

**Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment
Screening Determination**

Proposed Housing Development at Church Road, Durrus, Co. Cork.



Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

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This document contains the Habitats Directive Screening Determination of Cork County Council in respect of a housing scheme for 8 units at Church Road, Durrus, Co. Cork. The assessment is based on project drawings and details prepared by the Architects Dept.

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 European¹ 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

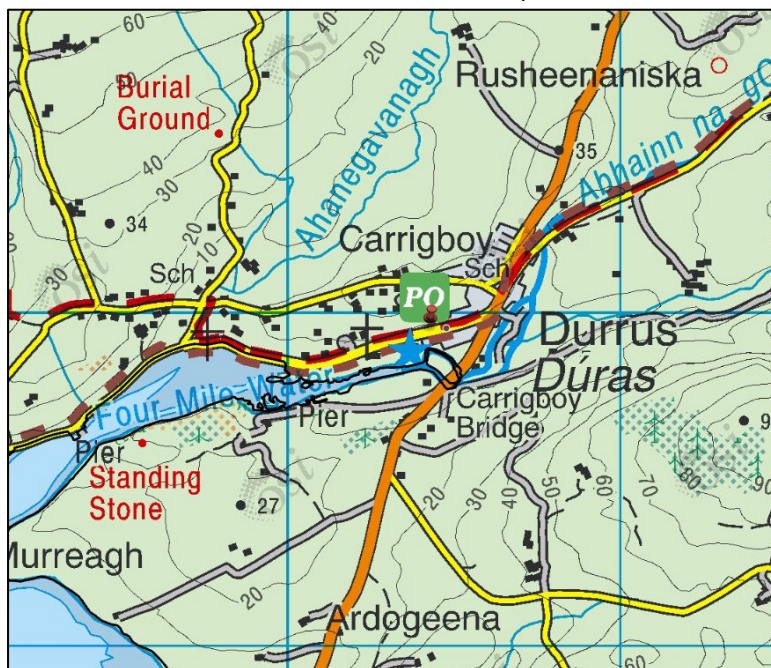
Where the possibility of significant impacts has not been discounted by the screening process, a more detailed assessment is required. This is called an Appropriate Assessment and requires the compilation of a **Natura Impact Statement** by the project proponent, which is a report of scientific evidence 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 European sites, or if uncertainty remains in relation to potential impacts on one or more European sites.

¹"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.

<p>Name of the project</p> <p>Proposed Housing Development at Church Road, Durrus, Co. Cork.</p>
<p>Description of the project</p> <p>The proposed project is for 8 units consisting of 7no. two storey two bed houses and 1no. one bed house within the development boundary of Durrus.</p> <p>The foul wastewater from the scheme is proposed to connect to the public foul system and conveyed to the Durrus Wastewater treatment plant.</p> <p>The surface water proposed to connect into the existing storm water main line.</p> <p>Drinking water is proposed to be supplied from the public system from the existing water supply line to the south of the site.</p>
<p>Site Context</p> <p>The site is located on a greenfield site between the village centre and the village church within the settlement boundary of Durrus village. The site is bound by the L47040 to the South, a row of terraced houses / back gardens to the East and a recently developed private housing estate to the North with private back gardens backing onto the Western boundary.</p> <p>The subject site measures 0.36 Ha (0.9 acres) in total and is described to comprise wet grassland habitat bounded by hedgerow and treeline to the west, per the National Landcover Map. Aerial and street view imagery indicates that the site has become encroached with Gorse scrub and there is evidence of mounds of soil dumped on the site.</p> <p>The site slopes upwards to the North with an incline of 7.5m across the site. Currently there is a ditch forming the boundary to the roadside, outside this a recently new footpath providing access from the village down to the Church.</p> <p>There is a level section of ground in the middle of the site which had been previously used as an access track for the construction of the estate to the North. There is a large concrete retaining wall along the Northern boundary constructed as part of the estate.</p> <p>The site is located within the Dunmanus-Bantry-Kenmare WFD catchment. There are no watercourses on site. The nearest watercourse is the Four Mile River approximately 60m south of the site which flows into Dunmanus Bay Inner Harbour. There is a dyke/drain located along the western boundary of the site. However, the dyke does not appear to have any connection to the stream or rivers nearby.</p> <p>The site is not identified to be located within flood risk areas A and B in the Cork County Development Plan 2022 or the draft PFRA Flood Maps available for the site. Therefore, there are no issues in relation to flood-risk associated with the proposed development.</p>

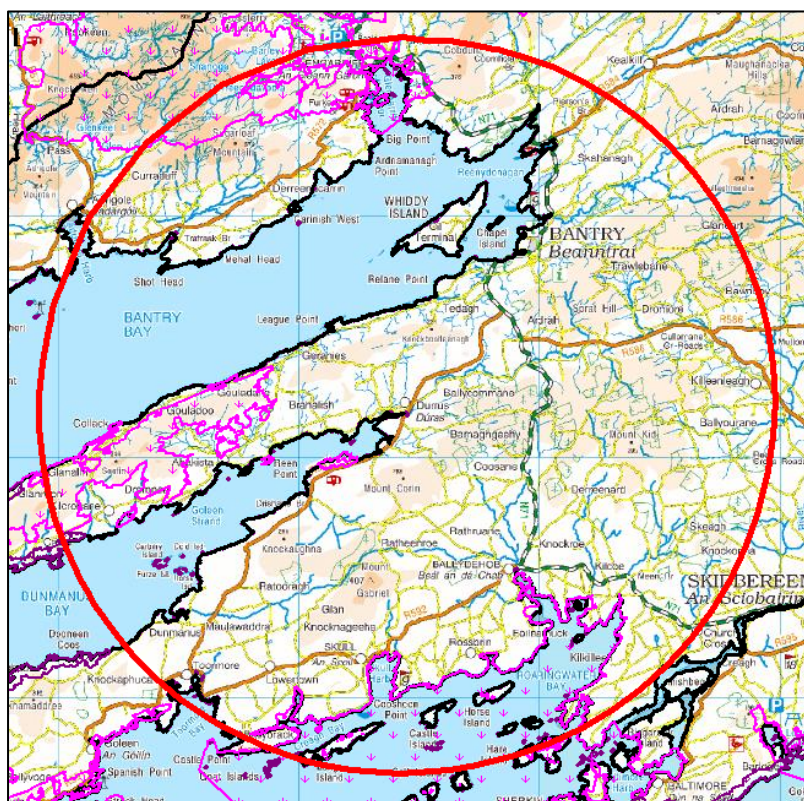
Figure 1: Site Context (Site Location)

(Red pin drop indicates site location within the settlement.)



Name and location of EU sites subject to screening

Figure 2: Red buffer indicates all European sites within 15kms of the proposed development location.



The subject site does not overlap with any European site. There are eight Natura 2000 (European) sites located within a 15km radius of the site which are considered in this document. These are:

- Dunbeacon Shingle SAC (Site Code: 002280) – approximately 2.8km south-west of the site
- Sheep's Head SAC (Site Code: 000102) – approximately 5.7km west of the site.
- Reen Point Shingle SAC (Site Code: 002281) – approximately 5.9km south west of the site.
- Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC (Site Code: 000101) – approximately 8.5km south of the site.
- Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC (Site Code: 000090) – approximately 11.6km north of the site.
- Farranamanagh Lough SAC (Site Code: 002189) – approximately 12.1km to the west of the site.
- Caha Mountains SAC (Site Code: 000093) – approximately 13km north of the site.
- Sheep's Head to Toe Head SPA (Site Code: 004156)- approximately 14.4km south west of the site.

The sites listed are identified in Figure 2 above relative to the proposed development site. There are no other Natura 2000 sites are within the 15km radius of the proposed project.

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

No.

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

1. Dunbeacon Shingle SAC (Site Code 2280)

Distance from Project Site: 2.8km.

Qualifying Interests: Perennial Vegetation of stony banks.

Conservation Objectives: To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Perennial vegetation of stony banks in Dunbeacon Shingle SAC.

Key Requirements to ensure compatibility with the Conservation Objective: Maintain quality, extent and distribution of habitat as mapped. Maintain natural processes of erosion and sedimentation. Prevent disturbance to habitat. Maintain typical species (pioneer species). Prevent encroachment with negative indicator species and invasive species.

Threats Pressures: Activities which could alter natural processes of erosion and sedimentation in Dunmanus Bay or which could cause direct damage to the habitat e.g. Heavy trampling, vehicle damage, removal of substrate could interfere with the achievement of the Conservation Objective established for this site.

Potential pathway for impact: None identified. No works are proposed within this SAC and the proposed project does not require the abstraction of any resources from the SAC. No element of the proposed project has been identified which could negatively impact the qualifying interest feature having regard to the project details, the distance of the SAC from the development site (2.8km), and taking account of the requirements of its qualifying interest habitat as set out above.

2. Sheep's Head SAC (Site Code 0102)

Distance from Project Site: 5.7km.

Qualifying Interests:

- Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* [4010]
- European dry heaths [4030]
- *Geomalacus maculosus* (Kerry Slug) [1024]

Conservation Objectives: To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the qualifying interest features of the Sheep's Head SAC.

Key Requirements to ensure compatibility with the Conservation Objectives: *Heath Habitats:* Maintain extent, quality and distribution of heath habitat. *Kerry Slug:* Maintain extent and quality of heath, grassland and rocky outcrop habitat (supporting habitats of Kerry Slug).

Threats Pressures: Over or under grazing; Drainage for land reclamation; Burning; Recreational pressures - potential to cause erosion. Activities which could have the potential to introduce invasive alien species into qualifying interest habitats.

Potential pathway for impact: None identified. No works are proposed within this SAC and the proposed project does not require the abstraction of any resources from the SAC. No element of the proposed project has been identified which could negatively impact the qualifying interest features having regard to the project details, the distance of the SAC (5.7km) from the development site and taking account of the requirements of its qualifying interest features as set out above.

3. Reen Point Shingle (Site Code 2281)

Distance from Project Site: 5.9km.

Qualifying Interests: Perennial Vegetation of stony banks.

Conservation Objectives: To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Perennial vegetation of stony banks in Reen Point Shingle SAC.

Key Requirements to ensure compatibility with the Conservation Objective: Maintain quality, extent and distribution of habitat as mapped. Maintain natural processes of erosion and sedimentation. Prevent disturbance to habitat. Maintain typical species (pioneer species). Prevent encroachment with negative indicator species and invasive species.

Threats Pressures: Activities which could alter natural processes of erosion and sedimentation in Dunmanus Bay or which could cause direct damage to the habitat e.g. Heavy trampling, vehicle damage, removal of substrate, or which could result in the introduction of invasive alien species could interfere with the achievement of the Conservation Objective established for this site.

Potential pathway for impact: None identified. No works are proposed within this SAC and the proposed project does not require the abstraction of any resources from the SAC. No element of the proposed project has been identified which could negatively impact the qualifying interest feature having regard to the project details, the distance of the SAC from the development site

(5.9km), and taking account of the requirements of its qualifying interest habitat as set out above.

4. Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC (Site Code: 000101)

Distance from Project Site: 8.5km.

Qualifying Interests:

- Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]
- Reefs [1170]
- Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]
- European dry heaths [4030]
- Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]
- *Phocoena phocoena* (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]
- *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]
- *Halichoerus grypus* (Grey Seal) [1364]

Conservation Objectives: To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]; Reefs [1170]; Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]; European dry heaths [4030]; Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]; *Phocoena phocoena* (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]; and *Halichoerus grypus* (Grey Seal) [1364]; and to restore the favourable conservation condition of *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355] in the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC.

Key Requirements to ensure compatibility with the Conservation Objectives: Maintain the permanent area, distribution and quality of all of the above listed habitats; Ensure that the above listed species have undisturbed access to their supporting habitats including identified breeding sites and resting places.

Threats Pressures:

- *Heath:* Over and/or under grazing; Drainage; Burning; Erosional pressures associated with recreational use; Development causing direct loss of or damage to Heath habitat; Activities resulting in the introduction or spread of invasive alien species (e.g. *Rhododendron*) within the SAC;
- *Marine habitats (Large shallow inlets and bays, Reefs and Sea Caves):* Development resulting in direct loss of or damage to marine habitats (e.g. dredging, harbour works, flood protection works); activities impacting water quality; activities impacting natural patterns of sediment deposition in the marine environment;
- *Coastal Sea Cliffs:* activities causing direct damage to or loss of habitat; activities with potential to alter natural coastal patterns of erosion and deposition in the coastal environment (e.g. coastal protection works); activities impacting negatively on vegetation structure/composition (e.g. changes in agricultural practises);
- *Marine Species (Grey Seal and Harbour Porpoise):* Activities generating significant underwater noise; for Seals - activities causing disturbance at pupping sites or other haul out sites; activities interfering with food supply (e.g. overfishing); activities interfering with the quality or extent of marine or coastal habitats upon which these species are dependent.

- *Otter*: Activities which could cause disturbance at breeding sites or resting places; activities interfering with free passage of fish; activities impacting on water quality and thereby with potential to impact negatively on availability of prey species.

Potential pathway for impact: None identified. There is no hydrological or other ecological connectivity linking the project area to this site. No works are proposed within this SAC and the proposed project does not require the abstraction of any resources from the SAC. No activities associated with the development have the potential to cause disturbance to qualifying interest species for which this SAC is designated having regard to the distance of the SAC from the project site (8.5km). No element of the proposed project has been identified which could negatively impact the qualifying interest features of the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC, having regard to the project details, the distance of the SAC from the development site, and taking account of the requirements of its qualifying interest habitats and species.

5. Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC (Site Code: 000090)

Distance from Project Site: 11.5km

Qualifying Interests:

- 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]
- Geomalacus maculosus (Kerry Slug) [1024]
- Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]
- Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]
- Phoca vitulina (Harbour Seal) [1365]

Conservation Objectives: To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the qualifying interest features of the Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC.

Key Requirements to ensure compatibility with the Conservation Objectives:

Old sessile oak woods: Maintain quality, extent and distribution of habitat as mapped. Prevent disturbance to habitat. Maintain diversity and extent of community species. Prevent encroachment with negative indicator species and invasive species.

Alluvial forests: Maintain quality, extent and distribution of habitat as mapped. Prevent disturbance to habitat. Maintain diversity and extent of community species. Maintain appropriate hydrological regime necessary for maintenance of alluvial vegetation. Prevent encroachment with negative indicator species and invasive species.

Kerry Slug: Maintain quality, extent and distribution of habitat that supports the Kerry slug as mapped. To ensure control of non-native invasive species.

Lesser Horseshoe Bat: Maintain minimum population number per roosts and maintain conditions of roosts. Maintain extent of potential foraging habitat. Ensure no significant increase

in artificial light intensity adjacent to named roosts or along commuting routes within 2.5km of those roosts.

Otter: Maintain quality, extent and distribution of habitats supporting the Otters as mapped. Ensure there is no significant increase to barriers of connectivity

Harbour Seal: Ensure that the listed species have undisturbed access to their supporting habitats including identified breeding sites and resting places. Conserve the moult haul-out sites and resting haul-out sites in a natural condition. Ensure human activities do not adversely affect the harbour seal population at the SAC.

Threats Pressures: Burning, Non intensive grazing, Nautical sports, Tree surgery, Tree felling for public safety or other reasons, Dispersed habitation, Piers / tourist harbours or recreational piers, Grazing in forests/ woodland, Invasive non-native species, Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources, Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish), Walking, horse riding and non-motorised vehicles, Suspension culture, Forestry clearance.

Potential pathway for impact: None identified. No works are proposed within this SAC and the proposed project does not require the abstraction of any resources from the SAC. No activities associated with the development have the potential to cause disturbance to qualifying interest species for which this SAC is designated having regard to the distance of the SAC from the project site (11.5km). No element of the proposed project has been identified which could negatively impact the qualifying interest features of the SAC, having regard to the project details, the distance of the SAC from the development site, and taking account of the requirements of its qualifying interest habitats and species.

6. Farranamanagh Lough SAC (Site Code: 002189)

Distance from Project Site: 12.1km

Qualifying Interests:

- Coastal lagoons [1150]
- Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]

Conservation Objectives: To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Coastal Lagoons (1150) and to restore the favourable conservation condition of Perennial vegetation of stony banks (1220) in Farranamanagh Lough SAC.

Key Requirements to ensure compatibility with the Conservation Objectives:

- *Coastal Lagoons:* Maintain quality, extent and distribution of habitat as mapped. Maintain appropriate hydrological connections between lagoon and sea, maintain typical species (plant and animal species), Prevent encroachment with negative indicator species and invasive species.
- *Perennial vegetation of stony banks:* Maintain quality, extent and distribution of habitat as mapped. Maintain natural processes of erosion and sedimentation. Prevent disturbance to habitat. Maintain typical species (pioneer species). Prevent encroachment with negative indicator species and invasive species.

Threats Pressures:

- Water exposure changes and removal of beach materials.
- Activities which could alter natural processes of erosion and sedimentation in Dunmanus Bay or which could cause direct damage to the habitat e.g. Heavy trampling, vehicle damage, removal of substrate, or which could result in the introduction of invasive alien species could interfere with the achievement of the Conservation Objective established for this site.

Potential pathway for impact: None identified. No works are proposed within this SAC and the proposed project does not require the abstraction of any resources from the SAC. No element of the proposed project has been identified which could negatively impact the qualifying interest features having regard to the project details, the distance of the SAC from the development site (12.1km) and taking account of the requirements of its qualifying interest habitats as set out above.

7. Caha Mountains SAC (Site Code: 000093)

Distance from Project Site: 13km

Qualifying Interests:

1. Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) [3110]
2. Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]
3. Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* [4010]
4. European dry heaths [4030]
5. Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]
6. Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230]
7. Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]
8. Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (*Androsacetalia alpinae* and *Galeopsietalia ladani*) [8110]
9. Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210]
10. Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]
11. *Geomalacus maculosus* (Kerry Slug) [1024]
12. *Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern) [1421]

Conservation Objectives:

- Maintain favourable conservation condition of Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) [3110], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], *Geomalacus maculosus* (Kerry Slug) [1024] and *Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern) [1421].
- Restore favourable conservation condition of Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* [4010], European dry heaths [4030], Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230], Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (*Androsacetalia alpinae* and *Galeopsietalia ladani*) [8110], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210] and Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220].

Key Requirements to ensure compatibility with the Conservation Objectives:

Freshwater Habitats: Maintain extent and quality of habitats supporting freshwater habitats. Maintain typical species present in the habitat. Maintain appropriate water quality necessary to support the habitat.

Upland Peat based habitats: Maintain quality, extent and distribution of habitats as mapped. Maintain soil nutrient status and maintain variety of vegetation communities. Ensure no decline in distribution or population sizes of rare, threatened or scarce species associated with the habitats.

Killarney fern: Maintain extent and quality of habitats supporting the Killarney Fern. Ensure no decline in population or number of colonies, subject to natural processes. Maintain hydrological conditions and light shading levels. Prevent encroachment of invasive species.

Kerry Slug: Maintain extent and quality of heath, grassland and rocky outcrop habitat (supporting habitats of Kerry Slug).

Threats Pressures:

Freshwater habitats: non-native species, activities impacting water quality.

Upland Peat based habitats: Over or under grazing; Drainage for land reclamation; Burning; Recreational pressures - potential to cause erosion. Activities which could have the potential to introduce invasive alien species into qualifying interest habitats.

Killarney Fern: Invasive non-native species, Burning down.

Kerry Slug: Activities which could have the potential to introduce invasive alien species into qualifying interest habitats.

Potential pathway for impact:

None identified. No works are proposed within this SAC and the proposed project does not require the abstraction of any resources from the SAC. No element of the proposed project has been identified which could negatively impact the qualifying interest features having regard to the project details, the distance of the SAC from the development site (13 km) and taking account of the requirements of its qualifying interest habitats as set out above.

8. Sheep's Head to Toe Head SPA (Site Code: 004156)

Distance from Project Site: 14.4km

Qualifying Interests:

- Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) [A103]
- Chough (*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*) [A346]

Conservation Objectives: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for Sheep's Head to Toe Head SPA.

Key Requirements to ensure compatibility with the Conservation Objectives:

Maintain extent and quality of habitats supporting the listed species. Ensure that the above listed species have undisturbed access to their supporting habitats including identified breeding sites and resting places.

Threats Pressures: Grazing, Competition with Fauna, Predation and activities interfering with the quality or extent of habitats upon which these species are dependent.

Potential pathway for impact: None identified. No works are proposed within this SPA. No activities associated with the development have the potential to cause disturbance to qualifying interest species for which this SPA is designated having regard to the distance of the SPA from the project site (14.4km). No element of the proposed project has been identified which could negatively impact the qualifying interest species of the Sheep's Head to Toe Head SPA, having regard to the project details, the distance of the SPA from the development site, and taking account of the requirements of its qualifying interest species.

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

No potential for impacts identified, therefore the proposed project does not pose a threat of contributing to effects which could be significant when considered in combination with other impact sources.

Cork County Council evaluation and overall conclusion that there are no significant effects on European Sites foreseen as a result of the proposal.

In accordance with Section 177S of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the objective information provided in this report, it is concluded that the proposed project does not pose a risk of causing significant negative any EU site for the following reasons:

- No works are proposed within any of the listed European sites above.
- No direct loss, alteration or fragmentation of habitats will occur within any EU sites;
- There are no hydrological linkages between the project site an any EU site;
- The site is located sufficiently distant from any EU site to be satisfied that there is no risk of activities associated with the project causing disturbance to qualifying habitats or species.

It is therefore determined that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 is not required.