

**Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination under the
European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (as amended)
(For Proposed Local Authority Development)**

Project Title: Hillcrest Road Improvement Scheme

Description of the Proposed Development:

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council is proposing to develop Hillcrest Road Improvement Scheme. The Hillcrest Road Improvement Scheme (HRIS) seeks to provide adequate service for vulnerable road users and drivers as well as integrating with the upgraded infrastructure on the signalised Lambs Cross to the east and signalised Kilgobbin Road Junction to the west (approximately 660m of road). This requires addressing the infrastructure deficiencies along Hillcrest Road. The route will continue to be operated and maintained as a public transport route in an urban area.

The proposed scheme consists of the following:

- Widening of the existing road to 6.50m.
- Addition of 2.0 m footpaths on both sides
- Addition of 2.0 m. cycle tracks on both sides.
- Public lighting.
- Surface water drainage
- Provision of utilities and services.
- Road marking and signage.
- Diversion of existing utilities and provision of new utilities.
- Accommodation works to existing properties.
- Walls, retaining walls, fencing and other boundary treatments.
- Associated landscaping works.
- Miscellaneous ancillary works.

Legislative Context:

This determination has considered the relevant legislative context as set out in Section 1 of the AA screening report entitled 'AA SCREENING REPORT 15th April 2025', including, but not limited to:

- Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora)
- Habitats and Birds Directives (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 Capital Projects Office, Infrastructure and Climate Change Department of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC) commissioned O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates Ltd. (OCSC) to prepare an AA Screening Report (AASR) entitled 'AA SCREENING REPORT 15 April 2025'.

The AASR has been examined and evaluated by Ger Ryan, Planning 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.

Fourteen European designated sites were identified within the zone of influence (ZOI) on a precautionary basis : Wicklow Mountains SAC, South Dublin Bay SAC, Wicklow Mountains SPA, South Dublin Bay and

River Tolka Estuary SPA, Knocksink Wood SAC, Ballyman Glen SAC, Dalkey Islands SPA, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, Glenasmole Valley SAC, North-West Irish Sea SPA, North Bull Island SPA, North Dublin Bay SAC, Bray Head SAC, Howth Head SAC.

The Appropriate Assessment screening report concluded that:

"The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases as a result of the implementation of the project. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the project characteristics, taking into account the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that there are no likely significant adverse effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interests, or the conservation objectives of any designated European site. The ecological integrity of the European sites is not foreseen to be significantly affected by the project.

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. Consequently, a Stage Two Appropriate Assessment is not required for the project." The main reasons for this are as follows:

- There is no spatial overlap between the study area and the closest Natura Sites.
- The nearest European sites or qualifying habitats feature are located 4.8 kilometres from the proposed development site and have no direct hydrological link to the site.
- Due to the small scale and short duration of the proposed construction works, the nature of the site operations, the distance to these designated sites, and the lack of hydrological connectivity, impact to European sites within the ZOI is predicted to be unlikely and not significant.
- No in-combination effects predicted from other proposed or permitted plans or projects
- No changes are predicted to occur at any designated sites which may result in effects on the conservation objectives of those sites with regard to the following:
 - habitat or species fragmentation
 - climate change
 - disturbance to key species
 - reduction in species density
 - changes in key indicators of conservation value
 - reduction of habitat area
- This AA screening is based on best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature and 'grey' literature was conducted.

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 (Hillcrest Road Improvement Scheme), individually or in combination with other plans or projects¹⁾, 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.

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.

Signature:


Name

Senior Planner, Planning Department
Position / Department

Signatory (Approved Officer):


Name

Director of Service Planning Department
Position / Department

Delegation No. 2617

Date: 23/04/2025

The proposed Hillcrest Road Improvement Scheme is being promoted by Capital Projects Office, Infrastructure and Climate Change Department. This Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination in respect of the proposed Hillcrest Road Improvement 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.