailed design provided in the construction method statement.

4.9. The likelihood of impacts occurring are established in light of the type and scale of the proposed development, the location of the proposed development with respect to Natura 2000 sites and the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites.

4.10. This screening report is prepared following the Cause – Pathway – Effect model\(^8\). The potential impacts are summarised into the following categories for screening purposes.

- Direct impacts refer to habitat loss or fragmentation arising from land-take requirements for development or agricultural purposes. Direct impacts can be a result of change in land use or management, such as the removal of agricultural practices that prevent scrub encroachment.

- Indirect and secondary impacts do not have a straight-line route between cause and effect. It is potentially more challenging to ensure that all the possible indirect impacts of the plan/project – in combination with other plans and projects - have been established. These can arise, for example, when a development alters the hydrology of a catchment area, which in turn affects the movement of groundwater to a site and the qualifying interests that rely on the maintenance of water levels. Deterioration in water quality can occur as an indirect consequence of development, which in turn changes the aquatic environment and reduces its capacity to support certain plants and animals. The introduction of invasive species can also be defined as an indirect impact. Disturbance to fauna can arise directly through the loss of habitat (e.g. displacement of roosting bats) or indirectly through noise, vibration and increased activity associated with construction and operation.

Special Areas of Conservation

4.11. No section of the Greenway is located within or directly adjacent to a Natura 2000 Site. There are nine Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed greenway: four Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and five Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

4.12. Details of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and their qualifying interests are presented in Table 4.1 below. A short description of each SAC and any potential links with the Greenway for e.g. via watercourses are summarised in Table 4.2. Figure 2 shows the location of the SACs with respect to the proposed greenway.

---

\(^8\) The approach is broadly based on information contained in Cooper, L. M. (2004), *Guidelines for Cumulative Effects Assessment in SEA of Plans, EPMG Occasional Paper 04/LMC/CEA*, Imperial College London.
### Table 4.1 – Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) located within 15 km of the proposed Greenway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Site Code</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Qualifying Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Great Island Channel SAC 9 10                  | 001058    | ca. 1.1km S | ➢ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]  
➤ Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330] |
| Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC 11 12 | 000077    | ca. 1.64km S | ➢ Estuaries [1130]  
➤ Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]  
➤ Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]  
➤ Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330]  
➤ Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) [1410] |
| Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC 13 14    | 002170    | 240m NE  | ➢ 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]  
➤ *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]  
➤ *Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern) [1421] |
| Ardmore Head SAC 15 16                         | 002123    | >9km E   | ➢ Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]  
➤ European dry heaths [4030] |

### Table 4.2 – Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) – site description and details of connectivity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Site Code</th>
<th>Short Description of the Site</th>
<th>Details of connectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Island Channel SAC</td>
<td>001058</td>
<td>This site comprises the north-eastern part of Cork Harbour. It includes all of the Great Island Channel, the intertidal areas between Fota Island and Little Island, and also the estuary of the Dungourney and Owenacurra Rivers as far as Midleton. The area is well sheltered and the intertidal sediments are predominantly fine muds. In addition to the estuarine habitats, the site includes some wet grassland areas which are used by roosting birds, as well as some broad-leaved woodland at Fota Island. Compared to the rest of Cork Harbour, the Great Island Channel is relatively undisturbed, with aquaculture the main activity. The site is of ecological importance for its examples of intertidal mud and sand flats and Atlantic salt meadows of the estuarine type. Both habitats are fairly extensive in area and of moderate to good quality. Site has high ornithological importance, supporting regularly c. 50% of the wintering waterfowl of Cork Harbour.</td>
<td>Proposed greenway crosses the Dungourney River c. 2.7 km upstream of SAC boundary. The Dungourney River flows into the Owenacurra Estuary at Midleton. This is part of the Great Island Channel SAC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC</td>
<td>000077</td>
<td>Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC comprises the estuary of the Womanagh River, a substantial river which drains a large agricultural catchment. The site includes part of the tidal section of the river and extends out to the low tide mark. This is a fine example of a relatively small estuarine system. Intertidal flats are well represented, with a good diversity of macro-invertebrate species and range of intertidal biotopes. Atlantic salt meadows are particularly well-developed and currently extending in parts of site. Salicornia and other annuals of intertidal sand and mud flats also occur. The quality of habitats on the site is good though pollutants from surrounding agricultural catchment undoubtedly enter site. The site is very important for wintering waterfowl, with over 20,000 birds occurring at times.</td>
<td>This SAC is located 1.64 km to the south (as the crow flies). The greenway is hydrologically linked via water crossing points of the Womanagh River and seven of its tributaries which discharge into Ballymacoda SAC. These crossing points are at distances between 2.9 km (Inchiquin Stream at Burges Lower) and 14.4 km (Womanagh River at Mogeely) upstream of this site (see Figure 4).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC</td>
<td>002170</td>
<td>The site supports important examples of a range of Annex I habitats, notably estuaries, intertidal mudflats and sandflats, perennial vegetation of stony banks, salt meadows, floating river vegetation, alluvial forests and oak woodlands. Most of these are of good quality and extensive in area. The Blackwater system is an important salmonid fishery and is of high conservation value for <em>Salmo salar</em>. Also supports important populations of <em>Lampetra planeri</em>, <em>L. fluviatilis</em>, <em>Petromyzon marinus</em> and <em>Alosa fallax</em>. Substantial populations of <em>Margaritifera margaritifera</em> occur, while <em>Austropotamobius pallipes</em> is found in the Awbeg River. Otter <em>Lutra lutra</em> is widespread throughout the site and has been subject to detailed surveys. <em>Tritchomus speciosum</em> occurs at one location. Annex I bird species present in the site include breeding <em>Egretta garzetta</em>, <em>Alcedo atthis</em> and <em>Falco peregrinus</em> and wintering <em>Cygnus cygnus</em> and <em>Pluvialis apricaria</em>. A good diversity of other winter waterfowl species also occurs (NPWS, 2015).</td>
<td>The proposed greenway crosses the East Ballyvergan River which travels through Ballyvergan Marsh and discharges to the sea at Summerfield / Redbarn to the southwest of Youghal. The boundary of the SAC is located at the mouth of the estuary ca. 240m to the northeast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ardmore Head SAC</td>
<td>002123</td>
<td>This site is situated on a small headland to the east of the village of Ardmore on the west Waterford coastline. The site consists of sea cliffs and associated coastal habitats. The cliffs, which form part of the Ardmore Syncline, are of moderate height (up to 40 m), continuous and precipitous. They are also well indented, and have numerous small ledges which support breeding seabirds. The aspect of the cliffs is mostly east and south facing, but there is a small section facing north.</td>
<td>Located ca. 9 km to the east of Yougthal. No surface water or landscape connectivity to the proposed Midleton to Youghal greenway.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

4.13. There is no spatial overlap between the Greenway and any of the SACs listed in Table 4.1.

4.14. There is no hydrological link between the proposed Greenway and either Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC or Ardmore Head SAC. There is no risk of either direct or indirect negative impacts on either of these two sites arising from the proposed development. These sites can therefore be excluded from further consideration. This is due to factors such as; the distance between them and the proposed Greenway, the absence of surface water pathways and other landscape features linking them and the scale and localised nature of the proposed development largely being located within an existing disused rail line. It is not anticipated that these sites are at risk of significant impacts as a result of the proposed works. These sites are not, therefore considered further in this assessment.

4.15. Whilst the proposed Greenway is itself remote from Great Island Channel SAC and Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC, it is linked hydrologically to these two sites. These sites are discussed further in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 – Screening of SACs within 15km of the proposed Greenway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Site Code</th>
<th>Screening Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Great Island Channel SAC       | 001058    | As noted Great Island Channel SAC is designated for the protection of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] and Atlantic salt meadows *(Glaucoc-Puccinellietalia maritimae)* [1330]; see Map 3 and 5 of NPWS (2014), respectively. There is no direct impact on wetlands within the SAC and hence on habitats or associated species for which the site has been designated.

As noted the Greenway crosses the Dungourney River, which enters Cork Harbour in the estuary of the Owenacurra; discharging into Great Island SAC. As noted above, the appointed contractor will be required to prevent escapement of any pollutants (e.g. silt laden waters) from the works area to the river generally & downstream to the Dungourney River and estuarine waters within Cork Harbour in particular, in order to prevent any deterioration in water quality within the catchment.

The location, scale and duration of proposed works are such that they should not contribute to direct, indirect or in-combination impacts on habitats for which Great Island Channel SAC has been designated and do not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of any of these habitats.

Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC | 000077    | As noted Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC is designated for the protection of a number of coastal / estuarine habitats: - namely Estuaries [1130] (Map 3); Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] (Map 4); Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] (Map 6); Atlantic salt meadows *(Glaucoc-Puccinellietalia maritimae)* [1330] (Map 6) & Mediterranean salt meadows *(Juncetalia maritimi)* [1410] (Map 6) (map references refer to NPWS, 2015).

There is no direct impact on wetlands within the SAC and hence on habitats or associated species for which the site has been designated.

As noted the Greenway crosses a number of watercourses in the catchment of the Womanagh River, which enter the sea at Ballymacoda Bay. As noted above, the appointed contractor will be required to prevent escapement of any pollutants (e.g. silt laden waters) from the works area to the river generally & downstream to the estuarine waters within Ballymacoda Bay in particular, in order to prevent any deterioration in water quality.

The location, scale and duration of proposed works are such that they should not contribute to direct, indirect or in-combination impacts on species for which Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC has been designated and do not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of any of these species.
Special Protection Areas for birds

4.16. Details of Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs) and their qualifying interests are presented in Table 4.4 below. A short description of the site and any potential links with the greenway for e.g. via watercourses are discussed in Table 4.5. Figure 3 shows the location of the SPAs with respect to the proposed greenway.

Table 4.4 – Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs) located within 15 km of the proposed Greenway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Site Code</th>
<th>Details of connectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cork Harbour SPA 17 18</td>
<td>1.14km</td>
<td>004030</td>
<td>➢ Little Grebe (<em>Tachybaptus ruficollis</em>) [A004]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Great Crested Grebe (<em>Podiceps cristatus</em>) [A005]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Cormorant (<em>Phalacrocorax carbo</em>) [A017]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Grey Heron (<em>Ardea cinerea</em>) [A028]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Shelduck (<em>Tadorna tadorna</em>) [A048]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Wigeon (<em>Anas penelope</em>) [A050]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Teal (<em>Anas crecca</em>) [A052]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Pintail (<em>Anas acuta</em>) [A054]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Shoveler (<em>Anas clypeata</em>) [A056]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Red-breasted Merganser (<em>Mergus serrator</em>) [A069]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Oystercatcher (<em>Haematopus ostralegus</em>) [A130]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Golden Plover (<em>Pluvialis apricaria</em>) [A140]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Grey Plover (<em>Pluvialis squatarola</em>) [A141]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Lapwing (<em>Vanellus vanellus</em>) [A142]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Dunlin (<em>Calidris alpina</em>) [A149]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Black-tailed Godwit (<em>Limosa limosa</em>) [A156]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Bar-tailed Godwit (<em>Limosa lapponica</em>) [A157]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Curlew (<em>Numenius arquata</em>) [A160]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Redshank (<em>Tringa totanus</em>) [A162]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Black-headed Gull (<em>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</em>) [A179]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Common Gull (<em>Larus canus</em>) [A182]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Lesser Black-backed Gull (<em>Larus fuscus</em>) [A183]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Common Tern (<em>Sterna hirundo</em>) [A193]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymacoda Bay SPA 19 20</td>
<td>1.64km</td>
<td>004023</td>
<td>➢ Wigeon (<em>Anas penelope</em>) [A050]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Teal (<em>Anas crecca</em>) [A052]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Ringed Plover (<em>Charadrius hiaticula</em>) [A137]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Golden Plover (<em>Pluvialis apricaria</em>) [A140]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Grey Plover (<em>Pluvialis squatarola</em>) [A141]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Lapwing (<em>Vanellus vanellus</em>) [A142]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Sanderling (<em>Calidris alba</em>) [A144]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Dunlin (<em>Calidris alpina</em>) [A149]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Black-tailed Godwit (<em>Limosa limosa</em>) [A156]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Site Code</th>
<th>Details of connectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballycotton Bay SPA 21</td>
<td>8.6km</td>
<td>004022</td>
<td>Bar-tailed Godwit (<em>Limosa lapponica</em>) [A157]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Curlew (<em>Numenius arquata</em>) [A160]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Redshank (<em>Tringa totanus</em>) [A162]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Turnstone (<em>Arenaria interpres</em>) [A169]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Black-headed Gull (<em>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</em>) [A179]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Common Gull (<em>Larus canus</em>) [A182]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesser Black-backed Gull (<em>Larus fuscus</em>) [A183]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackwater Estuary SPA 23 24</td>
<td>2.1km</td>
<td>004028</td>
<td>Wigeon (<em>Anas penelope</em>) [A050]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Plover (<em>Pluvialis apricaria</em>) [A140]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lapwing (<em>Vanellus vanellus</em>) [A142]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Black-tailed Godwit (<em>Limosa limosa</em>) [A156]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bar-tailed Godwit (<em>Limosa lapponica</em>) [A157]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Curlew (<em>Numenius arquata</em>) [A160]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Turnstone (<em>Arenaria interpres</em>) [A169]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Common Gull (<em>Larus canus</em>) [A182]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesser Black-backed Gull (<em>Larus fuscus</em>) [A183]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helvick Head to Ballyquin SPA 25 26</td>
<td>ca. 12km</td>
<td>004192</td>
<td>Cormorant (<em>Phalacrocorax carbo</em>) [A017]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peregrine (<em>Falco peregrinus</em>) [A103]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Herring Gull (<em>Larus argentatus</em>) [A184]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kittiwake (<em>Rissa tridactyla</em>) [A188]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chough (<em>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</em>) [A346]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 – Special Protection Areas for birds (SPAs) - site description and details of connectivity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Site Code</th>
<th>Short Description of the Site (from NPWS site synopses)</th>
<th>Details of connectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cork Harbour SPA</td>
<td>004030</td>
<td>Cork Harbour is a large, sheltered bay system, with several river estuaries - principally those of the Rivers Lee, Douglas, Owenboy and Owenacurra. The site comprises the main intertidal areas of Cork Harbour. Owing to the sheltered conditions, the intertidal flats are often muddy in character. Salt marshes are scattered through the site and these provide high tide roosts for the birds. Otherwise, birds roost on stony shorelines and in some areas fields adjacent to the shore. Cork Harbour is an internationally important wetland site, regularly supporting in excess of 20,000 wintering waterfowl, for which it is amongst the top five sites in the country. The site provides both feeding and roosting areas for the waterfowl species. The quality of most of the estuarine habitats is good. The wintering birds have been well-monitored since the 1970s. Proposed greenway crosses the Dungourney River c. 1.14 km upstream of SPA boundary. The Dungourney River flows into the Owenacurra Estuary at Midleton. This is part of the Cork Harbour SPA.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymacoda Bay SPA</td>
<td>004023</td>
<td>The site comprises of the estuary of the Womanagh River, a substantial river which drains a large agricultural catchment. The inner part of the site is well sheltered by a stabilised sandy peninsula and includes the tidal section of the river as far as Crompaun Bridge. Ballymacoda Bay is the second most important site for wintering waterfowl on the south coast after Cork Harbour. The site has internationally important numbers of Black-tailed godwit (Limosa limosa) and Lesser black-backed gull (Larus fuscus), and is the most important site in the country for Larus fuscus during autumn. Nationally important numbers of a further 16 species are found in the site. Ballymacoda Bay is a regular site for passage waders and it is also an important site for wintering gulls. The site provides both feeding and roosting areas for the waterfowl species and habitat quality for most of the estuarine habitats is very good. Wintering bird populations have been well monitored since the 1970s. This SPA is located 1.64 km to the south (as the crow flies). The greenway is hydrologically linked via water crossing points of the Womanagh River and seven of its tributaries which discharge into Ballymacoda Bay SPA. These crossing points are at distances between 2.9 km (Inchiquin Stream at Burges Lower) and 14.4 km (Womanagh River at Mogeely) upstream of this site (see Figure 4).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballycotton Bay SPA</td>
<td>004022</td>
<td>Situated on the south coast of Co. Cork, Ballycotton Bay is an east-facing coastal complex, which stretches northwards from Ballycotton to Ballynamona, a distance of c. 2 km. The site comprises two sheltered inlets which receive the flows of several small rivers. The southern inlet had formerly been lagoonal (Ballycotton Lake) but breaching of the shingle barrier in recent times has resulted in the area reverting to an estuarine system. The principal habitat within the site is inter-tidal sand and mudflats. These are mostly well-exposed and the sediments are predominantly firm sands. In the more sheltered conditions of the inlets, sediments contain a higher silt fraction. The inter-tidal flats This Natura 2000 site is located 8.6 km to the east of Youghal. The proposed greenway is not connected to this Natura 2000 site via a watercourse.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Name</td>
<td>Site Code</td>
<td>Short Description of the Site (from NPWS site synopses)</td>
<td>Details of connectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackwater Estuary SPA</td>
<td>004028</td>
<td>Provide the main feeding habitat for the wintering birds. Sandy beaches are well represented. Salt marshes fringe the flats in the sheltered inlets and these provide high tides roosts. A small area of shallow marine water is also included.</td>
<td>The Blackwater Estuary SPA is a moderately-sized, sheltered south-facing estuary, which extends from Youghal New Bridge to the Ferry Point peninsula, close to where the river enters the sea. It comprises a section of the main channel of the River Blackwater to Ballynaclash Quay. At low tide, intertidal flats are exposed on both sides of the channel. On the eastern side the intertidal channel as far as Kinsalebeg and Moord Cross Roads is included, while on the west side the site includes part of the estuary of the Tourig River as far as Kilmagner. The intertidal sediments are mostly muds or sandy muds, reflecting the sheltered conditions of the estuary. Green algae (<em>Ulva</em> spp.) are frequent on the mudflats during summer, and Bladder Wrack (<em>Fucus vesiculosus</em>) occurs on the upper more stony shorelines. The sediments have a macrofauna typical of muddy sands, with polychaete worms such as Lugworm (<em>Arenicola marina</em>), Ragworm (<em>Hediste diversicolor</em>) and the marine bristle worm <em>Nephtys hombergii</em> being common. Salt marshes fringe the estuarine channels, especially in the sheltered creeks. Located ca. 12km to the east of Youghal. No surface water or landscape connectivity to the proposed Midleton to Youghal greenway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helvick Head to Ballyquin SPA</td>
<td>004192</td>
<td>Helvick Head to Ballyquin SPA is a linear site situated on the south-west coast of Co. Waterford. It includes the sea cliffs and land adjacent to the cliff edge between Helvick Head in the east and Ballyquin townland in the south-west. The high water mark forms the seaward boundary, except around Helvick Head where the adjacent sea area to a distance of 500 m from the cliff base is included.</td>
<td>The proposed greenway crosses the East Ballyvergan River which travels through Ballyvergan Marsh and discharges to the sea at Summerfield / Redbarn to the southwest of Youghal. The boundary of the SPA is located 2.1 km to the northeast within the estuary of the River Blackwater (northeast of Youghal).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

4.17. A screening of the five SPAs within 15km of the proposed Greenway is presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 – Screening of SPAs within 15km of the proposed Greenway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Site Code</th>
<th>Screening Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cork Harbour SPA</td>
<td>004030</td>
<td>There is no direct impact on wetlands within the SPA and hence on waterbird species for which the site has been designated. As noted the Greenway crosses a number of watercourses within the catchment of the Dungourney River, which enters Cork Harbour in the estuary of the Owenacurra and within Cork Harbour SPA. Nonetheless, the appointed contractor will be required to prevent escapement of silt laden waters from the works area to the river generally &amp; downstream to the Dungourney River and estuarine waters within Cork Harbour in particular, in order to prevent any deterioration in water quality within the catchment. The location, scale and duration of proposed works are such that they should not contribute to direct, indirect or in-combination impacts on species for which the SPA has been designated and do not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of any of these species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballymacoda Bay SPA</td>
<td>004023</td>
<td>There is no direct impact on wetlands within the SPA and hence on waterbird species for which the site has been designated. As noted the Greenway crosses a number of watercourses within the catchment of the Womanagh, which discharge to the sea within Ballymacoda Bay SPA. Nonetheless, the appointed contractor will be required to prevent escapement of silt laden waters from the works area to the river generally &amp; downstream to the Womanagh River and coastal waters in particular, in order to prevent any deterioration in water quality within the catchment. The location, scale and duration of proposed works are such that they should not contribute to direct, indirect or in-combination impacts on species for which the SPA has been designated and do not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of any of these species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ballycotton Bay SPA</td>
<td>004022</td>
<td>There is no direct impact on wetlands within the SPA and hence on waterbird species for which the site has been designated. There is no hydrological link between the proposed Greenway and Ballycotton Bay SPA. While, some of the species for which the site has been designated do disperse in the wider landscape during the winter months (e.g. golden plover, lapwing etc.), the works area does not support habitats used by the species for which this site has been designated. The location, scale and duration of proposed works are such that they should not contribute to direct, indirect or in-combination impacts on species for which the SPA has been designated and do not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of any of these species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackwater Estuary SPA</td>
<td>004028</td>
<td>There is no direct impact on wetlands within the SPA and hence on waterbird species for which the site has been designated. There is no hydrological link between the proposed Greenway and Blackwater Estuary SPA. While, some of the species for which the site has been designated do disperse in the wider landscape during the winter months (e.g. golden plover, lapwing etc.), the works area does not support habitat used by the species for which this site has been designated. The location, scale and duration of proposed works are such that they should not contribute to direct, indirect or in-combination impacts on species for which the SPA has been designated and do not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of any of these species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Name</td>
<td>Site Code</td>
<td>Screening Statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helvick Head to Ballyquin SPA</td>
<td>004192</td>
<td>There is no direct impact on wetlands within the SPA and hence on waterbird species for which the site has been designated. There is no hydrological link between the proposed Greenway and Blackwater Estuary SPA. The works area does not support habitat used by the species for which this site has been designated. The location, scale and duration of proposed works are such that they should not contribute to direct, indirect or in-combination impacts on species for which the SPA has been designated and do not have the potential to affect the conservation objectives of any of these species.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cumulative impacts

4.18. Cumulative effects can result from individually insignificant but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time or concentrated in a specific location. Cumulative effects can occur where a proposed development results in negative impacts that when potential impacts arising from a proposed development are considered in-combination with impacts of other proposed or permitted plans and projects. It can also occur where several developments have insignificant impacts individually, but together have a cumulative impact / effect.

4.19. It is considered that the proposed development does not have the potential to impact, directly or indirectly, any of the habitats and species listed as features of interest of neighbouring Natura 2000 sites. In the absence of any potential impacts to the SAC and SPA due to the proposed development there is no pathway for other existing, permitted or proposed plans and projects to act in-combination and to give rise to cumulative impacts with the proposed Greenway.

4.20. Key developments in the environs of Midleton include the Midleton Flood Relief Scheme, details of which can be viewed at - http://www.midletonfrs.ie/; Water Rock LIHAF; and large scale housing developments etc. All such developments are subject to their own Appropriate Assessments.

Likelihood of Significant Effects on Natura 2000 Sites

4.21. It is considered that there is no potential for impact on the Natura 2000 Sites mentioned above as a result of construction and operation of the proposed Greenway between Midleton and Youghal, Co. Cork. Therefore, there can be no likelihood of significant effects on the Natura 2000 Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.

Consideration of Findings

4.22. This screening report for Appropriate Assessment, based on the best available scientific information, demonstrates that construction and operation of the proposed Greenway between Midleton and Youghal, Co. Cork, poses no risk of likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites (e.g. Great Island Channels SAC, Cork Harbour SPA, Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC or Ballymacoda Bay SPA).

4.23. It is considered that the proposed works do not require progression to second stage Appropriate Assessment.

4.24. Based on this conclusion, we submit that the competent authority can determine that an appropriate assessment is not required, as it can be excluded, based on objective scientific information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any European sites.

27 Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund.
Figures
Cork County Council

Midleton to Youghal Greenway - Appropriate Assessment Screening

Title: Special Areas of Conservation

Legend

Proposed Route
Line

Natura 2000 Sites
Special Areas of Conservation

- Ardmore Head SAC
- Ballymacoda (Clonpriest And Pillmore) SAC
- Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC
- Great Island Channel SAC

Dublin - Tel: 353 - 1 - 899 9000
Cork - Tel: 353 - 21 - 420 0300
Galway - Tel: 353 - 91 788050
Legend

Proposed Route

Natura 2000 Sites

Special Protection Areas

- Ballycotton Bay SPA
- Ballymacoda Bay SPA
- Blackwater Estuary SPA
- Cork Harbour SPA
- Helvick Head to Ballyquin SPA

Client: Cork County Council

Project: Midleton to Youghal Greenway - Appropriate Assessment Screening

Title: Special Protection Areas

Drawn: OT

Checked: OT

Authorised: JN

Date: 15/12/2017
Legend
Proposed Route
Line
Natura 2000 Sites
(NPWS)
Special Areas of Conservation
Special Protection Areas
Watercourses
(EPA)
Appendices
Appendix A. Design Drawings