

**Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment
Screening Determination**

Project: Redevelopment of two Viewing Platforms at Youghal.



Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

Completed by Tony Nagle
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This document contains the Habitats Directive Screening Determination of Cork County Council in respect of a proposal to restore and redevelop two public viewing platforms, at Lighthouse Road, Youghal. The determination is based on information provided in the Habitats Directive Screening Assessment Report which has been prepared by MWP Engineering and Environmental Consultants on behalf of Cork County Council and which is appended to this document. This screening determination should be read in conjunction with that report.

<p>Name of the project.</p> <p>Redevelopment of two viewing platforms at Youghal.</p>
<p>Description of the project.</p> <p>The project comprises the restoration and redevelopment of two existing viewing platforms located on the seaward side of the Lighthouse Road in Youghal and the stabilization of the rocks beneath them. The two platforms are known as the Moll Goggin’s Viewing Platform and the Lighthouse Road Viewing Platform and they are located within 130 metres of each other.</p> <p>The restoration of the viewing platforms will initially involve the excavation and removal of the existing concrete structures, the formation of new reinforced concrete decks, piling and utility works prior to the installation of high quality paving, seating, lighting, information boards and stainless-steel railings. The viewing platforms will be at the same level as the existing footpath.</p> <p>The existing concrete decks will be dismantled by an excavator and the surfaces will be planed. The excavated material will be removed to a licensed waste facility for disposal.</p> <p>The existing void under the Moll Goggin’s Platform will be filled with suitable material and approximately 24 metres of the rock face beneath the platform will be shotcreted to a height of approximately 10 metres and the cliff will be stabilized with soil nails.</p> <p>The existing void beneath the Lighthouse Road Platform will not be filled. Approximately 7 metres of the rock face beneath the platform will be shotcreted to a height of approximately 8 metres.</p>
<p>Name and location of Natura 2000 sites identified for screening.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC 002170 is adjacent to both viewing platforms • Blackwater Estuary Bay SPA 004028 is approximately 1.4 km north of the viewing platforms • Ballycotton Bay SPA 004022 is approximately 14 km southwest of the viewing platforms • Ardmore Head SAC 002123 is approximately 9 km east of the viewing platforms • Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC 000077 is approximately 4.4 km southwest of the viewing platforms • Ballymacoda Bay SPA 004023 is approximately 2.9 km southwest of the viewing platforms • Helvick Head to Ballyquin SPA 004192 is approximately 14 km northeast of the viewing platforms <p>Ardmore Head SAC, Helvick Head to Ballyquin SPA and Ballycotton Bay were excluded from further assessment due to the distances between the Natura 2000 sites (no direct hydrological links present) and the project sites and the lack of an effective pollution pathway.</p> <p>No other EU sites have been identified with ecological connectivity to the proposed development site.</p>

Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites listed above?

No.

Describe how the project (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 Sites.

The submitted screening report considers potential impacts on the Natura 2000 sites as follows:

- Habitat loss and/or habitat alteration to Natura 2000 sites.
- Potential for the project to give rise to disturbance related impacts to species which are qualifying interests of the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ballymacoda Bay SPA;
- Potential risk of negative effects on water quality in the construction phase associated with the emission of polluting substances (Blackwater River SAC, Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pilmore) SAC).

Habitat Loss

The proposed developments are not located within any Natura 2000 site (although the Moll Goggin Viewing Platform is adjacent to the Blackwater River SAC and the Lighthouse Road Viewing Platform is very close to this SAC. No habitat loss to any Natura 2000 site will occur as a result of the proposed developments. None of the designated habitats in nearby Natura 2000 sites occur in the development sites.

Disturbance

The following Qualifying Interests of the Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ballymacoda Bay SPA could potentially be subjected to disturbance caused by construction works that will include the excavation of the existing sites including concrete, piling and soil nails:

Blackwater Estuary SPA

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [A050]
Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140]
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]
Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

Ballymacoda Bay SPA

Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [A050]
Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052]
Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [A137]
Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140]
Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141]
Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [A142]
Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [A144]
Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149]
Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [A156]
Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157]

Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [A160]
Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162]
Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) [A169]
Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179]
Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [A182]
Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) [A183]
Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

The potential for the proposed projects to cause significant disturbance to any of the above Qualifying Interests has been screened out because of:

- The estuarine habitat in the immediate vicinity of the proposed projects is not suitable foraging or roosting habitat for significant numbers of any of the Qualifying Interests of the two SPAs listed above.
- The nature and extent of the proposed works will be of limited duration and is very unlikely to cause any significant disturbance to foraging or roosting birds. Works are expected to be completed within 16 weeks. Work will be restricted to daylight hours.
- The proposed developments are located within the urban area of Youghal and much of the noise created during the relatively short construction period will be subsumed by the noise of people, traffic and machinery.

Water Quality

Negative impacts on water quality caused by excavation of soil and concrete, the use of shotcrete and the potential spillage of oil and/or fuel and any of these could potentially have negative effects on the following Qualifying Interests:

Blackwater River SAC

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]
Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095]
Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]
Alosa fallax (Twaiite Shad) [1103]
Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]
Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]

(The remaining Qualifying Interests of the Blackwater River SAC are either terrestrial or freshwater and there is no pollution pathway between the project work site and these Qualifying Interests).

Ballymacoda SAC

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]

The potential for runoff to the above two SACs is limited to:

- Sedimentation from surface water runoff (which will be insignificant as quantities are

- small);
- Accidental fuel/oil spills from machinery/equipment;
- Shotcrete.

The potential for sedimentation is very low as actual quantities are small and the dilution effect from the estuarine waters would negate the impacts.

Detailed consideration is given to potential for impact on these Qualifying Interests in the screening report. Risk of the proposed projects giving rise to significant negative effects on these habitats and species are ruled out for the following reasons:

- The potential damage from a fuel or oil spill is also extremely low given the small volumes in use, re-fuelling will take place away from the site and in the unlikely event of a spillage, the turbulent waters of the estuary are likely to increase the rates of evaporation and dispersal of any hydrocarbon substance.
- The shotcrete used will be directed to the rockface where required and will be dry within thirty minutes. In the unlikely event of a spillage, the dilution effect of the estuarine waters would result in rapid dispersal of the liquid concrete and this would greatly reduce the harmful pollution potential to insignificant levels.
- The tidal water beneath the work sites (although within or very close to the Blackwater River SAC) is not suitable habitat for any of the migratory fish species protected in the SAC: Sea and River Lamprey, Twaite Shad and Salmon. The work sites are not likely to be used by Otter on a regular basis so the potential for significant effects on any of these species is very low.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

No potential for significant negative effects on any of the Qualifying Interest habitats or species or the Conservation Objectives of nearby Natura 2000 have been identified.

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

No potential for impacts identified. Consequently, the risk of this project contributing to cumulative negative impacts to water quality, when considered in combination with other projects, is screened out.

List of agencies consulted

The AA Screening Report and this Determination will be circulated to Statutory Consultees and will be available for review as part of the consultation documents.

Who carried out this assessment?

Tony Nagle, Ecologist, Capital Programme Implementation Unit, Cork County Council.

Sources of data

Scheme drawings. AA Screening Report.

Level of assessment completed

Appropriate Assessment Screening.

Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed?

Part 8 Documents are available online and at:

[Active Part 8 Development Consultation | Cork County Council \(corkcoco.ie\)](https://www.corkcoco.ie/active-part-8-development-consultation)

Overall conclusion

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the objective information provided in this report, it is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans/projects are not likely to have a significant effect on any European site (Natura 2000 site). It is therefore considered that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), is not required.

Explain how the overall conclusion that there are no significant effects on European sites was arrived at

- No interventions are proposed within any European site;
- There is no significant risk of activities associated with the project causing disturbance to species that are qualifying interests of any European site;
- Surface water run-off (containing sediment or pollution substances) during the construction phase is not likely to cause any significant impacts to any of the nearby European sites.