

Doneraile Car Park

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Determination



Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

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Introduction

This document includes the Habitats Directive Screening Assessment and Screening Determination by Cork County Council of the proposed demolition of the old abattoir on Main Street, Doneraile County Cork and conversion of the site to a public car park. The assessment is based on project drawings and details prepared by Cork County Council, a site visit on 12/02/2024 and referral to published sources.

Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act as amended, provides for the implementation of the EU Habitats Directive, and Section 177 of the Act, requires Planning Authorities to assess the impacts of land use plans and proposed developments on sites that are designated for the protection of Natura 2000 (European Sites¹) prior to giving consent for the development of such projects. This process is undertaken to determine whether a proposed development could have negative consequences for the habitats, or plant and animal species for which these sites are designated. This assessment process is called a **Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA)**. The requirements originate from Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive which states:

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 set 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 project or a plan on a Natura 2000 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 if no significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites are identified to be likely to arise, during the screening stage. The findings of the screening assessment are normally contained in a **Habitats Directive Screening Report**.

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 is completed by the Competent Authority, (the authority designated to give consent to the project). It involves 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 by the Competent Authority to identify and classify any implications of the project for these sites in view of their conservation objectives. The Appropriate Assessment must include a determination as to whether the project would adversely affect the integrity of any European site or sites. The project may only be consented if adverse effects on the integrity of European sites can be ruled out during the Appropriate Assessment process. The 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.

The directive provides for a **derogation procedure** which can allow a plan or project to proceed despite a finding that the plan or project could / would give rise to adverse effects on the overall integrity of one or more Natura 2000 sites. Derogation procedures can only be progressed in very limited circumstances which are set out in Article 6(4) of the Directive (see below).

Habitats Directive Article 6(4)

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

EU and National Guidance identifies the procedures which must be followed in circumstances where a derogation from the Habitats Directive is sought to allow a project or a plan to proceed, despite a finding that it will give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of one or more Natura 2000 sites. These procedures can only be invoked where it has been shown that there are no alternative ways to implement the plan/project which avoid adverse effects on the integrity of one or more European sites, where it has been demonstrated that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for which the plan/project must proceed and where measures have been developed and provided to compensate for any losses to be incurred. These further stages are described below.

Stage Three: Assessment of alternative solutions

In circumstances where the potential for a plan or project to give rise to adverse effects on the integrity of a European site or sites has not been ruled out during the appropriate assessment process, it can only be considered for authorisation where it is demonstrated that there are no alternative solutions and that there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) which can allow the plan or project to proceed. Stage three of a Habitats Directive Assessment involves the assessment of alternative solutions.

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain

The fourth stage of the Habitats Directive Assessment process involves demonstrating that Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest exist and includes the assessment of the compensatory measures which are proposed to be implemented. In every case in which a local authority envisages approving or proceeding with a plan or project on grounds of IROPI, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage must be consulted.

The assessment may cease at any of the above stages if significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites can be ruled out.

Regulation 250 of the Planning and Development Regulations requires the Local Authority to complete Habitats Directive Screening in respect of development it proposes to progress.

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This document presents the outcomes of the screening assessment of Cork County Council in respect of the proposed conversion of the old abattoir on Main Street, Doneraile to a public car park. All European sites within or close to the proposed works site, or that might have an ecological linkage to the proposed development have been identified and screened to determine whether there is potential for this project to give rise to significant impacts on the qualifying features of these sites.

Map showing the Location of the Proposed Development Site and Natura 2000 Sites

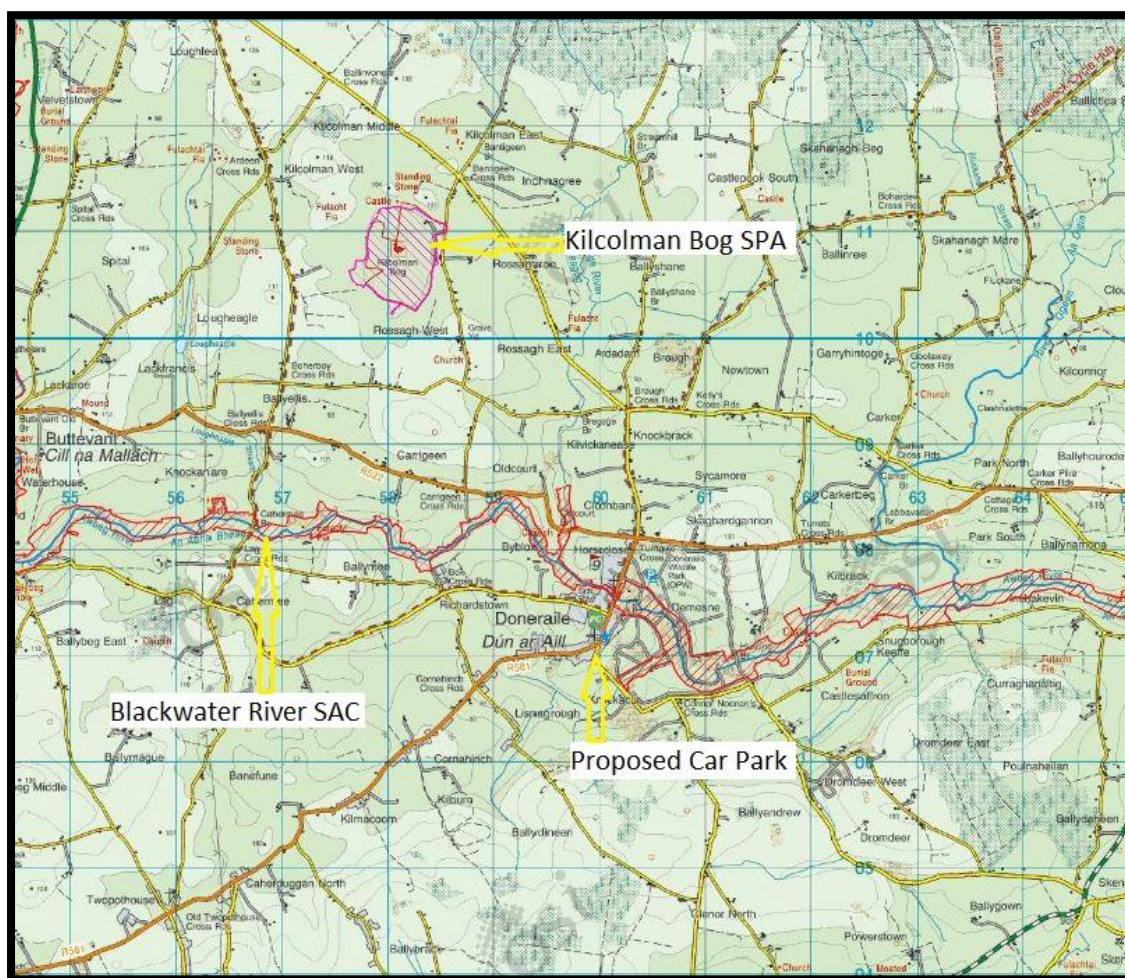


Figure 1. Map showing the location of the proposed Car Park in relation to nearby Natura 2000 sites.

Description of the project and local site characteristics

STEP 1. Description of the project/proposal and local site characteristics	
(a) Site Name/Reference Number:	Doneraile Car Park
(b) Brief description of the project or plan:	<p>Part VIII documents/drawings are currently being prepared and the proposed works include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demolition of existing abattoir and other existing ancillary outhouse buildings located on site. • Development of a new landscaped public car park including 25 car spaces. • Installation of a new soakaway at the rear of the site to deal with any surface water run-off. • Demolition of the front entrance wall including the existing mural. • Erection of a new 1m high entrance wall and new entrance gates. • The modification/widening of the existing vehicular entrance/exit including sight lines at entrance/exit. • Lowering of the existing public footpath to facilitate the modified vehicular entrance/exit. • Provision of new bollards on the existing public footpath. • Associated groundworks including drainage, stormwater connections, watermain connections and electrical ducting. • Provision of Public Lighting. • Provision for recycling bins to be located in the new car park. <p>Construction work is expected to be completed within a 12 week period.</p>
(c) Brief description of site characteristics:	<p>The proposed work site is located in the south of the town on Main Street, close to the junction of the R581 (Mallow Road) and the L1332 (New Road). The area of the site is approximately 0.2 acres and it currently encompasses an disused abattoir and some ancillary outhouse buildings (sheds etc). The northern and eastern boundaries are comprised of high stone walls. The eastern boundary is the old Demesne Wall for Doneraile Court. These walls will be retained in the new development however, the existing buildings will have to be demolished. The southern boundary comprises of a block wall to the front and a combination of dilapidated fencing and hedging/trees to the rear.</p> <p>The proposed car park is approximately 455 metres south of the Blackwater River SAC and 3.64 km southeast of Kilcolman Bog SPA.</p>

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(d) Relevant prescribed bodies consulted:	None
(e) Response to consultation:	Not applicable

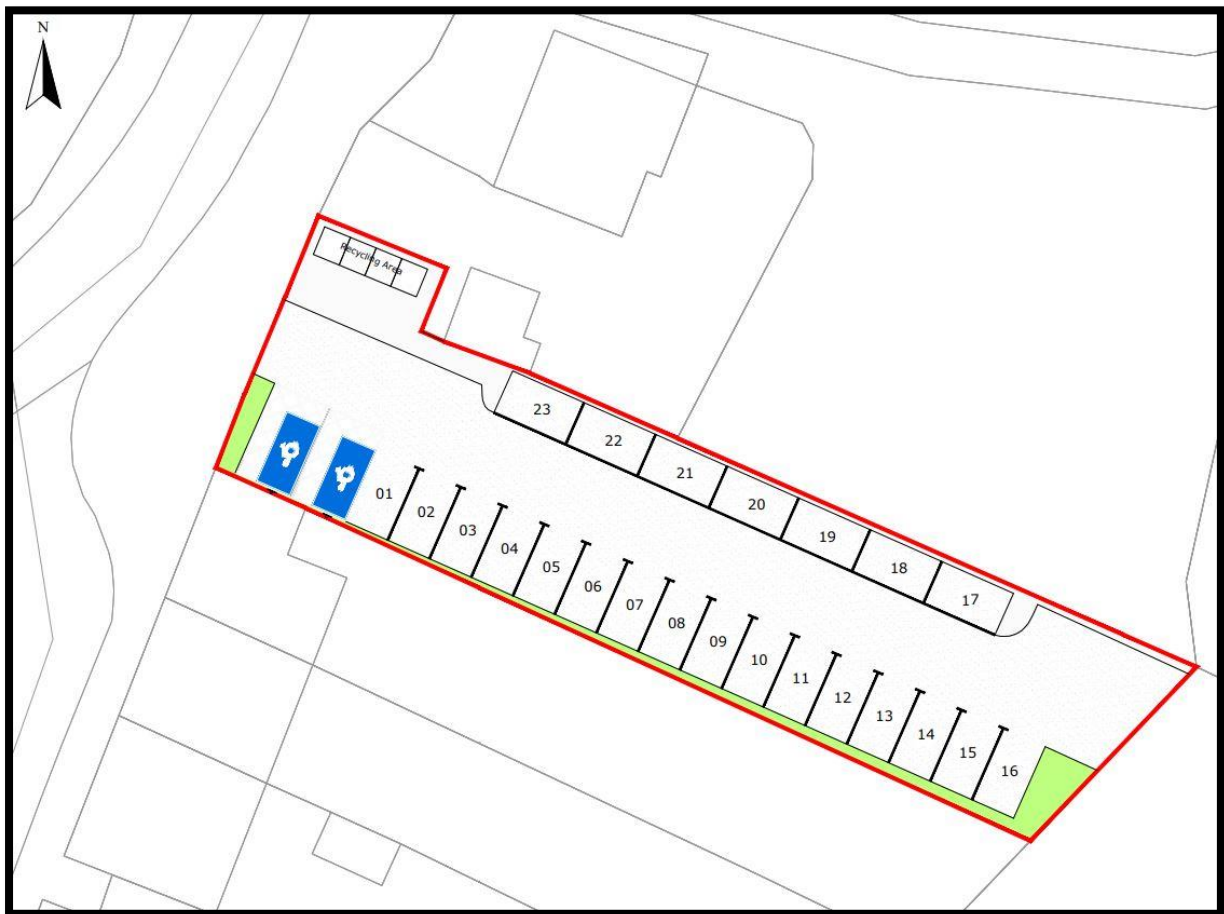


Figure 2. Map showing the proposed layout for the new car park.

Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites and Qualifying Interests

STEP2. Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using the Source-Pathway-Receptor and compilation of information on Qualifying Interests and conservation objectives:				
European Site (code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest [Habitat/Species code]	Distance from proposed development (approximate)	Connections (Source- Pathway-Receptor)	Considered further in screening Y/N
Blackwater River SAC (2170)	Estuaries [1130]	64 km	A weak and ineffective pathway exists via the Awbeg River and Blackwater River but the distance between the proposed works and this habitat is too great to be a source of pollution.	No
	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]	64 km	A weak and ineffective pathway exists via the Awbeg River and Blackwater River but the distance between the proposed works and this habitat is too great to be a source of pollution.	No
	Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]	86 km	A weak and ineffective pathway exists via the Awbeg River and Blackwater River but the distance between the proposed works and this habitat is too great to be a source of pollution.	No
	Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]	87 km	A weak and ineffective pathway exists via the Awbeg River and Blackwater River but the distance between the proposed works and this habitat is too great to be a source of pollution.	No
	Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330]	85 km	A weak and ineffective pathway exists via the Awbeg River and Blackwater River but the distance between	No

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			the proposed works and this habitat is too great to be a source of pollution.	
	Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]	85 km	A weak and ineffective pathway exists via the Awbeg River and Blackwater River but the distance between the proposed works and this habitat is too great to be a source of pollution.	No
	Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260]	500m	The close proximity of this habitat to the proposed work site via the River Awbeg creates a viable pathway.	Yes
	Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0]	33 km	This is a terrestrial habitat so no effective pathway exists between the work site and the habitat (apart from the distance between the sites).	No
	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]	64 km	A weak and ineffective pathway exists via the Awbeg River and Blackwater River but the distance between the proposed works and this habitat is too great to be a source of pollution.	No
	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029]	20 km	A weak and ineffective pathway exists via the Awbeg River and Blackwater River but the distance between the proposed works and this species is too great to be a source of pollution.	No
	<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092]	500 m	The nearby Awbeg River is an important habitat for this species.	Yes
	<i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095]	500 m	This species occurs in the nearby Awbeg River (King & Linnane 2004).	Yes

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	Lampetra planeri (Brook Lamprey) [1096]	500 m	This species occurs in the nearby Awbeg River (King & Linnane 2004).	Yes
	Lampetra fluviatilis (River Lamprey) [1099]	500 m	This species occurs in the nearby Awbeg River (King & Linnane 2004).	Yes
	Alosa fallax (Twaiite Shad) [1103] Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106]	45 km	A weak and ineffective pathway exists via the Awbeg River and Blackwater River but the distance between the proposed works and this species is too great to be a source of pollution.	No
	Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]	500 m	Otters occur widely throughout the Blackwater catchment and are likely to be present close by in the River Awbeg.	Yes
	Trichomanes speciosum (Killarney Fern) [1421]	60 km+	This is a terrestrial species so no effective pathway exists between the work site and the habitat (apart from the distance between the sites).	No
Kilcolman Bog SPA (4095)	Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus) [A038]	3.64 km	No effective pathway exists between the proposed work site and this species' preferred habitat.	No
	Teal (Anas crecca) [A052]	3.64 km	No effective pathway exists between the proposed work site and this species' preferred habitat.	No
	Shoveler (Anas clypeata) [A056]	3.64 km	No effective pathway exists between the proposed work site and this species' preferred habitat.	No
	Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	3.64 km	No effective pathway exists between the proposed work site and this species' preferred habitat.	No

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects


STEP 3. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects	
(a) Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may result in significant effects on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into consideration the size and scale of the project under the following headings:	
Construction phase:	
Impacts	Significance of Impacts (duration/magnitude etc.)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vegetation clearance 2. Habitat loss 3. Demolition 4. Surface water runoff from soil excavation/infill/landscaping 5. Contaminants or pollution 6. Dust, noise, vibration 7. Lighting disturbance 8. Impact on groundwater/dewatering 9. Storage of excavated construction materials 10. Access to site 11. Invasive species 	<p>1. The east side of the property is currently vegetated with grasses, Broad-leaved Dock, Cow Parsley and Cuckoo Pint. The south boundary consists of two invasive species: Sycamore x 8 and Traveller’s Joy, Elder x 2 and Box. The trees are relatively young (10-12 metres in height. All of the above mentioned vegetation will have to be cleared to facilitate the car park construction. 4 large Oaks growing in the adjacent property next to the north boundary will not be removed. No clearance will occur anywhere close to the Blackwater River SAC.</p> <p>2. The removal of the above vegetation and replacement with hard surface tarmacadam will result in minor habitat loss. Removal of the invasive species referred to above, will prevent their spread into the adjacent Doneraile Park. No habitat within the Blackwater River SAC will be affected by the proposed development.</p> <p>3. The existing abattoir building as well as three smaller ancillary buildings will all be demolished to facilitate construction of the car park. These buildings were found to be unsuitable for bats (plastered block walls and corrugated sheet roofing). All of the resulting waste material will be removed to a licensed waste disposal facility and none of the Qualifying Interests of the Blackwater River SAC will be affected by demolition work at the site.</p> <p>4. There may be some surface water runoff during the construction phase but most (if not all) of the runoff will be contained on site as the site is flat and drains into the vegetated area on the east side of the property. No significant volume of runoff is anticipated to reach the Awbeg River.</p>

	<p>No infilling will be required other than a layer of hard core stone.</p> <p>5. Excavating machinery will be required for the demolition phase and vegetation clearance. The use of hydrocarbon fuels and lubricants will be necessary to power and lubricate this machinery and these fuels and lubricants are the main potential source of pollution that could potentially affect White-clawed Crayfish, Atlantic Salmon, Sea Lamprey, Brook Lamprey, River Lamprey and Otter populations in the River Awbeg. Any form of pollution originating in the work site is likely to be contained within the work site (given the flat layout) and in the unlikely event of a spillage, volumes would be low (given the limited amount of machinery likely to be present at any one time) and very unlikely to reach the Awbeg River 500 metres north of the site.</p> <p>6. Some dust will be generated during the demolition and excavation phase (depending on rainfall). Quantities of dust will be low given the small scale of demolition proposed. Dampening procedures will be in place to prevent excessive dust (due to the urban location) and dust emanating from the site will not pose any threat to the Conservation Objectives of the Blackwater River SAC. There will be some noise and vibration, especially during the early construction phases (demolition and excavation). This noise and vibration will be muffled by the normal sounds of urban traffic and noises and none of the Qualifying Interests of the SAC will be affected.</p> <p>7. All work will be undertaken during daylight hours and no lighting will be necessary.</p> <p>8. No impact on groundwater is anticipated given the nature and scale of the work involved. Work is expected to be completed within 12 weeks.</p> <p>9. There will be no storage of excavated materials given the limited space available and all excavated and demolished material will be removed to a licensed facility within a short time period and there will be no impact on the Conservation Objectives of the SAC.</p> <p>10. The proposed car park is located 500 metres south of the SAC and will not impede</p>
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	<p>access for any of the Qualifying Interests to or from the SAC.</p> <p>11. Two invasive species occur in the site: Sycamore and Traveller’s Joy. Both of these species will be completely removed from the site and carefully removed to a licensed facility for disposal and there will be no future threat of spread from this source to the SAC.</p>
<p>Operational phase:</p>	
<p>Impacts</p>	<p>Significance of Impacts (duration/magnitude etc.)</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct emission to air and water 2. Surface water runoff containing contaminant or sediment 3. Lighting disturbance 4. Noise/vibration 5. Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction 6. Presence of people, vehicles and activities 7. Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks) 8. Potential for accidents or incidents 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There will be no direct emissions to air or water during the operational phase. 2. All surface water runoff will be collected on site in a new soakaway that will be specially constructed for this purpose. 3. Four to six new lights will be installed to facilitate night time use of the car park. Lighting will be chosen to ensure minimal disturbance to bats. Given the 500 metre distance between the car park and the SAC, the new lights will not have any significant impact on the Qualifying Interests of the SAC. 5. No significant changes to groundwater are anticipated given the relatively small area of the car park (0.2 acre). 6. The car park has been designed to provide car parking spaces for visitors to the town and Doneraile Park. It is not likely to result in any significant increase in the presence of people or vehicles. There may be a localised increase of access to the south side of Doneraile Park and hence the Blackwater River SAC, but these visitors would most likely have used the existing car park in the Park based on a planned visit to Doneraile. No significant increase in the presence of people and activities in the vicinity of the SAC is anticipated as a result of the new car park. 7. The construction of the new car park will not pose a collision risk to any of the Qualifying Interests of the SAC. 8. The construction of the new car park will not increase the potential for accidents or incidents in the SAC.
<p>(b) Describe any likely changes to the European site(s):</p>	
<p>In combination/other: A search of Cork County Council’s Planning Enquiry System for the period 21/02/2023 to 21/02/2024 revealed that planning permission has been granted for the following</p>	

developments: new dwelling house x 1, house extensions x 5, domestic garage x 1, new entrance and driveway x 1, agricultural shed x 1.	
Impacts	Significance of Impacts (duration/magnitude etc.)
<p>Types of changes to consider include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area 2. Disturbance to QI species 3. Species fragmentation 4. Reduction or fragmentation in species density 5. Changes in key indicators of conservation status value (water quality etc.) 6. Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI 7. Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site 8. Climate change 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed new car park alone and in combination with the developments listed above will not result in any reduction or fragmentation of the habitat area of the Blackwater River SAC. 2. The new car park alone and in combination with the above listed developments will not cause disturbance to any of the Qualifying Interests of the Blackwater River SAC. 3. The new car park alone and in combination with the above listed developments will not cause disturbance to any of the Qualifying Interests of the Blackwater River SAC. 4. The new car park alone and in combination with the above listed developments will not cause population reduction or fragmentation of any of the Qualifying Interests of the Blackwater River SAC. 5. The new car park alone and in combination with the above listed developments will not cause any significant change to water quality in the Blackwater River SAC. 6. The new car park alone and in combination with the above listed developments will not cause any significant change to areas of sensitivity in the Blackwater River SAC and will not be a threat to any of the Qualifying Interests of the SAC. 7. The proposed car park will not result in any interference in the key relationships that define the structure and ecological function of the site such as predator-prey relationships. 8. The proposed car park will not cause any significant increase in the effects of climate change that could affect the Conservation Objectives of the Blackwater River SAC.
(c) Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?	
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	While best practice methods are referenced, these are not required to avoid or reduce any effects on a European site. These measures are not relied on to reach a conclusion of no likely significant effects on any European site.

Screening Determination Statement

STEP 4. Screening Determination Statement		
Describe how the proposed development (alone or in-combination) is/is not likely to have significant effect on European site(s) in view of its conservation objectives.		
<p>On the basis of the information available on file, which is considered adequate to undertake a screening determination, a site visit (12/02/2024) and having regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature and scale of the proposed development and the limited pollution potential, • The intervening land uses and distance from most of the nearby or potentially connected European sites, • The lack of direct connections with regard to the Source-Pathway-Receptor model to most of the nearby or potentially connected European sites, • The lack of a viable connection to the nearby Blackwater River SAC given the approximately 500 metre distance to the River Awbeg and the very the limited pollution potential threat posed by construction activities, <p>it is therefore concluded that the proposed development, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on the Conservation Interests of the Blackwater River SAC or any other European site. An Appropriate Assessment is therefore not required.</p>		
Conclusion:		
	Tick as appropriate	Recommendation
(1) It is clear that no likelihood of significant effects arises.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The proposal can be screened out: Appropriate Assessment is not required.
(2) It is uncertain if the proposed development will have a significant effect on a European site.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Request further information to complete screening <input type="checkbox"/> Request NIS <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse planning permission <input type="checkbox"/>
(3) Significant effects are likely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Request NIS <input type="checkbox"/> Refuse planning permission <input type="checkbox"/>
Signature and date of Recommending Officer:		 Tony Nagle Cork County Council Ecologist 22/02/2024

References

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).

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