

KERRY ECOLOGICAL SERVICES

## Appropriate Assessment Screening for carpark at Ballard, Kilworth, Co. Cork

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[Ballard Recreational Amenity]

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**[July, 2023]**

**On behalf of: Coillte / Avondu Blackwater CLG / Cork County Council**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

It is proposed to construct a car-park at Ballard, Kilworth, Co. Cork.

The proposed development is <1km from the Blackwater River Special Area of Conservation (SAC code 2170) and >7km from the Blackwater Callows Special Protected Area (SPA code 4094).

In this regard, a Habitats Directive Screening Report has been prepared.

The overall objectives of this assessment are:

- To assess any likely impacts that may impact on any existing Natura 2000 site(s) and their associated species.
- To assess the likely impacts, if any, on the existing habitats and associated fauna, which may arise from the proposed development.

This report has been compiled by Ciaran Ryan (B.Sc. Analytical Science; M.Sc. Environmental Science) with over 25 years experience in ecological survey (including SAC & SPA designations), SAC & SPA Management Plans, Commonage Framework Plans, SAC Appeals, Natura 2000 site assessments and reports (NIS) and general environmental consultancy. I am an accredited Native Woodland Scheme ecologist.

### **1.2 Description of project / development**

Cork County Council in partnership with Coillte and Avondhu Blackwater Partnership propose to develop an off road car park and picnic area to cater for recreational users of the Ballard Forest, the entrance is via an existing forest road exit/entrance and the car park is to cater for 18 car spaces. There is minimal parking available at the entrance and parking at this area is not appropriate. Additionally numerous vehicles are parked along the L-1419 which is again not appropriate.

#### **Site works will include:**

- The development of hardcore public car park.
- The creation of a vehicular entrance/exit on to the exiting forestry road
- New hardcore footpath link to Forest Recreation Area.
- Landscaping of site boundaries with native hedging and trees
- Drainage works within the carpark.
- Erection of a height barrier
- Erection of signage

## **2. LEGISLATIVE SCOPE OF THIS REPORT**

### **2.1 Environmental Impact Assessment**

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and EC (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 (S.I. 94/97), require local governments to ensure that appropriate ecological assessment of any proposed developments or works is carried out. Section 31 of the Natural Habitats Regulations stipulates that where an operation or activity is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site (i.e. an SAC or SPA), then an assessment should be carried out on the implications for that site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The Environmental Impact Regulations 1989 - 2000 stipulates the classes of development that would require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The proposed project is sub-threshold and will not require an EIA as per the legislation.

### **2.2 Appropriate Assessment**

The concept of Appropriate Assessment (AA) is the requirement to consider the possible nature conservation implications of any plan or project on the Natura 2000 site network, before that plan or project proceeds. The obligation to undertake an AA derives from Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. 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. An AA is a focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of the plan or projects, alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, in view of its conservation objectives. Assessments should be undertaken on the basis of best scientific evidence and methods.

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) has issued a document entitled *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: guidance for planning authorities (2010)*. This document states that it is the responsibility of the competent authority to undertake the AA. The assessment should be based on sufficient relevant information such as that submitted by the proponent of the plan.

This assessment must be prepared by an ecological specialist(s) undertaking surveys, research and analysis, with input from other relevant disciplines as required e.g. engineers, hydrologists, archaeologists etc. Assessments should be undertaken on the basis of best scientific evidence and methods. Accordingly, data and information on the project and on the site must be obtained and an analysis of potential effects on the site must be undertaken.

This AA has been undertaken in accordance with the European Commission "*Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*" and the European Commission Guidance on "*Managing Natura 2000 Sites*" and in accordance with current DoEHLG guidance. It provides the information required in order to establish whether or not the proposed development is likely to have a significant impact on any Natura 2000 site. It considers the potential impacts on local Natura 2000 sites in the context of the habitats and species for which such Natura 2000 site(s) has been selected, along with their conservation objectives.

### **2.3 Screening Statement/ Natura Impact Assessment**

The first step in an AA is a Screening Statement. This requires a description of the project, identification and description of relevant Natura 2000 sites, and an assessment of likely effects of the proposed project. If these are not deemed to be potentially significant, then there is no need to conduct a full AA. However, if any likely effects are deemed to be potentially significant, then a full AA or Natura Impact Assessment (NIS) must be conducted.

In complying with the obligations under Article 6(3) and following the above guidelines, this AA has been prepared using the following structure:

#### **Stage 1: Screening**

This includes:

- Description of the proposed development/project (and if the plan/project is necessary for the management of the Natura 2000 site(s)).
- Consultation with NPWS.
- Identification of all Natura 2000 sites potentially affected by the plan/project.
- Identification and description of individual and cumulative impacts likely to result from the plan/project.
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on site integrity.
- Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.
- Determination of the necessity or otherwise for a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

Screening for AA examines the likely effects of a project or plan, alone and in combination with other projects or plans, upon a Natura 2000 site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant. If it is determined during screening that the development may have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site then a NIS will need to be prepared. If it is determined during screening that the development may have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site then a Stage 2 NIS will need to be prepared. This assessment has concluded that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required on this occasion.

This report complies with a Screening Statement in accordance with current DoEHLG guidance. It provides the information required in order to establish that the proposed development is not likely to have a significant impact on any Natura 2000 site. It considers the potential impacts on local Natura 2000 sites in the context of the habitats and species for which such Natura 2000 site(s) has been selected, along with their conservation objectives.

### **3. ECOLOGICAL STATUS**

#### **3.1 General background**

The proposed development is <1km from a Natura 2000 site(s) i.e. the Blackwater River SAC. It is also approximately 7km from the Blackwater Callows SPA. These are part of the EU designated Natura 2000 site network.

The site is also 5.7km from the Lower River Suir SAC (code 2137). However, there is no hydrological link to this site. As such, there is no pathway for any impact on this SAC and therefore, this Natura 2000 site can be screened out at this stage.

With the introduction of the Birds Directive in 1979 (79/409/EEC) and the Habitats Directive in 1992 (92/43/EEC), came the obligation 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) and Special Protection Areas (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; from these the conservation objectives of the site are derived.

SACs are to be managed in a method to maintain a favourable ecological status for the relevant Annex I habitat(s) and Annex II species listed under the Habitats Directive.

Similarly, SPAs require the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of habitats for birds listed under Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, or areas that are important to migratory bird species. Important migratory sites are graded as either of national or of international importance i.e.:

- holds 1% of the estimated national population for non-Annex I migratory species,
- regularly supports 20,000 waterfowl,
- regularly sustains 1% of the all-Ireland bird population for an Annex I species,
- regularly sustains 1% of the bio-geographical (European) bird population for an non-Annex I migratory species.

### 3.2 **Natura 2000 site(s)**

#### 3.2.1 **Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC (code 2170)**

This SAC has been designated for:

##### **Habitats**

- 1130 Estuaries
- 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks
- 1310 *Salicornia* and other annuals colonizing mud and sand
- 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*)
- 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*)
- 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation
- 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles
- 91E0 \*Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (*Alno-Padion*, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)
- 91J0 \**Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles

##### **Species**

- 1355 Otter *Lutra lutra*
- 1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera*
- 1092 White-clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*
- 1095 Sea Lamprey *Petromyzon marinus*
- 1096 Brook Lamprey *Lampetra planeri*
- 1099 River Lamprey *Lampetra fluviatilis*
- 1103 Twaite Shad *Alosa fallax*
- 1106 Atlantic Salmon *Salmo salar* (only in fresh water)
- 1421 Killarney Fern *Trichomanes speciosum*

Full site synopsis for this site can be accessed on the NPWS database, while details of the conservation objectives for this site can be accessed at:

[http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation\\_objectives/CO002170.pdf](http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002170.pdf)

#### 3.2.2 **Qualifying interests & Conservation Objectives**

The qualifying interests of the SAC potentially relevant to this development are aquatic habitats and species namely floating river vegetation, Lamprey, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Atlantic Salmon and Otter within the nearby Muchnagh Stream, Agaglin River and greater Blackwater River SAC. The potential impacts on aquatic species within the SAC are addressed in section 5. This shows that there is no significant ecological impact.

The conservation objectives of the SAC are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of Annex I Habitats and Annex II Species.

### 3.2.2 Blackwater Callow SPA (code 4094)

This SPA has been designated for:

**Birds**

A050 Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

A052 Teal (*Anas crecca*)

A038 Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*)

A156 Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*)

**Habitats**

Wetlands

Full site synopsis for this site can be accessed on the NPWS database, while details of the conservation objectives for this site can be accessed at:

[http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation\\_objectives/CO004094.pdf](http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004094.pdf)

The principal species that may potentially be impacted is Whooper Swan, as all other designated species would have a low foraging range.

The conservation objectives of the SPA are to maintain or restore the favourable condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interest.



## 4. **SITE ASSESSMENT**

### 4.1 **General**

The site was surveyed on the 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2023. The site was walked, identifying habitats and species likely to be affected. The survey was carried out in accordance with the Smith *et al.*, (2011). Foulkes *et al.*, (2013) and the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2011 & 2012). Using the information gathered in the field, together with any published and/or local information on the site and its environs, it is considered that an adequate ecological assessment is achieved.

Survey for terrestrial mammals was carried out by means of a search within the site and immediate vicinity focusing on mammal dwellings (e.g. Badger setts, Otter holts), feeding signs or droppings and direct observations if possible. Special attention is paid to species listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife Act, 1976; 2000 in particular Badger or Otter. Bird sampling such as those recommended by Bibby *et al.*, (2000) were not carried out, but any bird species seen or heard were recorded. The survey also took account of the presence of any invasive species listed under the Third Schedule of the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011).

The underlying soil is predominantly acid, brown earth / brown podzolics (i.e acid, deep, well drained mineral) on bedrock of primarily sandstone conglomerate and mudstone (epa mapviewer).

### 4.2 **Habitats**

Habitats identified are categorised as per level 3 habitat mapping classification (Fossitt, 2000). The principal habitat present is conifer woodland (WD4). Some of this has been recently felled and now comprises re-colonising bare ground (ED3) and scrub (WS1). The land and adjacent entrance track are on flat terrain.

Species present include Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Willow (*Salix* spp. incl. *S. aurita*, *S. fragilis*), Lodgepole Pine (*Pinus contorta*), young Birch (*Betula pubescens*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Common Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Rush (*Juncus effusus*, *Juncus articulatus/acetiflorus*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Lesser Spearwort (*Ranunculus flammula*), typical grasses (e.g. *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, *Holcus lanatus*, *Agrostis* spp.), Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*), moss species and occasional Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*).

There are shallow depressions either side of the entrance track. There is little to no water present after a period of heavy rainfall. These depressions are not drainage channels, but just take localised surface water.

The river waterbody status (2013-18) within nearby relevant watercourses, including SAC watercourses and River Douglas (non SAC) is classified as good (EPA database).

There were no non-native, invasive plant species (as listed under schedule 3 of SI no. 477 of 2011) recorded.

### **4.3 Fauna**

#### **4.3.1 General**

There is no notable fauna recorded on this site. Conifer woodland is not ideal habitat for native species, although the current scrub habitat has more ecological appeal. However, the footprint area of the proposed works is small.

Species present within R8707 & R8708 1km grids (encompassing development site) only includes Otter (Biodiversityireland.ie). However, although this is a qualifying interest for the Blackwater River SAC, this species would only occur along watercourses, none of which are present on or near the proposed site works.

Badger setts were not recorded and there are no trees large enough to host roosting bats. It is possible, though that bats forage along and within the current scrub habitat.

#### **4.3.3 Birds**

The Blackwater Callows SPA has been designated for Wigeon, Teal, Whooper Swan and Black-tailed Godwit. However, this SPA is >7km distant, which is well out of the foraging range for all species – Whooper Swan being the largest at 5km (Forest Service, 2020). In any case, the habitats present on site are not suitable for any of these bird species.

Whooper Swan often feed on river-side callows and other low-lying ground near wetlands. They are fairly wide-spread visitors to Ireland's larger inland wetlands. (Cabot, 1995). Its core foraging range is less than 5km (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2016). Whooper Swan is listed for protection under Annex I of the EU Birds Directive.

Some native songbirds would likely occur within the general area in hedgerow and fields e.g. Blackbird, Wren, Robin and possibly Bullfinch, Chaffinch and Willow Warbler. None of these are listed under Annex I of the EU Birds Directive or on the Birds of Conservation Concern Red List.

### **4.4 Rare plants / notable species**

The site does not support any of the habitats or species for which any nearby SAC and/or SPA are designated, nor are there rare plants or other notable species present.

The site is within the Munster Blackwater catchment of SAC populations of Freshwater Pearl Mussel (listed in SI 296 of 2009).

## **5. SCREENING**

### **5.1 Identification of potential impacts**

Only those features of the development that have the potential to impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site are considered. For screening purposes the potential impacts from the proposed development are examined with regard to the following:

- Habitat loss
- Alteration of habitats
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Potential impairment of water quality
- Disturbance and/or displacement of protected species
- Cumulative impacts

### **5.2 Assessment of direct impacts**

#### **5.2.1 Natura 2000 site(s)**

The development site is not located within a Natura 2000 site. Consequently, there is no direct loss of habitat from within the boundaries of any Natura 2000 site and as such no loss of habitat or fragmentation of habitat for the conservation interests of any site. Therefore, it can be concluded that no direct impacts will occur on any Natura 2000 site.

#### **5.2.2 Site habitats**

The development will result in a loss of some conifer woodland / scrub habitat. However, this is relatively species-poor, non-native (with respect to conifers) and comprises quite a small area. There is ample similar habitat nearby. As such, any ecological impact on site habitats would not be regarded as significant.

### **5.3 Assessment of indirect impacts**

#### **5.3.1 Sediment run-off / pollution**

Sediment and nutrient run-off can occur owing to proposed works and the general operation of machines. These works could result in impacts on the semi-natural habitats present, notably any aquatic environment hydrologically linked with the Natura 2000 site(s). The works could result in the run-off of sediment, dust, hydrocarbons and other potential pollutants into on-site drains and watercourses, which could act as conduit for the transfer of such into a Natura 2000 site(s).

Surface water run-off laden with silt/sediment, nutrients, pollutants and/or dust deposits could potentially have negative impacts (e.g. disturbance and/or displacement of species) on important and sensitive species that are found within the nearby Muchnagh Stream (<1km distant) and greater Blackwater River SAC. Although slope and soil/surface permeability will have a bearing on surface water run-off, in general it can be stated that any works within 10m of a watercourse discharging into this river could potentially result in sediment run-off into the natural aquatic environment and the SAC. With steep downward slope and/or poor surface permeability this figure would decrease.

The qualifying features of the SAC potentially impacted by the proposed development are aquatic habitats and species namely floating river vegetation, Atlantic Salmon, Lamprey, Freshwater Pearl Mussel and Otter, as well as Brown Trout and a number of coarse fish. The Blackwater River gets one of the biggest Salmon runs of any Irish river. The main channel of the Blackwater is a designated Salmonid river under the Quality of Salmonid Waters regulations (S.I. 293/1988).

### **5.3.2 Assessment**

- (i) There is no hydrological link between the proposed works and any Natura 2000 site. Although the Muchnagh Stream is <1km distant, there is no watercourse near the proposed works that could act as a pathway for sediment run-off.
- (ii) The proposed works are separated from the SAC by dense conifer woodland, scrub, grassland habitat and earth banks, as well as dense vegetation along the Muchnagh Stream.
- (iii) The land present comprises relatively flat, well-drained mineral soil. Any run-off would likely permeate this soil as opposed to surface run-off.
- (iv) The level of the works is relatively small and likely to only result in very limited localised run-off.
- (v) The majority of materials utilised will comprise inert stone and gravel.
- (vi) As with any development project, the application of good building (CIRIA guidelines) is assumed.

Considering all the above, it can be stated that there is no potential for the run-off of sediment or polluting material having a significant negative impact upon any Natura 2000 site, notably the Blackwater River SAC. As such, this development will not impact on its conservation objectives.

#### **5.4 Assessment of impacts on relevant fauna**

The site is not within any Natura 2000 site and as such cannot have any direct impact here. It comprises felled conifer woodland with no resident fauna of note. Only a small area will be impacted upon. The nature of the on-going operation of the development would not represent a significant disturbance factor, as currently it is used recreationally by the public.

The potential for impact on the SAC is mostly indirect, as described above. The Muchnagh Stream and nearby Araglin River may provide spawning habitat for Atlantic Salmon while other aquatic based species such as Otter may also occur. The site is within the Munster Blackwater catchment of populations of Freshwater Pearl Mussel. These and other aquatic species could be negatively impacted upon if sediment run-off from the works entered this watercourse. This potential impact is addressed above (section 5.3).

There are no potential impacts on the Blackwater Callows SPA designated bird species, as the site is well outside the foraging range for these species and also does not provide suitable foraging habitat.

#### **5.5 Assessment of cumulative impacts**

The proposed development is considered in combination with other developments in the area that could result in cumulative effects on Natura 2000 sites. In combination activities that could potentially impact on water quality with the developments include agriculture, wastewater treatment and further development/construction in the area. Agricultural grassland predominantly used for grazing livestock is the main landuse in the surrounding area. Farming activities and buildings present potential point and diffuse sources of nutrients to the aquatic environment.

The following was undertaken:

- A search of on-line system for Cork County Council recent planning applications.
- A review of aerial photography in the vicinity of the proposed forestry works.

Both of the above indicate low-density dwelling houses and agricultural buildings in a rural environment of predominantly agricultural grassland fields, commercial forestry (mostly conifers) and some heath habitat. There are no major developments proposed within the vicinity that could be considered to significantly impact on the integrity of the SAC.

The proposed development is very small and will have minimal impact on the local environment. Standard building guidelines (e.g. CIRIA) and County Council requirements will be applied.

Considering that it can be shown that this current project will have no significant impact on any Natura 2000 site, it would therefore contribute little to any potential cumulative /combination impacts with other potential developments. Any future development will be subject to the Appropriate Assessment process, and therefore, cumulative or in-combination impacts are unlikely to ensue.

## **5.6 Screening Assessment Conclusion**

On the basis of the above scientific assessment, this Screening for Appropriate Assessment finds that the proposed works, either individually or in combination with other projects and plans, will not have a significant effect on any designated Natura 2000 European Union site, notably the Blackwater River SAC.

A Screening Matrix for Appropriate Assessment elements is given in Appendix 1.

## **5.7 Recommendations**

Notwithstanding that the proposed works are deemed to not have a significant impact on any Natura 2000 site, the following is recommended with respect to improvement in general ecology of the locality, e.g. providing a nesting/refuge and food resource for birds, mammals and insects:

- The carpark boundaries will be planted with native trees comprising a mix of at least 3 species such as Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Holly, Rowan, Birch, Crab Apple, Elder, Aspen, Ash, Oak.

**Appendix 1: Matrix of Screening for Appropriate Assessment elements**  
(European Commission, 2001)

Brief description of the project	Construction of woodland carpark.
Brief description of Natura 2000 site	The Blackwater River SAC is designated for alluvial wet woodlands & Yew wood (priority habitats), along with floating river vegetation, estuaries, tidal mudflats, Salicornia mudflats, Atlantic salt meadows, Mediterranean salt meadows, perennial vegetation of stony banks and old Oak woodlands, all habitats listed under Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also selected for the following species listed on Annex II of the same directive - Sea Lamprey, River Lamprey, Brook Lamprey, Freshwater Pearl Mussel, Crayfish, Twaite Shad, Atlantic Salmon, Otter and the plant, Killarney Fern.
<b>Assessment criteria</b>	
Describe the individual elements of the project (either along or along with other projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site	Run-off from the proposed works could enter the aquatic environment.
Describe any likely impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Size and scale</li> <li>• Land-take</li> <li>• Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site</li> <li>• Resource requirements (e.g. water abstraction)</li> <li>• Emissions (land, water, air)</li> <li>• Excavations requirements</li> <li>• Transportation requirements</li> <li>• Duration of operation</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The size and scale of the operation is small.</li> <li>• There is no land-take involved.</li> <li>• The works are &lt;1km from Natura 2000 site</li> <li>• There are no resource requirements.</li> <li>• There will be no other emissions.</li> <li>• Minor excavation required for small carpark, but outside Natura 2000 site(s)</li> <li>• Transportation involves importation of carpark materials.</li> <li>• Approximately 2 months.</li> </ul>
Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction of habitat area</li> <li>• Disturbance to key species</li> <li>• Habitat or species fragmentation</li> <li>• Reduction in species density</li> <li>• Changes in key indicators of conservation value (e.g. water quality)</li> <li>• Climate change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no reduction in Natura 2000 habitat area.</li> <li>• There will be no disturbance to key species</li> <li>• Habitat/species fragmentation will not occur as outside any Natura 2000 site.</li> <li>• There will be no reduction in species density.</li> <li>• There are no expected changes in the conservation value of the site e.g. designated habitats and species will not be affected.</li> <li>• No impact on climate change</li> </ul>

Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of: Interference with the key relationships that define the (i) structure of the site (ii) function of the site	The limited scale of the proposed works will not result in any interference with the key relationships defining the structure or function of the site.
Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss</li> <li>• Fragmentation</li> <li>• Disruption/disturbance</li> <li>• Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be no habitat loss.</li> <li>• There will be no fragmentation as the works occur outside the site boundary.</li> <li>• Disturbance is restricted to a very small area for a limited time period.</li> <li>• No changes to key elements of the site anticipated.</li> </ul>
<b>Finding of no significant effects</b>	
Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site? (- details)	No. The works relate to car-park construction under the planning regulations.
Are there other projects that together with the project being assessed could affect the site? (-details)	No
<b>Assessment of significance of effects</b>	
Describe how the project (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site.	Run-off from the proposed works could enter the aquatic environment.
Explain why these effects are not considered significant	There are no watercourses present on site eliminating any potential for a hydrological pathway link to any Natura 2000 site. The distance between the site and the SAC (comprising dense conifer and scrub vegetation and earth banks) is such that there can be no significant impact.
<b>Data collected to carry out assessment</b>	
List of agencies consulted	NPWS.
Response to consultation	Positive
Who carried out assessment?	Ciaran Ryan M.Sc. (Environmental Science)
Sources of data	NPWS, refer Bibliography
Level of assessment completed	Screening Assessment / Statement
Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed?	Cork County Council / Coillte
<b>Overall conclusion: The proposed development will have no significant impact on the flora fauna, conservation interests and integrity of any Natura 2000 site, notably the Blackwater River SAC.</b>	



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