

# Woodbrook DART Gateway Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

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**Brady Shipman  
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## Environmental Assessment **Built Environment**

For:

Aeval UC and Dún Laoghaire-  
Rathdown County Council

Date:

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## DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Aeval Unlimited Company and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council propose to develop a residential area at a site located at lands south of Shanganagh cemetery and east of Woodbrook Dart Station, within the Woodbrook – Shanganagh Local Area Plan (LAP) boundary at Shanganagh, Shankill, Cork Little, Dublin. This Part 8 development will comprise 359 dwellings in two principal blocks; Block P and Block Q, all on a site area of approximately 2.63Ha, with the addition of ancillary roads, services, landscaping and car and bike parking provisions. The subject site was previously part of the golf course at Woodbrook Golf Club.

The subject site already has extant planning permission for residential development – it comprises the northeastern part of development permitted under DLR Reg. Ref.: LRD24A/0382/WEB, and now under construction.

Of the 359 dwelling units now being planned, some 123 no. of those units are already authorised under Reg. Ref. LRD24A/0382/WEB in the form of Block P1 (27 units) and Block P2 (96 units) in that case. That already authorised element was positioned on approximately 1.63Ha of the site area - the western part of the site. The proposed new development is located to the east of these permitted units, mainly on land that is in use for (formerly) car parking and (now) as a construction compound.

Brady Shipman Martin was appointed to prepare a report to assist Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Council (DLR) County Council in undertaking a screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment (AA). The purpose of the screening exercise is to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on European sites taking into account their conservation objectives. The assessment was undertaken without considering or taking into account mitigation measures or measures intended to avoid or reduce any impact on European sites.

This document constitutes the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (“AA Screening Report”) prepared for this purpose.

A comprehensive desk study review and site visits were undertaken and the potential impacts on European sites, both as a result of the proposed development and in-combination with other plans and projects, are appraised in this report.

## 1.2 Expertise and Qualifications

This report has been prepared by Siddharth Sonny, Ecologist and Environmental Consultant at Brady Shipman Martin. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Zoology from the Sacred Heart College, Thevera, India and a master’s degree in Coastal and Marine Environment Science Policy and Practice from National University of Galway. He is an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and is experienced in drafting and reviewing AA Screening Reports, EIA Screening Reports and SEA Screening Reports. He is also experienced in undertaking ecological surveys and preparing Ecological Impact Assessments Reports (EiA).

A technical review of this document has been completed by Senior Ecologist and Associate, Matthew Hague BSc MSc Adv. Dip. Plan. & Env. Law CEnv MCIEEM of Brady Shipman Martin. Matthew is a highly experienced and qualified ecologist, with a master’s degree in Ecosystem Conservation and Landscape Management. He has over 20 years of experience in ecological and environmental consultancy, across a wide range of sectors. Matthew is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). Matthew has also completed an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law, at King’s Inns and is a member of the Irish Environmental Law Association (IELA).

## 1.3 Legal Requirement for Appropriate Assessment

European sites make up a network of sites designated for nature conservation under Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the “Habitats Directive”) and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (the “Birds Directive”). The requirements for Appropriate Assessment are set out under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish law by the European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended)<sup>1</sup> (the “Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations”) and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (the “Planning Acts”).

European sites are also known as ‘Natura 2000 Sites’ (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)). As defined in section 177R of the Planning Acts, “European site” means:

- (a) a candidate site of Community importance,
- (b) a site of Community importance,
- (ba) a candidate special area of conservation,
- (c) a special area of conservation,
- (d) a candidate special protection area and
- (e) a special protection area.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that:

*“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have 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.”*

The first test is to establish whether, in relation to a particular plan or project, appropriate assessment is required. Section 177U of the Planning Acts requires that screening for appropriate assessment must be carried out:

- To assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.
- An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

The project is not required for the management of any European site, and this AA Screening Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Birds Directive, the Habitats Directive, the Planning Acts, and the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Guidelines

This report takes the following guidance documents into account:

- European Commission (2021). *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites- Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.*

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<sup>1</sup> SI No. 477 of 2011

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*, September 2018, updated in September 2019 (V1.1), further updated in April 2022 (V1.2) and in September 2024 (V1.3).
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) (2010a). *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*.
- DoEHLG (2010b). *Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10: Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*.
- European Commission (2018). *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*.
- Directorate – General for Environment (European Commission) (2021). *Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community Interest under the Habitats Directive*.
- National Roads Authority (NRA)<sub>2</sub> (2009). *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes*
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021). *Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*.
- National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) (2021). *Guidance for Public authorities on the Application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive to development/works undertaken by or on behalf of a Public authority*.

## 2.2 Baseline data collection and field visits

A desk-based assessment was undertaken between January and May 2026 of subject site and the wider area. This focused on habitats and species that are listed as Qualifying Interests (QI) (in the case of SACs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) (in the case of SPAs) in the designations for European sites.

The authors of this report are very familiar with the subject site, having undertaken biodiversity surveys on multiple occasions between 2018 and 2026 as part of previous development phases on the land – now permitted and under construction or complete.

Surveys undertaken to date have comprised habitat, invasive species, rare and protected plant surveys and hedgerow surveys, as well as bat, large mammal and bird surveys. These were all carried out by specialist ecologists, including by ornithologist John Fox, botanist Alexis Fitzgerald, bat and large mammal specialist Brian Keeley, and herpetologist and amphibian specialist Robert Gandola as part of the planning applications for the permitted developments, and as part of compliance and construction phase ecological monitoring. In addition, regular monitoring of an active badger sett that is located within a protected biodiversity area on the western boundary of the site of this proposed Part 8 development is ongoing.

Three additional site visits were undertaken by ecologist Siddharth Sonny of Brady Shipman Martin in the preparation of this report.

- The first visit, on 13 January 2026, comprised a general ecological survey including habitat mapping, an invasive species check, a winter bird survey, and a mammal survey.
- The second and third visits, on 23 March and 7 April 2026, comprised targeted breeding bird transect surveys to assess potential breeding activity on site, and updated the findings of the previous surveys.

There are no bat species listed as Qualifying Interests in any European sites within the Zone of Influence. However, Article 12 of the Habitats Directive requires Member States to take *requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection of animal species listed in Annex IV(a) in their natural range*. Bat surveys undertaken in support of the planning applications for the permitted developments at Woodbrook are consistent with the level of survey recommended in the NPWS document *Bat Mitigation Guidelines for Ireland V2– Irish Wildlife Manuals No. 134* (2022) and *Bat Mitigation Guidelines for Ireland- Irish Wildlife Manuals No. 25* (2006). The surveys focussed on all Irish bat species that are fully protected under the Wildlife Act 1976 and subsequent amendments, and under the

EU Habitats Directive, which is transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011-2015 (as amended). An examination of available information from Bat Conservation Ireland (BCI), previous data from neighbouring sites was also undertaken to compile a list of most likely species in the overall area in addition to the evaluation of the habitat for bats.

The surveys undertaken confirm that there is no bat roosting activity on the site, and there are no features suitable for use by roosting bats, or otters<sup>2</sup>.

An assessment of habitat suitability for species with links to European sites has been undertaken, in order to appraise the potential for *ex-situ* effects on European sites. The surveys have confirmed that the subject site is entirely unsuitable for use by bird species such as light bellied Brent goose, and other species listed as Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species in European sites within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development (see Section 5).

Information was collated from the organisations and websites listed below:

- Data on European sites and rare and protected plant and animal species contained in the following databases:
  - The National Park and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage ([www.NPWS.ie](http://www.NPWS.ie)).
  - The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NDBC) ([www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie)).
  - BirdWatch Ireland ([www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie)).
  - Bat Conservation Ireland ([www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org)).
- Information on land-use zoning from the online mapping of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (<http://www.myplan.ie/en/index.html>).
- Recent and historical Osi mapping and aerial imagery, including [www.geohive.ie](http://www.geohive.ie).
- Photographs taken at the site.
- Information on local watercourses from [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie).
- Information on water quality in the area ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)).
- Information on soil, geology and hydrogeology in the area ([www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie)).
- Information on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (Article 17 report) (NPWS, December 2025).
- National Biodiversity Action Plan (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024).
- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the accompanying Appropriate Assessment documentation (Natura Impact Report).
- Woodbrook - Shanganagh Local Area Plan 2017 – 2023 as extended (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council).

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<sup>2</sup> Neither bats nor otters are listed as Qualifying Interests in any European sites within the Zone of Influence (refer to Section 4.2). However, Article 12 of the Habitats Directive requires Member States to take *requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection of animal species listed in Annex IV(a) in their natural range*. Therefore, an assessment of the suitability of the site for use by bats and otters was made and can be found in the biodiversity chapter of the EclA that accompanies the planning application.

The report taken full account of the design of the proposed development and a detailed examination of all relevant elements of the proposed development was undertaken.

### 3 Description of the Permitted Development

The proposed residential development (See Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3) is on a site measuring c.2.63 Ha at lands south of Shanganagh Cemetery and east of Woodbrook DART Station, within the Woodbrook Local Area Plan boundary, Shanganagh, Shankill, Cork Little, Dublin. The proposed development comprises 359no. apartment units across two blocks (Block P and Block Q), as follows:

Block P: 154no. units, comprising 83no. 1-bed units, 18no. 2-bed (3-person) units, 46no. 2-bed (4-person) units, 4no. 3-bed (4-person) units, and 3no. duplex units (5-person).

Block Q: 205no. units, comprising 77no. 1-bed units, 34no. 2-bed (3-person) units, 91no. 2-bed (4-person) units, and 3no. 3-bed (5-person) duplex units.

The development also includes 2,540sqm of communal space; at ground level, an ESB substation, car, bicycle and motorcycle parking, bin storage, a bulk storage area, a bus turning and taxi turning area, and supporting mechanical, electrical and water infrastructure; landscaping works including tree protection, tree removal and tree planting, green roofs, boundary treatment, internal roads and footpaths, and electrical services; and all associated site development works including provisions for water services, foul and surface water drainage and connections, and an attenuation proposal.

Of the 359 dwelling units now being planned, 123no. units are already authorised under Reg. Ref. LRD24A/0382, in the form of Block P1 (27 units) and Block P2 (96 units). That already authorised element was positioned on approximately 1.63Ha of the site area — the western part of the site.

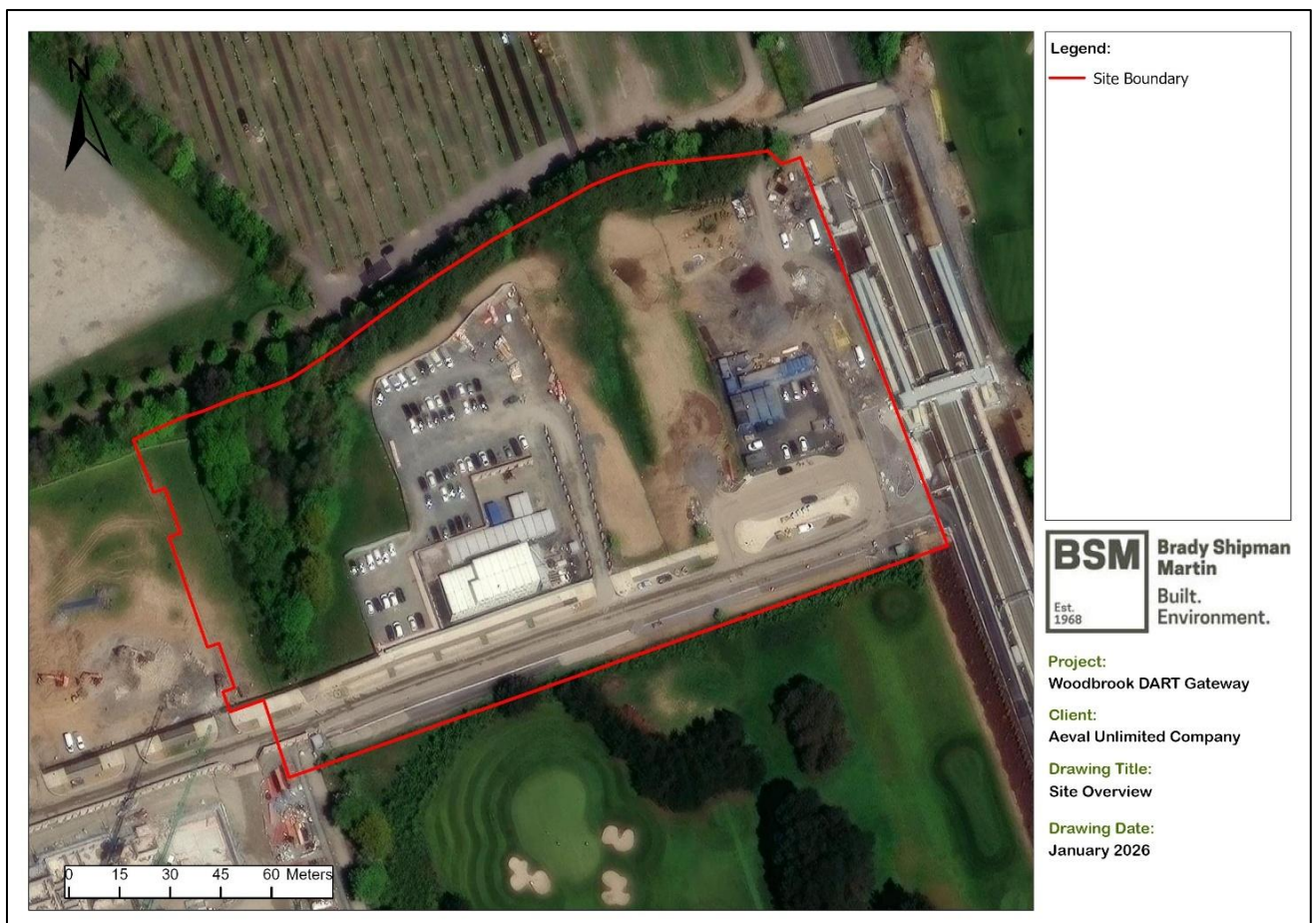


Figure 3.1 The location of the site of the proposed development, outlined in red (aerial photo dated 2025).



Figure 3.2 The permitted site layout (permitted under DLR Reg. Ref.: LRD24A/0382/WEB)

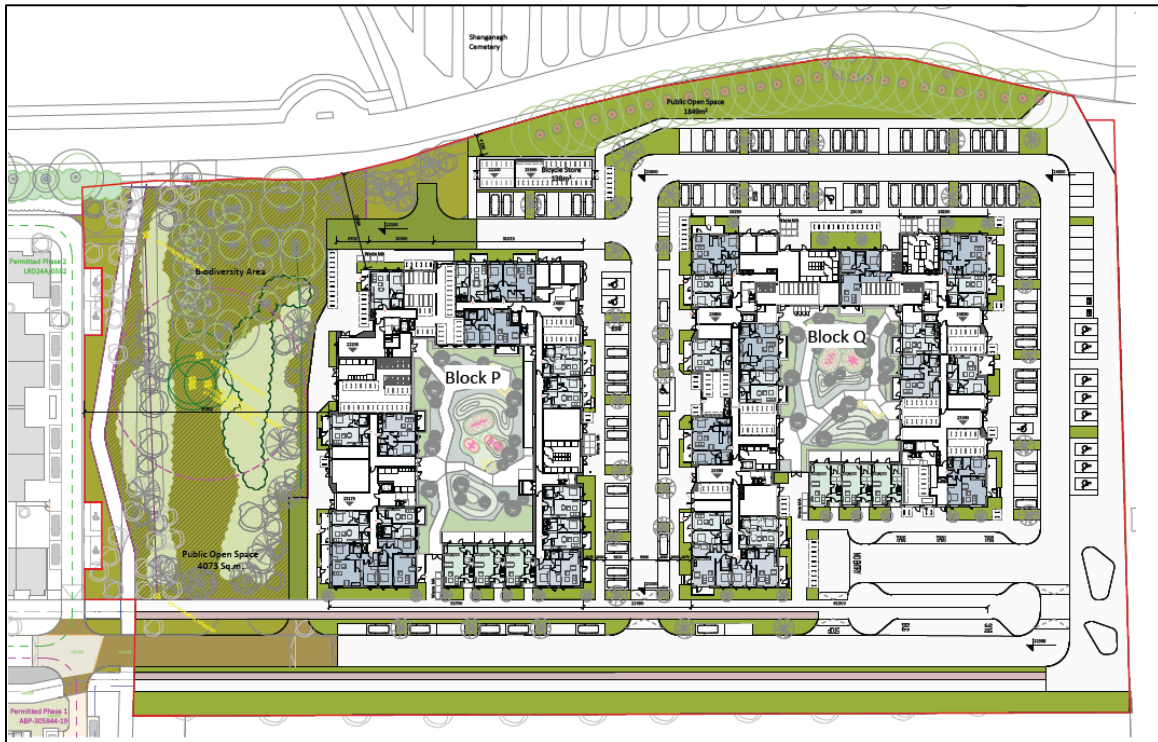


Figure 3.3 The proposed layout (refer to the drawings prepared by OMP, Project Architects). It can be seen that the

new development mainly relates to the eastern part of the subject site, with minor adjustments to the permitted layout of Block P.

## 4 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

### 4.1 Background

The first part of the Appropriate Assessment process is the Screening phase. Screening identifies the likely effects of a proposed development on European sites that could arise, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects and considers whether these impacts are likely to have a significant effect on the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

In accordance with sections 177U of the Planning Acts, screening for appropriate assessment must be carried out:

- To assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site;
- An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

Screening must be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation and it is in this context that this AA Screening Report is prepared.

In addition to the foregoing, the OPR's Practice Note "Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management", dated March 2021 – also details a number of key concepts relevant to AA Screening, including "Best Scientific Knowledge/Information in the Field" (pg.5), stating:

*"The screening determination must be based on scientific information relevant to the likely effects on the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites. The information should be up-to-date and based on the best available techniques and methods to estimate the presence and extent of effects. This is because if there is any scientific uncertainty as to the absence of significant effects, the project must be screened in for appropriate assessment.*

*In the vast majority of cases the information provided by the applicant (including the project description) and publicly available information in relation to the European sites in question and information published by the NPWS, the EPA and others in relation to such sites, should provide a sufficient level of objective scientific information to allow the planning authority to make an informed decision on screening."*

Following screening therefore, if there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment under section 177V of the Planning Acts for the purposes of compliance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This means that, if the conclusion at the end of the screening exercise is that significant effects on any European sites, as a result of the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely, uncertain or unknown, then an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out. This is in accordance with established precedent and case law.

### 4.2 Potential Zone of Influence

This assessment is based on the source-pathway-receptor model, which dictates that, for an effect to occur, there must be a 'source' (such as a construction site); a 'receptor' (such as a designated site for nature conservation); and a 'pathway' between the two (such as a watercourse that links the construction site to the designated site). A construction site or completed development may also create a barrier to movement, for example, by preventing the migration of fauna along a river corridor, or by obstructing the migration of birds.

Identification of a potential effect means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the potential effect and the characteristics of the receptor. Although there may be a risk of an impact, it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant. In other words, the existence of a source, a pathway and a receptor does not necessarily mean that a significant effect is likely.

There are no set recommended distances for projects to consider European sites as being relevant for assessment. DoEHLG (2010a, pp. 31 – 32) states that:

“The approach to screening is likely to differ somewhat for plans and projects, depending on scale and on the likely effects, but the following should be included:

1. *Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area*
2. *Any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan or project. A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans, and derives from UK guidance (Scott Wilson et al., 2006). For projects, the distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects*
3. *Natura 2000 sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area depending on the likely impacts of the plan or project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, bearing in mind the precautionary principle. In the cases of sites with water dependent habitats or species, and a plan or project that could affect water quality or quantity, for example, it may be necessary to consider the full extent of the upstream and/or downstream catchment.”*

The 2021 OPR guidelines, Practice Note PN01: *Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, state that the Zone of Influence “*should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km)*” (p. 8).

Therefore, considering the nature, scale and location of the proposed development and in accordance with the source-pathway-receptor model, the potential Zone of Influence (Zol) for the proposed development is:

- Any site to which there is a pathway from the subject site during either the construction or operational phases, as defined in the following sections. This assessment takes account of all sites within the *potential* Zone of Influence first, regardless of distance.

#### 4.2.1 European sites

There are no European sites within the immediate vicinity of the subject site at Woodbrook DART Gateway, which is not under any designation for nature conservation.

The nearest sites are as follows (see **Figure 4.1**):

##### Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

- Ballyman Glen SAC (site code 000713), c.2.8km to the south west.
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (Site code 003000), c.3.1km to the north east.
- Bray Head SAC (site code 000714), c.3.1km to the south east.
- Knocksink Wood SAC (site code 000725) c.4.6km to the south west.
- Wicklow Mountains SAC (site code 002122), c.7.6km to the west.
- Glen of the Downs SAC (site code 000719), c.8.6km to the south.
- South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), 8.6km to the north.
- The Murrough Wetlands SAC (site code 002249), c.12.7km to the south.
- Carriggower Bog SAC (site code 000716), c.12.9km to the south west.
- North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c.13.9km to the north.

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- Howth Head SAC (site code 000202), c.15.4km to the north.
- Glenasmole Valley SAC (site code 001209), c.15.7km to the west.
- Baldoyle Bay SAC (site code 000199), c.18.7km to the north.
- Ireland's Eye SAC (site code 002193), c.19.9km to the north.

### Special Protection Areas (SPA)

- Dalkey Islands SPA (site code 004172), c.5.4km to the north east.
- Wicklow Mountains SPA (site code 004040), c.8.0km to the west.
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024), c.8.5km to the north.
- The Murrough SPA (site code 004186), c.10.5km to the south.
- North-west Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236), c. 13.5km to the north.
- North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c.13.8km to the north.
- Howth Head Coast SPA (site code 004113), c.15.7km to the north.
- Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016), c.18.8km to the north.
- Ireland's Eye SPA (site code 004117), c.19.5km to the north.

Note that the above-listed distances are linear (i.e. 'as the crow flies').

The Conservation Objectives of these sites are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the QIs / SCIs in question. Where specific conservation objectives have been set out by the NPWS, 'favourable conservation condition' is defined in respect of specific attributes and targets for the habitat or species in question. For further information, refer to **Appendix II**.

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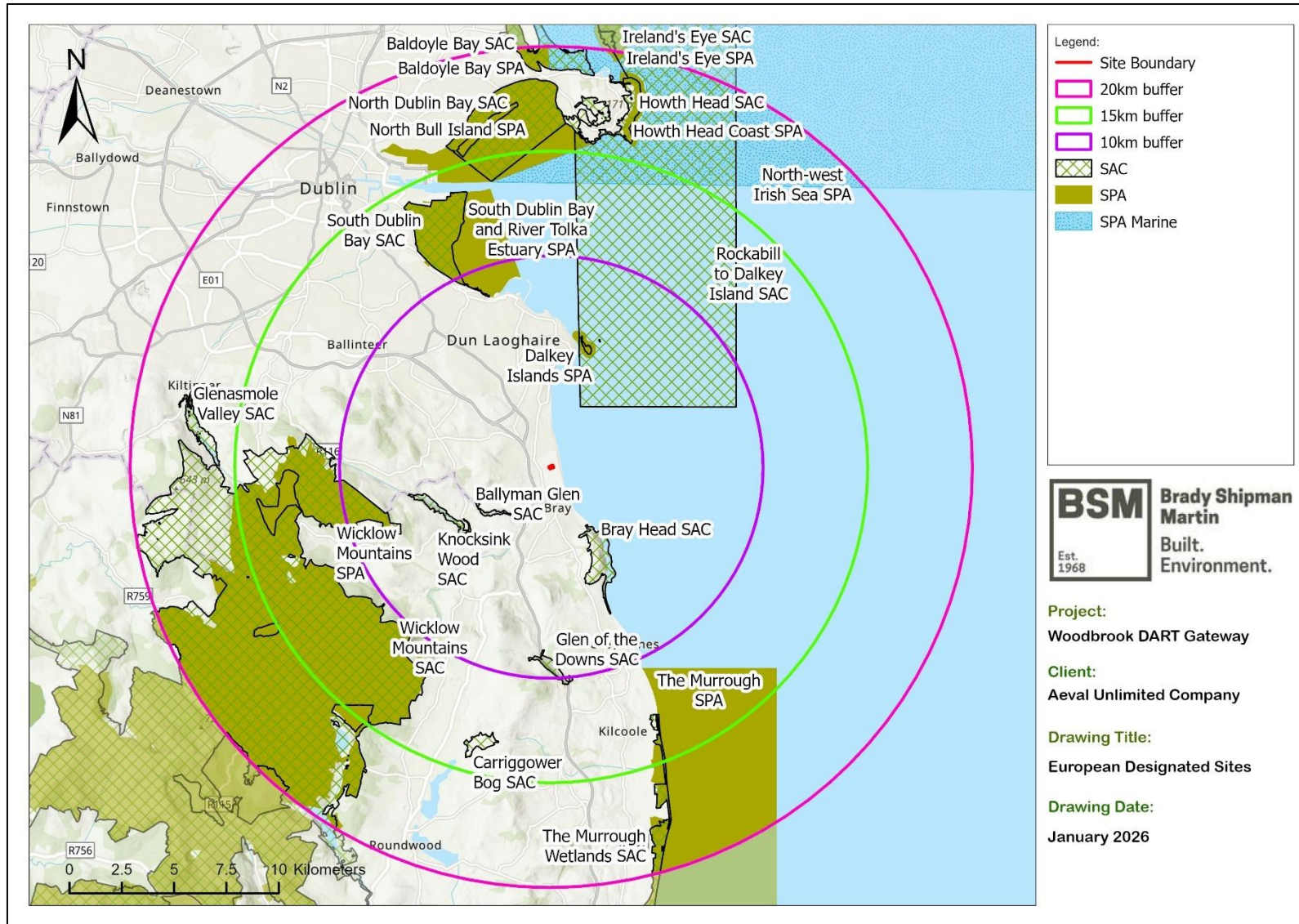


Figure 4.1 European sites within 20km of the subject site. 10, 15 and 20km radii are shown for scale.



#### 4.2.2 Other designated areas (other than European sites)

Designated sites other than European sites (i.e. proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) and designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA)) within the potential Zone of Influence have been included in this assessment in order to address their potential to act as supporting sites for European sites. There are no fully designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) within the potential Zone of Influence. The pNHAs (not otherwise designated as European sites) within the ZoI are as follows:

##### Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs):

- Loughlinstown Woods pNHA (site code 001211, c.2.3km to the north.
- Dalkey Coastal Zone and Killiney Hill pNHA (site code 001206), c.2.6km to the north.
- Ballyman Glen pNHA (site code 000713), c.2.8km to the south west.
- Bray Head pNHA (site code 000714), c.3.2km to the south.
- Dargle River Valley pNHA (site code 001754), c.4.2km to the south west.
- Dingle Glen pNHA (site code 001207), c.4.5km to the north west.
- Knocksink Wood pNHA (site code 000725), c.4.6km to the west.
- Powerscourt Woodland pNHA (site code 001768), c.5.1km to the south west.
- Great Sugarloaf pNHA (site code 001769), c.5.6km to the south west.
- Ballybetagh Bog pNHA (site code 001202), c.5.5km to the north west.
- Kilmacanogue Marsh (site code 000724), c.6.2km to the south west.
- Glencree Valley pNHA (site code 001755), c.8.1km to the south west.
- South Dublin Bay pNHA (site code 000210), c.8.5km to the north.
- Glen of the Downs (site code 000719), c.8.7km to the south.
- Powerscourt Waterfall pNHA (site code 001767), c.9.0km to the south west.
- Fitzsimon's Wood pNHA (site code 001753), c.9.2km to the north-west.

**Figure 4.2** illustrates all of the NHA and pNHA within the potential Zone of Influence (including those which overlap with European sites).

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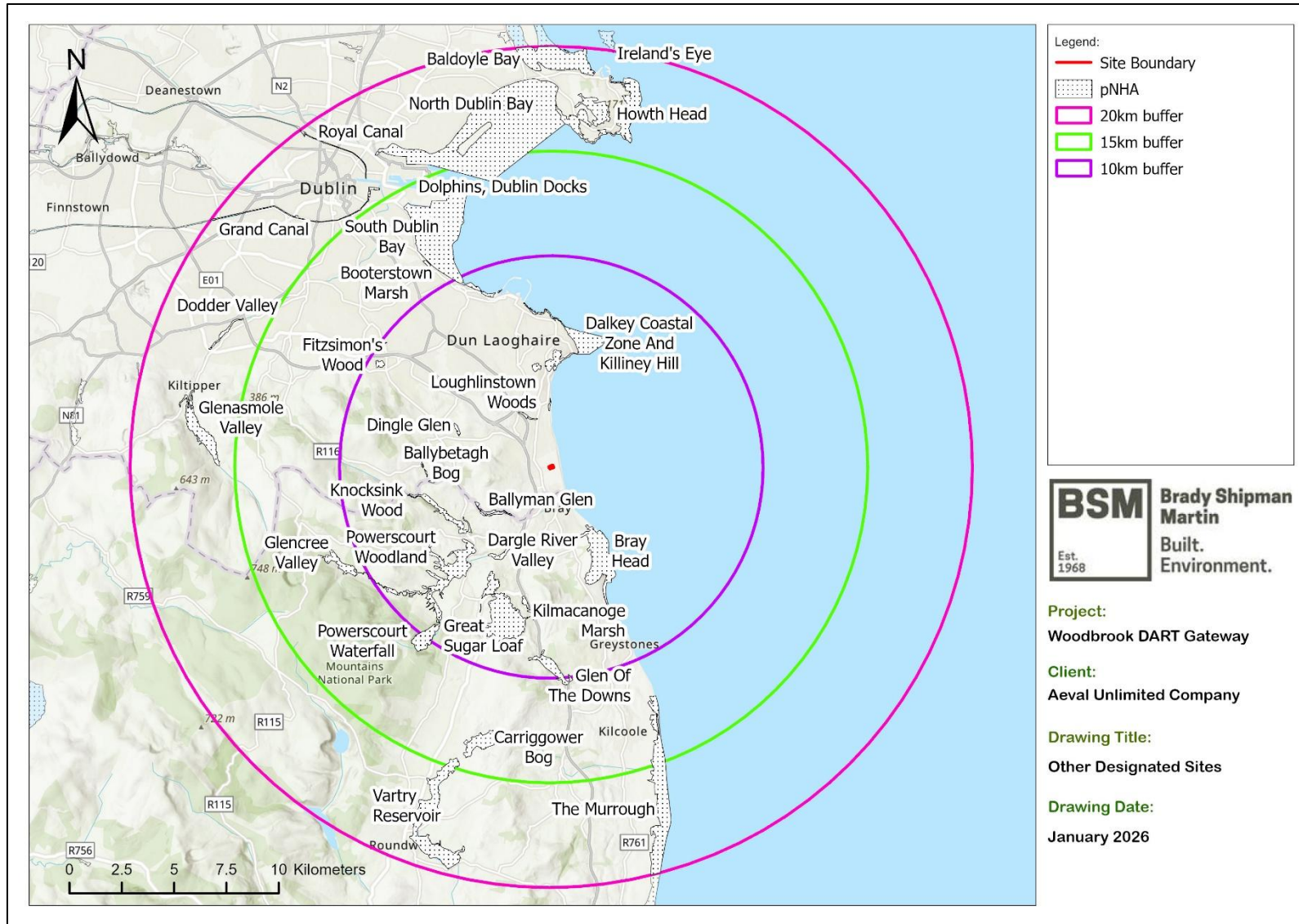


Figure 4.2 pNHA sites within 20km of the subject site. 10, 15 and 20km radii are shown for scale.



### 4.2.3 Watercourses and pathways to European sites

There are no watercourses on this site. A review of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) web-tool (see **Figure 4.3**) indicates that there are no surface water features present on the site the nearest being the Rathmichael (Crinken) Stream (IE\_EA\_10D01300), located approximately 820m to the east of the site boundary.

As set out in the *Stormwater Impact Assessment* (Atkins Realis, 2026), *Surface water generated from the proposed residential development will be conveyed through the proposed and recently constructed as part of the phase 1 development surface water network including SuDS and attenuated / managed on site prior to final discharge at Qbar greenfield run-off rates. The restricted discharge from the proposed overall site will remain unchanged and be conveyed via the recently constructed surface water sewer on the Dublin Road before discharge to the receiving Crinken / Rathmichael Stream. The proposed storm drainage network for the Woodbrook Dart Gateway development is as indicated on the planning drawings 0119017-ATK-ZZ-02-DR-CE090503.*

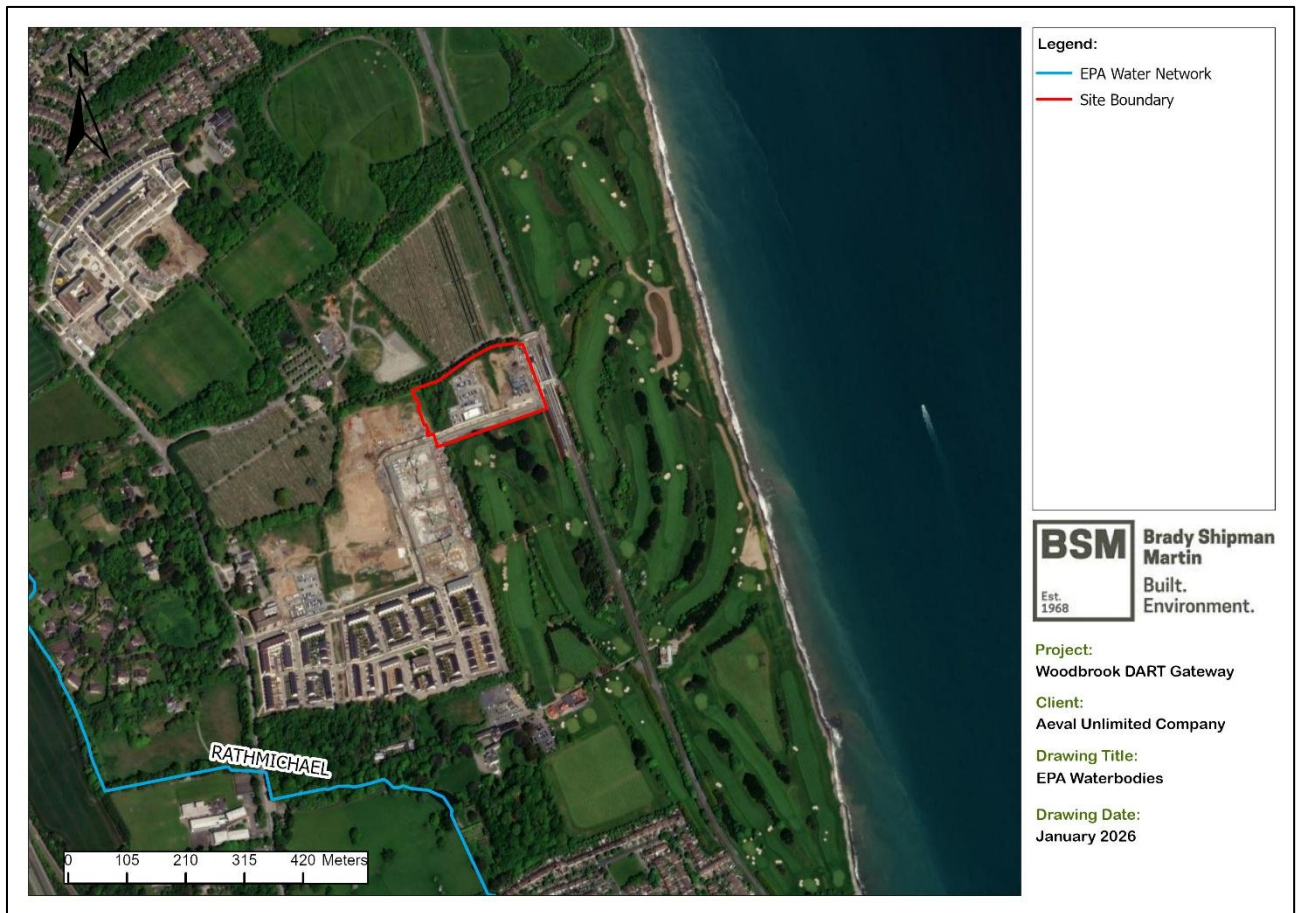


Figure 4.3. Waterbodies mapped by the EPA in the vicinity of the permitted development and described in the EPA database.

## 5 Potential impacts from the proposed works including in-combination effects

### 5.1 European sites and habitats with links to European sites

The subject site is located to the west of the newly constructed and operational Woodbrook Dart Station. There is a line of mature Leyland cypress (*Cupressus x leylandii*) trees on the northern boundary, separating the site from Shanganagh Cemetery. The southern boundary is marked by the Woodbrook Dart access road, to the south of which is the active Woodbrook Golf Club.

To the west of the subject site is a *protected biodiversity area*, comprising dense scrub and woodland. This is the only area of any ecological value in the vicinity of the subject site – and is fully protected from development. Further, dense, biodiversity-focussed planting is proposed between the existing biodiversity area and Block P, to further protect and enhance this area as part of the permitted LRD and in this Part 8 project (refer to the Landscape Masterplan and related drawings prepared by Brady Shipman Martin that accompany the submission (including drg 7059-BSM-XX-00-DR-L-1001).

The site of the proposed development is not under any wildlife or conservation designation. Furthermore, no rare, threatened or legally protected plant species, as listed in the *Irish Red Data Book 1 – Vascular Plants (Curtis & McGough, 1988)*, the *Flora Protection Order, 2022* or the *EU Habitats Directive*, are known to occur within the site and none have been recorded during the site visits. The most ecologically valuable habitat is located within the protected biodiversity area to the west.

A large, old and active badger sett is present nearby<sup>3</sup>, however the proposed development is outside the exclusion zone for the badger sett, as agreed during the course of planning, compliance and construction for the permitted developments at Woodbrook (under construction). This sett has been regularly monitored throughout the construction of Phases 1 and 2 of the permitted Woodbrook development. Regular monitoring reports have been submitted by the project ecologist to the satisfaction of the local NPWS Conservation Ranger and the DLR Biodiversity Officer. The sett, and badger activity locally, remain unaffected by the ongoing development.

The site has no value for roosting bats (this includes the mature Leyland cypress trees on the northern boundary which are of low roost suitability), nor for otters (as noted previously both otters (and bats) are protected under Article 12 of the Habitats Directive. They are known from the wider area, but the site itself is entirely unsuitable for use by otters) – no evidence of otters has ever been recorded by the Brady Shipman Martin team at the subject site since surveys began in 2018.

None of the habitats or features present on the site are Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests in any European site within the Zone of Influence and none of these Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests are present on the site. No evidence of any habitats or species with links to European sites was recorded during either the field surveys or desk study undertaken and no ‘reservoir’ type habitats (habitats which have the potential to support Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest species in any European site) are present. There are, further, no groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems at the site, including those with potential links to Qualifying Interests in European sites (such as petrifying springs).

There is no habitat on the site suitable for use, even on a very occasional basis, by any overwintering birds, such as light-bellied Brent goose, or any other protected bird species listed as a Special Conservation Interest (SCI) in any European site within the Zone of Influence. The site is not of value as an *ex-situ* feeding site for SCI species associated with the coastal European sites.

Overall, while noting that the protected biodiversity area to the immediate west is of Local Importance (Higher Value), taking account of the habitats present **the site is considered to be of Local Importance (Lower Value)**, in

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<sup>3</sup> Note that the location of the sett is not being disclosed in the Part 8 planning documentation.

according with the ecological resource valuations presented in the National Roads Authority/Transport Infrastructure Ireland Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes (NRA/TII, 2009 (Rev.2)).

#### 5.1.1 Potential impacts during construction

The proposed development comprises a residential development project, on a site which already has extant planning permission for similar development.

The proposed Block P, located on the western side of the site, is fundamentally unchanged from that already permitted. There are no basements required, and the construction methodology is unchanged from that already approved by DLR as part of the permitted LRD scheme. The interface between Block P and the biodiversity area remains unchanged, comprising an estate railing and defensive planting. Refer to the Landscape Design Rationale Report and accompanying drawings (Brady Shipman Martin, 2026) for further details.

The eastern part of the proposed development site comprises disturbed ground used for car parking and as a construction compound (this use is permitted) with the Leyland cypress tree line to the north. There are no habitats or features with any links to any European sites. There is no possibility of any significant construction-related effects on any QI or SCI habitats or species.

At any development site, site clearance and construction activities pose a potential risk to water as **surface/ ground water** arising at a site may contain contaminants. The main contaminants arising from such activities may include suspended solids, hydrocarbons and concrete/cement products. If not properly managed, such pollutants could pose a temporary risk to surface water quality in the local surface water network (such as the Rathmichael (Crinken) Stream) during the construction phase, via the permitted and installed surface water drainage network.

However, polluted surface water will not be emitted directly to any surface water body – there is no direct hydrological pathway – there are no watercourses or drainage ditches present on the site that can provide direct hydrological linkage to the Rathmichael Stream.

There is a possibility that contaminated surface water from the site could enter the local ditches/surface water network, thereby creating an indirect hydrological pathway linking the proposed development site with coastal European Sites downstream of the Rathmichael Stream. The Rathmichael Stream does not drain directly into any European sites – Bray head SAC is approximately 3km to the south of the outfall and Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC is approximately 3km to the north. Nevertheless, a potential (albeit theoretical) surface water pathway exists between the proposed development site and coastal European sites. This pathway is via the local surface water drainage network and, ultimately, the open sea.

There are no European sites with groundwater-dependent qualifying interests within the zone of influence of the proposed development and there is no possibility of significant effects on any European site via spillages to ground or via changes to groundwater.

There is no source pathway linkage to any water-related feature of any kind and no conceivable likelihood of any significant effects. In the absence of mitigation, rainfall run-off generated during the construction phase may contain elevated levels of silt and other pollutants arising from construction activities. Increased concentrations of suspended solids in run-off could lead to a higher suspended sediment load, resulting in increased turbidity. Elevated turbidity can affect local infiltration capacity and downstream effects on drainage infrastructure and receiving watercourses.

However, should any silt-laden stormwater from construction or hydrocarbon-contaminated water from a construction vehicle leak/tank leak manage to enter into the drainage system, the suspended solids will naturally settle within the network and receiving waters. In the event of a worst case hydrocarbon leak this would be diluted to background levels (established as surface water quality objectives as outlined in S.I. No. 272 of 2009, S.I. No. 386 of 2015 and S.I. No. 77 of 2019) by the time the stormwater waters reaches the nearest coastal European sites (over

3km); it would undergo dilution and mixing within the Irish Sea, in addition to attenuation processes occurring along the drainage pathway prior to discharge to the sea.

Consequently, it is certain that there is no potential for changes to water-dependent habitat requirements arising from the proposed development – this conclusion does not take any mitigation measures into account.

During the construction phase, typical environmental effects associated with construction works of this nature and scale are predicted, including elevated levels of noise, emissions of dust, direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions, etc. These effects will be short-term in duration, at most, temporary and reversible. There will also be environmental risks associated with the presence of potential pollutants typically stored and used on-site (e.g. hydrocarbons, solvents, cementitious materials).

There is no possibility of any other potential direct, indirect or secondary impacts on any European site during the construction phase. For example, there will be no land-take from any European site and there will be no resource requirements such as water abstraction. Similarly, there will be no emissions to air from construction vehicles that could remotely impact any European site. Dust, noise and vibration arising during construction will similarly be entirely remote from any European site by virtue of distance.

There will be no loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance or other change to any element of any European site as a result of the construction of the proposed development, and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

**Significant construction-related effects as a result of the proposed development, on European sites or otherwise, can therefore be excluded.**

#### 5.1.2 Potential impacts during operation

During the operational phase, typical environmental effects associated with the presence and operation of a residential development are predicted, including water consumption, surface and foul water loading to the municipal network, additional traffic volumes and direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions. Operational phase effects are expected to be permanent in duration.

The proposed **surface water drainage** system at Woodbrook, including the proposed development has been designed to incorporate multiple Sustainable urban Drainage (SuDS) features across each of the catchment areas within the subject site. Storm water from each catchment will pass through various SuDS and an attenuation system prior to discharge at Qbar greenfield run-off rates. According to the Engineering Report and the Stormwater Impact Assessment report (both documents prepared by Atkins Réalis and submitted separately), surface water arising at the proposed development will be conveyed through the network permitted as part of Woodbrook Phase 1 and now constructed. Attenuated surface water will ultimately discharge, via the recently constructed surface water sewer on the Dublin Road, to the receiving stream (the Rathmichael Stream).

The SuDs techniques to be applied within the development include the following;

- Swales within Open Space / Park areas adjacent to roads.
- Permeable paving in light traffic areas (parking bays).
- Green roofs to suitable apartment blocks.
- Green courtyards to suitable apartment blocks.
- Underground modular system within green corridors / park areas.
- Filter drains in rear gardens.
- Tree pits.
- Vortex Flow control devices.

In keeping with the requirements of the Woodbrook – Shanganagh Local Area Plan 2017- 2023 as extended, run-off will pass through at least one level of treatment where possible using a SUDS component prior to the final level of treatment in the public realm areas.

Even in the total absence of any SuDS measures there would be no impacts on any European sites. The significant distances to European sites and the natural characteristics of the receiving waters ensure rapid mixing of water such that there is no possibility of any appreciable effect on water quality in European sites in any event.

According to the Flood Risk Assessment for the proposed development, prepared by Atkins Réalis in accordance with the requirements of the OPW 2009 publication “*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities*” the site is located in Flood Zone C. Therefore, A residential development on the subject site is appropriate for the site’s flood zone category and a justification test as outlined in the guidelines is not required.

**Significant effects related to surface water management or flooding, arising as a result of the operation of the proposed development, on European sites or otherwise, can therefore be excluded.**

As set out in the Engineering Report that accompanies the application (prepared by Atkins Réalis), the proposed **foul drainage** network for the permitted Woodbrook Phase 1 development has been constructed. It was designed to include capacity for Woodbrook DART Gateway (this proposed development).

Further, as set out in the engineering report the peak foul flow is calculated at 7.61l/s for the proposed development (the predicted total daily wastewater discharge volume for the development is 145,800 litres per day). The Shanganagh-Bray WwTP operate under license from EPA (License no. D0038) and as confirmed in the Annual Environmental Report (AER)<sup>5</sup> for the 2023 the *WWTP discharge was compliant with the ELV’s set in the wastewater discharge license*. In Addition, the AER confirms that the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant does not have an observable impact on water quality, coastal/transitional water quality, bathing water quality and does not have an observable negative impact on the Water Framework Directive status.

Uisce Éireann issued a Confirmation of Feasibility (COF) letter on 07 July 2025 (IW Ref CDS25003420) which stated the following with regards to foul water: “*Feasible without infrastructure upgrade by Uisce Éireann*”.

**Significant effects related to foul water management, arising as a result of the operation of the proposed development, on European sites or otherwise, can therefore be excluded.**

The proposed development will include the construction of new buildings, ranging from 5- to 8-storeys. However, the proposed development site at a significant remove from the nearest SPA and has no features suitable for use by any SCI species. The risk of collision is imperceptible. Birds tend to fly higher than the tallest obstruction in their flightpath and also to fly at a greater height between foraging sites. The proposed development site is not an important site for light-bellied Brent geese or any other overwintering species. No issues arise via the disruption of flight lines for birds.

There is no possibility of any other potential direct, indirect or secondary impacts on an European site once the proposed development is operational. There will be no loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance or other change to any element of any European sites as a result of the operation of the proposed development, and no interference with the key relationship that define the structure of function of any European site.

**Significant effects arising as a result of the operation of the proposed development, on European sites or otherwise, can therefore be excluded.**

Full details on the potential impacts of the proposed works on European sites are presented in **Table 5.1**.

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Table 5.1 - Potential Impacts on European sites in the Potential Zone of Influence

| European Site  | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)   | Source – Pathway – Receptor link  | Likely significant effect? |
|--|--|---|----------------------------|
| <p>Ballyman Glen SAC (site code 000713), c.2.8km to the south-west</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)*</li> <li>■ 7230 Alkaline fens</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 17 July 2019), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) for which the SAC has been selected.</p>             | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological, or hydrogeological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SAC. It is over 3km distant and is unconnected via any pathway.</p> <p>No emissions have potential to result in any impact on the QIs of the SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QIs of this SAC as a result of the proposed development. There are, specifically, no possible effects on groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems. There are none on the subject site, and no excavation is proposed. There are no hydrogeological impacts arising.</p>   | <p>No</p>                  |
| <p>Bray Head SAC (site code 000714), c.3.1km to the south-east</p>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts</li> <li>■ 4030 European dry heaths</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 11 April 2017), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p><b>This site is within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>Nevertheless, no significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's QIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the construction and operation of the proposed development could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, via the Rathmichael/Crinken Stream, eventually, to the sea.</p> <p>There will be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, as described in Section 5. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality locally (within the proposed development site), this would not be perceptible in this SAC – as confirmed and explained in Section 5.1. This is due to the significant separation between the proposed development site and the European site. Any pollution entering the ground or any watercourse during construction would be diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the bay. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and transitional water would occur. Upon reaching the bay any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated in the marine environment.</p> | <p>No</p>                  |

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| European Site   | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)   | Source – Pathway – Receptor link   | Likely significant effect? |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|
|   |  | <p>There is in fact no pathway to the QIs of this site, which are elevated above the sea.</p> <p>There will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the construction of the proposed development.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development.</p>   |                            |
| <p>Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000), c.3.1km to the north-east</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1170 Reefs</li> <li>■ 1351 Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 07 May 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p><b>This site is within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>Nevertheless, no significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's QIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the construction and operation of the proposed development could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, via the Rathmichael/Crinken Stream, eventually, to the sea.</p> <p>There will be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, as described in Section 5. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality locally (within the proposed development site), this would not be perceptible in this SAC – as confirmed and explained in Section 5.1. This is due to the significant separation between the proposed development site and the European site. Any pollution entering the ground or any watercourse during construction would be diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the bay. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and transitional water would occur. Upon reaching the bay any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated in the marine environment.</p> <p>There will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the construction of the proposed development.</p> | <p>No</p>                  |

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### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

| European Site   | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)   | Source – Pathway – Receptor link   | Likely significant effect? |
|---|--|--|----------------------------|
|   |  | No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development.   |                            |
| Knocksink Wood SAC (site code 000725), c.4.6km to the south- west | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*</li> <li>■ 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> <li>■ 91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 13 December 2021), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) for which the SAC has been selected.</p>  | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological, or hydrogeological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SAC. It is almost 5km distant and is unconnected via any pathway.</p> <p>No emissions have potential to result in any impact on the QIs of the SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QIs of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p> | No                         |
| Wicklow Mountains SAC (site code 002122), c.7.6km to the west     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae)</li> <li>■ 3160 Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds</li> <li>■ 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></li> <li>■ 4030 European dry heaths</li> <li>■ 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths</li> <li>■ 6130 Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae</li> <li>■ 6230 Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)*</li> <li>■ 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</li> <li>■ 8110 Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)</li> </ul> | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological, or hydrogeological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SAC. It is almost 8km distant and is unconnected via any pathway.</p> <p>No emissions have potential to result in any impact on the QIs of the SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QIs of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p> | No                         |

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### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

| European Site  | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)  | Source – Pathway – Receptor link   | Likely significant effect? |
|--|---|--|----------------------------|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 8210 Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation</li> <li>■ 8220 Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation</li> <li>■ 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> <li>■ 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 31 July 2017), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> |  |                            |
| Glen of the Downs SAC (site code 000719), c.8.6km to the south | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 10 December 2020), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat for which the SAC has been selected.</p>  | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological, or hydrogeological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SAC. It is almost 9km distant and is unconnected via any pathway.</p> <p>No emissions have potential to result in any impact on the QIs of the SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QIs of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p> | No                         |
| South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), c.8.6km to the north  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>■ 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines</li> <li>■ 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand</li> <li>■ 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 2, dated 24 April 2026), for the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable</p>  | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological, or hydrogeological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SAC. It is almost 9km distant and is unconnected via any pathway.</p> <p>No emissions have potential to result in any impact on the QIs of the SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QIs of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p> | No                         |

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| European Site  | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)   | Source – Pathway – Receptor link  | Likely significant effect? |
|--|--|---|----------------------------|
|  | conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected.  |   |                            |
| The Murrough Wetlands SAC (site code 002249), c.12.7 km to the south | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines</li> <li>■ 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks</li> <li>■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</li> <li>■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)</li> <li>■ 7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the Caricion davallianae*</li> <li>■ 7230 Alkaline fens</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22 December 2021), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological, or hydrogeological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SAC. It is almost 13km distant and is unconnected via any pathway.</p> <p>No emissions have potential to result in any impact on the QIs of the SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QIs of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p> | No                         |
| Carriggower Bog SAC (site code 000716), c.12.9km to the south-west   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 13 December 2019), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat for which the SAC has been selected.</p>  | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological, or hydrogeological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SAC. It is almost 13km distant and is unconnected via any pathway.</p> <p>No emissions have potential to result in any impact on the QIs of the SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QIs of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p> | No                         |
| North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c.13.9km to the north       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>■ 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines</li> <li>■ 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand</li> </ul>   | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological, or hydrogeological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SAC. It is almost 14km distant and is unconnected via any pathway.</p>  | No                         |

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| European Site  | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)   | Source – Pathway – Receptor link  | Likely significant effect? |
|--|--|---|----------------------------|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</li> <li>■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)</li> <li>■ 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes</li> <li>■ 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes)</li> <li>■ 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*</li> <li>■ 2190 Humid dune slacks</li> <li>■ 1395 Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 06 November 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p>No emissions have potential to result in any impact on the QIs of the SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QIs of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>  |                            |
| Howth Head SAC (site code 000202), c.15.4km to the north       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts</li> <li>■ 4030 European dry heaths</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 06 December 2016), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected.</p>   | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological, or hydrogeological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SAC. It is over 15km distant and is unconnected via any pathway.</p> <p>No emissions have potential to result in any impact on the QIs of the SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QIs of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p> | No                         |
| Glenasmole Valley SAC (site code 001209), c.15.7km to the west | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)</li> </ul>   | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological, or hydrogeological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SAC. It is almost 16km distant and is unconnected via any pathway.</p>  | No                         |

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### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

| European Site  | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)  | Source – Pathway – Receptor link  | Likely significant effect? |
|--|---|---|----------------------------|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 6410 <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)</li> <li>■ 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 10 December 2021), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected.</p>  | <p>No emissions have potential to result in any impact on the QIs of the SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QIs of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>  |                            |
| Baldoyle Bay SAC (site code 000199), c.18.7km to the north       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ [1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>■ [1310] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand</li> <li>■ [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>)</li> <li>■ [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 19 November 2012), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p> | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological, or hydrogeological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SAC. It is almost 19km distant and is unconnected via any pathway.</p> <p>No emissions have potential to result in any impact on the QIs of the SAC.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QIs of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p> | <b>No</b>                  |
|  |   |   |                            |
| Dalkey Islands SPA (site code 004172), c.5.7km to the north-east | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)</li> <li>■ A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)</li> <li>■ A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>)</li> </ul>  | <p><b>This site is within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>The species of tern for which the SPA is designated are sensitive to direct disturbance due to noise and anthropogenic activity. However, such disturbance is not considered to be</p>  | <b>No</b>                  |

## Woodbrook DART Gateway

### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

| European Site  | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)   | Source – Pathway – Receptor link  | Likely significant effect? |
|--|--|---|----------------------------|
|  | <p>According to this SPA's Conservation Objectives (Version 1, dated 29 October 2024), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.</p>  | <p>remotely likely as a result of the proposed development, which is inland and separated by 5km of open sea from the European site.</p> <p>Further, no significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's SCIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the construction and operation of the proposed development could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, via the Rathmichael/Crinken Stream, eventually, to the sea.</p> <p>There will be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, as described in Section 5. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality locally (within the proposed development site), this would not be perceptible in this SPA – as confirmed and explained in Section 5.1. This is due to the significant separation between the proposed development site and the European site. Any pollution entering the ground or any watercourse during construction would be diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the bay. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and transitional water would occur. Upon reaching the bay any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated in the marine environment.</p> <p>The site is of no value for SCI species associated with this or any other SPA, and there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCIs of this site as a result of the construction of the proposed development.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development.</p> |                            |
| <p>Wicklow Mountains SPA (site code 004040), c.8.0km to the west</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A098 Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>)</li> <li>■ A103 Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to this SPA's Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 16 July 2024), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird</p> | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SPA. It is approximately 8km distant and is unconnected via surface water or any other pathway. No significant effects on water quality, and no effects on the site's SCIs, are predicted.</p>  | <p><b>No</b></p>           |

## Woodbrook DART Gateway

### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

| European Site  | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)   | Source – Pathway – Receptor link  | Likely significant effect? |
|--|--|---|----------------------------|
|  | <p>species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.</p>  | <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCIs of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.</p>   |                            |
| <p>South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024), c.8.7km to the north</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)</li> <li>■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)</li> <li>■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)</li> <li>■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)</li> <li>■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)</li> <li>■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)</li> <li>■ A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>)</li> <li>■ A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)</li> <li>■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)</li> <li>■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)</li> <li>■ A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)</li> <li>■ A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)</li> <li>■ A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>)</li> <li>■ A999 Wetlands</li> </ul> <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9 March 2015), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p> | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SPA. It is almost 9km distant and is unconnected via surface water or any other pathway. No significant effects on water quality, and no effects on the site's SCIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCIs of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.</p> | <p><b>No</b></p>           |
| <p>The Murrough SPA (site code 004186), c.10.4km to the south</p>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A001 Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>)</li> <li>■ A195 Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>)</li> <li>■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)</li> <li>■ A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)</li> <li>■ A043 Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>)</li> </ul>  | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SPA. It is over 10km distant and is unconnected via surface water or any other pathway. No significant effects on water quality, and no effects on the site's SCIs, are predicted.</p>  | <p><b>No</b></p>           |

## Woodbrook DART Gateway

### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

| European Site   | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)  | Source – Pathway – Receptor link   | Likely significant effect? |
|---|---|--|----------------------------|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A050 Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>)</li> <li>■ A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)</li> <li>■ A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)</li> <li>■ A999 Wetland and Waterbirds</li> </ul> <p>According to this SPA's Conservation Objectives (Version 1, dated 8 October 2024), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species and wetland habitat listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.</p>   | <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCIs of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.</p>  |                            |
| <p>North-West Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236), c.13.8km to the north</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A065 Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>)</li> <li>■ A001 Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>)</li> <li>■ A003 Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>)</li> <li>■ A009 Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>)</li> <li>■ A013 Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>)</li> <li>■ A018 Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>)</li> <li>■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)</li> <li>■ A177 Little Gull (<i>Larus minutus</i>)</li> <li>■ A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>)</li> <li>■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)</li> <li>■ A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>)</li> <li>■ A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>)</li> <li>■ A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)</li> <li>■ A187 Great Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>)</li> <li>■ A195 Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>)</li> <li>■ A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>)</li> <li>■ A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)</li> <li>■ A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)</li> <li>■ A204 Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>)</li> <li>■ A200 Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>)</li> <li>■ A199 Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>)</li> </ul> | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SPA. It is almost 14km distant and is unconnected via surface water or any other pathway. No significant effects on water quality, and no effects on the site's SCIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCIs of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.</p> | <p><b>No</b></p>           |

## Woodbrook DART Gateway

### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

| European Site  | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)   | Source – Pathway – Receptor link   | Likely significant effect? |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
|  | <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 19 September 2023), for the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the species for which the SPA has been selected.</p>  |  |                            |
| <p>North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c.14.1km to the north</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)</li> <li>■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>)</li> <li>■ A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)</li> <li>■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)</li> <li>■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)</li> <li>■ A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)</li> <li>■ A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>)</li> <li>■ A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>)</li> <li>■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)</li> <li>■ A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)</li> <li>■ A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)</li> <li>■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)</li> <li>■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)</li> <li>■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)</li> <li>■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)</li> <li>■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)</li> <li>■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)</li> <li>■ A999 Wetlands</li> </ul> <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9 March 2015), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the</p> | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SPA. It is over 14km distant and is unconnected via surface water or any other pathway. No significant effects on water quality, and no effects on the site's SCIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCIs of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.</p> | <p>No</p>                  |

Woodbrook DART Gateway

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

| European Site  | Reasons for designation (information correct as of May 2026) (*denotes a priority habitat)   | Source – Pathway – Receptor link   | Likely significant effect? |
|--|--|--|----------------------------|
|  | species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.   |  |                            |
| Howth Head Coast SPA (site code 004113), c.16.0km to the north | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>)</li> </ul> <p>According to this SPA’s Conservation Objectives (Version 1, dated 29 October 2024), for the listed SCI, the Conservation Objective is to restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interest for this SPA.</p> | <p><b>This site is not within the Zone of Influence of the proposed development.</b></p> <p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed development and this SPA. It is over 16km distant and is unconnected via surface water or any other pathway. No significant effects on water quality, and no effects on the site’s SCIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Furthermore, there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCIs of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.</p> | No                         |

## 5.2 Summary of potential impacts of the Proposed Development

There will be no land-take from any European site and there will be no resource requirements such as water abstraction. Similarly there will be no emissions to air from construction vehicles that could remotely impact any European site. Dust, noise and vibration arising during construction will similarly be entirely remote from any European site.

There will be no loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance or other change to any element of any European site as a result of the construction or operation of the proposed development, no predicted impact on *ex-situ* species and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

There will also be no significant effects on any European sites as a result of:

- Habitat loss and/or fragmentation
- Land-take
- Resource requirements such as water abstraction
- Impacts to habitat structure
- Mortality to species (such as roadkill)
- Noise pollution / vibration impacts
- Light pollution
- Emissions to air (including dust)
- Emissions to water

Additionally, for the reasons outlined in this report for the European sites, no impacts on any other designated sites including proposed Natural Heritage Areas, will occur.

## 6 Mitigation specific to European sites

This screening assessment is consistent with the judgment of the European Court in Case C-323/17, *People Over Wind & Sweetman v Coillte* (Judgment of the Court (Seventh Chamber) of 12 April 2018) and the recent case-law of the High Court, including *Heather Hill Management Company CLG v An Bord Pleanála* [2019] IEHC 450 and *Sweetman v An Bord Pleanála* [2020] IEHC 39.

It is also consistent with the judgment in *Eco Advocacy CLG v An Bord Pleanála* [2021] IEHC 265. In that case, Humphreys J confirmed the core legal principle, being that regard should not be had to mitigation measures at AA screening stage. Humphreys J decided in that case that clarification was required from the CJEU on the matter (as it related to the consideration of SuDS and whether these represented mitigation measures).

The CJEU, in its ruling on this case dated 15 June 2023 clarified issues defining mitigation in the context of European sites<sup>4</sup>. It confirmed that Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43 *must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out an appropriate assessment of the implications of a plan or project for a site, account may be taken of the features of that plan or project which involve the removal of contaminants and which therefore may have the effect of reducing the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site, where those features have been incorporated into that plan or project as standard features, inherent in such a plan or project, irrespective of any effect on the site.*

In relation to European sites, there will be no impacts capable of giving rise to any likely significant effects as a result of the proposed development. As with the permitted scheme, SuDS measures will be incorporated into the design of the proposed development as standard features. SuDS features are highly effective and are required to be included in developments where appropriate. These standard measures are considered best practice in construction and, therefore reasonable scientific doubt concerning their effectiveness can be ruled out.

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<sup>4</sup><https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=274644&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=21723482>

As set out in this report, it is certain that likely significant effects on European sites as a result of both the construction and operation of the proposed development can be excluded. Even if no SuDS measures were to be incorporated into the design there could be no impacts on European sites.

No mitigation is necessary or proposed for the protection of European sites.

## 7 In-combination effects

It is a requirement of Section 177U of the Planning Acts that, when considering whether a plan or project will have a significant effect on a European site, the assessment must take into account in-combination effects with other plans and projects. The assessment should consider plans and projects that are completed, approved but uncompleted, or proposed (but not yet approved).<sup>5</sup> If there are identified effects arising from the plan or project, even if they are perceived as minor and not likely to have an effect on a European site alone, then these effects must be considered ‘in-combination’ with the effects arising from other plans and projects.

The following sources were consulted to identify relevant other plans or projects:

- Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Planning Viewer (May 2026);
- EIA Portal Viewer (May 2026);
- Woodbrook – Shanganagh Local Area Plan 2017 – 2023 as extended;
- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

No developments are proposed within the immediate vicinity of the site that would, in combination with the works under appraisal in this report, give rise to significant effects. This includes the permitted Woodbrook Phase 2 LRD (of which the current Part 8 comprises part), now under construction, and the development being delivered by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council at Shanganagh ABP Reg. Ref.: 306583), also under construction.

Furthermore, the zoning, policies and objectives set out in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022 – 2028 are intended to protect the environment while encouraging development in appropriate areas. The proposed development complies with these objectives in the context of Appropriate Assessment.

The project is similarly in full compliance with the Woodbrook – Shanganagh Local Area Plan 2017 – 2023 as extended, in particular Section 3.6 (Open Space, Recreation & Green Infrastructure).

A number of other plans were considered when assessing in-combination effects, but it was determined that there would be no in-combination effects with these:

- Revised National Planning Framework (April 2025).
- The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019 – 2031 (The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly).
- The Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study.
- Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042.
- Climate Action Plan 2024 and 2025.
- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 – 2030.

None of these plans grant development consent so do not in themselves generate a significant effect that can be assessed along with the permitted development for the purposes of the in-combination assessment.

Considering the nature and scale of the proposed development, the localised and insignificant nature of the environmental effects predicted to occur as a result of the proposed development, and the nature of existing, permitted and proposed development in its environs, it is considered that significant in combination effects on

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<sup>5</sup> *Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, September 2021)*

European sites are not likely to occur as a result of the proposed development in combination with other plans or projects.

## 8 Screening conclusion

In view of best scientific knowledge this report concludes that the proposed Part 8 development (the residential development at the site at Woodbrook DART Gateway), individually or in combination with another plan or project, will not have a significant effect on any European sites. This conclusion was reached without considering or taking into account mitigation measures or measures intended to avoid or reduce any impact on European sites.

It is considered that this report provides sufficient relevant information to allow the Competent Authority (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council) to carry out an AA Screening under Section 177U of the Planning Acts and reach a determination, under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, that the proposed development will not have any likely significant effects on European sites under in light of their conservation objectives.

## 9 References

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2024). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine (Version 1.3).
- DoEHLG (2010a). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities.
- DoEHLG (2010b). Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10: Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities.
- European Commission (2018). Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2021). Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022 – 2028, including the accompanying Appropriate Assessment documentation (Natura Impact Report).
- NBDC (2026). Biodiversity Maps. [www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie).
- NPWS (2021). Guidance for Public authorities on the Application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive.
- NPWS (2026). Boundary data – Special Area of Conservation (SAC). [Update date 03/03/2026].
- NPWS (2026). Boundary data – Special Protection Area (SPA). [Update date 03/03/2026].
- NPWS (2015). Boundary data – proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). [Update date 01/11/2015].
- OPR (2021). Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.
- OPW (2009). The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities.
- TII/NRA (2009, Rev. 2). Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes.
- NRA (2009). Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes.
- OPR (2021). Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management.
- OPW (2009). The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities.
- Woodbrook - Shanganagh Local Area Plan 2017 – 2023 as extended (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council).

## Appendix I: Background

The European<sup>6</sup> network is a Europe-wide network of ecologically important sites (SPAs and SACs – also known as ‘European sites’ or ‘Natura 2000 sites’) that have been designated for protection under either the EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) or the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna).

The main aim of the Habitats Directive is “to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States to which the treaty applies”. Any actions taken must be designed to “maintain or restore, at a favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest”. Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, an assessment is required where a plan or project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but may give rise to significant effects upon a European site.

In addition, it is a matter of law that candidate SACs (cSACs), candidate SPAs (cSPAs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCI) are considered in this process and treated the same as SACs and SPAs.

Article 6 (paragraphs (3) and (4)) of the Habitats Directive states that:

(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have 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.

(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.

The requirements of the Habitats Directive are transposed into Irish law by means of the *European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2021* (hereafter referred to as the *Birds and Habitats Regulations*)<sup>7</sup> and by the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended.

In Ireland, the statutory agency responsible for the designated areas is NPWS.

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<sup>6</sup> The EU Habitats Directive, Article 3.1, states “A Coherent European ecological network of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC shall be set up under the title Natura 2000”

<sup>7</sup> SI No. 477 of 2011 and subsequent amendments

#### Stages in the assessment

European Commission guidance (2021)<sup>8</sup> sets out the principles on how to undertake decision making in applying the Habitats Directive. The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise three distinct stages”:

**Stage one: screening.** The first part of the procedure consists of a pre-assessment stage (‘screening’) to ascertain whether the plan or project is directly connected with, or necessary to, the management of a Natura 2000 site, and, if this is not the case, then whether it is likely to have a significant effect on the site (7) (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) in view of the site’s conservation objectives. Stage one is governed by the first part of the first sentence of Article 6(3).

**Stage two: the appropriate assessment.** If likely significant effects cannot be excluded, the next stage of the procedure involves assessing the impact of the plan or project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) against the site’s conservation objectives, and ascertaining whether it will affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, taking into account any mitigation measures. It will be for the competent authorities to decide whether or not to approve the plan or project in light of the findings of the appropriate assessment. Stage two is governed by the second part of the first sentence and the second sentence of Article 6(3).

**Stage three: derogation from Article 6(3) under certain conditions.** The third stage of the procedure governed by Article 6(4). It only comes into play if, despite a negative assessment, the developer considers that the plan or project should still be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest. This is only possible if there are no alternative solutions, the imperative reasons of overriding public interest are duly justified, and if suitable compensatory measures are adopted to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected.

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<sup>8</sup> [\*Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6\(3\) and \(4\) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC \(European Commission Environment Directorate-General, September 2021\)\*](#)

## Appendix II Conservation Objectives of European sites

The conservation objectives for a European site are intended to represent the aims of the Habitats and Birds Directives in relation to that site. To this end, habitats and species of European Community importance should be maintained or restored to 'favourable conservation status' (FCS), as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive below<sup>9</sup>:

The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- its natural range and the area it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and
- 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, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined (i).

The conservation status of a species will be taken as favourable 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, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

The 2019 Guidance from the European Commission<sup>10</sup> indicates that the general objective of achieving FCS for all habitat types and species listed in Annexes I and II to the Habitats Directive needs to be translated into site-level conservation objectives.

The European Commission guidance recommends that screening should fulfil the following steps:

1. ascertaining whether the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site;
2. identifying the relevant elements of the plan or project and their likely impacts;
3. identifying which (if any) Natura 2000 sites may be affected, considering the potential effects of the plan or project alone or in combination with other plans or projects;
4. assessing whether likely significant effects on the Natura 2000 site can be ruled out, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01992L0043-20130701>

<sup>10</sup> [Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. \(European Commission 2019\)](#)

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