



N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Report

May 2022

Mott MacDonald
5 Eastgate Avenue
Eastgate
Little Island
Co Cork T45 EE72
Ireland

T +353 (0)21 480 9800
mottmac.com

Wexford County Council,
Roads Department,
Wexford County Council,
Carricklawn,
Wexford Town.
Y25 WY93

Tel: (053) 919 6000

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Directors: J T Murphy BE HDipMM CEng
FIEI FConsEI FIAE (Managing), D Herlihy
BE MSc CEng, R Jefferson BSC MSCS
MRICS MCI Arb DipConLaw, J Shinkwin
BE DipMechEng CEng MIEI, M D Haigh
BSc CEng FICE MCIWEM (British)
Innealtóirí Comhairleach (Consulting
Engineers)
Company Secretary: Michael Cremin CPA
Registered in Ireland no. 53280.
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Issue and Revision Record

Revision	Date	Originator	Checker	Approver	Description
P1	18/06/2021	J. Lyne	E Johnston/ R Macnaughton	J Shinkwin	First Issue
P2	27/07/2021	E Johnston	R Macnaughton	J Shinkwin	Updated based on client comment
P3	13/05/2022	E Johnston	R Macnaughton	R Macnaughton	Updated based on client comment

Document reference: 229100548 | 229100548-MMD-0000-RE-RP-C-0028 | P3

Information class: Standard

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

Rosslare Europort is a key strategic transport link between Ireland and both the European mainland and the United Kingdom. It is an important ferry port for all major Roll-On, Roll-Off (RO-RO) passenger and freight services operating on UK and continental routes. The N25 is a strategically important national primary road which together with the connecting N11/M11 national primary road and Rosslare Europort form part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). TEN-T is a European Union initiative directed towards the implementation and development of a Europe-wide network of transport infrastructure, and this inter-modal transport corridor provides a critical connection between Ireland and both the European mainland and the United Kingdom.

The N25 along with the connecting N11 are vital strategic transport corridors providing national and regional connectivity with Rosslare Europort, a critical gateway with continental Europe and the UK. Rosslare Europort is Ireland's second largest port for unitised freight and passenger numbers and provides the shortest sea crossing between Ireland & mainland Europe. The impacts of Brexit have significantly intensified Rosslare Europort's strategic importance as a gateway for Irish trade and tourism. The N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road project aims to support the future resilience of this critical international land-sea corridor by delivering a safe, sustainable, high-quality and cost-effective direct transport connection with Rosslare Europort. Wexford County Council is proposing to provide improved access to Rosslare Europort from the N25 National Primary Road to ensure and secure the sustainability and competitiveness of this key transport link. The main objectives of the project are as follows:

- Improve accessibility and connectivity to Rosslare Europort in order to secure the sustainability and competitiveness of this key international transport corridor;
- Improve road safety, particularly in the village of Rosslare Harbour;
- Avoid or minimise negative impacts on the existing environment;
- Improve accessibility and social inclusion in Rosslare Harbour village by managing or removing Port traffic;
- To promote balanced regional development by improving access to the south-east and Rosslare Europort;
- Promote sustainable and active travel by integrating high quality cycling and walking infrastructure.

1.2 Requirement for Appropriate Assessment

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) is European Community legislation regarding nature conservation. The intention of the Directive is to ensure biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora in Europe. The Habitats Directive was transposed into Irish law by the *European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 (S.I. No. 94 of 1997)* and the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended. The 1997 Regulations were subsequently revoked and replaced by the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011*, as amended.

A network of sites of conservation importance hosting habitats and/or species identified in the Directives as needing to be either maintained at or returned to favourable conservation status have been identified by each Member State. These sites are known as European sites within the

Natura 2000 network and in Ireland, European sites comprise areas designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and/or Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

The Habitats Directive requires that where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, while not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the site, it will be subject to 'Appropriate Assessment' to identify any implications for the European site in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. Specifically, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

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

Article 176B of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 requires that "A planning authority shall, where appropriate, carry out screening for appropriate assessment in respect of a proposed development...". The proposed development is not associated with the 'management' of European sites within the Natura 2000 Network having regard to Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, and as such it is appropriate that the proposed development is subjected to screening for appropriate assessment.

This screening assessment investigates, in view of best scientific knowledge, whether the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on European sites. This report considers the likelihood of significant effects on European sites from the construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed development.

1.3 Methodology

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following European Commission Guidance:

- EC (2018) Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC Commission Notice C(2018) 7621
- DEHLG (2009) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities (Revised 2010).
- EC (2000) Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- EC (2007) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC: Clarification of the concepts of alternative solutions and imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the Commission.

This report has similarly been prepared with regard to relevant rulings by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), the High Court, and the Supreme Court.

This assessment includes a desk-based review of available records of protected species and habitats including the following sources:

- Conservation Status Assessment Reports (CSARs), Backing Documents and Maps prepared in accordance with Article 17 of the Habitats Directive;
- Site Synopsis and Conservation Objective Reports available from NPWS;

- Published and unpublished NPWS reports on protected habitats and species including Irish Wildlife Manual reports, Species Action Plans, and Conservation Management Plans; and
- Existing relevant mapping and databases e.g. waterbody status, species and habitat distribution etc. (sourced from the Environmental Protection Agency - <http://gis.epa.ie/>, the National Biodiversity Data Centre - <http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie> and the National Parks and Wildlife Services - <http://www.npws.ie/mapsanddata/>, and the Forestry Service (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine).

In addition, ecology filed surveys have been conducted as follows which informed this report;

- Winter bird surveys were carried out in the vicinity of the scheme by an experienced ornithologist during the 2019/2020 and the 2020/2021 winter seasons.
- Field walkover surveys have been conducted on the site by an experienced ecologist during April and May 2021.

2 Project Description

2.1 Overview of the Proposed Development

The proposed N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road (REAR), which hereafter may be referred to as the proposed road development/scheme, comprises the construction of approximately 1.45km of high quality single carriageway road consisting of a combination of improved existing road and new road corridor to provide a new access route to Rosslare Europort in Co. Wexford, in the townlands of Ballygerry and Ballygillane Little. The proposed scheme includes a railway crossing, two access underpasses, pedestrian/cycle facilities, public lighting, safety measures, environmental mitigation measures and local road junctions and property accesses, as well as localised services diversions.

The scheme utilises and repurposes the existing L3068 Ballygerry Link Road and begins at its junction with the existing N25 national road at Ballygillane. A separate Wexford County Council scheme titled 'N25 Ballygillane Roundabout' proposes a new roundabout at this junction to improve its operational and safety performance. This project received planning permission in January 2020 under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, and Part XI of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Wexford County Council intends to construct the N25 Ballygillane Roundabout scheme in 2022.

The proposed road scheme will improve the existing L3068 Ballygerry Link Road to the standards required for a national primary road and to meet the forecast future demand for port traffic. A new section of road then extends from the western end of the existing L3068 Ballygerry Link Road at its junction with the existing L7021 Churchtown Road. The new section of road then turns to the north, crossing over the existing Dublin to Rosslare Harbour rail line before continuing east to connect into Rosslare Europort, via a new roundabout proposed as part of the Masterplan Phase 1 development of Rosslare Europort. Phase 1 of the Masterplan for Rosslare Europort received planning approval in August 2020 (application reference: 20200725) and will commence construction in 2022. The Rosslare Europort Infrastructure Masterplan Phase 1 includes proposals for the development of a new internal road layout that will improve the flow of traffic through the port thus allowing the port to implement the operational capacity required for the current and forecast future increases in freight and passenger traffic using the port. The layout of the masterplan infrastructure also enables the development of new customs terminal facilities at the port. The Office of Public Works (OPW) received planning permission for the terminal development in August 2021 (planning reference number 20211322) and intend to commence construction in 2022. The proposed road development has been designed in close consultation with Rosslare Europort and OPW in order to ensure the full integration of the separate but interconnected developments.

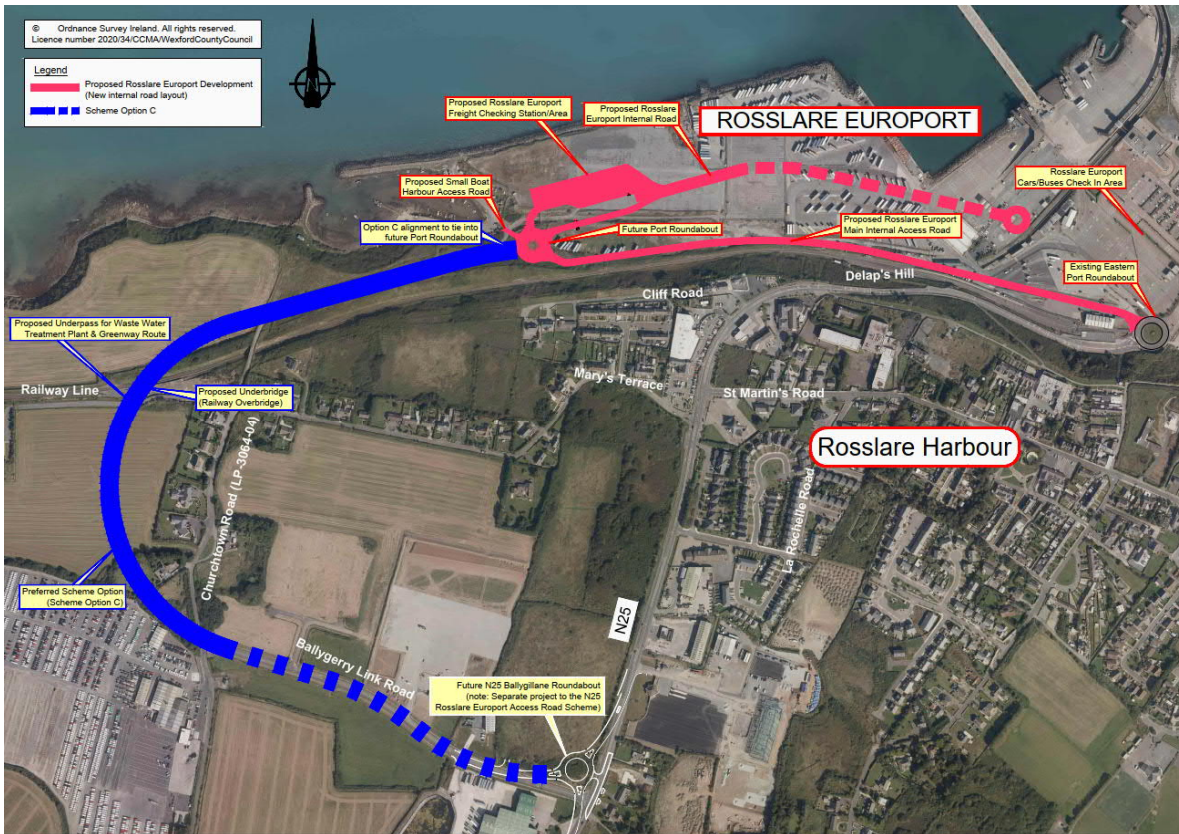
The proposed road development was also developed in consideration of proposals for the future development of a greenway connecting the villages of Rosslare Harbour and Rosslare Strand with a possible onwards connections with Wexford town to the north and New Ross/Waterford city to the west. A preferred route corridor for the Rosslare Harbour to Rosslare Strand greenway has been identified and it is anticipated that a planning submission will be made in 2022. The proposed scheme includes high quality segregated pedestrian & cycle facilities that will also fully integrate with the proposed greenway project.

The total area within the footprint of the development boundary is approximately 8.07ha.

2.2 Project Location

The works are located on the outskirts of Rosslare Harbour. Rosslare Harbour is located approximately 10km south east of Wexford, refer to Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: Works location within Rosslare Harbour



2.3 Construction Phase Activities and Associated Potential for Effects

Construction activities required will be as follows:

1. Upgrading of 450m of the existing Ballygerry Link Road and provision of 1km of new single road carriageway with associated lay-bys to provide a new access route to Rosslare Europort.; all existing private accesses will be maintained, and local road tie-ins upgraded along the 1.45km route of the proposed development
2. Construction of a 3m wide shared two-way cycle/pedestrian route between the proposed N25 Ballygillane Roundabout to the new future Rosslare Europort roundabout;
3. New railway bridge;
4. 2No. underpasses providing provision for access to the existing Irish Water Wastewater Treatment Plant (located in Ballygerry townland) and to the future Rosslare Strand to Rosslare Harbour Greenway, respectively;
5. New staggered road junction with L7021 Churchtown/Station Road;
6. Minor road realignment of the existing L7021 Churchtown/Station Road;
7. Vehicle restraint systems and fencing at the existing railway bridge (OBH227);
8. Drainage systems and flood mitigation measures, including attenuation ponds and storage tank;
9. Enabling works including the demolition of a single residential dwelling (Wayside House, Station Road);

10. Provision of traffic calming islands measure at certain locations along the hatch median.

11. Provision of all associated site development and infrastructure works (including fencing, drainage, utilities, road markings, signage, landscaping and public lighting).

To facilitate the scheme construction there will be a requirement for site clearance, excavation and earth moving. These works have the potential to result in direct impacts to habitats within the footprint of the works. Excavation and earth moving activities, including the storage of materials like topsoil, have the potential to result in sediment laden run-off and increased levels of dust. Spills and leaks of oils, fuels, concrete, and chemicals from storage areas, plant, and equipment used during construction can further cause impacts to surface water during the construction phase.

The proposed works will result in an increase in noise level during construction due to the presence of construction vehicles and machinery on site. Activities likely to generate the most noise include the breaking out of the existing road surface, piling associated with the structure construction, and compaction activities during reinstatement.

Four construction compounds have been identified for use during the construction phase of the proposed developments.

2.4 Operational Phase Activities and Associated Potential for Effects

A new section of road is required from the existing junction of the Ballygerry Link Road/Churchtown Road to the existing Port. The construction of this section of road will result in a permanent loss of agricultural grassland, tillage field and scrub habitats.

New drainage outfalls will be required to accommodate the drainage for the scheme. One will outfall through an attenuation pond into an existing drainage ditch which ultimately flows to the Grange Big Stream. The northern portion of the scheme will tie into the existing Port drainage.

New lighting will be required at the operational phase along the new infrastructure section, and the new cycleway. This will result in increased light levels along the scheme footprint.

2.5 Zone of Influence

The works are located entirely outside of any European sites. However, the Zone of Influence of works can impact areas outside of the immediate footprint of works.

CIEEM guidelines (2018) states that the “*zone of influence (Zoi) is the area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes as a result of the proposed project and associated activities*” and that the “*zone of influence will vary for different ecological features depending on their sensitivity to an environmental change*”.

The likely biophysical changes associated with the works are set out having regard to the timing, frequency, duration, location, extent and magnitude of the works. The zones of influence associated with these project effects have been derived from relevant published literature and guidance documents. All European sites within the defined zones of influence were identified using Geographic Information System (ArcGIS).

The zone of impact for each is outlined below:

Direct Loss of Habitat

There is potential for a loss of supporting habitat and displacement for SCI bird species associated with the proposed development.

Disturbance and displacement

There is potential for increased operational phase visual disturbance from increased traffic and vehicle presence to coastal SCI bird species with the proposed development.

Surface water run-off

As previously noted, there is potential for impacts to surface water caused by the proposed works. On a precautionary basis, given the potential for remobilisation of sedimentation and other pollutants within the water column, the Zol for surface water runoff is taken on a river catchment basis.

Dust

Breaking out of existing hardstanding has the potential to cause dust. The proposed construction works are likely to result in the temporary generation of dust. The Institute of Air Quality Management 'Guidance on the Assessment of the Impacts of Construction on Air Quality and the Determination of their Significance' (2014) prescribes potential dust emission risk classes to ecological receptors. The guidance specifies that the need for a detailed assessment arises "where there is an 'ecological receptor' within 50m of the works, or within 50m of the route(s) used by construction vehicles on the public highway, up to 500m from the site entrance" and that "Where the need for a more detailed assessment is screened out, it can be concluded that the level of risk is "negligible", and any effects will not be significant".

The Zol is, therefore, taken as 50m from the works and 500m along existing roadways from the works areas.

Noise

There is potential for a temporary increase in noise during the construction of the proposed works. Wetland birds have been documented to tolerate noise levels at or below 70dBA (Institute of Estuarine & Coastal Studies, University of Hull, 2009). A noise study carried out as part of the application process found that the worst case scenario for noise impacts during the construction phase falls to within 70dBA within 90m of the site boundary. The Zol for noise impacts is therefore taken as 90m.

2.6 Source Pathway Receptor Assessment

European sites within 15km of the proposed project were identified using GIS software as per DoEHLG guidance (2010). European sites outside of 15km but with connectivity to the proposed project were also identified. The location of the works area in relation to European Sites, with 15km buffer shown, is presented in Figure 2.2.

The source-pathway-receptor connectivity between European Sites and the works areas was investigated using GIS software, and through examination of aerial photography to determine likely pathways of connection including ecological corridors and stepping-stones.

The assessment had regard to the Zone of Impact for the works as outlined above. Any European Sites identified to have a viable source-pathway-receptor connection to the proposed works were then examined further to determine the potential for significant effects. The results of this examination are presented in Table 2.2

Figure 2.2: Site Location in Relation to European Sites

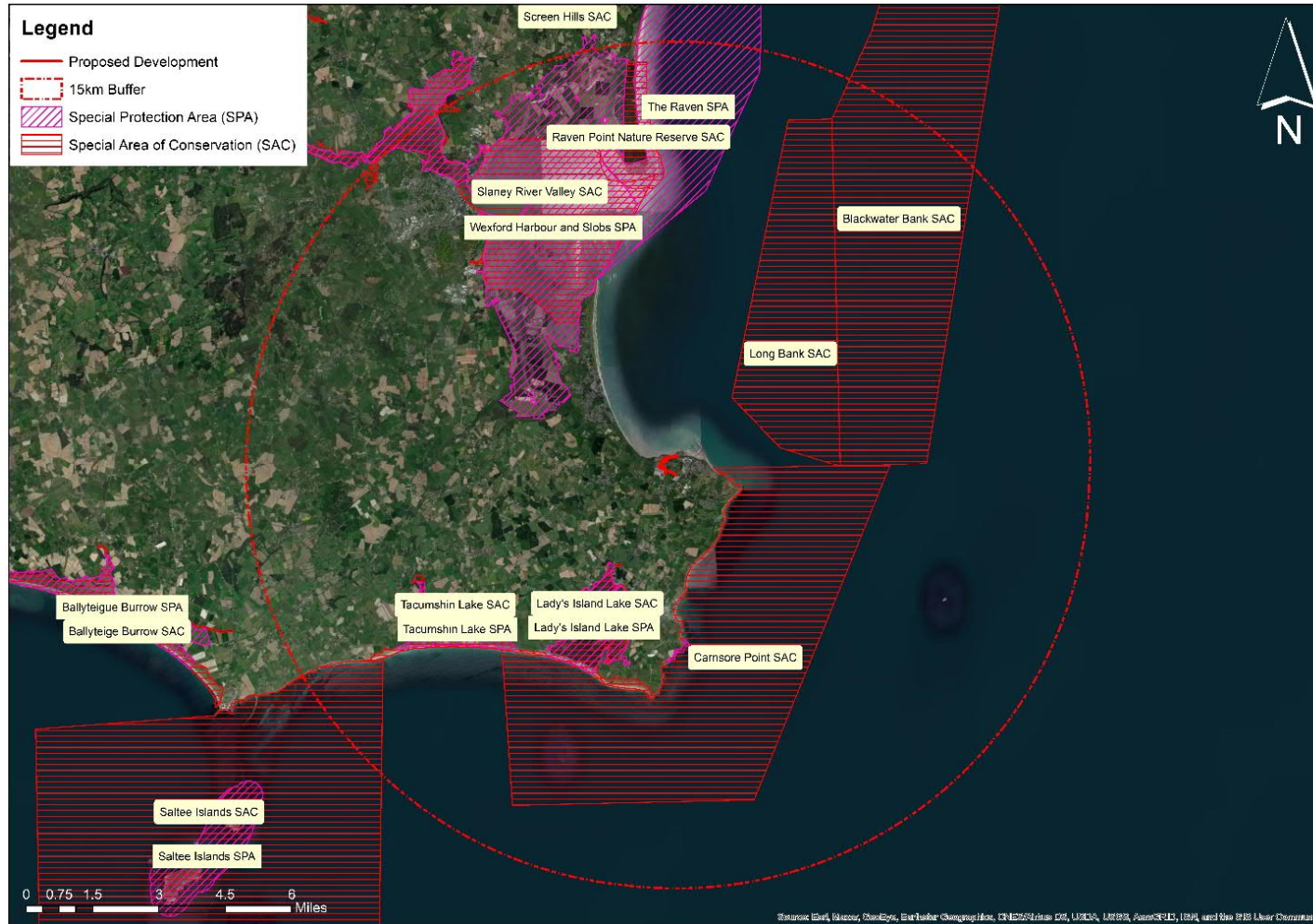


Table 2.1: Source Pathway Receptor Analysis

Designated Site	Qualifying Interest/ Feature	Distance and potential connectivity	Source Pathway Receptor Analysis
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Carnsore Point SAC (002269)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Reefs [1170] 	<p>The works area is located approximately 1.4km from the nearest point of the SAC.</p> <p>Hydrological connectivity is present through the coastal waters. The works are generally buffered from the coastal waters with the closest works area set back approximately 35m from the water's edge. However, outfalls to the coastal waters to accommodate surface water drainage may be required.</p> <p>Given the location of the works area relative to the European Site, the habitats for which it's designated, the nature and scale of the works there is no potential for significant effects.</p>	<p>Given the distance between the works area and the European Site, and their locations relative to each other, there is no viable source pathway receptor link.</p>
Long Bank SAC (002161)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110] 	<p>The nearest point of the site is approximately 2km from the works area. The closest extent of this habitat to the works area is located approximately 2.6km from the site boundary (NPWS 2013a).</p> <p>Hydrological connectivity is present through the coastal waters. The works are generally buffered from the coastal waters with the closest works area set back approximately 35m from the water's edge.</p> <p>Given the location of the works area relative to the European Site, the habitats for which it's designated, the nature and scale of the works there is no potential for significant effects.</p>	<p>Given the distance between the work area and the European Site, and their locations relative to each other, there is no viable source pathway receptor link.</p>
Lady's Island Lake SAC (000704)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal lagoons [1150] Reefs [1170] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] 	<p>The nearest point of the site is located approximately 3.5km from the works area and is buffered by a large area of land.</p> <p>Hydrological connectivity is present through the coastal waters. The works are generally buffered from the coastal waters with the closest works area set back approximately 35m from the water's edge.</p> <p>Given the location of the works area relative to the European Site, the habitats for which it's designated, the nature and scale of the works there is no potential for significant effects.</p>	<p>Given the distance between the work area and the SAC, there is no viable source pathway receptor link.</p>

Designated Site	Qualifying Interest/ Feature	Distance and potential connectivity	Source Pathway Receptor Analysis
Blackwater Bank SAC (002953)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time [1110] 	<p>The closest mapped extent of sandbanks to the works area is located approximately 7.9km from the boundary (NPWS 2013b).</p> <p>Hydrological connectivity is present through the coastal waters. The works are generally buffered from the coastal waters with the closest works area set back approximately 35m from the water's edge.</p> <p>Given the location of the works area relative to the European Site, the habitats for which it's designated, the nature and scale of the works there is no potential for significant effects.</p>	<p>Given the distance between the work area and the SAC there is no viable source pathway receptor link.</p>
Raven Point Nature Reserve SAC (000710)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (<i>Salicion arenariae</i>) [2170] Humid dune slacks [2190] 	<p>The nearest point of the SAC is located approximately 9.5km from the works area.</p> <p>Hydrological connectivity is present through the coastal waters. The works are generally buffered from the coastal waters with the closest works area set back approximately 35m from the water's edge.</p> <p>Given the location of the works area relative to the European Site, the habitats for which it's designated, the nature and scale of the works there is no potential for significant effects.</p>	<p>Given the distance between the work area and the SAC there is no viable source pathway receptor link.</p>
Saltee Islands SAC (000707)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1160 Large shallow inlets and bays 1170 Reefs 	<p>The nearest point of the site is located approximately 13km from the works area.</p> <p>Hydrological connectivity is present through the coastal waters. The works are generally buffered from the coastal waters with the closest works area set back approximately 35m from the water's edge.</p>	<p>Given the potential for <i>ex situ</i> Qualifying Interest (QI) Grey Seal associated with the SAC to occur within the ZoI of the proposed development, a viable source pathway receptor link is identified.</p>

Designated Site	Qualifying Interest/ Feature	Distance and potential connectivity	Source Pathway Receptor Analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts • 8330 Submerged or partially submerged sea caves • 1364 Grey seal (<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>) 	<p>Given the location of the works area relative to the European Site, there is no potential for impact to habitats associated with the SAC</p> <p>The Grey seal haulout areas associated with this SAC are located approximately 19km from the works area. 13km of this distance is land.</p> <p>There is potential that seals may occur in the coastal waters surrounding the REAR scheme based on historic records available from the National Biodiversity Data Centre. NPWS Guidance outlines that works including piling, and blasting can have significant effects including injury and death to marine mammals. It is understood that no blasting will be required along the scheme, however piling will be required</p>	
<p>Slaney River Valley SAC (000781)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estuaries [1130] • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] • Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] • Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] • Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation [3260] • Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] • Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>) [91E0] 	<p>The nearest point of the SAC is located approximately 5.5km from the works area.</p> <p>A small stream known as Grange Big (EPA Code 12G48) is noted in proximity to the footprint of the works area. There is potential for indirect hydrological connectivity between this stream and the SAC, which is located approximately 8.5km downstream (hydrological route).</p> <p>Twaite shad may occur in the coastal waters nearby. The works area is set back from coastal waters by 35m, however, there is potential for outfalls to be constructed to accommodate drainage during the operational phase.</p> <p>Otter and seal have the potential to occur outside the boundaries of the SAC. The works are set back from the coast by 35m. No signs of otter were recorded during site walkovers, however it is likely that they use the coastal waters along the shore at least on occasion.</p> <p>Haulout areas for seals are noted 8km to the north and 19km to the south of the works area. There is potential that seals may occur in the coastal waters surrounding the REAR scheme, within the Zol for noise. NPWS Guidance outlines that works including piling, and blasting can have significant effects including injury and</p>	<p>Given the potential for <i>ex situ</i> Qualifying Interest (QI) Grey Seal and Otter associated with the SAC to occur within the Zol of the proposed development, a viable source pathway receptor link is identified.</p>

Designated Site	Qualifying Interest/ Feature	Distance and potential connectivity	Source Pathway Receptor Analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> (freshwater pearl mussel) [1029] • <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> (Sea Lamprey) [1095] • <i>Lampetra planeri</i> (brook lamprey) [1096] • <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> (river lamprey) [1099] • <i>Alosa fallax fallax</i> (twaité shad) [1103] • <i>Salmo salar</i> (salmon) [1106] • <i>Lutra lutra</i> (otter) [1355] • <i>Phoca vitulina</i> (harbour seal) 	death to marine mammals and outlines a radius of 1km from the piling.	
Tacumshin Lake SAC (000709)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal lagoons [1150] • Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] • Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] • Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] 	<p>The nearest point of the site is located approximately 7.5km from the works area.</p> <p>Hydrological connectivity is present through the coastal waters. The works are generally buffered from the coastal waters with the closest works area set back approximately 35m from the water's edge.</p> <p>Given the location of the works area relative to the European Site, the habitats for which it's designated, the nature and scale of the works there is no potential for significant effects.</p>	Given the distance between the work area and the SAC, there is no viable source pathway receptor link.
Special Protection Areas (SPA)			
Lady's Island Lake SPA (004009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red-throated diver (<i>Gavia stellate</i>) [A001] • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Common scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] • Grey plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] 	<p>The works area is located outside of the boundary of Lady's Island Lake SPA, which is approximately 3.7km away. However, there is potential for birds associated with European sites to occur outside of the SPA boundary.</p> <p>Wintering bird surveys were carried out in the vicinity of the scheme in the 2019/2020 and the 2020/2021 wintering seasons. Counts from the 2019/2020 season recorded red throated diver</p>	Given the records of <i>ex situ</i> SCI bird species in proximity to the proposed development location, a viable source pathway receptor link is identified.

Designated Site	Qualifying Interest/ Feature	Distance and potential connectivity	Source Pathway Receptor Analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] • Greenland white-fronted goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>(peak count 1), and cormorant (peak count 28) within the count section in both seasons.</p> <p>A field along the alignment adjacent to the sea was identified during Phase 2 of the project as a foraging area for small numbers of wintering Special Conservation Interests (SCI) bird species.</p>	
<p>Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] • Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Grey Heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [A028] • Bewick's Swan (<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>) [A037] • Whooper Swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] • Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] • Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] • Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] • Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] • Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] 	<p>The works area is located outside of the boundary of any Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA which is approximately 4km away. However, there is potential for birds associated with European sites to occur outside of the SPA boundary.</p> <p>Wintering bird surveys were carried out in the vicinity of the scheme in the 2019/2020 and the 2020/2021 wintering seasons. SCI species, (along with peak counts across the two seasons) recorded within the section (shoreline and fields) which incorporates the proposed development are outlined hereunder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great crested grebe (peak count of 3 recorded during 2020/2021 season), • Cormorant (peak count of 28 recorded during 2019/2020 season), • Grey heron (peak count of 4 recorded during 2019/2020 season) • Red breasted merganser (peak count of 4 recorded during 2019/2020 season), • Oystercatcher (peak count 4 2020/2021 season), • Lapwing (peak count of 151 recorded during 2019/2020 season), • Black tailed godwit (peak count 53 recorded during 2019/2020 season) • Curlew (peak count of 77 recorded during the 2019/2020 season), • Redshank (peak count 5 2020/2021 season) • Black headed gull (peak count of 49 recorded during the 2020/2021 season) • Lesser black-backed gull (peak count of 1 recorded during the 2019/2020 season) 	<p>Given the records of <i>ex situ</i> SCI species in proximity to the proposed development location, a viable source pathway receptor link is identified.</p>

Designated Site	Qualifying Interest/ Feature	Distance and potential connectivity	Source Pathway Receptor Analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>) [A062] • Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] • Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] • Hen harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>) [A082] • Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125] • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] • Golden plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] • Grey plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] • Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] • Black-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] • Bar-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] • Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] • Black-headed gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] • Lesser black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] 		

Designated Site	Qualifying Interest/ Feature	Distance and potential connectivity	Source Pathway Receptor Analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) [A195] • Greenland white-fronted goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] • Wetland and waterbirds [A999] 		
The Raven SPA (004019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red-throated diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) [A001] • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Common scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] • Grey plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] • Greenland white-fronted goose (<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>) [A395] • Wetland and waterbirds [A999] 	<p>The works area is located outside of the boundary of the Raven SPA which is located approximately 7km away. However, there is potential for birds associated with European sites to occur outside of the SPA boundary.</p> <p>Wintering bird surveys were carried out in the vicinity of the scheme in the 2019/2020 and the 2020/2021 wintering seasons. SCI species, (along with peak counts across the two seasons) recorded within the section which incorporates the proposed development are outlined hereunder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red throated diver (peak count 1 recorded during 2019/2020 season) • Cormorant (peak count of 28 recorded during 2019/2020 season), 	<p>Given the records of <i>ex situ</i> SCI species in proximity to the proposed development location, a viable source pathway receptor link is identified.</p>
Tacumshin Lake SPA (004092)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [A004] • Bewick's swan (<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>) [A037] • Whooper swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>) [A038] • Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [A050] • Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) [A051] • Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] • Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] • Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] 	<p>The works area is located outside of the boundary of Tacumshin Lake SPA which is approximately 7.5km away. However, there is potential for birds associated with European sites to occur outside of the SPA boundary.</p> <p>Wintering bird surveys were carried out in the vicinity of the scheme in the 2019/2020 and the 2020/2021 wintering seasons. SCI species, (along with peak counts across the two seasons) recorded within the section which incorporates the proposed development are outlined hereunder:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lapwing (peak count of 151 recorded during 2019/2020 season), • Black tailed godwit (peak count 53 recorded during 2019/2020 season) 	<p>Given the records of <i>ex situ</i> SCI species in proximity to the proposed development location, a viable source pathway receptor link is identified.</p>

Designated Site	Qualifying Interest/ Feature	Distance and potential connectivity	Source Pathway Receptor Analysis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tufted duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) [A061]• Coot (<i>Fulica atra</i>) [A125]• Golden plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]• Grey plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]• Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]• Black-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]• Wetland and waterbirds [A999]		

3 Potential for Impact to European Sites

Viable source pathway receptor links were identified to the following European sites:

- Saltee Islands SAC (000707)
- Slaney River Valley SAC (000781)
- Lady's Island Lake (004009)
- Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076)
- The Raven SPA (004019)
- Tacumshin Lake SPA (004092)

The potential for impact to these European Sites associated with the proposed works is discussed hereunder.

3.1 Construction Phase

Size, Scale, Area, Land-Take

The works are located outside of any European site boundaries. There will be no additional land-take, or change of use, within any European Sites associated with the works.

The works are anticipated to take between 18 and 24 months. There is no potential for impact due to the size and scale of the proposed works.

Physical Changes

The works are located within agricultural grassland and existing hardstanding and will not result in any physical changes to any European Sites as the works are entirely outside of any European site boundaries. There is no potential for physical changes to any European Sites as a result of the proposed works.

Resource Requirements

The works will not require resources associated with any European sites. Any fill imported to the site for the proposed development will be from a licensed facility. There will be no requirement for abstraction associated with the works.

Emissions and Waste

Surface Water Emissions

As previously noted, excavation and earth moving activities, including the storage of materials like topsoil, have the potential to result in sediment laden run-off. Spills and leaks of oils, fuels, concrete, and chemicals from storage areas, plant, and equipment used during construction can further cause impacts to surface water during the construction phase.

The grange big stream has hydrological connectivity to the Slaney River Valley SAC (000781) and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076). As such, there is potential for surface water emissions to enter into these European sites and cause degradation of QI habitats and supporting habitats for SCI species.

Dust

As previously noted, breaking out of hard surfaces has the potential to cause dust emissions. The closest European site to the proposed development is located 1.4km away. As such, there are no European sites identified within the Zol for effects caused by dust.

Given the location of the works there is no potential for impacts to European sites caused by dust.

Waste

The proposed works are likely to result in the generation of construction waste. Any waste generated during the proposed works will be disposed of in accordance with waste legislation. There will be no effects on any European sites as a result of waste generated by the proposed works.

Noise and disturbance

Wetland birds have been documented to tolerate noise levels at or below 70dB(A) (Institute of Estuarine & Coastal Studies, University of Hull, 2009). BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 prescribes typical noise level data for various construction plant and activities within 10m of the various sources. As previously noted, the inverse square law can then be applied to determine likely noise levels at varying distances from the proposed works. As per table 2.1 the worst-case scenario noise impacts associated with the construction activities fall below 70dB(A) within 200m of the works area. Wintering bird surveys which were carried out over two seasons recorded SCI species for the following Special Protection Areas within this Zol:

- Lady's Island Lake SPA (004009)
- Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076)
- The Raven SPA (004019)
- Tacumshin Lake SPA (004092)

As such, there is potential for disturbance effects to *ex situ* SCI species associated with these SPA sites.

As previously noted, NPWS Guidance outlines that works including piling can have significant effects including injury and death to marine mammals and outlines a radius of 1km from the piling. Marine mammals associated with SACs have the potential to occur outside of the site boundary, and may occur within the Zol of the proposed works (per NBDC records). The potential for disturbance to marine mammals associated with the following SAC sites has been identified:

- Saltee Islands SAC (000707)
- Slaney River Valley SAC (000781)

3.2 Operational Phase

Surface Water Emissions

New drainage outfalls will be required to accommodate the drainage for the scheme. One will outfall through an attenuation pond into an existing drainage ditch which ultimately flows to the Grange Big Stream. The northern portion of the scheme will tie into the existing Port drainage.

As previously noted, the grange big stream has hydrological connectivity to the Slaney River Valley SAC (000781) and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076). As such, there is potential for surface water emissions to enter into these European sites and cause degradation of QI habitats and supporting habitats for SCI species.

Lighting

New lighting will be required along the areas of new infrastructure associated with the proposed development. As such, there is likely to be an increase in light levels in the vicinity of the development.

Given the location of the European sites in the vicinity, and the species for which they are designated, there is no potential for effects associated with increased lighting,

3.3 Summary of Likely Effects

The proposed works have the potential to result in a degradation on habitat/supporting habitat for the following European sites:

- Slaney River Valley SAC (000781)
- Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076)

The proposed works have the potential to result in disturbance effects to *ex situ* SCI species associated with the following European sites

- Lady's Island Lake SPA (004009)
- Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076)
- The Raven SPA (004019)
- Tacumshin Lake SPA (004092)

The proposed works have the potential to result in disturbance effects to *ex situ* QI species associated with the following European sites

- Saltee Islands SAC (000707)
- Slaney River Valley SAC (000781)

No effects to any other European sites were identified

3.4 Plans or projects which might act in combination

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

'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives.'

It is therefore required that the potential impacts of the proposed works are considered in combination with any other relevant plans or projects.

A search of planning applications in the vicinity of the works was undertaken in 11/02/2021 to examine projects with potential for in combination effects. Applications which were made typically consisted of extensions, demolitions and renovations to existing houses and agricultural buildings, and retention of existing developments.

Given the location of the proposed developments relative to these applications, the short-term duration of the works and the small-scale nature of these developments, there is no potential for cumulative or in-combination effects identified.

Other, larger scale, projects which were identified are outlined hereunder:

Urban Quarter Development

Wexford county Council applied for the proposed development of a 3.6 Ha. derelict site as a new mixed-use urban quarter, a new boardwalk and marina and ancillary works at Trinity Wharf, Wexford. An EIA Report has been prepared for the proposed development located at Trinity Wharf, Trinity Street in the townland of Townparks, Wexford Town. This location is 11km from the works area, adjacent the River Slaney SAC (000781) and Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076). EIA reports (reference numbers 6462743, 76323729, 46089173,114728669) and NIS reports (reference number 64515732) have been completed for this development.

Given the location of this development there is no potential for cumulative or in combination effects

Residential Development

William Neville & Sons proposed the development of 413 residential units, a retail unit, 2 crèche facilities 769 Car parking spaces at Carcur, Park, Wexford Town, County Wexford. This location is adjacent the River Slaney SAC (000781) and in proximity to Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076). EIAR reports (reference numbers 39104481) and NIS reports (reference number 25453023) have been completed for this development.

Wexford Creamery Limited located at Rocklands, Wexford, Wexford. Applied to upgrade involved the extension of existing buildings on the site to allow for the installation of new process equipment to replace older inefficient equipment. This location is adjacent the River Slaney SAC (000781) and in proximity to Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076).

Given the location of these developments relative to the proposed road scheme, there is no potential for cumulative or in combination effects.

Solar Farms

<https://dms.wexfordcoco.ie/index.php#>

The following developments are noted in townlands with hydrological links to the River Slaney SAC (000781), Tacumshin Lake SAC (000709), Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076) and Tacumshin Lake SPA (004092):

- Application number: EXD00733 located 4.3km from the works area
- Application number: EXD00747 located 7.9km from the works area
- Application number: 20200441 located 10km from the works area
- Application number: 20171314 located 10km from the works area
- Application number: 20161212 located 10km from the works area
- Application number: 20161110 located 10km from the works area
- Application number: EXD00749 located 14km from the works area

Given the timing of the works, and the location of the solar farm related works there is no potential for cumulative or in combination effects.

N25 Ballygillane roundabout

An application was made in October 2019 for the provision of a new roundabout at Ballygillane little. The project was approved in January 2020. A report for the screening of Appropriate Assessment was produced for the project and found no potential for significant effects. The works to construct the Ballygillane Roundabout will be completed prior to the commencement of works for the Proposed Development. Given the timing of the works, there is no potential for cumulative or in combination effects.

Port Masterplan Development

In July 2020 an application for a proposed new access road, roundabout, internal road, and freight entrance plaza was lodged. Planning approval for this project was received in August 2020. The project is located predominantly within the existing hard standing associated with the port.

A screening for Appropriate Assessment was carried out for this project and found no potential for significant effects. The upgrades associated with the port will be completed in advance of the proposed development being constructed. As such, given the timing, nature and scale of the port upgrade works, there is no potential for cumulative or in-combination effects identified.

N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Project

Wexford County Council is working in association with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) to develop an approximate 30km section of high-quality road which will link Rosslare Europort/Wexford with both Dublin via the M11 and Cork/Waterford via the N25. A selected scheme option has been confirmed for the N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour Project and it is currently estimated that a planning application for the scheme may be submitted to An Bord Pleanála in late 2023 or early 2024. The scheme will be subject to its own environmental assessment which will incorporate an assessment of cumulative and in-combination effects that may occur. Subject to separate planning consents for both projects, the proposed development will be completed in advance of the possible commencement of the N11/N25 Oilgate to Rosslare Harbour project. There is, therefore, no potential for cumulative or in-combination effects associated with the proposed development.

Conclusion

The scale, nature, locations, extent and duration of the proposed works are such that the project does not have the capacity to act in-combination with any other plan or project such as to cause likely significant effects on European Sites as a direct consequence of its contribution. There are no identified plans or consented projects which have the potential to act in combination with the proposed works in relation to any identified effects.

There are therefore no potential effects identified from the proposed works which could act in-combination with any other plans or projects to result in any likely significant effects on any European site.

4 Screening Statement

The current assessment investigates the potential for significant effects on European Sites arising from the proposed works. The assessment considers whether the proposed works, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have a significant effect of the European site. The conclusion reached by this assessment has not taken account of any measures intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on European sites.

It is concluded that there is **potential for significant effects** on the conservation objectives of European sites associated with the project either alone or in-combination with other plans and/or projects. As such, the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA). The Stage 2 Natura Impact Statement is outlined in Report No: 229100548-MMD-0000-RE-RP-C-0030. The findings of this report for screening for Appropriate Assessment are summarised in the Screening Matrix of the proposed development in Table 4.1 and are presented to aid the Competent Authority in their screening assessment.

Table 4.1: Screening Matrix of the proposed development

Screening Matrix	
Brief description of the project or plan	The proposed development is comprised of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Upgrading of 450m of the existing Ballygerry Link Road and provision of 1km of new single road carriageway with associated lay-bys to provide a new access route to Rosslare Europort.; all existing private accesses will be maintained, and local road tie-ins upgraded along the 1.45km route of the proposed development ● Construction of a 3m wide shared two-way cycle/pedestrian route between the proposed N25 Ballygillane Roundabout to the new future Rosslare Europort roundabout; ● New railway bridge; ● 2No. underpasses providing provision for access to the existing Irish Water Wastewater Treatment Plant (located in Ballygerry townland) and to the future Rosslare Strand to Rosslare Harbour Greenway, respectively; ● New staggered road junction with L7021 Churchtown/Station Road; ● Minor road realignment of the existing L7021 Churchtown/Station Road; ● Vehicle restraint systems and fencing at the existing railway bridge (OBH227); ● Drainage systems and flood mitigation measures, including attenuation ponds and storage tank; ● Enabling works including the demolition of a single residential dwelling (Wayside House, Station Road); ● Provision of traffic calming islands measure at certain locations along the hatch median. ● Provision of all associated site development and infrastructure works (including fencing, drainage, utilities, road markings, signage, landscaping and public lighting).
European Site	
Brief description of the European site(s)	Viable source pathway receptor links were identified for the following European sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Saltee Islands SAC (000707) ● Slaney River Valley SAC (000781)

Screening Matrix

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladys Island Lake SPA (004009) • Wexford Harbour and Slobs SPA (004076) • The Raven SPA (004019) • Tacumshin Lake SPA (004092)
Assessment Criteria	
Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the European site.	<p>Site clearance, and construction of the proposed development has the potential to cause surface water emissions.</p> <p>Drainage associated with the operational phase of the works has the potential to result in additional surface water emissions.</p> <p>Construction phase works (e.g. piling works) have the potential to cause elevated noise levels.</p>
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of: Size and scale; Land-take; Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key interests of the site; Resource requirements (water abstraction etc); Emissions (disposal to land, water or air); Excavation requirements; Transportation requirements; Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning Other.	<p>The Proposed development will be wholly outside of any European sites and will not require any land-take within the site boundaries. The works will be approximately 1.5km from the European sites at its closest point.</p> <p>The proposed works have the potential to cause surface water emissions which may indirectly cause the degradation of habitats/supporting habitat associated with European Sites downstream.</p> <p>The proposed works have the potential to cause elevated noise and vibration levels. This has the potential to cause disturbance to <i>ex situ</i> QI and SCI species associated with European sites.</p>
Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of: Reduction in habitat area; Disturbance to key species; Habitat or species fragmentation; Reduction in species density; Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.); Climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A degradation in water quality could potentially reduce the carrying capacity of supporting habitat for Special Conservation Interests of Wexford Harbour SPA • A degradation in water quality could potentially degrade habitats within the Slaney River Valley SAC. • Noise and vibration associated with the works has the potential to result in disturbance to <i>ex situ</i> Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests
Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of: Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site; Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site.	Effects that have been identified associated with the works have the potential to result in a degradation of habitats within European sites, and a degradation/loss of supporting habitat associated with <i>ex-situ</i> Qualifying Features of European sites.
Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of: Loss; Fragmentation; Disruption; Disturbance; Change to key elements of the site.	<p>Indicators of significance are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in protected habitat quality or area as may be caused by a change in water quality • Disturbance of <i>ex situ</i> Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests away from supporting habitat • A reduction in population density of Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests as may be caused by disturbance from supporting habitat
Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.	Disturbance effects and surface water degradation caused by emissions have the potential to result in significant effects to European sites.
Data collected to carry out the assessment	

Screening Matrix

Who carried out the assessment?	Erin Johnston and Roger Macnaughton
Sources of data?	Refer to References Section.
Level of assessment?	Desktop study

5 References

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NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Carnsore Point SAC 002269. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

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NPWS (2019) Conservation Objectives: Lady's Island Lake SAC 000704. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2018) Conservation Objectives: Tacumshin Lake SAC 000709. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Blackwater Bank SAC 002953. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Slaney River Valley SAC 000781. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2011) Conservation Objectives: Raven Point Nature Reserve SAC 000710. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

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NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Wexford Harbour and Slobbs SPA 004076. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2020) Conservation objectives for Lady's Island Lake SPA [004009]. Generic Version 7.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

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Office of the Planning Regulator (2021) OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management

