

# Woodbrook DART Gateway Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)

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**Brady Shipman  
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Environment**

Client:

Castlethorn and Dún Laoghaire-  
Rathdown County Council  
15 June 2026

Date:

**DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET**

**7059\_RPEcIA01\_Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)**

**Project No.** 7059  
**Client:** Castlethorn and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council  
**Project Name:** Woodbrook DART Gateway  
**Report Name:** Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)  
**Document No.** RPEcIA01  
**Issue No.** 02  
**Date:** 15/06/2026

This document has been issued and amended as follows:

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Prepared</b>	<b>Checked</b>
01	Draft	15 Jan 2026	SS	MH
02	Final Part 8	15 Jun 2026	SS	MH



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# 1 Introduction

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 by the applicant to prepare this Ecological Impact Assessment report (EclA) in relation to the proposed development.

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) defines EclA as follows (2022, p. 8):

*“EclA is a process of identifying, quantifying and evaluating potential effects of development-related or other proposed actions on habitats, species and ecosystems<sup>1</sup>. The findings of an assessment can help competent authorities understand ecological issues when determining applications for consent. EclA can be used for the appraisal of projects of any scale including the ecological component of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). When undertaken as part of an EIA, EclA is subject to the relevant EIA Regulations. Unlike EIA, EclA on its own is not a statutory requirement. It is an evaluation process undertaken to support a range of assessments.”*

The potential for any impacts on sites designated as European (Natura 2000) sites under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives was also appraised, and the results of that study are presented in a separate report (Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, prepared by Brady Shipman Martin (2026) and included with this Part 8 submission).

## 1.1 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 (EclA).

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).

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the definition originally published in Treweek (1999), *Ecological Impact Assessment* (Blackwell).

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Appraisal methodology

#### 2.1.1 Biodiversity surveys

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.

In order to provide comprehensive baseline on the local ecological environment, biodiversity surveys were undertaken at the proposed development site 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.

In addition to the ecological surveys undertaken by the authors, the following surveys were carried out in support of the planning application for the development of Woodbrook Phase 2, permitted by DLR under Reg. Ref.: LRD24A/0382/WEB, now under construction and which encompasses the subject site.

These were all carried out by specialist ecologists, as follows (these surveys covered the wider Phase 2 lands (now permitted and under construction) specifically including the subject site which comprises a small area, in the northeastern-most part of the permitted development:

- Ornithologist John Fox: 6 visits between 15 May and 14 August 2023 and between 15 March and 4 April 2024.
- Botanist Alexis Fitzgerald: 2 visits: 14 March 2024 (habitats) and 15 March 2024 (hedgerows).
- Bat and large mammal ecologist Brian Keeley: 12/13 July 2023, 7/8 August 2023 and 15/21/22 March 2024.
- In addition to the ecological surveys undertaken, specialist tree surveys have been undertaken by arborist Andy Worsnop (The Tree File) on several occasions.

These surveys are referred to where appropriate in this report. Reference is also made to the CIEEM *Advice Note on the Validity of Ecological Reports & Surveys*<sup>2</sup>. Given the age of the original surveys for the permitted development the surveys undertaken in 2026 served to confirm and validate the surveys undertaken previously. Further detail is provided in Section 3.3, however the surveys undertaken in 2026 provided comprehensive information on the habitats on site, the use of the site by birds, the status of a nearby badger sett and the suitability of the site to be used by roosting bats.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>

### 2.1.2 Additional desk-based research

This report has been prepared in accordance with the following **publications**:

- EPA Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Statements (EPA, 2002).
- EPA Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment reports (EPA, 2022).
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects – Guidance on Screening (European Commission, 2017).
- OPR Practice Note PN02: Environmental Impact Assessment Screening (Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021).
- Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Environmental Impact Assessment (European Commission, 2013).
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, August 2018).
- *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes* (Transport Infrastructure Ireland (formerly the National Roads Authority, 2009).
- *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* ('the CIEEM Guidelines') published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), September 2018, updated in September 2019 (V1.1), further updated in April 2022 (V1.2) and in August 2024 (V1.3).

The proposed development complies with the following **legislative instruments**:

- The Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended (the “Planning Acts”).
- The Wildlife Act 1976 to 2023 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000.
- Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the “Habitats Directive”).
- 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”).
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended.
- Flora (Protection) Order 2022 (SI No. 235 of 2022).

The report has regard to the following **Policies and Plans**:

- Guidelines on Protection of Fisheries During Construction Works in and Adjacent to Waters (Inland Fisheries Ireland, 2016).
- Planning for Watercourses in the Urban Environment (Inland Fisheries Ireland, 2020).
- *All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025* (National Biodiversity Data Centre).
- Ireland’s 4<sup>th</sup> 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).

Information collated from the sources listed below was also reviewed in the preparation of this report:

- Data on rare and protected plant and animal species contained in the following databases:
  - The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht: [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie).
  - The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) [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).

- Recent aerial photography and photographs taken at the site.
- Recent and historic ordnance survey mapping ([www.geohive.ie](http://www.geohive.ie)).
- Information on protected areas, as well as watercourses, catchments and water quality in the area available from EPA, <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>.
- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area available from GSI, [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).
- Information on land-use zoning from the online mapping of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, <http://www.myplan.ie/en/index.html>.

As a result of the biodiversity surveys and research and given the habitats and species known to be present on the site and in the wider area, the amount of information gathered to date is sufficient to allow a comprehensive understanding of the potential impacts of any proposed development at the site on biodiversity and related receptors.

## 2.2 Evaluation of ecological features

The methodologies used to determine the value of ecological resources, to characterise impacts of the proposed development and to assess the significance of impacts and any residual effects are in accordance with the NRA (TII) *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes*<sup>3</sup>. This is consistent with the approach taken in the CIEEM *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom and Ireland – Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*.

In accordance with the NRA (TII) Guidelines, impact assessment is undertaken of sensitive ecological receptors (Key Ecological Receptors) within the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the proposed project. According to the guidelines, the Zone of Influence is the 'effect area' over which change resulting from the proposed project is likely to occur and the Key Ecological Receptors are defined as features of sufficient value as to be material in the decision-making process for which potential impacts are likely. As noted in the guidelines, the following geographic frames of reference are used when determining ecological value:

- International Importance.
- National Importance.
- County Importance.
- Local Importance (Higher Value).

In the context of the proposed development site, a Key Ecological Receptor is defined as any feature valued between Local Importance (Higher Value), such as sites containing semi-natural habitat types with high biodiversity in a local context, or populations of species that are uncommon in the locality or sites or features containing common or lower value habitats, including naturalised species that are essential in maintaining links and ecological corridors between features of high ecological value, and International Value (such as a European site).

Features of local importance (Lower Value) and features without ecological value are not considered to be Key Ecological Receptors in this context.

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<sup>3</sup> NRA (TII), 2009. Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes. National Roads Authority

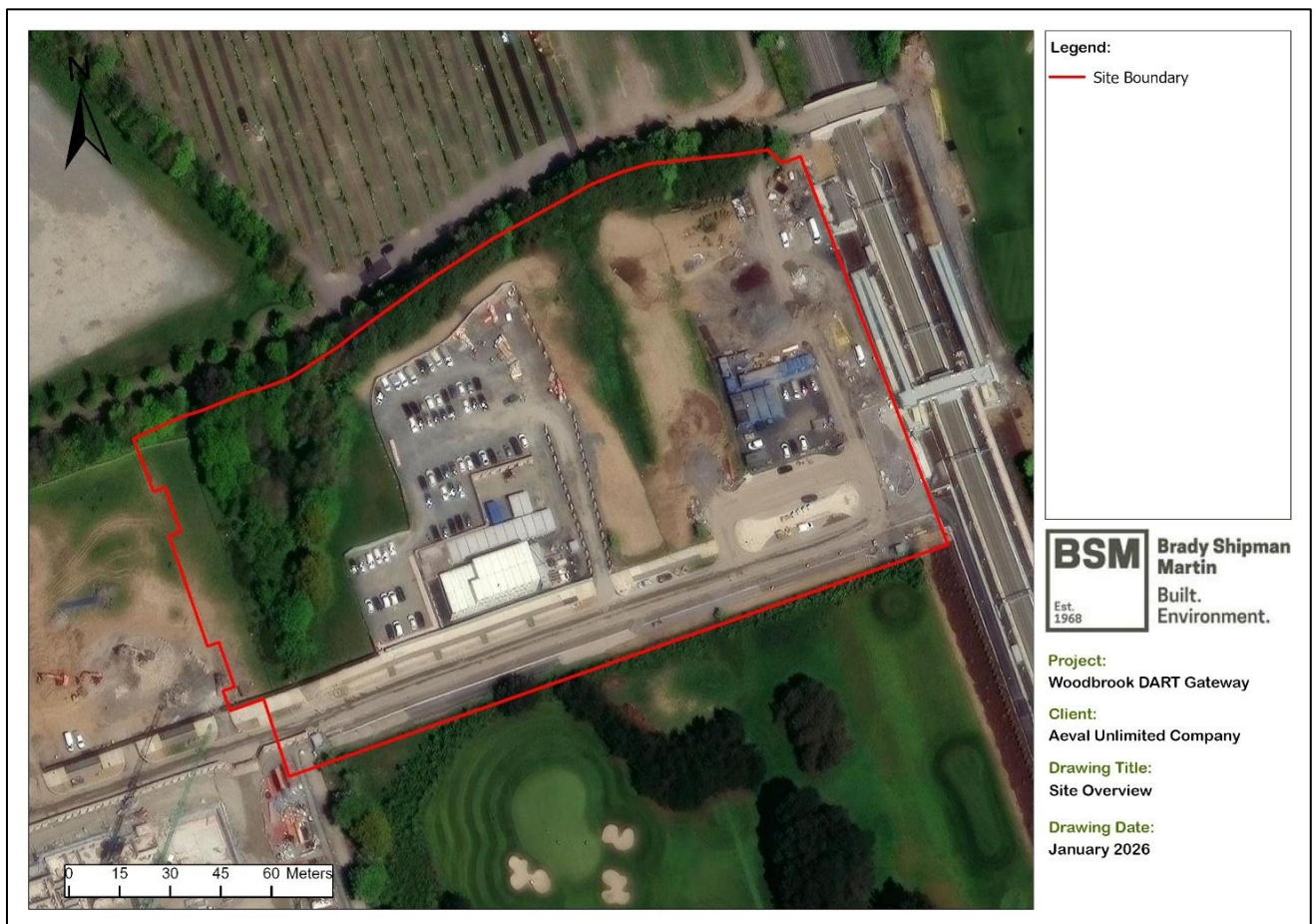
### 3 Baseline environment

#### 3.1 General description of the Study Area and Receiving Environment

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 (i.e. the western part of the proposed development (which has the same footprint on its western side as the permitted development)), 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 location of the subject site is shown in **Figure 3.1**.



**Figure 3.1** The location of the site of the proposed development, outlined in red (aerial photo dated 2025). The protected *biodiversity area* is clearly visible on the western (left-hand) side of the subject site

#### 3.2 Designated conservation areas

This assessment uses a source-pathway-receptor model to assess environmental risk. For the risk of an adverse effect to occur there must be a ‘source’, such as a construction site; a ‘receptor’, such as a site designated for nature

conservation; and a 'pathway' between the source and the receptor, such as a watercourse that links the construction site to the proposed development site. Although there may be a risk of an impact, it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant.

### 3.2.1 European Sites

The potential for any impacts on European sites from the proposed development site was considered. Full details of that study are presented in a stand-alone report (Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, Brady Shipman Martin, 2026), submitted as part of this application under separate cover.

The site of the proposed development is not under any designation for nature conservation. There are no European sites within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site at Woodbrook.

The nearest sites are as follows (see also **Figure 3.2**):

- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
  - 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 Murrrough 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.
  - 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 (SPAs)
  - 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 Murrrough 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.

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, to the standalone AA Screening Report.

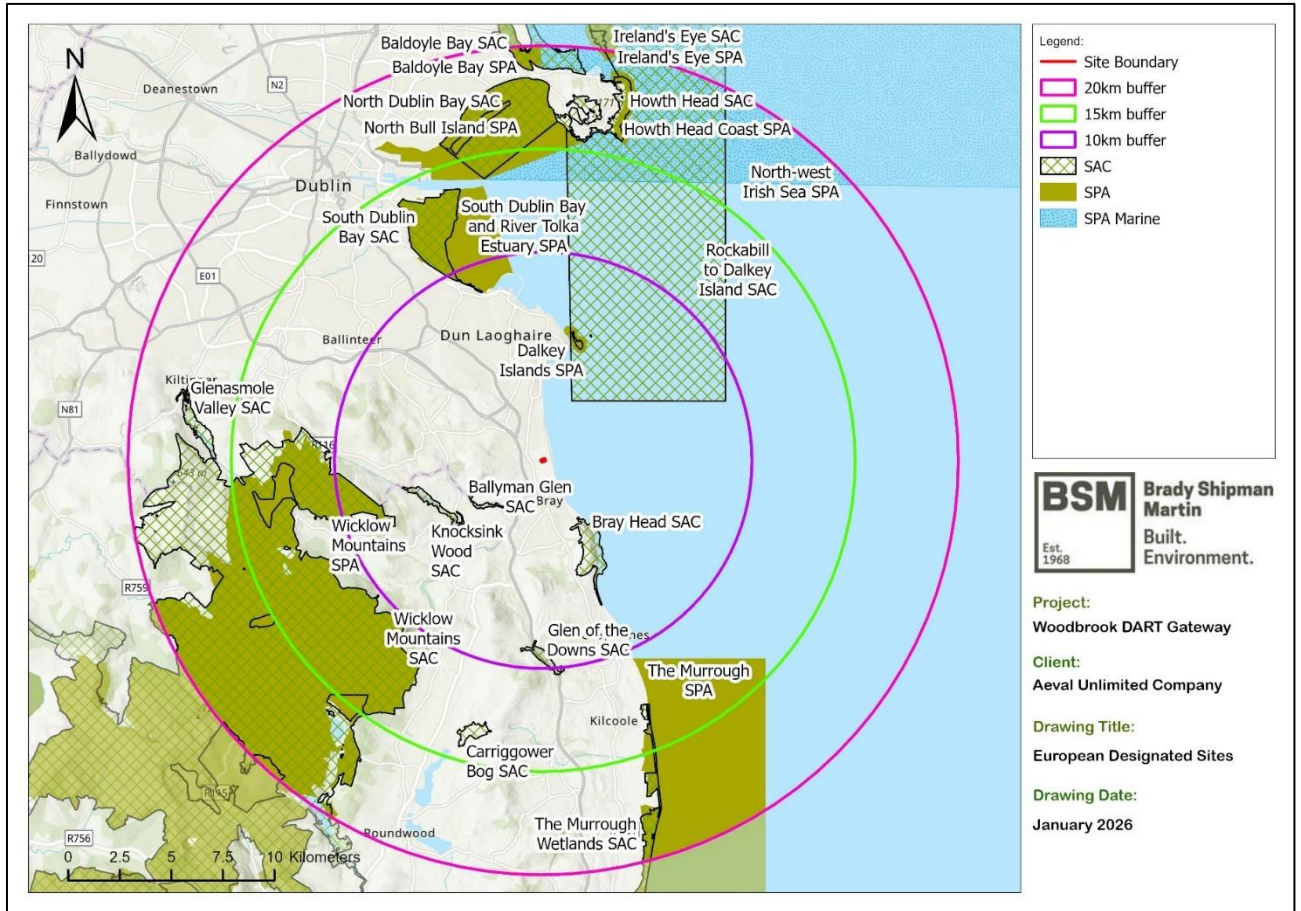


Figure 3.1 - European sites within potential zone of influence of the proposed development at Woodbrook. 15, 10 and 20 km radii are shown for scale.

### 3.2.2 Other Designated Areas (other than European sites)

There are no fully designated NHAs within the zone of influence (see **Figure 3.3**). The pNHAs within the immediate vicinity include:

- 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.
- Glenree 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.



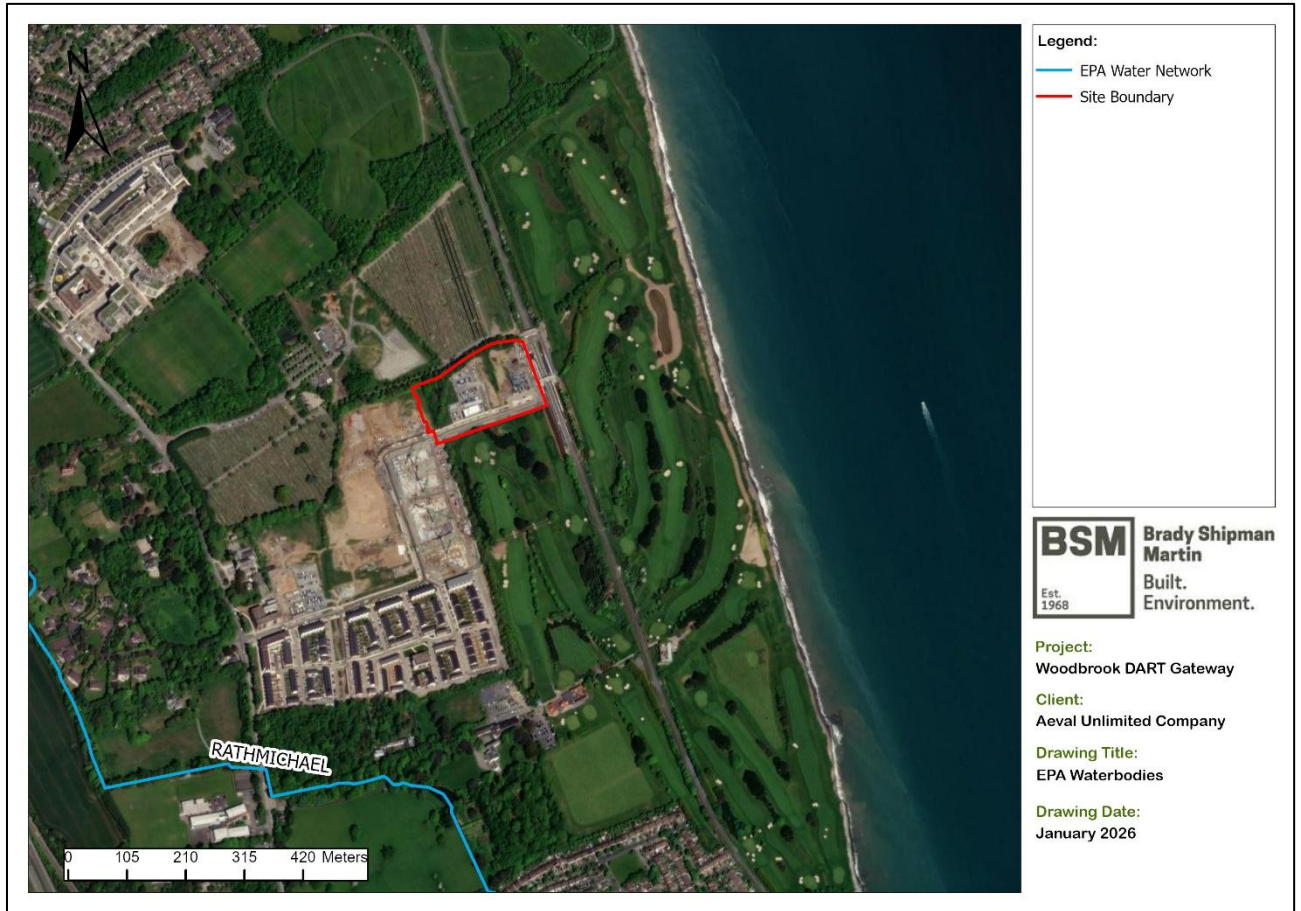


Figure 3.4 Waterbodies mapped by the EPA in the vicinity of the permitted development and described in the EPA database.

### 3.3 Ecological Features

The site of the proposed development comprises an area currently in use for (formerly) car parking and (now) as a construction compound.

#### 3.3.1 Habitats and Flora

The botanical surveys undertaken by Brady Shipman Martin in 2026 included a full survey of habitats, rare and legally protected plants and invasive plant species on the site. The habitat types recorded across the site are described below and depicted in **Figure 3.5 – Figure 3.10** (site photographs) and **Figure 3.11** (habitat map).

##### 3.3.1.1 Rare and protected plant species

No rare plant species, and no species listed on the *Flora (Protection) Order 2022*, were recorded during the field surveys between 2018 and 2025, or in 2026.

##### 3.3.1.2 Non-native invasive plant species

No plant species (such as Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) or giant hogweed (*Mantegazzianum heracleum*) listed on the Third Schedule of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011* were recorded during the field surveys between 2018 and 2025, or in 2026.

### 3.3.1.3 Habitats

The following habitat types<sup>4</sup> (and/or mosaics) were recorded within the study area during the field survey in 2025 and are described in detail below:

- Buildings and artificial surfaces (Fossitt code **BL3**)
- Spoil and Bare Ground (**ED2**)
- Dry meadows and grassy verge (**GS2**)
- (Mixed) Broadleaved Woodland (**WD1**)
- Hedgerows and treelines (**WL1/WL2**)
- Flower beds and borders (**BC4**)

#### 3.3.1.3.1 Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)

This habitat dominates the central and southern portions of the site and includes buildings (containers/prefabricated structures), hardstanding/gravel/stone, access roads, and car parking areas. These habitats are highly modified, support negligible vegetation cover, and provide very limited ecological function.

- This habitat is of **negligible ecological value**.



Figure 3.3 BL3 habitat within the subject site, looking north. It is of negligible ecological value.

<sup>4</sup> Habitat types are named after Fossitt, 2000 (<https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/A%20Guide%20to%20Habitats%20in%20Ireland%20-%20Fossitt.pdf>)

### 3.3.1.3.2 Spoil and bare ground (ED2)

This habitat is present in the central part of the site. It supports small amounts of ruderal and grassland species typical of disturbed soils and transitional habitats, with low botanical diversity.

- This habitat is of **Local Importance (Lower Value)**.



Figure 3.6 ED2 habitat within the site, looking north. It is of no more than Local Importance (Lower Value).

### 3.3.1.3.3 Dry meadows and grassy verge (GS2)

This habitat is found in two areas on the site – in the east, between areas of hardstanding and spoil/bare ground and in the west, east of the biodiversity area (see Section 3.3.1.3.4). It forms small pockets of unmanaged semi-natural grassland strips with some structural diversity. These areas provide limited foraging opportunities for common invertebrates and birds and are not species rich.

- This habitat is of **Local Importance (Lower Value)**.



Figure 3.7 GS2 habitat in the western part of the site. It is of no more than Local Importance (Lower Value).

#### 3.3.1.3.4 (Mixed) Broadleaved Woodland (WD1)

This is the main habitat in the protected *biodiversity area* on the western side of the site. The canopy is dominated by sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), with lesser amounts of oak (*Quercus* sp.) and elm (*Ulmus* sp.). The understorey of the woodland is vegetated by shrubs dominated by bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and ivy (*Hedera helix*). A small amount of elder (*Sambucus nigra*) is present also. The herbaceous species occurring here include lesser celandine (*Ficaria verna*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), herb-Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), and cuckoo pint (*Arum maculatum*). The western side of this biodiversity area comprises part of an old hedgerow (WL1).

- This habitat is considered to be of **Local importance (higher value)**, due to its relatively well-developed and diverse woodland vegetation and the potential for the woodland to become more species diverse (with a native tree species canopy) over time.



Figure 3.8 WD1 habitat – the eastern side of the biodiversity area. It is of Local Importance (Higher Value) and will be retained intact and enhanced with additional planting.

### 3.3.1.3.5 Hedgerows and treelines (WL1/WL2)

This habitat is primarily restricted to the northern boundary of the site and comprises a single line of mature Leyland cypress (*Cupressus x leylandii*). The ground layer, such as it is, contains the high nutrient indicator species nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and the noxious weeds spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* and common ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*).

- This habitat is of **Local Importance (Lower Value)**. This is not because the trees have any particular intrinsic value, rather that they provide (very limited) habitat connectivity along the southern boundary of Shanganagh Cemetery.



Figure 3.9 WL1 habitat (Leyland cypress tree line on the northern site boundary) It is of no more than Local Importance (Lower Value).

### 3.3.1.3.6 Flower beds and borders (BC4)

This habitat is present in small areas along the western boundary of the site and comprise ornamental and managed planting. These areas are of low ecological value, supporting limited biodiversity typical of landscaped environments.

- This habitat is of **negligible ecological value**.



Figure 3.10 BC4 habitat on the western boundary. It is of no more than Local Importance (Lower Value).

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Figure 3.11 - Habitat map of the Woodbrook DART Gateway site



### 3.3.2 Fauna

#### 3.3.2.1 Large Mammals

Otters, badgers, hedgehogs and Irish hare are protected under the Wildlife Act 1976 and subsequent amendments. Otters are also protected under the EU Habitats Directive (via Article 12), as transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended),

A large, old and active badger sett is present nearby<sup>5</sup>, however the proposed development is outside the exclusion zone for the badger sett. This exclusion zone was agreed with DLR 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.

Otters 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.

- Overall, given the habitats present within the subject site, which are unsuitable for use by badgers, the proposed development site is of **Local Importance (Lower Value)** for large mammals.
- However, the protected *biodiversity area*, as described above, is of **Local Importance (Higher Value)** for large mammals.

#### 3.3.2.2 Birds

Birds, as well as their nests and eggs, are protected under the Wildlife Act (1976) and subsequent amendments.

The breeding bird survey was conducted as a transect walk comprising all various habitats present within the red line boundary of the site. A total of 10 bird species were recorded during the April 2026 survey, as summarised in **Table 3.1** below. All species recorded are common and widespread breeding birds typical of urban-edge and scrub habitats in the greater Dublin area. No Annex I bird species (under the EU Birds Directive) and no Red-listed species of High conservation concern were recorded during the survey. Willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*), an Amber-listed species of moderate conservation concern, was recorded as a single individual; this species is a summer migrant to Ireland and its presence in April is consistent with early season arrival rather than confirmed breeding. The updated survey results are consistent with previous survey data gathered across the wider Woodbrook lands between 2018 and 2025, which recorded a total of 28 bird species, of which 10 species were confirmed breeding within the wider site (to the west of the subject site). No species listed as Special Conservation Interests for any European site were recorded breeding within the proposed development footprint.

**Table 3.1 – Summary of bird species recorded during the breeding bird survey.**

Common Name	Count	Conservation Status (Ireland)
Chaffinch	6	Green
Woodpigeon	8	Green
Wren	2	Green
Blue Tit	2	Green
Dunnock	2	Green
Robin	1	Green

<sup>5</sup> Note that the location of the sett is not being disclosed in the Part 8 planning documentation.

Common Name	Count	Conservation Status (Ireland)
Blackbird	2	Green
Goldcrest	2	Green
House Sparrow	2	Amber
Willow Warbler	1	Amber

- Overall, given the habitats present and the bird species recorded, the site is of **Local Importance (Lower Value)** for breeding birds.
- However, the protected *biodiversity area*, as described above, is of **Local Importance (Higher Value)** for common breeding birds. The site has no significant value for SCI bird species associated with European sites within the Zone of Influence.

### 3.3.2.3 Bats

All Irish bat species are 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 (as amended).

The bat surveys undertaken as part of the planning application for the permitted Woodbrook Phase 2 development confirmed that there were no bat roosts on the site – the Leyland cypress trees have negligible value for roosting bats. Only minimal bat activity was recorded in the subject site – very low numbers of common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and Leisler’s bat recorded in 2023 and 2024

This sparse activity across the site indicates the site is not of great significance to bat commuting and feeding. No evidence of bat roosting was found in any of the trees onsite and the trees, as noted, have low roosting potential.

- The subject site is of **Local Importance (Lower Value)**.

### 3.3.2.4 Other Fauna

Amphibians (common frog and smooth newt) and reptiles (common lizard) are protected under the Wildlife Act (1976) and subsequent amendments. The habitats present are not suitable for any Irish herpetofauna – and no evidence was recorded, including as part of specialist surveys carried out in 2025 as part of compliance submissions to DLR in respect of the permitted development.

The site was assessed for the presence of butterflies and for the suitability of the habitats for butterfly abundance and diversity. No evidence of Ireland’s only protected insect, the marsh fritillary butterfly (*Euphydryas aurinia*), or its food plant (devil’s bit scabious (*Succisa pratensis*)) was recorded on the site.

- Overall, the site is of **no importance** for any other fauna.

### 3.3.3 Overall Ecological Valuation of the Proposed Development Site

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.

As noted above, a large, old and active badger sett is present nearby, 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 accordance 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)).

## 4 Development Description

The proposed residential development (See Figures 4.1 and 4.2) 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 4.1 The permitted site layout (permitted under DLR Reg. Ref.: LRD24A/0382/WEB)

Woodbrook DART Gateway  
Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)

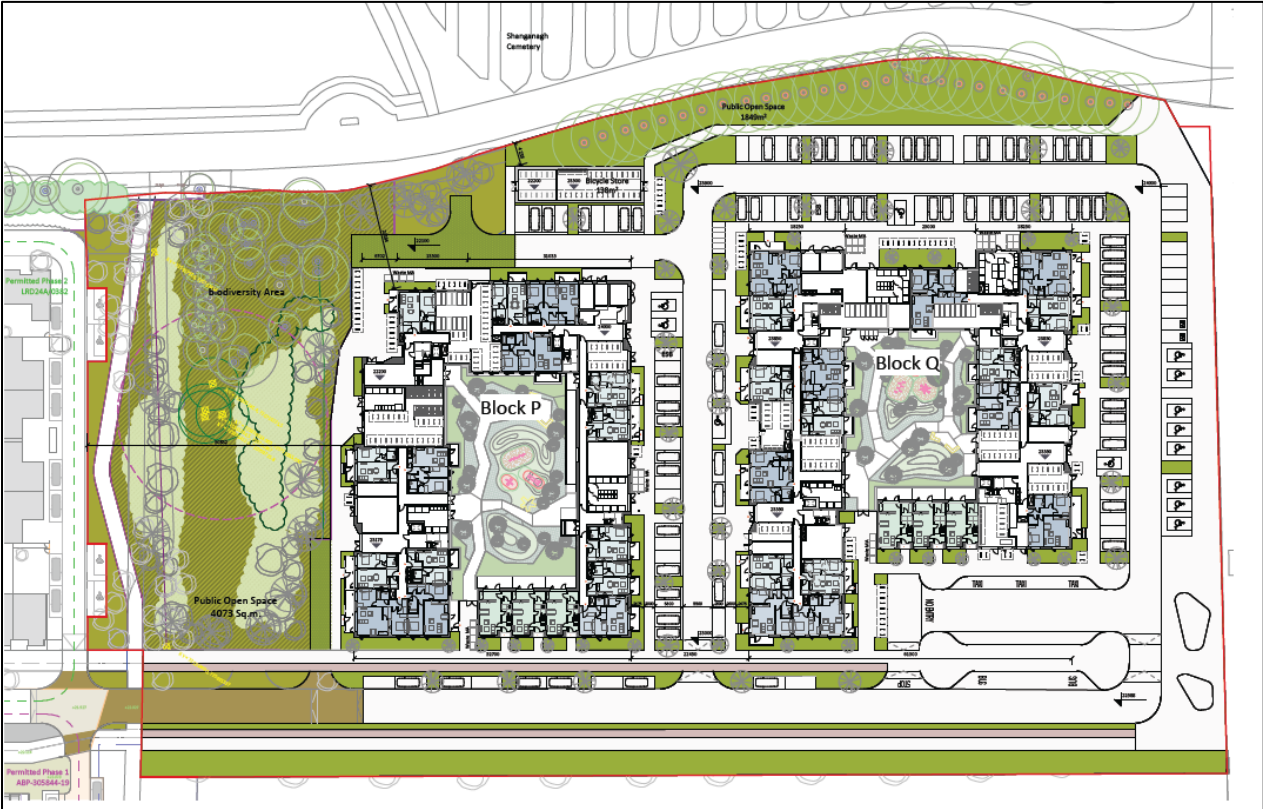


Figure 4.2 The proposed layout (refer to the drawings prepared by OMP, Project Architects). It can be seen that the new development mainly relates to the eastern part of the subject site, with minor adjustments to the permitted layout of Block P.

## 5 Potential Impact of the proposed development

### 5.1 Designated Conservation Areas including Screening for Appropriate Assessment

The potential for any significant effects on European designated sites (sites designated for nature conservation under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives) has been assessed separately, and a stand-alone report (Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, Brady Shipman Martin, 2026), compiled in consultation with the wider design team including the project engineers and landscape architects, has been prepared for inclusion as part of the overall planning application and is submitted under separate cover.

*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.*

### 5.2 Habitat loss and disturbance within the site

Construction of the proposed development will result in habitat loss, specifically the removal of habitats of **local Importance (Lower Value)** including the following

- Buildings and artificial surfaces (Fossitt code **BL3**)
- Spoil and Bare Ground (**ED2**)
- Dry meadows and grassy verge (**GS2**)
- Hedgerows and treelines (**WL1/WL2**)
- Flower beds and borders (**BC4**)

The following habitat, which is of **local Importance (Higher Value)** will not be impacted by the proposed development. This is fully consistent with the approach permitted by DLR for the permitted Woodbrook LRD Phase 2 scheme (the subject site being located within the site area of that permitted development):

- (Mixed) Broadleaved Woodland (**WD1**)

This is the area occupied by the protected *biodiversity area* – see **Figure 4.2**.

These lower value habitats (i.e. excluding the protected biodiversity area which will be strengthened through perimeter planting) will be replaced with the proposed development itself as well as the new and replacement landscaping as shown in detail in the accompanying landscape design drawings. The proposed development has been designed in a manner that minimises the amount of habitat loss required while complying with the specific requirements of DLR.

- In the absence of mitigation (biodiversity-focussed planting and landscaping) the removal of the on-site habitats would be a **long-term to permanent minor negative impact at the local level**.

There are no structures on the site, and the trees to be removed (and replaced with a new tree line and hedge of high ecological value), i.e. the Leyland cypress tree line are of no significance for roosting bats.

- There will be **no impacts on roosting bats**.

- There will be removal of vegetation that is likely to result in a reduction in insect abundance at the site. In the absence of mitigation (biodiversity-focussed planting) the removal of vegetation would be a **long-term to permanent minor negative impact at the local level** (loss of foraging opportunity).

There will be a reduction in vegetation cover for nesting birds as a result of the proposed development (although the long-term replacement planting will result in new habitat for nesting birds). No other impacts on birds are expected.

- In the absence of mitigation (replanting and high value landscaping, including within development courtyards – see the Brady Shipman Martin Landscape Design Rationale Report) this will be a **long-term to permanent minor negative impact at the local level**.

As was the case with the development now permitted (Woodbrook Phase 2) in the absence of mitigation to avoid disturbance to a nearby badger sett the construction of elements of Phase 1 would be a **moderate to major temporary negative impact**. However, mitigation measures and comprehensive on-site ecological monitoring have ensured that the sett remains active, and the badger sett continues to be occupied. These worst-case scenario impacts are not expected to occur – as evidenced by the works undertaken to date.

There will be **no impacts** on other large mammals such as otter or Irish hare, or on amphibians, reptiles or lepidoptera.

Overall, despite the potential for long-term to permanent impacts, the new landscaping provided as part of the proposed development will introduce significant additional areas of habitat which will benefit the birds and other species that will continue to utilise the site.

### 5.3 Water quality, dust and other emissions

All construction activities pose a potential risk to watercourses as surface water arising at any site may contain contaminants. The main contaminants arising from construction (and site clearance activities, including vegetation removal and the reshaping works to the pond for example.) 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 local watercourses during construction.

During the construction phase there is also potential for an increase in run-off due to compaction of the soil which could in turn reduce the infiltration capacity and increase the rate and volume of surface water run-off. This can increase surface water run-off and sediment loading which has potential to impact on drainage locally.

Activities with the potential to impact on water during construction stage include:

- Excavation for building foundations and underground services.
- Run-off from excavation and construction areas, including wheel washes, that may be contaminated with either silt or oil from leaks from road vehicles and mobile site plant and elevated pH from mass concrete construction.
- Spills and leaks of fuels and oils stored and used on site by the construction plant and equipment.

In addition, there is a potential risk to flora and fauna arising from dust deposition, which in extreme cases can inhibit photosynthesis in plants and can increase turbidity in water courses. Given the nature, scale and duration of the construction phase for the proposed development there is the potential for temporary negative impacts on water quality arising during the construction phase.

As confirmed in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, there is no possibility of there being any significant impacts arising via contaminated water run-off. There is no possibility that contaminated surface water from the site could enter the municipal surface water drainage network (e.g. during extreme rainfall events and / or high tides) and create a hydrological pathway linking the proposed development site with European Sites downstream.

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 noise, vibration, visual or any other kind of disturbance arising during construction and affecting the species associated with any European sites. There is, further, no possibility of any *ex-situ* effects (effects on birds roosting or feeding outside any of the designated sites). As previously stated, the bird fauna recorded on the site is as expected for such a site and there is no habitat on the site suitable for use, even on a very occasional basis, by any overwintering birds, such as pale-bellied Brent goose, black-tailed godwit, curlew or any other protected bird species listed as a Special Conservation Interest (SCI) in any European site within the Zone of Influence. No such species, and no evidence of such species (e.g. droppings), has been recorded on the site despite extensive survey work having taken place at the site.

## 5.4 Lighting

Lighting during the construction phase will be limited to the site compound and development areas only. It is not expected that there will be any impacts on bats or any other protected species – including badgers – well-habituated to activity at the site.

Once the proposed development is operational increased lighting and increased human activity have the potential to impact on bat feeding and commuting behaviour. There is, currently, no sustained lighting on the site, however there is significant street lighting present on the external road network and to the east associated with the Dart Station.

Given the absence of bat roosts, illumination will only affect commuting and feeding bats.

- Therefore, poorly designed lighting from the proposed development during the operational phase may have at most, a **long-term to permanent, minor, negative impact upon bats**.

## 6 Mitigation measures

In order to ensure that the ecological impacts are minimised and adequately mitigated a number of measures will be incorporated into the development design, as follows:

### 6.1 Designated Conservation areas

No designated conservation areas will be impacted in any way by the proposed development and no specific mitigation measures are required for the protection of such sites, including European sites. Full details in relation to European sites are provided in a separate Appropriate Assessment Screening Report that accompanies the Part 8 submission.

### 6.2 Construction

#### 6.2.1 Habitats

As it is proposed to build on much of the site (albeit retaining the biodiversity area intact – with additional enhancement planting) it will not be possible to mitigate entirely all the potential impacts on local ecological receptors. Therefore, significant planting of new and replacement habitat will be implemented.

The landscape design (refer to the Landscape Design Rationale Report as well as the Landscape Masterplan drawing (DRG 7059-BSM-XX-00-DR-L-1001\_Landscape Masterplan) prepared by Brady Shipman Martin) is biodiversity focussed. The landscape and biodiversity value of the site post-development will be enhanced using primarily native and indigenous locally appropriate species, together with species-rich planting in a network of connected areas. The landscape proposals will also promote the use of pollinator-friendly species and will assist the functioning of SUDs (nature-based solutions). The new landscaping will maintain habitat connectivity to the wider hinterland.

Additionally, robust, protective hedge planting and associated fencing will ensure that the biodiversity area remains protected permanently.

##### 6.2.1.1 Planting strategy

The proposed planting strategy will include a mix of native trees and shrubs. The planting scheme will incorporate a number of evergreen species to ensure year-round screening and shelter.

The planting proposed will, wherever possible, comprise an appropriate mixture of native trees and shrubs, preferably of local provenance. The planting will also incorporate a range of species that will attract feeding invertebrates, including moths, butterflies and bees. It will take account of and implement the relevant objectives of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025<sup>6</sup>, taking account of the requirements of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Development Plan 2022 – 2028.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://pollinators.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/All-Ireland-Pollinator-Plan-2021-2025-WEB.pdf>

All planting plans and landscaping proposals will ensure that no invasive species are introduced, either deliberately or inadvertently, to the site. This includes invasive plants that are not listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended, such as *Crococsmia* spp. and buddleia.

## 6.2.2 Fauna – badgers

The following measures are currently being implemented at Woodbrook in order to protect an existing badger sett. The sett is subject to regular monitoring and works continue to the satisfaction of both the local NPWS Conservation Ranger and the DLR Biodiversity Officer. The following is an extract (edited for length) from the EIA Biodiversity chapter for the permitted development. These measures will continue to be implemented:

*All works relating to the badger setts will be carried out in accordance with the NRA Guidelines for the Treatment of Badgers Prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes (n.d.) and the Woodbrook Badger Conservation Plan.*

*Specific measures will be implemented for the protection of badgers during the course of construction at Woodbrook Phase 2. The vegetation that currently exists will be retained intact, and ground levels will not be altered in the vicinity of the sett.*

*Extensive new planting of tree and shrub species, including holly, blackthorn, hawthorn and gorse, will take place – the planting of these species, in a large biodiversity area will have the dual benefit of providing pollinator-friendly habitat while also discouraging human disturbance to the sett area. Elder and bramble will also be planted – both species are beneficial to badgers.*

*An underpass for badgers was installed at the time of construction of the access road to the future Woodbrook DART Station (under construction). The tunnel will be opened as part of the development of Woodbrook Phase2 <sup>7</sup>, and a direct connection will be created (with localised land grading) to the tunnel entrances north and south of the road, to allow badgers to travel along an unobstructed path from the Biodiversity Area to the hedgerow to the south (between Woodbrook Phase 1 and the Golf Course). The areas connecting to the tunnel entrances will be planted with gorse and bramble.*

*Further measures intended to protect the sett include the erection of fencing and hoarding to ensure that sett entrances, tunnels and chambers are protected from accidental damage or collapse. Further, in order to ensure that ground levels are unaltered within the vicinity of the sett a retaining wall will be erected between the Biodiversity Area and the development area.*

*Work around the sett will be undertaken no earlier than July in any given year and no later than the start of December (up to the end of December if it can be shown that such work would not affect the badgers).*

*Additionally, the following mitigation measures are proposed for the general protection of badgers: -*

- *Day-to-day measures to ensure the welfare of badgers is maintained will be implemented as follows: -*
  - *Good house-keeping measures will be maintained and no loose netting, fencing or other materials that could trap badgers will be left out on site;*
  - *Food waste will be secured so as not to attract badgers to the construction site at night;*
  - *Ramps will be included in any excavation deeper than 500mm to allow animals to escape if necessary.*

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<sup>7</sup> This tunnel is now open

The following is an extract from the methodology for protecting badgers, agreed with DLR during the compliance stages for the permitted Woodbrook Phase 2 scheme:

**Specific Construction Method Statement for Pre-construction works in the vicinity of the Biodiversity Area:**

- a) *Establish extent of sett area and tunnels (including with geophysical survey).*
- b) *Dig trench and install mesh to depth of 1.5 metres (if required or if directed by the project ecologist).*
- c) *Erect a stout post and rail fence (with sheep mesh/Heras fencing attached if advised by the project ecologist).*
- d) *Install signage to say Biodiversity Area - Keep Out, no construction access.*
- e) *Site induction for all operatives will include a briefing on the exclusion zone and limit of works adjacent to that area.*
- f) *There is adequate space available to dig foundations and perform any drainage operations between the building and the new protection fence installed without interference with the badger sett.*
- g) *Foundations will be standard strip foundations to formation level with typical 1.0 – 1.5 metre build up in lean mix up to a 400/500mm strip footings, similar to the rest of the site (i.e. the Phase 1 site, under construction).*
- h) *Rising wall elements will be constructed of in situ concrete with the use of formwork, all lifting operations will be carried out away from the protection zone. Ground floor construction will be in situ concrete slab on insulation on radon barrier on stone backfill to engineer's and architect's details.*
- i) *Scaffolding will be erected around the building with all loading in the protection zone being serviced by crane only with no access for telehandlers allowed.*
- j) *Concrete pumps will be placed away from protection zone on the south western, southern or eastern perimeter of the site*
- k) *Walls and transfer slab will be in situ up to first floor with all lift operations carried out by crane. The crane will be established on the south east courtyard area, wall and floors above this level will comprise precast panels and hollow-core precast floor panels with structural screeds.*

The implementation of these measures in the construction of Block P, coupled with the ongoing monitoring of works by a qualified Ecological Clerk of works will ensure that the badger sett remains unaffected by the proposed development.

### 6.2.3 Fauna – other

Where possible, the removal of vegetation suitable for use by nesting birds will be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (avoiding the period 1 March to 31 August, unless otherwise agreed). Should the construction programme require vegetation clearance between March and August, and this is unavoidable due to overriding programme constraints, bird nesting surveys will be undertaken by suitably experienced ecologists. If no active nests are recorded, vegetation clearance will take place within 24 hours. In the event that active nests are observed, an appropriately sized buffer zone will be maintained around the nest until such time as all the eggs have hatched and the birds have fledged – a period that may be three weeks from the date of the survey. Once it is confirmed that the birds have fledged and no further nests have been built or occupied, vegetation clearance may take place immediately.

No bat roosts will be removed as part of the proposed development, and it will not be necessary to apply for a derogation licence under Regulation 54 or 55 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended.

Specially designed bat and bird boxes will be incorporated into the landscaping on the site to provide new roosting opportunities for bats and nesting opportunities for birds. It is proposed to install a total of six bat boxes. These will be pole-mounted if necessary and placed in dark areas that are subject to low levels of disturbance – at a minimum height of 3 metres). The bat boxes are not required as mitigation for roost loss – as no roosts will be lost. Rather, the bat boxes are intended to enhance the overall ecological value of the proposed development. The location of the boxes will be agreed with DLR at construction stage, but it is likely that they can be incorporated into the biodiversity area.

Bird boxes will be provided throughout the proposed development site. A total of 6 no. assorted wooden or woodcrete bird boxes will be included. It will not be necessary to include insect hotels – areas of bare earth, to be included in the landscaped areas, will provide appropriate habitat for solitary bees and other insects.

Increased artificial lighting has the potential to impact on bat feeding and commuting behaviour. The proposed lighting for the proposed development has been designed in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Bats and Lighting – Guidance Notes for Planners, Engineers, Architects and Developers (Bat Conservation Ireland, 2010)<sup>8</sup>;
- Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night, Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2023<sup>9</sup>;
- Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01-21 (Institute of Lighting Professionals, 2021)<sup>10</sup>;
- Dark Sky Ireland’s Environmentally Friendly Lighting Guide<sup>11</sup>.

The proposed lighting will have the following characteristics:

- The minimum level of lighting will be provided within the developed areas, within the lux level criteria required by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.
- No flood lighting will be provided within the proposed development, and all light fittings will be LED and are designed to shine downwards and will avoid sky glow and light spill.
- Lighting will be directed only where it is needed.
- Most importantly – the *biodiversity area* will remain unlit

The site is not of notable importance for amphibians and reptiles regardless, care must be taken during development to ensure that common lizards, common frogs and smooth newts (which are all protected under the Wildlife Act 1976 and subsequent amendments) are not harmed. Any ponds/wet areas found (although there are none on the site at present) will be inspected by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to works being undertaken. Should any frog spawn or tadpoles be discovered, a licence to remove frog spawn may be required from NPWS.

## 6.2.4 Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

The Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), setting out the overall plan for the construction works with particular reference to ‘environmental management’ requirements for contractor’s activities, will be finalised by the appointed contractor. It will be the duty of the contractor to ensure that any work within their scope is carried out in accordance with these requirements.

## 6.3 Operation

No mitigation is proposed for the operation phase of the proposed development, once the measures required during the construction phase are implemented, other than monitoring the success of the measures set out in this report and in the accompanying documentation – see Section 7 (Monitoring).

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<sup>8</sup> [https://www.batconservationireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BCIrelandGuidelines\\_Lighting.pdf](https://www.batconservationireland.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/BCIrelandGuidelines_Lighting.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-1-for-the-reduction-of-obtrusive-light-2021/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.darksky.ie/lighting-documents/#guidelines>

## 7 Monitoring

### 7.1 Construction

A suitably experienced Project Ecologist (Ecological Clerk of Works) will be appointed for the duration of the construction phase and regular monitoring of all related works will take place to ensure the correct and full implementation of all mitigation measures. The Project Ecologist will ensure that all construction works take place in accordance with planning conditions, the project CEMP and the mitigation measures set out in this EclA.

- Works in the vicinity of the *biodiversity area* will only take place following the approval of the Project Ecologist.
- The Project Ecologist will monitor all site clearance activities in order to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and the commitments set out in the planning application documentation.
- The Project Ecologist will maintain regular contact with the following organisations as required:
  - Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (Biodiversity Officer).
  - National Parks and Wildlife Service (Conservation Ranger).
- All monitoring tasks will be recorded and logged for inspection by the site manager.
- Effectively this will comprise a continuation of the situation that pertains to the construction phase of the permitted Woodbrook Phase 2 scheme, including in relation to badgers.

Should vegetation clearance be required during the bird nesting season, and should this work be unavoidable, such clearance will take place only after the Project Ecologist has undertaken a survey to ensure that no active bird nests or recently fledged birds are present.

As noted in this report, there are no features of any value for roosting bats within the proposed development site. No bat roosts will be removed as part of the proposed development, and it will not be necessary to apply for a derogation licence under Regulation 54 or 55 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 as amended. Nevertheless, bats are highly mobile species and may use even very small features in trees (cracks, fissures) for roosting occasionally. Therefore, in line with best practice, pre-construction surveys will be required to ensure that any unavoidable tree-felling of trees with lower bat roosting potential or other works will have no impact on even very small numbers of roosting bats.

Monitoring of all fuel / oil storage areas will also be undertaken to ensure that all related mitigation measures are being implemented effectively.

On completion of construction, the lighting installed will be reviewed by the Project Ecologist and a bat specialist, to ensure that it is operating according to the approved specifications. The landscape architect will similarly ensure that all works undertaken are in full compliance with the landscape specification.

All monitoring tasks will be recorded and logged for inspection by the site manager.

### 7.2 Operation

The success of the enhancement planting to the *biodiversity area*, the protection and ongoing occupation of the badger sett, tree planting and all other landscaping in the landscaped areas will be monitored for a period of three years in order to ensure it is successful. If necessary, tree and vegetation management measures will be implemented during this period.

No other long-term ecological monitoring is required, other than post-construction monitoring of the bat and bird boxes installed. The bat and bird boxes on the site will be checked annually for a period of two years post-completion of the works, to ensure that they continue to be accessible to these species. If necessary, they will be repositioned within the site.

## 8 Conclusion

Overall, although the proposed development is likely to have negative effects on biodiversity at the site level that are minor in the absence of mitigation, these impacts will be fully mitigated over time to be rendered not significant or imperceptible. Although impacts on the biodiversity area and nearby badger sett would be considered major if the sett were to be impacted by development, the continuation of the ecological monitoring and the adherence by the contractor to the existing mitigation measures and site protocols will ensure that no such impacts arise.

There will be a loss of feeding habitat internally within the site for breeding birds and a loss of nesting habitat for birds as a result of the proposed development. However, following mitigation this loss is not significant. There will be no loss of bat roosting sites as a result of the proposed development.

The landscape design proposed, which includes the protection of the *biodiversity area* and the provision of significant replacement and new planting, including tree planting, will ensure that vegetation will establish over time and the losses will be reduced considerably. The provision of a strong, new, landscaped biodiversity corridor all along the boundary (replacing the Leyland cypress tree line) is a significant addition to biodiversity on the site.

There will be no long-term impact on watercourses as a result of the proposed development.

There will be no long-term residual impact on ecological receptors, including on badgers, either within or in the vicinity of the proposed development or associated with any site designated for nature conservation as a result of the proposed development.

## 10 Selected References

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