

**Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment  
Screening Determination**

**Housing Development  
Massey Town, Macroom, Co Cork**

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Cork County Council.**

**Date: January 2023**



**Cork County Council  
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí**

This document contains the Habitats Directive screening determination of Cork County Council in respect of proposed 18 no. dwelling units and a five-bed communal Acquired Brain Injury Ireland dwelling at Massey Town, Macroom, Co. Cork. The determination is based on the information provided in the Ecology & Appropriate Assessment (Screening) Report which has been prepared by Roger Goodwillie & Associates for Tuath Housing who are working in partnership with Cork County Council and which will be placed on display with the Part 8 documentation. This screening determination should be read in conjunction with that report.

In accordance with Regulation 250 of the Planning and Development Regulations, Local Authorities are required to carry out screening for appropriate assessment of proposed development to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on one or more European<sup>1</sup> sites. The Local Authority is required to determine that appropriate assessment of the proposed development is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on one or more European sites.

These requirements derive from Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive which states that

*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. 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.

#### ***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 and requires the compilation of a **Natura Impact Statement** by the project proponent, 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 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

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<sup>1</sup>“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.

European sites, or if uncertainty remains in relation to potential impacts on one or more European sites.

**Part 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics**

**Project Name:**

Housing Development Massey Town, Macroon, Co Cork

**Project Details:**

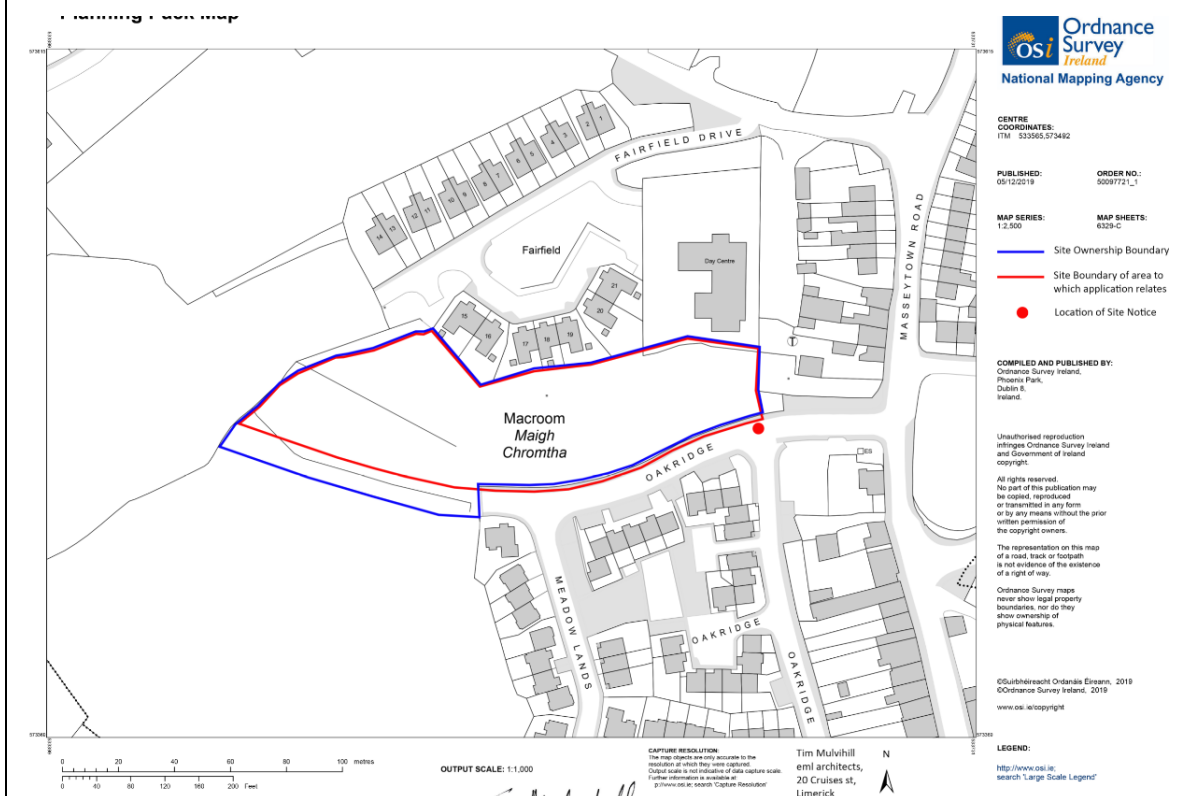
The proposed project relates to the construction of 18 housing units of one- and two-storey height and a 5-bed building for Acquired Brain Injury Ireland at Massey Town, Macroon, Co Cork.

As part of the proposal a field drain will be piped during site preparation where it cuts through the site.

*Surface water disposal:* It is proposed that all generated storm waters from the development will be collected via a separate stormwater gravity network and discharged to the existing storm sewer network of the adjoining Meadowlands Estate. The existing system at this location provides for restricted discharge and outfall to the Sullane River, with stormwater treatment in the form of a Petrol Interceptor included as part of the drainage strategy.

Further to the above, additional measures in the form of natural Sustainable Drainage mechanisms have been incorporated into the design to slow the release of surface waters into the existing gravity system. The proposed development provides for the integration of such features as Permeable Paving, Subsurface storage, Swales and Rain Gardens into the design which will aid in the slowing of storm run-off and allow for natural drainage to ground in as far as the natural subsoils will accept. Any waters not absorbed will discharge to the gravity storm network and discharged from the site.

*Foul water disposal:* Foul water discharge from the estate will be connected to the public system where wastewater will be conveyed to Macroon Wastewater Treatment Plant (D0126-01) for treatment.



**Figure 1: Site Location**

Full details of the proposed project can be consulted in project documents including the Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report, as well as in the project drawings.

**Site Characteristics:**

The site is located central to Macroon town towards the northern aspect of same. The site is situated within a portion of the town that seen considerable expansion and development over the last decade or so. Located to the south of the site is the Meadowlands housing complex, with the Macroon Family Resource Centre and an existing residential development to the north of the site with older longstanding residential units in place along the public road to the east.

Ecological surveying of the site conducted by Roger Goodwillie & Associates has assessed the site to be of low ecological interest.

The proposed site is located in the Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay Catchment, Catchment ID 19, sub-catchment Sullane\_SC\_010. The River Sullane is located approximately 275m southeast of the site. Online mapping indicates that there is no direct hydrological link between the site and the River Sullane. However, per the Ecology & Appropriate Assessment (Screening) Report a small watercourse crosses the site from a field drain to the north, with the drain created by an upstream diversion with much of the flow through the existing grasses. The drain ultimately discharges to a roadside shore.

The proposed development site does not lie within an area which is considered to be at risk of fluvial flooding.

**Part 2: Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of associated information.**

Six European Designated Sites have been identified as occurring within the potential zone of influence of the proposed project i.e. four are located within 15km of the study area and two have an identified pathway link. These sites are as follows:

*The Gearagh SAC (000108)* – located 2.1km from site. The conservation objective of this site is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the following qualifying interests:

- Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260]
- Rivers with muddy banks with Chenopodium rubri p.p. and Bidens p.p. vegetation [3270]
- 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]
- Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]

Targets associated with these qualifying interests are included in the [Conservation Objectives document](#).

*The Gearagh SPA (004109)* – located 2.1km from site. The conservation objective of this site is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the following qualifying interests:

- Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050]
- Teal (Anas crecca) [A052]
- Mallard (Anas platyrhynchos) [A053]
- Coot (Fulica atra) [A125]
- Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]

Targets associated with this qualifying interests are included in the [Conservation Objectives document](#).

*Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA (004162)* – located 5.3km from site. The conservation objective of this site is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the following qualifying interest:

- Hen Harrier (Circus cyaneus) [A082]

Targets associated with these qualifying interests are included in the [Conservation Objectives document](#).

*St. Gobnet's Wood SAC (000106)* – located 12.6km from site. The conservation objective of this site is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the following qualifying interests:

- Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]

Targets associated with this qualifying interest are included in the [Conservation Objectives document](#).

*Cork Harbour SPA (004030)* – located 38km from site. The conservation objective of this site is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the following qualifying interests:

- 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]

**Part 2: Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor model and compilation of associated information.**

- 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]

Targets associated with these qualifying interests are included in the [Conservation Objectives document](#).

*Great Island Channel SAC (001058)* – located >38km from site. The conservation objective of this site is to maintain / restore the favourable conservation condition of the following qualifying interests:

- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]
- Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330]

Targets associated with these qualifying interests are included in the [Conservation Objectives document](#).

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- 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.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, 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 will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Of these sites, only the Great Island Channel SAC and Cork Harbour SPA have been identified as having a pathway for possible effects.

### **Part 3: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects**

The AA screening report considers the potential risks of impact to the Great Island Channel SAC and the Cork Harbour SPA and rules out risk of significant impacts arising for the following reasons:

- Loss of habitat, displacement and/or exclusion of fauna and possible pollution events arising from accidental spillages of building materials such as cement or fuels will be confined to the immediate vicinity of the site;
- The development site supports none of the habitats or species that are qualifying interests of the European Designated Sites so it cannot act as a reserve area in case of loss from the main sites; and
- Lack of sensitive organisms or habitats within European Designated Sites hydrologically linked to the site that could be altered significantly by escaping material, coupled with assimilation capacity of Lee Reservoir.

The report concludes that there is no likelihood that this development will have significant impacts on the integrity and functioning of the Natura 2000 site network or its site management objectives. This is a finding of no significant effects.

### **Part 4: Screening Determination Statement**

On the basis of the information available, which is considered adequate to undertake a screening assessment and to make a screening determination Cork County Council is satisfied that the proposed project poses no likelihood of causing significant effects on any European Designated Site for the following reasons:

- No direct interventions are proposed within any European Designated Site, therefore no associated risk of direct damage to qualifying interest habitats and associated species will occur.
- The site is significantly removed from any European Designated Site and there is no direct hydrological or other ecological connection linking the development area to same.
- No elements of the proposal will generate noise to significant levels above ambient levels that could impact qualifying interest species occurring within any European Designated Site.
- There are no features or habitats of value within the proposed works areas which would differentiate it as a critical resource for ex-situ qualifying interest species from similar habitats in the surrounding area.
- There is no direct hydrological or other ecological connection linking the development area to any European Designated Site. The risk of surface water emissions associated with the proposed development is considered low during the construction phase and imperceptible during the post construction phase. The potential risk related to accidental release of sediments, spillage of hydrocarbons and waste from construction plant and equipment would likely to be localized to the immediate area of the site. Should contaminants reach adjoining watercourses and in turn the waters of Cork Harbour, given the assimilation and dilution capacity of both the riverine and estuarine environments, the risk for potential significant effects to the Great Islands Channel SAC, Cork Harbour SPA or any other European Designated Site can be ruled out.
- During operation wastewater will be conveyed to Macroom wastewater treatment plant for treatment.
- No alteration or fragmentation of habitats will occur within any European Designated Site.
- No high-risk invasive species listed under European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011, as amended) were recorded within the proposed development site. Therefore, the proposed development does not pose a risk of causing the spread of invasive alien species to any European Designated Site, which could negatively impact their qualifying interest habitats and/or species.

- No potential for in-combination effects have been identified

It is therefore determined that Appropriate Assessment is not required