

Cork City, Harbour and East Cork Draft Destination & Experience Development Plan

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING AND NATURA IMPACT STATEMENT

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**Brady Shipman
Martin**

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Environmental Assessment **Built Environment**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This document comprises an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS), prepared in order to support the Appropriate Assessment for the Cork City, Harbour and East Cork Destination & Experience Development Plan (hereafter referred to the 'Plan' or the 'CDEDP') in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive and Article 42 of the European Communities (Birds and Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended (the Habitats regulations).

The potential impacts on European sites (also known as Natura 2000 sites), both as a result of the CDEDP and in-combination with other plans and projects, are appraised in this report.

This report should be read in conjunction with the CDEDP and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – Environmental Report prepared by Brady Shipman Martin (2024).

1.2 Expertise and Qualifications

This Report has been prepared by Namrata Kaile, Ecologist and Environmental Consultant with Brady Shipman Martin. She holds a Bachelor's Degree (BSc) in Life Sciences from University of Delhi and a Master's Degree (MSc) with distinction in Environmental Sciences from Trinity College Dublin. She is an associate member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and has been working professionally in the field of environmental consultancy for the last four years. Namrata is experienced in drafting and reviewing AA Screening Reports, EIA Screening Reports as well as in coordination of EIARs. She is also experienced in undertaking baseline ecological surveys and preparing Ecological Impact Assessments Reports (EclA).

A technical review of this document has been completed by Senior Ecologist and Associate, Matthew Hague BSc MSc Adv. Dip. Plan. & Env. Law CEnv MCIEEM. Matthew is a highly experienced and qualified ecologist, with a master's degree in Ecosystem Conservation and Landscape Management. He has over 20 years of experience in ecological and environmental consultancy, across a wide range of sectors. Matthew is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). Matthew has also completed an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law, at King's Inns and is a member of the Irish Environmental Law Association (IELA).

1.3 Legal requirement for Appropriate Assessment

European sites make up a network of sites designated for nature conservation under Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the "Habitats Directive") and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the "Birds Directive"). The requirements for Appropriate Assessment are set out under *Article 6 of the Habitats Directive*, transposed into Irish law by the *European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended)* (the "Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations") and the *Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)* (the "Planning Acts").

European sites are also known as Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)). As defined in section 177R of the Planning Acts “European site” means:

- (a) a candidate site of Community importance,
- (b) a site of Community importance,
- (ba) a candidate special area of conservation,
- (c) a special area of conservation,
- (d) a candidate special protection area and
- (e) a special protection area.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that:

“(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have 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 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.”

The first test is to establish whether, in relation to a particular plan or project, appropriate assessment is required. Article 42(1) of the Habitats Regulations requires that the AA screening test must be applied to the Plan, as follows:

42. (1) Subject to Regulation 42A, a screening for Appropriate Assessment of a plan or project for which an application for consent is received, or which a public authority wishes to undertake or adopt, and which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site, shall be carried out by the public authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the conservation objectives of the site, if that plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.

An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development (plan or project), individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

1.3.1 Stages in the Appropriate Assessment Process

There are four main stages in the AA process and are as follows:

1.3.1.1 Stage 1 - Screening

The stage identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

1.3.1.2 Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment

This stage considers whether the plan or project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, and includes any mitigation measures necessary to avoid, reduce or offset negative effects.

1.3.1.3 Stage 3 – Alternative Solutions

This stage examines any alternative solutions or options that could enable the plan or project to proceed without adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site.

1.3.1.4 Stage 4 – Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)

Stage 4 examines whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project that will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site to proceed in cases where it has been established that no less damaging alternative solution exists.

1.4 Baseline data collection

This report takes the following guidance documents into account:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine, September 2018, updated in September 2019 (V1.1), further updated in April 2022 (V1.2)*;
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) (2010a). *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*;
- DoEHLG (2010b). *Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10: Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*;
- European Commission (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*;
- European Commission (2018). *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*;
- Directorate – General for Environment (European Commission), (2021). *Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community Interest under the Habitats Directive*;
- National Roads Authority (NRA)¹ (2009). *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes*;
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021). *Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*;
- National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) (2021). *Guidance for Public authorities on the Application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive to development/works undertaken by or on behalf of a Public authority*.

Information was collated from the organisations and websites listed below:

- Data on European sites and rare and protected plant and animal species contained in the following databases:

¹ Now Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

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- The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (www.NPWS.ie);
- The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NDBC) (www.biodiversityireland.ie);
- BirdWatch Ireland (www.birdwatchireland.ie);
- Bat Conservation Ireland (www.batconservationireland.org).
- Information on land-use zoning from the online mapping of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (<http://www.myplan.ie/en/index.html>);
- Recent and historical OSi mapping and aerial photography, including www.geohive.ie;
- Information on local watercourses from www.catchments.ie;
- Information on water quality in the area (www.epa.ie);
- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area (www.gsi.ie);
- Information on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (Article 17 report) (NPWS, August 2019);
- Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024);
- Cork City Development Plan 2022 – 2028 and the accompanying reports;
- Cork County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 and the accompanying reports.

The report takes full account of the details of the CDEDP and a detailed examination of all relevant elements was undertaken. The Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report (Brady Shipman Martin, 2024) was also reviewed in the preparation of this report.

A desk-based assessment of the receiving environment was undertaken, and this focussed on habitats and species that are listed as Qualifying Interests (QI) (in the case of SACs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) (in the case of SPAs) for European sites. An assessment of habitat suitability for species with links to European sites was undertaken, in order to appraise the potential for *ex-situ* effects on European sites.

2 Outline Description of the Draft Plan

2.1 Introduction

Cork City is considered a 'Progressing' destination with a focus on developing new best-in-class visitor experiences aligned with a distinctive visitor proposition. East Cork and the Harbour area are categorised as a 'Pioneering' destination with a focus on product development, improving visitor infrastructure and building effective local tourism networks.

The Cork City, Harbour and East Cork Destination and Experience Development Plan (CDEDP) is a five-year sustainable tourism development plan. The CDEDP focuses on increasing the value of tourism in Cork City, Cork Harbour, and East Cork by growing the appeal of the destination, reducing seasonality and increasing visitor spend. The DEDP has been developed to contribute to the overarching regional objectives for Ireland's Ancient East.

The CDEDP builds on existing projects and connects all related investment activity with the potential to impact on the visitors experience of Cork. This includes projects currently underway, projects featuring in existing plans and new concepts designed to grow the leisure tourism base within Cork City and Harbour. The plan incorporates new approaches to visitor orientation while also ensuring tourism and related cultural activity are considered for integration into future regeneration projects. The overarching approach is designed to develop the appeal of Cork City as a leisure tourism hub destination and grow its role as a visitor hub for the rest of the destination. It features a collective ambition to establish Cork Harbour as a world class visitor experience and grow the appeal of East Cork in the domestic and international market.

The plan has been created through a programme of research and consultation guided by the V.I.C.E. (Visitor, Industry, Community, Environment) model for sustainable tourism development. It incorporates the views of visitors, the tourism industry, local community stakeholders in addition to a programme of international benchmarking.

The key objectives of the plan are:

- *Ensure local experiences are brought to life through the development of the optimal mix of hero and ancillary tourism products that attract visitors and retain them for longer in the destination.*
- *Unlock the economic growth potential of an area by progressing a range of key initiatives that will motivate tourists to explore the wider destination.*
- *Develop a sustainable basis for commercial tourism development centred on creating strong signature, supporting and ancillary experiences that are commoditised through the creation of saleable experiences that excite consumers and buyers alike.*
- *Create the conditions to attract leisure visitors on a year-round basis to Cork to immerse themselves actively in the community, interacting with local people.*
- *Strengthen the value of tourism to the local community by providing sustainable employment opportunities.*

2.2 Vision

The Destination Vision (10 year vision) for CDEDP is:

"Cork City is a year round leisure tourism destination recognised for the energy of its communities, great cultural experiences and Ireland's Capital of Food. It is home to a world class Cork Harbour

experience accessed by the Lee, City and Harbour Way network of trails, greenways and on water experiences. The vibrant tourism towns of East Cork have become the gateways to activity, food and attractions clusters contributing to its profile as a family destination.”

2.3 Strategic Objectives

Regional Tourism Development Plans 2023- 2027 (RTDS) have been developed for each of Fáilte Ireland’s four Regional Experience Brands (Ireland’s Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way, Dublin and Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands). These plans provide the strategic framework for other tourism development strategies, such as, Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs) and County Tourism Strategies. The DEDP has been developed to contribute to the overarching regional objectives for Ireland’s Ancient East. The following five objectives provide the basis for the strategic approach reflected within the DEDP.

The Plan is structured around the following strategic objectives and strategic goals:

1. RTDS Strategic Objective 1: Motivate the domestic and international consumer to visit Cork and Ireland’s Ancient East
<p>Strategic Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Develop the “Lee, City and Harbour Way” Experience Corridors linking the destination’s cultural, natural and built heritage experiences. 1.2. Develop Cork Harbour as a world class visitor destination within Ireland’s Ancient East. 1.3. Develop an attraction of scale for Cork City to contribute to the development of the city as a year round leisure tourism economy. 1.4. Integrate tourism and cultural opportunities within the regeneration of Cork Docklands as part of enhancement of Cork as a place to Live, Work and Visit. 1.5. Enhance the cultural visitor experience in Cork to support the continued development of Cork’s status as an international city of culture. 1.6. Contribute to tourism season extension through the existing calendar of events and festivals.
2. RTDS Strategic Objective 2: Provide the visitor with more reasons to stay, increasing the economic impact of tourism in Cork
<p>Strategic Goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Grow the capacity of established visitor attractions across the destination to be key contributors to destination recovery and future growth. 2.2. Establish the food in tourism opportunity for Cork City to become the national Capital of Food and gateway to the largest concentration of artisan producers in Ireland. 2.3. Grow the capacity of Cork City to become a vibrant year-round evening time economy destination. 2.4. Develop tourism town hubs across East Cork to attract and retain visitors for longer and motivate them to explore the communities of East Cork.

2.5. Grow the opportunity for East Cork to establish itself as a national family holiday cluster through collaboration between the network of existing attractions, future product development and outdoor amenities investment.

3. RTDS Strategic Objective 3: Ensure the destination is easy to access, navigate and consume

Strategic Goals:

- 3.1. Build on the tourism opportunity for local communities and trail heads through the development of the MY Greenway.
- 3.2. Maximise the opportunity for visitors to explore the wider destination through slow tourism linked to Cork to Waterford cycle network, EuroVelo 1 long distance cycle route and the proposed National Cycle Network.
- 3.3. Conduct feasibility analysis to establish the requirements to create a Cork to Dublin Greenway in partnership with TII and LA's.
- 3.4. Create the linkages across the "Lee, City, Harbour Way" to integrate on land and on water exploration of the destination from the river, harbour to greenways.
- 3.5. Achieve greater levels of visitor dispersion across East Cork through the opportunities provided by outdoor, adventure and rural tourism experience clusters working together.
- 3.6. Maximise the investment in increased transport infrastructure and active travel opportunities linking the City, Cork Harbour and East Cork.

4. RTDS Strategic Objective 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability to ensure that it can thrive and create sustainable jobs in local communities.

Strategic Goals:

- 4.1. Create destination clusters to enhance the tourism industry's capacity to work together and create the experiences and reasons for visitors to explore Cork city, Cork Harbour and East Cork communities.
- 4.2. Develop a coherent destination network approach to encourage new levels of collaboration and how the industry collectively motivates the visitor to explore the city, Harbour and East Cork.
- 4.3. Develop the digital capacity of the destination to grow the distribution capabilities of the tourism industry linked to the Digital that Delivers programme.
- 4.4. Create the appropriate Industry Development Programmes to enable the tourism industry's capacity to build on the projects identified within the DEDP.
- 4.5. Develop the community capacity of harbour towns and villages to attract and retain visitors and prepare them for the opportunities arising from current and future capital investment.

5. RTDS Strategic Objective 5: Build committed stakeholder and industry partnerships to guide sustainable destination development.

Strategic Goals:

- 5.1. A new collaborative approach through the formation of a DEDP Steering Group to generate new levels of industry collaboration and the creation of a strong and coherent tourism network.
- 5.2. Ensure tourism is integrated as a key element of future strategic development sites across the city and county to include future urban and rural regeneration activity.
- 5.3. Grow the number of tourism enterprises operating in the destination supported by an environment that encourages new levels of tourism entrepreneurship.
- 5.4. Influence sustainable tourism development to become a key element of the Cork visitor experience and the creation of a strong responsible tourism destination proposition.

2.4 Destination Catalyst Projects Overview

To achieve the above strategic objectives, the CDEDP focuses on six catalyst and six enabling projects that each include a number of sub-elements that contribute to the overarching objectives of developing the CDEDP. The delivery of these projects will collectively contribute to achieving the transformational objectives of creating a Lee, City Harbour Way Experience Corridor and realising the tourism potential of Cork Harbour.

The catalyst projects and their key objectives are as follows:

Project 1 Lee, City, harbour Way, Experience Corridors - *Develop an innovative trails approach linking land, water and cultural experiences to encourage visitors to explore more of the destination.*

Project 2 World Class Harbour- Harbour Navigation – Island Journeys – *Develop Cork Harbour into a world class visitor experience.*

Project 3 Cork Docklands / attraction of Scale – *Develop an attraction of scale in Cork City.*

Project 4 Cork City Cultural Quarters - *Create new opportunities for visitors to engage with local communities through cultural experiences and linking the city's cultural quarter.*

Project 5 Midleton to Youghal Greenway - *Develop the Midleton to Youghal Greenway (MY Greenway) to become a key attractor to East Cork and motivation for visitors to explore the local communities on the route.*

Project 6 Food Capital - *Establish Cork as Ireland's Food Capital.*

The complete list of catalyst project and destination supporting projects (enablers) are summarised in **Section 4.2.4.**

3 Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1 Introduction

The first part of the Appropriate Assessment process is the Screening phase. Screening identifies the likely effects of the CDEDP on European sites that could arise, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and considers whether these impacts are likely to have a significant effect on the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

As per Section 1.3 and in accordance with Article 42 of the Habitats regulations, screening for appropriate assessment must be carried out. Screening must be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation and it is in this context that this AA Screening Report is prepared.

Following screening therefore, if there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of compliance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This means that if the conclusions at the end of the screening exercise are that significant effects on any European sites, as a result of the CDEDP, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely, uncertain or unknown, then an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out. This is in accordance with established precedent and case law.

3.2 Potential Zone of Influence

This assessment is based on the source-pathway-receptor model, which dictates that, for an effect to occur, there must be a 'source' (such as a construction site); a 'receptor' (such as a designated site for nature conservation); and a 'pathway' between the two (such as a watercourse). A construction site or completed development may also create a barrier to movement, for example, by preventing the migration of fauna along a river corridor, or by obstructing the migration of birds.

Identification of a potential effect means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the potential effect and the characteristics of the receptor. Although there may be a risk of an impact, it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant.

There are no set recommended distances for projects to consider European sites as being relevant for assessment. DoEHLG (2010a, pp. 31 – 32) states that:

“The approach to screening is likely to differ somewhat for plans and projects, depending on scale and on the likely effects, but the following should be included:

1. Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area
2. Any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan or project. A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans, and derives from UK guidance (Scott Wilson et al., 2006). For projects, the distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects
3. Natura 2000 sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area depending on the likely impacts of the plan or project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, bearing in mind the precautionary principle. In the cases of sites with water dependent habitats or species,

and a plan or project that could affect water quality or quantity, for example, it may be necessary to consider the full extent of the upstream and/or downstream catchment.”

The 2021 OPR guidelines, *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, state that the Zone of Influence “*should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km)*” (p. 8).

Therefore, considering the nature, scale and location of the CDEDP, and in accordance with the source-pathway-receptor model, the potential Zone of Influence for the CDEDP includes any site to which there is a potential for impacts, as set out in the following sections.

3.3 Description of the Receiving Environment and the Potential Zone of Influence

The description of the receiving environment presented in this section has been based on a desktop study of relevant available information, as cited in the text.

The *Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028* states that Cork City Council is working with Fáilte Ireland and other stakeholders to prepare a Destination Experience Development Plan for Cork City and East Cork. It is envisaged that this will address the reliance of Cork City’s tourism market on commercial tourism. There is a need to broaden this base to include leisure tourism by developing the tourism products and activities in the city.

The Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027 published by Fáilte Ireland provide a framework for sustainable tourism development across Ireland and include Regional Tourism Strategies for Ireland’s Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands and Dublin. The Regional Tourism Development Strategies will be activated across every region through a series of local area action plans, referred to as Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs). Under the Ireland’s Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027, there is a requirement to prepare DEDP for Cork City, Harbour and East Cork.

Biodiversity plays a significant role in the provision of clean air, water, healthy soils and food as well as visually contributing to a plan area with its natural beauty and heritage. Cork is rich in biodiversity, ecology and wildlife and provides a valuable range of green and blue infrastructure assets. The diverse green and blue infrastructure network in Cork offers many opportunities for Tourism, Culture, Recreation and Leisure. The Landscape and Harbour in Cork also contributes to its wider setting, creating a unique sense of place.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive recognises the importance of ecological networks as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife, including for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species of flora and fauna. The Directive requires that ecological connectivity and areas of ecological value outside the Natura 2000 network of designated ecological sites are maintained and it recognises the need for the management of these areas through land use planning and development policies. Ecological networks are important in connecting areas of local biodiversity with each other and with nearby designated sites so as to prevent islands of habitat from being isolated entities. They are composed of linear features, such as treelines, hedgerows and rivers / streams which provide corridors or stepping stones for wildlife species moving within their normal range.

Ecological corridors are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species, particularly for mammals, bats and small birds and facilitate linkages both between and within designated ecological sites, non-designated surrounding countryside and the more urban areas of the County.

3.3.1 Designated European Sites

Within the study area, there are a number of areas designated for protection under the Natura 2000 network. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are legally protected under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats and Annex II species. Special Protection Areas are protected under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds 2009/147/EC.

All designated European Sites located within the study area are listed in **Table 3.1** below. There are a further 9no. SPAs and 4no. SACs within the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the study area listed in **Table 3.2** below.

Conservation objectives for SACs and SPAs have been set for the habitats and species for which the sites have been selected. Site specific detailed conservation objectives are available on the NPWS website².

Table 3.1 European sites located within the study area

Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
004030	Cork Harbour SPA	001058	Great Island Channel SAC
004028	Blackwater Estuary SPA	000077	Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC
004023	Ballymacoda Bay SPA	002170	Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC
004022	Ballycotton Bay SPA		

Table 3.2 European sites located within the zone of influence of the study area

Site Code	Special Protection Area (SPA)	Site Code	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
004192	Helvick Head to Ballyquin SPA	002123	Ardmore Head SAC
004032	Dungarvan Harbour SPA	000665	Helvic Head SAC
004094	Blackwater Callows SPA	000108	Gearagh SAC
004124	Soverign Islands SPA	001230	Courtmacsherry Estuary SAC
004021	Old Head of Kinsale SPA		
004219	Courtmacsherry Bay SPA		
004191	Seven Heads SPA		
004109	The Gearagh SPA		
004162	Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA		

² NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/conservation-management-planning/conservation-objectives>

3.3.2 Nationally Designated Sites

Nationally Designated Sites include *Natural Heritage Areas* (NHAs) which are legally protected areas that are considered important for their habitats or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. *Proposed Natural Heritage Areas* (pNHAs) are also of significance for wildlife and habitats but have not yet been statutorily designated. However, under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage from the date they are formally proposed for designation³.

Refer to **Tables 3.3** and **3.4** and **Figure 3.2** below for the NHAs and pNHAs within the study area and within the zone of influence of the County boundary.

Table 3.3 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within the study area and zone of influence

Site Code	Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within study area	Site Code	Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within zone of influence
	None	002447	Boggeragh Mountains NHA

Table 3.4 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within the study area and zone of influence

Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within study area	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within zone of influence
000103	Shoumagh Valley pNHA	001067	Lough Gal pNHA
001039	Blarney Castle Woods pNHA	001055	Glashgarriff River pNHA
001799	Ardamadane Wood pNHA	000079	Bride/Bunaglanna Valley pNHA
001857	Blarney Bog pNHA	000670	Tallow (Disused Church) pNHA
001798	Blarney Lake pNHA	001692	Ballyeelinan Wood pNHA
000094	Lee Valley pNHA	001698	Glenanna Wood pNHA
001249	Ballincollig Cave pNHA	000663	Dungarvan Harbour pNHA
001081	Cork Lough pNHA	000665	Helvick Head pNHA
001054	Glanmire Wood pNHA	001740	Bandon Valley Above Inishannon pNHA
001082	Dunkettle Shore pNHA	001515	Bandon Valley Below Inishannon pNHA
001074	Rockfarm Quarry, Little Island pNHA	001966	Minane Bridge Marsh pNHA
001046	Douglas River Estuary pNHA	001060	James Fort pNHA
001058	Great Island Channel pNHA	001053	Garretstown Marsh pNHA
001987	Cuskinny Marsh pNHA	000087	Garrylucas Marsh pNHA
001076	Rostellan Lough, Aghada Shore and Poul nabibe Inlet pNHA	001230	Courtmacsherry Estuary pNHA
001979	Monkstown Creek pNHA		
001084	Whitegate Bay pNHA		
001990	Owenboy River pNHA		
001066	Lough Beg (Cork) pNHA		

³ NPWS website 2019: <https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/nha>

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Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within study area	Site Code	Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) within zone of influence
000107	Templebreedy National School, Crosshaven pNHA		
000371	Fountainstown Swamp pNHA		
001408	Carrigacrump Caves pNHA		
001064	Leamlara Wood pNHA		
000099	Ballynaclashy House, North of Midleton pNHA		
000446	Loughs Aderry and Ballybutter pNHA		
001183	Clasharinka Pond pNHA		
001235	Ballyquirk Pond pNHA		
001042	Carrigshane Hill pNHA		
000076	Ballycotton, Ballynamona and Shanagarry pNHA		
001978	Ballycotton Island pNHA		
000083	Capel Island and Knockadoon Head pNHA		
000077	Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) pNHA		
000078	Ballyvergan Marsh pNHA		
000072	Blackwater River and Estuary pNHA		

Figure 3.1 European Sites within the study area and in the surrounding zone of influence

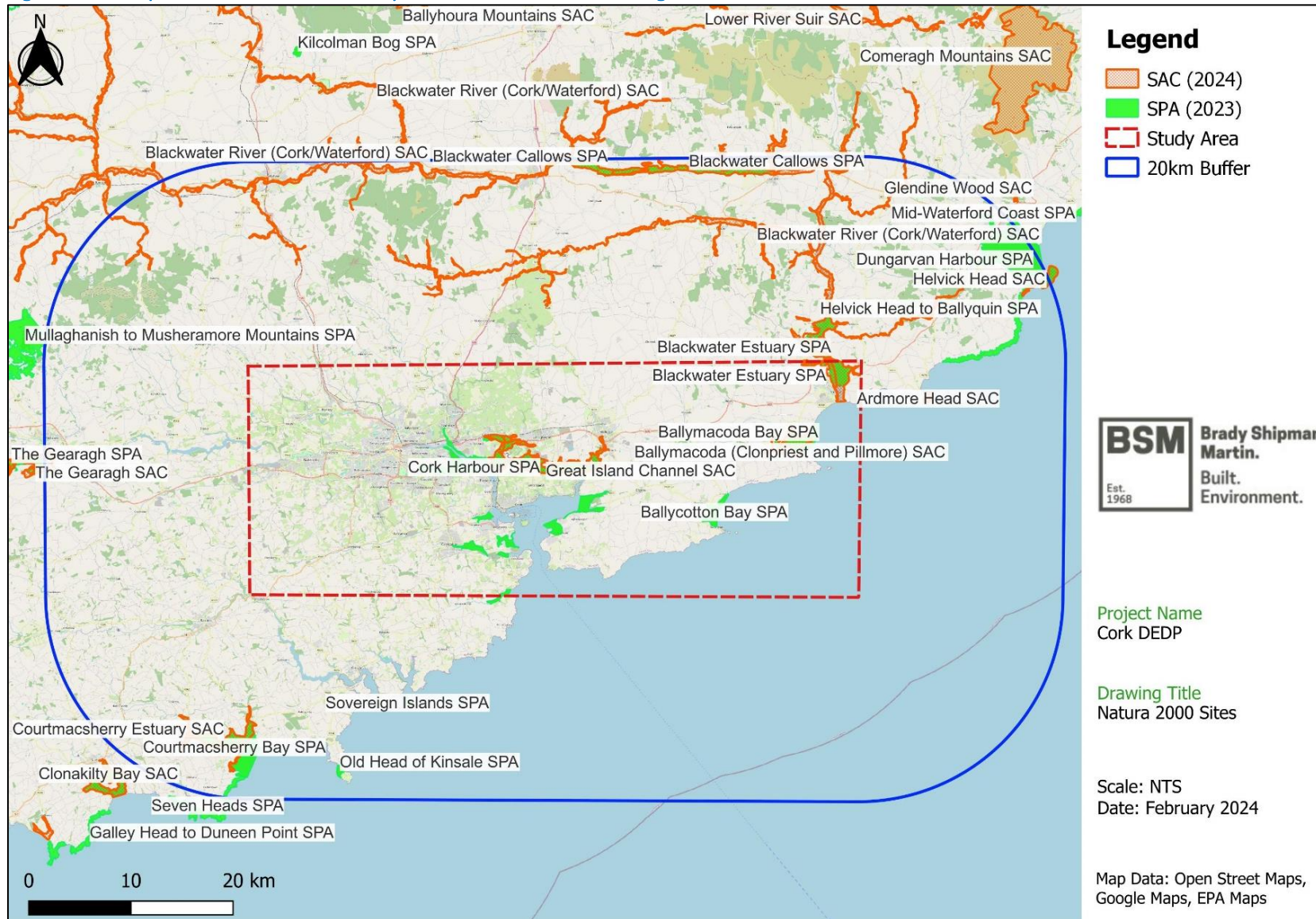
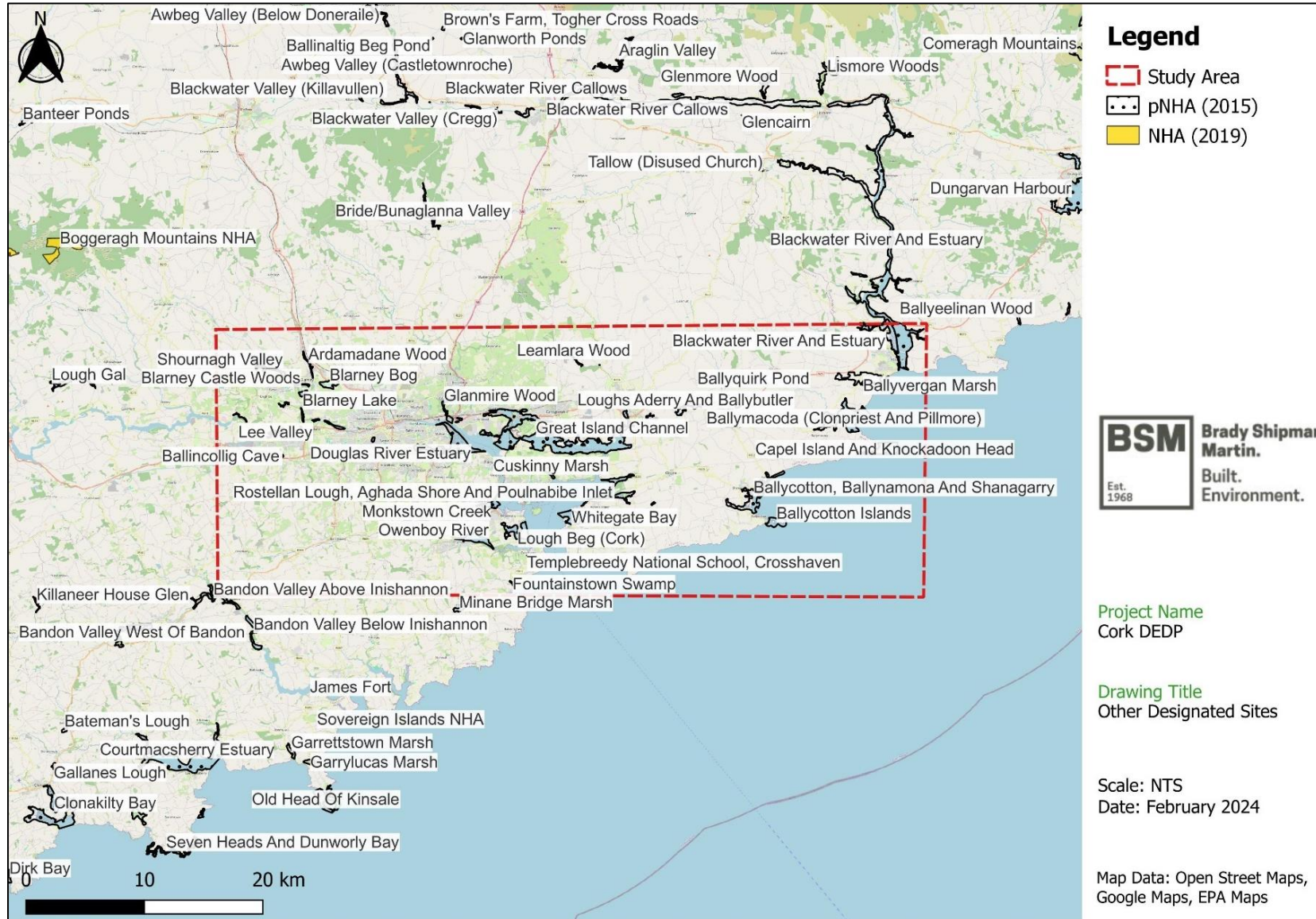


Figure 3.2 Other Designated Sites within the study area and in the surrounding zone of influence



3.3.3 Hydrology

The latest *Water Quality in Ireland* report 2016-2021 was published by the EPA in 2022. This report contains the most up-to-date and comprehensive assessment of the ecological health of Ireland’s groundwater, rivers, lakes, canals, transitional waters and coastal waters following the completion of the first six-year cycle of the WFD. The results shows that a considerable amount of work is still required to meet the environmental objectives of the WFD.

The status of the **river waterbodies** in County Cork range from ‘*bad*’ to ‘*high*’, however the majority of the major river waterbodies range from ‘*poor*’ to ‘*high*’.

There is a part of Inniscarra Lake (IE_SW_19_138) (‘Good’ WFD status) within the study area which is designated WFD operational monitoring lakes.

There are nine transitional WFD waterbodies within the study area – Lee (Cork Estuary Upper) (IE_SW_060_0900), Lough Mahon (IE_SW_060_0750), Lough Mahon (Harper’s Island) (IE_SW_060_0700), North Channel Great Island (IE_SW_060_0300), Owenboy Estuary (IE_SW_060_1200), Owencarra Estuary (IE_SW_060_0400), Rostellan Lake (IE_SW_060_0100), Womanagh Estuary (IE_SW_030_0100), Lower Blackwater Estuary / Youghal Harbour (IE_SW_020_0100). **Table 3.5** below has a list of the **WFD Catchments** and **WFD Sub-Catchments** in the study area.

Table 3.5 WFD Catchments and Sub-Catchments within the study area

Catchment (WFD Catchment Code)	Sub-catchment Name (WFD Sub-catchment Code)
Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay (19)	Owenboy[Cork]_SC_010
	Glasheen[Corkcity]_SC_010
	Lee[Cork]_SC_050
	Lee[Cork]_SC_060
	Kiln_SC_010
	Manin_SC_010
	Glashaboy[L.Mahon]_SC_010
	Tibbotstown_SC_010
	Owennacurra_SC_010
	Womanagh_SC_010
	Farrannamanagh_SC_010
Blackwater (Munster) (18)	Tourig_SC_010
Bandon-Ilen (20)	Stick_SC_010
	Bandon_SC_060

Groundwater Quality Status between 2016 and 2021 was generally 'good'⁴ across the groundwater bodies in the study area, with the exception of one groundwater body that is Waste Facility (W0012-03) (IE_SW_G_091) which have a status of 'poor'.

The groundwater vulnerability within the study area ranges from 'low' to 'extreme'.

A number of these protected areas are present within study area and these are as follows:

- The entire ground waterbody beneath the study area is included on the Drinking Water - Ground Waterbody.
- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Lake, Coastal & Transitional waterbodies) – Lee Estuary / Lough Mahon and Blackwater Estuary Lower.
- WFD RPA Nutrient Sensitive Areas (Rivers) – none within study area.
- WFD RPA Shellfish Areas – Cork Great Island North Channel, Rostellan North, Rostellan South, Rostellan West and Ballymacoda Bay.
- Salmonid Rivers – River Lee (Cork).

3.3.3.1 Designated Shellfish Waters

The *EU Shellfish Waters Directive* (2006/113/EC) aims to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth.

Pollution reduction programmes are in operation for these areas. The identified pressures on these designated waters include urban wastewater systems, on-site wastewater treatment systems and port activities. The coastal waters provide an important resource, supporting and generating employment and recreational activities and must be protected.

There are five areas of Shellfish waters within the study area - Cork Great Island North Channel (IE_SW_060_0300) within Lough Mahon, Rostellan North (IE_SW_060_0000), Rostellan South (IE_SW_060_0000), Rostellan West (IE_SW_060_0000) all within the Cork Harbour and Ballymacoda Bay (IE_SW_020_0000) within the Youghal Bay.

3.3.3.2 Salmonid Waters

The *Salmonid Regulations* (S.I. No. 293 of 1988) designate the waters capable of supporting salmon (*Salmo salar*), trout (*Salmo trutta*), char (*Salvelinus*) and whitefish (*Coregonus*) as protected. Thirty-four rivers, tributaries and lakes are listed and protected under these Regulations that prescribe quality standards for salmonid waters, sampling programmes and methods of analysis and inspection to be used by local authorities to determine compliance with the standards.

The River Lee (Cork) within the study area is a designated Salmonid Water under the EU Freshwater Fish Directive.

3.3.4 Other Designations

RAMSAR Sites

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention. Wetlands are important ecosystems, which improve water quality, provide storm protection, flood mitigation, stabilise shorelines, maintain biodiversity, and provide natural products such as fish and

⁴ EPA Groundwater Quality Data - <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

shellfish. Ireland presently has 45no. RAMSAR sites. The Ramsar sites located within the study area include – Blackwater Estuary (836), Ballycotton Bay (830) and Cork Harbour (837). Relevant authorities are expected to manage their Ramsar Sites so as to maintain their ecological character and retain their essential functions and values for future generations.

Wildfowl Sanctuaries

Wildfowl sanctuaries are areas that have been excluded from the ‘Open Season Order’ so that game birds can rest and feed undisturbed. There are 68no. sanctuaries in the State⁵. Shooting of game birds is not allowed in these sanctuaries. The Ballynamona – Shannagarry (WFS-08), Lough Aderry (WFS-10) and The Lee Reservoir (WFS-11) are within the study area.

Nature Reserves

Other nature conservation designations are *Statutory Nature Reserves*, which are protected under Ministerial order.

There is one Nature Reserves within the study area – Capel Island and Knockadoon Head Nature Reserve. These reserves comprise all of Capel Island off the south coast near Youghal, Co. Cork, part of Knockadoon headland opposite the island and the intervening sea area. The reserve comprises 143.0 hectares, of which 126.9 are State-owned and 16.1 are privately owned.

3.3.5 Potential for significant effects on Natura 2000 sites

The effects that could arise from the CDEDP have been examined in the context of several factors that could potentially affect the integrity of any European site, see **Table 3.6** below.

⁵ NPWS (2021).

Table 3.6 Potential for significant effects on designated sites in the potential Zone of Influence

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
European sites within the study area			
Cork Harbour SPA (site code 004030), within the study area	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A004 Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) ■ A005 Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) ■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) ■ A028 Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) ■ A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>) ■ A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) ■ A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) ■ A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) ■ A069 Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the CDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	Yes

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius Arquata</i>) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>) ■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) ■ A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) ■ A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) ■ A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 16 December 2014), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>		
Blackwater Estuary SPA (site code 004028), within the study area	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>) (wintering) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) (wintering) 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the CDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic</p>	Yes

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) (wintering) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) (wintering) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) (wintering) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) (wintering) ■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) (wintering) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>) (wintering) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 17 May 2012), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>	<p>objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	
<p>Ballymacoda Bay SPA (site code 004023), within the study area</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7230 Alkaline fens ■ A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>) ■ A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) ■ A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the CDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic</p>	<p>Yes</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) ■ A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) ■ A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) ■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) ■ A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) ■ A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 19 February 2015), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>	<p>objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
<p>Ballycotton Bay SPA (site code 004022), within the study area</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) ■ A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius Arquata</i>) ■ A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) ■ A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) ■ A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 26 August 2014), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the CDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
Great Island Channel SAC (site code 001058), within the study area	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 06 June 2014), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the CDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	Yes
Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC (site code 000077), within the study area	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1130 Estuaries ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) <p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 19 February, 2015), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the CDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	Yes

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.		
Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC (site code 002170), within the study area	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel (<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>) ■ 1092 White-clawed Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>) ■ 1095 Sea Lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) ■ 1096 Brook Lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) ■ 1099 River Lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) ■ 1103 Twaite Shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>) ■ 1106 Atlantic Salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) (only in fresh water) ■ 1130 Estuaries ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks ■ 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) ■ 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) ■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is within the CDEDP area and there is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	Yes

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1421 Killarney Fern (<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>) ■ 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation ■ 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>) ■ 91J0 *<i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles <p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 31 July, 2012), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>		
European sites <i>outside</i> the study area but potentially within the Zone of Influence of the study area			
<p>Helvick Head to Ballyquin SPA (site code 004192), c. 8km to the east of the study area</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) ■ A103 Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) ■ A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) ■ A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A346 Cough (<i>Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>) <p>According to the first order site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October, 2022), for the listed SCI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 8km to the east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	
<p>Dungarvan Harbour SPA (site code 004032), c. 17.5km to the north-east of the study area</p>	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A005 Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) (wintering) ■ A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) (wintering) ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) wintering ■ A069 Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) (wintering) ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) (wintering) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) (wintering) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) (wintering) 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 17.5km to the north-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) (wintering) ■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) (wintering) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) (wintering) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) (wintering) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) (wintering) ■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) (wintering) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) (wintering) ■ A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) (wintering) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 16 January 2012), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>		
Blackwater Callows SPA (site code 004094), c.	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A038 Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) 	Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
18.5km to the north of the study area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) ■ A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 26 March, 2024), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>	<p>risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 18.5km to the north of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	
Soverign Islands SPA (site code 004124), c. 10.7km to the south of the study area	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) <p>According to the first order site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October 2022), for the listed SCI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 10.7km to the south of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	No
Old Head of Kinsale SPA (site code 004021), c.	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
17.2 km to the south of the study area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A199 Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) <p>According to the First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition.</p>	<p>risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 17.2km to the south of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	
Courtmacsherry Bay SPA (site code 004219), c. 13km to the south-west of the study area	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A003 Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) ■ A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>) ■ A069 Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A142 Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 13km to the south-west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) ■ A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 03 October 2014), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>		
Seven Heads SPA (site code 004191), c. 21km to the south-west of the study area	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A346 Cough (<i>Pyrhcorax pyrrhcorax</i>) <p>According to the first order site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October 2022), for the listed SCI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 21km to the south-west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	No
The Gearagh SPA (site code 004109), c. 21km to the west of the study area	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>) ■ A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased</p>	No

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A053 Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) ■ A125 Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) <p>According to the first order site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 12 October 2022), for the listed SCI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 21km to the west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	
Mullaghanish to Musheramore Mountains SPA (site code 004162), c. 21.5km to the north-west of the study area	<p>The Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A082 Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) <p>According to the SPA's site Conservation Objectives for the SPA (dated 23 September 2022), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable condition of the bird species listed.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 21.5km to the north-west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	No
Ardmore Head SAC (site code 002123), c. 6.8km to the east of the study area	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts ■ 4030 European dry heaths 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p>	Yes

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 21 November, 2016), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 6.8km to the east of the study area and there is a hydrological connectivity via Ypughal Bay. There is therefore potential for significant effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	
<p>Helvic Head SAC (site code 000665), c. 17.4km to the north-east of the study area</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts ■ 4030 European dry heaths <p>According to the site-specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 21 November, 2016), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 17.4km to the north-east of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Gearagh SAC (site code 000108), c. 19.5km to the west of the study area</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) ■ 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 19.5km to the west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 3270 Rivers with muddy banks with <i>Chenopodium rubri</i> p.p. and <i>Bidention</i> p.p. vegetation ■ 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> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 15 September, 2016), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>	<p>there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	
<p>Courtmacsherry Estuary SAC (site code 001230), c. 12.2km to the south-west of the study area</p>	<p>The Qualifying Interests (QIs) of this site are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1130 Estuaries ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines ■ 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks ■ 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) 	<p>Any development or refurbishment works proposed under the CDEDP could have the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water, air and, potential disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites.</p> <p>This Natura 2000 Site is c. 12.2km to the south-west of the study area and there is no hydrological or other connectivity. Therefore, due to the lack of pathways there is no potential for effects on this site as a result of the strategic objectives & goals, catalyst projects and destination enablers proposed under the CDEDP.</p>	<p>No</p>

European Site (Site Code)	Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2024) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link and potential effects	Likely Significant Effect? (If yes, the site is Screened In)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) ■ 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes ■ 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ('white dunes') ■ 2130 *Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes') <p>According to the site specific Conservation Objectives for the SAC (dated 09 July, 2014), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable condition, as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.</p>		

3.4 Screening for Appropriate Assessment – Summary

According to the Guidance published by the European Commission (*Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, 21st November 2018) the “integrity of a site” relates to the site’s conservation objectives. For example, it is possible that a plan or project will adversely affect the site only in a visual sense or only affect habitat types or species other than those listed in Annex I or Annex II. In such cases, the effects do not amount to an adverse effect for the purposes of Article 6(3). If none of the habitat types or species for which the site has been designated is significantly affected then the site’s integrity cannot be considered to be adversely affected.

In addition, plans or projects or applications for developments which have “no appreciable effect” on the protected site are excluded from the requirement to proceed to appropriate assessment⁶ (Opinion of Advocate General Sharpston in *Sweetman*, para. 48).

In other words, if, following Screening, there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

European sites with no connection/pathway to the CDEDP area can be screened out (Appropriate Assessment Screening) and they are not considered any further in this report. By virtue of their locations, and the presence of potential pathways, of the 20 European sites listed in **Table 3.1** there is the possibility of there being a significant effect on a total of eight sites (these are listed in **Table 3.6**), and this results in a requirement for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

There is potential for significant effects (at least, the potential for significant effects cannot be excluded) as a result of:

- Habitat loss and/or fragmentation;
- Impacts to habitat structure;
- Disturbance to species of conservation concern;
- Mortality to species (such as roadkill);
- Noise pollution;
- Emissions to air;
- Emissions to water.

Despite its positive intent there is the possibility that the implementation of certain of the actions listed in the CDEDP could result in significant effects on 12 European sites. Applying the precautionary principle therefore, and in accordance with Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive, Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required.

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A62011CC0258>

4 Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

4.1 Introduction

As set out in Section 3.4 the implementation of the CDEDP has the potential to impact on up to eight European sites. Given this conclusion, which is based on the Precautionary Principle, it is necessary to undertake Appropriate Assessment.

At this stage it is necessary to determine whether the CDEDP would result in *significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any European site* with respect to the site's structure, function, and/or conservation objectives.

These potential adverse effects may arise either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

The CDEDP, once implemented, will ensure that all existing and future tourism projects and initiatives for the Cork DEDP are planned, developed and managed in a sustainable and integrated manner. It is driven by local, regional, national, European and International plans and policy.

Nevertheless, as set out in the preceding sections, there is the potential that the implementation of certain elements of the CDEDP could lead to impacts on these European sites. This is particularly the case for actions that will result in construction or other development, and/or their ancillary infrastructure.

There is the possibility of reduction of habitat area, or loss of habitat within European sites in the Zone of Influence as a result of the implementation of certain actions within the CDEDP. Any development works, no matter how minor, adjacent to watercourses (such as those associated with the River Lee, Cork Harbour, Youghal Bay and Ballycotton Bay) have the potential to cause habitat loss or a reduction in habitat / water quality, with indirect effects on the European sites themselves. Similarly works within any European sites could lead to fragmentation (breakup) of habitats, resulting in impacts on site integrity or cause degradation to, any habitats associated with any European site.

There is the possibility of disturbance to key species arising as a result of the implementation of certain actions within the CDEDP. The Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) of the European sites are sensitive to disturbance from noise, light, vibration and other construction activities including inappropriately timed works, as well as from recreational and amenity activity (human disturbance). Rivers and estuarine sites such as the Cork Harbour SPA, Great Island Channel SAC, Ballymacoda (Clonpriest and Pillmore) SAC, Ballymacoda Bay SPA, Ballycotton Bay SPA, Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC, Blackwater Estuary SPA and Ardmore SAC are prone to contamination risk due to surface water runoff during construction. Any works near or within these sensitive sites could lead to disturbance of these species.

There is the possibility of changes to key indicators of conservation value arising as a result of the implementation of the CDEDP. This could arise via pollution, siltation or other run-off to watercourses that could ultimately discharge to the European sites. Any pollution-related impacts on the QIs/SCIs of any European site could adversely affect the integrity of the sites.

4.2 Potential impacts from the CDEDP, including in-combination effects

4.2.1 Is the CDEDP necessary for the management of European sites?

As set out in the Habitats Directive (Article 6(3)), plans that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site do not require Appropriate Assessment. Management in this context means management for nature conservation and the qualifying interests of the European site, specifically the conservation objectives – to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the habitats and species for which the site has been selected.

While the CDEDP has been developed with sustainability as core elements its purpose is to deliver and promote enhanced tourism experience within the Cork City, Harbour and East Cork. Therefore, the CDEDP is not considered to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

4.2.2 Are there elements of the CDEDP with potential to give rise to significant effects on European sites

The elements/actions of the CDEDP have potential to give rise to significant effects on European sites during construction and operational phase. Any development of existing and new infrastructure located within the potential zone of influence of any European site has the potential to give rise to impacts on European sites, for example via construction works, habitat loss/replacement (both temporary and permanent), increased risk of pollution of surface water and, potentially, disturbance due to an increase in human activity in the vicinity of European sites. During the operational phase, there is potential for uncertain effects due to the new developments and their ancillary infrastructure and increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.

The CDEDP, once implemented, is expected to enhance the visitor experience, promote tourism and support economic growth. Despite its positive intent, the CDEDP has the potential to give rise to effects on European sites within its zone of influence under the following scenarios:

- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect water quality, flow and/or morphology and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly increase risk of flooding and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect groundwater quality or supply and potentially affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any Action that could directly or indirectly affect air quality due to emissions and affect the European sites, protected habitats and species;
- Any risk of habitat loss, fragmentation or degradation to European sites or network supporting European sites, protected habitats and species, including via increased visitor numbers and human activity;
- Any potential for a risk of direct or indirect disturbance to European site habitats and/or species, e.g. development at coastal sites /along rivers/within bogs, noise disturbance due to construction, light pollution etc.;
- Any Action that could risk a reduction in ecological connectivity between European sites and/or the ecological networks supporting them.

4.2.3 Appraisal of the of the Strategic Objectives of the Cork City, Harbour and East Cork Destination & Experience Development Plan

The finding of the environmental assessment of the overall Vision and Strategic Objectives of the CDEDP is presented in **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1 Appraisal of the Strategic Objectives and Strategic Goals of the CDEDP

Strategic Objectives/Goals	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
<p>Vision</p> <p>The Destination Vision (10 year vision) for CDEDP is:</p> <p><i>“Cork City is a year round leisure tourism destination recognised for the energy of its communities, great cultural experiences and Ireland’s Capital of Food. It is home to a world class Cork Harbour experience accessed by the Lee, City and Harbour Way network of trails, greenways and on water experiences. The vibrant tourism towns of East Cork have become the gateways to activity, food and attractions clusters contributing to its profile as a family destination.”</i></p>	<p>This vision statement sets an overall context for destination experience and tourism in Cork. This will support and underpin the local tourism economy, industry and associated workers. No specific projects are associated with the statement, and therefore no negative or uncertain environmental effects arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>RTDS Strategic Objective 1: Motivate the domestic and international consumer to visit Cork and Ireland’s Ancient East</p>		

Strategic Objectives/Goals	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
<p>1.1 Develop the “Lee, City and Harbour Way” Experience Corridors linking the destination’s cultural, natural and built heritage experiences.</p>	<p>This goal will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience.</p> <p>However, in the absence of mitigation, this goal could have the potential to result in negative or uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites. The development of new and existing blueways/greenways and culture line has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations. The development of these projects, however, might result in negative environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast/transitional waters. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>1.2 Develop Cork Harbour as a world class visitor destination within Ireland’s Ancient East.</p>	<p>In the absence of mitigation, the objective could have the potential to result in negative or uncertain environmental effect for biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites. The development of new and existing blueways/greenways and marine based activities has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations. The development of these projects, however, might result in negative environmental effects that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast/transitional waters. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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Strategic Objectives/Goals	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
1.3 Develop an attraction of scale for Cork City to contribute to the development of the city as a year round leisure tourism economy.	The new attraction presents potential uncertain environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	Yes
1.4 Integrate tourism and cultural opportunities within the regeneration of Cork Docklands as part of enhancement of Cork as a place to Live, Work and Visit.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management.	Yes
1.5 Enhance the cultural visitor experience in Cork to support the continued development of Cork's status as an international city of culture.	This goal will result in positive effects on population and human health. However, in the absence of mitigation, the goal could have the potential to result in uncertain environmental effect on biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites. The enhancement works could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
1.6 Contribute to tourism season extension through the existing calendar of events and festivals.	In the absence of mitigation, the use of visitor attractions and public spaces presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from the use of these spaces and/or provision of ancillary infrastructure for the events.	Yes
RTDS Strategic Objective 2: Provide the visitor with more reasons to stay, increasing the economic impact of tourism in Cork		
2.1. Grow the capacity of established visitor attractions across the destination to be key	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes

Strategic Objectives/Goals	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
contributors to destination recovery and future growth.		
2.2 Establish the food in tourism opportunity for Cork City to become the national Capital of Food and gateway to the largest concentration of artisan producers in Ireland.	This goal would result in positive effects for tourism industry. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
2.3 Grow the capacity of Cork City to become a vibrant year-round evening time economy destination.	In the absence of mitigation, the increase in capacity presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from the use of these spaces and/or provision of ancillary infrastructure. This would also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
2.4 Develop tourism town hubs across East Cork to attract and retain visitors for longer and motivate them to explore the communities of East Cork.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
2.5 Grow the opportunity for East Cork to establish itself as a national family holiday cluster through collaboration between the network of existing	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes

Strategic Objectives/Goals	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
attractions, future product development and outdoor amenities investment.		
RTDS Strategic Objective 3: Ensure the destination is easy to access, navigate and consume		
3.1 Build on the tourism opportunity for local communities and trail heads through the development of the MY Greenway.	<p>The development of new and existing greenways, trails and walking and cycling routes, including those within and between existing destinations, has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility, reduction in emissions and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.</p> <p>The development of these projects, however, may result in uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast and could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites.</p>	Yes
3.2 Maximise the opportunity for visitors to explore the wider destination through slow tourism linked to Cork to Waterford cycle network, EuroVelo 1 long distance cycle route and the proposed National Cycle Network.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast and could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
3.3 Conduct feasibility analysis to establish the requirements to create a Cork to Dublin Greenway in partnership with TII and LA's.	This goal would result in positive effects for tourism industry. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	Yes

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Strategic Objectives/Goals	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
3.4 Create the linkages across the “Lee, City, Harbour Way” to integrate on land and on water exploration of the destination from the river, harbour to greenways.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast and could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
3.5 Achieve greater levels of visitor dispersion across East Cork through the opportunities provided by outdoor, adventure and rural tourism experience clusters working together.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast and could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes
3.6 Maximise the investment in increased transport infrastructure and active travel opportunities linking the City, Cork Harbour and East Cork.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. This would also result in increased footfall in sensitive areas.	Yes
RTDS Strategic Objective 4: Enable and assist the industry to grow its capacity and capability to ensure that it can thrive and create sustainable jobs in local communities.		
4.1 Create destination clusters to enhance the tourism industry’s capacity to work together and create the experiences and reasons for visitors to explore Cork city, Cork	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast and could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes

Strategic Objectives/Goals	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
Harbour and East Cork communities.		
4.2 Develop a coherent destination network approach to encourage new levels of collaboration and how the industry collectively motivates the visitor to explore the city, Harbour and East Cork.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
4.3 Develop the digital capacity of the destination to grow the distribution capabilities of the tourism industry linked to the Digital that Delivers programme.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
4.4 Create the appropriate Industry Development Programmes to enable the tourism industry's capacity to build on the projects identified within the DEDP.	This objective will result in positive effects on population and human health by provision of enhanced visitor experience. No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
4.5 Develop the community capacity of harbour towns and villages to attract and retain visitors and prepare them for the opportunities arising from	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potentially uncertain environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast and could also result in increased visitor numbers and pressure in the vicinity of European sites.	Yes

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Strategic Objectives/Goals	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
current and future capital investment.		
RTDS Strategic Objective 5: Build committed stakeholder and industry partnerships to guide sustainable destination development.		
5.1 A new collaborative approach through the formation of a DEDP Steering Group to generate new levels of industry collaboration and the creation of a strong and coherent tourism network.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
5.2 Ensure tourism is integrated as a key element of future strategic development sites across the city and county to include future urban and rural regeneration activity.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
5.3 Grow the number of tourism enterprises operating in the destination supported by an environment that encourages new levels of tourism entrepreneurship.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
5.4 Influence sustainable tourism development to become a key element of the Cork visitor experience and the	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No

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Strategic Objectives/Goals	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required ? Yes / No
creation of a strong responsible tourism destination proposition.		

4.2.4 Appraisal of the Catalyst Projects and Destination Enablers listed within the Cork City, Harbour and East Cork Destination & Experience Development Plan

The CDEDP includes a list of catalyst projects and destination enablers which will be delivered to support the above strategic objectives of the DEDP. The environmental assessment of the effects of the catalyst projects is detailed in **Table 4.2** below.

There are 6no. catalyst projects and 6no. destination enablers in total. Projects where there is a requirement for development of existing and new infrastructure might give rise to uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.

Where potential negative or uncertain effects on European sites have been identified appropriate mitigation has been provided. See **Section 4.4** of this Report.

Table 4.2 Appraisal of the Catalyst Projects and Destination Enablers of the CDEDP

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
CATALYST PROJECTS				
1. CATALYST PROJECT 1 : LEE, CITY, HARBOUR WAY EXPERIENCE CORRIDORS				
1.1	Lee, City, Harbour Way (LCH) Greenway Masterplan	Develop a Lee, City, Harbour Way, Greenway Masterplan to create a signature cycling and walking trail animated by ‘Experience Corridors’ integrating the Greenways, Blueways and Culture Trails. It will also reflect the opportunities identified by the Green Blue Infrastructure Study to support improved Connectivity including delivery of new and enhanced walking and cycling routes.	While the overall intention is positive, resulting actions (e.g. water-based activities) could have negative or uncertain effects for biodiversity, water, land & soils, landscape and visual, material assets and air & noise. The development of new and existing greenways and blueways has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations. The development of these projects, however, might result in negative environmental effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. Increased tourism in	Yes
1.2	Cork Lido	Undertake a site options appraisal and feasibility analysis for a Cork Lido aligned with the objective of creating more visitor engagement opportunities with the water.		
1.3	Meitheal Mara	Examine the potential for Meitheal Cois Abhainn to deliver river based experiences and activities.		
1.4	Water Activity Hubs	Explore the potential to develop sustainable water activity access hubs to correspond with the Lee, City, Harbour Greenway route integrating Carrigaline, Ballincollig Regional Park, Fitzgerald Park, Lee Fields, Blackrock Village, Crosshaven and privately Owned sites on the route.		
1.5	Marina Park	Progress the development of Marina Park Phase 2 between Blackrock and Pairc Ui Chaoimh and the creation of a boating activity in the area of Pairc Ui Chaoimh.		
1.6	Crosshaven Trail head	Examine the requirements to develop the outdoor activity opportunity in Crosshaven maximising the Greenway and potential future linkages with an extended Active Travel trails network. This will also include an examination of the requirements to develop a water activity hub in Crosshaven.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
1.7	Cork Public Museum	Undertake an assessment of the visitor experience in the Cork Public Museum and future opportunities to become an orientation hub for the Lee, City, Harbour Way Experience.	these locations could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
1.8	Pairc Ui Chaoimh	Examine the potential to develop a visitor attraction in Pairc Ui Chaoimh and the development a range of saleable experiences in the stadium. This will also leverage the proximity of the stadium to the Greenway and river access.		
2. CATALYST PROJECT 2: CORK HARBOUR TOURISM PLAN				
2.1	Cork Harbour Tourism Plan	Develop a Cork Harbour Tourism Plan to grow the value of tourism in Cork Harbour and masterplan a sustainable tourism development approach. The plan will examine all aspects of the visitor experience including access, water transport opportunities, visitor experience development, facilities to create an integrated roadmap for the harbour and it's islands.	<p>This project will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	Yes
2.2	Fota House	Examine the potential of developing the Courtyard space (covered and uncovered) and future use of units to provide a new visitor experience or linked to the destination story e.g. artisan producers, artists in residence, specialist retail.		
2.3	Fota House	Undertake a review of the requirements to transition the management of Fota House Gardens into the management of Fota House.		
2.4	Spike Island Experience	Undertake an independent assessment of the immediate product / experience development opportunities and visitor service investment priorities for Spike Island to grow annual visitor numbers as identified in the adopted Spike Island Business Plan.		
2.5	Spike Island Access	Assess the opportunity to increase the frequency and levels of access to Spike Island to drive demand from existing and new locations without causing any displacement to the service from Cobh.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
2.6	Camden Fort	Examine the potential of developing Camden Fort Meagher as a visitor attraction under the Cork Harbour Tourism Plan.		
2.7	Haulbowline Island	Examine the opportunity to create a national maritime visitor experience located at Haulbowline Island.		
2.8	Haulbowline Naval Base	Examine the potential for Haulbowline to open elements of the base for visitor experiences incorporating the operational naval base with a visitor experience comparable to other international maritime and military site experiences.		
2.9	Roches Point	Examine the possibility of re-opening the Roches Point Lighthouse as a visitor experience.		
2.10	National Maritime College of Ireland	Support the experience development for outreach programme tours at the National Maritime College of Ireland at scheduled times. This will also explore the opportunity to develop an AR / VR Cork Harbour experience located at Camden Fort in partnership with the Cork County Council.		
3. CATALYST PROJECT 3: CORK DOCKLANDS VISION PLAN				
3.1	Cork Docklands Vision Plan	Develop a Cork Docklands Vision Plan to deliver a coordinated approach to tourism development linked with the regeneration programme for the Docklands and Tivoli Docks. The vision plan will integrate tourism into the regeneration programme including opportunities such as visitor attractions, greenways, outdoor activities and active travel.	The development of these projects might result in negative environmental effects on all European sites within the Zone of Influence that would, if unmitigated, have the potential to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure. These types of infrastructure have potential to be located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the harbour/coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also	Yes
3.2	Attraction of Scale	Following the identification of the need for an Attraction of Scale for Cork, undertake an assessment of the most appealing theme and experience and site options to enable the attraction become a key contributor to destination growth.		
3.3	Odlum's Building	Examine the potential for an enhanced tourism offering through food and retail experiences as part of the regeneration of the Odlum's Building.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
3.4	National Sculpture Factory	Examine the potential to expand the capacity of the National Sculpture Factory to deliver a visitor experience as part of the Cork Dockland’s cultural experience.	require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development of these projects could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
3.5	Outdoor, Event Space	Examine the opportunity to develop a multi purpose outdoor space in the Docklands to incorporate family activity, playground, culture and arts provision.		
3.6	Creative Hub Space	Examine the potential to develop a creative industry hub as part of the Docklands regeneration and the development of immersive cultural experiences.		
3.7	River Cruise Activity	Examine how the future development of Cork Docklands can increase the level of leisure and river cruise activity to and from the area.		
4. CATALYST PROJECT 4: MY GREENWAY				
4.1	MY Greenway	Complete the Midleton to Youghal Greenway to open in 2024 and maximise the economic opportunity for communities on route. Support the development of added value elements to the Greenway including placemaking and bio-diversity initiatives with a commitment to continuous maintenance and improvement.	The development of new and existing greenways, trails and walking and cycling routes, including those within and between existing destinations, has the potential to contribute to sustainable mobility, reduction in emissions and a better management of movements in sensitive areas, thereby benefiting various environmental components including habitats at certain locations.	Yes
4.2	Greenway Communities	Deliver a programme of training and capability building to enable the communities and local businesses along the Greenway develop new visitor experiences and services.		
4.3	City to My Greenway	"Complete the key projects that will link the city boundary to the Midleton to Youghal Greenway to include the completion of the following phases; Dunkettle to Carrigtwohill (4 Phases, Part 8 planning in place) · Phase 3 - Bury’s Bridge to Fitzpatrick’s (Under Construction) · Phase 4 - The Elm Tree to Carrigtwohill (Detailed Design) Carrigtwohill to Midleton · Phase 1 - Carrigtwohill to Ballyadam (Part 8 in place and detailed design on-going)		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
		· Phase 2 - Ballyadam to Water rock (Outline design on-going. Part 8 to commenced in 2023)"	located in ecologically and visually sensitive areas adjacent to the banks of rivers and streams or along the coast. These works can also potentially result in the spread of invasive species. Increased tourism in these locations would also require provision of welfare facilities, wastewater and waste management. The development of these projects could also potentially result in disturbance due to an increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.	
4.4	Active Travel	Examine the linking of Fota Island Resort to the active travel network based on the outputs of the design stages of a spur off the Dunkettle to Carrigwohill interurban route.		
4.5	National Cycling Network	Examine the requirements create an eastern cycling trail from Dublin to Cork. This will also examine the requirements to connect Youghal and Dungarvan to extend the greenway network.		
5. CATALYST PROJECT 5: CULTURAL QUARTERS				
5.1	Cultural Quarter Experiences	Develop clusters of new day and evening time visitor experiences across Cork's Cultural Quarters.	This project will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health. In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	Yes
5.2	Cork Cultural Trail	Develop a Cork Cultural Trail to encourage culture-based exploration of the city. Support the development of the trail by building the capabilities of the Cork creative and artistic community to develop experiences to animate the Cork Cultural Trail.		
5.3	Visitor orientation	Undertake a tourism signage audit in the city to improve the city centre orientation and visitor way finding infrastructure.		
5.4	City Library Investment	Undertake a review of the opportunity to incorporate day and evening time cultural experiences within the City Library.		
5.5	Cork Playful Trail	Build on the success of the Cork Playful Trail to create a family focused cultural activity trail.		
5.6	Music City Experience	Leverage Cork's reputation as a music city building on the established Cork music network, music festivals, music venues and the School of Music.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
5.7	Creative Placemaking	Develop a creative urban place making approach supporting new cultural and public realm investment e.g. Crawford Gallery area, City Library, Event Centre, Docklands.		
5.8	Cultural Plaza	Assess the requirements to deliver an extended cultural plaza and imaginative public realm enhancements following the Crawford Gallery refurbishment.		
5.9	Riverside public realm	Examine the opportunities to re-imagine public realm investment in opening the river by creating more boulevard and riverside streetscapes to develop a vibrant riverside city experience.		
5.10	City Galleries Network	Develop a strategy for a co-ordinated approach between the city galleries linking the Glucksman, Crawford Gallery and Cork Public Museum and other related sites.		
5.11	UCC	Examine the potential to create a University College Cork tourism experience.		
5.12	UCC	Develop the planned programme for the Boole Library to include new multimedia facilities, signature treasures gallery and the development of cultural, educational and social spaces on the ground floor of the Library.		
5.13	Elizabeth Fort	Assess the requirements to enhance the Elizabeth Fort visitor experience.		
5.14	Living History Experiences	Examine the potential of creating story based trails for the family market based on hysterical histories linking key attractions across Cork such as Elizabeth Fort in the telling of the Cork story through living history.		
5.15	Shandon Masterplan	Prepare a master plan to develop a co-ordinated tourism development approach for the Shandon area linked with the wider vision for the area.		
5.16	Heritage Sites Presentation	Undertake an audit of requirements to enhance the presentation of cultural and heritage sites supported by a programme of maintenance e.g. Church Spires in key cultural quarters		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
5.17	Cultural Sites Usage	Examine the capacity and usage of cultural buildings across Cork City to identify opportunities to create new evening time experiences.		
5.18	Flood Defence Scheme	Explore opportunities to interpret the heritage of the River Lee through investment in future flood defence schemes.		
5.19	National Sculpture Factory	Examine the potential of developing a permanent range of digital sculptures linked to key heritage sites across Cork to contribute to the ongoing urban animation of Cork City.		
5.20	Public Art	Support the development of the installation of public art around the city in partnership with Glucksman Art Gallery and the City Council.		
5.21	Nano Nagle Place	Implement the development plan for Nano Nagle Place and enhance the visitor experience.		
6. CATALYST PROJECT 6: FOOD CAPITAL				
6.1	Food Capital of Ireland	Implement the actions identified in the Food in Tourism Plan to develop Cork as Ireland's Capital of Food by growing the experience base, enhancing existing experiences and leveraging Corks food and drink heritage.	This project will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.	Yes
6.2	Midleton Distillery Experience	Maximise the impact of the investment in Midleton Distillery through the development of premium and added value experiences in Midleton Distillery.	In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	
DESTINATION ENABLERS				
7. DESTINATION ENABLER 1: ENHANCING ATTRACTIONS				
7.1	Visitor Attractions	Undertake an assessment of current visitor attraction experiences to benchmark the requirements to develop new, improved and collaborative visitor experiences.		Yes

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
7.2	Barryscourt Castle	Examine the requirements to re-open Barryscourt Castle, including future management and site partnership options and develop a quality visitor experience on site.	<p>This project will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	
7.3	Blarney Castle & Gardens	Support the development of a new vision for Blarney Castle & Gardens and the delivery of new visitor experiences across the site.		
7.4	Maritime Museums	Develop the capabilities of existing local maritime heritage centres to enhance their visitor experiences e.g. Cobh Museum and Passage West Museum.		
7.5	Cork Attractions Network	Enhance the cross promotion of attractions and examine new ways of attractions working together through co-created experiences and commercial initiatives such as single ticketing.		
7.6	Butter Museum	Undertake an assessment of visitor experience development opportunities in the Butter Museum.		
8. DESTINATION ENABLER 2: FESTIVAL CAPITAL				
8.1	Festival of Scale	Develop a new international festival of scale building on the potential of existing events or the identification of new festival opportunities in the city and county. This will also assess the potential for an international river or Harbour themed festival.	<p>This project will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p> <p>In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.</p>	Yes
8.2	Growing Event Impact	Maximise the potential of existing festivals and events by growing the numbers of cultural sites, attractions, activities and local experiences incorporated into event programming.		
8.3	Niche Events	Examine new approaches to packaging festivals and events with the Cork accommodation sector to maximise the year round programme of events.		
9. DESTINATION ENABLER 3: TOURISM GROWTH TOWNS & COMMUNITIES				
9.1	Accommodation Base	Grow the hotel accommodation base in key tourism growth towns.	<p>This project will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health.</p>	Yes
9.2	Accommodation Base	Grow the capacity of the destination to grow its alternative accommodation base.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
Cobh			In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	
9.3	Cobh - International Destination	Secure the funding and implement the regeneration roadmap for Cobh to develop the town and Great Island as an international tourism destination. Enhance the supporting visitor experiences in Cobh to maximise the investment for the local community.		
9.4	Industry Network	Grow the linkages with Cobh and the Cork City tourism industry to maximise the opportunity presented by increased rail services between Cork and Cobh.		
Youghal				
9.5	Platforms for Growth Activity Centre	Maximise the opportunity for activity-based tourism through the investment in the Platforms for Growth Activity Centre at Clay Castle, Youghal. Build on the potential for Youghal to develop and position itself as a year-round training base for Ironmen and Triathlons (Triathlon Capital of Ireland).		
9.6	Youghal Lighthouse	Continue with the phased development of the Youghal Lighthouse experience to maximise its potential as a viewing platform and visitor orientation role guiding visitors to other sites in the town.		
9.7	Youghal Courthouse	Review the experience development requirements for Youghal Courthouse following the refurbishment programme.		
9.8	Visitor Orientation	Undertake a review of the orientation and wayfinding requirements to link the town heritage sites with its coastal amenities to influence visitor flow.		
Blarney				
9.9	Blarney	Undertake an assessment of the requirements to develop the tourism opportunity for Blarney to create reasons for visitors to Blarney Castle & Gardens to explore the local community.		
Midleton				
9.10	Food Story Gateway	Examine the opportunity to develop the food destination positioning of Midleton as an access hub to the East Cork food and drink story.		

No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
Passage West				
9.11		Support the development of the town framework and maximise its potential with the inclusion of strategic tourism development projects.		
9.12	Ballycotton Cliff Walk	Assess the requirements and feasibility of expanding the Cliff Walk to link to Roche's Point, developing a coastal pathway linking Ballycotton to Cork Harbour, integrating the Knockadoon Coastal Walk and Gyleen.		
9.13	Ballycotton Lighthouse	Develop the potential of Ballycotton Lighthouse / Island for the delivery of new visitor experiences and opportunities to repurpose the island buildings for activities or accommodation.		
10. DESTINATION ENABLER 4: TOURISM COMMUNITIES				
10.1	Developing tourism communities	Deliver a training programme for tourism communities groups to understand the tourism opportunity and how to develop local experiences to attract visitors to explore East Cork and the Harbour communities.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
11. DESTINATION ENABLER 5: INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT				
11.1	Industry development	Develop the capacity and capabilities of tourism industry to create motivational itineraries and new approaches to collaboration and packaging that will attract visitors to Cork City, Cork Harbour and East Cork.	No negative or uncertain environmental effects on European Sites arise and therefore, mitigation is not required.	No
12. DESTINATION ENABLER 6: MAXIMISE MOBILITY INVESTMENT				
12.1	Maximise Mobility Investment	Develop the capacity of tourism industry and local communities to maximise the commercial and community opportunities provided by Greenways, Blueways and Active Travel investment.	This project will enhance tourism opportunities for the county and have positive effect on population and human health. In the absence of mitigation, the development of new and existing infrastructure presents a variety of potential uncertain effects on European sites	Yes

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No.	Project	Action	Potential to negatively impact on any of the European sites within the Zone of Influence?	Mitigation Required Yes / No.
			within the Zone of Influence to arise from both the construction and operation of such developments and/or their ancillary infrastructure.	

4.2.5 Direct, indirect or secondary effects?

None of the Actions of the CDEDP have any resource requirements from any European site as a result of any of the actions contained therein.

Any pollution could adversely affect the habitats and species listed as qualifying interests in any of the European sites, many of which rely on good water quality. Also, during construction works there is potential for an increase in run-off due to compaction of the soil which will in turn reduce the infiltration capacity and increase the rate and volume of surface water run-off. This can increase surface water run-off and sediment loading which has potential to impact the local drainage and in turn on the European sites.

In addition to the habitats and species associated with the European sites, bird species, may be sensitive to disturbances arising as a result of any proposed development. Construction works have the potential for indirect impacts on the Natura 2000 sites and their qualifying features of interest. Potential impacts include habitat degradation as well as disturbance to habitats, species and ecosystem dynamics due to noise, vibration, air quality, and disturbance due to human activities. In addition there is a potential risk to flora and fauna arising from dust deposition, which in extreme cases can inhibit photosynthesis in plants and can increase turbidity in watercourses.

During the operational phase, there is potential for uncertain effects due to the new developments and their ancillary infrastructure and increase in human activity and visitor numbers in the vicinity of European sites.

4.2.6 In-combination / Cumulative effects with other plans and programmes

It is a requirement of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive that when considering whether a plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of a European site the assessment must take into account in-combination effects with other current or reasonably foreseeable plans and projects.

If it can be clearly demonstrated that the plan or project will not result in any impact on the integrity of a European site then the plan or project should proceed without considering the in-combination test; further, if there are identified effects arising from the plan or project even if they are perceived as minor and not likely to have an impact on the integrity of a European site alone, then any such impacts must be considered 'in-combination' with the effects arising from other plans and projects.

The Actions listed within the CDEDP will be required to comply with the relevant international, national and regional policies, plans and programmes and also undertaken individual environmental assessments for Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and any other relevant processes as appropriate.

The CDEDP could have a relationship with other plans and programmes. However, these plans and programmes will also be subject to environmental assessment, including SEA and AA, for the purpose of preventing and mitigating potential negative environmental effects. **Table 4.3** lists the relevant plans and programmes that have potential for cumulative effects with the CDEDP.

The assessment of cumulative effects above focused on national, regional and local plans, programmes, strategy and policy documents that have the potential to affect the same receiving environment that could be affected by the CDEDP.

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The Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 and Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 sets out policies and objectives for land use, settlement strategy, sustainable development, transport, infrastructure, environmental protection, and management, cultural heritage, climate change, etc. for Cork City & County. Other higher-level international, national and regional plans are integrated within the Cork City & County Development Plan and have been assessed as such. The CDEDP will comply with the provisions set within the Cork City & County Development Plan which itself has been subject to standalone environmental assessment (SEA, NIR, etc.).

The assessment of cumulative effects concludes that the implementation of the CDEDP will not result in direct, indirect or cumulative impacts which would have the potential to adversely affect the environment. Indeed the implementation of the CDEDP has the potential for positive cumulative interactions in delivering on policies and objectives of higher level plans in relation to increased economic activity and employment and greater appreciation and understanding of natural heritage, cultural heritage and landscape.

Table 4.3 Potential Cumulative Effects with other Plans and Programmes

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
National Planning Framework (NPF) Project 2040 National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030 (<i>As part of Project Ireland 2040 the National Development Plan sets out the Government's over-arching investment strategy and budget for the period 2021-2030</i>)	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the National Planning Framework have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Southern Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RSES have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the RSES have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
National CFRAMS Programme South- eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study	Catchment-based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies and their product – Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) – are at the core of national policy for flood risk management and the strategy for its implementation. These studies are required by The Floods Directive [2007/60/EC], which is being implemented in Ireland through the European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 [S.I.122/2010]. Each FRMP is accompanied by an associated SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement. The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the FRMP have	No

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Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement

Plan, Programme etc.	Potential Cumulative effect	Likely Cumulative Effect
	ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the FRMP have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	
National 4 th Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030	The Biodiversity Action notes the requirements and purposes of AA and SEA and the vision of the plan to conserve and restored for the benefit of all sectors of society.	No
National Sustainable Mobility Policy (2022)	The policy sets a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support Ireland’s overall requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by the end of this decade. The projects which will be implemented as a result of this national policy will be subject to their individual environmental impact assessment and appropriate assessment processes (as appropriate) and hence there would be no potential adverse effects on the overall receiving environment.	No
River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for Ireland 2022-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the RBMP have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
County Development Plans (Waterford City & County Development Plan 2022-2028, Tipperary County Development Plan 2022-2028, Limerick Development Plan 2022-2028, Kerry County Development Plan 2022-2028)	The County Development Plan (CDP) provides the principal planning strategy document for the development of a local authority area over the statutory time period of the plan. Each of the CDP with Zone of Influence of County Cork has been subject to SEA and AA processes to ensure that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Plan have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No
Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027 – Ireland’s Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy 2023-2027	The SEA and AA processes carried out during the preparation of the Strategy have ensured that the potential significant environmental impacts associated with implementation of the Strategy have been identified and that these impacts have been given appropriate consideration.	No

4.3 Conservation objectives, threats and vulnerabilities of the European Sites

A key aim of the Habitats Directive is to ‘maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest’. Site-specific conservation objectives aim to define favourable conservation condition for particular habitats or species within a European site. In the case of European sites for which site-specific conservation objectives have not yet been prepared, generic conservation objectives have been provided by NPWS.

The integrity of a site is the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified.

Site specific conservation objectives for each of the eight European sites under appraisal in the NIS have been published by NPWS. For every SAC the conservation objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of each of the Qualifying Interests (habitats), as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out. For every SPA the conservation objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of each of the Special Conservation Interests (the bird species and the wetland habitat), as defined by the range of attributes and targets set out.

4.4 Mitigation measures

The findings set out in **Section 4.2** of this Natura Impact Report confirm that, if unmitigated, a number of the actions of the Cork City, Harbour and East Cork Destination & Experience Development Plan have potential for adverse effects on the integrity of a total of eight European sites.

This Plan sits at the lower level of the hierarchy and must comply with relevant higher-level strategic actions / plans. These documents include plans and programmes, which have also been subject to their own environmental assessment processes, as relevant.

The projects included in this Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which this Plan is not part and does not contribute towards. The Plan includes requirements for environmental protection and management including the ones set out in the ***Regional Tourism Development Strategies 2023-2027*** especially the ***Ireland’s Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy***.

As stated in the CDEDP these include:

- **Infrastructure Management** - *With respect to infrastructure (including drinking water, wastewater, surface water, waste and transport) consideration must be given to the available capacity and the potential impact on existing infrastructure, as well as the potential environmental effects arising from the provision of new infrastructure and / or from a likely increase in tourism-related pressures. Any such environmental effects will be appropriately mitigated. The promotion of developing visitor friendly infrastructure where it is required is encouraged.*
- **Visitor Management** - *Those receiving funding will be requested to manage any increase in visitor numbers and/or any change in visitor behaviour in order to avoid significant effects including loss of*

habitat and disturbance, including ensuring that new projects are located at a suitable setback from ecological sensitivities.

Research by Fáilte Ireland has shown improved environmental outcomes (including improved attainment of conservation objectives) in areas operating appropriate visitor management strategies. Visitor management strategies will be required for proposed plans, programmes and projects that are to receive funding as relevant and appropriate.

- **Green Infrastructure and Ecosystem Services** - *Those receiving funding shall contribute towards the maintenance of existing green infrastructure and its ecosystem services, taking into account the output of the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystem Services project being undertaken by the NPWS. Proposals for the development of any green infrastructure should demonstrate the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the: provision of open space amenities; sustainable management of water; the enhancement, protection and management of biodiversity; protection of cultural heritage; and protection of landscape sensitivities.*
Consideration and implementation for all environmental mitigation measures as set out in Irelands Ancient East Regional Tourism Development Strategy will also be considered a requirement as appropriate.

The majority of the mitigation measures are achieved through the detailed environmental protective policies and objectives as set out in the Cork City & County Development Plans 2022-2028. The Development Plans provide for sustainable planning and management control of all development in Cork County & City – including the delivery of Destination Experience Development Plans through continued collaboration with Fáilte Ireland.

Proposals for development within the CDEDP area must comply as appropriate with the relevant provisions included within the Cork City and County Development Plan 2022-2028. Given that the CDEDP sits within and at a lower level in the planning hierarchy, the measures contained to the Development Plans, and in their Natura Impact Reports (NIR), SEA Environmental Reports / SEA Statements and Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA) are applicable to the CDEDP.

Therefore, the key environmental protection measures included in the Cork City and County Development Plans 2022-2028, provide for appropriate and detailed mitigation of potential uncertain environmental effects of the CDEDP. These measures include the following selected aims / policies / objectives as detailed below.

Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 Protective Objectives

- **S05 – Green and Blue Infrastructure, Open Space and Biodiversity** - *Manage and enhance green and blue infrastructure, to protect and promote biodiversity, ecology and habitat connectivity, protect natural areas, enhance landscape character and maritime heritage, and manage access to green and blue spaces that provide recreation, amenity and natural areas.*
- **Objective 6.1 – Cork City Green & Blue Infrastructure Study and Strategy** - *To manage, protect and enhance the Green and Blue Infrastructure assets of Cork City in line with the Cork City Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy set out in the Development Plan, and to support the actions, opportunities and projects identified in the Cork City Green and Blue Infrastructure Study 2021.*
- **Objective 6.5 Trees & Urban Woodland**

- a. To protect and enhance the City's tree and urban woodlands in public and private ownership. Cork City Council will seek to survey, map and maintain existing important individual and groups of trees, using Tree Preservation Orders as appropriate;
- b. To encourage the planting of new urban woodlands and trees where appropriate throughout the City and particularly where there are deficiencies in tree coverage as identified in the Cork City Green and Blue Infrastructure Study;
- c. To support the preparation of a City Tree Strategy which provides a vision for long-term planting, protection and maintenance of trees, hedgerows and woodlands;
- d. To support retaining existing trees and the planting of new trees as part of new developments subject to care on the species of tree and the siting and management of the trees to avoid conflict with transport safety and residential amenity in particular;
- e. To promote the planting of pollinator friendly native deciduous trees and mixed forestry to benefit biodiversity.

■ **Objective 6.6 Rivers, Waterway and Wetlands**

- a. To protect and maintain the integrity, and maximise the potential, of the natural heritage and biodiversity value of rivers, associated watercourses and wetlands in Cork City, and to
- b. To promote an integrated approach to optimising opportunities associated with rivers, waterways and wetlands generate biodiversity, recreation, tourism, and economic benefits.

■ **Objective 6.22 Natural heritage and Biodiversity**

- a. To protect, promote and enhance Cork City's natural heritage and biodiversity;
- b. To support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Plan and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and successor publications in Cork City;
- c. To support and implement the biodiversity actions from the Cork City Heritage and Biodiversity Plan (2021-2026) in partnership with all relevant stakeholders;
- d. Cork City Council will seek to establish and use a City biodiversity database, accessible across all council departments for consideration in land management decision-making;
- e. Cork City Council will work with communities to enhance existing, and the delivery of new, biodiversity-rich areas throughout the City including individual buildings, streets, public and private spaces by supporting the provision of green roofs and walls, rain gardens, biodiversity-rich parklets, rainwater harvesting, natural banks and naturalised SUDS;
- f. Cork City Council will seek, where appropriate, to enhance the linear habitat connectivity, including the interconnection and enhancement of:

- Woodlands, gardens, open spaces, fields and hedgerows.
- Coastal habitats, river catchments, lakes, streams, ponds.
- Aquatic, marginal and bank side habitats.
- Parks, playing fields and recreational areas.
- Upstream of mapped flood zones.
- City transport routes.

■ **Objective 6.23 Designated Sites and Protected Species** - 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.

■ **Objective 6.25 Non-designated Areas of Biodiversity Importance** -Cork City Council will seek to map the City's ecological networks and corridors of local biodiversity value outside of designated areas,

and to work with local stakeholders in supporting the effective management of features which are important for wild flora and fauna and habitats.

- **Objective 6.26 Alien Invasive Species** - *To support the implementation of measures to control and prevent the introduction, establishment or spread of ecologically damaging alien invasive species (e.g. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam).*
- **Objective 10.20 – The River Lee**
 - a. *To ensure that the River Lee is maintained as a defining feature of the City Docks.*
 - b. *To secure access to the riverside and provide walkway / cycleways (see Volume 2: Mapped Objectives).*
 - c. *To update the Public Realm Strategy for the City Docks to take into account the evolving masterplan for the City Docks (north and south).*
 - d. *Measures will be put in place to enhance the River Lee’s biodiversity value.*
 - e. *To provide new active recreational infrastructure to improve access to the river, and to repair and enhance steps and slipways.*
- **Objective 9.4 – Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)**
 - a. *To require that all planning applications for new development incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in so far as possible. Such proposals shall be accompanied by a comprehensive SUDS assessment including run-off quantity, run off quality and impacts on habitat and water quality.*
 - b. *To encourage the provision of green roofs and green walls as an integrated part of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and which provide benefits for biodiversity, wherever feasible.*
 - c. *To investigate the feasibility of preparing Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) guidelines for Cork City during the lifetime of the plan. In the interim The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage document: Nature-based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas Water Sensitive Urban Design - Best Practice Interim Guidance Document, will provide guidance in this regard.*
- **Objective 9.7 – Water Quality**
 - a. *To ensure the delivery of the relevant policies and objectives of The River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018 – 2021 and any subsequent plan, including those relating to protection of water status, improvement of water status, prevention of deterioration and meeting objectives for designated protected sites.*
 - b. *To support Irish Water in its implementation of Water Quality Management Plans for ground, surface, coastal and estuarine waters as part of the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and in the development of Drinking Water Protection Plans.*
 - c. *To support the provision of mitigation and protection measures for all protected areas, including Drinking Water Protected Areas and associated Source Protection Plans in line with the Water Framework Directives and River Basin Management Plans.*
 - d. *To have cognisance of, where relevant, the EU’s Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Documents No. 20 and 36 which provide guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the Water Framework Directive.*
- **Objective 9.8 Flood Protection** - *To protect, enhance and manage the City’s floodplains, wetlands and coastal habitat areas that are subject to flooding as vital ‘green infrastructure’ which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reduce the need to provide flood defence infrastructures. Cork City Council will also require that*

all proposed flood protection or alleviation works will be subject to Appropriate Assessment to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any European Sites and that the requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive are met.

Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 Protective Objectives

■ **MCI 7-5 Marine Leisure**

(a) Support the development of rural Cork's coastal marine leisure facilities, where they are compatible with other objectives and policies in this Plan and any Natura 2000 designations.

(b) Proposals for development of marine leisure facilities will be subject to ecological impact assessment and, where necessary, Appropriate Assessment, with a view to ensuring the avoidance of negative impacts on designated sites, protected species and on-sites or locations of high biodiversity value.

- **EC 8-1 Cork Harbour - b.** *Guide the sustainable future management of different uses in the Cork Harbour area, through a specific planning framework initiative, including strategic economic uses, while protecting the sensitive ecosystems and designated natural habitats including the Cork Harbour SPA and the Great Island Channel SAC.*

■ **GI 14-1 Countywide Green and Blue Infrastructure Objectives**

a) Create an integrated and coherent green infrastructure for the County by encouraging the retention and strengthening of substantial networks of green space in urban, urban fringe and the wider countryside to serve the needs of communities now and in the future and as a key contributor to climate mitigation and climate adaptation.

b) Develop the green infrastructure network (including green corridors) to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, including the protection of Natura 2000 European Sites, the provision of accessible parks, open spaces and recreational facilities (particularly within settlements), the sustainable management of water, the maintenance of landscape character and the protection and enhancement of architectural and archaeological heritage.

c) Capitalise on and highlight the multifunctional benefits/opportunities (ecosystem services) that green and blue infrastructure can present. Seek to advance the use of nature based solutions as an alternative to traditional infrastructure. Seek to advance an ecosystem services approach and ecosystem services valuation as a decision-making tool in plans and projects.

d) Recognise rivers and streams (and their wider riparian corridors) as one of the natural foundations for multi-functional green and blue infrastructure corridors. Seek to strengthen ecological linkages which watercourses have with other water dependent habitats as well as with hedges/treelines, woodland and scrub in the wider landscape.

e) Ensure that all settlements have an adequate level of quality green and recreational infrastructure (active and passive) taking into account existing deficits, planned population growth as well as the need to serve their surrounding hinterlands.

f) Achieve a net gain in green infrastructure through the protection and enhancement of existing assets and through the provision of new green infrastructure as an integral part of the planning process. Encourage the provision of different green infrastructure elements, such as trees in urban areas and green roofs in town centres, so that a net gain in green infrastructure is achieved over the lifetime of this Development Plan.

g) Seek to increase investment in green infrastructure provision and maintenance by accessing relevant EU funding mechanisms and national funding opportunities including tourism related funding.

h) Integrate the provision of green infrastructure with infrastructure provision and replacement, including walking and cycling routes, as appropriate, while protecting biodiversity and other landscape resources.

i) Support initiatives and programmes which seek to strengthen the green and blue infrastructure and work with communities and other stakeholders in furthering the green and blue infrastructure concept.

■ **BE 15-1: Support and comply with national biodiversity protection policies**

a) Support and comply with the objectives of the National Biodiversity Plan 2017-2021 (and any future National Biodiversity Plan which may be adopted during the period of this Plan) as appropriate,

b) Implement the current County Biodiversity Action Plan and any future updated Plan;

c) Support and comply with biodiversity policy set out in other national and regional policy documents as appropriate.

■ **BE 15-2: Protect sites, habitats and species**

a) Protect all natural heritage sites which are designated or proposed for designation under European legislation, National legislation and International Agreements. Maintain and where possible enhance appropriate ecological linkages between these. This includes Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Marine Protected Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and Ramsar Sites. These sites are listed in Volume 2 of the Plan.

b) Provide protection to species listed in the Flora Protection Order 2015, to Annexes of the Habitats and Birds Directives, and to animal species protected under the Wildlife Acts in accordance with relevant legal requirements. These species are listed in Volume 2 of the Plan.

c) Protect and where possible enhance areas of local biodiversity value, ecological corridors and habitats that are features of the County's ecological network. This includes rivers, lakes, streams and ponds, peatland and other wetland habitats, woodlands, hedgerows, tree lines, veteran trees, natural and semi-natural grasslands as well as coastal and marine habitats. It particularly includes habitats of special conservation significance in Cork as listed in Volume 2 of the Plan.

d) Recognise the value of protecting geological heritage sites of local and national interest, as they become notified to the local authority, and protect them from inappropriate development.

e) Encourage, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, the protection and enhancement of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

■ **BE 15-6: Biodiversity and New Development** - Provide for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the development management process and when licensing or permitting other activities by:

a) Providing ongoing support and guidance to developers on incorporating biodiversity considerations into new development through preplanning communications and the Council's guidance document 'Biodiversity and the Planning Process – guidance for developments on the management of biodiversity issues during the planning process' and any updated versions of this advice;

b) Encouraging the retention and integration of existing trees, hedgerows and other features of high natural value within new developments;

- c) Requiring the incorporation of primarily native tree and other plant species, particularly pollinator friendly species in the landscaping of new developments;*
- d) Fulfilling Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment obligations and carrying out Ecological Impact Assessment in relation to development and activities, as appropriate;*
- e) Ensuring that an appropriate level of assessment is completed in relation to wetland habitats subject to proposals which would involve drainage or reclamation. This includes lakes and ponds, watercourses, springs and swamps, marshes, heath, peatlands, some woodlands as well as some coastal and marine habitats;*
- f) Ensuring that the implementation of appropriate mitigation (including habitat enhancement, new planting or other habitat creation initiatives) is incorporated into new development, where the implementation of such development would result in unavoidable impacts on biodiversity - supporting the principle of biodiversity net gain.*
- **BE 15-7: Control of Invasive Alien Species** - *Implement best practice to minimise the risk of spread of invasive alien species, on Council owned or managed land, and require the development and implementation of Invasive Alien Species Management Plans for new developments where required.*
 - **TO 10-1 Promotion of Sustainable Tourism in County Cork** - *Promote a sustainable approach to the development of the tourism sector within Cork County while;*
 - a) Ensuring the protection of the natural, built and cultural heritage assets of the county, including Natura sites, which are in themselves part of what attracts visitors to the county.*
 - b) Having regard to cumulative impacts increased visitor numbers and visitor facilities can have on local infrastructure, sensitive areas and sites, water quality, biodiversity, soils, ecosystems, habitats and species, climate change etc.*
 - c) Supporting investment in placemaking and the regeneration of towns and villages in recognition of the role 'People and Place' make in attracting visitors to Ireland; encouraging the development of tourism and other facilities within settlements to support such regeneration and compact growth.*
 - d) Work in partnership with public and private sector agencies to implement the key tourism objectives in this Plan, while first ensuring early consultation with landowners around any new proposed routes and facilities.*
 - e) Assist community groups to access funding for appropriate, sustainable and beneficial tourism developments.*
 - **TO 10-2 Wild Atlantic Way and Irelands Ancient East** - *Continue to actively engage, invest, encourage and promote the development of the Wild Atlantic Way and Irelands Ancient East regional brands through sustainable tourism, which will enable visitors to have enjoyable experiences while having regard for the cultural, built and natural heritage, and environmental impacts, including the protection of Natura 2000 sites.*
 - **WM 11-1: EU Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan**
 - a) Protect and improve the County's water resources and ensure that development permitted meets the requirements of the River Basin Management Plan and does not contravene the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive.*
 - b) Promote compliance with the River Basin Management Plan and associated environmental standards and objectives set out in the European Communities (Environmental Objectives) Surface Water Regulations, 2009 and the European Communities (Environmental Objectives) Groundwater Regulations, 2010, to prevent deterioration; restore good status; reduce chemical pollution, and*

achieve water related protected areas objectives in rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters (as applicable).

c) Secure the objectives and facilitate the implementation of the associated Programme of Measures of the River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021 and any successor plan for ground, surface, estuarine, coastal and transitional waters in the Plan area as part of the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive.

d) Support an integrated and collaborative approach to local catchment management in order to assist in the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan.

e) In acknowledgement of the sustained pressures on ecological status being experienced in Blue Dot catchment waterbodies, additional measures, as deemed necessary to protect and restore these waterbodies to high status may be required for development permitted in such catchments. Measures may include, but are not limited to, a water management plan (including the construction phase), tertiary treatment and appropriate SUDs measures.

f) Support the prioritisation of the provision of water services infrastructure in:

- Metropolitan Cork, the Key Towns and Main Towns to complement the overall strategy for economic and population growth while ensuring appropriate protection of the environment.*
- All settlements where services are not meeting current needs, are failing to meet the requirements of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive, and where these deficiencies are – interfering with Councils ability to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive; or – having negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites; and*

g) Development may only proceed where appropriate wastewater treatment is available which meets the requirements of environmental legislation, the Water Framework Directive and the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

■ **WM 11-2: Surface Water Protection**

a) Protect and improve the status and quality of all surface waters throughout the County, including transitional and coastal waters.

b) At least secondary treatment should be provided to all wastewater discharges from any new development, to surface waters.

■ **WM 11-3: Groundwater Protection**

a) Preserve and protect groundwater and surface water quality throughout the County.

b) Prevent or limit, as appropriate, the input of pollutants into groundwater and prevent the deterioration of the status of all bodies of groundwater.

c) Protect, enhance and restore all bodies of groundwater and ensure a balance between abstraction and recharge of groundwater with the aim of achieving good groundwater quantitative status and good groundwater chemical status.

d) Reverse any significant and sustained upward trend in the concentration of any pollutant resulting from the impact of human activity in order to progressively reduce pollution of groundwater.

e) Achieve compliance with any standards and objectives established for a groundwater dependant protected area included in the register of protected areas.

- **TO 10-5 Protection of Natural, Built and Cultural Features** - *Protect and conserve those natural, built, and cultural heritage features that form the resources on which the County's tourist industry is based. These features will include areas of important landscape, coastal scenery, areas of important wildlife interest, historic buildings and structures including archaeological sites, cultural sites including battlefields, the Gaeltacht areas, arts and cultural sites, the traditional form and*

appearance of many built up areas and promote access and interpretation of archaeological sites in State and Local Authority ownership.

■ **BE 15-17: Waste Prevention and Management**

a) Planning applications for infilling of marginal land through soil importation will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the developments accord with proper planning and sustainable development, ensuring that they are compatible with the protection of environmental resources including water quality, Natura 2000 sites, biodiversity, archaeological and landscape resources.

b) Support will be provided for locating suitable sites within the county for the safe disposal of construction and demolition waste in conjunction with the Southern Waste Region.

c) Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs)/ Construction and Demolition Management Plans shall be prepared for larger scale projects as set out in paragraph 15.12.24 and this requirement shall be assessed on a case-by-case basis as part of the development management process.

d) Support the implementation of the recommendations and policies of the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2014-2020.

4.5 Summary and Conclusion

This Natura Impact Statement has considered the potential impacts of the implementation of the Cork City, Harbour and East Cork Destination & Experience Development Plan on the integrity of the relevant European sites.

This report concludes on the best scientific evidence that it can be clearly demonstrated that no elements of the CDEDP will result in any impact on the integrity or Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests of any relevant European site, either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects, in light of their conservation objectives, provided mitigation measures are implemented.

Refer to Appendix 1 for the Appropriate Assessment Determination.

Appendix 1 – Appropriate Assessment Determination

**Appropriate Assessment Determination under the
European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended)
for the
Draft Cork City, Harbour & East Cork Destination and Experience Development Plan**

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) Determination, pursuant to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive and Regulation 42 (11) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended), as to whether a plan or project would adversely affect the integrity of a European Site has been made by Fáilte Ireland.

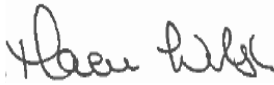
In carrying out this AA, Fáilte Ireland is taking into account the relevant matters specified under Regulation 42 (12) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended). The AA Natura Impact Statement (which considers other relevant plans and projects) has been carefully considered and its reasoning and conclusion agreed with and adopted. All other relevant documents prepared and submitted during the preparation process for the Cork City, Harbour & East Cork Destination and Experience Development Plan were also considered in making this determination, including the Plan to be finalised and written submissions made on the Draft Plan and associated documents while they were on public display.

It is determined that the risks to the integrity of the Natura 2000 sites have been addressed by the inclusion of achievable mitigation measures that will prioritise the avoidance of impacts in the first place and reliably mitigate these impacts where they cannot be avoided. Furthermore, in order to be realised, projects included in the Plan will have to comply, as relevant, with the various provisions of legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier AA) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework, of which the Plan is not part and does not contribute towards.

Having incorporated these mitigation commitments; it is determined that implementation of the Cork City, Harbour & East Cork Destination and Experience Development Plan will not have a significant adverse effect on the ecological integrity of any European Site, either individually or in combination with any other plan or project¹. Therefore, no further assessment is required.

Date: June 2024

Signed:



Signatory
Approved Officer

¹ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:

- a) No alternative solution available,
- b) Imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and
- c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.

Brady Shipman Martin

DUBLIN

Mountpleasant Business Centre
Mountpleasant Avenue Upper
Ranelagh
Dublin 6

CORK

Penrose Wharf Business Centre
Penrose Wharf
Cork

LIMERICK

11 The Crescent
Limerick

+353 1 208 1900

mail@bradyshipmanmartin.com

www.bradyshipmanmartin.com

