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APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

FOR

PROPOSED STRATEGIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

AT

Blackglen Road,

Sandyford,

Dublin 18

ON BEHALF OF

Zolbury Ltd.

Prepared by
Enviroguide Consulting

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Enviroguide Consulting was commissioned by Zolbury Ltd. to undertake a screening for Appropriate Assessment in relation to the Proposed Strategic Housing Development, at Blackglen Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18. The purpose of this Appropriate Assessment Screening report is to provide information to the Competent Authority to enable it to undertake Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening in respect of the Proposed Development.

1.1 Legislative Background

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) seeks to conserve natural habitats and wild fauna and flora by the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) seeks to protect birds of special importance by the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The Birds and Habitats Directives have been transposed into Irish law through the EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011).

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. SACs are selected for the conservation of Annex I habitats (including priority types which are in danger of disappearance) and Annex II species (other than birds). SPAs are selected for the conservation of Annex I birds and other regularly occurring migratory birds and their habitats. The annexed habitats and species for which each site is selected correspond to the qualifying interests of the sites; from these the conservation objectives of the site are derived.

An 'Appropriate Assessment' (AA) is a required assessment to determine the likelihood of significant effects, based on best scientific knowledge, of any plans or projects on European 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 European site, in view of its conservation objectives.

This AA Screening has been undertaken to determine the potential for significant effects on relevant European 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.

1.1.1 Legislative Context

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 European site. Paragraph 3 states 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.”

These obligations in relation to Appropriate Assessment have been implemented in Ireland under Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (“the 2000 Act”), and in particular Section 177U and Section 177V thereof. The relevant provisions of Section 177U in relation to AA screening have been set out below:

“177U.— (1) A screening for appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or application for consent for proposed development shall be carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.

(2)...

(3)...

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

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

1.1.2 Stages of AA

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (the “**Screening Report**”) has been prepared by Enviroguide Consulting. It considers whether the Proposed Development is likely to have a significant effect on a European 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.

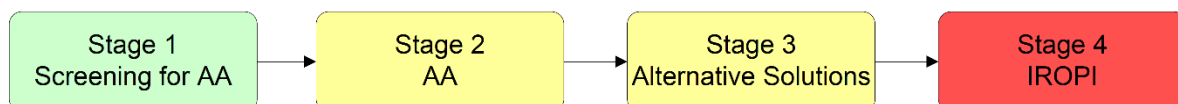


Figure 1. The four stages of the Appropriate Assessment Process (DEHLG, 2010).

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

- Stage 1 Screening addresses:

- whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of a European site, or
- whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site in view of its conservation objectives.
- **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 European site, having regard to the conservation objectives of the site and its ecological structure and function. A NIS must provide the objective scientific information to enable the competent authority to carry out an appropriate assessment of the proposed development. It should describe any mitigation measures to avoid and reduce significant 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 European Site, where no less damaging solution exists.

The Competent Authority must determine that an NIS is required where the project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site as a European Site and if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective scientific information following screening, that the plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Guidance

This AA Screening Report has been undertaken in accordance with the following guidance:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities*. (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision);
- *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- *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 Commission, 2001);
- *Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle* (European Commission, 2000);
- *Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission, 2019).
- *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* Brussels, 28.9.2021 C (European Commission, 2021); and,
- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, OPR Practice Note PN01, (Office of the Planning Regulator, March 2021)

2.2 Screening Steps

This Screening for AA, or Stage 1 of AA, has been undertaken in accordance with the European Commission Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2021). Screening for AA involves the following:

- Establish whether the plan is directly connected with or necessary for the management of a European 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 European site;
- Identification of European sites potentially affected;
- Identification and description of potential effects on the European site;
- Assessment of the likely significance of the impacts identified on the European site; and
- Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.

2.3 Desk Study

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

- Information on the network of European 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 European sites taken from the respective Standard Data Forms and Site Synopses 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 Ordnance Survey Ireland;
- Information on the existence of permitted developments, or developments awaiting decision, in the vicinity of the proposed development from Dun-Laoghaire Rathdown County Council available at: <https://planning.agileapplications.ie/dun-laoghaire/search-applications/>

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

2.4 Assessment of Impacts

The potential for significant effects that may arise from the Proposed Development were considered through the use of key indicators, namely:

- Habitat loss or alteration
- Habitat/species fragmentation
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species
- Changes in population density
- Changes in water quality and resource
- The potential for spread of invasive plant species

In addition, information pertaining to the conservation objectives of the European sites, the ecology of the designated habitats and species and known or perceived sensitivities of the habitats and species were considered.

3 STAGE 1 SCREENING

3.1 Management of European Sites

The Proposed Development at Blackglen Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18 is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European Sites.

3.2 Description of Proposed Development

3.2.1 Site location

The Site of the Proposed Development is located at Blackglen Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18, 710m south of the M50 and 3km west of Leopardstown Golf Course. The Site is bounded to the north partially by Blackglen Road, with the remainder of the northern boundary, along with the east, south and western boundaries, bounded by residential dwellings and their associated gardens. The Site is also abutted by the Woodside Road to the south-west and the Carrickmines stream along the south-east. The surrounding landscape is comprised of residential estates, agricultural land and areas of woodland.

3.2.2 Description of Development

Zolbury Limited intend to apply to An Bord Pleanála for planning permission for a Strategic Housing Development on a site of c. 3.7 ha at Blackglen Road and Woodside Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18. The development shall consist of a new residential scheme comprising 360 no. residential units, associated resident amenity facilities and a childcare facility in the form of 9 no. new apartment buildings (A1 – C3) as follows:

- Block A1 (4 storeys) comprising 18 no. apartments (3 no. 1 bed units and 15 no. 2 bed units); a crèche facility of approx. 401 sq. m with associated outdoor play space of approx. 20 sq. m; and resident amenity facilities of approx. 30 sq. m.
- Block A2 (3-4 storeys) comprising 24 no. apartments (2 no. 1 bed units and 22 no. 2 bed units) and resident amenity facilities of approx. 39 sq.m.
- Blocks B1 and B2 (2-6 storeys) comprising 69 no. apartments (30 no. 1 bed units, 34 no. 2 bed units, 5 no. 3 bed units).
- Blocks B3 and B4 (2-6 storeys) comprising 62 no. apartments (30 no. 1 bed units, 27 no. 2 bed units and 5 no. 3 bed units).
- Blocks C1, C2 and C3 (3-6 storeys) comprising 187 no. apartments (58 no. 1 bed units, 126 no. 2 bed units and 3 no. 3 bed units); and resident amenity facilities of approx. 187.5 sq. m.

Each residential unit is afforded with associated private open space in the form of a terrace / balcony.

Total Open space (approx. 22,033 sq. m) is proposed in the form of public open space (approx. 17,025 sq. m), and residential communal open space (approx. 5,008 sq. m).

Podium level / basement level areas are proposed adjacent to / below Blocks A2, B1, B2, B3, B4, C1, C2 and C3 (approx. 12,733 sq. m GFA). A total of 419 no. car parking spaces (319

no. at podium/basement level and 100 no. at surface level); to include 80 no. electric power points and 26 no. accessible parking spaces); and 970 no. bicycle spaces (740 no. long term and 230 no. short term), and 19 no. Motorcycle spaces are proposed. 10 no. car spaces for creche use are proposed at surface level.

Vehicular/pedestrian and cyclist access to the development will be provided via Blackglen Road to tie in with the Blackglen Road Improvement Scheme. A second access is also proposed via Woodside Road but this access will be for emergency vehicles and pedestrian and cyclist access only.

The proposal also provides for Bin Storage areas and 4 No. ESNB substations to supply the development. 3 no. sub-stations shall be integrated within the building structures of Blocks B and Blocks C. In addition, one Sub-station shall be classed as a unit sub-station mounted externally on a dedicated plinth.

3.2.3 Proposed Drainage

Stormwater and foul water from the Proposed Development will be completely separate. A pre-connection enquiry was submitted to Irish Water prior to the completion of the Site services design. In response, Irish Water has confirmed that the Proposed Development can be accommodated by the Irish Water subject to upgrades to the existing network.

The following detail is extracted from the Engineering Services Report submitted as part of this application (OSCS, June 2022).

3.2.3.1 Proposed Stormwater management

'The Proposed Development is to be served by a gravity surface water network comprising a single catchment as a result of the natural topography'. Surface water from the Proposed Development will be discharged, once attenuated and treated on Site, to the public surface water network on Blackglen Road. Surface water discharge from the Site will be restricted to below the greenfield equivalent runoff rate of 15.9l/s.

A suite of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) measures are included in the proposed development design. It is noted that these measures **are not relied upon in any way** as mitigation in relation to European Sites and the conclusions of this Appropriate Assessment Screening. SuDS integrated into the surface water management plan include the following:

- Permeable paving will be provided within all car parking spaces within the Proposed Development.
- Green roofs on buildings within the Proposed Development, over 60% of roof area is proposed as green roof.
- All road gullies serving the Proposed Development are to be trapped, which will help prevent sediment and gross pollutants from entering the surface water network.
- A silt trap which will be located upstream of the attenuation system.
- Filter drains to be provided along roads where possible to intercept and treat polluted water.
- Interception storage will be provided below the development's primary attenuation. This will temporarily store and treat the first 5mm rainfall on the development. The

interception storage is to be allowed to drain naturally, which will reduce the volume of discharging to the existing network while increasing the quality of the water infiltrating to the ground

- A flow control device will be provided immediately downstream of the attenuation system, restricting the surface water discharge from the Site.
- A Class 1 bypass fuel separator will be located prior to outfall to the public water network.

Surface water drainage design is carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the Greater Dublin Strategic Development Study (GDSDS) and the Regional Drainage Policies Volume 2 – New Development.

3.2.3.2 Proposed Foul water management

The foul water management design for the Proposed Development has been carried out in accordance with Irish Water's Code of Practice for Wastewater Infrastructure.

There is an existing foul water sewer on Blackglen Road, north of the Proposed Development. This sewer is to be upgraded as part of the planned upgrade works on Blackglen Road. Foul water arising from the Proposed Development will be discharged by gravity to the foul sewer on Blackglen Road. As suggested in the Confirmation of Feasibility Letter received from Irish Water, it is proposed to provide a temporary Wastewater Pumping System (WWPS) within the confines of the Site of Proposed Development. This temporary WWPS will limit development flows to a maximum of 5 l/s, until such a stage that the planned upgrade works to the local infrastructure have been completed. On completion of the upgrade works, the connection to the temporary WWPS will be bypassed, to allow for it to be decommissioned and removed, with a gravity connection to the public network facilitated.

According to the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study, the Proposed Development is within the West Pier West Sewer Catchment, as such foul water from the Proposed Development will ultimately be treated at Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant (WwTP) (GDSDS, 2005).

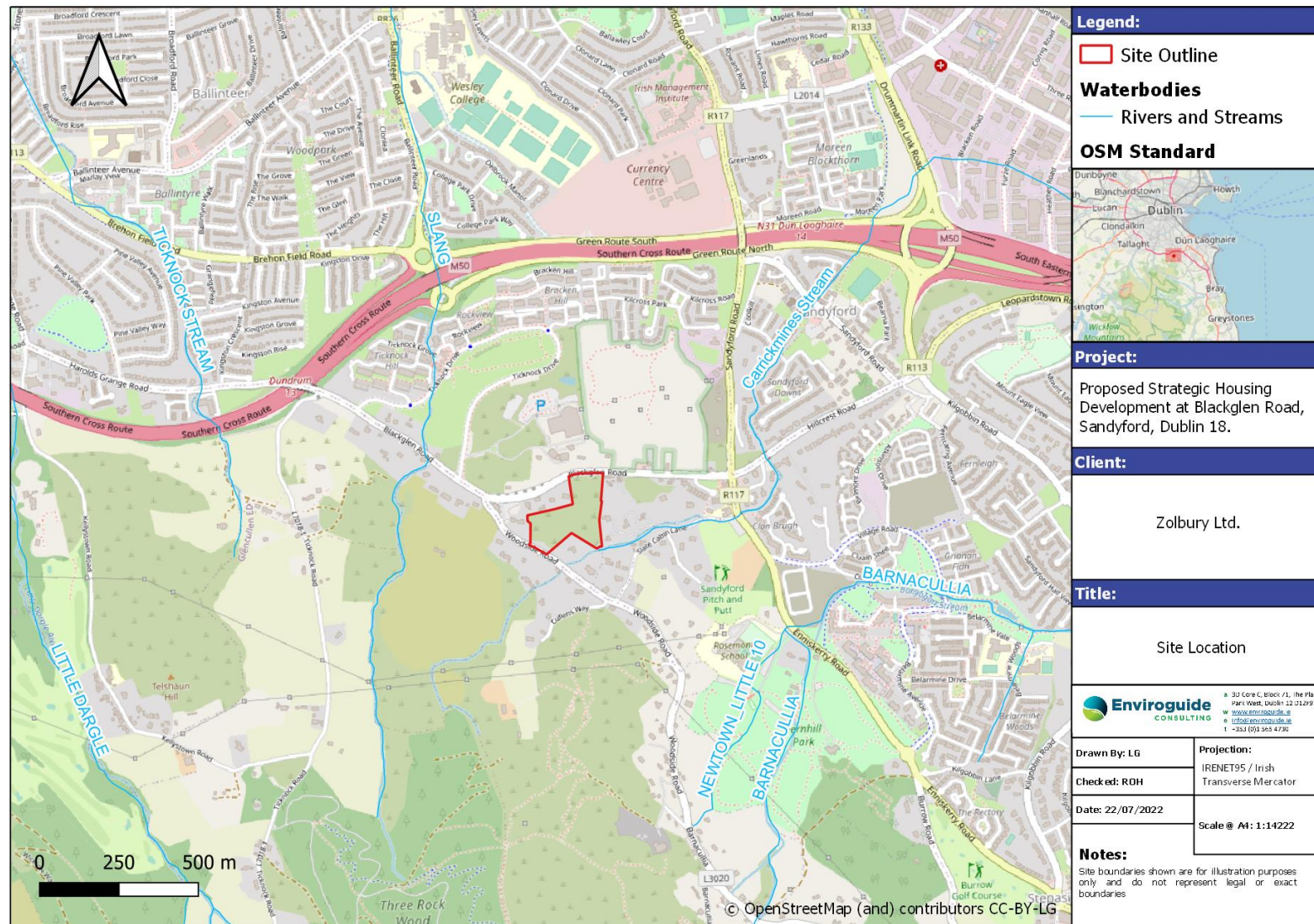


Figure 2. Site Location



Figure 3. Indicative proposed site layout (Adapted from OMP, Drw. No 20006-OMP-00-ZZ-DR-A-1001, dated August 2022)

3.3 Existing Environment

3.3.1 Surface Water

The Site of the Proposed Development is within the Ovoca-Vartry Water Framework Directive (WFD) Catchment, the Dargle_SC_010 WFD sub catchment, the Carrickmines_010 River Subbasin (IE_EA_10C040350) and the Ovoca-Vartry Hydrometric Area (EPA,2021).

The Carrickmines stream (EPA Code: 10C04) flows along part of the south-eastern boundary of the Site, flowing through Brides Glen, Loughlinstown and discharging to the Irish Sea at Shanganagh, 10.7 river km downstream of the Site. The Carrickmines stream has a WFD status of *Moderate* and the waterbody is *At Risk* of not meeting its WFD objectives. Water quality in the Carrickmines stream is monitored downstream of the Site between Glenamuck Road and Loughlinstown, water quality was *Moderate* (Q3-4) at all stations monitored in 2018 (EPA,2021). The status of the Irish Sea at Killiney Bay is *High* and the coastal waterbody is *Not At Risk* of not meetings its WFD status objectives. The Slang River (EPA Code:09S04)

flows 0.4 km west of the Site in a northern direction and maintains no connection with the Site. The waterbody has a WFD status of *Moderate* and is *At Risk* of not meeting its WFD objectives (EPA,2021). The Slang River is a tributary of the River Dodder (EPA Code:09D01) and flows into the Liffey Estuary Lower 10.2 river km north of the Site. The status of the Liffey Estuary Lower is currently *Good* and the transitional waterbodies risk is currently *Under Review* (EPA,2021).

3.3.2 Hydrogeology

The Site of the Proposed Development is situated on Wicklow groundwater body, which has a WFD status of *Good* and the risk of not meeting its WFD objectives is currently *Under Review*. The groundwater vulnerability to contamination via human activities is classed as *Extreme – Rock at or Near Surface*. The Site is on a Poor aquifer, namely PI, *Bedrock which is Generally Unproductive except for Local Zones*. The groundwater rock units underlying the aquifer are classified as *Granites and other Igneous Intrusive Rocks*. (GSI,2021). The subsoil beneath the Site is classified as *bedrock outcrop or subcrop* (EPA,2021).

3.4 Identification of Relevant European Sites

To identify the European Sites that potentially lie within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the Proposed Development, a Source-Pathway-Receptor model (S-P-R) was adopted, as described in 'OPR Practice Note PN01 - Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management' (OPR, 2021), a practice note produced by the Office of the Planning Regulator, Dublin. This note was published to provide guidance on Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) during the planning process, and although it focuses on the approach a planning authority should take in screening for AA, the methodology is also readily applied in the preparation of Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports.

The guidance document published by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (then DEHLG) 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities' (2009) recommends an arbitrary distance of 15km as the precautionary ZOI for a plan or project being assessed for likely significant effects on European sites, stating however that this should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

As such, the 15km ZOI is used in this report as an initial starting point for collating European sites for AA screening. The methodology used to identify relevant European Sites comprised the following:

1. Use of current GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites and water catchments – downloaded from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) and the EPA website (www.epa.ie) to identify European Sites which could potentially be affected by the Proposed Development;
2. The catchment data were used to establish or discount potential hydrological connectivity between the Project Boundary and any European Sites.
3. All European sites within the zone of influence (within 15km of the Proposed Development Site) were identified and are shown in Figure 4.
4. The potential for connectivity with European sites at distances greater than 15km from the Proposed Development was also considered in this initial assessment. In this case,

there is no potential connectivity between the Proposed Development Site and European Sites located at a distance greater than 15km from the Proposed Development based on the S-P-R model.

5. Table 1 details all relevant European sites as identified in the preceding steps. The potential for pathways between European Sites and the Proposed Development Site was assessed on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework as per the OPR Practice Note PN01 (March 2021). Those European Sites where a pathway has been identified are highlighted in green. Pathways considered included:
 - a. Direct pathways (e.g., proximity (i.e., location within the European site), water bodies, air (for both air emissions and noise impacts)).
 - b. Indirect pathways (e.g., disruption to migratory paths, 'Sightlines' where noisy or intrusive activities may result in disturbance to shy species).
6. The site synopses and conservation objectives of these sites, as per the NPWS website (www.npws.ie), were consulted and reviewed at the time of preparing this report.
7. There is absolutely no reliance placed in this Appropriate Assessment Screening Report on measures intended to avoid/reduce harmful effects on the European Sites.

The result of this preliminary screening concluded that there is a total of nine SACs and four SPAs located within the precautionary ZOI of the Proposed Development Site. The distances to each site listed are taken from the nearest possible point of the Proposed Development Site boundary to the nearest possible point of each European Site.

Potential pathways between the Proposed Development Site and four European sites within the ZOI were identified. The European sites linked to the Proposed Development are:

- North Dublin Bay SAC
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC
- North Bull Island SPA
- Dalkey Island SPA

Table 1. European sites within the 15km precautionary zone of influence of the Proposed Development and potential Impact pathways between them. Those European sites for which a S-P-R link was identified are highlighted in green.

Site Name & Site Code	Qualifying Interests (*= priority habitats)	Distance to Site	Connections (Source- Pathway- Receptor)
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Wicklow Mountains SAC (002122)	[3110] Oligotrophic Waters containing very few minerals [3130] Oligo-trophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3160] Dystrophic Lakes [4010] Wet Heath [4030] Dry Heath [4060] Alpine and Subalpine Heaths [6130] Calaminarian Grassland [6230] Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> Grassland* [7130] Blanket Bogs (Active)* [8110] Siliceous Scree [8210] Calcareous Rocky Slopes [8220] Siliceous Rocky Slopes [91A0] Old Oak Woodlands [1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)	4.2 km	None – There are no impact pathways present linking the Proposed Development and the habitats and species listed for the Wicklow Mountains SAC. This SAC is located 4.2 km south-west of the Proposed Development.
South Dublin Bay SAC (000210)	[1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats [1210] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1310] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [2110] Embryonic shifting dunes	5.6 km	None – There are no impact pathways present linking the Proposed Development and the habitats and species listed for this SAC. This SAC is located 5.6 km from the Proposed Development and is separated by a significant marine buffer. No significant hydrological connectivity exists. ¹
Knocksink Wood SAC (000725)	[7220] Petrifying Springs* [91A0] Old Oak Woodlands [91E0] Alluvial Forests*	5.9 km	None – There are no impact pathways present linking the Proposed Development and the habitats and species listed for this SAC.

¹ The main area of dispersal of the treated effluent from Ringsend WwTP is in the Tolka Basin and around North Bull Island. South Dublin Bay is unaffected by the effluent from the plant (Irish Water, 2018).

Site Name & Site Code	Qualifying Interests (*= priority habitats)	Distance to Site	Connections (Source- Pathway- Receptor)
			This SAC is located 5.6 km from the Proposed Development in the mountains to the South of the Site.
Ballyman Glen SAC (000713)	[7220] Petrifying Springs* [7230] Alkaline Fens	7.7 km	None – There are no impact pathways present linking the Proposed Development and the habitats and species listed for these SACs. These SACs are located in the Dublin and Wicklow mountains to the south of the Site.
Glenasmole Valley SAC (001209)	[6210] Orchid-rich Calcareous Grassland* [6410] <i>Molinia</i> Meadows [7220] Petrifying Springs*	8.1 km	
Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (003000)	[1170] Reefs [1351] Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>)	9.7 km	Yes – a potential connection exists via surface water and treated wastewater ² flows from the Proposed Development. However, the distance between the Site and the SACs is sufficient to exclude the possibility of significant effects on the SACs arising from: emissions of noise, dust, airborne pollutants and/or vibrations emitted from the Site during the Construction and Operational Phase; increased traffic volumes during the Construction and Operational Phase and associated emissions; potential increased lighting emitted from the Site during the Construction and Operational Phase; and increased human presence at the Site during the Construction and Operational Phase.
North Dublin Bay SAC (000206)	[1140] Tidal Mudflats and Sandflats [1210] Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines [1310] Salicornia Mud [1330] Atlantic Salt Meadows [1410] Mediterranean Salt Meadows [2110] Embryonic Shifting Dunes [2120] Marram Dunes (White Dunes) [2130] Fixed Dunes (Grey Dunes) * [2190] Humid Dune Slacks [1395] Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>)	10.5 km	
Bray Head SAC (000714)	[1230] Vegetated Sea Cliffs [4030] Dry Heath	12.3 km	

² The main area of dispersal of the treated effluent from Ringsend WwTP is in the Tolka Basin and around North Bull Island. South Dublin Bay is unaffected by the effluent from the plant (Irish Water, 2018).

Site Name & Site Code	Qualifying Interests (*= priority habitats)	Distance to Site	Connections (Source- Pathway- Receptor)
Howth Head SAC (000202)	[1230] Vegetated Sea Cliffs [4030] Dry Heath	14.7 km	<p>None – There are no impact pathways present linking the Proposed Development and the habitats and species listed for these SACs.</p> <p>These SACs are located at considerable distances from the Proposed Development and are separated by a significant marine buffer. No significant hydrological connectivity exists.</p>
Special Protection Areas (SPA)			
Wicklow Mountains SPA (004040)	[A098] Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A103] Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)	4.3 km	<p>None – There are no impact pathways present linking the Proposed Development and the populations of bird species listed for this SPA.</p> <p>This SPA is located in the mountains situated a considerable distance to the south-west of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Although Peregrine and Merlin may forage in the lands surrounding the Site, the Site itself provides no suitable <i>ex-situ</i> habitat for these species , i.e., it is comprised of a mosaic of dense gorse scrub, exposed rock, and tall bracken. Neither species were observed during surveys of the Site.</p>
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)	[A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A130] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A137] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A141] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A143] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A144] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A149] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A162] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A179] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A192] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A193] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A194] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds	5.5 km	<p>None – There are no impact pathways present linking the Proposed Development and the populations of bird species listed for this SPA.</p> <p>The Site provides no suitable <i>ex-situ</i> habitat for any of the species listed as SCIs for this coastal SPA.</p>

Site Name & Site Code	Qualifying Interests (* = priority habitats)	Distance to Site	Connections (Source- Pathway- Receptor)
			This SPA is located in Dublin bay and is situated a considerable distance from the Proposed Development. The hydrological connection via Ringsend WwTP is deemed insignificant. ³
Dalkey Island SPA (004172)	[A192] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A193] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hi-rundo</i>) [A194] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)	9.4 km	Yes – a potential connection exists via surface water and treated wastewater flows from the Proposed Development.
North Bull Island SPA (004006)	[A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A048] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A052] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A054] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A056] Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A130] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A140] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A141] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A143] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A144] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A149] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A156] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A160] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A162] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A169] Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A179] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds	10.5 km	However, the distance between the Site and the SPAs is sufficient to exclude the possibility of significant effects on the SPAs arising from: emissions of noise, dust, airborne pollutants and/or vibrations emitted from the Site during the Construction and Operational Phase; increased traffic volumes during the Construction and Operational Phase and associated emissions; potential increased lighting emitted from the Site during the Construction and Operational Phase; and increased human presence at the Site during the Construction and Operational Phase.

³ The main area of dispersal of the treated effluent from Ringsend WwTP is in the Tolka Basin and around North Bull Island. South Dublin Bay is unaffected by the effluent from the plant (Irish Water, 2018).

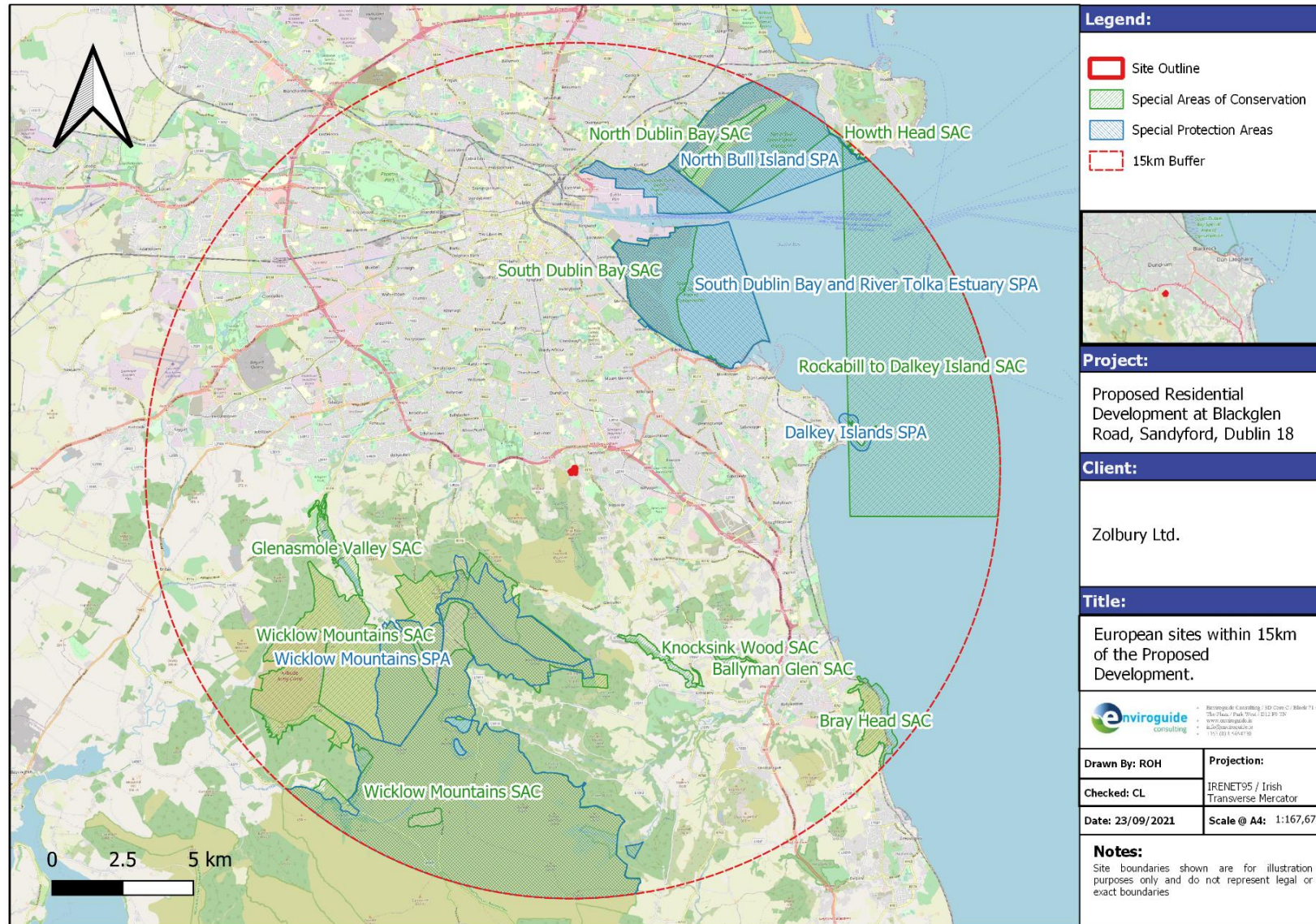


Figure 4. European Sites within 15km of the Proposed Development

3.5 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

3.5.1 Conservation objectives

The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation status of habitats and species of community interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives and Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas are designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them.

Site specific conservation objectives (SSCO) have been compiled for the European Sites listed above. Site-specific conservation objectives aim to define favourable conservation condition for habitats or species at a site.

The maintenance of habitats and species within European Sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing.
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future.
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats.
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future.
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

3.5.2 Identification and Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

The conservation objectives of the European sites within the zone of influence were reviewed and assessed to establish whether the construction and operation of the Proposed Development has the potential to have a negative impact on any of the qualifying interests and/or conservation objectives of the European sites listed above.

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 on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC".

The potential for significant effects resulting from the Proposed Development during the Construction and Operational Phases 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

The following elements of the Proposed development were assessed for their potential for likely significant effects on European Sites.

- **Construction Phase (Estimated duration: 18 months)**
 - Uncontrolled releases of silt, sediments and/or other pollutants to air due to earth-works.
 - Surface water run-off containing silt, sediments and/or other pollutants into nearby waterbodies.
 - Surface water run-off containing silt, sediments and/or other pollutants into the local groundwater.
 - Waste generation during the Construction Phase comprising soils, construction and demolition waste.
 - Increased noise, dust and/or vibrations as a result of construction activity
 - Increased dust and air emissions from construction traffic.
 - Increased lighting in the vicinity as a result of construction activity.
- **Operational Phase (Estimated duration: indefinite)**
 - Surface water drainage from the Site of the Proposed Development.
 - Foul water from the Proposed Development leading to increased loading on wastewater treatment plants.
 - Increased lighting in the vicinity emitted from the Proposed Development; and
 - Increased human presence in the vicinity as a result of the Proposed Development.

A European Site will only be at risk from likely significant effects where a Source-Pathway-Receptor link exists between the Proposed Development and the European site. As such, the remainder of this AA Screening report will focus on the European sites for which a S-P-R link was identified, namely:

- North Dublin Bay SAC
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC
- North Bull Island SPA
- Dalkey Island SPA

3.5.2.1 Habitat Loss and Alteration

The Project is not located within any European Site and therefore there will be no loss or alteration of habitat as a result of the Proposed Development.

3.5.2.2 Habitat / Species Fragmentation

As there will be no habitat loss or alteration within any European Site, no habitat fragmentation will arise as a result of the Proposed Development.

3.5.2.3 Changes in Water Quality and Resources

There is a weak hydrological connection between the Site, North Dublin Bay SAC, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, North Bull Island SPA and Dalkey Islands SPA via surface water and treated wastewater flows from the Proposed Development.

The Carrickmines stream is located along the southern boundary of the Site, as such a potential hydrological link exists with Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC and Dalkey Islands SPA via this source. The Carrickmines stream flows past the southern boundary of the Site and continues for over 10 river km before discharging to the Irish Sea at Shanganagh.

The potential for surface water generated at the Site of the Proposed Development to reach the above European Sites and cause significant effects, during both the Construction and Operational Phases, is deemed to be negligible due to the following:

- In the event of an accidental pollution event of the Carrickmines stream, given the hydrological distance of over 10 river km to the coast and the capacity for dilution within the Carrickmines stream and the Irish Sea itself, there is no significant risk of negative effects to the habitats and species of European sites listed above.
- The design of the Proposed Development; The proposed buildings on Site are significantly set back from the southern boundary of the Site, and excavation works along the southeast boundary are not required. The current vegetated natural buffer of 10 meters along the southern boundary of the Site will prevent any entrained sediment in surface water runoff from entering the Carrickmines stream during the Construction Phase.
- Surface water run-off from the Operational Phase of the Proposed development will be discharged to the public surface water sewer once attenuated and treated via a suite of SuDS infrastructure including silt traps, green roof, a flow control device and a bypass fuel separator (see section 3.2.3.1 for more details).

With regard SuDS, it is a policy objective of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council (DLR CoCo), as laid out in the County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 (Policy EI6), to “*ensure that all development proposals incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)*”. Furthermore the plan states that “*Any site-specific solutions to surface water drainage systems shall meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan 2018 – 2021 any subsequent RBMP and ‘Water Quality in Ireland 2013 - 2018’ (2019), or any updated version of the document.*”

It is noted that these design features are a requirement in all new development, as per the above policy objective; to contribute to both the improvement of water quality in receiving waterbodies and the easing of pressures on existing drainage networks. They are in **no way** included as a mode of mitigating potential effects on European Sites as a result of the Proposed Development.

Foul water generated at the Site of the Proposed Development will be discharged to the local foul sewer network where it is subsequently treated at the Ringsend WwTP. Wastewater is discharged from Ringsend WwTP under discharge licence (D0034-01). There are stringent conditions attached to this discharge licence to ensure the treated effluent is of good quality and does not negatively impact on the environment.

The main area of dispersal of the treated effluent from Ringsend WwTP is in the Tolka Basin and around North Bull Island. South Dublin Bay is unaffected by the effluent from the Plant (Irish Water, 2018). It is considered that effects on marine biodiversity and the European Sites within Dublin Bay from the current operation of Ringsend WwTP are unlikely (see section 3.6.3 for more details).

It is therefore concluded that **there is no potential** for likely significant effects relating to water quality at any European Sites as a result of the Proposed Development.

3.5.2.4 Disturbance and / or Displacement of Species

As outlined in section 3.5.2.3 above, the hydrological link between the Site and the European sites assessed here will not result in significant effects on the water quality and resource indicator during both the Construction and Operational Phases. The closest SPA to the Proposed Development is Wicklow Mountains SPA, 4.3 km southwest of the Site. Although Peregrine and Merlin may forage in the lands surrounding the Site, the Site itself provides no suitable *ex-situ* habitat for these species, i.e., it is comprised of a mosaic of dense gorse scrub, exposed rock, and tall bracken. In addition, the Proposed Development does not have the capacity to cause any significant disturbance and/or displacement to any species within any other European Site due to the intervening distances between the Site of the Proposed Development and the European Sites.

It is therefore concluded that the Proposed Development does not have the capacity to cause any disturbance and/or displacement of any species within the European sites.

3.5.2.5 Changes in Population Density

For the same reasons outlined in section 3.5.2.4 above, the Proposed Development does not have the capacity to cause any significant changes in the population density of any species within any European Site.

3.6 Potential for In-combination Effects

A review has also been undertaken of the surrounding area to determine relevant existing or permitted developments. The following sets out several relevant permissions in the vicinity of the Proposed Development

3.6.1 Existing Planning Permissions

Planning Application Reference: D19A/0744

Planning permission was sought for the development of 15 no. dwellings comprising 1 no. 1.5 storey 3-bedroom detached dwelling (Type A), 1 no. 1.5 storey 3-bedroom detached dwelling (Type E), 1 no. 1.5 storey 3-bedroom detached dwelling (Type F), 1 no. 1.5 storey 4-bedroom detached dwelling (Type D), 1 no. 2.5 storey 5-bedroom detached dwelling (Type B), 2 no. 2.5 storey 5-bedroom detached dwellings (Type C), 2 no. 2.5 storey 5-bedroom detached dwellings (Type H) and 6 no. duplex units in a single 3 storey block (Type G), consisting of 3 no. 2 bedroom ground floor and 3 no. 3 bedroom upper floors units with vehicular and pedestrian access from the Sandyford Road (Coolkill), including all associated on and off site development works, car parking, soft and hard landscaping pedestrian/cycle link to south-eastern boundary, boundary treatments and 225 mm dia. outfall foul sewer of circa 180 m, which will discharge into the existing foul manhole at Kilcross housing estate to the west of

the subject site all on overall application site circa 0.49ha. Decision Date: 29/07/202. Planning permission granted with conditions.

Planning Application Reference: D19A/0769

Planning permission was sought for the development consisting of the demolition of 2 no. dwellings known as 'Barrogue' and 'the nook', construction of 1 no. two storey detached dwelling (232m.sq.), alterations to front boundary treatment including vehicular entrance and associated site works. Decision date: 04/12/2019. Planning permission granted with conditions.

Planning Application Reference: D17A/1003

Planning permission was sought for a residential development consisting of the demolition of the existing dwelling house and sheds and the construction of 67 no. apartments in 3 no. three storey plus penthouse blocks (Block A,B and C) containing in total 5 no. one bed units, 48 no. two bed units and 14 no. three bed units. The development will also include a basement (under blocks B and C), on surface car parking, the construction of a new site entrance from the public road and all associated site and landscaping works on a 1.09 hectare site. Decision date: 16/10/2018. Planning permission granted with conditions.

Planning Application Reference: D17A/0400

Planning permission was sought for the construction of a new 2 bedroom detached bungalow with car parking to the front and patio areas, new effluent treatment systems, entrance gates and gate pillars, and new boundary fencing / native hedging and all ancillary site works. Decision Date: 18/02/2018. Planning permission granted.

Planning Application Reference: ABP 313321-22

This application is currently being reviewed by An Bord Pleanála and awaits a decision. The proposal consists of the demolition of the existing structures on site, construction of 101 no. residential units (32 no. houses, 69 no. apartments), creche and associated site works.

Planning Application Reference: ABP 313443-22

This application is currently being reviewed by An Bord Pleanála and awaits a decision. The proposal consists of the demolition of dwellings known as 'Glenina' and 'Karuna'. construction of 137 no. apartments and associated site works.

3.6.2 Relevant Policies and Plans

The following policies and plans were reviewed and considered for possible in-combination effects with the Proposed Development:

- Dun-Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

The Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown Blackglen Road/Harrold's Grange Road Improvement Scheme includes proposals for footpaths and cycle lanes along Blackglen Road and a realignment of the Enniskerry Road at Lamb's Cross along with other additional works. An Appropriate Assessment screening report was submitted with the scheme (RPS, 2015) and concluded that there would be no significant impacts on any European Site as a result of the proposed works. The scheme is proposed to be completed on a phase basis and is expected to be completed

in 2023. However, negative effects as a result of the Road Improvement scheme are not anticipated given the remote distance to the European Sites within Dublin Bay.

It is noted that there is potential for proposed plans and projects within the DLR County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 area, to have cumulative, negative impacts on conditions in Dublin Bay, via rivers, other surface water features, and foul waters treated at wastewater treatment facilities. However, the core strategy, policies and objectives of the DLR County Development Plan have been developed to anticipate and avoid the need for developments that would be likely to significantly affect the integrity of any European Site. Furthermore, such developments are required to conform to the relevant regulatory provisions for the prevention of pollution, nuisance, or other environmental effects likely to significantly affect the integrity of European sites.

With regards the Proposed Development, there is no potential for significant in-combination impacts to downstream European Sites to arise, due to surface water discharges during the Construction and Operational Phases of the development.

On examination of the above it is considered that there are no means for the Proposed Development to act in-combination with any plans or projects, that would cause any likely significant effects on any European Site.

3.6.3 Operations at Ringsend wastewater treatment plant

In June 2018 Irish Water applied for and subsequently received planning permission in 2019 for upgrade works to the Ringsend WwTP facility. Works are currently ongoing at the plant on a phased basis to ensure that the plant remains operational for the duration of the works. These works will increase the capacity of the facility from 1.6 million PE to 2.4 million PE by 2025 (Irish Water website: <https://www.water.ie/projects/local-projects/ringsend/>). This plant upgrade will result in an overall reduction in the final effluent discharge of several parameters from the facility including BOD, suspended solids, ammonia, DIN and MRP. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) was submitted by Irish Water as part of this application. The EIAR contains sections relating to Marine Biodiversity and Terrestrial Biodiversity, and each contains a section on the 'do-nothing scenario'. These review the effects of the WwTP on biodiversity in Dublin Bay *in the absence of the upgrade works* and so are relevant to this report.

The EIAR report acknowledges that under the do-nothing scenario *"the areas in the Tolka Estuary and North Bull Island channel will continue to be affected by the cumulative nutrient loads from the river Liffey and Tolka and the effluent from the Ringsend WwTP"*, which could result in a decline in biodiversity and the deterioration of the biological status of Dublin Bay (Irish Water, 2018). Nevertheless, these negative impacts of nutrient over-enrichment are considered *"unlikely"* (Irish Water, 2018). This is because historical data suggests that pollution in Dublin Bay has had little or no effect on the composition and richness of the benthic macroinvertebrate fauna. The EIAR notes that *"although a localised decline could occur, it is not envisaged to be to a scale that could pose a threat to the shellfish, fish, bird or marine mammal populations that occur in the area."* Indeed, the results of the marine macroinvertebrate studies undertaken for the EIAR show that *"the Inner Tolka Basin is host to macroinvertebrate communities as rich (if not richer) than those found in the north Dublin Bay and south Dublin Bay mudflats and sandflats"*. Furthermore, the EIAR notes that significant impacts on waterbird populations foraging on invertebrates in Dublin Bay due to nutrient over-

enrichment are “*unlikely*” to occur (Irish Water, 2018). What is important in the context of this AA screening report is that the do-nothing scenario predicts that nutrient and suspended solid loads from the WwTP will “*continue at the same levels and the impact of these loadings should maintain the same level of effects on marine biodiversity*” and that “*if the status quo is maintained there will be little or no change in the majority of the intertidal faunal assemblages found in Dublin Bay which would likely continue to be relatively diverse and rich across the bay.*”

Therefore, it can be concluded that significant effects on marine biodiversity and the European sites within Dublin Bay from the *current* operation of Ringsend WwTP are unlikely. Importantly, this conclusion is not dependent upon any future works to be undertaken at Ringsend. As such, in the absence of any upgrading works, significant effects to European sites are not likely to arise, and therefore likely significant effects involving foul waters produced by the Proposed Development also do not have the potential to occur.

Table 2. Summary of impact assessment on European Sites as a result of 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
SAC						
North Dublin Bay SAC	No	No	No	None	None	No
Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC	No	No	No	None	None	No
SPA						
North Bull Island SPA	No	No	No	None	None	No
Dalkey Island SPA	No	No	No	None	None	No

4 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING CONCLUSION

The Proposed Development at Blackglen Road, Sandyford, Dublin 18 has been assessed taking into account:

- the nature, size and location of the proposed works and possible impacts arising from the construction works.
- the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of the European Sites.
- the potential for in-combination effects arising from other plans and projects.

In conclusion, upon the examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information and applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded by the authors of this report that, on the basis of objective information; the possibility **may be excluded** that the Proposed Development will have a significant effect on any of the following European Sites identified as maintaining a potential impact pathway with the Proposed Development:

- North Dublin Bay SAC
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC
- North Bull Island SPA
- Dalkey Island SPA

In carrying out this AA screening, **mitigation measures have not been taken into account**. Standard best practice construction measures which could have the effect of mitigating any effects on any European Sites have similarly not been taken into account.

Further to the screening exercise presented above, it can be concluded, on the basis of the best scientific knowledge available, that the possibility of any significant effects on any European Sites, in light of said sites' conservation objectives, whether arising from the project itself or in combination with other plans and projects, **can be excluded**. Thus, there is no requirement to proceed to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process, and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is not required.

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