APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

FOR

EXTENSION OF EXISTING SITE BOUNDARY

AT

CHURCHFIELD, CORK, CO. CORK

November 2019

ON BEHALF OF

COUNTRY CLEAN RECYCLING LTD.

Prepared by
Enviroguide Consulting
Dublin
3D Core C, Block 71, The Plaza,
Park West, Dublin 12

Kerry
19 Henry Street
Kenmare, Co. Kerry

www.enviroguide.ie
info@enviroguide.ie
+353 1 565 4730

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Client	Country Clean Recycling Ltd.
Project Title	Extension of Existing Site Boundary, at Churchfield, Cork, Co. Cork.
Document Title	Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Revision	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed	Approved	Issue Date
1.0	Draft for internal Review	Liam Gaffney *Ecologist*	Jim Dowdall *Director*	Jim Dowdall *Director*	07/11/2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Enviroguide Consulting were commissioned by Country Clean Re-Cycling Ltd. to carry out an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report in relation to an application for an extension of an existing site boundary at Churchfield, Cork, Co. Cork. The purpose of this report is to provide information for the relevant competent authority to carry out the screening for Appropriate Assessment.

1.2 Relevant Legislation

1.2.1 Legislative Background

Member States are required to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protected Areas (SPAs) under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives, respectively. SACs and SPAs are collectively known as Natura 2000 sites. An 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) is a required assessment to determine the likelihood of significant impacts, based on best scientific knowledge, of any plans or projects on Natura 2000 sites. A screening for AA determines whether a plan or project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site, in view of its conservation objectives.

This AA Screening has been undertaken to determine the potential for significant impacts on relevant Natura 2000 sites. The purpose of this assessment is to determine, the appropriateness, or otherwise, of the proposed development in the context of the conservation objectives of such sites.

1.2.2 Legislative Context

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) seeks to conserve natural habitats and wild fauna and flora by the designation of SACs and the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) seeks to protect birds of special importance by the designation of SPAs. It is the responsibility of each member state to designate SPAs and SACs, both of which will form part of Natura 2000, a network of protected sites throughout the European Community.

An Appropriate Assessment is required under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive where a project or plan may give rise to significant effects upon a Natura 2000 Site, and paragraphs 3 and 4 state that:

"*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. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*

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, including those of a social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest."

This AA Screening Report was conducted within this legislative framework and the published Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2009 guidelines - "Appropriate Assessment of Plans & Projects - Guidance for Planning Authorities". The directives are transposed into Irish legislation by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended).

As outlined in these, it is the responsibility of the proponent of the project to provide a comprehensive and objective Screening for Appropriate Assessment, which can then be used by the competent authority in order to conduct the Appropriate Assessment (DEHLG, 2009).

1.2.3 Stages of AA

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (the "**Screening Report**") has been prepared by Enviroguide Consulting. It considers whether the proposed application is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site and whether a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required.

The AA process is a four-stage process, with 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.

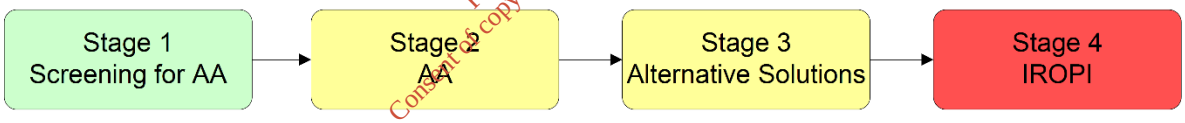


FIGURE 1. THE FOUR STAGES OF THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS (DEHLG, 2010).

The four stages of an AA, can be summarised as follows:

- Stage 1: *Screening*. The first stage of the AA process is to determine the likelihood of significant impacts of the project or plan.
- Stage 2: *Natura Impact Statement (NIS)*. The second stage of the AA process assesses the impact of the project or plan (either alone or in combination with other projects or plans) on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, with respect to the conservation objectives of the site and its ecological structure and function. A Natura Impact Statement containing a professional scientific examination of the project or plan is required and includes any mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or offset negative impacts.
- Stage 3: *Assessment of alternative solutions*. If the outcome of Stage 2 is negative i.e. adverse impacts to the sites cannot be scientifically ruled out, despite mitigation, the plan or project should proceed to Stage 3 or be abandoned. This stage examines alternative solutions to the proposal.

- Stage 4: *Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.* The final stage is the main derogation process examining whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project to adversely affect a Natura 2000 site, where no less damaging solution exists.

The purpose of Stage 1, the Screening Stage is to determine the necessity or otherwise for a NIS. Screening for AA examines the likely effects of a project or plan alone, and in combination with other projects or plans, upon a Natura 2000 site, and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant.

If it is determined during screening stage that the proposal has the potential to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, then a NIS will need to be prepared.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Screening Steps

This AA Screening Report has been undertaken in accordance with the European Commission Methodological Guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001) and the European Commission Guidance 'Managing Natura 2000 sites' (EC, 2018). Screening for AA involves the following:

- Establish whether the plan is directly connected with or necessary for the management of a Natura 2000 site;
- Description of the plan or project and the description and characterisation of other projects or plans that in combination have the potential for having significant effects on the Natura 2000 site;
- Identification of Natura 2000 sites potentially affected;
- Identification and description of potential effects on the Natura 2000 site;
- Assessment of the likely significance of the impacts identified on the Natura 2000 site; and
- Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.

This AA Screening Report examines whether any potential effects upon a Natura 2000 site will be significant and determines whether the AA process for the proposed boundary extension at Churchfield, Cork, Co. Cork alone, and in combination with other developments in the area, requires to proceed to a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

2.2 Desk Study

A desktop study was carried out to collate and review available information, datasets and documentation sources relevant for the completion of this Screening Report. The desktop study, completed in October 2019, relied on the following sources:

- Information on the network Natura 2000 sites, boundaries, qualifying interests and conservation objectives, obtained from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) at *www.npws.ie*;
- Text summaries of the relevant Natura 2000 sites taken from the respective Standard Data Forms and Site Synopsises available at *www.npws.ie*;

- Information on species records and distributions, obtained from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) at *maps.biodiversityireland.ie*;
- Information on waterbodies, catchment areas and hydrological connections obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at *gis.epa.ie*;
- Information on bedrock, groundwater, aquifers and their statuses, obtained from Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) at *www.gsi.ie*;
- Satellite imagery and mapping obtained from various sources and dates including Google, Digital Globe, Bing and Ordinance Survey Ireland;
- Information on the existence of permitted developments, or developments awaiting decision, in the vicinity of the proposed development from Cork County Council, available at: *https://www.corkcoco.ie/en/planning.*

For a complete list of the specific documents consulted as part of this assessment, see *Section 5 References*.

2.3 Assessment of Impacts

Once the potential impacts that may arise from the proposal were identified, the significance of these was assessed through the use of key indicators:

- Habitat loss or alteration;
- Habitat/species fragmentation;
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species;
- Changes in population density; and
- Changes in water quality and resource.

In line with the EPA Guidelines (EPA, 2017), the following terms are defined when quantifying duration:

TABLE 1. DEFINITION OF DURATIONS (EPA, 2017).

Description of Duration	Corresponding Time Frame
Momentary Effects	Effects lasting from seconds to minutes
Brief Effects	Effects lasting less than a day
Temporary Effects	Effects lasting less than a year
Short-term Effects	Effects lasting one to seven years.
Medium-term Effects	Effects lasting seven to fifteen years.
Long-term Effects	Effects lasting fifteen to sixty years
Permanent Effects	Effects lasting over sixty years
Reversible Effects	Effects that can be undone, for example through remediation or restoration

Frequency of Effects	Describe how often the effect will occur. (once, rarely, occasionally, frequently, constantly – or hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, annually)

The criterion for confidence levels of the predicted likely impacts are given below in Table 2. The impact significance criteria follow EPA guidance (EPA, 2017).

TABLE 2. IMPACT SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA (EPA, 2017).

Significance of Effects	Definition
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.
Not significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences.
Slight Effects	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities.
Moderate Effects	An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
Significant Effects	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment

3 STAGE 1 SCREENING

3.1 Management of Natura 2000 Sites

The boundary extension at Churchfield, Cork, Co. Cork is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of Natura 2000 sites in Co. Cork or elsewhere.

3.2 Description of Proposed Development

3.2.1 Brief Description of Development

The applicant is seeking a Technical Amendment to their existing licence reference No. planning permission from the Environmental Protection Agency for a proposed extension of the existing site boundary to the north of the site.

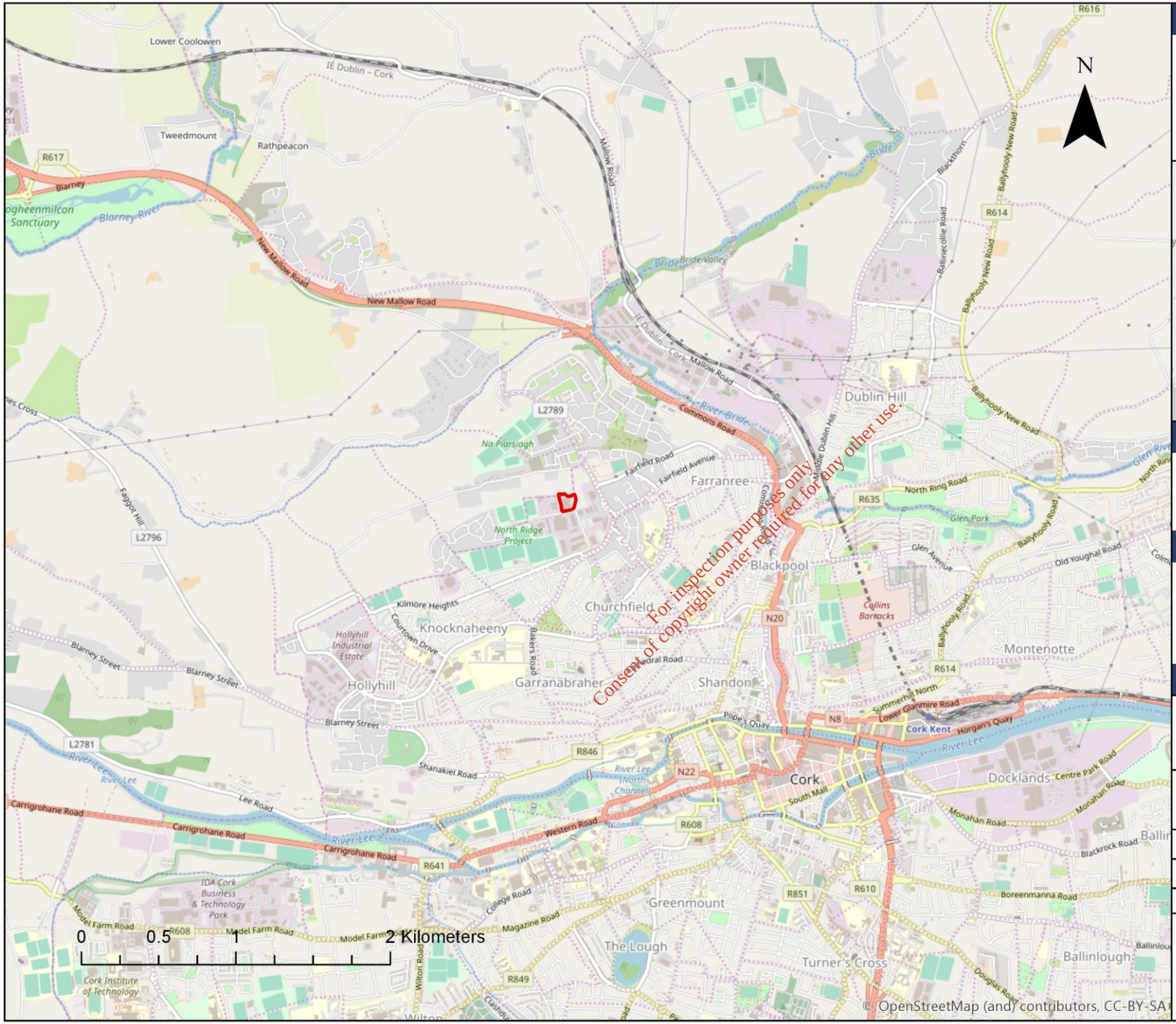
3.2.2 Existing Environment

The site in question is located in the Churchfield Industrial Estate Co. Cork on the northern outskirts of Cork city. The entrance to the site is located along John F. Connolly Road *ca.* 1.5km west of where the R635 Regional Road joins the N20 National Road. See figure 2 for site location and figure 3 for site layout.

The subject site is located in the townland of *Garranabraher*, Co. Cork. *Garranabraher* and surrounding areas are located within the *Ballinhassig East* groundwater body. The vulnerability status of this waterbody is recorded as *Extreme.* The groundwater rock units underlying the

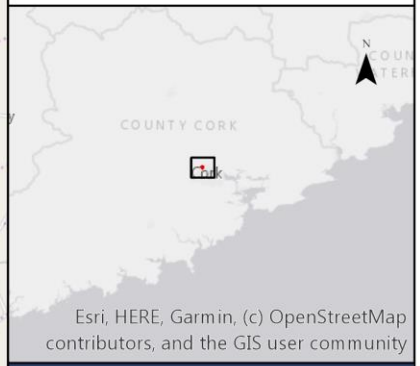
area are classed as *Devonian Old Red Sandstones* and the sub-soil at the site is classified as predominantly *Till derived from Devonian sandstones*, with an area of *Urban* making up the southern section of the site. The site area is located on a *Locally Important Aquifer - Bedrock which is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones* (GSI, 2019).

The site is located within the *Lee, Cork Harbour and Youghal Bay* river catchment, the *Kiln_SC_010* river sub-catchment, and the *BRIDE (Cork City) _020* river sub-basin. The nearest waterbody to the site is the *BRIDE (Cork City)* waterway (EPA: 19B14) which passes within *ca*. 830m of the site's north-western boundary, flowing from south-west to north-east, and eventually flowing into the River Lee in Cork city as the *Kiln* waterway (EPA: 19K75) *ca.* 2km to the south (EPA, 2019).



Legend

Site Boundary



Project

Boundary Extension at Churchfield, Cork, Co. Cork.

Client

Country Clean Re-Cycling Ltd.

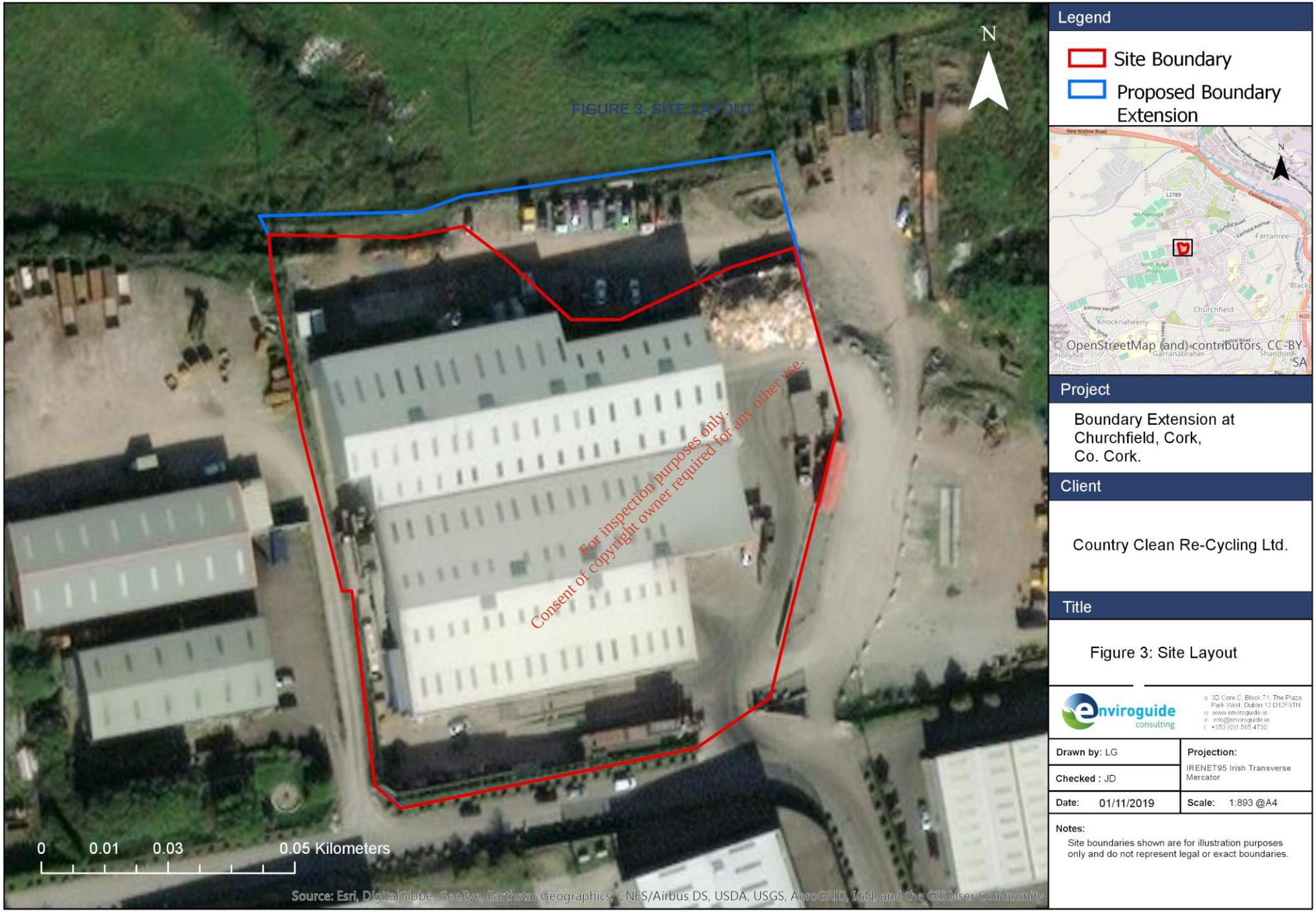
Title

Figure 2: Site Location

enviroguide consulting
3D Core C, Block 71, The Plaza Park West, Dublin 12 D12F9TN
www.enviroguide.ie
info@enviroguide.ie
t: +353 (0)1 565 4730

Drawn by: LG	Projection: IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
Checked : JD	
Date: 01/11/2019	Scale: 1:32,891 @A4

Notes:
Site boundaries shown are for illustration purposes only and do not represent legal or exact boundaries.



3.3 Identification of Relevant Natura 2000 Sites

In order to identify potentially affected Natura 2000 sites, as a starting point, and adopting the precautionary principle, all SPAs and SACs within a 15km distance radius of the proposed development were included in the zone of influence (ZOI) (see figure 4 below). Natura 2000 sites outside of this 15km radius are either; (a) located a considerable physical distance inland; or (b) located within different surface water catchment zones.

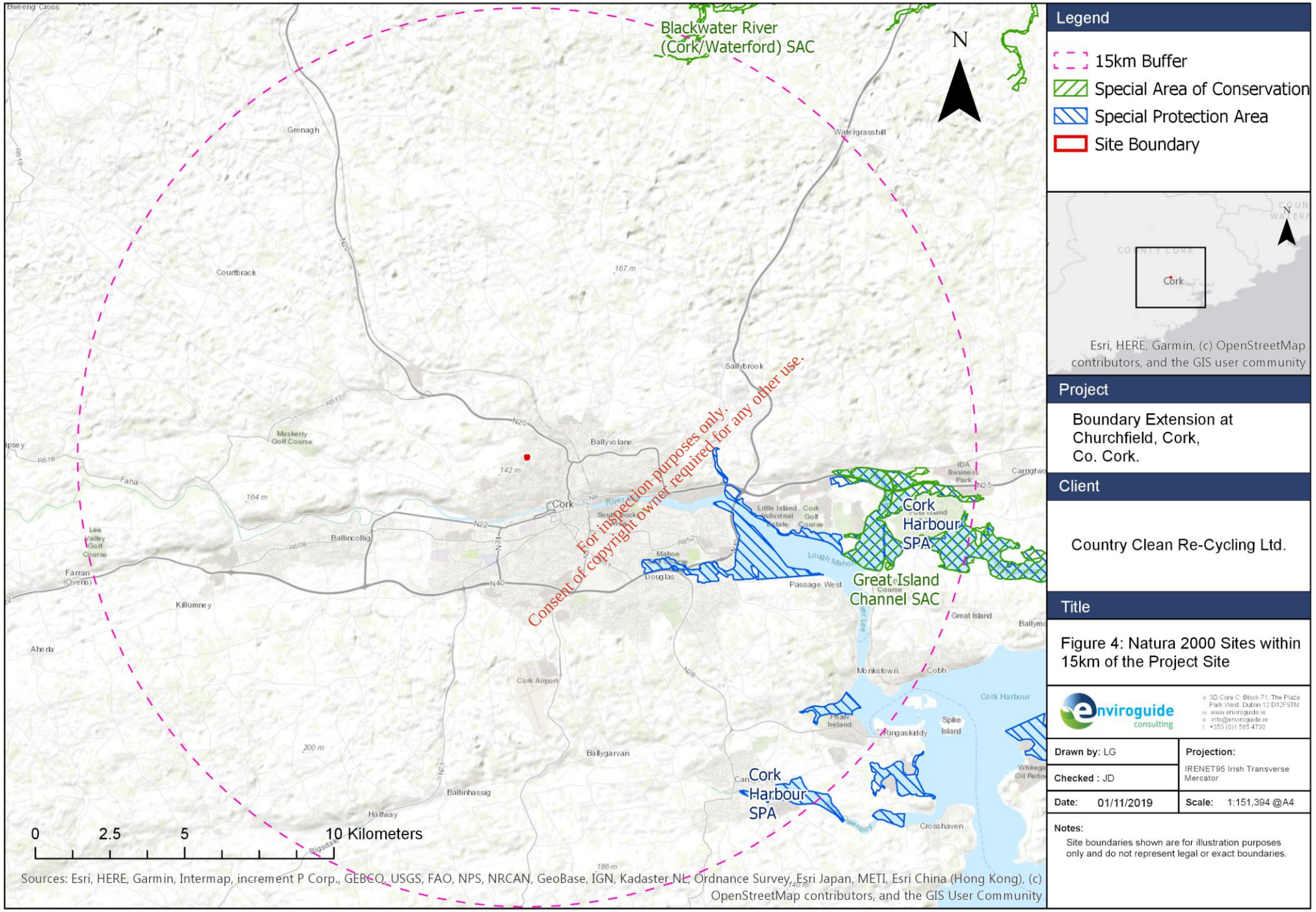
Two SACs and one SPA are located within the precautionary ZOI of the proposed development site. The name of each site, corresponding code and qualifying interests are detailed in Table 3 below. The distances to each site listed below are taken from the nearest possible point of the proposed development site boundary to nearest possible point of each Natura 2000 site.

TABLE 3. NATURA 2000 SITES WITHIN 15KM RADIUS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE.

*** =PRIORITY HABITATS**

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Distance to Site
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
001058	Great Island Channel SAC	- [1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats - [1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows	10.2km
002170	Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC	- [1130] Estuaries - [1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats - [1220] Perennial Vegetation of Stony Banks - [1310] Salicornia Mud - [1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows - [1410] Mediterranean Salt Meadows - [3260] Floating River Vegetation - [91A0] Old Oak Woodlands - [91E0] Alluvial Forests* - [1029] Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) - [1092] White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) - [1095] Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) - [1096] Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) - [1099] River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) - [1103] Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax*) - [1106] Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo salar*) - [1355] Otter (*Lutra lutra*) - [1421] Killarney Fern (*Trichomanes speciosum*)	14.1km
Special Protected Area (SPA)			
004030	Cork Harbour SPA	- [A004] Little Grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) - [A005] Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus)* - [A017] Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo)* - [A028] Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea)* - [A048] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna)*	5.1km

		- [A050] Wigeon (*Anas penelope)* - [A052] Teal (*Anas crecca)* - [A054] Pintail (*Anas acuta)* - [A056] Shoveler (*Anas clypeata)* - [A069] Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator)* - [A130] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus)* - [A140] Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria)* - [A141] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola)* - [A142] Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus)* - [A149] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina alpina)* - [A156] Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa)* - [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica)* - [A160] Curlew (*Numenius arquata)* - [A162] Redshank (*Tringa tetanus)* - [A179] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus)* - [A182] Common Gull (*Larus canus* - [A183] Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus)* - [A193] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) - [A999] Wetlands	



3.4 Identification of Potential Impacts

Information available on the Natura 2000 sites within the identified precautionary zone of influence was reviewed and assessed in order to establish whether the construction and operation of the proposal has the potential to have an impact on any of the qualifying interest and/or conservation objectives of the identified Natura 2000 sites.

The features of the proposal that have the potential to directly or indirectly impact on the qualifying interests and/or conservation objectives of the 2 SACs and 1 SPA that are located within the 15km radius of the proposed development are detailed in Table 5 below.

The assessment framework is taken from the best practice guidelines issued by the European Commission, i.e. “Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance”.

TABLE 4. IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON RELEVANT NATURA 2000 SITES

Natura 2000 site	Potential for significant impacts on Natura 2000 site
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)	
Great Island Channel SAC	**No impacts on SAC envisaged due to:** - The lack of any direct hydrological connections between the subject site and the SAC; - The small scale and nature of the application. - The lack of an faunal species listed as of qualifying interest to the SAC; and - The considerable intervening distance (*ca.*10.2km) between the subject site and the SAC.
Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC	**No impacts on SAC envisaged due to:** - The lack of any direct hydrological connections between the subject site and the SAC; - The small scale and nature of the application; - The lack of any habitat of qualifying interest to the SAC and/or suitable habitat for any species of qualifying interest to the SAC; present in the vicinity of the subject site; and - The considerable intervening distance (*ca.*14.1km) between the subject site and the SAC.
Special Protected Areas (SPA)	
Cork Harbour SPA	**No impacts on SPA envisaged due to:** - The lack of any direct hydrological connections between the subject site and the SPA; - The small scale and nature of the application; - The lack of any suitable *ex-situ* roosting/foraging habitat for species of qualifying interest to the SPA present in the vicinity of the subject site; and - The considerable intervening distance (*ca.*5.1km) between the subject site and the SPA.

3.5 Assessment of Significance of Potential Impact

The potential for significant impacts resulting from the proposed boundary extension was determined based on a range of indicators, including:

- Habitat loss or alteration;
- Habitat/species fragmentation;
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species;
- Changes in population density; and
- Changes in water quality and resource;

An assessment on each of the indicators are given below for each of the Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the subject site location.

3.5.1 Habitat Loss and Alteration

The subject site is not located within or adjacent to any Natura 2000 site. It is therefore considered that there will be no direct loss or alteration of habitat as a result of the proposed boundary extension.

3.5.2 Habitat / Species Fragmentation

Habitat fragmentation has been defined as the 'reduction and isolation of patches of natural environment' (Hall et al., 1997 cited in Franklin et al., 2002) usually due to an external disturbance such that an alteration of the spatial composition of a habitat occurs that alters the habitat and 'create[s] isolated or tenuously connected patches of the original habitat' (Wiens, 1989 cited in Franklin et al., 2002). This results in spatial separation of habitat units which had previously been in a state of greater continuity.

As there will be no direct habitat loss within any Natura 2000 sites, it is not considered that habitat fragmentation will arise from the proposed boundary extension.

3.5.3 Disturbance and / or Displacement of Species

Due to the distance of the subject site from the relevant Natura 2000 sites, is not considered that the proposed boundary extension will lead to any disturbance and/ or displacement of any species of qualifying interest to these sites.

3.5.4 Changes in Population Density

It is not expected that the proposed development will cause any reduction in the baseline population of any species associated with any Natura 2000 site.

3.5.5 Changes in Water Quality and Resource

There are no potential hydrological connections or pathways present between the subject site and any Natura 2000 site.

Therefore, due to the small scale of the site and nature of the proposed application (extension of a site boundary); the fact that the subject site does not maintain any hydrological links to any Natura 2000 sites; it is not considered that there is any significant potential for contamination or adverse effects to water quality or resource in any Natura 2000 site.

A summary of the potential impacts on these indicators from the proposed development is outlined in table 6.

TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON NATURA 2000 SITES FROM THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT.

Site	Habitat Loss / Alteration	Habitat or Species Fragmentation	Disturbance and/or Displacement of Species	Changes in Population Density	Changes in Water Quality and/or Resource	Stage 2 AA Required
Great Island Channel SAC	No	No	No	None	None	NO
Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC	No	No	No	None	None	NO
Cork Harbour SPA	No	No	No	None	None	NO

3.6 Potential for In-combination Effects

Plans and projects that could have the potential to result in cumulative impacts in Churchfield, Cork, Co. Cork, were reviewed from data sources such as the Cork County Council website, An Bord Pleanála website and local knowledge of the area.

Policy documents such as the 'Cork City Development Plan 2015 – 2021' were also consulted, and upon examination of these plans and projects, it is concluded that there is no possibility for any in-combination effects between these plans and the proposed development. Due to the nature of the proposed development and the short term and local scale of any potential in-combination effects.

4 Concluding Statement

In conclusion, upon the examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information including, in particular, the nature of the proposed development and the likelihood of significant effects on any Natura 2000 site, in addition to considering possible in-combination effects, and applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded by the authors of this report that, on the basis of objective information, the possibility can be excluded that the proposed boundary extension application will have any significant effect on any of the Natura 2000 sites listed below:

- Great Island Channel SAC *(001058)*
- Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC *(002170)*
- Cork Harbour SPA *(004030)*

5 REFERENCES

Cork County Council. (2015). Cork City Development Plan 2015 - 2021. Cork County Council, Ireland.

DEHLG. (2010). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2002). Guidelines on information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements. Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2017). Guidelines on information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (Draft). Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2019). Environmental Protection Agency Online Mapping [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.epa.ie/ [Accessed October 2019].

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

Franklin, A. N. (2002). What is Habitat Fragmentation? Studies in Avian Biology, 20-29.

GSI, (2019). Geological Survey of Ireland website [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.gsi.ie/ accessed [Accessed October 2019].

NBDC (2019). National Biodiversity Data Centre online mapping [ONLINE] Available at: http://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Map.aspx. [Accessed October 2019].

NPWS (2010). Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10. Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

NPWS (2013). Site Synopsis: Great Island Channel SAC. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2016). Site Synopsis: Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford) SAC. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015). Site Synopsis: Cork Harbour SPA. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2018). Generic Conservation Objectives. Version 6.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Smith, G.F., O'Donoghue, P, O'Hora K., and Delaney, E. (2010). Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping. Published by the Heritage Council.