

Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

draft Carrigaline Transportation and Public Realm Enhancement Plan June 2021

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Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

This document contains the Habitats Directive Screening Determination of Cork County Council in respect of the draft Carrigaline Transportation and Public Realm Plan Co. Cork. The determination is based on the information provided in the Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report which has been prepared by Arup for Cork County Council and which is appended to this document. This screening determination should be read in conjunction with that report.

In accordance with [Part 5 of the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations \(SI 477 of 2011\)](#), Public Authorities are required to assess the impacts of non-statutory land use plans¹ and projects (other than projects consented through the Planning and Development Act), on certain sites that are designated for the protection of nature (European Sites²). This is to determine whether or not the plans or project could have negative consequences for the habitats, or plant and animal species for which these sites are designated. This assessment process is called a **Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA)**. The requirements emanate from Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive which states

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.

EU and National Guidance sets out two main stages to the assessment process which are as follows:

Stage One: Screening

The process which identifies what might be likely impacts arising from a plan or project on a European site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant. No further assessment is required where the risk of significant impacts on European sites can be objectively ruled out during the screening stage. The findings of the screening assessment are normally contained in a **Habitats Directive Screening Report**.

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment

Where the possibility of significant impacts has not been discounted by the screening process, a more detailed assessment is required. This is called an Appropriate Assessment. For land use plans, it involves the compilation of a **Natura Impact Statement** by the Public Authority, which is a report of scientific evidence and data relating to European sites for which significant negative impacts have not been previously screened out. This is used to identify and classify any implications of the plan or project for these sites in view of their Conservation Objectives. The Appropriate Assessment must include a determination as to whether or not the project would adversely affect the integrity of any European site or sites. The plan or project may

¹ In accordance with Part 1 of the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations, excluding, except where the contrary intention appears, of any plan that is a land use plan within the meaning of the Planning Acts, plans means – ‘any plan, programme or scheme, statutory or non-statutory, that establishes public policy in relation to land use and infrastructural development in one or more specified locations or regions, including any development of land or on land, the extraction or exploitation of mineral resources or of renewable energy resources and the carrying out of land use activities, that is to be considered for adoption or approval or for the grant of a license, consent, permission, permit, derogation or other authorisation by a public authority’

²“European Site” means— (a) a candidate site of Community importance; (b) a site of Community importance; (c) a candidate special area of conservation; (d) a special area of conservation; (e) a candidate special protection area, or (f) a special protection area.

only be consented if adverse effects on the integrity of European sites can be objectively ruled out during the Appropriate Assessment process. The plan or project may not be consented on foot of an Appropriate Assessment, if it is found that it will give rise to adverse impacts on one or more European sites, or if uncertainty remains in relation to potential impacts on one or more European sites.

The responsibility for completing screening for Appropriate Assessment and Appropriate Assessment for a plan which is **not** covered by the Planning and Development Act, is the Public Authority which wishes to adopt the plan (Section 42(9) of the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations).

This document contains the screening determination of Cork County Council in respect those elements of the draft Carrigaline TPREP which have not already been subject to screening for Appropriate Assessment or Appropriate Assessment. The document has been informed by the draft Carrigaline Transportation and Public Realm Enhancement Plan (July 2021) and the draft Carrigaline Transportation and Public Realm Enhancement Plan – Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (August 2021).

Name of the Plan

Draft Carrigaline Transportation and Public Realm Enhancement Plan, August 2021

Description of the Plan

The Carrigaline Transportation and Public Realm Plan is an integrated transportation framework addressing transportation infrastructure and public realm enhancement required to support the sustainable development of Carrigaline. Through the TPREP, a transport hierarchy focussed on pedestrians, cyclists and public transport has been developed. It is envisaged that the plan will provide for an increase in the number of people walking/ cycling and taking public transport in Carrigaline along with a reduction in traffic flow on Main Street with traffic provided with routes on the outskirts of town.

The plan includes both new transport and public realm improvement proposals as well as details of transport infrastructure proposals which have emanated from other plans and strategies relevant to the study area, some of which have been through project consent procedures and have been implemented; some of which are in the course of being implemented; and some of which for which planning for implementation is at an advanced stage.

In brief, the draft Carrigaline TPREP includes proposals for

- public realm enhancement of the Main Street;
- construction of the Inner Wester Relief Road;
- development of a pedestrian and cycle network within the town linking to the Carrigaline – Crosshaven and the Passage- Carrigaline Greenways;
- traffic management controls; and
- information on enhanced provision of public transport.

Other plans and strategies which have previously included elements of the Carrigaline TPREP are

- the Cork Metropolitan Area Cycle Network Plan (January 2017);
- the Cork County Council Ballincollig Carrigaline Municipal District Local Area 2017; and
- the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040.

These are high level plans which identified indicative routes and set out general objectives and for the delivery of cycleways at county or local area level. No fundamental issues of concern in relation to EU sites was identified in relation to any of the routes identified in these plans subject to sensitive design and appropriate measures being put in place at project stage to prevent effects which could be associated with construction related activities.

The key transport infrastructure proposals adopted from the Cork Metropolitan Area Cycle Network Plan (January 2017) include the following:

- the Carrigaline to Passage West Strategic Cycle Route;
- Carrigaline to Crosshaven Greenway (between Main Street and the R612 (Fountainstown Road);
- Kilmoney Road Route (between Castleheights and Captain’s Boreen);
- Mountain Road Route;
- Ballea Road Route;
- Ballinrea Road Route (between the new school campus and Waterpark);
- Cork Road Route (between Janeville and Foster’s Cross);
- Fernhill Route (between Cogan’s Lane and Church Road);

- Forrest Hill Route;
- Lower Kilmoney Route;
- Waterpark Route;
- Westwood –Glenwood Route;
- Heron’s Wood Route (between Cork Road and Rock Road);
- Janeville Route (between Cork Road and Rock Road);
- the Southern Amenity Walk;
- the Weston Link;
- the Dún Eoin Link; and
- the Rock Road Link.

The conclusion of the assessment was that subject to sensitive approaches to design and construction at the project level, there would be no likelihood of significant effects arising from the plan for designated sites in the study area, namely the Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and the Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA).

The key transport infrastructure proposals adopted from the Ballincollig Carrigaline Municipal District Local Area 2017 include the following:

- the Carrigaline to Passage West Strategic Cycle Route (between the Owenabue car park and the Ringaskiddy Road);
- Carrigaline to Crosshaven Greenway (between Main Street and Ballea Road);
- the Southern Amenity Walk;
- Janeville Route (between Cork Road and Rock Road);
- the Western Distributor Road (between Ballea Road and Ballinrea Road); and
- the Southern Distributor Road (between Ballea Road and Forrest Road).

The plan was subject to both a Strategic Environmental Assessment Statement and Appropriate Assessment. The conclusion of the Appropriate Assessment of the plan was that subject to the adoption of sensitive approaches to the development of cycleways at design and construction phases was that the plan would not give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of any EU site.

The key transport infrastructure proposals adopted from the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040 include the following:

- the cycle proposals identified for the Carrigaline area as presented in the Cork Metropolitan Area Cycle Network Plan;
- the provision of bus services along Cork Road, Main Street, Lower Kilmoney Road, Upper Kilmoney Road, Kilnageary Road, Crosshaven Road, Church Road, Ringaskiddy Road, Bothar Guidel and Ballinrea Road;
- the M28 Cork to Ringaskiddy Road; and
- the provision of additional road network infrastructure and public realm improvements within Carrigaline a designated Urban Expansion Area.

The Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040 was subject to Appropriate Assessment and a Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report was also prepared. The conclusion of the Appropriate Assessment of the plan was that subject to the adoption of sensitive approaches during corridor and route selection processes and subject to the adoption of environmental best practise approaches at the construction phase for individual projects.

Elements of the plan which have not been previously described in other land use plans or consented at project level include the following:

Pedestrian and Cycle Networks

- section of the Kilmoney Road route between Kilmoney road and Ballea Road;
- section of the Cork road Route between Foster’s Cross and Forrest Hill;
- section of the Ballinrea Road route between Waterpark and the Rock Road;
- section of the Fernhill Road contained within the Fernhill Axpansion Area;
- Dún Eoin route;
- Carrigcourt route;
- section of the Heron’s Road route contained within the Fernhill Expansion Area
- section of the Janeville route contained within the Fernhill Expansion Area;
- the Maple Hill linkl
- the Mount Rivers link(s);
- the Old Waterpark link(s);
- additional bicycle parking throughout the study area;
- provision of enhanced permeability (where possible) within the existing built-up area and within any new development zones;
- alternations to the management and control of junctions within the town centre;
- provision of speed reduction measures within the study area; and
- enhanced on-street parking enforcement.

Public Transport Provision

- provision of bus lanes in both directions along Cork Road between the Shannonpark roundabout and Ballinrea Road;
- provision of an outbound bus lane on Cork Road between Glenwood and Ballinrea Road;
- provision of a bus only section of Main Street between Ballea Road and Strand Road (southbound only);
- provision of a local mobility hub within the Owenabue Car Park;
- provision of a Local Park and ride to the north of Carrigaline; and
- provision of high quality bus shelters including seating, information panels and real-time information displays.

Traffic Management

- the introduction of an active travel priority zone within the centre of Carrigaline to include a reduction in posted speed limit;
- one-way traffic northbound on Main Street between Strand Road and Ballea Road;
- one-way westbound traffic on Crosshaven Road approaching Main Street;
- one-way southbound on Church Hill;
- new and upgraded traffic signal controls within the active travel priority zone;
- modifying the number and regulation associated with the existing on-street parking provision within the study area;
- the strengthening and resurfacing of the Ballea Road as part of the delivery of the Western Outer Distributor Road along with enhanced safety measures at key junctions along this route;
- in tandem with the delivery of the Fernhill Expansion Area provide a new distributor road to the north of the lands running parallel to the proposed M28 Motorway;
- the strengthening and resurfacing of the Rock Road and Coogan’s Lane (part of) to complete the delivery of the Eastern Outer Distributor Road along with enhanced safety measures at key junctions along this route;
- the alignment of the Southern Distributor Road to the west of the built area around Mountain Road and its tie in with Kilmoney Road to the south of Wheatfields;

- the provision of enhanced safety measures along the Central Distributor Road (i.e. Cork Road – Bothar Guidel – Crosshaven Road);
- the creation of an Urban Traffic Management Centre for Carrigaline to include the active management of traffic signals through a combination of CCTV, detection and fault monitoring at various junctions within the town; and
- the provision of new access points both pedestrian and vehicular serving the Town Centre Expansion Area.

Public Realm Enhancement

- Main Street between Church Hill and Ballea Road;
- Crosshaven Road between Main Street and Bothar Guidel; and
- Lower Kilmoney Road between Main Street and the entrance to the Co-op.

Name and location of EU sites Subject to Screening

The AA Screening Report identifies two EU sites within the potential zone of influence of the proposed project. These are the Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation and the Cork Harbour Special Protection Area.

The Great Island Channel is located in the north channel of Cork Harbour. It is located over 8km from Carrigaline and has only indirect linkages to same. There is no hydrological linkage to this site and the area covered by this plan. No source-pathway-receptor link is identified between this site and the area which is the subject of proposals contained in the plan. No potential for impact on this site is identified in the AA Screening Report.

The Owenaboy Estuary is located within Carrigaline. This area forms part of the Cork Harbour Special Protection Area. The AA Screening Assessment Report identifies a source-pathway-receptor link between the SPA and the area which is the subject of the proposals contained in this plan. Further consideration is given in the AA Screening Assessment Report to the question of likely significant effects of the plan on this site.

The **Cork Harbour SPA** is an estuarine complex which is primarily comprised of intertidal habitats, mainly mudflats as well as some other coastal and marine habitats. These habitats support very high numbers of wintering waterfowl. The harbour regularly supports in excess of 20,000 wintering birds, making it an internationally important site and the fifth most important wintering waterfowl site in the country. The qualifying interests for this SPA are:

- Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [A004]
- Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) [A005]
- Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) [A017]
- Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*) [A028]
- Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A048]
- Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [A050]
- Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052]
- Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [A054]
- Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) [A056]
- Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) [A069]
- Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A130]
- Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140]
- Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141]
- Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A142]

- Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149]
- Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [A156]
- Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157]
- Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [A160]
- Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162]
- Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179]
- Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182]
- Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) [A183]
- Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193]
- Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

The Conservation Objectives of the site are as follows:

Objective 1: To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the non-breeding waterbird Special Conservation Interest species listed for Cork Harbour SPA.

To be favourable:

- the long-term population trend for each waterbird Special Conservation Interest species should be stable or increasing. Waterbird populations are deemed to be unfavourable when they have declined by 25% or more, as assessed by the most recent population trend analysis.
- there should be no significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by the waterbird species of Special Conservation Interest, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.

Factors that can adversely affect the achievement of Objective 1 include:

- Habitat modification: activities that modify discrete areas or the overall habitat(s) within the SPA in terms of how one or more of the listed species use the site (e.g. as a feeding resource) could result in the displacement of these species from areas within the SPA and/or a reduction in their numbers.
- Disturbance: anthropogenic disturbance that occurs in or near the site and is either singular or cumulative in nature could result in the displacement of one or more of the listed waterbird species from areas within the SPA, and/or a reduction in their numbers.
- Ex-situ factors: several of the listed waterbird species may at times use habitats situated within the immediate hinterland of the SPA or in areas outside of the SPA but ecologically connected to it. The reliance on these habitats will vary from species to species and from site to site.
- Significant habitat change or increased levels of disturbance within these areas could result in the displacement of one or more of the listed waterbird species from areas within the SPA, and/or a reduction in their numbers

Objective 2: To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Common Tern in Cork Harbour SPA.

To be favourable:

- the long-term trend for the breeding population of Common Tern Special Conservation Interest species should be stable or increasing.
- there should be no significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by Common Tern, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.

Factors that can adversely affect the achievement of Objective 2 include:

- availability of breeding habitat;
- disturbance levels at breeding sites;
- availability of prey species;

Objective 3: To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Cork Harbour SPA as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it. This objective is defined by the following attributes and targets:

To be favourable:

- the permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat should be stable and not significantly less than the area of 2,587 ha, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.

Activities which involve direct intervention within wetland habitats or which could result in the introduction of nutrients or toxic contaminants to wetland habitats, or could cause the spread of invasive alien species within wetland habitats could have the potential to give rise to negative effects on this qualifying interest.

Describe how the plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the EU Site(s) Identified Above.

Consideration is given in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report to the potential for the implementation of this plan to give rise to significant negative impacts on the Cork Harbour SPA. Particular focus is given to those elements of the plan which have not been referenced in previous plans and have not therefore been assessed. This is a plan level assessment which examines the general principles and locations for proposed works.

The conclusion of the assessment is that no elements of the plan which have not already been subject to assessment, require works within or adjoining the SPA, and all of these elements are located sufficiently distant from the SPA to be satisfied that their implementation will avoid any risk of causing disturbance to qualifying interest species, or indirect effects such as those that could affect wetland habitat within the SPA. It is recognised and stated in the AA screening report that projects emanating from this plan will require detailed assessment as part of their individual consenting process.

Are there other projects or plans that together with the project being assessed that could affect these sites (provide details)?

The AA screening report lists other plans which have the potential to interact with the implementation proposals for the draft Carrigaline TPREP and thereby result in in-combination effects.

None of the plans listed below are considered to have potential for in-combination likely significant effects with the Plan which would necessitate mitigation to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of any European site.

Screening Report Conclusion

The AA screening assessment objectively concludes that the new elements of the Carrigaline TRPEP (elements not previously subject to assessment) do not pose a risk of giving rise to significant effects on the either Cork Harbour SPA or Great Island Channel SAC when considered either in its own right

or in combination with other projects/plans. In light of this, the conclusion of the report is that the plan does not need to be subject to Appropriate Assessment.

Screening Determination Statement – Cork County Council

Cork County Council is satisfied that the elements of the draft Carrigaline TRPEP which have not been previously assessed, will not result in significant negative effects on any European Site in view of their conservation objectives, either alone or in-combination with other plans for the following reason:

No elements of the plan which have not already been subject to assessment, require works within or adjoining the SPA, and all of these elements are located sufficiently distant from the SPA to be satisfied that their implementation will avoid any risk of causing disturbance to qualifying interest species, or indirect effects such as those that could affect wetland habitat within the SPA.

The implementation of projects emanating from this plan may require the deployment of mitigation measures at construction stage, including measures to control the risk of release of contaminants to the Owenboy Estuary. While such measures are standard, it may be determined for some projects that they are necessary to prevent significant impacts on the Cork Harbour SPA and these projects therefore will be subject to Appropriate Assessment at the project consent stage.