

**Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment
Screening Determination**

**4no. Housing Units at
Dr Patrick O’Sullivan Terrace, Aghada, Co. Cork**



Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

**Completed by: Joy Barry,
Cork County Council.**

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This document contains the Habitats Directive screening determination of Cork County Council in respect of project which involves the development of 4no. Housing Units at Dr Patrick O'Sullivan Terrace, Aghada, Co. Cork. The determination is based on the information provided by the Architects Department within their Capital Appraisal Report and drawings prepared in respect of the proposed scheme.

In accordance with section 250 of the Planning and Development Regulations, Local Authorities are required to carry out screening for appropriate assessment to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if this project, 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 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>4no. Housing Units at Dr Patrick O’Sullivan Terrace, Aghada, Co. Cork</p>
<p>Description of the project</p> <p>The proposed development relates to development of 4no. housing units within a greenfield site within an existing residential estate in Aghada in East Cork.</p> <p>The estate is located in the centre of Upper Aghada village adjacent to Aghada National School. The estate is bounded by a local road, agricultural lands to the east, one-off dwellings to the north and the community centre and church is located to the south of the site.</p> <p>The proposed development is proposed to connect to the public foul drainage network which is served by the Aghada Waste Water Treatment Plant which has recently been upgraded. Waste Water Services are confirmed via an Uisce Eireann Confirmation of Feasibility Letter dated 13th December 2024 also noting that proposals include for storm water separation works within the Ard Mhuire Estate to allow capacity within the existing network.</p> <p>Storm water drainage will be managed by way of an on site Sustainable Urban Drainage system which providing on site infiltration.</p>
<p>Name and location of EU sites subject to screening</p> <p>The following Natura 2000 sites are located within 15km of the proposed development site;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cork Harbour Special Protection Area (Site Code: 4030) – 520m to the north 2. Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation (Site Code: 1058) – 4.45km to the north 3. Ballycotton Bay SPA (Site Code: 4022) - 12km to the east <p>A source-pathway-receptor link has been identified between the source (the proposed development site) and the Cork Harbour SPA only given its proximity to the site, potential hydrological connection and nature of mobile species for which this Natura 2000 Site is designated. The source-pathway-receptor between the development and these sites are impacts on water quality and disturbance to species. Therefore, these Natura 2000 sites are considered further as part of this assessment.</p> <p>Given the limited scale of the proposed development, the lack of a hydrological connection and the distances from the development to the Great Island Channel SAC and Ballycotton Bay SAC Natura 2000 sites, no potential for significant effects from the development on these other designated sites listed have been identified.</p>

Figure 1: Site Location relative to Cork Harbour SPA



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.

Potential impacts on the Natura 2000 sites are considered to be as follows:

1. Loss of Habitat
2. Impacts from noise and disturbance
3. Impacts on water quality

An assessment of significance of potential effects in relation to points outlined above has been carried out. This assessment is based on potential for significant effects on the Cork Harbour SPA having regard to the conservation objectives, targets and indicators associated with these sites. Risk of the proposed project giving rise to significant negative effects on these designated sites is ruled out for the following reasons:

1. Habitats recorded within the proposed development boundary do not correspond to habitats listed on Annex I of the Habitats Directive. No habitats on site with foraging potential for SCI birds. Development will not result in any significant deterioration in habitat quality or loss of habitat within the Cork Harbour SPA.
2. Although construction will increase noise and activity levels temporarily, it will not be significant in the context of existing noise levels in an urban or agricultural lands context in terms of disturbance to SCI of SPA. No valuable habitat for SCI species was recorded within or adjacent to the proposed development site. Having regard to existing screening

available by permitter walls and shoreline habitats and distance to SPAs, no impact on SCI is predicted to occur.

3. Wastewater and storm water connections. Wastewater will be conveyed to the recently constructed Aghada WWTP and UE have confirmed feasibility of connection. Given the limited scale of the works, there is no potential for significant silt or hydrocarbon spillages associated with construction given the distance from the site to the SPA and lack of a hydrological connection. Operational stage surface water run-off will be contained on site per natural drainage solutions and therefore no potential for water quality impacts to the SPA is predicted to occur due to surface water runoff. Therefore, the development will not result in water quality impacts which could have significant effects on the SPA or any other Natura 2000 site during the construction or operational stage of the development.

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

In the absence of any predicted impacts from the proposed development, no in-combination impacts have been identified.

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

The primary issues of ecological concern to designated European sites as a result of the proposal are activities have the potential to give rise to significant negative impacts on the qualifying interests associated with these sites e.g. disturbance / displacement of qualifying species, impact to water quality by introducing and toxic pollutants such as hydrocarbons, or increasing turbidity, silt or nutrients into aquatic or estuarine systems.

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:

- There is no spatial overlap between the proposed development site and any Natura 2000 site;
- No direct loss, alteration or fragmentation of habitats will occur within any Natura 2000 site;
- The risk of surface water emissions associated with the proposed development is considered low. Given the small scale of the proposed development, the robust nature of estuarine qualifying habitats, and the lack of valuable habitat for aquatic QI species in the vicinity of the site, no impact on the conservation objective of the Cork Harbour SPA or any other Natura 20000 site is predicted to occur during the construction or operational phase.
- No potential for in-combination effects have been identified.

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