



**ENVIROPLAN CONSULTING
LIMITED**

September '25

Title

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

Development Description

"The proposed works will include internal modification, the construction of a toilet block extension (10m²), a glazed entrance lobby and a covered outdoor area, replacement of the existing wastewater treatment system and percolation area with a packaged Wastewater Treatment System, provision of wayfinding signage and all associated works."

Location

Unit 1, Páirc Ghnó, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Baile Iarthach Thuaidh,
Oileán Chléire, Co. Corcaigh

Applicants

Údarás na Gaeltachta.

Prepared by:

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A Site Layout Plan

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Note: The scope of this report is to provide the necessary information to the competent authority, to assess whether the proposed development alone and in combination with other projects, could have significant effects on Natura 2000 sites in the area in view of the sites conservation objectives, in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, and does not purport to be an ecological assessment of the subject sit

1. INTRODUCTION

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Edel Hardiman (B. Sc) in consultation with James O'Donnell, Planning Consultant (MA, MRUP, Dip APM) on behalf of Údarás na Gaeltachta who are applying for planning permission for *“works at Unit 1, Páirc Ghnó, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Baile Iarthach Thuaidh, Oileán Chléire, Co. Corcaigh. The proposed works will include internal modification, the construction of a toilet block extension (10m²), a glazed entrance lobby and a covered outdoor area, replacement of the existing wastewater treatment system and percolation area with a packaged Wastewater Treatment System, provision of wayfinding signage and all associated works.”*

Edel Hardiman is a qualified ecologist and has obtained a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science (BSc Hons) at the University of Galway. Edel has completed Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports, Natura Impact Statements, Ecological Impact Assessments, Bat Survey Reports and Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Reports for a wide range of public and private sector projects. She has conducted Bird Surveys and Bat Surveys in the Republic of Ireland. She is a registered member of CIEEM.

James O' Donnell is a qualified Town Planner and Project Manager with over 25 years planning experience in both the public and private sector in the west of Ireland, including 6 years-experience as a local authority planning officer. James has particular experience in the project management and delivery of a wide range of complex planning applications requiring environmental and ecological assessment, in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and EIA Directives.

The application site for proposed development borders the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. This site has been designated under the EU Habitats Directive, and so it is necessary that the potential impacts of the proposed works be assessed by the competent authority, in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. This report provides the information necessary for the competent authority to complete an Appropriate Assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed works on sites of European importance in the area. This report has also had regard to the provisions of the March 2021 publication entitled *“OPR Practice Note PN01- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.”*

Table 1.1: Step One: Description of the project/proposal and local site characteristics.

Brief description of the project plan	<i>“Údarás na Gaeltachta, intend to apply for full planning permission from Cork County Council for works at Unit 1, Páirc Ghnó, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Baile Iarthach Thuaidh, Oileán Chléire, Co. Corcaigh. The proposed works will include internal modification, the construction of a toilet block extension (10m²), a glazed entrance lobby and a covered outdoor area, replacement of the existing wastewater treatment system and percolation area with a packaged Wastewater Treatment System, provision of wayfinding signage and all associated works.”</i>
Brief description of site characteristics	The application site is located on Cape Clear Island; an island located off the south of County Cork. The subject site is located along the northwestern edge of the island. The application site features a number of existing buildings together with an existing treatment system. The subject site overlooks the island pier to the east.

1.1 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

1.1.1 EU Nature Conservation Legislation and Natura 2000 Sites.

There are three main types of designation for nature conservation in Ireland: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs). NHAs are designated under the Irish Wildlife Act 1976 (amended 2000). SACs and SPAs are designated under European legislation, the EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (transposed into Irish law in the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 as amended in 1998 and 2005) and the EU Birds Directive 79/409/EEC, respectively. These European designated sites (SACs and SPAs) are also known as Natura 2000 sites. This means that they are part of the Natura 2000 Network, a network of important ecological sites across the European Union.

Sites are designated on the basis of the presence of certain ‘Qualifying Features’, i.e. the habitats listed under Annex I and the species listed under Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive.

Once a site is designated as a SAC/SPA and publicly advertised it is legally protected and becomes a proposed candidate SAC (pcSAC) or proposed candidate SPA (pcSPA). A three-month period follows during which landowners may lodge an objection to the designation. Details of each proposed SAC and proposed SPA are then given to the EU Commission, and thereafter the site is called a “candidate SAC” or “candidate SPA”. Once the sites are approved by the commission, they are formally designated by the Minister.

1.1.2 Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites

Due to the proximity of the proposed development site to a candidate Special Area of Conservation, also known as a Natura 2000 site, an Appropriate Assessment may be required under the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, Article 6(3) and (4), Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites. Such assessments are required where it is identified that a proposed plan or project could have significant impact on a Natura 2000 site. Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Directive, state the following;

6.3 '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... 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....'

6.4 'If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest... the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected...'

2 METHODOLOGY

The screening exercise will be conducted in line with the recommendations and protocol set out in the Guidance from the Commission (EC, 2021). This protocol involves a four-stage process to complete an Appropriate Assessment. At each stage, the findings of certain issues and tests will determine whether the next stage in the process is required.

2.1.1 Appropriate Assessment Stages

The four stages in the Appropriate Assessment process are outlined below:

Stage 1: Screening

This step consists of examining the likely potential impacts of a project or plan, alone or in combination with other projects, upon a Natura 2000 site or sites, and considers whether these impacts may be considered significant. If no significant impacts are foreseen, then a 'finding of no significant effects' (FONSE) statement is issued to the appropriate authority, and the process is complete. If the effects are considered significant or their significance is unknown, then the process moves on to Stage 2.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment

Where the screening process has identified potential impacts which are considered significant or unknown, this process examines these potential impacts in detail, in relation to the conservation interests of the Natura 2000 site or sites. Mitigation measures may be suggested to reduce the likelihood or severity of these impacts. If the impacts are still considered to be significant or unknown after this stage is complete, then alternative solutions must be considered (Stage 3).

Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

If the potential impacts are still considered to be significant or unknown after the Appropriate Assessment stage, then alternative ways of implementing the project are considered at this stage. If no alternative solutions are possible, then it is considered whether the project or plan may go ahead regardless, if imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) are found.

Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)

If significant negative impacts on the Natura 2000 site are unavoidable, and no alternative solutions may be found, then this stage involves the consideration of whether the project or plan may go ahead despite these effects, for 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' (IROPI).

The results of a Stage 1 (Screening) Exercise are detailed in **Section 3** of this report.

3 STAGE 1: SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN OR PROJECT

The proposed development will consist of “internal modification, the construction of a toilet block extension (10m²), a glazed entrance lobby and a covered outdoor area, replacement of the existing wastewater treatment system and percolation area with a packaged Wastewater Treatment System, provision of wayfinding signage and all associated works.”

A Site Layout Plan is included as **Appendix A** to this report.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

3.2.1 Site Location in Relation to Natura 2000 Sites

The proposed site lies at Unit 1, Páirc Ghnó, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Baile Iarthach Thuaidh, Oileán Chléire, Co. Corcaigh (Grid Ref: Easting: 95316.80, Northing: 21953.22). The application site is bordering by the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC (see **Figure 3.1** below).

All Natura 2000 sites within a 15km buffer of the proposed development are listed in **Table 3.1** and **Figure 3.2**.

Table 3.1: Step Two: Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites using Source-Pathway-Receptor Model and Compilation of information on QI and Conservation Objectives

European Site (Code)	List of Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest	Distance from the proposed development (km)	Receptor/Connection	Screen In – Yes/No
Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC Site code: 000101	QIs – 5 Habitats and 3 Species https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/000101	0.0 m	Indirect impacts cannot be ruled out during the construction phase for this SAC. Construction Phase: Direct Impacts: The application site lies outside of the SAC; therefore, no direct impacts are predicted during the construction phase. Indirect Impacts: Indirect impacts cannot be ruled out during the construction phase of the proposed development. This is due to the close proximity between the application site and this SAC. As per the precautionary principle, construction phase activities could result in surface water runoff pollutants potentially impacting the groundwater in the area which could	Yes

			impact the protected qualifying interests in the absence of mitigation measures. The proposal involves the decommissioning of the existing wastewater treatment system. Given the immediate proximity to the SAC to the north, in the absence of mitigation measures, construction phase impacts cannot be ruled at this stage. Operational phase: Direct Impacts: The application site lies outside of the SAC; therefore, no direct impacts are predicted during the operational phase. Indirect Impacts: No indirect impacts are predicted due to the lack of hydrological/ ecological connectors/ receptors between the application site and this SAC. The proposed extension will be constructed over the existing hard standing area on site. As no additional roads are proposed and as there will be no changes to impermeable areas on site, surface water drainage will remain as is on site. No impacts are predicted in this regard. The existing wastewater treatment plant is to be decommissioned. A tertiary wastewater treatment system is proposed to be installed on site to the north, adjacent to the existing wastewater treatment system. The existing pumping station and rising main is proposed to be decommissioned and replaced with a new system to cater for the development. The proposed effluent treatment system is designed to provide for an enhanced effluent treatment system, compared to that which currently existing on site. No impacts are predicted in this regard.	
Barley Cove to Ballyrisode Point SAC Site code: 001040	QIs – 8 Habitats and 1 Species https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/sac/001040	13.1 km	No significant direct/ indirect impacts predicted due to the lack of identifiable hydrological/ ecological connectors/ receptors and significant distance from the proposed site.	No

Sheep's Head to Toe Head SPA Site code: 004156	QIs – 2 Species https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites/spa/004156	9.1 km	No significant direct/ indirect impacts predicted due to the lack of identifiable hydrological/ ecological connectors/ receptors and significant distance from the proposed site.	No
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The application site lies entirely outside of any Natura 2000 site and therefore, no direct impacts/effects are expected during the construction or operational phase of development.

Due to the close proximity, indirect impacts cannot be ruled out during construction phase activities. In the absence of mitigation measures, the Qualifying Interests associated with the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC could indirectly be impacted. As per the precautionary principle, construction phase activities could result in surface water runoff pollutants potentially impacting the groundwater in this area in the absence of mitigation measures. Therefore, considering the close proximity, indirect impacts cannot be ruled out in this regard on this Natura 2000 site. Indirect impacts can be ruled out during the operational phase of the development given the small scale of the proposed development together with the high standard of the enhanced treatment system which forms part of the proposed development.

No other designated Natura 2000 site has been highlighted for potential significant impacts from either construction or operational phases of the development. This is due to the significant distance between application site and the other designated Natura 2000 sites.



Figure 3.1: Site Location (Red X) in Relation to the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC Natura 2000 site

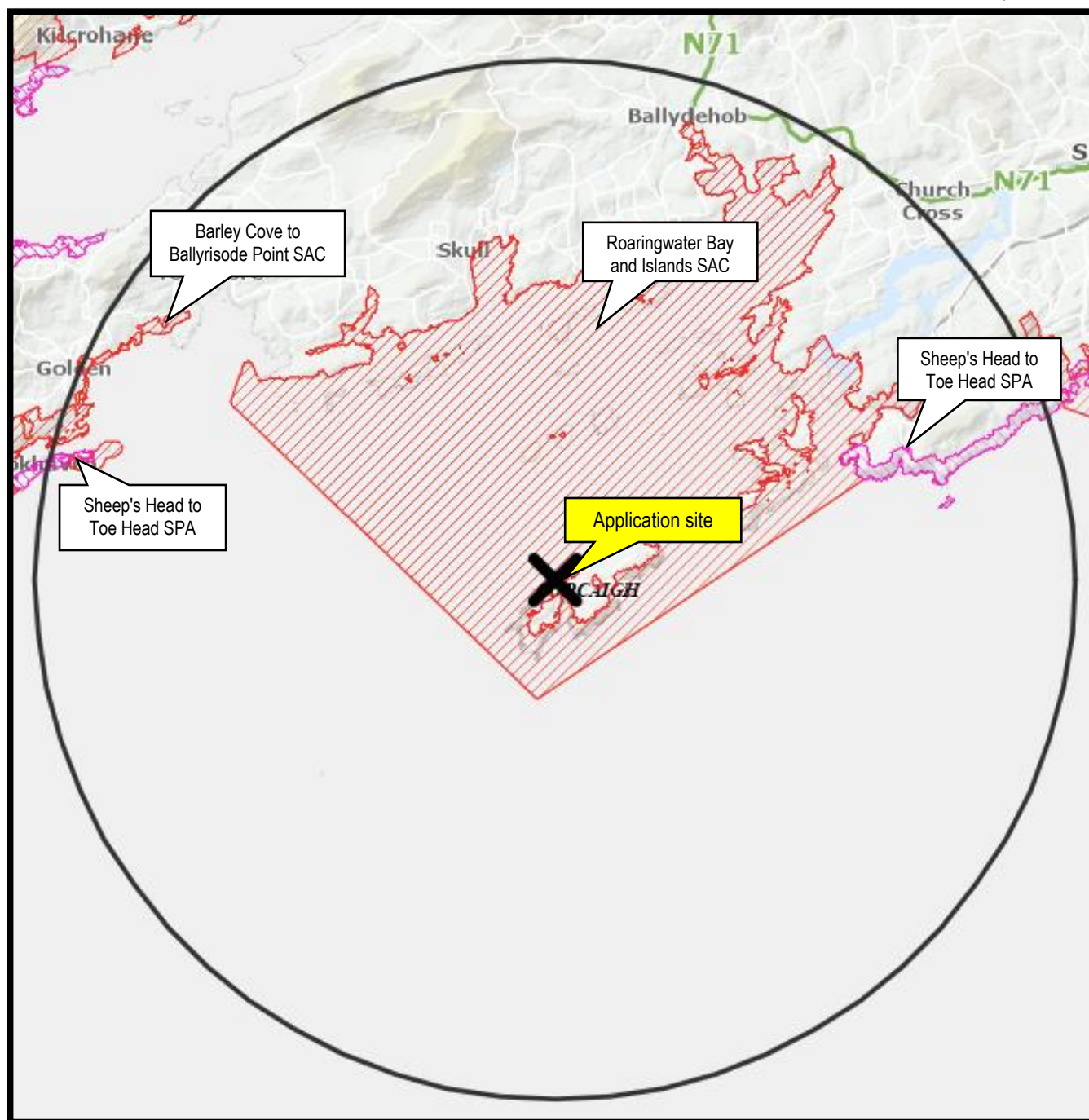


Figure 3.2: 15km Buffer Surrounding Site

4 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES WHICH MAY BE AFFECTED

4.1 QUALIFYING FEATURES

Natura 2000 sites are designated on the presence of certain habitats and species which are afforded protection under the Birds and Habitats Directives. These habitats and species are regarded as ‘qualifying features’ of the Natura 2000 site. The following section provides details on the qualifying features of the Natura 2000 site in question the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. The NPWS site synopses for the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC are given as Appendix B of this report.

Table 4.1 Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC Habitat Information

Habitat code	Habitat name	Cover (ha)	Representativity
1160	Large shallow inlets and bays	12,808.812	A
1170	Reefs	3,497.3362	B
1230	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts	142.59	B
4030	European dry heaths	712.96	A
8330	Submerged or partially submerged sea caves	142.59	A

For species, a value is given for ‘Population Significance’. This value is based on the relative density or size of the population of that species within the Natura 2000 site with that of the national population. Population Significance is ranked on a scale from A to D where A - $100 \geq p > 15\%$, B - $15 \geq p > 2\%$, C - $2 \geq p > 0\%$ and D - Non-significant population. The qualifying species found in the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC Natura 2000 site are outlined in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC Species Information

Species Code	English Name	Scientific Name	Representativity
1351	Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	C
1355	Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	C
1364	Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	C

4.2 POTENTIAL PRESSURES AND THREATS TO THE NATURA 2000 SITES

The European Nature Information System (EUNIS) website contains data on all Natura 2000 sites, including details of the main threats to and pressures on their qualifying features. Potential threats to and pressures on the qualifying features of the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC Natura 2000 site are listed in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Potential Pressures and Threats to the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC Natura 2000 Site

Activity	Location	Intensity	Influence
Marine and Freshwater Aquaculture	Inside	High	Negative
Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources	Inside	High	Negative
Fire and fire suppression	Inside	High	Negative
Abandonment of pastoral systems, lack of grazing	Inside	Low	Negative
Stock feeding	Inside	Low	Negative
Restructuring agricultural land holding	Inside	Low	Negative
Removal of beach materials	Inside	Low	Negative
Human intrusions and disturbances	Inside	Low	Negative
Non intensive grazing	Inside	Medium	Negative

4.3 CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES

Once a site has been designated as a Natura site, a management plan should be put together for the site which sets out the Conservation Objectives for the site. Every effort should then be made to ensure that these objectives are fulfilled, in order to prevent potential impacts to the qualifying features of the site and maintain as far as possible their favourable conservation status.

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

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when: its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when: population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Site-Specific Conservation Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC have been published. Qualifying interests and objectives (bulleted) are listed below.

Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC

[1160] Large shallow inlets and bays

- The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes.
- The extent of the *Zostera*- dominated and *maërl*- dominated communities should be conserved, subject to natural processes.
- The quality of *Zostera*- dominated communities should be conserved, subject to natural processes.
- The quality of *maërl*- dominated communities should be conserved, subject to natural processes.
- The following communities should be conserved in a natural condition: Muddy sand with bivalves and polychaetes community complex; Mixed sediment community complex; Shallow sand/mud community complex.

Predicted Impacts- Indirect impacts/ effects cannot be ruled out on this QI during construction phase activities. This is due to the close proximity of the application site to the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. Potential disturbance regarding surface water runoff and groundwater contamination cannot be ruled out at this stage.

[1170] Reefs

- The distribution of reefs should remain stable, subject to natural processes.
- The permanent habitat area is stable, subject to natural processes.
- The following reef community complexes should be maintained in a natural condition: Exposed to moderately exposed intertidal reef; Exposed to moderately exposed subtidal reef below 20m; Sheltered reef.
- The extent of *Laminaria*- dominated communities should be conserved, subject to natural processes.
- The biology of *Laminaria*- dominated communities should be conserved, subject to natural processes.

Predicted Impacts- Indirect impacts/ effects cannot be ruled out on this QI during construction phase activities. This is due to the close proximity of the application site to the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. Potential disturbance regarding surface water runoff and groundwater contamination cannot be ruled out at this stage.

[1230] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts

- Area stable, subject to natural processes, including erosion. Total length of cliff section mapped within SAC: 21.01km.
- No decline in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.
- No alteration to natural functioning of geomorphological and hydrological processes due to artificial structures.
- Maintain range of sea cliff habitat zonations including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession.
- Maintain structural variation within sward.
- Maintain range of sub- communities with typical species listed in the Irish Sea Cliff Survey (Barron et al. 2011).

- Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover.
- Cover of bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) on grassland and/or heath less than 10%. Cover of woody species on grassland and/or heath less than 20%.

Predicted Impacts- Indirect impacts/ effects cannot be ruled out on this QI during construction phase activities. This is due to the close proximity of the application site to the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. Potential disturbance regarding surface water runoff and groundwater contamination cannot be ruled out at this stage.

[1351] Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)

- Species range within the site should not be restricted by artificial barriers to site use.
- Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the harbour porpoise community at the site.

Predicted Impacts- Indirect impacts/ effects cannot be ruled out on this QI during construction phase activities. This is due to the close proximity of the application site to the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. Potential disturbance regarding surface water runoff and groundwater contamination cannot be ruled out at this stage.

[1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

- No significant decline in distribution.
- No significant decline. Area mapped and calculated as 171ha above high water mark (HWM); 3ha along river banks/ around ponds.
- No significant decline in marine habitat. Area mapped and calculated as 1562ha.
- No significant decline in freshwater (river) habitat. Length mapped and calculated as 0.74km.
- No significant decline in couching sites and holts.
- No significant decline in fish biomass available.
- No significant increase in barriers to connectivity.

Predicted Impacts- Indirect impacts/ effects cannot be ruled out on this QI during construction phase activities. This is due to the close proximity of the application site to the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. Potential disturbance regarding surface water runoff and groundwater contamination cannot be ruled out at this stage.

[1364] Grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*)

- Species range within the site should not be restricted by artificial barriers to site use.
- The breeding sites should be maintained in a natural condition.
- The moult haul-out sites should be maintained in a natural condition.

- The resting haul-out sites should be maintained in a natural condition.
- The grey seal population occurring within this site should contain adult, juvenile and pup cohorts annually.
- Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the grey seal population at the site.

Predicted Impacts- Indirect impacts/ effects cannot be ruled out on this QI during construction phase activities. This is due to the close proximity of the application site to the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. Potential disturbance regarding surface water runoff and groundwater contamination cannot be ruled out at this stage.

[4030] European dry heaths

- No decline from current habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.
- Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes. Habitat area is not known but estimated as 5% (or 414ha) of the area of the SAC.
- No increase or decrease in outcropping rock or scree, subject to natural processes. (Where rock has been exposed due to human activities, decrease necessary).
- Cover of characteristic dwarf shrub indicator species (heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), bell heather (*Erica cinerea*) and Western gorse (*Ulex gallii*)) at least 25%.
- Cover of senescent *Calluna vulgaris* less than 50%.
- Long shoots of palatable dwarf shrubs with signs of browsing collectively less than 33%.
- Cover of scattered native trees and shrubs less than 20%.
- Number of positive indicator species at least 2 (e.g. heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), bell heather (*Erica cinerea*) and Western gorse (*Ulex gallii*) or other characteristic dry heath grass and herbaceous species for this SAC).
- Cover of positive indicator species at least 60%. This should include plant species characteristic of dry heath in this SAC including 'southern' plant species.
- Number of bryophyte or non- crustose lichen species present at least 2.
- Cover of bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) less than 10%.
- Cover of agricultural weed species (negative indicator species) less than 1%.
- Cover of non-native species less than 1%.
- No decline in distribution or population sizes of rare/scarce species, including hairy birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus subbiflorus*), bird's foot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*), spotted rockrose (*Tuberaria guttata*); soft clover (*Trifolium striatum*); pale dog-violet (*Viola lactea*), bird's foot clover (*Trifolium ornithopodioides*), heath pearlwort (*Sagina subulata*).
- Cover of disturbed bare ground less than 10% (but if peat soil less than 5%).
- No signs of burning within sensitive areas.

Predicted Impacts- Indirect impacts/ effects cannot be ruled out on this QI during construction phase activities. This is due to the close proximity of the application site to the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. Potential disturbance regarding surface water runoff and groundwater contamination cannot be ruled out at this stage.

[8330] Submerged or partly submerged sea caves

- The distribution of sea caves occurring in the site should remain stable, subject to natural processes.
- Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the ecology of sea caves at the site.

Predicted Impacts- Indirect impacts/ effects cannot be ruled out on this QI during construction phase activities. This is due to the close proximity of the application site to the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. Potential disturbance regarding surface water runoff and groundwater contamination cannot be ruled out at this stage.

5 SOILS, GEOLOGY & HYDROGEOLOGY

5.1 GEOLOGY

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) website was consulted for available geological / hydrological information. Due to the development on site the soil is classed as Bedrock at Surface. The groundwater vulnerability within the site is rated as X - Rock at or Near Surface throughout the site. Vulnerability is a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease at which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities.

Table 5.1- Details information gleaned from catchments.ie on the water status of the groundwater waterbody. This concludes that the groundwater is rated as good overall status.

Bandon Islands Waterbody Information	
Name	Bandon Islands
Code	IE_SW_G_013
WFD Catchments	20 Bandon-Ilen
Longitude	51.4383702
Latitude	-9.4932219
Cycle 1 RBD	South Western
Local Authority	Cork County Council
Waterbody Category	Groundwater
WFD Risk	Not At Risk
Protected Area	N/A
High Status Objective	No
Heavily Modified	N/A
Artificial	N/A
Area (km ²)	N/A
Length (km)	N/A
Transboundary	No
Canal	No
GW 2016-2021 Overall Groundwater Status	Good

5.2 FLOOD RISK

There is no identifiable potential flood risk on site.

6 OTHER PLANS AND PROJECTS IN THE AREA

It is a requirement of the Appropriate Assessment process to consider the 'in combination' effects of the proposed development with other plans and projects in the area. **Table 6.1** below gives details of the other plans and projects in the area which may be affecting the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC Natura 2000 site.

Table 6.1: Other Plans and Projects Affecting the Natura 2000 Site

Name of Plan or Project	Key policies/issues/objectives directly related to the relevant Natura 2000 sites	Potential cumulative or in-combination effects on the relevant Natura 2000 sites
Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028	Designated Sites, Habitats and Species Policies and Objectives, Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Policies and Objectives, Natural Water Systems Polices Improve water quality, nature conservation/ biodiversity. The integration of Green/Blue Infrastructure and ecosystems services	Positive Impact
All Ireland Pollinator Plan	Reverse declines in pollinating insects. Pollinators are impacted by the actions of everyone ranging from the local authorities to community groups, farmers, schools, gardeners and businesses	Positive Impact
River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027	The River Basin Management Plan for Ireland sets out a number of objectives and measures for all national water bodies which aim: (1) to prevent the deterioration of water bodies and to protect, enhance and restore them with the aim of achieving at least good status and (2) to achieve compliance with the requirements for designated protected areas.	Positive impact
NPWS Conservation Management Plans	Site-Specific Conservation objectives have been published for the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC and its aims and objectives are outlined from page 14 - 17 above.	Positive impacts
Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) Corporate Plan 2021-2025	Goals: To protect, manage and conserve Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources and to maximize their sustainability and natural biodiversity. To play a leadership role in achieving our climate action and biodiversity goals	Positive impact
Planning Applications in the area	A search was carried out on Cork County Council's online planning query system on the 14 th of August 2025. It was ascertained that the following local planning applications were granted within a 300m radius of the site in the past 5 years. PI ref: 22558 Development Description: <i>Cead pleanála chun an sean - fhoirgneamh tionsclaíoch Aonad 1 a choinneáil mar atógadh é, chomh maith leis na hoibreacha coimhdeach ar fad a bhaineann leis. Permission for retention of old industrial building Unit 1 as re-constructed, as well as all associated ancillary works.</i> Grant Date: 24/11/2022	Neutral Impact

	PI ref: 23151 Development Description: <i>chun athruithe bunísacha agus athchóiriú ar Aonad 1, stór mar atá, a chur in oiriúint lena úsáid mar iarsmalan ag ionchorprú eispeáras 360 an Charraig Aonar agus leithris chomh maith le gach cineál oibreacha coimhdeach a bhaineann leis. The change of use and alterations to Unit 1, existing store, for use as a museum incorporating a Fastnet Rock 360 visual experience and toilets, as well as all associated works</i> Grant Date: 27/09/2023 PI ref: 23374 Development Description: <i>Change of use of former beer store to off-licence and associated site development works.</i> Grant Date: 29/08/2023	
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7 SCREENING MATRIX FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT IN LINE WITH EU COMMISSION GUIDANCE

Having established the extent of the proposed project and the details of the Natura 2000 sites, a screening assessment for possible impacts can be generated. This section follows the format of the Screening Matrix provided in Annex 2 of the following document.

“Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites- Methodology guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Commission, 2001”.

Table 7.1: Step Three: Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Identify all potential direct and indirect impacts that may have an effect on the conservation objective of a European site taking into account the size/scale of the project under the following headings:	
Impacts:	Possible significance of Impacts (Duration/Magnitude)
Construction Phase (Examples) - Vegetation Clearance - Demolition - Surface water runoff from excavation/infill - Dust, noise, vibration - Lighting disturbance - Impact on groundwater - Storage of excavation/construction materials - Access to site - Pests	There are no direct impacts/effects predicted on the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC during the construction phase as the application site is located outside of this Natura 2000 site. Indirect impacts cannot be ruled out during the construction phase of the proposed development. This is due to the close proximity between the application site and the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. As per the precautionary principle, construction phase activities could result in surface water runoff pollutants potentially impacting the groundwater in the area which could impact the protected qualifying interests in the absence of mitigation measures. The proposal involves the decommissioning of the existing wastewater treatment system. Given the immediate proximity to the SAC to the north, in the absence of mitigation measures, construction phase impacts cannot be ruled at this stage.
Operation Phase (Examples) - Direct emissions to air and water - Surface water runoff containing contaminant/sediment - Lighting Disturbance	There are no direct impacts/effects predicted on the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC during the operational phase as the application site is located outside of this Natura 2000 site. The proposed extension will be constructed over the existing hard standing

- Noise/vibration - Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage/abstraction - Presence of people, vehicles and activities - Physical presence of structures (collision risks) - Potential for accidents/incidents	area on site. As no additional roads are proposed and as there will be no changes to impermeable areas on site, surface water drainage will remain as is on site. No impacts are predicted in this regard. The existing wastewater treatment plant is to be decommissioned. A tertiary wastewater treatment system is proposed to be installed on site to the north, adjacent to the existing wastewater treatment system. The existing pumping station and rising main is proposed to be decommissioned and replaced with a new system to cater for the development. The proposed effluent treatment system is designed to provide for an enhanced effluent treatment system, compared to that which currently existing on site. No impacts are predicted in this regard.
In combination/ other:	No likely significant in-combination effects are identified.
(a) Describe any likely changes to the European site:	
Examples of the type of changes to give consideration to include: - Reduction/fragmentation of habitat - Disturbance to QI species - Habitat/species fragmentation - Reduction/fragmentation in species density - Changes in key indicators of conservation status value - Changes to areas of sensitivity/threats to QI - Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site	Indirect impacts cannot be ruled out during the construction phase of the proposed development. This is due to the close proximity between the application site and the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. As per the precautionary principle, construction phase activities could result in surface water runoff pollutants potentially impacting the groundwater in the area which could impact the protected qualifying interests in the absence of mitigation measures. The proposal involves the decommissioning of the existing wastewater treatment system. Given the immediate proximity to the SAC to the north, in the absence of mitigation measures, construction phase impacts cannot be ruled out at this stage.
(b) Are 'mitigation' measures necessary to reach a conclusion that likely significant effects can be ruled out at screening?	
☒ Yes ☐ No	

The findings of the screening matrix are summarized in **Table 7.2** below.

Table 7.2 Stage 1 - Screening Matrix for the Proposed Development

Brief Description of the Project or Plan
Location: The proposed site lies at Unit 1, Páirc Ghnó, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Baile Iarthach Thuaidh, Oileán Chléire, Co. Corcaigh (Grid Ref: Easting: 95316.80, Northing: 21953.22). Distance from Designated Site: The site for proposed development borders the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC. Brief Description of the Project: Planning permission is being sought for "works at Unit 1, Páirc Ghnó, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Baile Iarthach Thuaidh, Oileán Chléire, Co. Corcaigh. The proposed works will include internal modification, the construction of a toilet block extension (10m2), a glazed entrance lobby and a covered outdoor area, replacement of the existing wastewater treatment system and percolation area with a packaged Wastewater Treatment System, provision of wayfinding signage and all associated works." A Site Layout Plan for the proposed development is included as Appendix A to this report.

Brief Description of the Natura 2000 Site

Site Designation Status: The Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC is designated under EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

Qualifying Features

The Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC is of conservation significance due to the presence of 5 habitats and 3 species which is listed under Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive.

Qualifying Habitats

- Large shallow inlets and bays [1160]
- Reefs [1170]
- Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]
- European dry heaths [4030]
- Submerged or partially submerged sea caves [8330]

Qualifying Species

- Phocoena phocoena (Harbour Porpoise) [1351]
- Lutra lutra (Otter) [1355]
- Halichoerus grypus (Grey Seal) [1364]

(EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC)

Habitats and Species of Interest

Full details of the sites are found in the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC Site Synopses included as Appendix B in this report.

Unit Size:

Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC: Area [ha] 14,285.34, Marine area [%] 90.36

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Describe the individual elements of the project likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site.

Due to the close proximity of this application site and Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC, indirect impacts/ effects cannot be ruled out during the construction phase of the development. As per the precautionary principle, the qualifying interests associated with this SAC could be impacted during construction activities in the absence of mitigation measures. Construction phase activities could result in surface water runoff pollutants potentially impacting the groundwater in the area which could impact the protected qualifying interests in the absence of mitigation measures. The proposal involves the decommissioning of the existing wastewater treatment system. Given the immediate proximity to the SAC to the north, in the absence of mitigation measures, construction phase impacts cannot be ruled at this stage.

Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of the following;

- Size and Scale

The application site comprises an overall site area of 0.581 hectares, the proposed development extension floor space is 10m². Due to the fact that the works will be located within an area with several residential housing estates, entirely outside the designated area, it is not expected that the development will have any significant impact (direct, indirect or secondary in nature) on the Natura 2000 site in this regard.

- Land-Take

The proposed works will be entirely located outside the designated site and so there will be no impacts in this regard.

- Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site

The application site is located adjacent to the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC.

- Resource Requirements

It is not expected that the proposed development will have any significant impact (direct, indirect, or secondary in nature) on the designated sites in this regard.

- Emissions

The proposed extension will be constructed over the existing hard standing area on site. As no additional roads are proposed and as there will be no changes to impermeable areas on site, surface water drainage will remain as is on site. No impacts are predicted in this regard.

The existing wastewater treatment plant is to be decommissioned. A tertiary wastewater treatment system is proposed to be installed on site to the north, adjacent to the existing wastewater treatment system. The existing pumping station and rising main is proposed to be decommissioned and replaced with a new system to cater for the development. The proposed effluent treatment system is designed to provide for an enhanced effluent treatment system, compared to that which currently existing on site. No impacts are predicted in this regard.

- Excavation Requirements

No impacts are expected on the Natura 2000 site in this regard.

- Transportation Requirements

During the construction phase of the proposed development, there will be a slight increase in the volume of traffic in the area for a short time. It is not expected that this slight increase will result in direct, indirect, or secondary impacts on the Natura 2000 site.

- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

The construction phase of the proposed development will last approximately 1-5 years. It is expected that this development will remain in use for at least 100 years. Neither the operation nor the eventual decommissioning of the proposed development is likely to result in direct, indirect, or secondary impacts on the Natura 2000 sites.

Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of the following;

- Reduction of Habitat

There will be no changes in this respect.

Disturbance to Key Species

- There will be no changes in this respect.

- Habitat or Species Fragmentation

There will be no changes in this respect.

- Reduction in species density

There will be no changes in this respect.

- Changes in key indicators of conservation value

There will be no changes in this respect.

- Climate change

There will be no changes in this respect.

Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of the following;

- Interference with key relationships that define the structure and function of the site

No potential impacts which are likely to interfere with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site are expected.

Provide Indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of the following;

- **Loss**
No loss is expected.
- **Fragmentation**
No fragmentation is expected.
- **Disruption**
No disruption is expected.
- **Disturbance**
No disturbance is expected.
- **Change to key elements of the site**
No change is expected.

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.

Due to the close proximity of this application site and Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC, indirect impacts/ effects cannot be ruled out during the construction phase of the development. As per the precautionary principle, the qualifying interests associated with this SAC could be impacted during construction activities in the absence of mitigation measures. Construction phase activities could result in surface water runoff pollutants potentially impacting the groundwater in the area which could impact the protected qualifying interests in the absence of mitigation measures. The proposal involves the decommissioning of the existing wastewater treatment system. Given the immediate proximity to the SAC to the north, in the absence of mitigation measures, construction phase impacts cannot be ruled at this stage.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Planning is being sought for “works at Unit 1, Páirc Ghnó, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Baile Iarthach Thuaidh, Oileán Chléire, Co. Corcaigh. The proposed works will include internal modification, the construction of a toilet block extension (10m²), a glazed entrance lobby and a covered outdoor area, replacement of the existing wastewater treatment system and percolation area with a packaged Wastewater Treatment System, provision of wayfinding signage and all associated works.” A Site Layout Plan for the proposed development is included as **Appendix A** to this report. The screening exercise examined impacts on the Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC Natura 2000 site.

Due to the close proximity of this application site and Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC, indirect impacts/ effects cannot be ruled out during the construction phase of the development. As per the precautionary principle, the qualifying interests associated with this SAC could be impacted during construction activities in the absence of mitigation measures. Construction phase activities could result in surface water runoff pollutants potentially impacting the groundwater in the area which could impact the protected qualifying interests in the absence of mitigation measures.

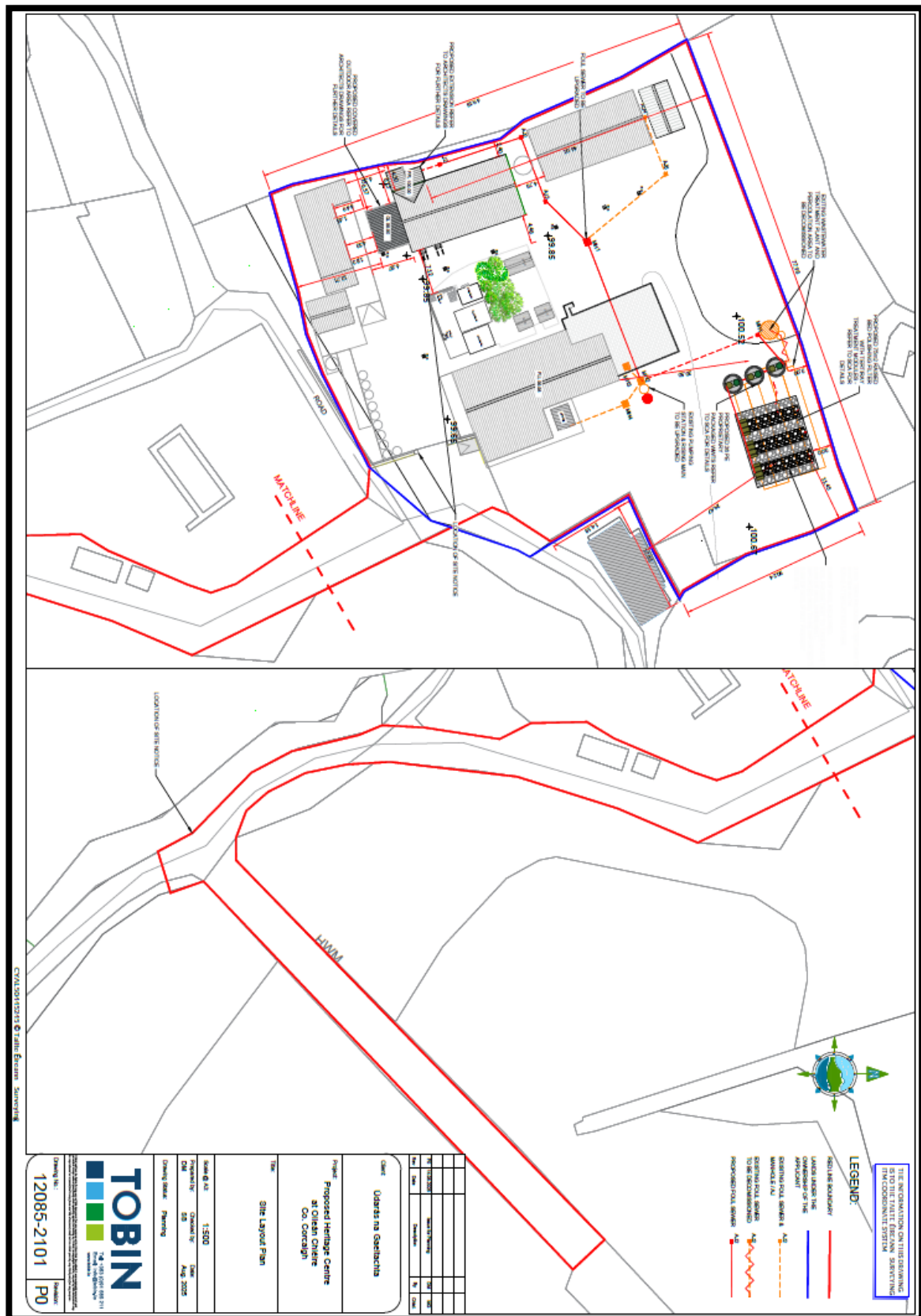
The proposal involves the decommissioning of the existing wastewater treatment system. Given the immediate proximity to the SAC to the north, in the absence of mitigation measures, construction phase impacts cannot be ruled at this stage.

The proposed extension will be constructed over the existing hard standing area on site. As no additional roads are proposed and as there will be no changes to impermeable areas on site, surface water drainage will remain as is on site. No impacts are predicted in this regard.

The existing wastewater treatment plant is to be decommissioned. A tertiary wastewater treatment system is proposed to be installed on site to the north, adjacent to the existing wastewater treatment system. The existing pumping station and rising main is proposed to be decommissioned and replaced with a new system to cater for the development. The proposed effluent treatment system is designed to provide for an enhanced effluent treatment system, compared to that which currently existing on site. No impacts are predicted in this regard.

Therefore, the conclusion of this screening exercise is that in the absence of construction phase mitigation, significant indirect effects/impacts are expected on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the surrounding Natura 2000 sites, as a result of the proposed development in question, alone or in combination with the other plans and projects in the area, and therefore a **Natura Impact Statement is required in this case.**

APPENDIX A-Site Layout Plan



APPENDIX B

NPWS Site Synopses for Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC

Site Name: Roaringwater Bay and Islands SAC

Site Code: 000101

Roaringwater Bay, Co. Cork, is a wide, shallow bay located on the south-west coast of Ireland. The SAC includes the immediate coastline on the mainland from Long Island to Baltimore, together with the whole bay and most of the islands. Some of the larger islands included are Sherkin Island, Cape Clear Island, Heir Island, Horse Island, Castle Island and Long Island. The bedrock in the area is composed of a series of Devonian Old Red Sandstone reefs that run parallel to troughs of Devonian Carboniferous marine clastics in a north-east/south-west direction. These reefs emerge to form the islands on the south side of the bay and within the bay. Generally the coast is low-lying but the southern edge rises, in line with the hills behind Baltimore, to culminate in a summit of 160 m on Cape Clear. The site is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) selected for the following habitats and/or species listed on Annex I / II of the E.U. Habitats Directive (* = priority; numbers in brackets are Natura 2000 codes): [1160] Large Shallow Inlets and Bays [1170] Reefs [1230] Vegetated Sea Cliffs [4030] Dry Heath [8330] Sea Caves [1351] Harbour Porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) [1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*) [1364] Grey Seal (*Halichoerus grypus*).

The bay itself has a wide variety of reef and sediment habitats, subject to a range of wave exposures and tidal currents. Within the habitat 'large shallow inlets and bays' are found the following communities: muddy sand with bivalves and polychaetes complex, mixed sediment community complex, and shallow sand-mud community complex. Also found are marine caves and reefs. The shores of the bay range from the exposed, rocky shores of South Sherkin Island, to the sheltered rock, sand and mud communities of the Inner Bay and estuarine communities where the rivers enter the bay. The shallow subtidal reefs have good examples of kelp forest community grazed by the sea urchin *Echinus esculentus*. The animal dominated reefs includes the feather star *Antedon bifida* community, the hydroid *Sertularia argentia* and *Hydrallmania falcata* community, and sponge and ascidian communities. Some of these are species-rich and at least two rare species occur; the sponge *Tethyspira spinosa* and the rare red alga *Phyllophora sicula*. The scarce hydroid *Tamarisca tamarisca* occurs at a number of sites within the bay. These communities are typical of very sheltered areas with some current present. The cave community on Sherkin Island is home to the rare filamentous red alga, *Pterosiphonia pennata*. The sedimentary communities in Roaringwater Bay are exceptional. Of particular interest is the extensive bed of the calcareous free living red alga *Lithophyllum dentatum*, (generally termed maerl, but may be locally known as 'coral'), which is the largest in the country for this species. This bed typically contains specimens that are very large and uniquely flattened in form, with the rare filamentous red alga *Spyridia filamentosa*. *Lithophyllum dentatum* is only known from two other sites. There are also other maerl communities and several Eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) beds which may co-occur with

a particularly good example in Horseshoe Bay, Sherkin Island. The terrestrial habitats at this site are also of conservation interest and include good examples of two habitats listed under the E.U. Habitats Directive, i.e. dry heath and sea cliffs. The coastal heath vegetation is typified by an abundance of Western Gorse (*Ulex gallii*), Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) and Bell Heather (*Erica cinerea*). This is regularly burnt in most places so that there are clearings where grasses and herbs such as Wood Sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*) and Tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*) have a temporary rise to prominence before the shrubs grow again. Outcrops of rock bring variety into the heath and these areas are sometimes host to interesting species. These include many plants of southern distribution, for example the rare Red Data Book species Bird's-foot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*), Spotted Rock-rose (*Tuberaria guttata*), Hairy Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus subbiflorus*), Pale Dog-violet (*Viola lactea*) and Lanceolate Spleenwort (*Asplenium billotii*). The latter three on this list are also protected under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999. In addition there is a small amount of Deptford Pink (*Dianthus armeria*), one of only a very small number of places it grows in Ireland, though it may have been introduced here, as at other sites. Flushes and damp places through this vegetation support some interesting liverworts, as well as Bird's-foot Clover (*Trifolium ornithopodioides*) and the special annual plants of the south-west, Chaffweed (*Anagallis minima*), Yellow Centaury (*Cicendia filiformis*) and Allseed (*Radiola linoides*). Chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*) is also common, with Yellow Bartsia (*Parentucellia viscosa*) somewhat less so. Most of the species mentioned above have restricted distributions in Ireland. High rocky sea cliffs are confined to the southern and south-eastern sides of Clear Island and Sherkin Island. The steep areas of rocky cliffs are generally between 30 and 60 m in height, but more sloping ground with a heath covering extends to 120 m on Clear Island and to 100 m on Sherkin Island. Low, gently sloping cliffs occur elsewhere on some of the islands and on coastal sections of the mainland (mostly less than 30 m). The cliffs have typical maritime vegetation, with Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), scurvygrass (*Cochlearia* spp.), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Sea Campion (*Silene vulgaris* subsp. *maritima*), plantains (*Plantago maritima* and *P. coronopus*), Rock Samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*), Tree-mallow (*Lavatera arborea*) and, locally, Dotted Sedge (*Carex punctata*) and the Slender Spike-rush (*Eleocharis uniglumis*). Two Red Data Book plants, Little-Robin (*Geranium purpureum*) and Sea Pea (*Lathyrus japonicus* subsp. *maritimus*), occur rarely on shingle beaches within the site, while Ray's Knotgrass (*Polygonum oxyspermum* subsp. *railii*) is more widespread. Sea Pea is listed in the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999. Several streams have been ponded by such beaches to create marshes of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) where Marsh Pennywort (*Hydrocotyle vulgaris*), Marsh Cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*) and marshorchids (*Dactylorhiza majalis* and *D. incarnata*) are frequent, together with some Creeping Willow (*Salix repens*) and Gypsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*). On Clear Island a similar marsh has developed into a bog with abundant bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp.), Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Marsh St John's-wort (*Hypericum elodes*). Sand is a notable feature of Sherkin Island and occurs to a small extent elsewhere. Wild Radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum*), Crested Hair-grass (*Koeleria macrantha*) and Sea Stork's-bill (*Erodium maritimum*) grow in this habitat, with a little Hare's-foot Clover (*Trifolium arvense*), Knotted Clover (*T. striatum*) and the Red Data Book species Lesser Centaury (*Centaureum pulchellum*). The last species is also listed under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999. Otter, Grey Seal and Harbour Porpoise, all mammal species listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive, occur within the

site. Grey Seal is present at the site throughout the year during all aspects of its annual life cycle which includes breeding, moulting, non-breeding, foraging and resting phases. A minimum population for all ages was estimated at 116-149 in 2005. Roaringwater Bay may be one of the most important sites in Ireland for Harbour Porpoise. Harbour Porpoise in Irish waters are largely resident and observations have shown that they are regular in the waters of Roaringwater Bay. Most observations are in the autumn, when more than 100 individuals have been recorded in a day. The population has been estimated (in 2008) to be 117-201 individuals. The main threat to Harbour Porpoise is incidental capture in fishery gear, especially set gillnets but also drift nets. Seabirds breed on some of the islands in the bay. A survey on Clear Island in 1995 reported the following species: Fulmar - 716 pairs, Shag - 59 pairs, Lesser Blackbacked Gull - 160 pairs, Herring Gull - 51 pairs, Great Black-backed Gull - 50 pairs, Guillemot - 42 individuals and Razorbill - 31 individuals. Cormorants breed on Calf Island, Carrigmore and The Catalogues (approx. 100 pairs in mid 1980s), and there is a scattering of gulls on several other islands. Roaringwater Bay has a nationally important population of Black Guillemot, with 198 individuals counted in 1999. Terns (Arctic/Common) bred within the site in the 1980s, with a large colony of 122 pairs on Carrigvish Rock in 1984. Such large numbers, however, have not been seen since and there have been no records of breeding in recent years. The site holds a very important concentration of Chough (33 pairs in 1992), as well as several pairs of Peregrine Falcon. Both of these species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Clear Island has Ireland's only manned bird observatory (established in 1959) and there is a marine research station on Sherkin Island. In conclusion, Roaringwater Bay and Islands is a site of exceptional conservation importance, supporting diverse marine and terrestrial habitats, five of which are listed under the E.U. Habitats Directive. The site is also notable for the presence of Otter, Grey Seal and Harbour Porpoise, and supports important sea bird colonies. Further, the site supports a large number of plants which are rare or scarce in Ireland, a number of which are listed under the Flora (Protection) Order, 1999.