

**Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment
Screening Determination**

Project: Kilcoolishal Compound, Glanmire, Co. Cork



Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

Completed by Ecology Office, Cork County Council

Date: January 2025

This document contains the Habitats Directive Screening Determination of Cork County Council in respect of Kilcoolishal Compound, Glanmire, Co. Cork. The assessment is based on project drawings and details prepared by the project design team.

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>Kilcoolishal Compound, Glanmire, Co. Cork</p>
<p>Description of the project</p> <p>The proposed development comprises of a maintenance compound for the Little Island Greenway and will comprise of the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of an equipment storage shed, • Staff welfare facilities with a small wastewater treatment system, • Green waste/mulch storage bays, • And new lighting for the site. • Construction of a pocket park with wildflowers and native trees. <p>Cork County Council propose to source native wildflower seed from the same supplier who provided the native wildflower for the greenway between Glanmire and Carrigtwohill (Connecting to Nature, Waterford) and under the supervision of the Cork County Council Project Ecologist.</p> <p>The site is located on the L3004, to the north of the Cobh train line and the N25 Dunkettle to Carrigtwohill Dual Carriageway. The site comprises of an area of built land consisting of recolonising bare ground and is bound to the south by a vegetated drain and treeline comprising of Ash and Sycamore which is also a medium impact invasive species. Other Invasive species identified on site include traveller's joy, Butterfly-bush and Himalayan Honeysuckle.</p> <p>The drainage ditch which runs to the south of the site outfalls c.1.4km to the east into the Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation (Site code: 1058) and 1.7km to the west into the River Lee and Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (Site Code: 4030). The nearest watercourse comprises of the Tibbstown Stream located c. 240m to the east of the site and discharges into the transitional waterbody of Lough Mahon. According to EPA mapping for the area the ecological status of the Tibbstown is Good and risk status is under 'Review' while the Lough Mahon transitional waterbody was classed as 'Good' and its risk is also under 'Review' under the 2016 – 2021 cycle of the Water Framework Directive.</p> <p>Surface waters and wastewater from the site during construction will be directed to the proposed on-site waste water treatment system.</p>
<p>Name and location of Natura 2000 sites identified for screening</p> <p>The Great Channel Island Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (Site Code: 1058) is located 1.4km of the proposed project at its closest point and the Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) (Site Code: 4030) is located c.1.7m of the proposed project at its closest point. These are the only two Natura 2000 sites which potentially could be affected by the proposed project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects.</p> <p>No other EU sites have been identified with ecological connectivity to the proposed development site.</p>

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 Sites

The submitted Appropriate Assessment Screening report prepared by JBA Consulting and dated January 2025 assesses potential impacts on the Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC which has been used to inform the following assessment.

Great Island Channel SAC

The Great Island Channel SAC Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives are described below.

Qualifying Feature	Conservation Objective
Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide in Great Island Channel SAC.
Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]	To restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) in Great Island Channel SAC.

Targets associated with these habitats are included in the [Great Island Channel Conservation Objectives document \(ver 1 June 2014\)](#).

Cork Harbour SPA Conservation Objectives

The Cork Harbour SPA Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives are described below.

Qualifying Feature	Conservation Objective
Little Grebe Great Crested Grebe Cormorant Grey Heron Shelduck Wigeon Teal Pintail Shoveler Red-breasted Merganser Oystercatcher Golden Plover Grey Plover Lapwing Dunlin Black-tailed Godwit Bar-tailed Godwit Curlew Redshank Black-headed Gull, Common Gull Lesser Black-backed Gull Common Tern	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of these species in Cork Harbour SPA.

Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]	To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetland habitats in Cork Harbour SPA, as a resource for the regularly – occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.
------------------------------	--

Targets associated with these features are included in the [Cork Harbour Special Protection Area Conservation objectives document \(ver1 Dec 2014\)](#).

Identification of Potential Impacts on Great Island Channel SAC and Cork Harbour SPA

Taking account of the targets set out for each of the above sites, activities resulting in

- direct removal of wetland habitats within the SAC or SPA;
- changes in distribution of marine invertebrate communities;
- changes to natural hydrological processes in the harbour:
- changes to natural sedimentation patterns in the harbour:
- spread of invasive species (*Spartina anglica*);
- the loss of the availability or decline in quality of feeding or roosting habitat of waterbird species;
- the loss of availability or decline in quality of breeding, feeding and roosting habitat of Common Tern; and/or
- significant disturbance to waterbirds or terns

could have the potential to interfere with the achievement of the conservation objectives which have been set for the Great Island Channel SAC and/or the Cork Harbour SPA.

Screening Assessment

There will be no direct interventions within the SAC or the SPA, and therefore no direct loss of habitat within the SAC or the SPA will arise as a result of this project.

Risk of activities associated with the project giving rise to negative effects on natural hydrological processes or patterns of sedimentation deposition is unlikely given the scale of development with limited potential for increased rates or volumes of surface water run-off arising from the proposed development.

There is also limited risk that the project will exacerbate the spread of *Spartina anglica* within the SAC as no interventions are proposed within either the SAC or the SPA and given the lack of High impact species on site, distances between the development site and SAC.

The primary considerations for this project are identified to be the following:

- risk of the project giving rise to deterioration of estuarine habitats, and thereby on their dependant marine communities, including invertebrate and bird communities. This risk is associated with the potential risk of release of toxic contaminants to surface water particularly associated with construction related activities and in times of flood; and
- risk of the activities associated with the project causing significant disturbance to birds.

Water Quality: Activities associated with the construction of the compound could have the potential to give rise to the release of toxic contaminants and/or sediments to water courses

linked to Cork Harbour and its associated European sites. Works in close proximity to a drain or watercourse with a direct linkage to the harbour are identified to be most sensitive.

The accidental release of toxic contaminants including fuels and/or cementitious materials could have negative effects on marine invertebrate communities and vegetation communities associated with intertidal mudflats and saltmarsh areas, were any such releases of significant scale. The intertidal habitats in the adjacent sections of the SAC and SPA are naturally silty environments, therefore run-off of suspended solids will not have adverse impacts on habitats, or the species that they support, other than if they were at a very significant scale.

However, activities associated with the construction of the compound are assessed to be at low risk of causing significant releases of pollutants to water for the following reasons:

- Limited scale of development and excavation required;
- Siltation and pollutants entering the drainage ditch is expected to be negligible as there is a buffer of existing vegetation and fencing which will all be retained, and the works are small in nature. Any such release could only be of a small scale (even in times of flood), taking account of the nature of the works proposed and direction of surface waters to on site waste water treatment system. As intertidal habitats in the adjacent sections of the SAC and SPA are naturally silty environments, small scale run-off of sediments will not negatively impact habitats, or the species that they support;
- Operational stage surface water shall discharge to the on-site waste water treatment system;
- Operational use will be limited to storage of green waste and greenway maintenance plant and machinery which will be limited in scale associated with greenway maintenance and all road operations plant and machinery will be stored in Ballinglanna and the site will have very limited storage of potential pollutants; and
- No instream works are proposed.

Disturbance to Birds: While the Glounthaune Estuary supports significant numbers of a range of species which are qualifying interests of the Cork Harbour SPA, the potential for activities associated with either the construction of this compound, or with its ongoing use, to give rise to disturbance related impacts to birds is ruled out for the following reasons:

- Lack of habitats of value for SCI of the SPA on site;
- There is a sufficient separation distance and the route is sufficiently well screened from the estuary by treelines and hedgerows, to be satisfied that activities associated with both proposed the construction and operation of compound does not pose a risk of causing any visual disturbance to birds using the estuary;
- No works which could generate significant noise above already occurring background levels are required during the construction phase, therefore no noise related disturbance to birds are predicted; and
- the use of the compound in the post construction phase will not generate any additional noise which could have the potential to cause disturbance to birds.

Potential for cumulative and in-combination effects

Per the Screening Report, the potential for cumulative and in-combination effects assessment has regard to existing plans and projects in the area. With regard to the Cork County Development Plan it is noted that this plan has been prepared to reflect the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and any development proposed has been assessed in full as part of environmental assessment to ensure that likely significant effects are adequately managed. The River Basin Management Plan is assessed in terms of positive effects that it would have on

<p>freshwater resources negating potential for in-combination / cumulative effects. Consideration is also given to potential cumulative and in-combination effects associated with development applications in the area and it concluded that the project as proposed does not pose a risk of in-combination effects as no significant effects are anticipated and as a result potential for in-combination effects can be ruled out.</p>
<p>Explain why these effects are not considered significant.</p> <p>No potential for negative effects on any qualifying interest habitats or species has been identified.</p>
<p>Are there other projects or plans that together with the project being assessed that could affect these sites (provide details)?</p> <p>No potential for significant effects identified. Consequently, the risk of this project contributing to cumulative negative impacts, when considered in combination with other projects, is screened out.</p>
<p>List of agencies consulted</p> <p>The AA Screening Report and this determination will be circulated to Statutory Consultees, and will be available for review as part of the consultation documents.</p>
<p>Who carried out this assessment</p> <p>Joy Barry of Cork County Council Ecology Office, Planning Department.</p>
<p>Sources of data</p> <p>Scheme drawings and associated planning statement documentation including AA Screening, EPA site suitability assessment and planning statement; EPA ENvision mapping; Cork County Development Plan 2022; NPWS Designated Sites Data; and Cork County Council Planning Enquiry System.</p>
<p>Level of assessment completed</p> <p>Habitats Directive Screening Assessment.</p>
<p>Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed?</p> <p>Part 8 Documents are available online.</p>
<p>Overall conclusion</p> <p>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 will not have a significant effect on 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.</p>
<p>Explain how the overall conclusion that there are no significant effect on European sites was arrived at</p>

There are two European 2000 sites within the potential zone of influence of this project. These are the Great Island Channel SAC and the Cork Harbour SPA. No other European sites have been identified which have any physical, hydrological or other ecological connectivity to this project.

No potential for impact on the Great Island Channel SAC or the Cork Harbour SPA has been identified for the following reasons:

- There will be no direct intervention within the Great Island Channel SAC or the Cork Harbour SPA, and therefore no direct loss of habitat within the SAC or the SPA will arise as a result of this project;
- Any potential surface water run off with siltation / pollutants given the scale of development will be very limited (even in times of flood), taking account of the nature of the works proposed and direction of surface waters to the on site waste water treatment system. As intertidal habitats in the adjacent sections of the SAC and SPA are naturally silty environments, small scale run-off of sediments and distances involved will not negatively impact habitats, or the species associated with the SAC / SPA;
- Surface water run-off in the post construction phase will discharge to an on-site waste water treatment system and storage of materials and plans will be limited in terms of potential pollutants limiting any risk of water quality impacts to designated sites (even in times of flood);
- Having regard to small scale nature of the works proposed, within a busy environment (road and railway line), lack of any supporting habitat to SCI of the SPA, distance from Cork Harbour SPA, there is no risk of activities associated with the project causing disturbance to species which are qualifying interests of the SPA;
- The proposed project does not pose a risk of causing the spread of invasive alien species to either the Cork Harbour SPA or the Great Island Channel SAC, which species could negatively impact qualifying interest habitats or species of either of these two sites.
- No potential for in-combination effects have been identified.

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.