

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Description of the site and proposed development**

PA/05420/21 is an application for the construction of the Corinthia Oasis development at the ex-Hal Ferħ Complex in Mellieħa. The proposal involves changes to the approved development of PA/03134/19 (renewal of PA/04906/10) (see Figures 1-4).

PA/03134/19 involved a tourism complex of 228 units in an undulating building, together with ancillary services such as a restaurant, small convenience shop, pools and bars, spa, underground parking facilities (293 parking spaces) (see Figure 4). The reconstruction of the road network (widening of eastern Triq il-Manikata and upgrading of junction between Triq San Pawl il-Baħar and Triq Ghajn Tuffieħa) and the construction of the surface car park on the grounds of the Scouts Association also form part of such permit. The said road and car park works, as well as the removal of all existing structures of the Hal Ferħ complex (apart from a hall within the Chapel area, across Triq il-Kappella tal-Militar) have been permitted through PA/03134/19 and have been undertaken (or are being undertaken) in accordance with such permit specifications.

The proposal under assessment (PA/05420/21 – see Figure 4) involves revisions to the proposed development, with the introduction of a residential component (25 villas) in the southern part of the site, in addition to a 161-room hotel complex in the northern part of the site. The proposed hotel complex would include a conventional hotel building with 122 rooms, a cluster of 39 detached suites, swimming pools, food and beverage amenities, and wellness, sports and meeting facilities. The residential villas would be serviced by the hotel. All proposed development is low-lying and limited to two storeys in height.

The project also includes extensive landscaping, covering both hotel and residential zones, with 50.4 % of the hotel complex footprint reserved for open space and 20.7 % of the villa zone earmarked for gardens. The proposed landscaping will consist of native trees and dry rubble walls to respect the typical features of the Maltese landscape, to green the site and screen the development from the immediate surroundings. At the south-eastern end of the site (across Triq il-Kappella tal-Militar), the Chapel area is present, which is reserved for sports facilities.

Table 1 – Overview table of approved vs proposed development

	<b>Approved (PA/03134/19)</b>	<b>Proposed (PA/05420/21)</b>
<b>Number of units</b>		
Hotel	228	161
Residential villas	0	25
Surface car park	330	330
Below-ground car park	293	115
<b>Total footprint</b>		
Hotel (incl. sports facilities)	80,500 m <sup>2</sup>	50,000 m <sup>2</sup>
Residential villas	0 m <sup>2</sup>	30,500 m <sup>2</sup>
Surface car park	9,750 m <sup>2</sup>	9,750 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Gross floor areas</b>		
Hotel	25,000 m <sup>2</sup>	16,000 m <sup>2</sup>
Residential villas	0 m <sup>2</sup>	9,000 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Landscaped areas</b>		
Softscape	29,342 m <sup>2</sup>	30,629 m <sup>2</sup>
Hardscape	50,273 m <sup>2</sup>	48,136 m <sup>2</sup>



Figure 1 – Pre-existing aerial view (*Source: EIA Report*)



Figure 2 – Aerial view (3D model) of approved development (*Source: EIA Report*)





Figure 3 – Aerial views (3D model) of proposed development (*Source: EIA Report and <https://corinthiaoasis.com/gallery/>*)





## **1.2 Background**

The approved development had been subject to an EIA in 2012 (GF/00117/10) and the then Environment Protection Directorate (under the former MEPA) had not objected to the development from an environmental point of view. The main impacts assessed through GF/00117/10 related to the alterations to the site geology, changes to the landscape and visual amenity, disturbance to fauna from operational lighting and noise emissions.

In view of the complete overhaul of the project, the proposal required the submission of a new Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (in accordance with Schedule I of the EIA Regulations S.L. 549.46, namely Category I, Section 7.1.1.1) and an Appropriate Assessment (AA), in accordance with the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44), in view of its location within the area of influence of the following Natura 2000 sites:

- MT0000024: Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ir-Ramla tač-Čirkewwa sal-Ponta ta' Bengħisa (Special Area of Conservation – SAC);
- MT0000101: Żona fil-Baħar bejn Rdum Majjiesa u Għar Lapsi (SAC); and
- MT0000111: Żona fil-Baħar fil-Lbič (Special Protection Area - SPA).

## **2. EIA CONSULTATIONS**

### **2.1 Scoping**

During the scoping stage, the Project Description Statement (PDS) was made available on the ERA website (<https://era.org.mt/era-project/pa05420-21/>) for a 30-day public consultation period between 23 February and 25 March 2022, and circulated to the following consultees:

- Planning Authority;
- Malta Resources Authority (MRA);
- Regulator for Energy and Water Services (REWS);
- Energy and Water Agency;
- Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights;
- Civil Protection Department;
- Malta Tourism Authority (MTA);
- Ministry for Health – Department of Health Regulation;
- Occupational Health and Safety Authority;
- Transport Malta;
- Superintendence of Cultural Heritage;
- Local Council of Mellieħa;
- Local Council Association;
- Environmental NGOs: Archaeological Society Malta; Biological Conservation Research Foundation (BICREF); Capers (Creating A Positive Resourceful Environmental Society) Malta; Environment Commission; Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna; Friends of the Earth Malta; Malta Bat Conservation Group; Malta Beekeepers Association; Malta Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies Association; Malta Water Association; Noise Abatement Society of Malta; Ramblers Association of Malta; Sustainable Built Environment Malta; Young Reporters for the Environment Malta; Żminijietna, Magħtab Residents Association; ACT Malta; Bicycle Advocacy Group Malta; Birdlife Malta; Centre for Sustainable Development; Din l-Art Ħelwa; Entomological Society of Malta; Flimkien għal Ambjent Aħjar; Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti; Front Ħarsien ODZ; Għaqda Sigar Maltin; Greenhouse Malta; International Tree Foundation; Light Pollution Awareness Group; Malta Herpetological Society; Malta Organic and Agriculture Movement (MOAM); Malta Youth in Agriculture; Malta Health Network; Moviment Graffiti; Nature Trust Malta; and Youth for the Environment.

The consultation was also published on the Government's online consultation platform.

A scoping meeting was held on 8 March 2022 to provide an additional opportunity to the public and the above-listed consultees to raise any aspects they wished to see included in the respective Terms of Reference for the EIA and AA Reports.

Within the stipulated consultation period, comments were received from Malta Resources Authority, Environmental Health Directorate; Superintendence of Cultural Heritage; and BirdLife Malta. These are reproduced in Section 1 of Annex III to this document.

The final EIA and AA Terms of Reference were issued on 28 April 2022.

## **2.2 Review**

The EIA and AA Reports were submitted to ERA on 31 October 2024 and were published for a 30-day public consultation period on 03 November 2024 with the same consultees consulted during the scoping stage (see Section 2.1 above), in accordance with the EIA Regulations (S.L. 549.46). The reports were made available on the ERA webpage and notifications to the public were issued through local newspaper adverts and *via* the government's online consultation platform.

A public hearing was held on 31 January 2025 to provide the general public with the opportunity to comment on and enquire about the proposed project, its impacts, and the EIA and AA Reports. The presentation provided by the EIA Coordinator and the minutes of the meeting are available on the ERA webpage.

Within the stipulated consultation period (including a 7-day period following the public hearing), comments were received from the Superintendent of Cultural Heritage, Environmental Health Directorate (Department for Health Regulation), Energy and Water Agency, the Light Pollution Awareness Group (Astronomical Society of Malta), BirdLife Malta, and two members of the public. No additional feedback was received following the public hearing. The received comments are reproduced in Section 2 of Annex III to this document.

Comments made by ERA, and received from its consultees and the public, during the review consultation stage, were communicated to the EIA Coordinator and the applicant on 19 December 2024 and 11 February 2025, respectively.

The final EIA and AA Reports were submitted to ERA on 10 April 2025.

## **3. ASSESSMENT OF ALTERNATIVES**

### **3.1 Alternative sites**

In view that the proposal involves changes to an already approved development, the selection of alternative sites was not considered relevant to this assessment. In addition, the proposal is formulated by the project proponents in direct response to the Ħal Ferri Development brief (and its partial review dated 2021), which promote the redevelopment of the site and reuse of the land predominantly for tourism, with acceptable secondary uses including separate residential accommodations.

### **3.2 Alternative layouts**

The history of the project for the redevelopment of the Ħal Ferħ site involved the following configurations:

- Ħal Ferħ Tourist Village (early 1980s): conversion of the military barracks into guest-room blocks, and the construction of a conventional hotel building in the northern part of the site.
- Development approved through PA/04906/10 (also discussed in section 1 above), including an undulating 'ribbon building' of 228 units with ancillary pools and facilities.
- Following the 2021 revisions to the Development Brief, alternative layouts were evaluated by the project proponents, introducing a residential component, considering the site in a three-block approach (conventional hotel, water and garden suites, and villas).

No alternative layouts involving higher densities of development were considered, in view of the limitation to low density/rise development set by the Development Brief.

With respect to the watercourse, the Development Brief requires the retention of the route through which runoff from il-Wied ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa flows to ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa, through the site. Such runoff route has remained part of the project, with the proposal now including an underground duct to allow unhindered passage through the site of runoff water originating from the upstream areas of the Wied ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa.

### **3.3 Do-Nothing scenario (zero option)**

With the Do-Nothing Scenario, the approved development (PA/04906/10, renewed through PA/03134/19) could be implemented. The original site condition (military barracks) is no longer existent, as the structures on-site (apart from the chapel) have already been removed (or are being removed) through PA/03134/19.

## **4. EIA FINDINGS**

The summary of the characteristics of the site, assessment of impacts, mitigation measures and residual impacts (taking into account cumulative effects) as identified in the EIA Report are as follows:

### **4.1 Land cover and land/sea uses**

The main site originally consisted of two military camps, being il-Qasam ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa (lower camp – barracks) and il-Kamp ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa (upper camp). Across Triq il-Kappella tal-Militar, is the Chapel area. The current situation involves ongoing interventions (undertaken through PA/03134/19) with the completion of the public car park abutting the main site to the north, the upgrading of the Triq il-Kappella tal-Militar, and the demolition of all buildings within the main site.

The main land uses in and around the il-Qasam ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa area are:

- *Agricultural* - Wied tal-Pwales;
- *Tourism* - Radisson Blu Resort and former Riviera Martinique Hotel;
- *Leisure/recreation* - Ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa, ir-Ramla ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa, camping grounds of the Scouts Association of Malta, marine area for water sports, Majjistral Nature and History Park;
- *Food and beverage* – kiosks, Apple's Eye restaurant, F&B facilities within the Radisson Blu Resort; and
- *Residential* – il-Manikata.

Construction-phase disturbance to nearby land-uses (notably farmers, residents, visitors) due to dust, noise, vibrations, light generation and disruptions caused by construction vehicles and machinery can be mitigated through proper adherence to the Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations (S.L. 552.09) and are assessed as *minor significant*.

No operational adverse impacts in terms of land use were assessed in view that the proposal reflects the Development Brief and includes fewer units than the approved development.

#### **4.2 Landscape character and visual amenity**

A desk study and a field survey were carried out to determine the landscape and visual baseline survey. The most sensitive receptors identified are farmers, residents (notably those of il-Manikata), ramblers/walkers, and campsite users. Fourteen (14) viewpoints were identified to represent short, medium and long-distance views:

- Viewpoint 1: Entry point Upper Camp;
- Viewpoint 2: Intersection of Triq Ġħajn Tuffieħa with Triq tal-Wilga;
- Viewpoint 3: Triq tal-Wilga;
- Viewpoint 4: Adjacent to western edge of il-Manikata (villa area);
- Viewpoint 5: South of Il-Manikata;
- Viewpoint 6: Station in tal-Pwales valley (long-distance);
- Viewpoint 7: Bajda ridge (southern boundary of il-Mizieb woodland (long-distance);
- Viewpoint 8: Triq Ġħajn Tuffieħa (near cluster of buildings known as il-Ballut);
- Viewpoint 9: Triq Ġħajn Tuffieħa (in closer proximity to the site);
- Viewpoint 10: Triq tal-Wilga (midway between vp 2 and 3;
- Viewpoint 11 and 12: Triq Ġħajn Tuffieħa;
- Viewpoint 13: Car park adjacent Riviera Martinique building; and
- Viewpoint 14: undeveloped areas of il-Moxa ta' Ġħajn Tuffieħa and ix-Xagħra l-Ħamra (western side of il-Manikata).

The presence and activity of construction machinery/cranes and associated structures is *not expected to have a significant impact* on the visual amenity of the surrounding area, noting the large footprint that can contain all equipment and the temporary duration of such phase.

During operation, the presence of new buildings (urban development in a predominant rural context) will have a *major significant* effect on the visual amenity of the area from short- to medium-distance viewpoints, noting the sensitivity of the landscape and the magnitude of the change to the site. With respect to long-distance viewpoints, the effects are less pronounced and assessed as *minor to moderate significant*, this is especially in view of the low-lying nature of the development (limited to maximum two storeys). However, noting that the proposal includes an extensive landscaping scheme that would provide a dense vegetation cover and visual screening all around the site, the visual effect of such mature landscaping on the surrounding areas may be perceived as beneficial instead of adverse (refer to Figures 5-10).





Figure 5 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 1 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)



Figure 6 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 2 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)





Figure 7 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 4 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)



Figure 8 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 7 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)





Figure 9 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 11 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)



Figure 10 – View of proposed development from Viewpoint 13 with mature landscaping  
(Source: EIA Report)



### 4.3 Geology, geomorphology, hydrology, hydrogeology

The geology on site is characterised by Upper Coralline Limestone (Tal-Pitkal member), which also forms the floor of Wied tal-Pwales and is exposed in the cliff face around Ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa. Blue clay is exposed to the south of the site. Quaternary to recent deposits, made up of red clays, silts and conglomerates are also present in the general area, and cover most of the development site, hence excavated material would be mostly soil. Fossil dunes are present at Ir-Ramla ta' Ghajn Tuffieħa.

The catchments relevant to the site are the Wied tal-Pwales, Wied ta' Ghajn Tuffieħa and the new carpark's catchments. The Wied ta' Ghajn Tuffieħa catchment is rather small but includes a narrow watercourse that originally discharged into Ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa, through the Hal Ferħ site. This was, however, disrupted with the construction of Triq il-Kappella tal-Militar, rendering the original watercourse mostly redundant. The proposal involves the reinstatement of this watercourse by the installation of an underground duct to allow unhindered passage of runoff to reach the area downstream of the site.

The proposed excavation and removal of 127,000 m<sup>3</sup> of ground material (91% soil [Quaternary and more recent valley deposits] and remainder rock) is assessed as *major significant*, noting its irreversibility and the large volume, and cannot be mitigated from a geology perspective *per se*. However, it is worth noting that most of such soil and rock is proposed to be retained on site and used for the landscaping works.

With respect to hydrology and hydrogeology, all construction works involve a risk of spillages of contaminated liquids (lubricants, paints, building chemicals), however, with appropriate transportation, storage and containment of such materials, these effects are assessed as *minor significant*.

During operations, the extensive soft landscaping would require the use of fertilisers and pesticides, which could remain within the water runoff leaving the site. With the proposed implementation of a management programme to control irrigation and the use of plant nutrition in line with Malta's Nitrates Action Programme Regulations and National Action Plan for Sustainable Use of Pesticides, such effect is assessed as *not significant*. In the event of an accidental spillage or escape of hazardous liquids (fuels, lubricants, pool chemicals, fertilisers/pesticides) taking place, the resulting effect on the water body is assessed as *minor significant*, as long as all operational plant and equipment is managed responsibly, and all hazardous liquids are appropriately stored.

### 4.4 Ecology

The surrounding area is sensitive from an ecological perspective and is afforded protection on a national level (the coastal stretch, Wied ta' Ghajn Tuffieħa and Il-Mizieb woodland are Areas of Ecological Importance (as per Government Notices 117 of 1995, 1137 of 2008 and 715 of 2010). In addition, the coastal terrestrial area forms part of the Natura 2000 network, being an SAC. While the SAC does not include the site, it abuts the site from the side of Ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa. The marine area is both an SAC (for the presence of important marine habitats such as *Posidonia oceanica* seagrass) and an SPA due to the presence of sensitive seabird species. The potential implications on the SACs and SPA are addressed further in the section on Appropriate Assessment (refer to section 5 below).

Site clearance works were undertaken by virtue of the approved permit PA/03134/19 and involved the removal of on-site vegetation (apart from protected trees which required transplanting within the site for integration into the landscaping). In view that the surveys undertaken showed that the site is currently mostly colonised by exotic species, and no species of particular conservation interest were recorded, further removal of vegetation is

assessed as *minor significant*. In this regard, subject that the effects from the works are strictly contained to the site boundaries, construction-phase disturbances (e.g. from dust-dispersion, trampling, stockpiling) on the relevant ecological features are also *minor significant*.

With respect to fauna, site illumination during construction works may affect birds, bats and other nocturnal mammals, reptiles or insects. Subject that lighting is kept minimal and only low-intensity downlighters are used, such impacts are assessed as *minor significant*.

During operations, light and noise emissions may disturb vertebrates. Operational rules and procedures (on both light and noise generation) are proposed to be established in a manual, addressing the management of both the hotel, the landscaped areas, and the villas. In addition, lighting is to be addressed through a lighting report, confirming that all lighting will be designed in a sensible manner to prevent contribution of light pollution in the area, in line with the relevant guidelines. In this regard, such impact on vertebrate fauna is assessed as *minor to moderate significant*. With respect to lighting, the effectivity of the proposed mitigation is highly dependent on improvements effected to the exterior lighting of the nearby Radisson Blu Resort tourism complex. The Directorate notes that the environmental permit recently granted for this facility includes the requirement for an improvement programme on lighting, hence addressing such aspect and allowing the proposed mitigation as part of the proposal under assessment to be effective.

Operational effects on biological communities are mainly related to the use of pesticides, fertilisers (as already discussed above in section 4.3 in relation to the water body) and the introduction of species for landscaping. Noting that the proposed landscaping does not include any invasive species and will be limited to indigenous shrubs and trees, similar to those found in the adjacent natural habitats, and no effects from pesticides or fertilizers are expected beyond the site boundaries, impacts are assessed as *minor significant*. In addition, the proposed landscaping is expected to act as a refuge and attract migrant species across different seasons.

#### **4.5 Cultural Heritage**

In line with development permit PA03134/19, all structures (apart from the chapel) have been removed. Hence, such effect on the cultural heritage value of the site is beyond the scope of this assessment. In view that the retention of the chapel is part of the current proposal, and is integrated into the design, *no significant effects* on cultural heritage can be attributed to this project, apart from a beneficial one due to the proposed restoration of the chapel structure.

#### **4.6 Human populations**

The assessed environmental effects, considering all proposed mitigation measures, are such that *no consequential significant effects* on the human populations in the surrounding area were identified.

#### **4.7 Climate change and climate change adaptation**

The proposed development will generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, both directly from traffic generation and indirectly from electricity and water demand and the management of generated waste. The proposal includes various measures to reduce emissions, including the use of highly efficient mechanical and electrical systems, such as heat pumps for hot water production, heat recovery systems, efficient chiller systems, grey water treatment plants and harvesting and re-utilisation of rainwater. Nonetheless, during normal operations, the development would still generate 980 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> due to electricity demand, 2,891 tonnes

of CO<sub>2</sub> due to traffic (light and heavy goods vehicles) and 180 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> due to required water production and waste treatment, totalling to 4,051 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.

No particular measures to adapt to changing climatic processes were identified in this assessment.

## 5. AA FINDINGS

Due to the nature of the development and the site's close proximity to the coastal and marine Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and the marine Special Protection Areas (SPA) identified in section 1.1 above, preliminary screening did not eliminate the likelihood of adverse impacts on the integrity of such protected sites. In this regard, an AA study was requested in accordance with the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44) to investigate whether the proposed development will or will not significantly affect the integrity of the protected sites, taking into account the objectives outlined in the respective management plan (as available for the terrestrial area). The first draft AA report was submitted by the consultant on 31 October 2024. The final version was submitted on 10 April 2025.

### **5.1 Terrestrial area (MT0000024 - *Rdumijiet ta' Malta: Ir-Ramla taċ-Ċirkewwa sal-Ponta ta' Bengħisa* (Special Area of Conservation – SAC)**

The coastal area is characterised by the *Rdum* habitats (coastal cliffs and boulder screes). The site itself is not located within but adjacent to the protected SAC, and has been subject to human alterations and disturbances for a long time. Only a small portion of the studied area was observed to be natural and in good condition, including habitat type 5330 (Thermo-Mediterranean arid scrubs) in parts of the nearby afforested area previously managed by the GAIA Foundation and under current management of Ambjent Malta, as well as habitat 1240 (Mediterranean and Black Sea rocky sea cliff and shore) situated below the escarpment and boulder scree. At Ir-Ramla tal-Mixquqa, a rare and intact sand dune habitat (habitat type 2110 - Mediterranean, Micronesian and Black Sea shifting coastal dune) is present. All these habitats are important ecological features, of community interest, and listed as Annex I habitats under the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

During construction works, potential adverse effects were mainly associated with the cordoning of fauna (due to site hoarding), increased movement of heavy machinery, release of airborne/waterborne particulate matters, noise and vibrations generation, and spillages of stockpiled (hazardous) materials. To prevent significant effects on the afore-mentioned habitats (and their species), the following mitigation measures are to be adhered to:

- Hoarding with corridor spaces, allowing small fauna to move freely in and out of the site.
- Optimisation of traffic management to reduce congestion and time spent within the site;
- Dust suppression mechanisms (e.g. cleaning, misting of stockpiles, wheel washing facility);
- The use of noise and vibration dampening measures for machinery and equipment; and
- Proper containment and covering of stored materials.

Operational effects mainly include the disturbance of susceptible fauna and flora due to site illumination (and noise disturbance on faunal species), infiltration of invasive alien species into surrounding habitats, leaching of pesticides/fertilizers into surrounding (downstream) areas and pest control efforts. To prevent significant effects on the present habitats and species, the following measures are to be adhered to:

- Use of low intensity ground facing light fixtures;
- Selection of indigenous non-invasive species for landscaping, typical for the surrounding environment; and
- Use of biodegradable pesticides, controlled use of fertilisers, non-fatal means of pest control to avoid accidental harm to non-target species.



While not all above-mentioned effects can be entirely mitigated (e.g. noise and light disturbance during operations), the resulting impacts are not expected to significantly affect the integrity of the protected SAC.

### **5.2 Marine area – avifauna (MT0000111 - Žona fil-Baħar fil-Lbiċ - Special Protection Area - SPA)**

The marine area is designated as a Special Protection Area due to its importance for seabirds, namely *Calonectris diomedea* (Scopoli's shearwater), *Puffinus yelkouan* (Yelkouan shearwater) and *Hydrobates pelagicus* (Storm Petrel), especially during the breeding season.

The AA identified light pollution as the main concern on avifauna. As discussed in section 4.4 above, while the surrounding land-uses (notably the nearby hotel) have a cumulating effect on the overall issue of light pollution, it is of utmost importance to rigorously follow the local guidelines for the reduction of light pollution and that a lighting plan is adopted that limits lighting to ground-facing lighting and avoids glare beyond the site boundaries. Subject to the proper implementation of such mitigation, the proposed development is not expected to have a significant impact on avifauna during both construction and operational phases and overall on the integrity of the protected SPA.

### **5.3 Marine area – habitats (MT0000101 - Žona fil-Baħar bejn Rdum Majjiesa u Għar Lapsi - SAC)**

During both construction and operational phases of the project, no significant impacts are envisaged on the designated marine habitats or species within the bay (and thus of the SAC as a whole), in view that no direct interventions in the marine environment are proposed, and runoff effects (including any potential load of fertiliser or pesticides) are unlikely to affect the downstream areas leading towards the marine environment. Hence, the project will not affect the integrity of the marine SAC.

## **6. Summary of EIA and AA findings**

While most assessed residual impacts are either not significant or up to minor significant, the EIA Report has still identified moderate and/or major adverse residual impacts in relation to the effects on:

- landscape character and visual amenity of the surrounding area (notably from short- and medium-distance viewpoint – *major significant*),
- geology (removal of geological material - *major significant*); and
- vertebrate fauna (disturbance due to operational lighting – *minor to moderate significant*).

The AA assessed potential impacts from the proposed project on the designated protected species/habitats within the designated SACs and SPA and concluded that the impacts from the proposal are not expected to significantly affect the integrity of these protected sites.

The main residual impacts identified in this assessment are similar to those envisaged for the previously approved development, no additional significant adverse impacts have been identified. On the contrary, certain impacts, such as those related to visual amenity are expected to be mitigated to a greater extent through the proposed dense landscaping.