Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Neighbourhood 7 Longview

Ballyvolane

Cork

Report prepared for Longview Estates Ltd

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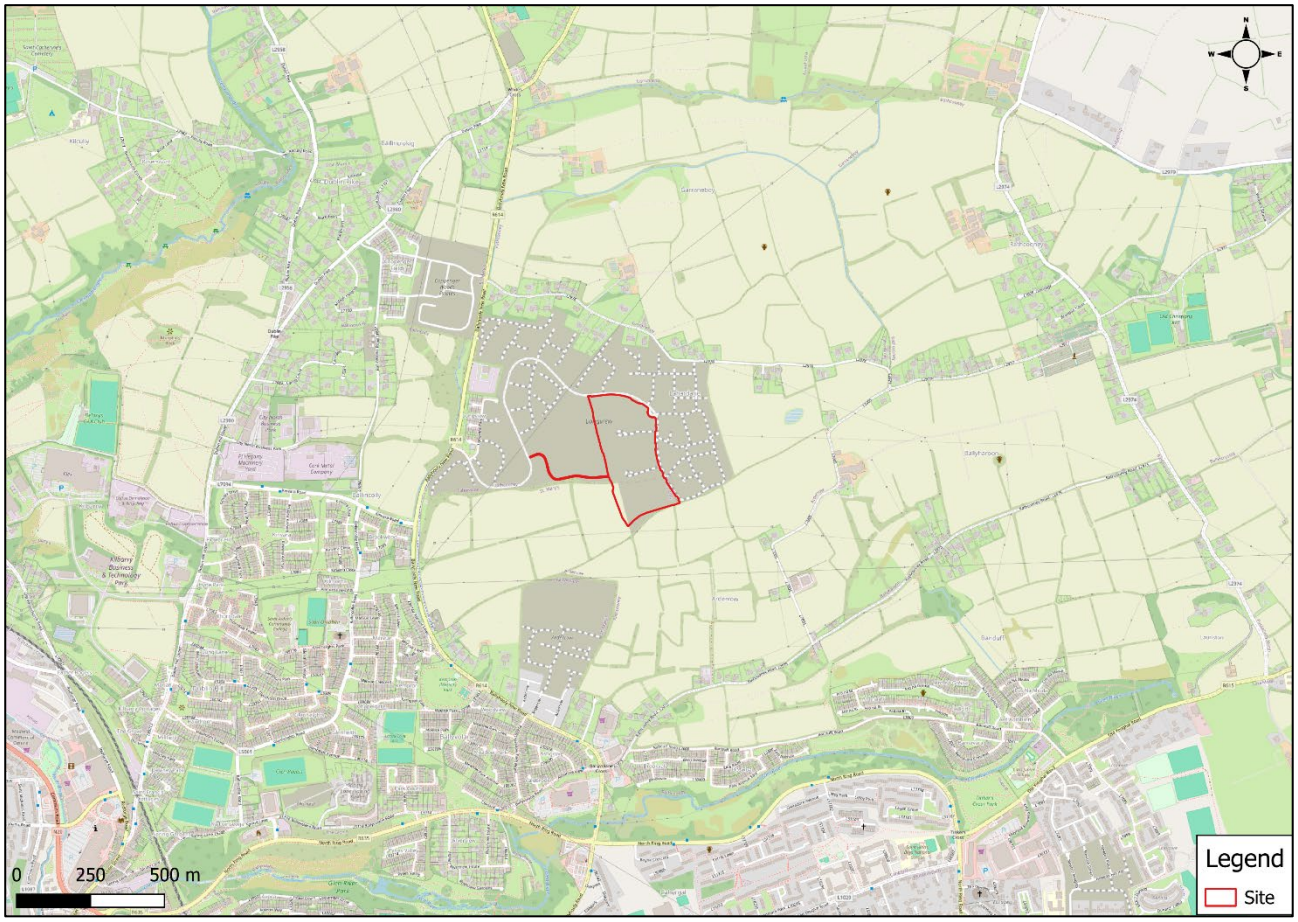
1 Introduction

Greenleaf Ecology was commissioned by Longview Estates Ltd to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) for the proposed Neighbourhood 7 Longview, Ballyvolane, Cork (hereafter referred to as the proposed development).

This report comprises information in support of screening for AA to be undertaken by the competent authority for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora as transposed by the Planning and Development Act (as amended) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011) as amended.

The location of the proposed development is illustrated in Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1: Site Location



1.1 Legislative Context for Appropriate Assessment

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as "The Habitats Directive", provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000.

The Habitats Directive has been transposed into Irish law by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act (as amended) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477/2011)

as amended. In the context of the Proposed Development, the governing legislation is Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act (as amended).

Articles 6(3) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to adversely affect the integrity of European sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA:

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 subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In 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.*

Natura 2000 sites are defined under the Habitats Directive (Article 3) as a coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation, composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, shall enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. In Ireland, these sites are designated as European sites and include Special Protection Areas (SPAs), established under the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC, as codified by 2009/147/EC) for birds and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), established under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC for habitats and species.

The competent authority is obliged to consider, in view of best scientific knowledge, whether the proposed works are likely to have a significant effect either individually or in combination with other plans and projects. If screening determines that there is likely to be significant effects on a European site, then AA must be carried out for the proposed works at Ballyvolane, including the compilation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to inform the decision making by the Competent Authority.

1.2 Statement of Competence

This AA Screening was carried out by Karen Banks, MCIEEM. Karen is an ecologist with Greenleaf Ecology and has 19 years' experience in the field of ecological assessment. Karen has extensive experience in the production of reports to inform AA screenings and Natura Impact Statements including those for transport infrastructure, small to large scale housing and mixed-use developments, flood alleviation schemes, solar farms and wind farms.

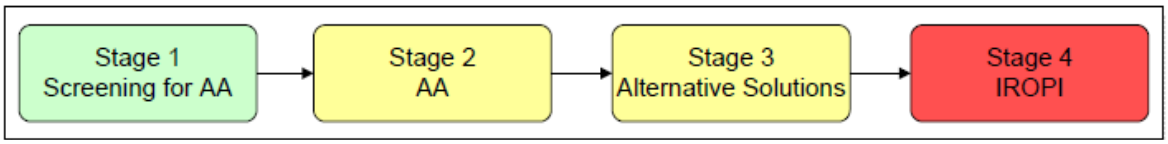
2 Methodology

2.1 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidelines (DELHG, 2009, rev. 2010) outlines the European Commission's methodological guidance (EC, 2002) promoting a four-stage process to complete the AA and outlines the issues and tests at each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

The four stages are summarised diagrammatically in Figure 2-1. Stages 1-2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, and Regulation 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations. Stage 3 may be part of the Article 6(3) Assessment or may be a necessary precursor to Stage 4. Stage 4 is the main derogation step of Article 6(4).

Figure 2-1: Four stages of Appropriate Assessment



Stage 1 - Screening is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3):

i. whether a plan or project (in this instance the proposed project) is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the European sites, and

ii. whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on the European sites in view of their conservation objectives.

If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA). This report fulfils the information necessary to enable the competent authority to screen the proposal for the requirement to prepare an AA.

This report forms Stage 1 of the AA process and sets out the following information:

- Description of the proposed works;
- Characteristics of the proximal European sites; and
- Assessment of significance of the proposed works on the European sites in question.

The methodology followed in relation to this assessment has had regard to the following guidance and legislation:

- European Union Habitats Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/43/EEC;
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities (DOEHLG 2009, rev 2010);
- The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended);
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg (EC, 2018);
- European Commission Notice Brussels C (2021) 6913 final 'Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC' (EC, 2021);
- Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. European Commission 2013;
- The European Union (Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats) Regulations 2011; and

- The European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, S.I. No. 477 of 2011 (as amended).

2.2 Information consulted for this report

The Screening assessment had regard to the following sources of data and information:

- Information on the location, nature and design of the proposed project;
- Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government – online land use mapping Home - My Plan;
- Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government- EIA Portal gov.ie - EIA Portal (www.gov.ie);
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Water Quality and Water Framework Directive data EPA Maps;
- Geological Survey of Ireland – Geology, soils and Hydrogeology www.gsi.ie;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – online European site network information, including site conservation objectives www.npws.ie;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – Information on the status of EU protected habitats in Ireland (NPWS 2019a, 2019b);
- National Biodiversity Data Centre – www.biodiversityireland.ie;
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland – Mapping and Aerial photography www.osi.ie; and
- Site survey, undertaken between May and October 2024 by Ms K. Banks (see Section 3.2).

2.3 Screening Protocol

The sequence of events when completing the AA Screening process is provided below:

- Ascertain whether the plan or project is necessary for the management of the European site;
- Description of the plan or project and its potential impact;
- Definition of the likely zone of influence for the proposed works;
- Identification of the European sites that are situated (in their entirety or partially or downstream) within the likely zone of influence of the proposed works;
- Identification of the most up-to-date QIs and SCIs for each European site within the zone of influence;
- Identification of the environmental conditions that maintain the QIs/SCIs at the desired target of Favourable Conservation Status;
- Identification of the threats/impacts of the proposed works – actual or potential that could negatively impact the environmental conditions of the QIs/SCIs within the European sites;
- Highlighting the activities of the proposed works that could give rise to significant negative impacts; and
- Identification of other plans or projects, for which in-combination impacts would likely have significant effects.

2.3.1 Screening Determination

The proposed development is one to which Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended applies. In accordance with Part XAB of the Planning Acts as amended, and Section 177U thereof:

> *"(5) The competent authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or a proposed development, as the case may be, is not required if it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the draft Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site*".

This report is to inform Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

2.3.2 Zone of Influence

In accordance with EC (2021) *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, identification of the European sites that may be affected should be done by taking into consideration all aspects of the plan or

project that could have potential effects on any European sites located within the zone of influence of the plan or project. This should take into account all of the designating features (species, habitat types) that are significantly present on the sites and their conservation objectives.

In particular, it should identify:

- Any European sites geographically overlapping with any of the actions or aspects of the plan or project in any of its phases, or adjacent to them;
- Any European sites within the likely zone of influence of the plan or project. Natura 2000 sites located in the surroundings of the plan or project (or at some distance) that could still be indirectly affected by aspects of the project, including as regards the use of natural resources (e.g. water) and various types of waste, discharge or emissions of substances or energy;
- European sites in the surroundings of the plan or project (or at some distance) which host fauna that can move to the project area and then suffer mortality or other impacts (e.g. loss of feeding areas, reduction of home range);
- European sites whose connectivity or ecological continuity can be affected by the plan or project.
- The range of European sites to be assessed, i.e. the zone in which impacts from the plan or project may arise, will depend on the nature of the plan or project and the distance at which effects may occur.

2.3.3 Likely Significant Effects

The threshold for a likely significant effect is treated in the screening exercise as being above a *de minimis* level[1]. The opinion of the Advocate General in CJEU case C-258/11 outlines:

"*the requirement that the effect in question be 'significant' exists in order to lay down a de minimis threshold. Plans or projects that have no appreciable effect on a European site are thereby excluded. If all plans or projects capable of having any effect whatsoever on the site were to be caught by Article 6(3), activities on or near the site would risk being impossible by reason of legislative overkill.*"

In this report, therefore, 'relevant' European sites are those within the potential zone of influence of the construction and / or operation of the proposed development, and to which likely significant effect pathways were identified through the source-pathway-receptor model.

[1] *Sweetman v. An Bord Pleanála* (Court of Justice of the EU, case C-285/11). A de minimis effect is a level of risk that is too small to be concerned with when considering ecological requirements of an Annex I habitat or a population of Annex II species present on a European site necessary to ensure their favourable conservation condition. If low level effects on habitats or individuals of species are judged to be in this order of magnitude and that judgment has been made in the absence of reasonable scientific doubt, then those effects are not considered to be likely significant effects.

3 Project and Site Description

3.1 Project Description

Longview Estates Ltd. intend to apply for planning permission for a Large Scale Residential Development (LRD) at a site of c. 7.61 ha located at Laherdane, Ballyhooley Road, Cork City.

The development will provide for the construction of 262 no residential units (total GFA c. 22,860.5 sqm), comprising:

i. 2 no. 4 storey apartment buildings (Blocks A & B) comprising 54 no. apartments (33 no. 1 bedroom & 21 no. 2 bedroom);
ii. 3 no. 2-storey apartment buildings (Blocks C, D & E) comprising 14 no. 2-bedroom duplex apartments;
iii. 194 no. houses in a mixture of 2-storey terraced, semi detached and mews end of terrace units (34 no. 4-bedroom, 136 no. 3-bedroom, 24 no. 2-bedroom); and
iv. A proposed creche (c. 452.7m²)

The development will also include: vehicular access points to the east and north of the proposed site connecting to the constructed distributor road to the adjoining Longview Estates (permitted under ABP-306325-20 as amended by CCC Reg Ref 23/42409 / ABP-318904-24 and CCC Reg Ref 25/43863); all associated car parking, EV charging points, cycle parking and bin storage facilities; associated internal roads, pedestrian and cycle paths; public lighting; public open space (c. 12,637 sqm); communal amenity space; landscaping and boundary treatments; connection to public utilities; drainage and surface water management works including attenuation and swales; all ancillary site infrastructure; ESB sub stations and site development and excavation works above and below ground. The proposed development will be constructed in one phase or a series of phases in accordance with construction management plans.

3.1.1 Background

Presently under construction, the existing Longview Estates residential development consisting of 6 neighbourhoods was granted planning permission in 2020 and is located to the north, east and west of the proposed development.

3.1.2 Surface Water

The proposed development will include a number of SuDS measures where possible, including swales, and tree-pits. These measures will be backed by a series of concrete attenuation tanks providing a hard drainage solution for the development. Together, these elements provide conveyance, interception storage, and attenuation storage for rainwater runoff.

All surface water runoff from the paved development will be directed away from the site. The attenuation tanks are specifically designed to handle a 100-year storm event with 20% climate change. The maximum discharge from the attenuation tanks will be restricted to less than the calculated permissible runoff (QBAR) for the site.

Surface water collected on the building roofs will discharge via down pipes and underground pipes to the public stormwater network which will discharge to attenuation tanks.

Surface water runoff from paved surfaces will be collected by swales/tree pits or by drainage channels where it will be directed via road gullies to underground pipes/attenuation tanks before discharging off site.

The surface water drainage system for the proposed development will be separate to the foul water system.

Where possible, surface water will be drained by gravity directly to SuDs measures such as swales and tree pits located in public areas. These SuDs measures will be suitably sized using infiltration results. The remainder of runoff from roofs as well as the paved areas, roads etc will discharge to attenuation systems via a bypass interceptor or similar approved.

Runoff from the swales/tree pits will discharge directly into the ground during normal weather conditions with these measures incorporating a piped outflow connection to the attenuated drainage network where necessary for storm events. It is proposed to discharge the attenuated surface water flow by gravity into the constructed Longview Estates surface water network (present on the main distributor road) where it will ultimately discharge into the stream located to the west side of Ballyhooly Rd.

3.1.3 Foul Water

The foul network required for Neighbourhood 7 will tie into the Longview development foul network and be gravity fed to the new Irish Water pumping station. Uisce Éireann have confirmed feasibility of connection.

3.2 Existing Environment

The proposed site consists of arable crops (BC1) with spoil and bare ground (ED2) bound by hedgerows (WL1). No active drainage ditches or EPA mapped watercourses are present within the proposed site and its immediate environs.

These habitats are described in full within the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) accompanying the planning application.

No species of Special Conservation Interest (SCIs) for Cork Harbour SPA were recorded at the proposed site during the breeding bird surveys undertaken in 2024. It is further noted that no species of Special Conservation Interest (SCIs) for Cork Harbour SPA were recorded at the permitted Longview Residential Development site during the site walkovers undertaken in 2017 and 2018 or the specific breeding bird surveys undertaken in July 2017 and April 2019.

No Annex II species or flora or fauna species for which European sites have been designated were recorded at the proposed site.

No invasive plant species included within the Third Schedule of Regulations 49 & 50 in the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 or the First Schedule of The European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024 (S.I. No. 374 of 2024) were recorded at the proposed site and its immediate environs.

3.2.1 Surface Water

3.2.1.1 Water Bodies

The proposed site is located within the Bride (Cork City)_020 River Sub Basin. There are no EPA mapped watercourses within the site and its immediate environs. The nearest watercourse is Ballincolly stream located to the west of Ballyhooly Road. The Ballincolly stream has been heavily modified so that it runs parallel to Ballyhooly Road and is culverted at Kempton Park for c.0.8km before flowing into the Glen River.

The Glen River is a second order watercourse, which confluences with the Bride River (a 2nd order watercourse) to form the Kiln River c.2.6km downstream of the bridge at Dunnes Stores, before flowing into the River Lee, which is a large 6th order river, a further c.1.0km downstream. The River Lee is part of the Lee Estuary transitional waterbody, which flows into Cork Harbour c.5km further downstream.

The proposed project overlies the Ballinhassig East Ground Waterbody (GWB). The Devonian ORS and Dinantian Mudstones & Sandstones of this GWB have no intergranular permeability; groundwater flow occurs in fractures and faults; in-filling of fractures is to be expected. The permeability of individual fractures

and the degree of interconnection will be generally low. In these rocks groundwater flow paths are expected to be relatively short, typically from 30-300 m, with groundwater discharging to small springs, or to the streams that traverse the aquifer. Flow directions are expected to approximately follow the local surface water catchments. Owing to the poor productivity of the aquifers in this body it is unlikely that any major groundwater- surface water interactions occur. Baseflow to rivers and streams is likely to be relatively low[2].

EPA codes for these water bodies are shown below in Table 3-1**.**

Table 3-1: EPA water body codes

EPA water body name	Water body type	EPA Code	EPA water body code
Glen (Cork City)	River	19G09	IE_SW_19B140300
Bride (Cork City)	River	19B14	IE_SW_19B140300
Kiln	River	19K75	IE_SW_19B140300
Lee (Cork) Estuary Lower	Transitional	n/a	IE_SW_060_0900
Ballinhassig East	Groundwater	n/a	IE_SW_G_004

3.2.1.2 Surface Water Quality and Risk Characterisation

No 'Q-values' are available for these watercourses. The watercourses within the Bride (Cork City) Sub-basin are classified as 'At risk' under the WFD and have been assigned a status of 'poor' under the WFD 2019-2024 round. The transitional water quality of the Lee (Cork) Estuary Lower (IE_SW_060_0900), into which the site ultimately drains, is classified as 'poor' and has been assigned as 'at risk' under the WFD.

A summary of the WFD and Risk status[3] is shown below in Table 3-2**.**

Table 3-2: Summary of WFD status for Bride (Cork City) water bodies

EPA Waterbody Name	Code	Risk	WFD Status 2019-2024
Glen (Cork City)	IE_SW_19B140300	At Risk	Poor
Kiln	IE_SW_19B140300	At Risk	Poor
Lee (Cork) Estuary Lower	IE_SW_060_0900	At Risk	Poor

3.2.2 Flooding

The Office of Public Works (OPW) flood mapping (http://www.floodinfo.ie/map/floodmaps/) indicates the flood extents regionally. As indicated in Figure 3-1, there are no flood extents in the vicinity of the proposed site. The nearest mapped flood event occurred at Ballyhooly Road c.0.8km to the south-west of the proposed site. This flood event is not in the immediate environs of the proposed site, as illustrated in Figure 3-1.

[2] https://secure.dccae.gov.ie/GSI_DOWNLOAD/Groundwater/Reports/GWB/BallinhassigGWB.pdf

[3] https://www.catchments.ie/maps/

Figure 3-1: OPW flood risk mapping of the proposed site and surrounding area

3.2.3 Soil, Geology and Hydrogeology

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) online database (www.gsi.ie) was consulted for available edaphic, geological and hydrological information on the site and its environs. The site is overlaid by AminDW, deep, well drained mineral (mainly acidic) soils. In terms of bedrock geology, the Gyleen Formation composed of sandstone with mudstone and siltstone underlies the site.

The bedrock units which underlie the site are mapped by the GSI as part of the same Locally Important Aquifer. Groundwater vulnerability is a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease at which groundwater may be contaminated. The proposed site is of '*Extreme*' groundwater vulnerability. There are no karst features located in the vicinity of the proposed development.

3.3 Description of European Sites

This stage of the screening for AA process describes European sites within the likely zone of influence of the proposed development. The methodology for establishing the likely zone of influence is described in Section 2.3.2.

Connectivity between the proposed development and European sites has been reviewed. Connectivity is identified via the potential source-pathway-receptor model which identifies the potential impact pathways such as land, air, hydrological, hydrogeological pathways etc. which may support direct or indirect connectivity of the proposed development to European sites and/or their qualifying features.

In view of the location and characteristics of the proposed development (i.e. residential development, see Section 3.1) and the source, pathway and receptors of potential impacts, a 15km radius is considered an appropriate zone of influence to screen all likely significant effects that might impact upon the European sites. Establishment of the likely zone of influence is in line with EC (2021) *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*.

The European sites located within 15km of the proposed development are outlined in Table 3-1 and Figure 3-2**.** There are 3 European sites located within 15km of the proposed development:

1. Blackwater River (Cork/ Waterford) SAC (Site Code: 002170);
2. Great Island Channel SAC (Site Code: 001058); and
3. Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code: 004030).

Source – pathway – receptor dynamics were assessed for the above detailed European sites located within a 15km radius of the proposed development and it was determined that there is no connectivity (via surface water, groundwater, air or other environmental vectors) between the proposed development and Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC, therefore this site will not be further considered as part of this screening for AA.

As detailed in Table 3-1, the proposed development supports remote hydrological connectivity to Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC during the operational phase. Therefore, these sites will be considered further in the below impact assessment.

Figure 3-2: European sites within 15km of the proposed development

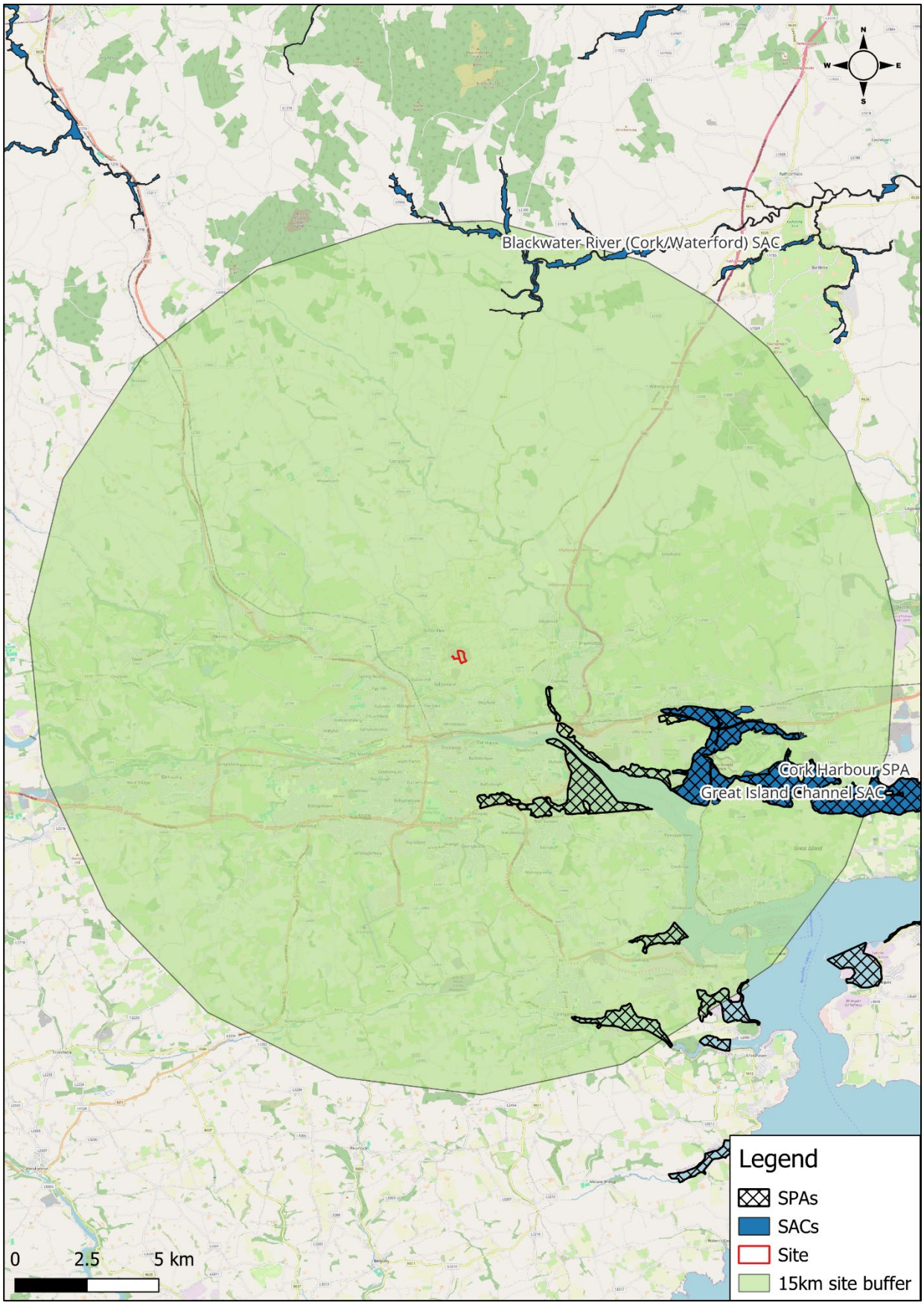


Table 3-3: European sites within 15km of the proposed development

Site Name and Code	Qualifying Interests	Distance from Proposed Development (km)[4]	Connectivity
Great Island Channel SAC and pNHA (001058)	**Annex I Habitats** Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide (1140) Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) (1330)	7.0	There is potential remote connectivity during the operational phase via surface water outfall to the Ballincolly stream to the west of the site, which discharges into the Glen River, which in turn ultimately drains into the open waters of Cork Harbour.
Blackwater River SAC (002170)	**Annex I Habitats** Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) [1410] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation [3260] Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0] Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] **Annex II Species** *Margaritifera margaritifera* (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) [1029] *Austropotamobius pallipes* (White-clawed Crayfish) [1092] *Petromyzon marinus* (Sea Lamprey) [1095] *Lampetra planeri* (Brook Lamprey) [1096] *Lampetra fluviatilis* (River Lamprey) [1099] *Alosa fallax fallax* (Twaite Shad) [1103]	11.8	There is no connectivity via surface water, groundwater or any other pathway.

[4] Straight line distance from site boundary

	Salmo salar (Salmon) [1106] *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355] *Trichomanes speciosum* (Killarney Fern) [1421]		
Cork Harbour SPA (004030)	**Bird Species:** Little grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) [wintering] Great crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) [wintering] Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) [wintering] Grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*) [wintering] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [wintering] Wigeon (*Anas penelope*) [wintering] Teal (*Anas crecca*) [wintering] Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [wintering] Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) [wintering] Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) [wintering] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [wintering] Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [wintering] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [wintering] Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) [wintering] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [wintering] Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [wintering] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [wintering] Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [wintering] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [wintering] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [wintering] Common Gull (*Larus canus*) [wintering] Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) [wintering] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [breeding] Wetlands	3.0km	There is potential remote connectivity during the operational phase via surface water outfall to the Ballincolly stream to the west of the site, which discharges into the Glen River, which in turn ultimately drains into the open waters of Cork Harbour.

3.3.1 Conservation Objectives of European Sites

The integrity of a European site (referred to in Article 6.3 of the EU Habitats Directive) involves its constitutive characteristics and ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the habitats and species for which the site has been designated and the site's conservation objectives (EC, 2018).

European and national legislation places a collective obligation on Ireland and its citizens to maintain at favourable conservation status areas designated as SAC and SPA. The Government and its agencies are responsible for the implementation and enforcement of regulations that will ensure the ecological integrity of these sites.

The qualifying features for each site have been obtained through a review of the conservation objectives available from the NPWS (Protected Sites in Ireland | National Parks & Wildlife Service (npws.ie)).

Site specific conservation objectives are available for all of the European sites located within 15km of the proposed development; these were accessed in November 2025. For brevity, the site-specific CO's are summarised thus:

- *To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of Annex I habitats and Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected*; and
- *To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for the SPA*.

4 Screening Assessment Criteria

4.1 Management of European Sites

Appropriate Assessment is not required where the proposed development is connected with, or necessary to, the management of any European site. In this case, the proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s).

4.2 Likely Direct, Indirect or Secondary Impacts of the Project on the European Sites

The proposed development is located outside the boundary of any European site; therefore, no direct impacts will occur through land take or fragmentation of habitats.

Cork Harbour SPA is of special conservation interest for wetlands and waterbirds. The proposed site comprises arable crops and spoil and bare ground bound by hedgerows. There are no freshwater habitats within the site and its immediate environs. As such, the proposed site would not be favoured by the Qualifying Interests of Cork Harbour SPA. Bird species observed during the bird surveys conducted in May and July 2024 comprised species that reflect the habitat assemblages present at the site (i.e. arable land and hedgerows) and adjacent agricultural lands to the south of the site. No wildfowl or waterbirds were observed at the proposed site and its environs. Further, the proposed site is set back from Cork Harbour SPA by a distance of c.3.0km. In consideration of these factors, it is considered that any disturbance/ displacement or ex-situ impacts to the qualifying interests of Cork Harbour SPA as a result of the proposed development is extremely unlikely. The qualifying interests of Great Island Channel are habitats, not species, therefore ex-situ disturbance impacts are not relevant to this European Site.

The proposed development will require groundworks including excavation for foundations and stockpiling of materials (soil, sand etc) during the construction phase. Excavation and ground disturbance during the construction phase can lead to suspended solids runoff into the receiving environment. However, as noted previously, there are no watercourses or active drainage ditches at the proposed site and its immediate environs; the nearest watercourse is the Ballincolly stream located to the west of Ballyhooly Road c.0.7km to the west of the proposed site at nearest. Therefore, there are no connecting pathways for surface water runoff to enter watercourses and, in turn, European sites during the construction phase.

During the operational phase, surface water will discharge to the Ballincolly stream, which runs parallel to Ballyhooly Road and is culverted at Kempton Park for c.0.8km before flowing into the Glen River. The Glen River confluences with the Bride River (a 2nd order watercourse) to form the Kiln River c.2.6km downstream of the bridge at Dunnes Stores, before flowing into the River Lee, which is a large 6th order river, a further c.1.0km downstream. The River Lee is part of the Lee Estuary transitional waterbody, which flows into Cork Harbour c.5km further downstream. There is therefore remote connectivity between the proposed development and Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC via surface water drainage during the operational phase.

The proposed development includes a number of SuDS measures, including swales, and tree-pits. These measures will be backed by a series of concrete attenuation tanks providing a hard drainage solution for the development. Together, these elements provide conveyance, interception storage, and attenuation storage for rainwater runoff. Runoff will discharge to attenuation systems via a bypass interceptor or similar approved. The attenuated surface water flow will discharge by gravity into the constructed Longview Estates surface water network (present on the main distributor road) before discharge into the Ballincolly stream.

Foul water will discharge to the Longview development foul network and be gravity fed to the new Irish Water pumping station. Uisce Éireann have confirmed feasibility of connection. The surface water drainage system for the proposed development will be separate to the foul water system.[5]

In view of these factors, no potential for likely significant effects on water quality within the Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC during the operational phase of the proposed development has been identified.

4.2.1 Cumulative Impacts with Other Plans and Projects in the Area

As part of the screening for an AA, in addition to the proposed development, other relevant projects and plans in the region must also be considered at this stage and assessed in the context of potential for in-combination effects. These plans and projects are outlined and assessed in Table 4-1 below.

Table 4-1: Other Projects and Plans that could result in potential cumulative impacts

Plan / Programme/Policy	Key Objectives/Policies/Proposals	Potential for In-combination Effects and Mitigation
Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028	The Cork City Development Plan includes Objective 6.23: To protect and enhance designated sites and areas of natural heritage and biodiversity and the habitats, flora and fauna for which it is designated, and to protect, enhance and conserve designated species.	The policies and objectives of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 ensure that local planning applications comply with proper planning and sustainability and with the requirements of relevant EU Directives and environmental considerations, there is no potential for in- combination effects on European Sites.
Water Action Management Plan 2024	The Water Action Plan includes targeted measures for all water bodies, with the objective of either protecting water bodies at good or high status or restoring water bodies to at least good status. Where further specific measures are needed in addition to those set in this plan, integrated catchment planning approaches will be used to identify and decide on further specific measures for each water body. This will be reported in 46 Catchment Management Work Plans. These will be used to locate measures within each catchment. The list of water bodies and their associated status, significant pressures/issues and targeted measures, which are to be included in the Catchment Management Work Plans, will include targets for the third-cycle, along with Key Performance Indicators to monitor progress and outcomes.	The implementation and compliance with key environmental policies, issues and objectives of this management plan will result in positive in-combination effects to European sites. The implementation of this plan will have a positive impact for the biodiversity. It will not contribute to in-combination effects with the proposed development.

[5] These surface water and waste water management features have been provided in accordance with the requirement of Objectives 9.2, 9.4 and 9.5 of Cork City Development Plan 2022 which are required for residential developments regardless of the presence or otherwise of connecting pathways to European sites.

Inland Fisheries Ireland Corporate Plan 2021 -2025 **The Inland Fisheries Act 2010.**	To place the inland fisheries resource in the best sustainable position possible for the benefit of future generations. To protect, manage and conserve Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources and to maximise their sustainability and natural biodiversity. ▪ To sustainably develop and improve fish habitats. ▪ To protect, maintain and enhance Ireland's wild fish populations. ▪ To actively engage with stakeholders in the continued stewardship of our shared resource. ▪ To play a leadership role in achieving our climate action and biodiversity goals. ▪ To vlaue our people and support their development and performance. ▪ To foster a culture of value for money and evaluation of performance in a measurable, transparent and accountable manner. ▪ Harness the power of innovation to continue to deliver a modern fisheries service.	The implementation and compliance with key environmental issues and objectives of this corporate plan will result in positive on-combination effects to European sites. The implementation of this corporate plan will have a positive impact for biodiversity of inland fisheries and ecosystems. It will not contribute to in-combination or cumulative impacts with the proposed development.
Ballyvolane SHD	A strategic housing development of 753 residential units to be constructed in a series of phases (six neighbourhoods in total), a local centre including retail (2 no. units), a crèche, doctors surgery and community use unit and all associated and ancillary infrastructure, services and site development works.	A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was prepared for the proposed development as part of the planning application. The potential for sediment laden runoff and pollutants to have an adverse impact on the water quality of Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC was identified. However, the NIS concluded that with the implementation of best practice and the recommended mitigation measures there will be no potential for direct, indirect or cumulative impacts arising from the proposed development. As such, assuming that mitigation measures are effectively implemented, no significant adverse in-combination impacts with the proposed development on the water quality within Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC will occur.
Arderrow SHD	275 residential units (205 houses, 70 apartments), créche and associated site works	The Competant Authoriity (ABP) Planning Inspectors Report found that:

		"It is reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information on file, which I consider adequate in order to issue a screening determination, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to have a significant effect on the Great Island Channel SAC (Site Code: 001058); and Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code: 004030) or any European site, in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives, and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (and submission of a NIS) is not therefore required. In reaching this conclusion I took no account of mitigation measures intended to avoid or reduce the potentially harmful effects of the project on any European Sites". No potential for significant adverse in combination effects on European sites has been identified.
Local Planning Applications[6]	Local developments[7] in the zone of influence of the proposed development that may contribute to potential cumulative or in-combination effects on European sites include retail development (Ref: 2139832, 2443156 & 2241026), domestic dwelling developments (Ref: 2442707, 2140285, 2039342 & 2140270), healthcare facility (Ref: 2443477), residential development (2140038, 2442789 & 2544084) and agricultural infill (Ref: 2140158).	These planning applications have been subject to either screening for Appropriate Assessment or Habitats Directive Assessment as appropriate. These assessments have found that, where required, construction phase measures and operational designs will be implemented to avoid likely significant effects to European sites. Each of the assessments completed for these projects have concluded that the project will not have the potential to combine with other projects to result in likely significant effects on European sites. No potential for significant adverse in combination effects on European sites has been identified.

[6] The Local Planning Applications included in this potential in-combination impacts assessment support the following criteria: planning applications granted within the past five years that may contribute to potential cumulative impacts on European sites of concern.

[7] Cork City Planning Applications & Enforcement Register (accessed 23/06/2025)

Cumulative and In-Combination Effects Conclusion

The proposed development comprises a Large Scale Residential Development adjoining Longview Estates (permitted under ABP-306325-20 as amended by CCC Reg Ref 23/42409 / ABP-318904-24 and CCC Reg Ref 25/43863). The existing Longview Estates residential development consists of 6 neighbourhoods; the proposed development is for Neighbourhood 7. At the time of writing, the permitted development at Longview Estates is under construction and major earthworks for installation of drainage and services provisions, distributor roads and associated Sub Regional Pumping Stations, rising mains and water mains have been completed; construction of houses has also commenced. The phasing of development will reduce the risk of acute episodes of sediment laden run-off that can occur from excavation over a large area. Further, there are no watercourses or active drainage ditches within the proposed site, therefore, significant in-combination effects with the permitted Longview Estates development as a result of transport of deleterious substances in surface water to European sites are not likely. As detailed in Section 4.2, the proposed development supports remote connectivity to Cork Harbour SPA and Great Island Channel SAC via discharge of surface water to the Ballincolly stream, which runs parallel to Ballyhooly Road to the west of the proposed site and eventually discharges into Cork Harbour. However, as required by Objectives 9.2, 9.4 and 9.5 of Cork City Development Plan 2022, both the proposed and permitted developments within the overall landholding include a number of SuDS measures to attenuate and treat surface water run-off prior to discharge. Uisce Éireann have confirmed feasibility of connection for foul water. The proposed site does not provide a supporting role for any QI habitats or species for European sites (see Section 4.2).

As detailed in Table 4-1, no potential for in-combination effects with other plans or projects has been identified.

It is concluded that there will be no negative in-combination effects between the proposed development and plans or project in the area.

4.3 Screening Assessment

Table 4-2 identifies the potential direct, indirect and secondary impacts of the proposed development on European Sites within a 15 km radius.

Table 4-2: Potential Significant Effects on European Sites from the Proposed Development

Site Name and Code	Direct Impacts	Indirect / Secondary Impacts	Resource Requirements	Emissions (Disposal to land, Water or Air)	Excavation Requirements
Great Island Channel SAC and pNHA (001058)	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI
Blackwater River SAC (002170)	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI
Cork Harbour SPA (004030)	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI

4.4 Likely Changes to the European Site(s)

The likely changes that could arise from the proposed development, have been examined in the context of a number of factors that could have a significant effect on the relevant European Sites (Table 4-3).

Table 4-3: Likely Changes to European Sites

Site Name and Code	Reduction of Habitat Area	Disturbance to Key Species	Habitat or Species fragmentation	Reduction in Species Density	Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality, etc.)	Climate Change
Great Island Channel SAC and pNHA (001058)	None	None	None	None	None	None
Blackwater River SAC (002170)	None	None	None	None	None	None
Cork Harbour SPA (004030)	None	None	None	None	None	None

4.4.1 Elements of the Project where the Impacts are Likely to be Significant

No elements of the proposed development are likely to cause significant effects to the relevant European sites.

5 Conclusion

This AA screening report was completed with due regard to relevant European Commission guidance, national guidance and case law.

The potential impacts of the proposed development have been considered in the context of the European sites potentially affected, their qualifying interests or special conservation interests, and their conservation objectives.

Through an assessment of the source-pathway-receptor model, which considered the zone of influence of effects from the proposed development and the potential in-combination effects with other plans or projects, the following are the main conclusions:

- The proposed Neighbourhood 7 Longview, Ballyvolane, Cork, either alone or in-combination with other plans and/or projects, does not have the potential to significantly affect any European site, in light of their conservation objectives. Therefore, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is deemed not to be required.

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