STATEMENT OF SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

OF A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

AT DOMINICAN COLLEGE, SION HILL, CROSS AVENUE, BLACKROCK, CO. DUBLIN

FOR DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL

SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL ROUND 2

In Line with the Requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive

Prepared for

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council

Prepared by

Traynor Environmental Ltd

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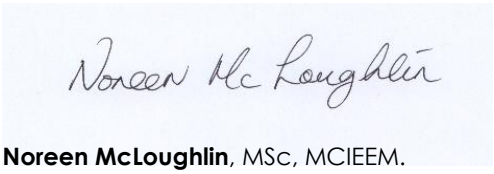
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This report refers, within the limitations stated, to the condition of the site at the time of the report. No warranty is given as to the possibility of future changes in the condition of the site. The report as presented is based on the information sources as detailed in this report, and hence maybe subject to review in the future if more information is obtained or scientific understanding changes.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report has been prepared as part of the NTA Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme for the Proposed Development (described in Section 3 below), in compliance with the NTA Guidance For EIA and AA Screening of Active and Sustainable Transport Projects Funded by the NTA (2025 Rev 01). The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR, 2021) was also considered.

This report contains information required for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC) (the competent authority) to undertake screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) in respect of works proposed under the Safe Routes to Schools Programme at and in the vicinity of Dominican College, Sion Hill, Blackrock, Co. Dublin (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Development) to determine whether it is likely individually or in combination with other plans and projects to have a significant effect on any European sites without relying on any mitigation measures, in light of best scientific knowledge.

Having regard to the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended (the "Planning Acts") (section 177U), the purpose of a screening exercise under section 177U of the PDA 2000 is 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 a European site.

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 then it is necessary to carry out a Stage 2 appropriate assessment under section 177V of the Planning Acts.

When screening the project, there are two possible outcomes:

- the project poses no potential for a likely significant effect and as such requires no further assessment.
- the project has potential to have likely significant effect (or this is uncertain) unless mitigation measures are applied, and therefore an AA of the project is necessary.

1.2. Legislative Background - The Habitats and Birds Directives

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive is transposed into Irish Law inter alia by the Part XAB of the Planning Acts (section 177U and 177V) govern the requirement to carry out appropriate assessment screening and appropriate assessment, where required, per Section 1.1 above.

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) is the main legislative instrument for the protection and conservation of biodiversity in the European Union (EU). Under the Habitats Directive, Member States are obliged to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which contain habitats or species considered important for protection and conservation in an EU context.

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds), transposed into Irish law by the Bird and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011, as amended, is concerned with the long-term protection and management of all wild bird species and their habitats in the EU. Among other things, the Birds Directive requires that Special Protection Areas (SPAs) be established to protect migratory species and species which are rare, vulnerable, in danger of extinction, or otherwise require special attention.

SACs designated under the Habitats Directive and SPAs, designated under the Birds Directive, form a pan- European network of protected sites known as Natura 2000. The Habitats Directive sets out a unified system for the protection and management of SACs and SPAs. These sites are also referred to as European sites.
Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the requirement for an assessment of proposed plans and projects likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites.
Article 6(3) establishes the requirement to screen all plans and projects and to carry out an appropriate assessment if required (Appropriate Assessment (AA)). Article 6(4) establishes requirements in cases of imperative reasons of overriding public interest:

Article 6(3): "Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. Considering 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."

1.3 Statement of Competency

This AA Screening report was carried out by Noreen McLoughlin, BA, MSc, MCIEEM and Nevin Traynor Environmental Scientist BSc Env. Nevin has an honours degree in Environmental Science from Sligo IT. Nevin has over 25 years' experience as an Environmental Consultant in Ireland. Noreen has an honours degree in Zoology and an MSc in Freshwater Ecology from Trinity College, Dublin and she has been a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management for over 15 years. Noreen has over 17 years' experience as a professional ecologist in Ireland.

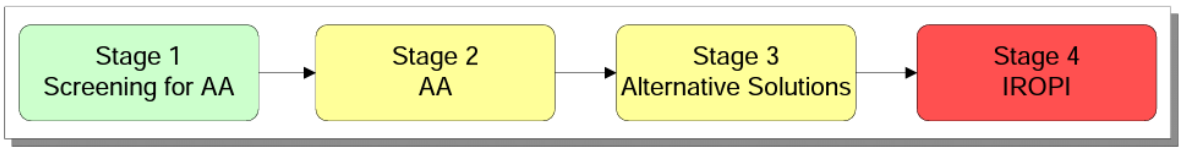
2.0 METHODOLOGY

The Commission's methodological guidance (EC, 2002, 2018, 2021 see Section 2.1 below) promotes a four-stage process to complete the AA and outlines the issues and tests at each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. Stages 1 and 2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6(3). Stage 3 may be part of Article 6(3) or may be a necessary precursor to Stage 4. Stage 4 is the main derogation step of Article 6(4).

2.1 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

The AA process is a four-stage process. Each stage requires different considerations, assessments, and tests to ultimately arrive at the relevant conclusion for each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Overview of Screening and Appropriate Assessment (OPR, 2021).



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

- **Stage 1: *Screening*.** The first stage of the AA process is to determine the likelihood of significant effects of the Proposed Development, this address:
  - whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site, or
  - Whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site in view of its conservation objectives.

- **Stage 2: *Appropriate Assessment*.** The second stage of the AA requires the competent authority to determine whether the project or plan (either alone or in combination with other projects or plans) will have an adverse effect on the integrity of the European site, having regard to the conservation objectives of the site and its ecological structure and function. (Figure 1). The applicant must provide a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to the competent authority to inform the AA, which is a statement, for the purposes of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive of the implications of a proposed development, on its own or in combination with other plans or projects, for one or more than one European site, in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites. It must include a report of a scientific examination of evidence and data, carried out by competent persons to identify and classify any implications for one or more than one European site in view of the conservation objectives of the site or sites. The competent authority must consult with the public in relation to any plan or project that requires AA. If the competent authority determines that the plan or project would have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site, it can only grant consent after proceeding through stages 3 and 4.

- **Stage 3: *Assessment of alternative solutions*.** If the outcome of Stage 2 is negative i.e., adverse impacts to the sites cannot be scientifically ruled out, despite mitigation, the plan or project should proceed to Stage 3 or be abandoned. This stage examines alternative solutions to the proposal.
- **Stage 4: *Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain*.** The final stage is the main derogation process examining whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project to adversely affect a European site, where no less damaging solution exists.

To ensure that the Proposed Development complies fully with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and all relevant Irish transposing legislation, Traynor Environmental Ltd compiled this report to enable Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council to carry out AA screening determination in relation to the Proposed Development to determine whether the Proposed Development, individually or in combination with another plan or project will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site.

2.2 Guidance

This report has been compiled in accordance with guidance contained in the following documents:

- Guidelines on the Information to be contained in NTA 'Guidance For EIA and AA Screening of Active and Sustainable Transport Projects Funded by the NTA' (2025 Rev 01).
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001); hereafter referred to as the EC Article 6 Guidance Document.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2000); hereafter referred to as MN2000.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018).
- Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive (EC, 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 (EC, 2021).
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management (OPR, 2021).

2.3 Data Sources

Sources of information that were used to collect data on the Natura 2000 network of sites, and the environment within which they are located, are listed below:

- The following mapping and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data sources, as required:
  - National Parks & Wildlife (NPWS) protected site boundary data.
  - Ordnance Survey of Ireland (OSI) mapping and aerial photography.
  - OSI/Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rivers and streams, and catchments.
  - Open Street Maps.
  - Google Earth and Bing aerial photography 1995-2024.
- Online data available on Natura 2000 sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie including:
  - Natura 2000 - Standard Data Form.
  - Conservation Objectives.
  - Site Synopses.
- National Biodiversity Data Centre records.
  - Online database of rare, threatened, and protected species.
  - Publicly accessible biodiversity datasets.
- Status of EU Protected Habitats in Ireland. (National Parks & Wildlife Service, 2019); and
- Relevant Planning and Development Data.
  - Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028
  - Dún Laoghaire – Rathdown County Council Planning Portal
  - Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Public Consultation Hub Portal, Citizen Space
  - National Planning Application Database
- Bus Connects.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, in conjunction with An Taisce and the National Transport Authority, is proposing to improve road safety adjacent to schools in the county as part of the NTA Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme. The purpose of the schemes is to make the areas immediately adjacent to the schools safer so that children can be encouraged and facilitated to walk and cycle to the schools safely.

A period of non-statutory public consultation will be carried out for the proposed traffic and road safety works outside the Dominican College, Sion Hill which aim to improve safety at school entrances, improve access routes to school and encourage pupils to walk and cycle.

Dominican College Sion Hill is an all-girls secondary school situated on Cross Ave, a busy street that sees heavy traffic flow in both the morning and afternoon. Directly next to the school is Blackrock College. 50m further up the road (northwest) on the opposite side is Booterstown National School. The majority of students live further than 1km from the school. There are 508 pupils in the school.

The proposals include:

- 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 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 design features will be consistent with those proposed nationally under the NTA Safe Routes to School Programme

Need for the Works Proposed

A parent's survey for the school found the following:

- 50.3% of parents surveyed agreed that road safety is a problem around the school
- 91.7% of parents would support works at the front of school that improve student safety, putting pedestrians and cyclists first
- 83.4% of parents would support works that would improve the walking and cycling links to school.

Figure 2: Site Location Map



Figure 3: Site Layout plan (A)

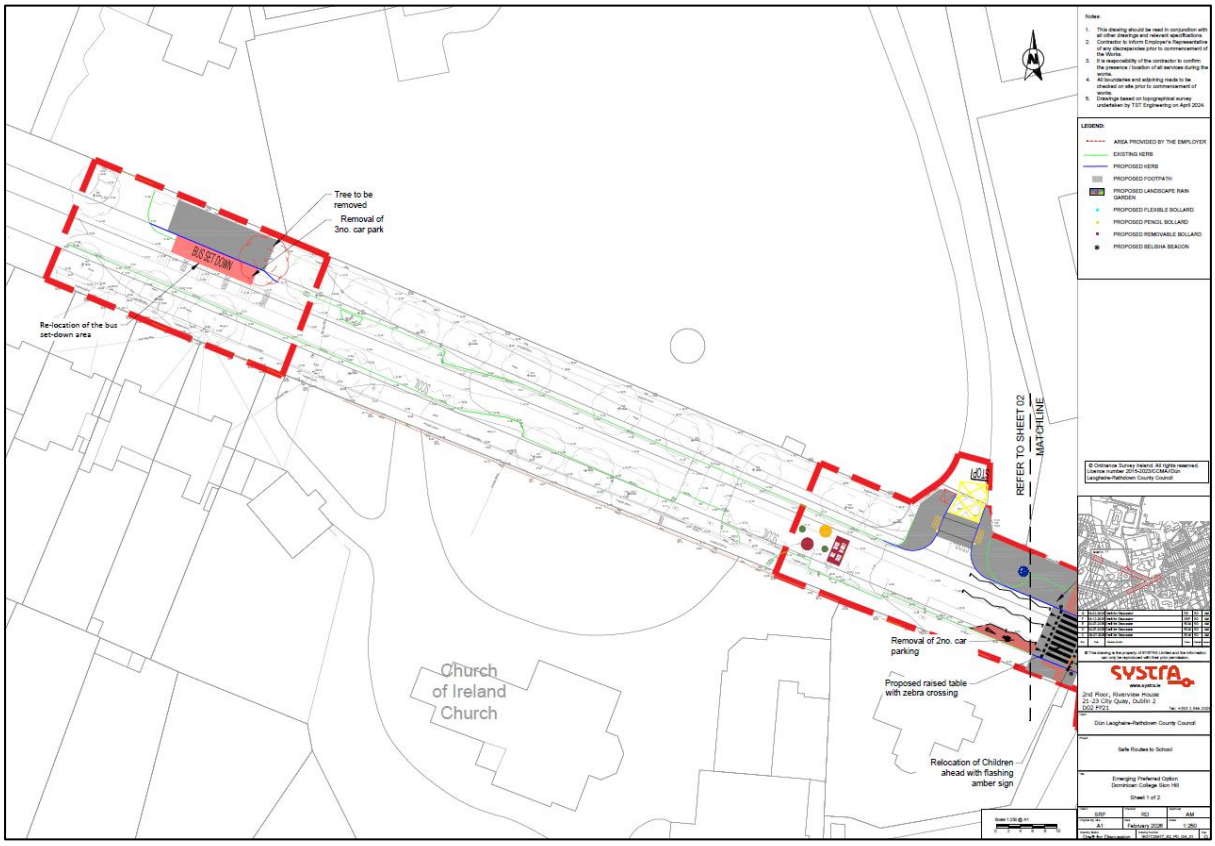
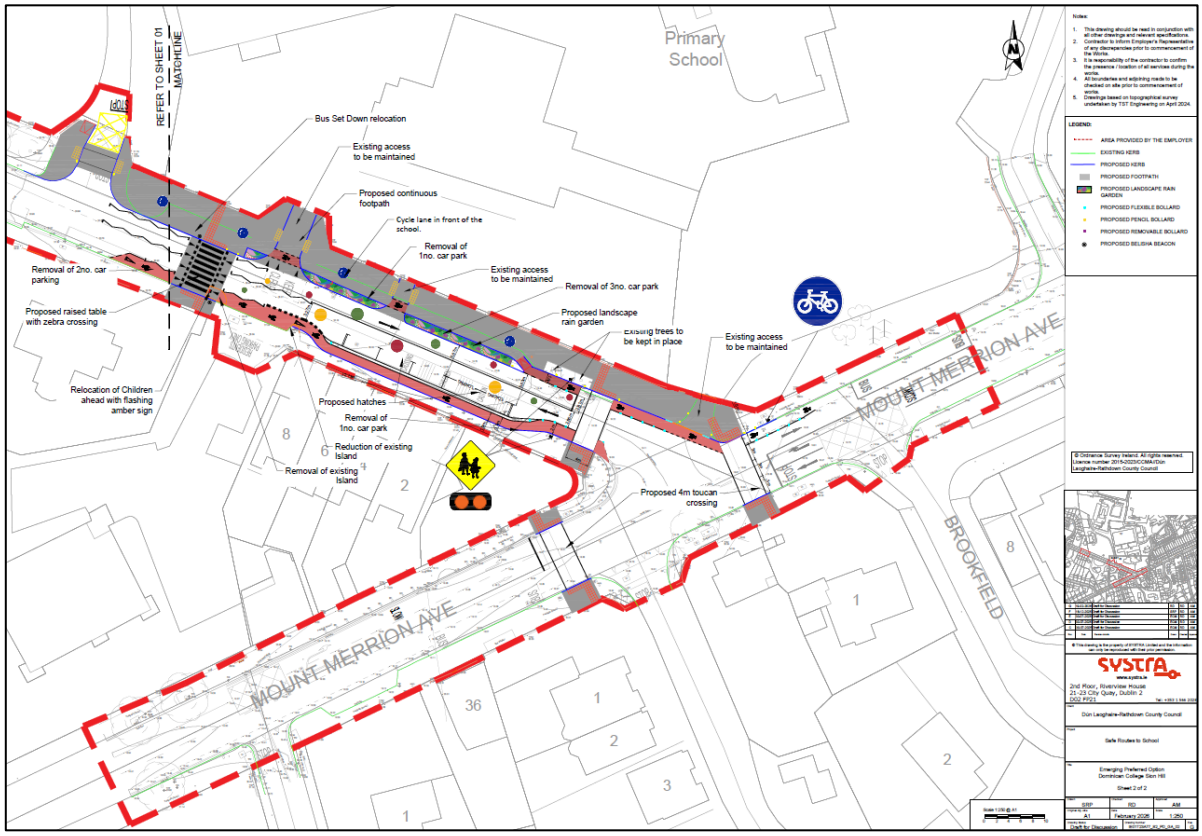


Figure 3-Site Layout (B)



3.1 Site Location and Surrounding Environment

The proposed works will be undertaken along Mount Merrion Ave, at the junction of Mount Merrion Ave and Cross Ave, and further up along Cross Ave. The Dominican College is currently accessed off Cross Ave. Site location maps can be seen in Figures 5, whilst an aerial photograph of the lands surrounding the application site is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – Site Layout Aerial (Site Outlined in Red)



Figure 5 – Site Location Map – Site Outlined in Red



Photograph 1– Existing Road Network on Cross Avenue



Photograph 2– Front of school car park



3.2 Habitats within the Site

All works are contained within the urban / sub-urban areas of Blackrock. The dominant habitats associated with these areas include Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (Fossitt Habitat Code BL3), along with areas of Amenity Grasslands (GA2), and Scattered Trees and Parkland (WD5). The dominant habitat within the areas close to the works is Buildings and Artificial Surfaces.

3.3 Water Framework Directive

In response to the increasing threat of pollution and the increasing demand from the public for cleaner rivers, lakes and beaches, the EU developed the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This Directive is unique in that, for the first time, it establishes a framework for the protection of all waters including rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters and groundwater, and their dependent wildlife/habitats under one piece of environmental legislation for all European member states.

The WFD (Directive 2000/60/EC) is a substantial piece of EU water legislation that came into force in 2000. The overarching objective of the WFD is for the water bodies in Europe to attain Good or High Ecological Status.

The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) is the competent authority in Ireland responsible for delivering the WFD. River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) have been created which set out measures to ensure that water bodies in the country achieve 'Good Ecological Status'.

Good Ecological Quality will depend on the quality of the individual quality elements on which the Ecological status is scored; namely the biological, chemical and morphological condition in a particular water body. Any reduction in any of these elements will result in a reduction of the overall ecological status.

3.3.1 Water Framework Status and Objectives

It is understood that Draft River Basin Management Plan for Ireland (2022-2027) has been adopted by all local authorities in order to achieve the aims of the WFD. The Plan sets out the new approach that Ireland will take to enhance protection, prevention, and monitoring of Irish waterbodies. The main actions include:

- Improve wastewater treatment.
- Conservation and leakage reduction.
- Scientific assessment of water bodies and implementation of local measures.
- A new collaborative Sustainability and Advisory Support Programme.
- Dairy Sustainability Initiative.
- Development of water and planning guidance for local authorities.
- Extension of Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems grant Schemes; and
- A new Community Water Development Fund

Regardless of their current quality, surface waters should be treated the same in terms of the level of protection and mitigation measures employed, i.e., there should be no negative change in status. The third and current cycle aims to build particularly on the initiatives of the second cycle, particularly the governance and implementation structures, and to improve the establishment of Uisce Éireann (Formerly Irish Water), An Fóram Uisce (The Water Forum), the Local Authority Waters Programme and the Agricultural Sustainability Support and Advisory Programme.

3.3.2 Water Features and Quality

The proposed works area lies within the Liffey and Dublin Bay Hydrometric Area (09) and Catchment (09), the Dodder Sub-Catchment (010) and the Brewery Stream Sub-Basin (010). There are no watercourses within or adjacent to the area of proposed works. The closest watercourse to the site is the Priory Stream and this is c180m south of the proposed works area. This stream flows in a north-easterly direction until it discharges into Dublin Bay at Blackrock.

The EPA have classified the ecological status of the Priory Stream as poor. The ecological status of Dublin Bay is noted to be good. Under the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, all waterbodies must achieve or maintain good ecological status within the timeframe set out in this directive (3rd cycle ends in 2027).

The site is within the Kilcullen Groundwater Body and the current status of this groundwater body is noted to be good.

4.0 IDENTIFICATION OF NATURA 2000 SITES

4.1 Description of Natura Sites Potentially Significantly Affected

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, a list of Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development have been identified and described according to their site synopsis, qualifying interests and conservation objectives. In addition, any other sites further than this, but potentially within its zone of interest were also considered. The zone of impact may be determined by an assessment of the connectivity between the application site and the designated areas by virtue of hydrological connectivity, atmospheric emissions, flight paths, ecological corridors etc.

For significant effects to arise, there must be a potential impact facilitated by having a source, i.e., the proposed development and activities arising out of its construction or operation, a receptor, i.e., the European site and its qualifying interests and a subsequent pathway or connectivity between the source and receptor, e.g., a water course. The likelihood for significant effects on the European site will largely depend on the characteristics of the source (e.g., nature and scale of the construction works), the characteristics of the existing pathway and the characteristics of the receptor, e.g., the sensitivities of the Qualifying Interests (habitats or species) to changes in water quality.

There are nineteen Natura 2000 designated sites within 15km of the application site. These designated areas and their closest points to the application site are summarised in Table 1 and a map showing their locations relative to the application site is shown in Figure 6. A full description of all these sites can be read on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (npws.ie).

4.2 Ecological Network Supporting Natura 2000 Sites

A concurrent GIS analysis of the proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) and designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) in terms of their role in supporting the species using Natura 2000 sites was undertaken along with GIS investigation of European sites. It was assumed that these supporting roles mainly related to mobile fauna such as mammals and birds which may use pNHAs and NHAs as "stepping stones" between Natura 2000 sites.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 2011 place a high degree of importance on such non-Natura 2000 areas as features that connect the Natura 2000 network. Features such as ponds, woodlands and important hedgerows were considered during the preparation of this AA Screening report.

Table 1 – Natura 2000 Sites Within 15km of the Proposed Site

Site Name & Code	Distance from Site	Qualifying Interests	Screened In / Out
South Dublin Bay SAC 000210	535m north-east at its closest point	• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • Annual vegetation of drift lines • Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand • Embryonic shifting dunes	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *There will be no direct or indirect impacts or significant effects upon the QIs of this SAC.*
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024	535m north-east at its closest point	• Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota)* • Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) • Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) • Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola)* • Knot *(Calidris canutus)* • Sanderling *(Calidris alba)* • Dunlin *(Calidris alpina)* • Bar-tailed Godwit *(Limosa lapponica)* • Redshank *(Tringa totanus)* • Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus)* • Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii)* • Common Tern *(Sterna hirundo)* • Arctic Tern *(Sterna paradisaea)* • Wetland and Waterbirds	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SPA.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SPA and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *The site does not support any ex-situ habitat that could be used by the QIs of this SPA and significant effects upon these species will not arise.*
North Bull Island SPA 004006	5.5km north-east	• Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota)* • Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) • Teal (*Anas crecca*) • Pintail (*Anas acuta*) • Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) • Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus)*	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SPA.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between*

		• Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) • Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) • Knot (*Calidris canutus*) • Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) • Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) • Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa)* • Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica)* • Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) • Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) • Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) • Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) • Wetland and Waterbirds	*the site and this SPA and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *The site does not support any ex-situ habitat that could be used by the QIs of this SPA and significant effects upon these species will not arise.*
North-West Irish Sea SPA 004236	5.5km north-east	• Red-throated Diver(*Gavia stellata)* • Great Northern Diver(*Gavia immer)* • Fulmar(*Fulmarus glacialis*) • Manx Shearwater(*Puffinus puffinus)* • Cormorant(*Phalacrocorax carbo)* • Shag(*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*) • Common Scoter(*Melanitta nigra)* • Little Gull(*Larus minutus*) • Black-headed Gull(*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) • Common Gull(*Larus canus*) • Lesser Black-backed Gull(*Larus fuscus)* • Herring Gull(*Larus argentatus*) • Great Black-backed Gull(*Larus marinus)* • Kittiwake(*Rissa tridactyla*) • Roseate Tern(*Sterna dougallii*) • Common Tern(*Sterna hirundo*) • Arctic Tern(*Sterna paradisaea*) • Little Tern(*Sterna albifrons*) • Guillemot(*Uria aalge*) • Razorbill(*Alca torda*) • Puffin(*Fratercula arctica*)	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SPA.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SPA and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *The site does not support any ex-situ habitat that could be used by the QIs of this SPA and significant effects upon these species will not arise.*
North Dublin Bay SAC 000206	5.5km north	• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • Annual vegetation of drift lines • Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand • Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) • Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia arenaria*) • Embryonic shifting dunes • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) • Humid dune slacks • *Petalophyllum ralfsii* (Petalwort)	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *There will be no direct or indirect impacts or significant effects upon the QIs of this SAC.*
Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC 003000	6.5km east	• Reefs • *Phocoena phocoena* (Harbour Porpoise)	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SAC and significant*

			effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out. *There will be no direct or indirect impacts or significant effects upon the QIs of this SAC.*
Dalkey Island SPA 004172	6.6km south-east	• Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) • Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) • Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SPA.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SPA and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *The site does not support any ex-situ habitat that could be used by the QIs of this SPA and significant effects upon these species will not arise.*
Wicklow Mountains SAC 002122	9.4km south-west	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* European dry heaths Alpine and Boreal heaths Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) Blanket bogs (* if active bog) Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles *Lutra lutra* (Otter)	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *There will be no direct or indirect impacts or significant effects upon the QIs of this SAC.*
Wicklow Mountains SPA 004040	9.5km south-west	Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) • Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*)	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SPA.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SPA and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.*

			The site does not support any ex-situ habitat that could be used by the QIs of this SPA and significant effects upon these species will not arise.
Howth Head SAC 000202	9.7km south-east	• Vegetated sea cliffs off the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts European dry heaths	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *There will be no direct or indirect impacts or significant effects upon the QIs of this SAC.*
Knocksink Wood SAC 000725	9.8km south	Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) • Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *There will be no direct or indirect impacts or significant effects upon the QIs of this SAC.*
Ballyman Glen SAC 000713	10.5km south	Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) • Alkaline fens	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *There will be no direct or indirect impacts or significant effects upon the QIs of this SAC.*
Howth Head Coast SPA 004113	11.2km north-east	• Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SPA.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between*

			the site and this SPA and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out. *The site does not support any ex-situ habitat that could be used by the QIs of this SPA and significant effects upon these species will not arise.*
Baldoyle Bay SAC 000199	11.2km north	• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand • Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) • Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi)	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *There will be no direct or indirect impacts or significant effects upon the QIs of this SAC.*
Baldoyle Bay SPA 004016	11.2km north-east	• Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota)* • Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) • Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) • Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) • Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) • Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) Wetland and Waterbirds	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SPA.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SPA and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *The site does not support any ex-situ habitat that could be used by the QIs of this SPA and significant effects upon these species will not arise.*
Glenasmole Valley SAC 001209	12.6km south-east	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae) • Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *There will be no direct or indirect impacts or significant effects upon the QIs of this SAC.*

Bray Head SAC 000714	13.3km south-east	• Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts • European dry heaths	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *There will be no direct or indirect impacts or significant effects upon the QIs of this SAC.*
Ireland's Eye SPA 004117	13.6km north-east	• Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax carbo)* • Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus)* • Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla)* • Guillemot (*Uria aalge*) • Razorbill (*Alca torda*)	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SPA.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SPA and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *The site does not support any ex-situ habitat that could be used by the QIs of this SPA and significant effects upon these species will not arise.*
Ireland's Eye SAC 002193	13.8km north-east	• Perennial vegetation of stony banks • Vegetated sea cliffs off the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts	*Screened Out - There is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of this SAC.* *There are no watercourses on the site, therefore there are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.* *There will be no direct or indirect impacts or significant effects upon the QIs of this SAC.*

Figure 6. Showing European sites SACs/SPAs and NHAs/pNHAs within the wider Potential Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development.



5.0 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS & ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The proposed development (Safe Routes to School) will consist of works to improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists travelling to and from Dominican College. 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 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.

5.1. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

The Proposed Development is located at Dominican College, Sion Hill, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. A review of aerial photography, Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) mapping and OSI Geographical Information System (GIS) data for rivers and streams indicates that there are no direct hydrological pathways to offsite surface water bodies.

The consideration of all potential direct and indirect impacts that may result in significant effects on the conservation objectives of a European site, taking into account the size and scale of the Proposed Development are presented below.

Table 2 Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

Identification of all potential direct and indirect secondary impacts that may result in significant effects on the conservation objectives of a European site, considering the size and scale of the project.	
Impacts:	**Significance of Impacts:**
Construction phase e.g. - Surface water runoff from soil excavation - Dust, Noise, Vibration - Lighting disturbance - Impact on groundwater/dewatering - Storage of excavated/construction materials - Access to site **Operational phase e.g.** - Direct emission to air and water - Surface water runoff containing contaminant or sediment - Lighting disturbance - Noise/vibration - Changes to water/groundwater due to drainage or abstraction - Presence of people, vehicles, and activities - Physical presence of structures (e.g. collision risks) - Potential for accidents or incidents	**Size and scale:** Having regards to the limited duration, and the small size and scale of the works in relation to the overall size of the Natura 2000 sites identified, the likelihood of any direct, indirect or cumulative impacts on these designated sites arising from the works are low. **Land-take:** There will be no land-take from any Natura 2000 site. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any Natura 2000 site. There will be no loss of undesignated habitats of biodiversity value. **Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site:** There are nineteen Natura 2000 sites within 15km of this proposed development. The closest of these are the South Dublin Bay SAC (000210) and SPA (004024), which are 535m northeast. There is no hydrological connectivity between the proposed works area and this SPA/SAC, or any other SPA/SPA within 15km of the site. **Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.):** No resources will be taken from any Natura 2000 site and there are no resource requirements that will impact upon any Natura 2000 site. **Emissions:** There will be no emissions from the works to any Natura 2000 site during construction. The separation distance between the area of proposed works and all Natura 2000 sites is considered sufficient to ensure that emissions such as noise, dust, airborne pollutants and vibrations generated will not have significant effects on these Natura 2000 sites. **Excavation requirements:** Construction, demolition waste and excavated material from the site will be removed to a registered site by a registered contractor. There will be no disposal of any material within any Natura 2000 site. There will be no excavation works within any Natura 2000 site. **Transportation requirements**: No access to any areas of any Natura 2000 site will be required during any phase of project. **In-Combination / Cumulative Impacts:** The proposed works were considered in combination with other developments or proposed developments in the greater Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area and potential cumulative impacts were considered. Any individual application that has the potential to impact upon a Natura 2000 site will be subject to Appropriate Assessment as required under Articles 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The proposed works will have no impacts when considered in combination with other plans and projects that have been screened for Appropriate Assessment or where mitigation measures have been included as part of Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement). **Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc:** The road safety works will be complete in a matter of months.

Describe any likely changes to the European site:	
Examples of the type of changes given consideration:	
- Reduction or fragmentation of habitat area - Disturbance to QI species - Habitat or species fragmentation - Reduction or fragmentation in species density - Changes in key indicators of conservation status value (water quality etc.) - Changes to areas of sensitivity or threats to QI Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or ecological function of the site - Climate change	**Reduction of habitat area:** The proposed development lies outside the boundaries of the Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 3.3. There will be no reduction of designated habitat area or interference with any protected habitat within any SAC or SPA. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any Natura 2000 site. There will be no loss or fragmentation or disturbance to any of the riparian habitats along any watercourse. There will be no loss of habitats defined as Qualifying Interests for any Natura 2000 site. **Disturbance to key species:** The bird species identified as using the SPAs within 15km of the site are mostly wading species that use the estuarine and coastal habitats of the estuaries of Co. Dublin and the surrounding areas. They will not be impacted upon by the construction or operation of the proposed works. The site does not support sufficient or suitable ex-situ habitat that could be used by the QIs of any SPA (especially brent geese) and significant effects upon these species will not arise. There will be no disturbance to or displacement of any QI bird species. There will be no deterioration in water quality within any SPA that may lead to indirect impacts upon these bird species. **Habitat or species fragmentation:** There will be no habitat or species fragmentation within any SAC or SPA. No ecological corridors between the site and any Natura 2000 site will be damaged or destroyed. There will be no loss of any habitat of biodiversity value. **Reduction in species density:** There will be no reduction in species density within any SAC and SPA. There will be no reduction of bird density in any SPA arising from the works. There will be no loss of any non-designated feeding areas used by birds that are listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. **Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.):** There will be no negative impacts upon surface or ground water quality within any SAC or SPA. There will be no negative impacts upon the water quality in any designated site. There will be no deterioration in water quality in any watercourse.
Describe any likely impacts on the nearby Natura 2000 sites as a whole in terms of:	
Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site: It is not considered likely that there will be any impacts on the key relationships that define the structure or function of the Natura 2000 sites identified.	

On the basis of the information supplied, which is considered adequate to undertake a screening determination and having regard to:

- the nature and scale of the proposed development,
- the intervening land uses and distance from European sites,
- the lack of direct connections with regard to the Source-Pathway-Receptor model,

It may be concluded that the proposed development, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to have a significant effect on the above listed European sites or any other European site without relying on any mitigation measures, in view of the said sites' conservation objectives.

5.2 Assessment of Potential In-Combination Effects

In-combination effects are changes in the environment that result from numerous human-induced, small-scale alterations. In-combination effects can be thought of as occurring through two main pathways: first, through persistent additions or losses of the same materials or resource, and second, through the compounding effects as a result of the coming together of two or more effects.

As part of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment, it is necessary to consider the Proposed Development both alone and in combination with other relevant plans and projects that may affect the same European sites. This stage of the assessment seeks to identify any potential for likely significant effects arising from the cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development when considered alongside other existing, permitted, proposed or approved developments within the surrounding area. A review of relevant plans and projects within the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area was undertaken, including projects identified through Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council public consultation and planning records. The following projects and planning applications were considered relevant in the assessment of potential in-combination effects:

- **Living Streets Dún Laoghaire -** A public realm, walking, cycling and streetscape enhancement scheme designed to improve accessibility, connectivity and urban greening within Dún Laoghaire town centre.
- **National Mobility Hubs Pilot Project (Part 8)** – A county-wide sustainable transport initiative involving the provision of mobility hubs at multiple locations throughout Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown to support active and shared travel modes.
- **Living Streets Blackrock Village -** Living Streets Blackrock Village is a public realm improvement project which aims to enhance the attractiveness, liveability, connectivity and economic vibrancy of Blackrock Village.
- **Blackrock DART to Park Active Travel Scheme** - It creates a new walking and cycling connection between Blackrock DART Station and Blackrock Park, improving access for families, students and commuters. The public consultation concluded in 2024.
- **Living Streets Coastal Mobility Route** - A sustainable transport and public realm improvement project along the coastal corridor within Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.
- **Bray to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme** – Is an 18.5 km infrastructure project under the Bus Connects Dublin programme.
- **DLR Connector** – A walking, cycling and public realm improvement scheme
- **Bus Connect Belfield/Blackrock to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme –** Aims to improve transport and address climate change.
- **Stillorgan Park Road Walking and Cycle Improvement Scheme –** Improved traffic calming measures and improved safer walking and cycling infrastructure on Stillorgan Park Road from the junction of N11 to Carysfort Avenue.
- **Proposed Materials Alterations to Proposed Variation No.1 of DLRCC Plan 2022-2028 –** Variation No.1to the County Development Plan 2022-2028 (with material alterations) was made at a Special Council Meeting on 23 September 2026
- **LRD24A/0342/WEB –** Strategic Housing Development at Lands at Cross Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
- **D26A/0334/WEB –** Proposed Development at Blackrock Private Hospital, Blackrock Clinic, Rock Road, Blackrock, Dublin.

- **D19A/0292 –** Permission for demolition of the existing dwelling, Renesca along with associated outbuildings and entrance pillars
- **ABP3135222 –** Permission for a part Build and part Build to Sell Strategic Housing Development
- **D22A/0582 –** Proposed development at 'Gileen' Cross Avenue, Booterstown, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development, and considering the characteristics of the above plans and projects, no pathways were identified by which the Proposed Development could act in combination with these projects to result in likely significant effects on any European site. Therefore, it is concluded that the Proposed Development, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, will not result in likely significant effects on any European site. The DLR County Development Plan 2022- 2028 and DLR Biodiversity Plan have been considered in this review. These proposed works in combination with other projects will have no significant effect upon the Natura 2000 sites identified. The application site has no hydrological or ecological connectivity to any Natura 2000 site. The Dún Laoghaire County Council Climate Action Plan (CCAP) 2024-2029 has also been taken into consideration.

5.3 Finding of no Significant Effects

5.3.1 Name of project or plan

Works to improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists travelling to and from Dominican College Sion Hill, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

5.3.2 Name and location of the Natura 2000 site(s)

There are nineteen Natura 2000 sites within 15km of this proposed development. The closest of these include the South Dublin Bay SAC and the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA these are 535m north of the proposed works area. There is no hydrological connectivity between the proposed works area and this SPA/SAC, or any other SPA/SPA within 15km of the site.

5.3.3 Description of the project or plan

The proposed development comprises of:

- 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 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 design features will be consistent with those proposed nationally under the NTA Safe Routes to School Programme

5.3.4 Is the project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site(s)

No

5.3.5 Are there other projects or plans that together with the projects or plan being assessed could affect the site.

No.

5.4 Assessment of Significant Effects.

5.4.1 Describe how the project is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site

No significant effects are likely

5.4.2 Explain why these effects are not considered significant.

Not applicable as there is no potential for negative significant effects

5.4.3 Describe how the project is likely to affect species designated under Annex II of the Habitats Directive.

No significant effects likely.

6.0 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, the relevant case law, established best practice and the precautionary principle, this AA Screening Report has examined the details of the project in relation to the relevant Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the application site and any other sites further than this, potentially within its zone of interest were also considered.

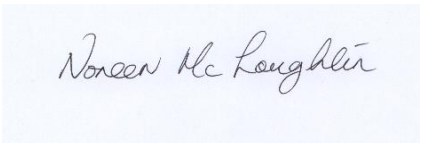
Reason for the Conclusions made by the author:

1. The plan 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
2. All Natura 2000 Sites are at a significant distance, where there is no potential for direct effects as the proposed works area is located entirely outside the boundary of the European Sites .
3. There are no source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC and significant effects arising from pollution during the construction and operation of proposed development can be ruled out.
4. Furthermore, the in-combination assessment also concludes that there are no likely effects at all predicted when considering the Proposed Scheme in combination with other projects or plans.

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.

The information and findings contained herein sets out the information necessary for DLRCC, as competent authority, to make an informed AA Screening Determination with respect to the proposed works.

Therefore, this proposed project does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment Process, i.e., a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).



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