

# **Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Determination**

## **Cork County Draft Recreation and Amenity Policy**



**Prepared by Cork County Council Ecology Office**

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Context

Cork County Council is in the process of preparing a new Recreation and Amenity Policy for the County. This document will set out policy and strategy recommendations for the planning and provision of public open space/amenity space and outdoor type recreation facilities in the county and will define how public open space is designed, managed, and maintained into the future.

In accordance with the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations of 2011 as amended, the Local Authority is required to assess the possible implications of the implementation of this policy on European Sites designated for the protection of natural habitats and native wild floral and faunal species.

The requirement to consider the implications of policies contained within land use plans on European Sites<sup>1</sup> (other than those Land Use Plans that come within the meaning of the Planning Acts), is set out in Part 5 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. This process, called the Appropriate Assessment process, and it applies to

*'any plan, programme or scheme, statutory or non-statutory, that establishes **public policy in relation to land use and infrastructural development in one or more specified locations or regions, including any development of land or on land**, the extraction or exploitation of mineral resources or of renewable energy resources and the carrying out of land use activities, that is to be considered for adoption or authorisation or approval or for the grant of a licence, consent, permission, permit, derogation or other authorisation by a public authority'*

### 1.2 Appropriate Assessment and Land Use Planning

Appropriate assessment obligations, as set out in the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations and the Planning and Development Act derive from Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive which states the following:

**Habitats Directive Article 6(3)**

*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.*

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<sup>1</sup> European sites include Special Areas of Conservation designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas designated under the Birds Directive. Special Areas of Conservation are sites that are protected because they support habitats and/or plant and animal species that have been identified to be threatened at EU community level. Special Protection Areas are sites that are protected for the conservation of species of birds that are in danger of extinction or are rare or vulnerable. Special Protection Areas may also be sites that are particularly important for migratory birds. Such sites include internationally important wetlands.

EU and National Guidance breaks the requirements of this article down into two stages. These are

- Screening; and
- Appropriate Assessment

**Screening:** The purpose of screening is to assess, in view of the best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the relevant sites, if a plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have significant effects on one or more European Sites, and whether therefore, it needs to be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The screening assessment must include consideration as to the potential for the plan to contribute to significant effects when considered 'in combination' with effects arising from other plans or projects. In accordance with EU and national guidance and case law, the screening trigger for appropriate assessment is very light. The mere probability or a risk that the plan or project might have a significant effect on a European site is sufficient to trigger a requirement for appropriate assessment at screening stage.

**Appropriate Assessment:** Appropriate assessment is an assessment of the potential for a plan or project to adversely affect the integrity of one or more European Sites. It is required where a screening determination fails to exclude the potential that a project or plan could give rise to significant negative effects on one or more European site. It is informed by scientific data and evidence which is presented in a Natura Impact Statement (projects) or a Natura Impact Report (plans). The assessment is made taking account of the conservation objectives which have been established for the qualifying interests of all relevant European sites.

Where the assessment process identifies that such plans or policies may give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of a European site, alterations to the plan or policy should be made prior to finalisation. In the event that adverse effects on the integrity of one or more European sites cannot be ruled out, the plan or policy may not be adopted other than in certain limited circumstances provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. Such procedures can only be progressed in very limited circumstances and are not discussed further here.

The draft RAP is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any designated European sites and is deemed to fall within the scope of the requirements of Appropriate Assessment as it sets policy which may influence land use and/or infrastructure development.

### 1.3 Appropriate Assessment of the draft Recreational and Amenity Policy

In accordance with Regulation 42 of the EU (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 as amended, the draft Recreation and Amenity Policy has been screened to determine whether it is likely to have significant effects on one or more European sites and whether, therefore, it should be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The conclusion of that process is set out in this document. The report has been compiled by the Ecology Office of Cork County Council. The Ecology Office also provided ecological advice and inputs to the policy drafting team during the policy drafting period.

## 2 How this Report Was Prepared

### 2.1 Legislation and Guidance Documents

The guiding legislation for the preparation of this document is:

- Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (also known as the ‘Habitats Directive’);
- Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds, codified version, (also known as the ‘Birds Directive’);
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended.

Regard has also been had to the following guidelines:

- European Communities, Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, Updated November 2018;
- European Communities, Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites, Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, November 2021; and
- Local Government and Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland, Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009.

This has been a desk top assessment relying on European site data available through National Parks and Wildlife Service website [www.NPWS.ie](http://www.NPWS.ie).

### 2.2 Consultation

The Draft Recreation and Amenity Policy along with this report and the SEA screening report will be made available for public consultation between 7<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

### 2.3 Gaps, Limitations and Difficulties

The information contained in this report is based on a desktop review of information relating to these sites and to the habitats and species that they support. References and data used are cited in the back of this report.

## 3 What the Draft Recreation and Amenity Policy Contains

The draft policy document is laid out in five sections. Sections 1-3 set the context, framework and scope of the document. Sections 4 and 5 include specific policy commitments and actions which are set out below. The document also includes Appendices incorporating further detail relating to public park typologies, case studies, policy references and relevant standards and criteria to be used when identifying suitable locations for developing playgrounds.

### **Part 1: Policy Scope and Definitions**

- Defines public open space as including the variety of spaces within the urban environment that are freely accessible to the wider community for recreation and enjoyment;

- Identifies the typologies of open space covered by the policy – including Public Parks and Gardens; Amenity Greenspace – Residential; Playspace for Children and Teenagers; Playing Fields; Green Corridors; Natural/Semi-natural Greenspace; Allotments and Community Growing Spaces and Civic Space.
- Explains the contribution of open space to Green Infrastructure.

**Part 2: Overview of Policy Context/Guidelines**

- Sets out the national and local policy framework for the document;
- Describes the national guidelines and standards which informed the development of the policy.

**Part 3: Setting the Scene – Policy Considerations**

- Explains the Green Blue Infrastructure themes (principles) which have informed the development of the policy including
  - Accessibility, recreation, health and wellbeing;
  - Natural and cultural heritage;
  - Water management; and
  - Climate Resiliency.
- Clarifies the strategic considerations and need to involve multiple stakeholders to deliver recreational infrastructure to deliver recreation and amenities.

**Part 4: Strategic Policy Approach to Planning for Green Space and Outdoor Amenities**

- Emphasises need for strategic planning of open spaces;
- References value of area level recreational needs/audits for strategic planning;
- Recognises the role of public open space in contributing to the Green/Blue Infrastructure resources of the county;
- Recognises the value of preparing indicative masterplans for larger parks and green spaces to support the development of an overall vision for new spaces;
- States the aim of developing an integrated network/hierarchy of accessible multi-functional public open space/green infrastructure with linked corridors across settlements;
- Sets out required sizes and accessibility standards for various park types;
- Sets out required standards for active open spaces including playing pitches and other sports areas;
- Encourages co-location of sporting facilities;
- Sets out priorities for future development of playgrounds to align with population;
- Includes policy and actions relating to children’s play, teen spaces and accessibility for all, enhancement of public spaces and resourcing and funding (see below).

**Table 3.1: Policy/Action Commitments Part 4**

Policy/Action Commitments Part 4		
Policy	Planning for recreational needs	The council will continue to plan for and support the delivery of and refurbishment of recreation

Policy/Action Commitments Part 4		
		and amenity facilities to serve, so far as is possible, the recreational needs of the population it serves.
<b>Action</b>	Planning for green infrastructure and open space	Taking into account available resources, Cork County Council will consider the most effective way to deliver on the various commitments/strategies expected from the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Growth Guidelines taking into account Green and Blue Infrastructure, parks and open space and recreational requirements for the County.
<b>Action</b>	Active recreation provision	To assess provision of sporting facilities as part of studies/audits carried out in advance of preparing area/settlement level plans and to identify possible locations and mechanisms to address any deficits in sporting facility provision and to provide for future growth.
<b>Policy</b>	Active recreation provision	Promote the development of high-quality and multi-functional recreational facilities in appropriate locations throughout County Cork (co-location is encouraged), including Active Recreational Hubs, Multi-Use Games Areas and other community facilities to meet existing and future community needs.
<b>Policy</b>	Playgrounds/Playspaces	Support upgrade and strengthening of the existing network of playgrounds where there is appropriate justification and in line with any refurbishment and improvement programme that may be prepared. Consideration may also be given to alternative forms of play infrastructure (see next section Playful Places).
<b>Policy (settlement network)</b>	Playgrounds/Playspaces	<p>Main Towns - Look to strengthen playground infrastructure in main towns across the county particularly those in which there may be current/future deficits and particularly where growth is planned.</p> <p>Villages - At key village/village level to cater for existing deficiencies where justified. In those villages and rural areas where the population is particularly low or there are other playgrounds within a reasonable catchment, other alternative amenity infrastructure should be considered</p>

Policy/Action Commitments Part 4		
		which may have more widespread appeal such as walking routes, natural/passive recreation areas, etc.
<b>Policy</b>	Playgrounds/Playspaces	Tourism - To give consideration to supporting playgrounds in important tourist locations where a need is appropriately demonstrated in recognition that playgrounds can be an important tourist attractor.
<b>Policy</b>	Playgrounds/Playspaces	Consider the potential for destination/flagship playgrounds in locations across the County where a need is appropriately demonstrated.
<b>Policy</b>	Playgrounds/Playspaces	In decision making on the location of new playgrounds or investment in existing playgrounds to consider the policies outlined in this section as well as the criteria for location of a playground as set out in Appendix C of this policy.
<b>Policy</b>	Childrens Play	To support the provision of natural open spaces and opportunities for children and young people within the county to play and socialise.
<b>Policy</b>	Childrens Play	To promote a built environment that is child friendly and accessible to children.
<b>Action</b>	Childrens Play	Give consideration to the preparation of a specific play policy for the County including specific playground standards/guidelines.
<b>Policy</b>	Teen Space	To ensure that the needs of children and teenagers are adequately considered when planning for the recreational needs of communities across the County.
<b>Policy</b>	Accessibility for all	To ensure that accessibility-for-all is a key consideration in site selection and project design processes for all open space and recreational facilities.
<b>Policy</b>	Enhancement of facilities	The Council will (where feasible) support the enhancement of existing facilities to encourage their better use through improved accessibility and capacity.
<b>Action</b>	Resourcing and Funding	To consider identification and allocation of appropriate additional resources to the provision of Parks and other Recreational Amenities.



Policy/Action Commitments Part 4		
<b>Action</b>	Resourcing and Funding	To ensure the review of the Cork County Council’s Development Contribution Scheme takes into account considerations identified in this policy and that the financial implications of designing, procuring, delivering and managing parks and other recreational amenities are considered in devising the scheme.
<b>Action</b>	Resourcing and Funding	To establish a mechanism within Cork County Council for identifying appropriate funding streams at European, national and local levels which are available towards the provision of public open space, recreation facilities and related infrastructure and to co-ordinate same. In addition, to examine and explore other alternative funding mechanisms as appropriate.

#### Part 5: Development Level Approach – Public (Amenity) Open Space

- Sets out guidance and standards for the provision of amenity space/green infrastructure at development level including landscape plans, drainage impact assessments and green infrastructure plans. The specified standards relate to quantity, quality and accessibility;
- Clarifies where exemptions to certain standards may be applied and the LA approach to calculating open space requirements for individual developments;
- Emphasises the need to retain and enhance existing biodiversity assets;
- Includes a check list to aid developers design high quality open spaces.

**Table 3.1: Policy/Action Commitments Part 5**

Policy /Action Commitments Part 5		
<b>Policy</b>	Public open space quantity standards – residential developments	Public Open Space quantity standards shall be applied which are in accordance with Policy and Objective 5.1 of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (2024).

## 4 EU Sites Within the Zone of Influence of the Policy

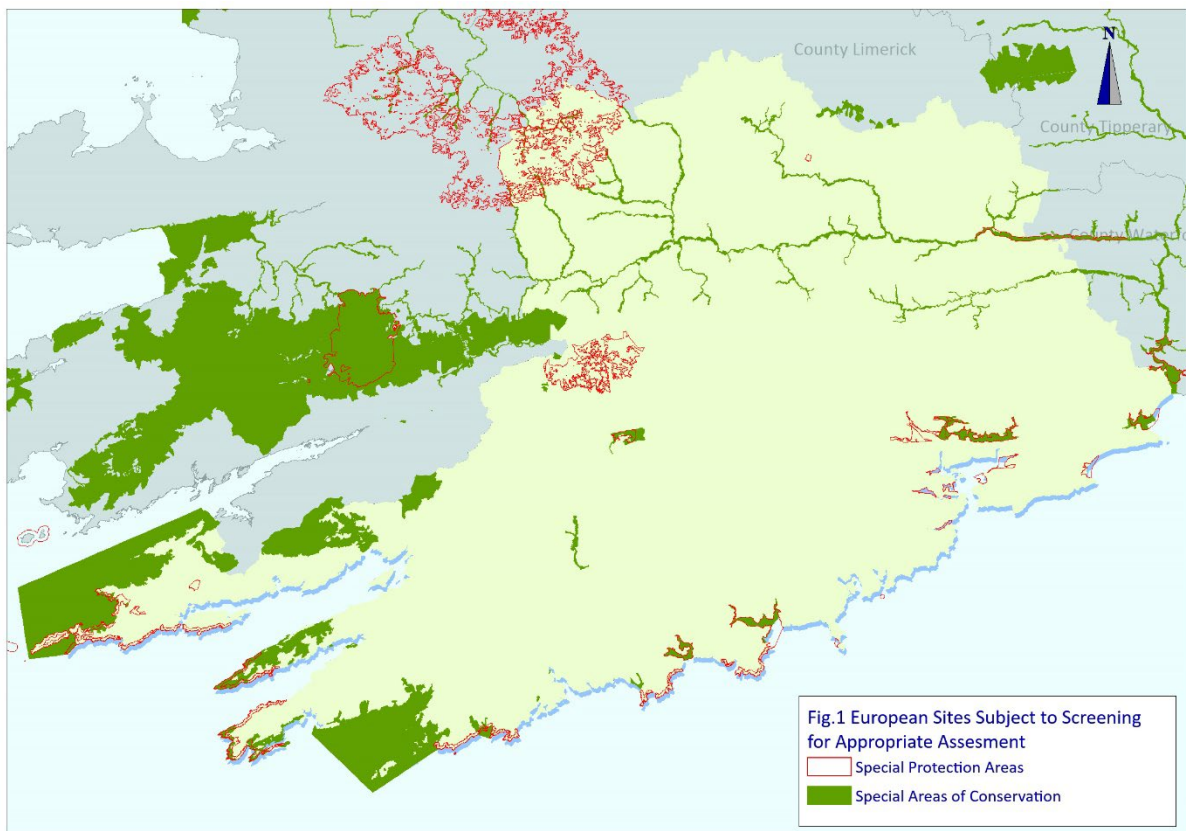
### 4.1 Identification of European Sites and Zones of Influence

The Recreation and Amenity Policy covers the administrative area of Cork County Council which encompasses most of the county with Cork County excluding the administrative area of the City. The county supports thirty sites which have been designated or proposed for designation as Special

Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive, and a further eighteen sites which have been designated as Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive which are identified within **Figure 4.1** below. The focus of this report is on potential for policies contained in this document to impact on these sites.

The policy is intended to influence the development of recreational and amenity space within designated settlements in the county. With this in mind, as a precautionary measure, the Zone of Influence was expanded to incorporate any EU sites located within adjoining counties located within 5km of settlements in the county area. These includes any additional designated sites within the counties of Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford which occur within 5km of Ardroom, Ballyvourney, Ballydesmond, Rockchapel, Tullylease, Milford, Dromina, Charlevill, Mitchelstown, Conna, Ballynoe and Youghal. No such EU sites were identified to occur within this zone. There are no European Sites in the Cork City boundary which do not also occur in the County area. No European Sites outside the county bounds therefore, have been identified to be potentially vulnerable to impact arising from policies set out in this document.

**Figure 4.1: European Sites Subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment**



**Table 4.1** lists the European sites which were subject to review in the context of this assessment and these are shown in **Figure 4.1** above. This includes all European sites within the County boundary. The habitats and species for which these sites are selected are also listed. Links are provided to the Conservation Objectives which apply to these sites.

Table 4.1 European Sites Subject to AA Screening		
Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests
0077	Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estuaries [1130]</li> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>• Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</li> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330]</li> <li>• Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] *</li> </ul> <p>*listed but not included in Conservation Objectives document.</p> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
0090	Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]</li> <li>• <i>Geomalacus maculosus</i> (Kerry Slug) [1024]</li> <li>• <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]</li> <li>• <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> <li>• <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (Common Seal) [1365]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
0091	Clonakilty Bay SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>• Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]</li> <li>• Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</li> <li>• Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</li> <li>• Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> <li>• Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (<i>Calluno-Ulicetea</i>) [2150]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
0093	Caha Mountains SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110]</li> <li>• Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160]</li> <li>• Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</li> <li>• European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>• Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li>• Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230]</li> <li>• Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> <li>• Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110]</li> <li>• Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210]</li> <li>• Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220]</li> <li>• <i>Geomalacus maculosus</i> (Kerry Slug) [1024]</li> <li>• <i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> (Killarney Fern) [1421]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>

Table 4.1 European Sites Subject to AA Screening

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests
0097	Lough Hyne Nature Reserve & Environs SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]</li> <li>• Reefs [1170]</li> <li>• European Dry Heaths {4030}</li> <li>• Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>).</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
0101	Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]</li> <li>• Reefs [1170]</li> <li>• Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]</li> <li>• European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>• Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]</li> <li>• <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]</li> <li>• <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> <li>• <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> (Grey Seal) [1364]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Site specific cons obj (npws.ie)</a></p>
0102	Sheep's Head SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</li> <li>• European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>• <i>Geomalacus maculosus</i> (Kerry Slug) [1024]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
0106	St. Gobnet's Wood SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
0108	The Gearagh SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</li> <li>• Rivers with muddy banks with <i>Chenopodium rubri</i> p.p. and <i>Bidention</i> p.p. vegetation [3270]</li> <li>• Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0]</li> <li>• <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
0109	Three Castle Head to Mizen Head SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]</li> <li>• European dry heaths [4030]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
0365	Killarney National Park, Magillycuddy Reeks and Caragh River Catchment SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110]</li> <li>• Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130]</li> <li>• Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</li> <li>• Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</li> </ul>

Table 4.1 European Sites Subject to AA Screening

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>• Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060]</li> <li>• Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130]</li> <li>• Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae [6130]</li> <li>• Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410]</li> <li>• Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> <li>• Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion [7150]</li> <li>• Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]</li> <li>• Taxus baccata woods of the British Isles [91J0]</li> <li>• Geomalacus maculosus (Kerry Slug) [1024]</li> <li>• Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]</li> <li>• Euphydrias aurinia (Marsh Fritillary) [1065]</li> <li>• Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</li> <li>• Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</li> <li>• Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]</li> <li>• Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li>• Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]</li> <li>• Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]</li> <li>• Trichomanes speciosum (Killarney Fern) [1421]</li> <li>• Najas flexilis (Slender Naiad) [1833]</li> <li>• Alosa fallax killarnensis (Killarney Shad) [5046]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
1040	Barley Cove to Ballyrisode Point SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>• Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> <li>• Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</li> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]</li> <li>• Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]</li> <li>• Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120]</li> <li>• Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> <li>• European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>• Petalophyllum ralfsii (Petalwort) [1395] *</li> </ul> <p>*not included in conservation objectives</p> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
1043	Cleanderry Wood SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]</li> <li>• Trichomanes speciosum (Killarney Fern) [1421]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
1058	Great Island Channel SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]</li> </ul>

Table 4.1 European Sites Subject to AA Screening

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests
		<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
1061	Kilkeran Lake and Castlefreke Dunes SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coastal lagoons [1150] *</li> <li>Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</li> <li>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</li> <li>Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> </ul> <a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
1070	Myross Wood SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> (Killarney Fern) [1421]</li> </ul> <a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
1230	Courtmacsherry Estuary SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estuaries [1130]</li> <li>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]</li> <li>Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> <li><i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</li> <li>Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330]</li> <li>Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]</li> <li>Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</li> <li>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]</li> <li>Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> </ul> <a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
1547	Castletownshend SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> (Killarney Fern) [1421]</li> </ul> <a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
1873	Derryclogher (Knockboy) Bog SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> </ul> <a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
1879	Glanmore Bog SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110]</li> <li>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]</li> <li>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010]</li> <li>Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230]</li> <li>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> <li><i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]</li> <li><i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> (Killarney Fern) [1421]</li> </ul> <a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
1890	Mullaghanish Bog SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> </ul>

Table 4.1 European Sites Subject to AA Screening

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests
		<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
2036	Ballyhoura Mountains SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010]</li> <li>European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]</li> </ul> <a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
2037	Carrigeenamronety Hill SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>Trichomanes speciosum (Killarney Fern) [1421]</li> </ul> <a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
2158	Kenmare River SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]</li> <li>Reefs [1170]</li> <li>Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> <li>Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]</li> <li>Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]</li> <li>Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]</li> <li>Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120]</li> <li>Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]</li> <li>European dry heaths [4030]</li> <li>Juniperus communis formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands [5130] *</li> <li>Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae [6130]</li> <li>Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]</li> <li>Vertigo angustior (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014]</li> <li>Rhinolophus hipposideros (Lesser Horseshoe Bat) [1303]</li> <li>Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]</li> <li>Phoca vitulina (Common Seal) [1365]</li> </ul> *Not included in conservation objectives  <a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
2165	Lower River Shannon SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110]</li> <li>Estuaries [1130]</li> <li>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>Coastal lagoons [1150]</li> <li>Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]</li> <li>Reefs [1170]</li> <li>Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> <li>Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]</li> <li>Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</li> <li>Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]</li> <li>Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]</li> <li>Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260]</li> <li>Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) [6410]</li> <li>Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]</li> <li>Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]</li> </ul>

Table 4.1 European Sites Subject to AA Screening

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</li> <li>• Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</li> <li>• Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]</li> <li>• Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li>• Tursiops truncatus (Common Bottlenose Dolphin) [1349]</li> <li>• Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Site specific cons obj (npws.ie)</a></p>
2170	Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estuaries [1130]</li> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]</li> <li>• Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> <li>• Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]</li> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima) [1330]</li> <li>• Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410]</li> <li>• Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260]</li> <li>• Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]</li> <li>• Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]</li> <li>• Austropotamobius pallipes (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]</li> <li>• Petromyzon marinus (Sea Lamprey) [1095]</li> <li>• Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</li> <li>• Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]</li> <li>• Alosa fallax fallax (Twait Shad) [1103]</li> <li>• Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]</li> <li>• Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]</li> <li>• Trichomanes speciosum (Killarney Fern) [1421]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Site specific cons obj (npws.ie)</a></p>
2171	Bandon River SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation [3260]</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0]</li> <li>• Margaritifera margaritifera (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]</li> <li>• Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
2189	Farranamanagh Lough SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal lagoons [1150]</li> <li>• Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
2280	Dunbeacon Shingle SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
2281	Reen Point Shingle SAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]</li> </ul>



Table 4.1 European Sites Subject to AA Screening

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests
		<a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
4021	Old Head of Kinsale SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188]</li> <li>• Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199]</li> </ul> <a href="#">CO004021.pdf (npws.ie)</a>
4022	Ballycotton Bay SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]</li> <li>• Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]</li> <li>• Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</li> <li>• Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]</li> <li>• Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]</li> <li>• Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]</li> <li>• Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169]</li> <li>• Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]</li> <li>• Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul> <a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
4023	Ballymacoda Bay SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]</li> <li>• Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]</li> <li>• Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]</li> <li>• Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</li> <li>• Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]</li> <li>• Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]</li> <li>• Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144]</li> <li>• Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]</li> <li>• Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]</li> <li>• Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]</li> <li>• Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169]</li> <li>• Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]</li> <li>• Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]</li> <li>• Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul> <a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a>
4028	Blackwater Estuary SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]</li> <li>• Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</li> <li>• Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]</li> <li>• Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]</li> <li>• Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]</li> <li>• Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul>

Table 4.1 European Sites Subject to AA Screening

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests
		<a href="#">Site_specific_cons_obj (npws.ie)</a>
4030	Cork Harbour SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little Grebe (Tachybaptus ruficollis) [A004]</li> <li>• Great Crested Grebe (Podiceps cristatus) [A005]</li> <li>• Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo) [A017]</li> <li>• Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea) [A028]</li> <li>• Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048]</li> <li>• Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050]</li> <li>• Teal (Anas crecca) [A052]</li> <li>• Pintail (Anas acuta) [A054]</li> <li>• Shoveler (Anas clypeata) [A056]</li> <li>• Red-breasted Merganser (Mergus serrator) [A069]</li> <li>• Oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130]</li> <li>• Golden Plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]</li> <li>• Grey Plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141]</li> <li>• Lapwing (Vanellus vanellus) [A142]</li> <li>• Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149]</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156]</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157]</li> <li>• Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160]</li> <li>• Redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162]</li> <li>• Black-headed Gull (Chroicocephalus ridibundus) [A179]</li> <li>• Common Gull (Larus canus) [A182]</li> <li>• Lesser Black-backed Gull (Larus fuscus) [A183]</li> <li>• Common Tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
4066	Bull and the Cow Rocks SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Storm Petrel (Hydrobates pelagicus) [A014]</li> <li>• Gannet (Morus bassanus) [A016]</li> <li>• Puffin (Fratercula arctica) [A204]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">CO004066.pdf (npws.ie)</a></p>
4081	Clonakilty Bay SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048]</li> <li>• Dunlin (Calidris alpina) [A149]</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156]</li> <li>• Curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>
4094	Blackwater Callows SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038]</li> <li>• Wigeon (Anas penelope) [A050]</li> <li>• Teal (Anas crecca) [A052]</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) [A156]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">CO004094.pdf (npws.ie)</a></p>
4095	Kilcolman Bog SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038]</li> <li>• Teal (Anas crecca) [A052]</li> </ul>

Table 4.1 European Sites Subject to AA Screening

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056]</li> <li>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">CO004095.pdf (npws.ie)</a></p>
4109	The Gearagh SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]</li> <li>Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]</li> <li>Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053]</li> <li>Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125]</li> <li>Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">CO004109.pdf (npws.ie)</a></p>
4124	Sovereign Islands SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">CO004124.pdf (npws.ie)</a></p>
4155	Beara Peninsula SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009]</li> <li>Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">CO004155.pdf (npws.ie)</a></p>
4156	Sheeps Head to Toe Head SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A103]</li> <li>Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">CO004156.pdf (npws.ie)</a></p>
4161	Stacks to Mullaghareirk Mountains, West Limerick Hills and Mountain Eagle SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">CO004161.pdf (npws.ie)</a></p>
4162	Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">CO004162.pdf (npws.ie)</a></p>
4190	Galley Head to Duneen Point SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">CO004190.pdf (npws.ie)</a></p>
4191	Seven Heads SPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chough (<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) [A346]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">CO004191.pdf (npws.ie)</a></p>
4219	<u>Courtmacsherry Bay SPA</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) [A003]</li> <li>Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]</li> <li>Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050]</li> <li>Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069]</li> <li>Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</li> <li>Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]</li> </ul>

Table 4.1 European Sites Subject to AA Screening

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]</li> <li>• Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]</li> <li>• Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]</li> <li>• Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">ConservationObjectives.rdl (npws.ie)</a></p>

## 5 Screening Assessment

The aim of Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the Favourable Conservation Status of specified habitats and species of community interest. The maintenance of habitats and species within individual Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at national level. In accordance with NPWS guidance, the favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing, and
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Conservation Objectives for each of the relevant sites subject to assessment are included as links in Table 4.1 above. The screening assessment has taken account of these objectives and the potential for the policy document to impact on the achievement of same.

## 6 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

The methodology for the assessment of impacts has been applied having regard to Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 site (EC, 2021).

The development of recreational and amenity spaces could have the potential to give rise to direct or indirect effects on EU sites, depending on the location of individual sites identified for redevelopment for recreational uses. Ex-situ indirect effects to EU sites are considered to be particularly relevant to proposals for the development of new recreational spaces which may have a

tendency to be located in areas zoned for green infrastructure which often coincide with flood risk zones adjoining watercourses. Each policy and action was examined in this context. Consideration was also given to the occurrence of EU sites within or near settlement boundaries where the draft RAP will apply.

Impacts that could potentially occur through the implementation of the draft RAP were categorised under several impact categories as follows:

#### **Direct Impacts**

- Habitat destruction and / or loss and / or fragmentation – including potential impacts on Annex I habitat or reduction in the area of the habitat of any EU site;

#### **Indirect Impacts**

- Habitat alteration and/or deterioration – resulting from direct or indirect damage to the physical quality of the environment (including for example impacts to water quality);
- Disturbance to species (eg bats, birds and Otter) for which any EU site 2000 is designated including for eg impacts associated with development of trails and/or lighting schemes within recreational parks or along watercourses;
- Impacts to habitat / species characteristics - Indirect effects on the size, characteristics, or reproductive ability of populations of a Natura 2000 site; and
- Impacts on habitats or species arising from any other sources which could contribute to significant effects when considered in combination with effects caused by this policy.

The potential for any such impacts to arise is discussed further below.

**Development of Recreation / Amenity Space in Larger Settlements – direct effects on EU sites:** In larger settlements, where there is an overlap with the boundaries of one or more EU sites and where land is zoned, the majority of EU designated land falls within the Green Conservation – Landscape Amenity / Conservation zoning category. The specified objectives for lands zoned Green Infrastructure Conservation which overlap with EU designated sites always gives priority to the nature conservation designation. This includes for example large towns along the Blackwater River which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation, such as Kanturk, Mallow and Fermoy and settlements adjoining coastal European sites such as Ringaskiddy, whose boundary overlaps with the Cork Harbour SPA. Having regard to the GC (Green Conservation) zoning which applies to such areas, it is not envisaged that the draft RAP will direct inappropriate recreational or amenity development into EU sites within larger settlements with zoned land.

No areas zoned for residential development overlap with the boundaries of EU sites in any settlement in the county. There is no potential therefore for proposals relating to the development of amenity spaces associated with new residential development in larger settlements with zoned land to give rise to direct effects on any EU sites.

**Development of Recreation / Amenity Space in Smaller Settlements - direct effects on EU sites:** In smaller settlements, whose boundaries overlap with European sites, where land has not been zoned, no specific zoning therefore applies to EU designated land. However, the policy objectives for these settlements generally acknowledge the proximity / linkage of the settlement to relevant EU sites and

include commitments to protect these sites. Having regard to these protective policies, it is not envisaged that the draft RAP will direct inappropriate recreational or amenity development into EU sites within smaller settlements whose boundaries overlap with EU sites.

**Indirect effects on EU sites:** While it does not specify development proposals for any locations within the county, the draft RAP will apply primarily to the development of recreation and amenity facilities within existing built-up areas, lands zoned for new residential development and lands zoned for Green Infrastructure – Recreation and Green Infrastructure – Active Open Space, in existing settlements. No such areas overlap with EU designated sites in the county, however, such sites could have linkages/connectivity to EU sites, especially new public parks which are likely to be targeted to areas zoned for Green Infrastructure, including areas which are liable to flooding close to watercourses which may occur upstream of designated sites. Where such linkages occur, proposals for development shaped by this policy document, will be subject to screening for Appropriate Assessment at project level and may need to be subject to Appropriate Assessment depending on the outcome of screening. The County Development Plan includes strong policy objectives which provide for the protection of biodiversity including European designated sites and their associated habitats and species (BE 15-2, BE 15-3, BE 15-4, BE 15-5, BE 15-6), the protection of watercourses and water quality WM 11-1, WM 11-2, WM 11-10 and WM 11-11, and the protection of features of the landscape which form ecological linkages and connections between European sites BE 15-2. It is considered that these protective policies of the CDP are sufficient to prevent indirect effects on EU sites arising from recreational/amenity proposals at project level and that the policy will not direct inappropriate development into any EU sites.

**Policies and actions:** The draft Recreation and Amenity Policy is a high-level policy document which sets out Cork County Council’s proposed approach to the development, management and funding of development of recreational and amenity spaces within existing settlements, and it establishes the quantitative and qualitative standards which will be required to be applied in these spaces. The policies and actions have been individually reviewed and assessed for potential to have significant effects on EU sites. No potential for significant effects has been identified to be likely to arise as a result of the implementation of the policies or actions of this document (see Table 5.1 below).

Table 5.1 Assessment of Policies and Actions of draft RAP

Theme	Policy/Action	Assessment
<b>Planning for recreational needs</b>	Policy: The council will continue to plan for and support the delivery of and refurbishment of recreation and amenity facilities to serve, so far as is possible, the recreational needs of the population it serves.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.
<b>Planning for green infrastructure and open space</b>	Action: Taking into account available resources, Cork County Council will consider the most effective way to deliver on the various commitments/strategies expected from	Development of new parks and recreational areas will be subject to protective policies of CDP. No potential for impact on EU

Table 5.1 Assessment of Policies and Actions of draft RAP

Theme	Policy/Action	Assessment
	the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Growth Guidelines taking into account Green and Blue Infrastructure, parks and open space and recreational requirements for the County.	sites predicted.
<b>Active recreation provision</b>	Action: To assess provision of sporting facilities as part of studies/audits carried out in advance of preparing area/settlement level plans and to identify possible locations and mechanisms to address any deficits in sporting facility provision and to provide for future growth.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.
<b>Active recreation provision</b>	Policy: Promote the development of high-quality and multi-functional recreational facilities in appropriate locations throughout County Cork (co-location is encouraged), including Active Recreational Hubs, Multi-Use Games Areas and other community facilities to meet existing and future community needs.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.
<b>Playgrounds/Playspaces</b>	Policy: Support upgrade and strengthening of the existing network of playgrounds where there is appropriate justification and in line with any refurbishment and improvement programme that may be prepared. Consideration may also be given to alternative forms of play infrastructure (see next section Playful Places).	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.
<b>Playgrounds/Playspaces</b>	Policy (settlement network): Main Towns - Look to strengthen playground infrastructure in main towns across the county particularly those in which there may be current/future deficits and particularly where growth is planned.  Villages - At key village/village level to cater for existing deficiencies where	Development of new parks and recreational areas will be subject to protective policies of CDP. No potential for impact on EU sites predicted.

Table 5.1 Assessment of Policies and Actions of draft RAP

Theme	Policy/Action	Assessment
	justified. In those villages and rural areas where the population is particularly low or there are other playgrounds within a reasonable catchment, other alternative amenity infrastructure should be considered which may have more widespread appeal such as walking routes, natural/passive recreation areas, etc.	
<b>Playgrounds/Playspaces</b>	Policy: Tourism - To give consideration to supporting playgrounds in important tourist locations where a need is appropriately demonstrated in recognition that playgrounds can be an important tourist attractor.	Development of new parks and recreational areas will be subject to protective policies of CDP. No potential for impact on EU sites predicted.
<b>Playgrounds/Playspaces</b>	Policy: Consider the potential for destination/flagship playgrounds in locations across the County where a need is appropriately demonstrated.	Development of new parks and recreational areas will be subject to protective policies of CDP. No potential for impact on EU sites predicted.
<b>Playgrounds/Playspaces</b>	Policy: In decision making on the location of new playgrounds or investment in existing playgrounds to consider the policies outlined in this section as well as the criteria for location of a playground as set out in Appendix C of this policy.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.
<b>Childrens Play</b>	Policy: To support the provision of natural open spaces and opportunities for children and young people within the county to play and socialise.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.
<b>Childrens Play</b>	Policy: To promote a built environment that is child friendly and accessible to children.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.
<b>Childrens Play</b>	Action: Give consideration to the preparation of a specific play policy for the County including specific playground standards/guidelines.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.



Table 5.1 Assessment of Policies and Actions of draft RAP

Theme	Policy/Action	Assessment
<b>Teen Space</b>	Policy: To ensure that the needs of children and teenagers are adequately considered when planning for the recreational needs of communities across the County.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.
<b>Accessibility for all</b>	Policy: To ensure that accessibility-for-all is a key consideration in site selection and project design processes for all open space and recreational facilities.	Development of new parks and recreational areas will be subject to protective policies of CDP. No potential for impact on EU sites predicted.
<b>Enhancement of facilities</b>	Policy: The Council will (where feasible) support the enhancement of existing facilities to encourage their better use through improved accessibility and capacity.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.
<b>Resourcing and Funding</b>	Action: To consider identification and allocation of appropriate additional resources to the provision of Parks and other Recreational Amenities.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.
<b>Resourcing and Funding</b>	Action: To ensure the review of the Cork County Council's Development Contribution Scheme takes into account considerations identified in this policy and that the financial implications of designing, procuring, delivering and managing parks and other recreational amenities are considered in devising the scheme.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.
<b>Resourcing and Funding</b>	Action: To establish a mechanism within Cork County Council for identifying appropriate funding streams at European, national and local levels which are available towards the provision of public open space, recreation facilities and related infrastructure and to co-ordinate same. In addition, to examine and explore other alternative funding mechanisms as appropriate.	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.

Table 5.1 Assessment of Policies and Actions of draft RAP

Theme	Policy/Action	Assessment
<b>Public open space quantity standards – residential developments</b>	Public Open Space quantity standards shall be applied which are in accordance with Policy and Objective 5.1 of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (2024).	No potential conflict with protection of EU sites identified.

**In-combination Effects:** Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive states that: “Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] 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.”

As there is no risk of impact to any EU Site(s) arising from this proposed policy, there is no risk that the proposed project could contribute to ‘in combination’ effects when considered in-combination with effects which may arise from other plans or projects.

## 7 AA Screening Determination

On the basis of all of the information set out above, it is determined that the draft RAP individually and/or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on the any EU Site and as a result there will be no adverse effects on the integrity of any EU site, for the following reasons:

- This policy is a high-level policy document which does not direct development within EU sites;
- This policy sits within the hierarchy of the Cork County Development Plan 2022 which shall be applied to any recreational and amenity led development projects. The CDP promotes the avoidance of effects on EU sites and also includes strong environmental protection policies which will contribute to the protection of EU designated sites, water quality, biodiversity outside EU designated sites and green infrastructure resources;
- As there is no risk of impact to any EU Site(s) arising from this proposed policy, there is no risk that the proposed project could contribute to ‘in combination’ effects when considered in-combination with effects which may arise from other plans or projects.

## 8 References

### National Parks and Wildlife Service Data

- Information relating to individual Natura 2000 sites including Article 17 Conservation Assessment Reports for Habitats and Species In Ireland (2019), individual site synopses, Natura 2000 data forms, and information relating to the qualifying features and conservation objectives of individual sites was sourced from the NPWS database ([www.NPWS.ie](http://www.NPWS.ie))

### Guidance

- Guidance used in the preparation of this report included the following:
- European Communities, Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, Updated November 2018;
- European Communities, Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites, Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, November 2021;
- European Union, EC Natura and Spatial Planning 2017; and
- Local Government and Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland, Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009.