

Cork County Council

Monkstown Active Travel Link and Public Realm Enhancement

Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Reference:

Draft 1 | 16 October 2023

This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.

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1. Introduction

Arup has been appointed by Cork County Council (CCC) to prepare a report for screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) to assist in determining whether AA is required for the proposed pedestrian and cycleway development located in Monkstown Village, County Cork.

The “proposed development” as referred to hereafter, will include the development of a pedestrian and cycleway at Monkstown Village, County Cork, including improvements to stormwater drainage infrastructure, parking provision, public lighting, fencing, signage, pedestrian crossings and landscaping.

The Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and the Habitats Directive (92/42/EEC) put an obligation on EU Member States to establish the Natura 2000 network of sites of highest biodiversity importance for rare and threatened habitats and species across the EU. In Ireland, the Natura 2000 network of European sites comprises Special Areas of Conservation (SACs, including candidate SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs, including proposed SPAs). SACs are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats (including priority types which are in danger of disappearance) and Annex II species (other than birds). SPAs are selected for the conservation of Annex I birds and other regularly occurring migratory birds and their habitats. The annexed habitats and species for which each site is selected correspond to the qualifying interests of the sites and from these the conservation objectives of the site are derived. The Birds and Habitats Directives set out various procedures and obligations in relation to nature conservation management in Member States in general, and of the Natura 2000 sites and their habitats and species in particular. A key protection mechanism is the requirement to consider the possible nature conservation implications of any plan or project on the Natura 2000 site network before any decision is made to allow that plan or project to proceed. Not only is every new plan or project captured by this requirement but each plan or project, when being considered for approval at any stage, must take into consideration the possible effects it may have in combination with other plans and projects when going through the process known as Appropriate Assessment (AA).

The obligation to undertake Appropriate Assessment (AA) derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, and both involve a number of steps and tests that need to be applied in sequential order. Article 6(3) is concerned with the strict protection of sites, while Article 6(4) is the procedure for allowing derogation from this strict protection in certain restricted circumstances. As set out in Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, a screening for appropriate assessment of an application for consent for the proposed development must be carried out by the competent authority 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 any European site. Each step in the assessment process precedes and provides a basis for other steps. The results at each step must be documented and recorded carefully so there is full traceability and transparency of the decisions made.

The purpose of this report is to inform the AA process as required under the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in instances where a plan or project may give rise to significant impacts on a Natura 2000 site. This report aims to inform the Appropriate Assessment process in determining whether the development, both alone and in combination with other plans or projects, are likely to have a significant impact on the Natura 2000 sites in the study area, in the context of their conservation objectives and specifically on the habitats and species for which the sites have been designated.

This report has been prepared with regard to the following guidance documents, where relevant.

- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provision of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission (EC), 2018);
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodical Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission (EC), 2021);
- Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, (EC) 2007);

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision);
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive; Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPW 1/10 and PSSP 2/10 (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010);
- Guidelines for Good Practice Appropriate Assessment of Plans under Article 6(3) Habitats Directive (International Workshop on Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Directive, 2011);
- Commission notice Guidance document on wind energy developments and EU nature legislation, (EC 2020);
- Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000);
- Assessment of plans & projects in relation to N2K sites – Methodological Guidance (EC 2021); and
- Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive (EC 2021).

This document sets out the results of the screening assessment and provides the competent authority, Cork County Council with the information necessary to undertake the AA screening in respect of the proposed development.

2. Regulatory Context and Methodology

2.1 Regulatory Context

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the *Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora*) aims to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest across Europe. The requirements of these directives are transposed into Irish law through the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2012-2021).

Under the Directive a network of sites of nature conservation importance have been identified by each Member State as containing specified habitats or species requiring to be maintained or returned to favourable conservation status. In Ireland the network consists of SACs and SPAs, and also candidate sites, which form the Natura 2000 network.

Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the *Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora* (as amended) (hereafter ‘the Habitats Directive’) requires that, any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a designated 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. A competent authority (e.g., the EPA or Local Authority) can only agree to a plan or project after having determined that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned.

The possibility of a significant effect on a designated or “European” site has generated the need for an appropriate assessment to be carried out by the competent authority for the purposes of Article 6(3). A Stage Two Appropriate Assessment 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 a European site. The first (Screening) Stage for appropriate assessment operates merely to determine whether a (Stage Two) Appropriate Assessment must be undertaken on the implications of the plan or project for the conservation objectives of relevant European sites.

2.2 Appropriate Assessment Procedure

The assessment requirements of Article 6(3) establish a stage-by-stage approach. This assessment follows the stages outlined in the 2001 European Commission publications “Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: methodological guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC” (2001) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC (Draft) Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg (EC, 2015).

The stages are as follows:

Stage One: Screening — the process which identifies any appreciable impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant;

Stage Two: Appropriate assessment — the consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site’s structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts;

Stage Three: Assessment of alternative solutions: The process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site. It is confirmed that no reliance is placed by the developer on Stage Three in the context of this application for development consent;

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain — an assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed (it is important to note that this guidance does not deal with the assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest). Again, for the avoidance of doubt, it is confirmed that no reliance is placed by the developer on Stage Four in the context of this application for development consent.

It is the responsibility of the competent authority, in this instance Cork County Council, to make a decision on whether or not the proposed development should be approved, taking into consideration any potential impact upon any Natura 2000 site within its likely zone of impact.

3. Description of the Receiving Environment and the Proposed Development

3.1 Introduction

Cork County Council (CCC) proposes to extend the existing pedestrian and cycleway network within the Cork Harbour Area through the development of a section of Pedestrian /Cycleway extending from Glenbrook to Raffeen Bridge. This section of Pedestrian/Cycleway will be a key link in the broader walking and cycling infrastructure in the area to the south of Cork City linking the existing Passage West to Rochestown Pedestrian /Cycleway through Carrigaline, Crosshaven and to Ringaskiddy. The route of the scheme broadly follows the alignment of the R610 (Strand Road) and historic alignment of the abandoned Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway line.

3.2 Original Application

In 2018, Part 8 consent was approved for a pedestrian and cyclist improvement scheme between Glenbrook and Raffeen in the Cork Harbour Area. However, the proposed development at Monkstown Village (Section 3 of the original scheme) was not approved at that stage.

Section 5 of the Part 8 Manager's Report prepared in 2017 proposed a number of modifications to the proposal at the time. One of these recommendations was:

"The proposal will be modified to provide for the suspension of the Pedestrian /Cycleway through the centre of Monkstown village core from the entrance to the public car park to the end of the Sand Quay".

3.3 The Proposed Development

This section of the scheme has been redesigned, and the redesigned element is the subject of this report. The original application was subject to screening for AA, and Cork County Council, as competent authority for AA determined that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment was not required. This report focusses on the material changes to the design of the proposed development and the receiving environment, to identify if the screening conclusion as determined by the competent authority for the original scheme design is correct in the context of the revised design and changes to the baseline.

The screening report for the original scheme is included as **Appendix B** to this report.

The proposed development comprises several elements, including the resurfacing of the existing R610 Road in Monkstown and the enhancement of the adjacent footway on the land side. Additionally, there will be the construction of a new shared cycleway/footpath. A new car park will be provided in front of the sand quay boat yard and the existing public car park in Monkstown will be resurfaced with the addition of more parking spaces.

To accommodate the shared cycleway/footpath, the proposed development encompasses the relocation of an existing stone wall situated at the public car park, to allow for widening the existing footway. The proposal includes maintaining the current on-street parking spaces and formalizing their structure, ensuring their continued availability for the community.

The proposed development also incorporates the creation of green spaces, which will feature shrubs, grass, and trees, along with street furniture. It also involves the installation of new lighting columns with luminaires. Traffic calming measures like speed bumps and buildouts will be implemented. Furthermore, new road markings, road signage, and traffic signals will be installed at designated pedestrian crossings. The proposed development will include the provision of new gullies to accommodate the modified road layout, connecting them to the existing drainage network of the area.

It will be a quality amenity for walkers and cyclists of all ages, and act as a gateway for bringing cycling tourists to the area. It will also provide health and safety benefits, enabling safe and easy access to pedestrian and cycling routes, improving opportunities for outdoor recreation in the area.

Scheme drawings are included as **Appendix D** to this report.

3.4 Development Location

The proposed development is located at Monkstown Village, County Cork and runs for approximately 450m from Monkstown Pier (to the north) to Sand Quay (to the south), as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Extent of Proposed Development | not to scale [background mapping © Microsoft Bing Maps]

At Monkstown, the Pedestrian /Cycleway will be routed along the existing footpath alignment adjacent to the car park, Sailing Club and access gangway to Monkstown Marina. Access to these facilities and on-street parking will be maintained and the route is lit by existing public lighting.

3.5 Construction of the Proposed Development

3.5.1 Design Standards

The proposed development has been designed with reference to and to comply with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) in terms of the overall principles of design. The design speed applied to the entire study area is 50 km/hr.

These principles include viewing the area as both a transport corridor and a place and use of the user hierarchy placing pedestrians and cyclists ahead of motorists, and specific standards, such as lane and carriageway widths and appropriate corner radii.

Where applicable, the National Cycle Manual has also been consulted for best practice guidance. In addition, emerging design guidance arising from the national BusConnects programme have been applied regarding details of bus lanes, cycle tracks and footway, in particular crossing entrances along cycle corridors.

3.5.2 Pavement

Proposed pavements will be constructed from standard bituminous materials. Where road widening is proposed, full depth road construction will be applied. In the cases where carriageway narrowing is proposed it is not proposed that the existing road surface will be replaced as this existing road surface will not be impacted by the proposed works.

Proposed footways will be standard concrete footways while cycle tracks will have a bituminous surface.

All surfaces will be subject to a detailed design to identify final proposed depths of layers and confirm material specifications.

3.5.3 Bus Stop

The existing bus stop in Monkstown includes both inbound and outbound stops. The redesigned stop will be located near a pedestrian crossing to allow for ease of movement across the carriageway for pedestrians.

3.5.4 Drainage

The proposed development includes enhanced environmental protection by including hydrocarbon interception in the stormwater drainage network. Any local changes to surface water drainage will still travel to the existing network that is currently in use in Monkstown. The drainage from the newly constructed areas will tie back into the existing network at appropriate points.

There will not be a substantial increase to the storm water flows into the existing network and the network has adequate capacity for the proposed development.

3.5.5 Earthworks

There are minimal earthworks proposed on the scheme, any earthworks will be designed to ensure balancing of cut and fill to prevent to need for either the import or disposal of significant quantities of material.

3.5.6 Utilities

Localised lowering or protecting of existing utilities may be required in areas of proposed works. This may include the relocation of the existing utilities providers overhead to be moved other ground at certain section of the scheme.

3.5.7 Public Lighting

Public lighting will be upgraded and provided. It is anticipated that adequate power supplies are available for this lighting. Some existing columns will need to be replaced or relocated due to the proposed new sustainable transport facilities. Where existing public lighting is being relocated, lanterns will be replaced with new, efficient LED lanterns.

3.5.8 Construction Traffic

During the construction phase, vehicular movement will increase in the immediate area, and temporary vertical elements such as hoarding or protective fencing, will be put in place. All construction impacts will be temporary, and will include the following:

- Site preparation works and operations;
- Site infrastructure works and vehicular access;
- Construction traffic;
- Dust and other emissions;
- Temporary hoardings or fencing;
- Temporary site lighting;
- Temporary site accommodation cabins and huts.

4. Ecological Overview

This section provides a description of the ecological baseline within the proposed works area. Impacts from the proposed works on biodiversity are described in this section. The potential for specific impacts on Natura 2000 sites is addressed in Section 5 below.

The baseline information for this section was gathered by desktop research and a site review in May and June 2023. The habitat and species identified are described below, illustrated in Figure 2 and the 2023 site habitat report including photographs is included as **Appendix C** to this report.

4.1 Walkover Survey

4.1.1 Introduction

The entire site is dominated by one main habitat; BL3 Buildings and Artificial Surfaces. This includes the R610 road, associated footpaths along the road and car park areas. Secondary, smaller habitats include areas of GA2 Amenity Grassland (Improved) and linear features such as CC1 Sea Walls, Piers and Jetties, BL2 Stone walls and BC4 Flowerbeds and Borders. Some individual trees are also present across the site.

4.1.2 BL3 Buildings and Artificial Surfaces

The site boundary at the northern end of the Monkstown site begins on the R610 road which travels through the full length of the site to the southern boundary. For a large portion of the site, the Monkstown carpark runs along the eastern half of the site. The carpark also has two small buildings and a recycling and waste collection point. Footpaths run the length of the site along the western site boundary and separating the roadway from the carpark.

4.1.3 GA2 Amenity Grassland (Improved)

Towards the southern half of the site there are several small areas of amenity grassland.

CC1 Sea Walls, Piers and Jetties

A sea wall runs along the western boundary of the majority of the site.

4.1.4 BL2 Stone Walls

Stone walls border the road and footpaths along the majority of the site.

4.1.5 BC4 Flowerbeds and Borders

Small flowerbeds and a short border of shrubs are located at the entrance and throughout the carpark.



Legend

Linear features

- BL2 Stone Walls
- Individual trees
- BC4 Flowerbeds & borders

Habitats

- GA2 Amenity grassland (improved)
- BL3 Buildings and artificial surfaces
- CC1 Sea walls, piers & jetties

Figure 2 Habitat Map | not to scale [source: APEM 2023 - Appendix C to this Report]

5. Natura 2000 Sites and Potential Effects

5.1 Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development

The zone of influence comprises the area within which the proposed development may potentially affect the conservation objectives or qualifying interests (QI) of a Natura 2000 site. There is no recommended zone of influence, and guidance from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) recommends that the distance should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in-combination effects (cumulative).

Natura 2000 sites (European sites) are only at risk from significant effects where a source-pathway-receptor link exists between a proposed development and a Natura 2000 site(s). This can take the form of a direct impact (e.g., where the proposed development and/or associated construction works are located within the boundary of the Natura 2000 site(s)) or an indirect impact where impacts outside of the Natura 2000 site(s) affect ecological receptors within (e.g. impacts to water quality which can affect riparian habitats at a distance from the impact source). Consideration is therefore given to the source-pathway-receptor linkage and associated risks between the proposed development and Natura 2000 sites.

The identification of risk does not automatically mean that an effect will occur, nor that it will be significant. The identification of these risks means that there is a possibility of environmental or ecological damage occurring. The level and significance of the effect depends upon the nature of the consequence, likelihood of the risk and characteristics of the receptor.

The precautionary principle is applied for the purposes of screening to ensure that consideration and pre-emptive action is undertaken where there is a lack of scientific evidence.

The proposed development is located within an area which is of low ecological potential.

The type of construction works proposed as described above are not complex in nature and are well understood. Emissions will be localised, temporary and minor. Habitat loss will not result in significant effects and the habitats are of low ecological value. The potential for significant disturbance effects on fauna will not arise due to the small scale, duration and location of the proposed works. The numbers of construction vehicles/equipment required for the works are very low, the excavations are small and the risk of significant pollution spillages or sedimentation entering Cork Harbour is extremely low.

Thus, it was determined that the likely zone of influence of the proposed site investigation works would not extend further than the immediate area around the works area.

5.2 European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development

There are no Natura 2000 sites within the site of the proposed development. No habitat loss will occur within any Natura 2000 site as a result of the proposed development. The proposed works area is not of importance for the qualifying interests (QI) species of any Natura 2000 site.

Consultation of NPWS online data identified two designated sites within 15km of the proposed development area – one Special Protection Area (Cork Harbour SPA) and one Special Area of Conservation (Great Island SAC). There is a potential hydrological connection between the proposed development and Cork Harbour SPA via surface water drainage and a hydrogeological connection during high tide. As Great Island Channel SAC is located upstream of the proposed development works area, it is considered that there is no hydrological connection. Therefore, only Cork Harbour SPA is considered further in this assessment.

Cork Harbour SPA is located <5m from the proposed development area (see Figure 3 below).



Figure 3 Cork Harbour SPA within 15km of the Proposed Development - note that the full extent of the Glenbrook to Raffeen Pedestrian /Cycleway is considered to address potential in-combination effects | source: July 2016 Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening Report | not to scale

5.3 Special Conservation Interests

Cork Harbour SPA is immediately east of the proposed development area. It comprises several discrete areas and estuaries along the harbour, including Monkstown Creek. A number of bird species are listed as special conservation objectives for this SPA, as follows: Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*), Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*), Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), Wigeon (*Anas penelope*), Teal (*Anas crecca*), Pintail (*Anas acuta*), Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*), Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*), Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Redshank (*Tringa tetanus*), Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), Common Gull (*Larus canus*), Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*), and Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*).

In addition to the bird species listed above, Wetlands are also a Special Conservation Interest for the SPA, on the basis of their habitat importance for non-breeding (wintering) migratory waterbirds.

5.4 Potential Effects

The AA screening report completed for the wider project included a summary table of the Stage 1 Screening Assessment, included as Table 1 here.

Table 1 Summary of Stage 1 Screening Assessment (Atkins, 2016)

| SCIs | Family Group | Habitat | Food Requirements | Relevant to Monkstown | Finding of 1 st & 2 nd Screening steps |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Little grebe | Podicipedidae (grebes) | Subtidal; flooded intertidal | Fish / Crustacea | Rarely occurs | Screened Out |
| Great crested grebe | Podicipedidae (grebes) | Subtidal; flooded intertidal | Fish / Crustacea | Rarely occurs | Screened Out |
| Cormorant | Phalacrocoracidae (cormorants) | Subtidal; flooded intertidal | Fish | Yes; Roosts favoured will not be impacted; occurs in low in estuary. | Screened out |
| Grey Heron | Ardeidae (herons) | Intertidal; coastal shallows; rivers etc. | Predominantly fish from shallow waters | Yes; Roosts favoured will not be impacted; occurs in low in estuary no's especially along shoreline. | Screened out |
| Shelduck | Anatidae (shelducks) | Intertidal mudflats | Mainly intertidal molluscs; <i>Hydrobia</i> | Yes | Should not be negatively impacted; see below. |
| Wigeon | Anatidae (dabbling ducks) | Wet grassland; saltmarsh; intertidal & coastal grassland | Grazer | Not recorded | Screened out |
| Teal | Anatidae (dabbling ducks) | Wet grassland; saltmarsh; freshwater; intertidal & coastal; often along tidal channels | Mainly seeds & invertebrates; but also on algal / bacterial layer on mud surface | Yes | Should not be negatively impacted; see below. |
| Pintail | Anatidae (dabbling ducks) | Wet grassland; saltmarsh; intertidal & coastal | Mainly seeds & invertebrates | Not recorded | Screened out |
| Shoveler | Anatidae (dabbling ducks) | Wet grassland; saltmarsh; freshwater; intertidal & coastal; | Mainly Zooplankton, also seeds & invertebrates | Not recorded | Screened out |
| Red breasted Merganser | Anatidae (seaduck) | Subtidal; flooded intertidal | Fish / Crustacea | Not recorded | Screened out |
| Oystercatcher | Haematopodidae (wading bird) | Intertidal mud / sand flats; terrestrial fields | Varied; includes bivalves, polychaetes and terrestrial worms | Yes | Should not be negatively impacted; see below. |
| Golden Plover | Charadriidae (wading bird) | Tends to feed more on wet terrestrial habitats; often roosting on shore | Beetles, worms, terrestrial molluscs etc.; coastal feeders take marine molluscs etc. | Not recorded | Screened out |
| Grey Plover | Charadriidae (wading bird) | Intertidal mudflat | Predominantly polychaetes & bivalves | Not recorded | Screened out |

| SCIs | Family Group | Habitat | Food Requirements | Relevant to Monkstown | Finding of 1 st Screening (spatial) |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lapwing | Charadriidae (wading bird) | Tends to feed more on wet terrestrial habitats; often roosting on shore | Beetles, worms, terrestrial molluscs etc.; coastal feeders take may take polychaetes and crustaceans | Tends to use estuary to roost; favouring mudflats remote from Greenway & the stone breakwater | Screened out |
| Dunlin | Scolopacidae (wading bird) | Intertidal sand flats | Predominantly polychaetes & gastropods | Yes | Favoured mudflats remote from Greenway; roosts on breakwater; up to 50 recorded in inner creek; See below. |
| Bar-tailed Godwit | Scolopacidae (wading bird) | Intertidal mud / sand flats; terrestrial fields | Predominantly polychaetes & bivalves | Rarely occurs; favours sand rather than mudflats; suitable habitat absent at Monkstown | Screened Out |
| Black-tailed Godwit | Scolopacidae (wading bird) | Intertidal mud / sand flats; terrestrial fields | Varied; includes bivalves, polychaetes and terrestrial worms | Yes | Should not be negatively impacted; see below. |
| Curlew | Scolopacidae (wading bird) | Intertidal mud / sand flats; terrestrial fields | Varied; includes bivalves, polychaetes, crabs etc. and terrestrial worms | Yes | Favoured mudflats remote from Greenway; see below. |
| Redshank | Scolopacidae (wading bird) | Intertidal mudflats; including along tidal channels | Predominantly polychaetes & gastropods | Yes | Should not be negatively impacted; see below. |
| Black-headed gull | Laridae (gulls) | Intertidal, Subtidal & Terrestrial | Varied, but can include significant terrestrial component | Yes | Should not be negatively impacted; see below. |
| Common gull | Laridae (gulls) | Intertidal, Subtidal & Terrestrial | Varied, but can include significant terrestrial component | Not present in notable numbers | Screened Out |
| Lesser black backed gull | Laridae (gulls) | Intertidal, Subtidal & Terrestrial | Varied, but can include significant terrestrial component | Occasional large roost count; otherwise not in notable numbers | Screened Out |
| Common tern | Sternidae (terns) | Subtidal; flooded intertidal | Fish / Crustacea | Yes | Breeding site at Pzifers no impact; tolerant to human presence; see below. |

The 2016 screening report (included as **Appendix C** to this report) addresses the species highlighted in green above and concludes that the proposed development will not have a negative impact on the conservation interests of European sites.

5.5 In-combination Effects

The potential for in-combination effects arising from the proposed development relates to the development of the remaining elements of the Raffeen to Glenbrook pedestrian and cycleway project. This combination of works was subject to screening for AA as documented in **Appendix C** and on the basis of the reporting provided, the Competent Authority, Cork County Council determined that the overall project as presented screened out for AA.

If the ecological baseline, the scheme design, or the status of potentially affected European sites were significantly altered such that the potential for negative effects on European sites were increased, then the conclusion on in-combination effects documented in Appendix C would consequently be subject to revision. The potential requirement to revise the conclusions of the 2016 screening report is reviewed in Section 0 of this report.

No other plans or projects were identified which have the potential for negative in-combination effects with the proposed development.

6. Assessment of Changes to Baseline, Scheme Design, and Status of Relevant European Sites

6.1 Changes to Ecology Baseline

As noted in Section 4.1, and detailed in **Appendix C** there has been no changes to the habitats and species in the receiving environment since the 2016 screening assessment which would materially change the conclusion of the 2016 screening report.

6.2 Changes to Scheme Design

The design of the proposed development has evolved since the wider scheme was subject to screening for appropriate assessment in 2016. The design changes comprise:

Increased provision of car parking at Monkstown;

Improvements to the provision of public lighting by the provision of new efficient LED lanterns;

Improvements to the provision of landscaping; and

Improvements to the local stormwater drainage network by the provision of hydrocarbon interception.

None of the design changes, either individually, or in combination, would materially change the conclusion of the 2016 screening report.

6.3 Changes to the status of Relevant European Sites

The National Parks and Wildlife Service records for Cork Harbour SPA were reviewed in June 2023 (www.npws.ie), to determine if there has been any changes to the Conservation Objectives, Site Synopsis or Special Conservation Interests of the SPA in the period between 2016 and 2023. No changes to any of the statutory reporting for the SPA have been recorded in the intervening period.

6.4 Summary

No material changes to any of the input data considered in the 2016 screening report have been identified which would affect the conclusion of that report with regard to the potential for effects on Natura 2000 sites.

7. Assessment of Significance

The proposed development will not result in any significant direct, indirect or in-combination effects on Natura 2000 sites. **Table 5** below has been used to determine whether significant impacts are likely.

Table 5: Significant Impacts Checklist

| Does the project have the potential to | Yes or No |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Reduce the area of key habitats? | No |
| Reduce the population of key species? | No |
| Change the balance between key species? | No |
| Reduce diversity of the site? | No |
| Result in disturbance that could affect population size or density or the balance between key species? | No |
| Result in fragmentation? | No |
| Result in loss or reduction of key features (e.g. tree cover, tidal exposure, annual flooding, etc.)? | No |
| Cause delays in progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site? | No |
| Interrupt progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site? | No |
| Disrupt those factors that help to maintain the favourable conditions of the site? | No |
| Interfere with the balance, distribution and density of key species that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the site? | No |
| Cause changes to the vital defining aspects (e.g. nutrient balance) that determine how the site functions as a habitat or ecosystem? | No |
| Change the dynamics of the relationships (between, for example, soil and water or plants and animals) that define the structure and/or function of the site? | No |
| Interfere with predicted or expected natural changes to the site (such as water dynamics or chemical composition)? | No |

In addition, this conclusion has been arrived at on the following basis:

- No works will take place within any Natura 2000 site. No material or spoil from the works will be deposited in any Natura 2000 site. There will be no encroachment on the habitats or species of any Natura 2000 site.
- There will be no loss of Natura 2000 site habitat area, no fragmentation of the habitats of Natura 2000 sites, no disturbance to the qualifying species of the Natura 2000 sites, no impacts on population density of these species, no impacts on water resources and no impacts on water quality of the Natura 2000 sites.
- There will be no significant emissions to air or soil during the proposed development. There will also be no significant noise emissions arising from the proposed development.

8. Screening Statement and Conclusion

This report was produced to fulfil the requirements of EU Habitats Directive (92/34/EEC). The screening document provides the information required in order to establish whether or not the proposed development is likely to have a significant impact on the Natura 2000 sites in the context of their conservation objectives and specifically on the habitats and species for which the Natura 2000 sites have been designated. The key site under consideration is the Cork Harbour SPA (004030).

There are no material impacts arising from the proposed development on Natura 2000 sites.

The aims of this report were as follows:

- Determine whether the proposed development is directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of any Natura 2000 sites.
- Provide information on and assess the potential for the proposed development to significantly impact on Natura 2000 Sites (also known as European sites).
- Determine whether the proposed development, alone or in combination with other projects and plans, is likely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites in view of their conservation objectives.

It has been objectively concluded by Arup that:

- The proposed development is not directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of any Natura 2000 sites.
- There is no potential for the proposed development to significantly impact on Natura 2000 Sites.
- The proposed development, alone or in combination with other projects, is not likely to have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites in view of their conservation objectives.

It has been determined by Arup that there is no likelihood of significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites, individually or in combination with any other plans or projects. It is the view of Arup that it is not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process.

9. References

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities;

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010. Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive; Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPW 1/10 and PSSP 2/10;

EC) 2007. Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission;

European Commission (2000) Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle;

European Commission (EC), 2001. Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodical Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;

European Commission (EC), 2018 Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provision of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;

Fossitt J A (2000) A Guide to Habitats in Ireland. The Heritage Council, Kilkenny;

Gilbert G, Stanbury A and Lewis L (2021), “Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020 –2026”. Irish Birds 43: 1-22;

Heritage Council, 2011 Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping;

International Workshop on Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Directive, 2011 Guidelines for Good Practice Appropriate Assessment of Plans under Article 6(3) Habitats Directive;

National Roads Authority, 2009 Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes;

NPWS (2014a) Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (Site Code 4030) Conservation Objectives Supporting Document Version 1;

NPWS (2014b). Great Island Channel SAC (site code 1058) Conservation objectives supporting document - coastal habitats. Version 1;

NPWS (2014c). Great Island Channel SAC (site code 1058) Conservation objectives supporting document - marine habitats. Version 1;

NPWS (2018) Natura 2000 Standard Data Form. Cork Harbour SPA IE0004030.

Appendix A

Findings of No Significant Effects Report

Name of Project: Monkstown Active Travel Link and Public Realm Enhancement

Names of Natura 2000 Sites of relevance to the proposed development:

There will be no direct nor indirect significant negative effects on any Natura 2000 sites as a result of the proposed site investigation works.

| Site Name | Site Code |
|------------------|-----------|
| Cork Harbour SPA | 004030 |

Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?

No

Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the site?

No

THE ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS

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

It has been determined by Arup that it is possible to rule out likely significant impacts on any Natura 2000 sites.

Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

- No works will take place within any Natura 2000 site. No material or spoil from the works will be deposited in any Natura 2000 site. There will be no encroachment on the habitats or species of any Natura 2000 site.
- There will be no loss of Natura 2000 site habitat area, no fragmentation of the habitats of Natura 2000 sites, no disturbance to the qualifying species of the Natura 2000 sites, no impacts on population density of these species, no impacts on water resources and no impacts on water quality of the Natura 2000 sites.
- There will be no significant emissions to air or soil arising from the proposed development. There will also be no significant noise emissions arising from the proposed development.

Sources of Data:

This report has been prepared with regard to the following guidance documents, where relevant:

Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provision of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2018); [hereafter referred to as MN 2018];

Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodical Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001);

Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission, 2007);

Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision);

Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive; Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPW 1/10 and PSSP 2/10;

Guidelines for Good Practice Appropriate Assessment of Plans under Article 6(3) Habitats Directive (International Workshop on Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Directive, 2011);

Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle. European Commission (2000).

Sources of information that were used to collect data on the Natura 2000 network of sites and on the existing ecological environment are listed below:

- Ordnance Survey Ireland OSI mapping and aerial photography – www.osi.ie
- Bing aerial photography – www.bing.com/maps
- Google aerial photography – www.googlemaps.com
- National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) - www.npws.ie
- National Parks and Wildlife Service online data on protected flora and fauna;
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – www.epa.ie (EPA Online Environmental Map Viewer)
- Information on environmental water quality data available from (EPA, www.catchments.ie)
- National Biodiversity Data Centre – www.biodiversityireland.ie
- BirdWatch Ireland - www.birdwatchireland.ie/
- Google Earth aerial photography
- Fossit (2000) *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland*. The Heritage Council
- Cork County Council Development Plan 2014.
- Draft Cork County Development Plan 2021

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided above, and by applying the precautionary principle, it has been determined by Arup that it is possible to rule out likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites and therefore it is the view of Arup that it is not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process.

Appendix B

2016 Stage 1 AA Screening Report

Appendix C

Baseline Habitat Report 2023

Appendix D

Scheme Drawings

