

**Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment
Screening Determination**

Project: Ballinrea Cross Roundabout Construction



Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

Completed by Tony Nagle (Ecologist)

Capital Programme Implementation Unit

Cork County Council

Date: 12/10/2023

This document contains the Habitats Directive Screening Determination of Cork County Council in respect of a proposal to construct a roundabout at Ballina Crossroads, Carrigaline, County Cork. The determination is based on information provided in the Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment Screening Assessment Report which has been prepared by DixonBrosnan Environmental Consultants on behalf of Cork County Council. This screening determination should be read in conjunction with the DixonBrosnan report.

<p>Name of the project:</p> <p>Ballinrea Crossroads Roundabout</p>
<p>Description of the project:</p> <p>The basis of the proposed project is the construction of a roundabout at Ballinrea Crossroads. The current crossroads layout provides restricted visibility and is a danger to road users. Construction of the new roundabout will involve land acquisitions on both sides of each of the four roads of the junction to facilitate road widening to enable the construction of the roundabout.</p> <p>The proposed project will consist of the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Widening of each of the four approach roads (involving some hedgerow removal).• Construction of a roundabout in the centre of the crossroads.• Road re-surfacing.• Construction of a retaining wall.• Construction of safety barriers.• Erection of new signage and road markings. <p>Work is likely to commence in 2025 and the timeframe to completion is estimated to be approximately 6 months.</p>
<p>Name and location of Natura 2000 Sites identified for screening:</p> <p>Two Natura 2000 Sites were identified to be within the zone of influence of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA)• Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation (SAC) <p>Cork Harbour SPA is approximately 5 km southeast of the proposed project site (via the nearby stream and Owenboy/Owenabue River).</p> <p>Great Island Channel SAC is approximately 13.5 km northeast of the project site (via the nearby stream and Owenboy/Owenabue River).</p>
<p>Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites listed above?</p> <p>No.</p>
<p>Is the project (alone or in combination) likely to affect any Natura 2000 sites?</p> <p>The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report assessed a number of developments in the area including:</p>

- The River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027.
- Inland Fisheries Ireland Corporate Plan 2021-2025.
- Irish Water Capital Investment Plan 2020-2024.
- Water Services Strategic Plan (WSSP, 2015).
- NPWS Conservation Management Plans.
- A search of Cork County Council’s online Planning Enquiry System over the previous 24-month period revealed a single development in the immediate area consisting of the refurbishment and extension of an existing dwelling.

Assessments of the above plans and projects found that there would be no significant impact on Natura 2000 Sites and each of the plans examined are likely to have positive impacts on European sites in terms of improved water quality and the NPWS Conservation Management Plans will contribute to the maintenance or return to favourable conservation status for each of these sites.

Has a site visit been undertaken?

Yes, the site was visited on 21/02/2023.

Legislative Context:

This determination has considered the relative legislative context as set out in Section 2.1 of the AA Screening Report including, but not limited to:

- The European Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992)
- The European Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by Directive 2009/147/EC)
- The European Communities (Bird and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No 477 of 2011), as amended
- Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Screening Report:

Cork County Council commissioned DixonBrosnan Environmental Consultants to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report entitled *Report in Support of Appropriate Assessment Screening Proposed Ballinrea Cross Roundabout* in May 2023. The Cork County Council Ecologist has examined and evaluated the content of the report and agrees with the conclusions set out in the screening report and the reasons therein.

Given the nature and scale of the proposed Ballinrea Crossroads Roundabout development, significant impacts on the two closest Natura 2000 sites (Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC) are considered to be unlikely. The proposed development will not involve any instream works in the Owenboy River. Excavation and construction works will be relatively minor and restricted to a small site. The existing noise levels of Carrigaline (traffic, people, construction works and industry) are likely to muffle any construction noise emanating from the roundabout construction, especially as the main concentrations of the Qualifying Interest species (mostly wintering waterfowl and waders) tend to be a considerable distance (3 km) from the proposed construction site. Given the nature of the construction process and distance from the nearest European site, the chances of any significant polluting substance entering the Owenboy River and Estuary are considered to be very low.

The AA Screening Report concluded (following an analysis and evaluation of the relevant information and considering best scientific information), that no significant potential negative impacts (alone and in-combination with other development plans and projects in the area) on the Conservation Objectives of the Qualifying Interests of the Natura 2000 sites are likely as a result of the proposed development of the proposed Ballinrea Crossroads Roundabout.

The main reasons for this conclusion are as follows:

- The proposed development is not located within a European site so there will be no habitat loss within any European site.
- The works zone is approximately 2.3 km directly northwest of Cork Harbour SPA and 4.6 km via the hydrological pathway of the nearby stream and Owenboy River. The relatively small sized stream on the east side of the crossroads that potentially provides a pathway connecting the work zone to the Owenboy River together with the 4.6 km distance to the SPA constitute a weak pollution pathway.
- The works zone is sufficiently distant from Cork Harbour SPA to avoid any threat of disturbance to the Qualifying Interests of the SPA.
- The works area is approximately 13.5km from Great Island Channel SAC and as such, there will be no direct impacts to the SAC.
- There will be no work within the nearby Owenboy River (which flows into Cork Harbour SPA).
- Precautionary working near water measures will be in place to prevent leakage of cement into the river. In the unlikely event of a hydrocarbon spillage, or siltation from excavation works, it was considered that a small scale hydrocarbon leakage or siltation would not negatively impact Cork Harbour SPA given the diluting effect of river and tide in the estuarine environment downstream of the work zone (via a small tributary stream on the east side of the crossroads).
- No impacts on Cork Harbour SPA are anticipated during the operational phase of the proposed development.
- It is not anticipated that there will be any cumulative impacts on Cork Harbour SPA due to the location, nature and scale of other developments in the area in combination with the proposed roundabout development.

Who carried out this assessment?

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

What sources of data were used in this screening?

Project scheme drawings and Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

What level of assessment was completed?

Appropriate Assessment Screening.

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 would not be likely to have a significant effect on the Conservation Objectives of a 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.

Signature and date of Recommending Officer:



Tony Nagle
Cork County Council Ecologist
11/10/2023