

**Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment
Screening Report & Screening Determination**

Project: Old Barrack Road, Bantry - Construction of 21 Housing Units.

August 2024

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1 Introduction

This document includes the Habitats Directive screening determination of Cork County Council in respect of a proposed development of 14 new residential units, in addition to the redevelopment of 5 existing properties with an overall total of 21 Housing Units at Old Barrack Road, Bantry. The assessment is based on project drawings and details prepared by the Architects Department of the Housing Directorate of Cork County Council.

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 on proposed developments on sites that are designated for the protection of nature (European Sites¹) prior to the giving consent for development of such projects. This is to determine whether or not the projects 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 emanate 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 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 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, being authority delegated to give consent for 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 or not 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 in spite of 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 authorization where it is demonstrated that there are no alternative solutions and that there 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 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 Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht must be consulted.

The assessment may stop 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.

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

2 Existing Environment

The proposed development site is located on Old Barrack Road within the Barrack Street Architectural Conservation Area in Bantry town centre. The lower of Old Barrack Road merges into Marino Street and from there leads directly onto Wolfe Tone Square and beyond to Bantry Bay. The start of Old Barrack Road at the western side of the overall site fronts onto the busy N71 junction that is formed by Marino Street, Barrack Street and Glengarriff Road.

The proposed site has an area of 0.285ha and is approx. 100m in length and varies in width across the site from circa 38m to 12m. The site currently consists of a number of derelict and abandoned structures within its western section, with an area of rank grassland to the east. A treeline forms the southern boundary of the site. The northern boundary abuts a steeply sloping green field which once contained the old railway line and platform.

Two high-risk invasive species listed under Regulations 49 and 50 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, namely Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Giant Rhubarb (*Gunnera manicata*) were recorded during a site inspection on the 24th of March 2022 within the northern section of the site. A number of other non-native species have also been noted as occurring onsite, namely Winter heliotrope, Himalayan honeysuckle, Traveler's-joy and Montbertia. An Invasive Alien Species Management Plan is in the process of being prepared in respect of the proposal site.

There are no natural watercourses on site and the site is not located within an area which is identified to be at risk of flooding.

3 Project Details

The proposed development seeks to provide 21 no. housing units consisting of a mix of one and two bed houses and apartments on a brownfield site at Old Barrack Road, Bantry. The proposed housing scheme incorporates both new (14 new residential units) and existing units retaining the existing buildings in the Architectural Conservation Area and developing a new linear terrace to the rear. The new and existing elements are connected by a new pedestrian street allowing free movement through the site.

The initial stages of the proposal will see the demolition of some existing structures on site.

A mixture of soft landscaping solutions is proposed to be used within the site with a mix of open green and wildflower spaces with larger native species trees planted throughout. The mix of planting will be chosen with a view to maximising biodiversity value. Existing hedgerows and mature trees will be

retained on site where at all possible. Any necessary vegetation clearance will be undertaken outside the bird breeding season.

Surface Water Management: The majority of the proposed surface water drainage from the site is proposed to discharge to a new 225mm storm water sewer to replace the existing land drain along the repaved section of the local road L0475. Surface water shall be collected via a series of downpipes, channel drains and gullies before discharging into an onsite attenuation tank. From here surface water shall be released via a flow controlled hydro break to the new 225mm public storm sewer. Outflow from the site shall be restricted to the greenfield runoff rate.

In addition to the above, permeable paving will be provided to all walkways where practical to facilitate the discharge of surface water runoff at the front and rear of the upper terrace.

Wastewater Management: Wastewater is to be directed to the Bantry Public Wastewater Treatment Plant for treatment and disposal via the sewer main running along Old Barrack Road. A Pre-Connection Enquiry Form has been submitted to Uisce Éireann for the proposed development and a Confirmation of Feasibility Letter (Ref: CDS23006701 – dated 10/10/23) has been received. Uisce Éireann have confirmed that based upon the capacity available within the network at the time of the enquiry the proposed connection to the Uisce Éireann network can be facilitated, subject to a valid connection agreement being put in place.

A Demolition and Construction and Environmental Management Plan will be prepared by the Project Contractor. This plan will include details of measures to control surface water and to protect hedgerows and other natural boundary features which are identified to be retained, during the demolition and construction phase. It will also include information relating to the management and proper disposal of wastes generated during demolition of the house and during the construction phase. The development and implementation of this plan is part of standard recognised good practise and is not deemed to be necessary to prevent impacts on any European site.

4 Natura 2000 Sites Information

The primary concern with this application from an ecological perspective is whether the development as proposed poses any risk of impact to nearby sites designated for nature conservation. Potential for impact on these sites could arise if the development as proposed requires construction within or near these sites or could or would result in disturbance/displacement of species, discharges of potentially contaminated surface water to the nearby coastal waters.

There are seven Natura 2000 sites located within 15km of the proposed development site. Preliminary screening has been carried out to identify any potential hydrological or ecological connectivity linking the development to these sites in Table 1 below. A limited potential pathway for impact was identified linking the proposed development to just one of these sites, the Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC which is located within Bantry Bay and this is discussed further below.

Table 1: Designated sites within the zone of influence of the proposal.

Natura 2000 Sites within 15km of proposed development site	Intervening Distance (Approx.)	Qualifying Interest Features	Source – Pathway – Receptor Link
Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC (000090)	8km NW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) • 1365 Harbour Seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>) • 1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>) • 1024 Kerry Slug (<i>Geomalacus maculosus</i>) • 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles • 91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)* 	Tentative Yes. There is an indirect hydrological connection identified due to discharge of treated wastewater from Bantry WwTP to the waters of the inner Bantry Bay. Potential for impact on this site is considered further below.
Caha Mountains SAC (000093)	10km NW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1024 Kerry Slug (<i>Geomalacus maculosus</i>) • 1421 Killarney Fern (<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>) • 3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) • 3160 Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds • 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> • 4030 European dry heaths • 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths • 6230 Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)* • 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog) • 8110 Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) • 8210 Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation • 8220 Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation 	No ecological and/or hydrological pathway identified. No further consideration required.

Natura 2000 Sites within 15km of proposed development site	Intervening Distance (Approx.)	Qualifying Interest Features	Source – Pathway – Receptor Link
Derryclogher (Knockboy) Bog SAC (001873)	10km N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog) 	No ecological and/or hydrological pathway identified. No further consideration required.
Dunbeacon Shingle SAC (002280)	11km SW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks 	No ecological and/or hydrological pathway identified. No further consideration required.
Sheep's Head SAC (000102)	12km SW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1024 Kerry Slug (<i>Geomalacus maculosus</i>) • 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> • 4030 European dry heaths 	No – Lack of ecological and/or hydrological pathway identified. No further consideration required.
Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC (000101)	13.5km S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1364 Grey Seal (<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>) • 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) • 1351 Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) • 1160 Large shallow inlets and bays • 1170 Reefs • 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts • 4030 European dry heaths • 8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves 	No ecological and/or hydrological pathway identified. No further consideration required.
Reen Point Shingle SAC (002281)	13.7km SW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks 	No ecological and/or hydrological pathway identified. No further consideration required.

Figure 1: Location of proposed development site relative to Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC (000090) – pink hatching



Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland Special Area of Conservation

Located to the south and north-west of Glengarriff Village in west Cork, this site contains an exceptional diversity of high quality semi-natural and natural habitats. This site is of importance because it is the only sizeable area of old oak woodland remaining in west Cork and is considered second only to Killarney as an example of Oceanic Sessile Oak/Holly woodlands. This woodland habitat supports populations of the protected species Kerry Slug. Good examples of alluvial forests occur along the Glengarriff and Coomarkane rivers. Most of the woodlands are a National Nature Reserve and as such are primarily managed for nature conservation and amenity purposes. However, some commercial forestry still occurs within the site.

Rocky islets in the harbour support one of the largest colonies of Harbour Seal in Ireland, with site and associated waters also home to a population of Otter.

The site is one of the most important in the south-west for Lesser Horseshoe Bat and includes three summer and three winter roosts, the numbers at one of which exceed the summer and winter thresholds for international importance.

Overall, the quality and extent of the oakwood's, and the diversity of habitats and species, including many rarities, make the site of international importance.

The Conservation Objectives for this site were published by the National Parks and Wildlife Service in 2015 (Ver 1). The objectives are set out below, as are a summary of the attributes and targets which are required to be met to achieve the objectives.

Old Sessile Oak Woods	
Conservation Objective: Maintain favourable conservation condition	
Attribute	Target
Habitat Area	Area stable or increasing subject to natural processes.
Habitat Distribution	No decline in distribution of habitat.

Old Sessile Oak Woods	
Conservation Objective: Maintain favourable conservation condition	
Attribute	Target
Woodland Size	Area stable or increasing. Large woods at least 25ha in size and small woodland at least 3ha in size.
Woodland structure: cover and height	Diverse structure with a relatively closed canopy containing mature trees; sub canopy layer with semi mature trees and shrubs; and well-developed herb layer.
Woodland structure: community diversity and extent	Maintain diversity and extent of community types.
Woodland structure: natural regeneration	Seedlings, saplings and pole age-classes occur in adequate proportions to ensure survival of woodland canopy.
Woodland structure: dead wood	At least 30m ³ /ha of fallen timber greater than 10cm diameter; 30 snags/ha; both categories should include stems greater than 40cm diameter.
Woodland structure: veteran trees	No decline.
Woodland structure: indicators of local distinctiveness	No decline.
Vegetation composition: native tree cover	No decline. Native tree cover not less than 95%.
Vegetation composition: typical species	A variety of typical native species present, depending on woodland type including oak and birch.
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Negative indicator species, particularly non-native invasive species, absent or under control.

Alluvial Forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>.	
Conservation Objective: Maintain favourable conservation condition	
Attribute	Target
Habitat Area	Area stable or increasing subject to natural processes.
Habitat Distribution	No decline in distribution of habitat.
Woodland Size	Area stable or increasing. Large woods at least 25ha in size and small woodland at least 3ha in size.
Woodland structure: cover and height	Diverse structure with a relatively closed canopy containing mature trees; sub canopy layer with semi mature trees and shrubs; and well-developed herb layer.
Woodland structure: community diversity and extent	Maintain diversity and extent of community types.
Woodland structure: natural regeneration	Seedlings, saplings and pole age-classes occur in adequate proportions to ensure survival of woodland canopy.
Hydrological regime: Flooding depth/height of water table	Appropriate hydrological regime necessary for maintenance of alluvial vegetation.
Woodland structure: dead wood	At least 30m ³ /ha of fallen timber greater than 10cm diameter; 30 snags/ha; both categories should include stems greater than 40cm diameter.
Woodland structure: veteran trees	No decline.
Woodland structure: indicators of local distinctiveness	No decline.
Vegetation composition: native tree cover	No decline. Native tree cover not less than 95%.
Vegetation composition: typical species	A variety of typical native species present, depending on woodland type including alder, willows, ash and birch.
Vegetation composition: negative indicator species	Negative indicator species, particularly non-native invasive species, absent or under control.

Kerry Slug	
Conservation Objective: Maintain favourable conservation condition	
Attribute	Target
Distribution: occupied 1km grid squares	Number of occupied 1km squares at least stable
Habitat extent: woodland area	Area stable or increasing subject to natural processes
Habitat quality: woodland	Proportion of sessile oak in canopy at least stable
Habitat quality: nonnative invasive species	Rhododendron in woodland absent or under control

Lesser Horseshoe Bat	
Conservation Objective: Maintain favourable conservation condition	
Attribute	Target
Population per roost	Minimum number of 252 bats for the summer roost (roost id 194); minimum number of 266 for the artificial hibernaculum (roost id 204) and minimum number of 111 for the paired winter roosts (roost ids 200 and 205).
Winter roost condition	No decline
Summer roost condition	No decline
Number of auxiliary roosts –number and condition	No decline
Extent of potential foraging habitat	No significant decline within 2.5km of roosts
Linear features	No significant loss within 2.5km of qualifying roosts
Light pollution	No significant increase in artificial light intensity adjacent to named roosts or along commuting routes within 2.5km of roosts.

Otter	
Conservation Objective: Maintain favourable conservation condition	
Attribute	Target
Distribution	No significant decline
Extent of terrestrial habitat	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 56ha
Extent of marine habitat	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 137ha
Extent of freshwater (river) habitat	No significant decline. Length mapped and calculated as 23.5km
Extent of freshwater (lake/lagoon) habitat	No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 2ha
Couching sites and holts	No significant decline
Fish biomass available	No significant decline
Barriers to connectivity	No significant increase

Harbour / Common Seal	
Conservation Objective: Maintain favourable conservation condition	
Attribute	Target
Access to suitable habitat	Species range within the SAC should not be restricted by artificial barriers to site use
Breeding behaviour	Conserve the breeding sites in a natural condition
Moulting behaviour	Conserve the moult haulout sites in a natural condition
Resting behaviour	Conserve the resting haulout sites in a natural condition.
Disturbance	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the harbour seal population at the SAC

5 Screening Assessment

This section of the report examines whether the proposed project has the potential to negatively impact on the conservation status of the above listed qualifying interests of the Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC.

As set out in the NPWS and EU 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.

The Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC is a site which is of high conservation value supporting woodland habitats and associated species as well as species associated with the marine environment. Of concern is the potential for the proposed project to impact negatively on species and habitats within the SAC due to potential contamination of surface waters, during construction through the discharge of silts, sediments and hydrocarbons and operation through the potential release of nutrients.

Further consideration of the potential for the project to give rise to any such impacts on the SAC is set out below:

Physical Interventions/Direct Effects: No works or interventions are proposed within the SAC and accordingly the risk of the proposed development giving rise to direct effects on habitats or species which are qualifying interests of the SAC can be ruled out.

Risk of Disturbance to Species: The proposed development site is sufficiently distant from the SAC to be satisfied that neither activities associated with the construction of the development, nor post construction occupation of the houses poses any risk of causing disturbance to qualifying interest species within the SAC.

With respect of the potential for ex-situ disturbance, it is noted that a day roost for three Lesser Horseshoe Bats was recorded in an outbuilding during the course of emergence surveys undertaken at the site on the 21st and 28th of September 2023. While Lesser Horseshoe Bat are a qualifying interest of the SAC, the bats recorded at this site are not considered to form part of the SAC population given

the intervening distance i.e. 8km and noting the core sustenance zone of the species to be 2.5km¹. Furthermore, there are a number of known Lesser Horseshoe Bat roosts within the wider Bantry area including maternity roosts in which it is considered that the bats recorded onsite are associated with these populations and not that of the Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC.

While not considered to be linked to the population linked to the Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC, measures will be implemented to help ensure the continued occurrence of bats at this site. These measures are currently being developed in liaison with the Ecology Office and with the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Any works which could involve the disturbance of the roost site at this location will only be carried out in accordance with a (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations Derogation License, where such a license is granted.

With respect to the other qualifying interest species of the SAC, given the intervening distance between the site and the waters of Bantry Bay it is considered that there is no risk of ex situ impacts to the relevant marine species arising.

Water Pollution Risks: Surface water will discharge to ground during the construction stage and will be attenuated to greenfield rates during the operational phase. The risk of surface water emissions associated with the proposed development is considered low during the construction phase and imperceptible during the post construction phase. It is noted that silting up or accretion are natural processes in estuarine and marine environments, with estuarine/marine habitats experiencing fluctuations in sediment on a daily basis. Sediment movement is a natural process that occurs within the marine environment and associated marine organisms will be adapted to the natural processes of sediment movement, erosion and deposition, including the increased levels of sediment movement reached during storms. Therefore, the habitats as a whole will naturally adjust or reach equilibrium in response to any minor local changes. As such, taking this into consideration, while also noting the scale of the proposal, dilution provided within the marine environment and intervening distance to Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC, any potential for significant effects to the marine habitats and associated species within the SAC and ex-situ (species) to same can be ruled out.

The potential risk related to accidental spillage of hydrocarbons and waste from construction plant and equipment would likely to be localized to the immediate area of the site. Should contaminants reach Bantry Bay, given the assimilation and dilution capacity of the coastal waters, the risk for potential significant effects to the Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC or any European Designated Site can be ruled out.

A tentative indirect hydrological connection will be established between the development site and the waters of Bantry Bay by linking the proposed new houses to the Bantry WwTP. This could result in the development influencing nutrient levels in Bantry Bay. An increase in nutrients could have the potential to impact negatively on qualifying interest species of the SAC. However, it is noted that the WwTP has sufficient capacity to accept the additional loading as a result of the proposal and there is no evidence the current situation at the plant is impacting on the status of Bantry Bay, it's Water Framework Directive status and European Designated sites which are hydrologically linked. Therefore,

¹ https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/Lesser_horseshoe_bat_supporting_document_Jan_2018_V1.pdf

on the basis of this assessment, it is concluded the proposed development will not affect nutrient levels in the Bantry Bay nor will it impact on ex-situ qualifying interest species or qualifying species occurring within the SAC.

Invasive Species Risks: The high-risk invasive species Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and *Gunnera* were recorded during a site inspection on the 24th of March 2022 within the northern section of the site. While these species have the potential to spread over large areas, given the intervening distance between the site and the Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC, while also noting the lack of potential transmitting ecological pathways e.g. watercourses within the site, no risks of effects to the SAC have been identified from the invasive species at the proposed development site.

These species will be controlled in accordance with an IAS Plan which is under development for the site.

6 Screening Determination

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and on the basis of the objective information provided in this report, it is concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt that the proposed works, individually or in combination with other plans/projects will not have a significant effect on a European site (Natura 2000 site). It is therefore considered that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment under Section 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), is not required.

Reasons for Determination

- No direct interventions are proposed within any European Designated Sites, therefore no associated risk of direct damage to qualifying interest habitats and associated species will occur.
- No elements of the proposal will generate noise to significant levels above ambient levels that could impact qualifying interest species occurring within Glengarriff Harbour and Woodland SAC some 8km from the development site.
- There are no features or habitats of value within the proposed works areas which would differentiate it as a critical resource for ex-situ qualifying interest species from similar habitats in the surrounding area.
- There is no risk of impact to water quality or to associated coastal habitats within the SAC associated with this development.
- No alteration or fragmentation of habitats will occur within any European Designated Site.
- The risk of spread of invasive species recorded within the development site on any European Designated Site within the surrounding area is considered highly unlikely. An Invasive Alien

Species Management Plan is in preparation and will provide for the control of invasive alien plant species on site.

7 References

NPWS Site 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).

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 92/43/EEC. European Communities, 2000.

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. European Communities, 2001.

Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities. 2009.