

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Large Scale Residential Development
Former Dell EMC Premises
Innishmore
Ballincollig
Cork

Report prepared for Castle Peak Properties Ltd

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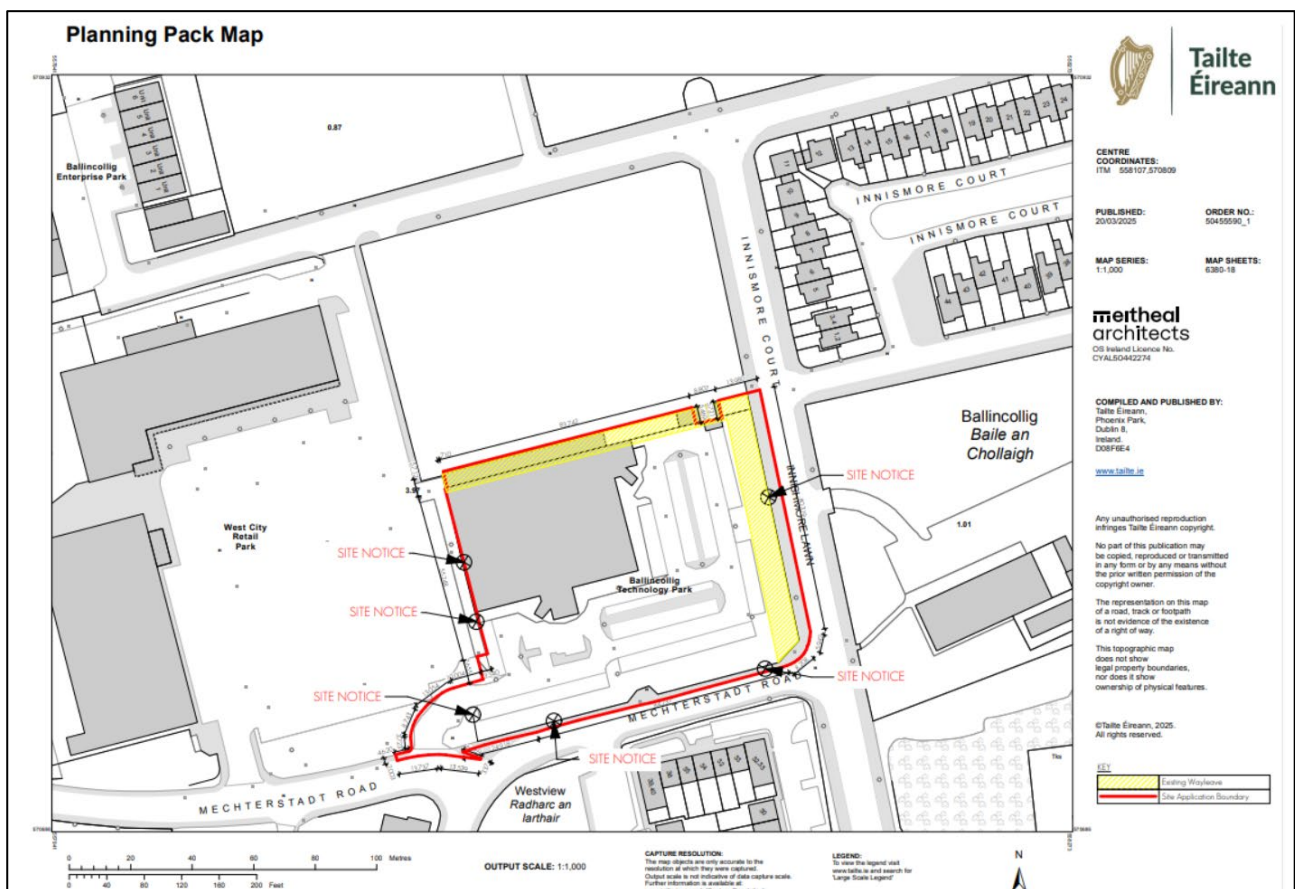
1 Introduction

Greenleaf Ecology was commissioned by Castle Peak Properties Ltd to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) for a proposed Large Scale Residential Development (LRD), located at the former DELL EMC premises, Innishmore, Ballincollig, Cork (hereafter referred to as the proposed development).

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

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

Figure 1-1: Site Location



1.1 Legislative Context for Appropriate Assessment

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

The Habitats Directive has been transposed into Irish law by Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477/2011) as amended. In the context of the Proposed Development, the governing legislation is Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

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

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

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

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

1.2 Statement of Competence

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

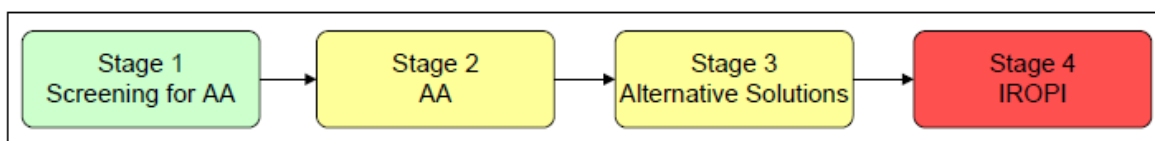
2 Methodology

2.1 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

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

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

Figure 2-1: Four stages of Appropriate Assessment



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

- i. whether a plan or project (in this instance the proposed project) is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the European sites, and
- ii. whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on the European sites in view of their conservation objectives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.2 Information consulted for this report

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

- Information on the location, nature and design of the proposed project;
- Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government – online land use mapping [Home - My Plan](#);
- Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government- EIA Portal [gov.ie - EIA Portal \(www.gov.ie\)](#);
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – Water Quality and Water Framework Directive data [EPA Maps](#);
- Geological Survey of Ireland – Geology, soils and Hydrogeology [www.gsi.ie](#);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – online European site network information, including site conservation objectives [www.npws.ie](#);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – Information on the status of EU protected habitats in Ireland (NPWS 2025a, 2025b);
- National Biodiversity Data Centre – [www.biodiversityireland.ie](#);
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland – Mapping and Aerial photography [www.osi.ie](#); and
- Site survey, undertaken on 14th June 2025 and 31st January 2026 by Ms K. Banks (see Section 3.2).

2.3 Screening Protocol

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

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

2.3.1 Screening Determination

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

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

This report is to inform Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

2.3.2 Zone of Influence

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

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

In particular, it should identify:

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

2.3.3 Likely Significant Effects

The threshold for a likely significant effect is treated in the screening exercise as being above a *de minimis* level¹. The opinion of the Advocate General in CJEU case C-258/11 outlines:

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

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

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

3 Project and Site Description

3.1 Project Description

Castle Peak Properties Ltd intend to apply for planning permission for a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) at this c. 1.0 ha site of the former DELL EMC premises, Innishmore, Ballincollig, Cork.

The proposed development will consist of the demolition of the existing former 2 no. storey DELL EMC building (c. 3882 sq m) and ancillary plant area, with associated site clearance works. The proposed development will provide for the 130 no. residential units, arranged in 3 no. blocks in a development ranging in height from 3 to 6 no. storeys.

The development will comprise a mix of 108 no. apartments (total apartment blocks area - c. 10,657 sqm), arranged in 2 no. blocks, providing a unit mix of 52 no. 1-bed and 56 no. 2-bed apartment units. In addition, the proposed development will provide 22 no. duplex units (total duplex block area - c. 2,159 sqm), arranged in 1 no. block, providing a unit mix of 4 no. 1-bed, 9 no. 2-bed, and 9 no. 3 beds.

Vehicular, cyclist and pedestrian access to the proposed development will be via 2 no. entrances from Innishmore Lawn (to the north east) and Mechterstadt Road (to the south west) and the development will include for pedestrian and cyclist permeability. Additionally, pedestrian access points are provided to the west of the subject site and to the south, off Mechterstadt Road.

The development will also include the provision of private, communal and public open space (including all balconies); car parking at ground floor level and undercroft; bicycle parking; internal roads and pathways; bin stores; hard and soft landscaping; boundary treatments; the provision of new surface water and foul drainage pipes and any associated pipe diversion works; retaining walls; changes in level; services provision and related ducting, piping and cabling; electric vehicle charging points; attenuation tanks; SUDS; signage; 1 no. ESB substation; wayfinding structures; public realm works including public lighting; and all site development and excavation works above and below ground. The application contains a statement setting out how the proposal will be consistent with the objectives of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028.

3.1.1 Surface Water

The proposed surface water drainage system has been designed to manage runoff from all hard surfaces within the development, including roadways, roofs, footpaths, and parking areas. The completed development will comprise a mix of hard paving, roofing, and soft landscaping, with the site's relatively flat topography forming a single catchment area. Surface water will be collected via a piped network and discharged through one designated outfall point to the existing stormwater network traversing the site.

To ensure compliance with best practice in sustainable drainage and environmental protection, a comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan has been developed. This plan aims to:

- Manage surface water runoff close to source
- Treat runoff on the surface for a range of contaminants
- Minimise sediment remobilisation and impacts from accidental spills
- Enhance biodiversity and local amenity

The surface water drainage strategy incorporates a range of SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) features, including:

- Permeable paving to promote infiltration and reduce surface runoff
- Bio-retention planting areas to treat and filter runoff while supporting biodiversity
- Full retention petrol/oil interceptors to treat runoff from roadways and parking areas
- Green roof to be applied in high density developments

- Attenuation tanks to store excess runoff and regulate discharge rates
- Hydrobrake flow control devices to restrict discharge to greenfield runoff rates (Q -bar)

Surface water runoff from roofs and paved areas will be directed to the piped network via conventional gullies and downpipes. The runoff will then pass through the attenuation and treatment systems before being discharged to the existing Council stormwater asset via a newly constructed surface water manhole. The design ensures that discharge rates are restricted to pre -development (greenfield) levels, thereby mitigating flood risk and protecting downstream infrastructure.

3.1.2 Foul Water

It is proposed to connect the foul sewer to the existing network at Innishmore lawn. Uisce Éireann have issued a Confirmation of Feasibility (COF) stating that, subject to a valid connection agreement being put in place, the proposed connection is feasible without infrastructure upgrades.

3.2 Existing Environment

The proposed site consists of the existing Dell building and associated car park (buildings and artificial surfaces, BL3) with landscaped areas around the site boundary and car park (ornamental shrubs (WS3). No Annex I habitats are present within the proposed site.

No species of Special Conservation Interest (SCIs) for Cork Harbour SPA were recorded at the proposed site during the ecological walkover survey undertaken on 14th June 2025 and 31st January 2026.

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

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

3.2.1 Surface Water

3.2.1.1 Water Bodies

The proposed site is located within the Lee (Cork)_090 WFD River Sub Basin. There are no EPA mapped watercourses within the site and its immediate environs. The nearest watercourse is the River Lee, a 6th order watercourse located c.0.64km to the north of the site. The River Lee flows into the Lee (Cork) Estuary Upper c.8.2km downstream of its location in the vicinity of the proposed site before, in turn, flowing into the open waters of Cork Harbour and Cork Harbour SPA a further c.7km downstream.

The proposed project overlies the Ballincollig Ground Waterbody (GWB).

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

Table 3-1: EPA water body codes

EPA water body name	Water body type	EPA Code	EPA water body code
Lee (Cork)_090	River	19L03	IE_SW_19L030800
Lee (Cork) Estuary Lower	Transitional	n/a	IE_SW_060_0900
Ballincollig	Groundwater	n/a	IE_SW_G_002

3.2.1.2 Surface Water Quality and Risk Characterisation

Macroinvertebrate sampling for Q-value determination was conducted within the River Lee as part of EPA's Water Framework Directive monitoring. The nearest sampling point is located within the River Lee c.0.9km

to the north-west of the proposed site (straight line distance). In 2023, the Q-value was 4 'Good'. The watercourses within the Lee (Cork) Sub-basin are classified as 'Not at risk' under the WFD and have been assigned a status of 'moderate' under the WFD 2019-2024 round. The transitional water quality of the Lee (Cork) Estuary Lower (IE_SW_060_0900) is classified as 'moderate' and has been assigned as 'at risk' under the WFD.

A summary of the WFD and Risk status² is shown below in Table 3-2.

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

EPA Waterbody Name	Code	Risk	WFD Status 2019-2024
Lee (Cork)	IE_SW_19L030800	Not at Risk	Moderate
Lee (Cork) Estuary Lower	IE_SW_060_0900	At Risk	Moderate

3.2.2 Flooding

The Office of Public Works (OPW) flood mapping (<http://www.floodinfo.ie/map/floodmaps/>) indicates the flood extents regionally. As indicated in Figure 3-1, there are no flood extents in the vicinity of the proposed site. The nearest flood extents are along the River Lee, c.0.27km to the north-west of the site. This flood zone is not in the immediate environs of the proposed site, as illustrated in Figure 3-1 (red x marks the centre of the proposed site).

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

² <https://www.catchments.ie/maps/>



A Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) completed by DOSA (2025) found that the site is located in Flood Zone C, as defined by the requirements of “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2000)” and its Technical Appendices.

The SSFRA concluded that:

- The proposed residential development is appropriate for the site’s flood zone category.
- The sequential approach outlined in Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines has been adhered to.
- The proposed development will not increase run-off rates when compared with the existing site and satisfies the requirement of the SSFRA to not increase flooding.

In conclusion, the proposed development is considered to have a minimal risk of flooding and to have the required level of flood protection up to and including the 1% AEP storm event.

3.2.3 Soil, Geology and Hydrogeology

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mapping ([EPA Maps](#)) was consulted for available edaphic, geological and hydrological information on the site and its environs. The site is overlaid by Made Ground.

The bedrock units which underlie the site are mapped as part of the same Regionally Important Aquifer-Karstified (diffuse). Groundwater vulnerability is a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease at which groundwater may be contaminated. The proposed site is of ‘High’ groundwater vulnerability.

3.3 Description of European Sites

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

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

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

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

1. Cork Harbour SPA (Site Code: 004030).

Source – pathway – receptor dynamics were assessed for the above detailed European site located within a 15km radius of the proposed development and it was determined that there is no connectivity (via surface water, groundwater, air or other environmental vectors) between the proposed development and Cork Harbour SPA.

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

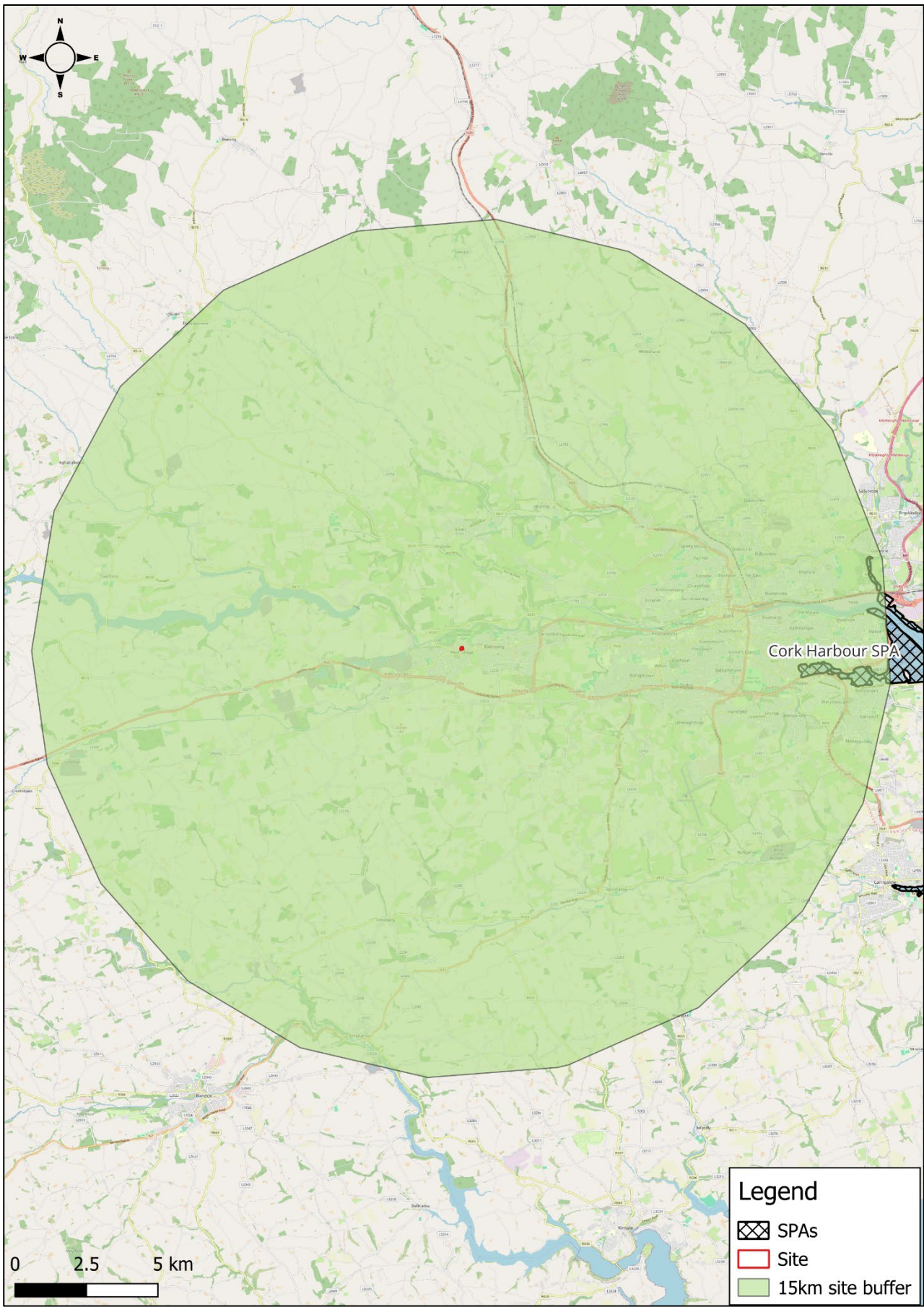


Table 3-3: European sites within 15km of the proposed development

Site Name and Code	Qualifying Interests	Distance from Proposed Development (km) ³	Connectivity
Cork Harbour SPA (004030)	Bird Species: Little grebe (<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i>) [wintering] Great crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [wintering] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [wintering] Grey heron (<i>Ardea cinerea</i>) [wintering] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [wintering] Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>) [wintering] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [wintering] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [wintering] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [wintering] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [wintering] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [wintering] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [wintering] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [wintering] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [wintering] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [wintering] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [wintering] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [wintering] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [wintering] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [wintering] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [wintering] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [wintering] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [wintering] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [breeding]	11.8km	There is no connectivity via surface water, groundwater or any other pathway.

³ Straight line distance from site boundary

	Wetlands		
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3.3.1 Conservation Objectives of European Sites

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

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

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

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

- *To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for the SPA.*

4 Screening Assessment Criteria

4.1 Management of European Sites

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

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

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

Cork Harbour SPA is of special conservation interest for wetlands and waterbirds. The proposed site comprises buildings and artificial surfaces with landscaped borders. There are no waterbodies within the proposed site; the nearest watercourse is the River Lee, located c.0.6km to the north of the site. As such, the proposed site would not be favoured by the Qualifying Interests of Cork Harbour SPA. No wildfowl or waterbirds were observed at the proposed site and its environs during the site survey undertaken on 14th June 2025 and 31st January 2026. Further, the proposed site is set back from Cork Harbour SPA by a distance of c.11.8km. In consideration of these factors, it is considered that any disturbance/ displacement or ex-situ impacts to the qualifying interests of Cork Harbour SPA as a result of the proposed development is extremely unlikely.

The proposed development will require groundworks including excavation for foundations and stockpiling of materials (soil, sand etc) during the construction phase. Excavation and ground disturbance during the construction phase can lead to suspended solids runoff into the receiving environment. Standard pollution control measures shall be employed during the construction phase to prevent sediment or pollutants from leaving the construction site and entering the water system. The pollution control measures that will be employed during the construction phase are standard practices that would be required for any development in order to protect local receiving waters, irrespective of any potential hydrological connection to European sites. Further, even in the event that standard pollution control and surface water treatment measures were not implemented or failed, there is no surface water connectivity between the proposed site and the River Lee. Further, the River Lee is buffered from the proposed site by c.0.6km of habitats including buildings and artificial surfaces and amenity grassland (houses and their associated gardens) and Ballincollig Regional Park. The potential for likely significant effects on the qualifying interests of Cork Harbour SPA as a result of degradation in water quality during the construction phase can be excluded given the lack of connectivity via surface water or overland flow and the nature, scale and the location of the proposed development (i.e. residential development).

During the operational phase, the surface water network will include a storm drainage pipe network, attenuation storage structures and SuDS features which will aid the reduction of runoff volumes by slowing surface water flows, providing the opportunity for evapotranspiration and providing the opportunity for infiltration to ground. It is proposed to provide a hydrobrake, or similar approved, at the outfall of the surface water catchment to restrict the outflow of water from the subject site to pre-development levels (see Section 3.1.1). The wastewater collected within the proposed

development will discharge to the existing network. Uisce Éireann issued a Confirmation of Feasibility (COF) for the proposed development⁴.

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

4.2.1 Cumulative Impacts with Other Plans and Projects in the Area

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

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

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

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

⁴ These surface water and waste water management features have been provided in accordance with the requirement of Objectives 9.2, 9.4 and 9.5 of Cork City Development Plan 2022 which are required for residential developments regardless of the presence or otherwise of connecting pathways to European sites.

Inland Fisheries Ireland Corporate Plan 2021 -2025 The Inland Fisheries Act 2010.	To place the inland fisheries resource in the best sustainable position possible for the benefit of future generations. To protect, manage and conserve Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources and to maximise their sustainability and natural biodiversity. ▪ To sustainably develop and improve fish habitats. ▪ To protect, maintain and enhance Ireland's wild fish populations. ▪ To actively engage with stakeholders in the continued stewardship of our shared resource. ▪ To play a leadership role in achieving our climate action and biodiversity goals. ▪ To value our people and support their development and performance. ▪ To foster a culture of value for money and evaluation of performance in a measurable, transparent and accountable manner. ▪ Harness the power of innovation to continue to deliver a modern fisheries service.	The implementation and compliance with key environmental issues and objectives of this corporate plan will result in positive on-combination effects to European sites. The implementation of this corporate plan will have a positive impact for biodiversity of inland fisheries and ecosystems. It will not contribute to in-combination or cumulative impacts with the proposed development.
Residential Development	The Innishmore, Ballincollig proposed development comprises of the construction of 56 no. homes, comprising 1 no. 4 bed house, 17 no. 3 bed houses, 12 no. 1 bed ground floor apartments, 12 no. 2 bed duplex units, 7 no. 2 bed ground floor apartments and 7 no. 3 bed duplex units, and all ancillary site works. The proposed development ranges in height from 2 storeys to 3 storeys and is located at Innishmore, Ballincollig, Cork.	The AA Screening completed for the proposed development concluded that: <i>"In accordance with the Habitats Directive, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been carried out on the proposed development, in relation to any potential impacts upon the Cork Harbour Special Protection Area [Site No. 004030] and the Great Island Channel Special Area of Conservation [Site No. 001058]. The findings of the AA screening noted that no significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites is likely and it was not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process"</i>
Local Planning Applications⁵	Local developments⁶ in the zone of influence of the proposed development that may contribute to potential cumulative or in-combination effects on European sites include retail development (Ref: 2443131 and 2140174) domestic dwelling developments (Ref: 2342484, 2544003 and	These developments are small scale. The policies and objectives of the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 ensure that local planning applications comply with proper

⁵ The Local Planning Applications included in this potential in-combination impacts assessment support the following criteria: planning applications granted within the past five years that may contribute to potential cumulative impacts on European sites of concern.

⁶ [Cork City Planning Applications & Enforcement Register](#) (accessed 23/06/2025)

	2140010) and educational facility development (Ref: 2543781).	planning and sustainability and with the requirements of relevant EU Directives and environmental considerations. No potential for significant adverse in combination effects on European sites has been identified.
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4.3 Screening Assessment

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

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

Site Name and Code	Direct Impacts	Indirect / Secondary Impacts	Resource Requirements	Emissions (Disposal to land, Water or Air)	Excavation Requirements
Cork Harbour SPA (004030)	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI	No impact on QI

4.4 Likely Changes to the European Site(s)

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

Table 4-3: Likely Changes to European Sites

Site Name and Code	Reduction of Habitat Area	Disturbance to Key Species	Habitat or Species fragmentation	Reduction in Species Density	Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality, etc.)	Climate Change
Cork Harbour SPA (004030)	None	None	None	None	None	None

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

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

5 Conclusion

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

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

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

- The proposed Large Scale Residential Development, located at the former DELL EMC premises, Innishmore, Ballincollig, Cork, either alone or in-combination with other plans and/or projects, does not have the potential to significantly affect any European site, in light of their conservation objectives. Therefore, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is deemed not to be required.

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