Comhairle Contae Dhún Laoghaire-Ráth an Dúin, Halla an Chontae, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Átha Cliath, Éire. A96 K6C9
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, County Hall, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland. A96 K6C9
T. 01 205 4700 E: info@dlrcoco.ie W: www.dlrcoco.ie

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended)

Project Title:	**Dominican College Sion Hill - Safe Routes to School**

Description of the Proposed Development:

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, in conjunction with An Taisce and the National Transport Authority (NTA), is proposing to improve road safety adjacent to Dominican College Sion Hill, Cross Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin as part of the NTA Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme. The purpose of the scheme is to make the areas immediately adjacent to the school including school entrances and access routes safer so that students can be encouraged and facilitated to walk and cycle to school, safely. Dominican College Sion Hill Secondary School is accessed from Cross Avenue. Internal parking is available within the school grounds. There is a bus set down area and dedicated pay and display parking to the front of the school property on Cross Avenue. The junction of Mount Merrion Avenue (N31) and Cross Avenue is signalised. Blackrock College and Booterstown National School are located to the northwest and southwest of Dominican College Sion Hill, respectively, and both schools have entrances on Cross Avenue also.

The proposed scheme consists of the following:

- Provision of enhanced pedestrian and cycle infrastructure along the school front.
- Front-of-school improvements, including revised surface treatments, widened footpaths, traffic calming measures, and upgraded crossing facilities with a zebra crossing.
- Introduction of school zone features to improve driver awareness and reduce vehicle speeds in the vicinity of the school.
- Provision of junction tightening and continuous footpath treatments at side roads near the school, where feasible.
- Incorporation of ancillary landscaping and placemaking elements to improve the quality of the streetscape and the school approach.
- Re-location of the Bus set down area from the front of the school further to the east.

The overall area of the proposed development is ca. 0.5 ha. The design features will be consistent with those proposed nationally under the NTA SRTS Programme.

Legislative Context:

This determination has considered the relevant legislative context as set out in the AA Screening report including, but not limited to:

- Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora).
- Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds).
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) (S.I. No. 477 of 2011).
- Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

AA Screening Report:

The Active Travel Section, Infrastructure and Climate Change Department of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC) commissioned Traynor Environmental Ltd. to prepare an AA Screening Report

(AASR) for the proposed Dominican College Sion Hill Safe Routes to School Scheme (SRTS).

The AASR has been examined and evaluated by Miguel Sarabia, T/Senior Planner, Planning & Economic Department, and is satisfied that the AA Screening Report gives full consideration to the relevant Directives and legislation and agrees with the contents and conclusion set out in the AASR and the reasons therein.

The likelihood for significant effects on the Natura 2000 site(s) will largely depend on the characteristics of the source (e.g., nature and scale of construction work), the characteristics of the existing pathway and the characteristics of the receptor. The AASR has considered potential effects which may arise during the construction and operation phases because of the proposed development.

The AASR assessed all European Sites with potential source-pathway-receptor connectivity to the proposed development. Nineteen European sites were identified: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, South Dublin Bay SAC, Dalkey Island SPA, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, North Bull Island SPA, North Dublin Bay SAC, North-West Irish Sea SPA, Howth Head SAC, Knocksink Wood SAC, Howth Head Coast SPA, Ballyman Glen SAC, Bray Head SAC, Glenasmole Valley SAC, Baldoyle Bay SAC, Baldoyle Bay SPA, Wicklow Mountains SAC, Wicklow Mountains SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Ireland's Eye SAC. The closest of these are the South Dublin Bay SAC and the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA which are located ca. 535m northeast of the subject site, respectively. The AASR considers the site-specific conservation objectives.

The report states that having regard to the nature, scale and location of the proposed works, there are no pathways by which the development could give rise to direct, indirect or in-combination effects on any Natura 2000 site within the potential Zone of Influence of the application site. There are no individual elements of the proposed project that are likely to result in significant effects on any Natura 2000 site or on the Qualifying Interests (Qis) or Special Conservation Interests for which these sites have been designated. Furthermore, the separation distance between the proposed works area and the identified Natura 2000 sites is sufficient to ensure that no impacts will arise when undertaking the proposed works.

Having regards to the lack of any impact pathway or ecological connectivity to the Natura 2000 sites identified, it can be concluded, on the basis of objective scientific information, that the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 site. Accordingly, no mitigation measures are required to avoid or reduce effects on any Natura 2000 site.

The AASR concludes that, on the basis of objective information and in view of best scientific knowledge and applying the precautionary principle, the proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, and without relying on any mitigation measures, is not likely to have a significant effect on any European Site(s), in view of the sites' conservation objectives, and there is no reasonable scientific doubt in relation to this conclusion. Therefore, this proposed project does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment Process, i.e., a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

The main reasons for this conclusion are as follows:

- The proposed development will not result in land use activities that have the potential to result in negative impacts to the qualifying features of interest of European Sites occurring in the surrounding area.
- All Natura 2000 Sites are located at a sufficient distance from the proposed works area to be screened out, as there is no potential for direct effects given that the proposed works area lies entirely outside the boundaries of the European Sites.

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- There are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the development site and SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.
- The in-combination assessment concludes that there are no likely effects at all predicted when considering the Proposed Scheme in combination with other projects or plans.

Determination:

Having regard to the foregoing, on the basis of objective information and in view of best scientific knowledge and applying the precautionary principle, for the reasons set out above and in the AA Screening Report, it has been concluded that the proposed development (Dominican College Sion Hill Safe Routes to School Scheme),individually or in combination with other plans or projects[1], without relying on any mitigation measures, will not have a significant effect on any European Sites, in view of the sites' conservation objectives, and that there is no reasonable scientific doubt in relation to this conclusion.

Consequently, a Stage Two AA and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is not required.

Signature: *Name* — Senior Planner, Planning Department *Position / Department*

Signatory (Approved Officer):

Name — Director of Services, Planning & Economic Department *Position / Department*

Delegation No. 2617 10/03/25

Date: 04/11/26

The proposed Dominican College Sion Hill Safe Routes to School Scheme is being promoted by the Active Travel Section, Infrastructure and Climate Change Department. This Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination in respect of the proposed Dominican College Sion Hill Safe Routes to School Scheme has been made by Paul Kennedy, Director of Services of the Planning and Economic Department to apply appropriate functional separation in the carrying out of a Screening Determination for Appropriate Assessment.

[1] Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:
a) No alternative solution available,
b) Imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and
c) Adequate compensatory measures in place.