

**Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment  
Screening Determination**

**Bantry Mill Culvert Upgrade Project, Bantry, Co. Cork.**



**Cork County Council**  
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

**Completed by: Kieran Murphy - Executive Ecologist  
Cork County Council.**

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This document contains the Habitats Directive Screening Determination of Cork County Council in respect of a proposed upgrade works to a mill culvert in Bantry, Co. Cork. The assessment is based on project drawings and details prepared by the Roads Department and Malachy Walsh and Partners.

In accordance with Regulation 250 of the Planning and Development Regulations, Local Authorities are required to carry out screening for appropriate assessment of proposed development to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on one or more European<sup>1</sup> sites. The Local Authority is required to determine that appropriate assessment of the proposed development is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on one or more European sites.

These requirements derive from Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive which states that

*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*

EU and National Guidance sets out two main stages to the assessment process which are as follows:

#### **Stage One: Screening**

The process which identifies what might be likely impacts arising from a plan or project on a European site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant. No further assessment is required where the risk of significant impacts on European sites can be objectively ruled out during the screening stage.

#### **Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment**

Where the possibility of significant impacts has not been discounted by the screening process, a more detailed assessment is required. This is called an Appropriate Assessment and requires the compilation of a **Natura Impact Statement** by the project proponent, which is a report of scientific evidence and data relating to European sites for which significant negative impacts have not been previously screened out. This is used to identify and classify any implications of the plan or project for these sites in view of their Conservation Objectives. The Appropriate Assessment must include a determination as to whether or not the project would adversely affect the integrity of any European site or sites. The plan or project may only be consented if adverse effects on the integrity of European sites can be objectively ruled out during the Appropriate Assessment process. The plan or project may not be consented on foot of an Appropriate Assessment, if it is found that it will give rise to adverse impacts on one or more European sites, or if uncertainty remains in relation to potential impacts on one or more European sites.

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<sup>1</sup>“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.

**Name of the project**

Bantry Mill Culvert Upgrade Project

**Description of the project**

The purpose of the project is to upgrade the existing Mill Stream culvert within the town and remove the existing foul connections to the culvert and change these to discharge into an independent foul network. Reconstruction of a new Mill River Culvert along Bridge Street and New Street and Wolfe Tone Square and connection to the existing Mill River Culvert at chainage 80m. This includes: a new Mill River Culvert of internal dimensions 5.2m wide, 1.5m high which will be constructed from a tie in at Wolfe Tone Square, at Chainage 80m, to William Street, at Chainage 242m. A new Mill River Culvert of internal dimensions 3.6m wide, 1.5m high which will be constructed from William St. junction at Chainage 242m to the Mill on Bridge Street at Chainage 452m.

Including those changes noted above, the following will also be carried out: road and footpath reinstatement works, removal and reconstruction of the central section of Wolfe Tone Square architectural feature will be required to facilitate the tie in of the new Mill River culvert; construction of new services and utilities including foul water drainage; surface water drainage, watermain infrastructure, gas, electricity and communications will be required at Wolfe Tone Square, New Street, and Bridge Street; and the construction of two surface water pumping sumps in Wolfe Tone Square.

Mechanical machinery and electrical equipment typically used for construction projects will be required to facilitate the proposed development. The following is a non-exhaustive list of plant that is typical of civil engineering works and may be used in this proposed development. The exact equipment to be used is not known at this stage, however the plant and machinery listed below are typical of equipment that are commonly used in construction projects of this nature and scale.

- Telescopic Handler
- Mobile Crane
- 15-30T Hydraulic Excavator
- 12T Roller
- Dump truck
- Tractor & Trailer
- 15-20T Rubber Tired Excavator
- 3-10T mini digger
- Generators – with acoustic shielding
- Water pumps 100mm or 150mm with integral drip trays
- Settling Tanks
- Cement Mixers
- Handheld drilling equipment for grout holes
- Grout mixer and pump
- Formwork
- Hand tools
- Surfacing Equipment

The following personnel will be required during the duration of the construction phase:

- 1 no. Project Manager

- 1 no. Construction Manager
- 1 no. Environmental Manager
- Health and Safety Personnel
- Construction Personnel

The principal waste is the excavation material, which comprises of subsoils, rocks and tarmac, for the most part. Fine sediments may be released during excavations and general site works; however, these are likely to be most mobile in topsoil and subsoil layers above the culvert.

#### **Site Context**

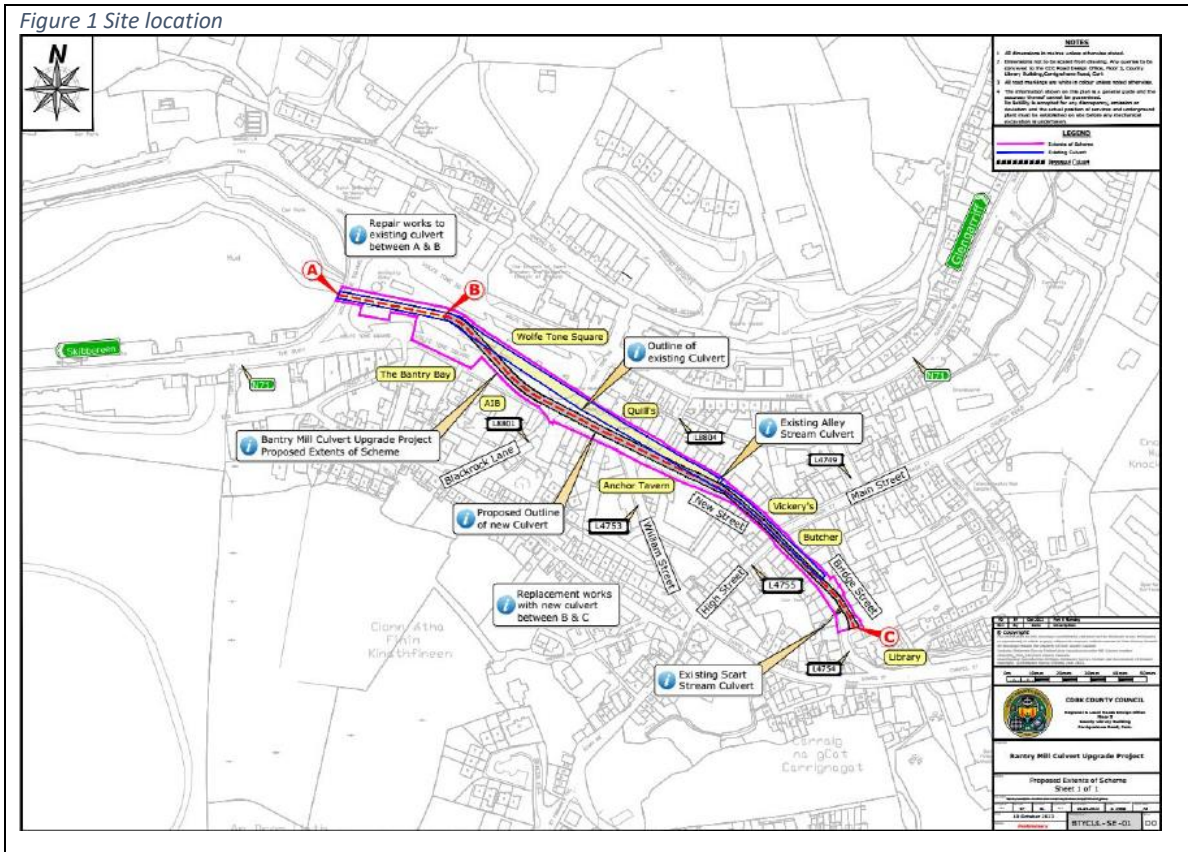
The proposed development will take place on the existing culvert that runs down Bridge Street and New Street and Wolfe Tone Square.

Drainage at Bantry is centred around the 2.2 km long River Mealagh, also known as the Bantry River, a high gradient watercourse. A distributary channel of the Doneelagh stream, which itself is a tributary of the River Mealagh, flows southwest to become the Mill Stream where it flows overland until entering a tidal culvert under Chapel Street in Bantry. The culvert passes under Bantry Town Centre and has an outfall into Bantry marina. There are multiple other tributaries which join the River Mealagh to the north: the Knocknaveagh, Sheskin East, Carrignagat, Alley River, and Scart. These are relatively steep and narrow, with many engineered sections including culverts, weirs, bridges, and aqueducts. The Alley River, also known as the Reenrou, has a shallower gradient, and is culverted in its lower reaches. Bantry Culverts' consists of a main culvert and two side culverts.

The main culvert is 445m long and carries the Mill Stream under the centre of Bantry along New Street until it outfalls west of Wolf Tone Square. There is a 103m long side culvert from the south which carries the Scart Stream into the main culvert at Bridge Street approximately 440m upstream of the outfall. The other side culvert connects from the north and carries the Alley River into the Mill Stream approximately 309m upstream of the outfall. There are surface water capacity issues with the Mill Stream and existing surface water culverts which contribute to flooding in the area.

Foul water in the Bantry area is conveyed via a combined sewer system to the Bantry Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), which has a design capacity of 6,000 population equivalent (PE) and is situated on the northern side of Bantry Harbour. Sewage treatment discharge locations were gathered from EPA maps (2024). The primary discharge location for foul water is in Inner Bantry Bay, approx. 2.6 km west of the Mill Stream outflow into Bantry Harbour. A secondary outflow is at the junction of Glengarriff Road and Barrack Street, while emergency outflows are located on the Scart Rd south of the Harbour, at Reenrou East north of the Harbour, and in Bantry Harbour itself, near the WWTP.

Figure 1 Site location

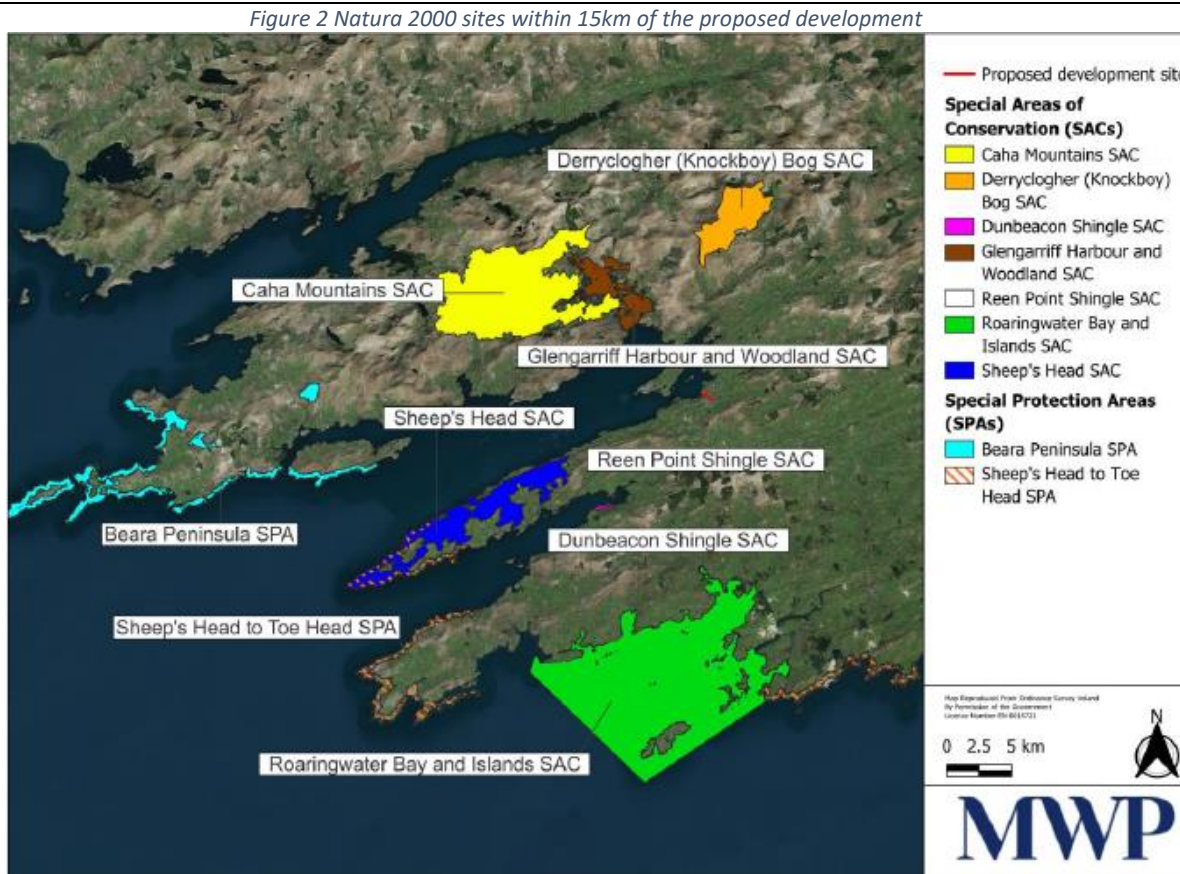


### Name and location of EU sites subject to screening

There are seven Natura 2000 (European) sites located within a 15km radius of the site, these include:

1. Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC (Site code: 000090) located approximately 7.5km northwest of the proposed development.
2. Caha Mountains SAC (Site code: 000093) located approximately 9.5km northwest.
3. Derrylogher (Knockboy) Bog SAC (Site code: 001873) located approximately 9.8km north.
4. Dunbeacon Shingle SAC (Site code: 002280) located approximately 11km southwest.
5. Sheep's Head SAC (site code: 000102) located approximately 11.5km southwest.
6. Reen Point Shingle SAC (site code: 2281) approximately 13.5km southwest.
7. Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC (Site code: 000101) approximately 14km south.

Figure 2 Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development



**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**

There is limited hydrological connection and limited ecological connection between the proposed works and Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC. There are no source-receptor pathways between the proposed site and any other European site. Therefore, likely significant effects to these EU site are screened out.

Regarding Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC, potential negative effects could arise from impacts to water quality, habitat loss/alteration, disturbance/displacement of species, and habitat/species fragmentation.

Regarding impacts to water quality, standard water protection measures, including working in the dry will be employed. Given the distance, any sediment or pollutant released will be assimilated into Bantry Bay and not reach Glengarriff Harbour

There will be no direct or indirect loss of habitat from the European site as a result of the proposed works.

Due to the location of the proposed works, the intervening distance, and presence of nursery and spawning grounds for prey species for harbour seal (QI for the SAC) within the SAC, it is considered

unlikely for significant effects to occur which may result in the deterioration of key resources including prey availability for the designated species. Breeding, moulting and resting sites for harbour seal are entirely within the SAC.

The proposed works are located within the inner reaches of the marina at Bantry in the southeast of the bay and therefore due to its location in relation to the location of the Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC in the north of the bay, habitat fragmentation is not considered likely to occur as a result of the proposed works.

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

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

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

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

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

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