

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report
for proposed development of

**St. Michael's Square and Environs,
Dún Laoghaire, County Dublin**

**in accordance with the requirements of
Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive**

by

CAAS Ltd

for

Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council



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¹ See Appendix III for contributor competencies

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1 Introduction

1.1. Background

CAAS has been appointed by Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Council to prepare this Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) for the proposed development of St. Michael's Square and Environs at Dún Laoghaire, County Dublin ('the proposed development').

Appropriate Assessment (AA) is a procedure carried out in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the "Habitats Directive"). This report has been prepared to assist the competent authority in assessing whether or not the proposed development requires Stage Two AA and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

1.2. Report structure

This report sets out an overview of the methodology used for this screening for AA report in order to support the competent authority in the AA process. It then details the proposed development and any associated works, followed by a description of receiving environment of the proposed development site, and any relationships to European sites. Subsequently the factors which determine what European sites are included in the report are described and the European sites relevant for the AASR identified.

The proposed development and its potential sources for effect are then examined in the context of the receiving environment, connectivity to the relevant European site and their sensitive ecological features. Following this, the metrics for the assessment of a 'likelihood of significant effect' of these potential effects are applied to each of the European sites identified, with support from scientific literature where relevant.

The assessment is undertaken in view of the Conservation Objectives, known sensitivities and threats and pressures of the Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests for each European site. The proposed development is then considered for in combination effects with any other plans and/or projects which may also result in a likelihood of significant effects on European sites.

A subsequent reasoned conclusion is provided, i.e., a statement as to whether a likelihood of significant effects was identified for any of the European sites considered in this report. This is followed by appendices containing supporting information considered by this report. The Appendices also provide supporting information and data utilised in this screening for AA report, including the legislative background and context for screening for AA in the overall AA process, followed by author details and competencies.

2 Methodology

2.1. Overview

Screening for AA identifies any likely significant effects on European sites arising from the project (for the purposes of this report, the “project” is herein referred to as the “proposed development”), either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The proposed development and receiving environment of the proposed development are examined in order to determine:

- Whether the project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site.
- Whether the project will have a potentially significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives or if residual uncertainty exists regarding potential impacts.

The proposed development is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site, and therefore will be considered as to whether it may have a potentially significant effect on any European site via screening for AA.

2.2. Supporting literature and contributor competencies

This AASR is prepared in consideration of best scientific knowledge with reference to relevant scientific literature where appropriate, and has utilised ecological expertise (ref Appendix III for contributor competencies), with consideration of the relevant guidance, including the following:

- *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021;*
- *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Commission Notice, Journal of the European Union, 2021;*
- *Commission Notice: Managing Natura 2000 sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC", European Commission 2018; and*
- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009.*

2.3. Assessment methodology

Note: see Appendix II for an overview of the legislative context for this report, the Habitats Directive, and the AA process.

2.3.1. Source-pathway-receptor model

The assessment of potential for significant effects on European sites is conducted following a standard source-pathway-receptor (SPR) model, where, in order for an effect to be established, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place.

Examples of a source, pathway and receptor are:

- Source(s) – e.g., pollutant run-off from proposed development;
- Pathway(s) – e.g., groundwater connecting to nearby qualifying wetland habitats; and,
- Receptor(s) – e.g., qualifying habitats and species of European sites.

Thus, in the context of this report, a receptor is a QI or SCI, or an ecological feature that is known to

be utilised by the QIs or SCIs of a European site. A source is any identifiable element of the proposed development that is known to interact with the QI, SCI, or any ecological processes underpinning a QI or SCI. A pathway is any connection or link between the source and the receptor², for example a river.

When all three elements of the SPR model are in place, a pathway for potential effect is identified to that European site. The pathway, receptor and source for effect are then examined further by conducting a desktop review, in the context of the receiving environment and the characteristics of the proposed development, in order to establish a Zone of Influence for potential significant effects.

2.3.2. Desktop review

The identification of the “Conservation Objectives” (COs), “Qualifying Interests” (QIs) and/or “Special Conservation Interests” (SCIs) of European sites requiring assessment is an integral part of the screening for AA process.

QIs are the habitat features and species (flora and fauna) listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive respectively, for which each Special Area of Conservation (SAC) has been designated under the Habitats Directive. SCIs are bird species listed within Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive for which each Special Protection Area (SPA) has been designated under the Habitats Directive. Under the requirements of the Habitats Directive, the threats and pressures on the ecological / environmental conditions that are required to support QIs and SCIs, with specific regard to the COs of each site, are considered as part of the assessment.

The COs or Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) for each site aim to achieve and maintain the favourable conservation status³ for a particular habitat or species at that site. COs define the requirements for the favourable conservation condition of the QIs or SCIs at a given European site by setting targets for attributes which define the healthy characteristics of a given habitat or species. The maintenance of the favourable condition for these habitats and species at the site level, as defined by their COs will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

Note: where detailed SSCO have not been prepared for any European site, the below First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives apply:

European site type	First Order Site-specific Conservation Objective ⁴
SAC	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected
SPA	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for the SPA

² Receptor example: a Qualifying Interest or Special Conservation Interest of the European site in question in the context of their known sensitivities and Conservation Objectives

³ Favourable conservation status of a species can be described as being achieved when: *‘population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.’*

Favourable conservation status of a habitat can be described as being achieved when: *‘its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable’.*

⁴ NPWS Conservation Management Planning [website](#).

Any European sites identified by this report at risk of potential effects from the proposed development as a result of the SPR model is reviewed in the context of the proposed development, and the qualifying features, known vulnerabilities and threats pertaining to the QIs and SCIs of the European sites identified. Where the SPR model identified European sites, the following databases are utilised in the preparation of this AASR: the National Biodiversity Data Centre⁵; the NPWS⁶; the EPA⁷; data collected for the most recent Article 12 and 17 conservation status reporting cycle, 2019; and, *The Status of Protected EU Habitats and Species in Ireland* report (NPWS, 2019). Based on these resources, the desktop review is also comprised of the following elements:

- Identification of European sites within one or several zones of Influence (as defined in s 2.3.3) established using the source -pathway-receptor model (as defined in s 2.3.1);
- Review of the NPWS site synopses and Conservation Objectives for European sites within the zone(s) of influence for which potential pathways from the proposed development area have been identified; and
- Examination of available data on protected species' and habitats' distribution, trends and abundances – where relevant.

Supporting information on threats to individual sites and vulnerability of habitats and species is also reviewed in the following documents where relevant:

- Ireland's Article 17 Report to the European Commission "*Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland*" (NPWS, 2019);
- Ireland's Article 12 Report to the European Commission "*Bird species' status and trends reporting format for the period 2008-2012-*" (NPWS, 2012)
- Site Synopses⁸; and
- NATURA 2000 Standard Data Forms¹³.

2.3.3. Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence (Zoi) is defined in the relevant guidance^{9,10} as the geographical area, relative to the proposed development, over which it could affect the ecological receiving environment in any way that could result in potential significant effects on the Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests of a given European site.

When the Zone of Influence is established, European sites (and their respective QIs and SCIs) that occur within this zone are examined in detail, with supporting surveys conducted, if necessary, to ultimately determine whether or not there is a *likelihood of significant effect*^{11,12} on a given European site. This is carried out by assessing information such as: the nature of the source for effect; the nature of the pathway; the distances involved; the QIs/SCIs (or 'receptors') involved, their

⁵ NBDC datasets available [here](#)

⁶ NPWS European sites information and mapping available [here](#) and [here](#) respectively

⁷ EPA datasets available [here](#)

⁸ NPWS (2019); NPWS Database of protected site data and associated documents for each European site; available [here](#). Accessed November 2024

⁹ *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021.

¹⁰ CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

¹¹ "Likely" defined by the [OPR Practice Note PN01 on Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management \(2021\)](#) as the: "*risk or possibility of effects occurring that cannot be ruled out based on objective information.*"

¹² With regard to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, and the precautionary principle ([C127/02 Waddenzee](#))

threats, pressures and sensitivities; and, consulting best scientific literature where relevant.

As such, the presence of all three elements and the identification of a pathway for potential effect, does not automatically constitute the likelihood of significant effect to a European site, and is context dependent. However, the absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that there is no potential effect(s) and thus present no likelihood for significant effects.

Where a likelihood for significant effects to any European site is established to be present, or the lack of significant effect cannot be ruled out, mitigation measures are required and the proposed development must proceed to Stage 2 AA, where a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is compiled for the development in order to prevent adverse effects to the QIs/SCIs involved in view of their Conservation Objectives.

2.3.4. Characterising potential significant effects

The terms used to characterise potential effects¹³ in this report are as follows: -

- Direct and Indirect Impacts: An impact can be caused either as a direct or as an indirect consequence of a Plan/Project.
- Magnitude: Magnitude measures the size of an impact, which is described as high, medium, low, very low or negligible.
- Extent: The area over that the impact occurs – this should be predicted in a quantified manner.
- Duration: The time that the effect is expected to last prior to recovery or replacement of the resource or feature.
 - Temporary: Up to 1 Year;
 - Short Term: The effects would take 1-7 years to be mitigated;
 - Medium Term: The effects would take 7-15 years to be mitigated;
 - Long Term: The effects would take 15-60 years to be mitigated; and
 - Permanent: The effects would take 60 or more years to be mitigated.
- Likelihood: The probability of the effect occurring taking into account all available information.
 - Certain/Near Certain: >95% chance of occurring as predicted;
 - Probable: 50-95% chance as occurring as predicted;
 - Unlikely: 5-50% chance as occurring as predicted; and
 - Extremely Unlikely: <5% chance as occurring as predicted.

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Guidelines For Ecological Impact Assessment (2018) define *an ecologically significant impact as*: an impact (negative or positive) on the integrity of a defined site or ecosystem and/or the conservation status of habitats or species within a given geographic area; and, the integrity of a site as: the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified.

¹³ Terms and parameters have been adapted from the following guidance documents on the conduction Appropriate Assessments and Ecological Impact Assessments:

- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities
- CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester; and,

3 The proposed development

3.1. Proposed development description

The proposed development involves upgrading of a public square at the corner of the Marine Road /Georges Street junction adjacent to St. Michaels Church.

The works will include new surface treatment, bespoke seating, public lighting, soft landscaping, etc. The project is a continuation of the greening of Dun Laoghaire and will be characterised by trees, planting and feature public seating. Materials and finishes will match the existing suite of street furniture around the town and specifically the elements established in the nearby Myrtle Square. The proposal and its context are described in more detail in the Council's Part 8 Report and in s3.2 below.

The finished surface treatment will be composed of exposed aggregate concrete. This will be prepared off site and poured on site. The proposed seating will also be composed of concrete and will be precast with small amounts of mortar concrete used on site to install the seating.

3.2. Project details

This description of the development below is taken from the Part 8 Report and should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Part 8 drawing set.

The proposal includes for level access off Georges Street into a seating/congregation space at the upper level. This entry point will be pinched to create a defined threshold, framed with specimen trees and ornamental planting. The raised planters will be at seating height (approx. 450mm high) to anchor the space and take account of the south facing aspect. A bespoke, free standing mesh fencing will enclose the space and be used to grow climbing plants. The fence will secure the ROW access in lower area and help to green the expansive gable wall of the EBS building. Allowance is being made for discreet, ornamental lighting, power points for events and a socket for a Christmas tree.

A new set of steps leading from the upper level to the lower level with handrails either side is proposed.

The existing planting in the lower area including the large, native Oak tree and groundcover will be retained as part of this proposal. Further seating, tree and ornamental planting will be provided at the lower level while allowing space for two hearses to park when required. There is a right of way to the rear of the properties on Georges Street Lower which will be maintained and managed with a new gate. The haphazard car parking will be removed through the inclusion of street furniture, planting and bollards and space for hearse parking only will be retained. A brass, cruciform motif is to be inlaid into the surface centred at the main entrance to the church. The existing step and ramp at the entrance will be removed and replaced with level access through revised finished ground levels.

The surfacing, colours and organic shapes take inspiration from the stained-glass windows of the church. The surface of the square is proposed to be an exposed aggregate concrete to reflect the quality of the concrete and fine craftsmanship within the church and to match exposed concrete used in public realm schemes elsewhere in the town.

The proposed development will be carried out on 490 square metres of land, as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

3.2. Drainage (wastewater and surface water)

There are no wastewater facilities proposed for the project. Standard urban drainage is already existing on site, as part of suburban drainage of the Dún Laoghaire town area, with no new or alterations to existing surface water drainage proposed for the project. There will be a reduction in that hard surface area on site as part of the proposed development, and an increase in permeable/soft landscaping areas (Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1 Plan of the proposed development

4 The receiving environment

4.1. Overview

The proposed development site is an existing public thoroughfare and junction (for pedestrian and vehicular traffic) located at the junction of Marine Road and George's Street in central Dún Laoghaire, south County Dublin (Figure 4.1).

The existing site is composed of a mix of hard surface pavement and urban landscaping/planting. As the proposed site is within an urban centre in south Dublin, it is surrounded by retail, industrial, and cultural infrastructure. Dún Laoghaire itself is located on the south Dublin coastline, and the proposed site is located approximately 330 m from Dún Laoghaire harbour and approximately 1.16 km from the nearest watercourse (which is largely culverted) (Figure 4.2). This is an intensively developed, urban landscape with existing high levels of disturbance.

4.2. Hydrology

There are no direct hydrological features running through or connected with the proposed site for development. The closest hydrological feature to the proposed site is the Monkstown stream (IE_EA_09B130400), which lies approximately 1 km west (Figure 4.2). Thus, there are no direct hydrological connections between the proposed site and any European sites (Figure 4.3). There is a likely indirect connection with Dún Laoghaire harbour of surface water drainage from the proposed site via the urban drainage network of Dún Laoghaire town). Due to the scale and nature of activity at the proposed site (s 3), there is unlikely to be any substantial connectivity between surface water runoff from the proposed site and the Monkstown stream or Dún Laoghaire harbour.

4.3. Hydrogeology

The proposed development site lies within the Kilcullen groundwater body (IE_EA_G_003) which has a WFD status¹⁴ of "Good". Due to the scale and nature of activity at the proposed site (s 3), there is unlikely to be any substantial connectivity between surface water runoff from the proposed site and the Kilcullen groundwater body Figure 4.2.

4.4. Flood risk

The proposed site does not occur within any area at risk of flooding according to the Geological Survey of Ireland's (GSI) flood risk mapping¹⁵.

4.5. Relationship to European sites

As mentioned, the proposed site is located on the south Dublin coast. The closest European sites are the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code: 004024), and the South Dublin Bay SAC (site code: 000210), at just over 1 km at the closest point. There is no direct hydrological connectivity between these European sites and the proposed site (Figure 4.2). There will be indirect connectivity between the proposed site and the coastline of Dún Laoghaire via urban surface water drainage already existing on site. No new wastewater or surface water drainage infrastructure, or alterations to existing drainage infrastructure, are proposed as part of the development (see s3).

¹⁴ EPA 2021. Ireland's National Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme 2019-2021. Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland.

¹⁵ GSI Flood risk mapping available [here](#). Accessed: January 2025

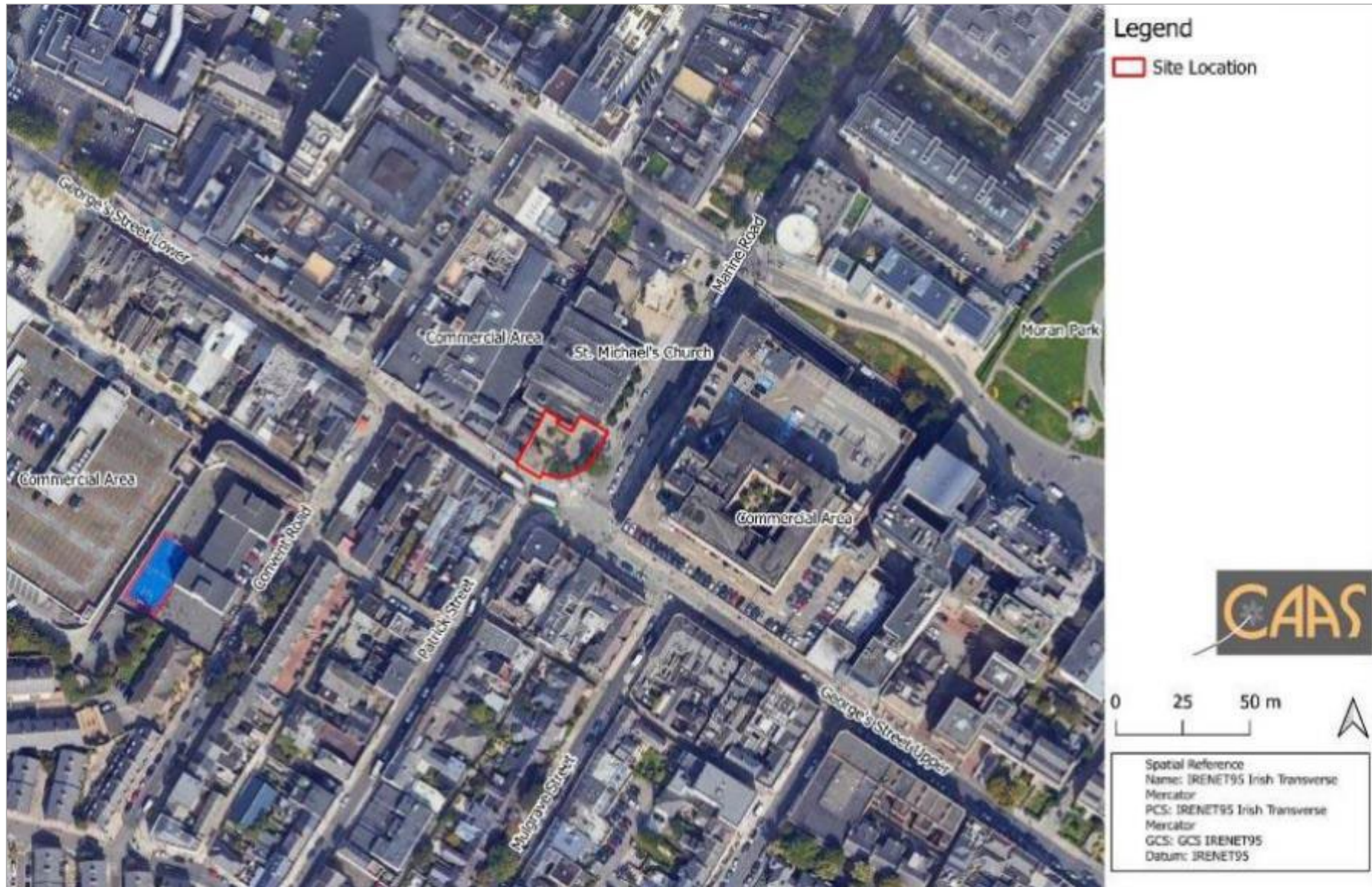


Figure 4.1 Location of the proposed development site

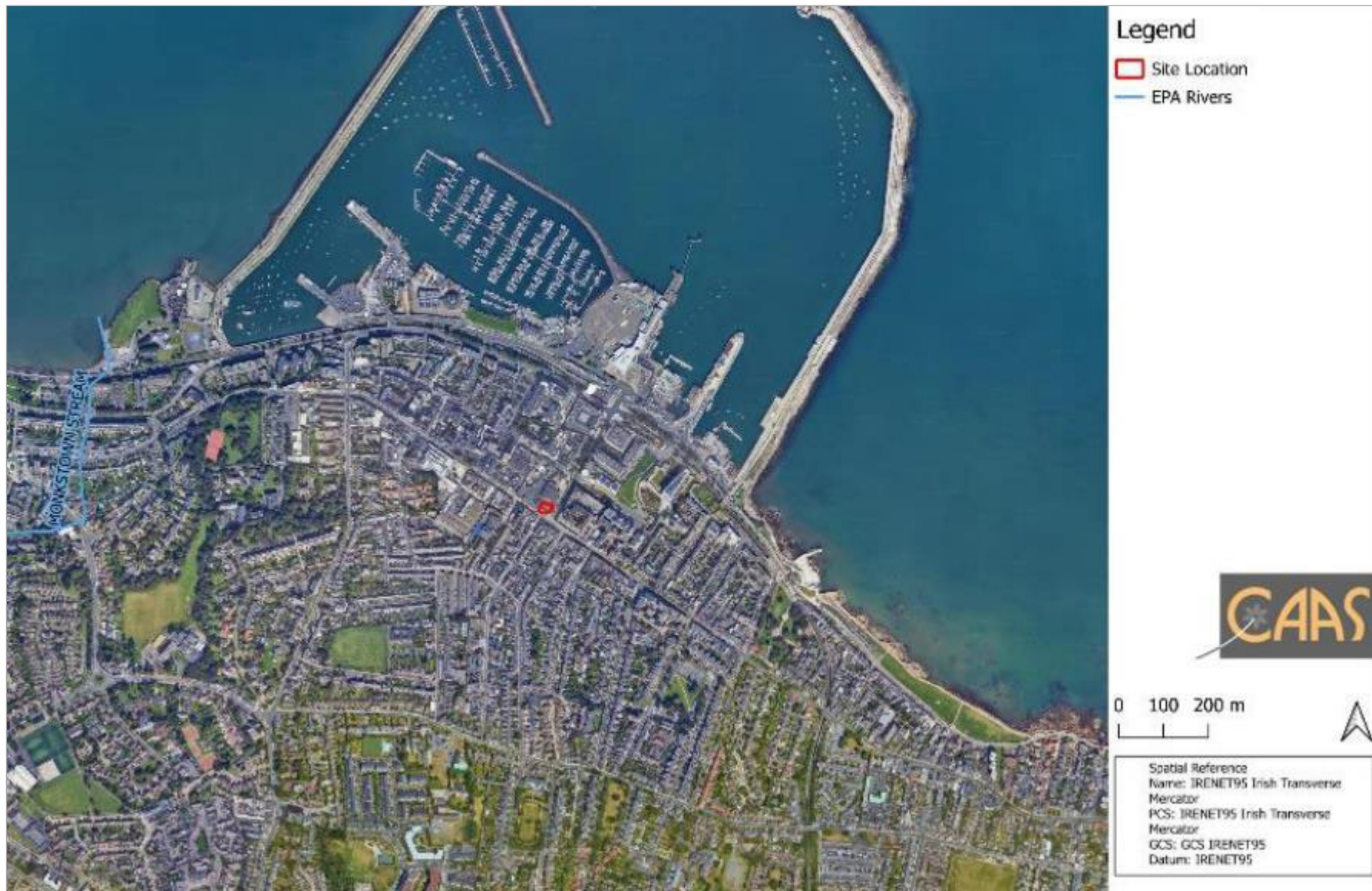


Figure 4.2 Location of proposed development relative to surface hydrological features⁷



Figure 4.3 European sites within a 1 km radius of the proposed development¹⁶

¹⁶ NPWS European sites information and mapping available [here](#) and [here](#) respectively. Accessed January 2025

5 Identification of European sites

5.1. Source-pathway-receptor model

EC guidance¹⁷ outlines the types of effects that may affect European sites. These include effects from the following activities:

- Land take
- Resource requirements (drinking water abstraction etc.)
- Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)
- Excavation requirements (removal of soil and vegetation)
- Transportation requirements
- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

This guidance is taken into consideration when applying the SPR model to this AASR.

Pathways for potential significant effects

The proposed site does not have any direct surface hydrological connectivity to European sites, or any other hydrological features in the surrounding area. There is possible indirect hydrological connectivity with the coastline of Dún Laoghaire via urban surface water drainage already existing on site. However, considering the receiving environment of an intensively developed urban centre, with existing surface water urban drainage network, in combination with the nature and small scale of the proposed development (490 square metres), and lack of any direct hydrological connection, it is not considered that there is any pathway for potential significant effects via hydrology as a result of the proposed development.

The proposed site is composed of a mix of hard surface and soft landscaping (planting), and does not have any suitable habitat for supporting any QI habitats or species, or any ex-situ foraging SCI species within the site itself. Regarding pathways disturbance to ex-situ foraging SCI species that could utilise surrounding agricultural lands; considering the nature of the proposed development and existing disturbance of the surrounding highly developed urban area, there are no pathways for disturbance to any SCI populations potentially utilising nearby agricultural lands for foraging.

Sources for potential significant effects

The proposed development is for small scale create a public square with seating and landscaping, of approximately 490 square metres in area, in a highly developed urban centre. The proposed project is of such minor scale in such a highly developed landscape that it does not pose any sources for potential effects to European sites. In addition, as discussed above, there are not pathways for potential effects to European sites as a result of the minor scale of the proposed development and lack of direct hydrological connectivity to European sites.

Therefore, based on the project description (s 3), the receiving environment description (s 4), and the examination of potential pathways and sources for effects between the proposed development site and European sites; there are no potential sources for significant effects on any European sites as a result of the proposed development.

¹⁷ 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 DG, 2001

Summary of likely significant effects

There are no likely significant effects arising from either the construction or operational phases of the proposed development to any European sites.

5.2. European sites identified for assessment

In applying the SPR model, as there are no sources with pathways for likely significant effect, there are no European sites at risk of potential effects from the proposed development.

5.3. Zone of Influence for European sites

Considering the lack of any sources with pathways for potential significant effect, there is no zone of influence for potential effects to any European sites as a result of the proposed development.

6 In combination effects

6.1. Overview

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other plans or projects that might, in combination with the plan or project, have the potential to have significant effects on European sites. The plans or projects considered for in-combination effects were chosen based on the following criteria, in the context of the characteristics of the proposed development and the receiving environment (as discussed in s 3 and s 4 respectively):

- Having direct or indirect connectivity to a European site;
- Being in close proximity to a European site;
- Being of a substantial scale relative to the conditions and/or current works taking place in the surrounding landscape;
- Having widely dispersed emissions or far-reaching sources for effects;
- Having sources for effects on ecological connectivity.

Considering the above factors; the Local Authority (LA)¹⁸ and An Bord Pleanála (ABP)¹⁹ databases were searched using a radius of 200 m from the proposed development boundary, over the past 5 years²⁰. All developments in these parameters were considered.

The characteristics of the proposed development and the receiving environment were examined in combination with the potential sources for effects from the plans and projects identified from the above search, for potential additive or interactive effects on European sites. The plans identified in the above search are discussed in s 6.1.1 below, while the identified projects that are most relevant for this report are discussed in s 6.1.2 below. The results from the search of ABP and LA applications are provided in Appendix I.

6.1.1. Plans considered for in-combination effects

- Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028

Considering the land use zoning of the above plan and the lack of any sources for likely significant effects as a result of the proposed development, it is not foreseen that the proposed development will have any likely significant in-combination effects with the above plan.

6.1.2. Projects considered for in-combination effects

There are a number other proposed developments in the vicinity of the proposed site, including works which are at planning stage or underway on various applications. The results of a search of the Local Authority database, as described above, found that the vast majority of projects within the area are relating to the altering of existing structures, small private home extensions, change of use, along more medium scale developments. Considering the nature and scale of the proposed development, and the lack of any sources for significant effects, there are no sources for potential significant in combination effects to any European sites with any of the projects examined (see Appendix I).

¹⁸ Local Authority planning applications - available [here](#), accessed; November 2024

¹⁹ An Bord Pleanála planning application - available [here](#), accessed; November 2024

²⁰ Planning applications have a standard lifespan of 5 years as per Section 40 (3)(b) of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended; therefore, these are viewed to be the 'live' applications, all other projects are considered as part of the site other than refused and withdrawn applications, as these would not have any in-combination effects

7 Conclusion

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has considered potential effects on European sites which may arise during the construction and operational phases as a result of the implementation of the proposed development of St. Michael's Square and Environs at Dún Laoghaire, County Dublin. Through an assessment of the potential sources and potential pathways for significant effects; an evaluation of the project characteristics; taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated by this report, that there is no likelihood of significant effects occurring to the Qualifying Interests, Special Conservation Interests or the Conservation Objectives of any designated European site as a result of the implementation of the proposed development.

Given the small, localised scale of the proposed development, and the nature of the proposed development in the context of the local environment, plans and projects; the proposed development will not lead to any likely significant effects in-combination with effects arising from any other plans or projects.

It is concluded by this AA Screening Report that the proposed development is not foreseen to have any likelihood of significant effects on any European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects – and therefore any potential for significant effects on any European site as a result of the proposed development can be ruled out.

This conclusion is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. Consequently, the proposed development does not need to be subject to Stage Two Appropriate Assessment and a Natura Impact Statement is not required.

Appendix I Planning applications assessed for in combination effects

An Bord Pleanála applications for consideration of potential in-combination effects

ABP case ID	Date	Decision	Description	Distance from proposed dev. (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
248770	2017-10-31	Grant permission with conditions	A mixed-use development on overall site of 0.282 hectares at The Old School House, Eblana Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, County Dublin. The proposed development (total Gross Floor Area circa 6,575 square metres) shall provide for the demolition of the Old School House building on site (circa 2,629 square metres) and the construction of 59 number apartments (circa 5,295 square metres); Café (circa 36 square metres); Kiosk (circa 23 square metres), all in a scheme of five-six storeys over basement level (circa 1,244 square metres).	93	<p>This is a project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
300320	2018-07-17	Grant permission with conditions	Permission is sought for the following development: (1.) Demolition of 2 No. vacant out buildings (on the site) to the rear, (2.) Works will comprise (a.) Partial demolition and alterations to the existing first floor return and removal of the existing roofs. (b.) A new extension to the rear and side (at first floor) of the existing return with a new second floor extension and associated roof terrace, (c.) Change of use from commercial to residential at first floor level to accommodate a 1 No.3 bedroom apartment. (3.) A new two storey building to the rear of the site, fronting on to Lynch Lane to accommodate 2 No. 1 bedroom apartments. (4.) Access to the 3 No. proposed apartments from Lynch's Lane. (5.) All ancillary works including central terrace/garden area.	19	<p>This is a project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
300650	2018-08-13	Grant permission	Permission is sought for a residential development comprising (a) construction of 4 no. 2 Bed dual aspect	87	<p>This is a project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping</p>	No

ABP case ID	Date	Decision	Description	Distance from proposed dev. (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
		with conditions	duplex apartments at first floor and second floor levels above existing retail units, with balconies / private open spaces at first and second floor levels and shared access podium courtyard at first floor level, (b) alterations to the layout and to the shopfront of the existing retail unit to the rear at Convent Lane and to the existing office suite at first floor level (accessed off Georges Street Lower), (c) new shared access pedestrian and bicycle entrance off Convent Lane, (d) part change of use of first floor from offices to residential and (e) all associated construction and site works.		<p>with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	
304249	2019-07-26	Grant Perm. w Conditions	Demolition of existing buildings on site, construction of 208 no. Build to Rent Shared Living Residential Development, cafe/kiosk and associated site works.	93	<p>This is a project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
306731	2020-11-10	Grant permission with conditions	Permission for alterations to part completed public amenity building (Planning Reference D03A/0140) to include commercial use and hotel suites.	194	<p>This is a project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No

ABP case ID	Date	Decision	Description	Distance from proposed dev. (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of significant in-combination effects
307297	2020-12-01	Grant permission with conditions	Demolition of existing two storey building and replacement with a five storey Aparthotel Development.	112	<p>This is a project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
307775	2021-01-21	Grant permission with conditions	Partial Demolition of existing storage/garage building and erection of a two storey house	128	<p>This is a project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
308612	2021-04-20	Grant Permissions with Conditions	Residential development consisting of 14 residential units.	112	<p>This is a project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects on European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No

Local planning applications²¹ for consideration of potential in-combination effects²²

Project Code	Decision	Description	Grant date	Project area (sq m) ²³	Distance from proposed dev. (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of in-combination effects
PC/PKS/01/20	Approve	Proposed development of Myrtle Sq and Convent Lane. The proposal involves taking down the three buildings (35-37 George's Street), reconfigure the space and introduce a new civic plaza.	2021-01-11	4280.80	59.28	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
PC/IC/03/23	Approve	Living Streets: Dún Laoghaire is a new scheme for Dún Laoghaire town involving sustainable mobility and public realm improvements. It aims to make our local streets safer and greener, our communities more connected, and to keep our economy vibrant. Works will provide for street and road safety improvements (including pedestrianisation of parts of George's Street Lower, Sussex Street and Convent Road), modal filters and park and landscaping improvements	2024-03-12	1514.70	178.04	<p>This is a medium-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
D21A/1142	Grant Permission	Permission for development. The proposed development will consist of the demolition of the existing single storey structure (not a Protected Structure) on the site and the construction of a new part 2 storey and part 4	2022-06-30	1171.20	142.35	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p>	No

²¹ The majority of surrounding planning permissions are for developments which are minor projects with no risk of in-combination effects. Therefore, a summary list is provided here of the largest / most relevant proposed projects within the below stated parameters (i.e., excluding minor additions or edits to residential homes / existing planning permissions)

²² Parameters used: planning application from within the last 10 years, within a radius of 200m around the proposed project boundary

²³ Project Area (sq m) calculated using QGIS

Project Code	Decision	Description	Grant date	Project area (sq m) ²³	Distance from proposed dev. (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of in-combination effects
		storey residential apartment building comprising 10 no. units (5 one bed and 5 two bed) and ancillary site works, including onsite parking for 5 cars, introduction of amenity open space, removal of existing entrance gates, bin storage, bicycle parking, PV panels on roof, ESB pi...				Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.	
D22A/0562	Grant Permission	Permission for development consisting of the following: a) Change of Use from authorised restaurant to professional services on ground floor of no. 17. b) Demolition to rear of no. 17 of existing 2 storeys to form extended courtyard, and demolition of existing building behind no. 17 onto West Lane including demolition of existing chimney, above roof level, to 18A. c) Construction of 8 no. apartment units, each with their own private balcony/terrace with apt 1-3 with winter gardens, made up of...	2023-05-09	560.30	119.70	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
D21A/0308	Grant Permission	Permission is sought for a development consisting of a development at these sites. This application with comprise of the following: (1.) A first floor extension to the rear of the property to house a bedroom with en suite, and a family bathroom and to include 2 .no. roof-lights and a ground floor extension to the rear of the property, alterations and reparations to rear roof and rear elevation at ground and first floor levels, and ancillary site works all at 65, Mulgrave Street, Dun Laoghaire...	2021-05-28	553.30	88.46	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
D22A/0	Grant	Permission for development. The development	2022-	518.00	46.60	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase	No

Project Code	Decision	Description	Grant date	Project area (sq m) ²³	Distance from proposed dev. (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of in-combination effects
340	Permission	will principally consist of: the change of use of No. 1 Sussex Street (existing office) and Nos. 2, 3 and 4 Sussex Street (existing Credit Union) to a mixed-use commercial and residential scheme which will include 1 No. café (111.6 sq m) and 10 No. apartments (comprised of 3 No. one bedroom units and 7 No. two bedroom units). The proposed development will include the demolition of the existing pitched roofs and the provision of an additional floor l...	07-11			and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.	
D23A/0762	Grant Permission	Change of use and alterations to D22A/0340. The proposed works will include the change of use of part of the previously approved cafe to a one-bedroom apartment (72sqm) and the remainder of the space to retail (32sqm). Together with all ancillary and associated ground and site works.	2024-01-30	518.00	46.60	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.	No
D25A/0007	N/A	Planning permission is sought for; the development of a lounge at the open space at the back of the store to accommodate a shisha and coffee bar with an overall area of 132.86 sqm, to install roller shutter doors to the south-west elevation and to demolish the attached illegal shed to the north-east elevation.	N/A	405.20	103.45	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.	No
S179A/H/05/20	N/A	The development will consist of 3no. 1-Bed apartments and 1no. 2-Bed Apartment, and all	N/A	331.80	194.64	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be	No

Project Code	Decision	Description	Grant date	Project area (sq m) ²³	Distance from proposed dev. (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of in-combination effects
24		ancillary works.				<p>in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	
D24A/0884/WEB	Grant Permission	Change of use of the existing 250sqm commercial building, a former HSE premises, into a single 4-bedroom, 265sqm dwelling; additional floor area provided by flooring over first floor level void. Private open space to the rear to be enclosed by new timber fence panels, with sliding gate for vehicular access	2024-12-17	283.10	111.03	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
D20A/0067	Grant Permission	Permission is sought for development comprising the development of a new residential unit. The proposal comprises: A) Change of use from office to residential (3 bed approx. 148m ² apartment) at upper ground floor and first floor level; permission is also sought to increase the ridge height from 8.45m above street level to 9.57m. B) Demolition of existing stores and lower ground floor level C) Landscaping of the site to provide private open space to the rear and all associated site works. ...	2020-08-11	272.90	19.17	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
D24A/0964	N/A	Planning Permission to change the use from Commercial to Residential. Permission is also	N/A	262.70	144.76	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be</p>	No

Project Code	Decision	Description	Grant date	Project area (sq m) ²³	Distance from proposed dev. (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of in-combination effects
		sought to renovate the existing single storey terrace structure to the front, to demolish the two storey return and to erect a new single storey extension at the rear. The proposal will include two bedrooms, living/dining/kitchen space and ancillary accommodation.				<p>in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	
D24A/0715	Grant Permission	Permission to change 59 Mulgrave Street, Dun Laoghaire from Commercial to Residential usage. Permission is also sought to renovate the existing single storey terraced structure to the front, to demolish the two storey return and to erect a new single and two storey extension at the rear. The proposal will include three bedrooms, living/dining/kitchen space and ancillary accommodation.	2024-11-04	242.30	145.64	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
D19A/0833	Grant Permission	Permission for development at a 235 sqm site. The development will consist of : Change of use at ground floor level from restaurant to credit union (Class 2, financial services where the services are provided principally to visiting members of the public) (181.8 sqm), and residential access (9 sqm); change of use at first floor level from restaurant to residential (173.7 sqm) to facilitate 2 no. one bedroom apartments (69.5 sqm and 67.7 sqm) and circulation space; the demolition of 7.3 sqm at...	2020-02-06	234.90	33.66	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
D21B/0016	Grant Permission	Permission is sought for partial demolition of boundary walls to the existing laneway to the	2021-03-11	212.60	154.89	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be</p>	No

Project Code	Decision	Description	Grant date	Project area (sq m) ²³	Distance from proposed dev. (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of in-combination effects
		rear, partial demolition of existing single storey extension walls, and removal of roof over extension in full, construction of anew external wall to existing extension (note existing extension floor area reduced in size), together with new roof over existing extension and partially over terrace area and high level glazing, extended landscaped private open space to the rear, glazed roof area above ex...				<p>in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	
D22A/0 897	Grant Permission	Planning permission for development will consist of renovations and upgrade to two existing buildings (front building on Lower George's Street and rear building accessed from lane off Sussex Street) including the demolition of existing single storey ground floor storage area and out buildings and a proposed new single storey extension, to provide a meeting room and accessible WC, to the rear of the front building that connects both existing buildings. Permission is also sought for change of u...	2023-01-18	168.70	114.80	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites..</p>	No
D23A/0 425	Grant Permission	The removal of the existing roof and the addition of a second floor accommodation, with all ancillary site works.	2023-11-13	164.40	149.51	<p>This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	No
D22A/0	Grant	Permission is sought for 01) Change of use of 2	2022-	125.20	179.27	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase	No

Project Code	Decision	Description	Grant date	Project area (sq m) ²³	Distance from proposed dev. (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of in-combination effects
805	Permission	No retail units to residential use to create 2no townhouses, 02) Demolition of single storey flat roof extensions to rear and existing two-storey return to rear and existing plant to rear, 3) Proposed two-storey flat roof extensions to rear of each townhouse, 04) Proposed alterations to fenestration to front and side of buildings at ground floor level and 05) Ancillary site and boundary works.	12-16			and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.	
D23A/0 548	Grant Permission	A) Change of use from retail to residential B) Partial demolition of existing two-storey structure including removal of pitched gable roof, C) Material alterations to front elevation, including removal of shopfront, increased height and alterations to existing openings at ground floor and first floor levels D) Construction of new set back third storey with access to new flat roofed terrace to front and enclosed winter garden to rear, the entirety as a new two bedroomed, three-storey live-work...	2023-10-11	79.00	93.75	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.	No
D22A/0 230	Grant Permission	Permission is sought for demolition of existing single story retail store and construction of a two-storey, two-bedroom apartment type dwelling with rear courtyard and first-floor balcony.	2022-05-27	64.80	131.99	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements. Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.	No
D20A/0	Grant	Permission for development on this site. The	2020-	64.80	103.82	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase	No

Project Code	Decision	Description	Grant date	Project area (sq m) ²³	Distance from proposed dev. (m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Likelihood of in-combination effects
784	Permission	development will consist of a proposed 3 storey 2 bedroom dwelling (total floor area=97.90m.sq.) with ground floor patio area top rear & second floor balcony to front & screened roof garden to rear, proposed pedestrian & vehicular access from Convent Lane and associated site works	12-18			<p>and the operational phase will have localised effects that will be in keeping with the context and character of the surrounding environment. The consent process for this project was subject to applicable EIA and AA requirements.</p> <p>Considering the above, in combination with the lack of any potential for effects to European sites arising from the proposed development, it is not considered that there is any potential for significant in-combination effects to any European sites.</p>	

Appendix II Legislative context and Habitats Directive overview

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the “favourable conservation status” of habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Habitats Directive as above and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds) with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated to afford their protection. Qualifying Interests (QIs) are the habitats and species for which SACs are designated and Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) are the species for which SPAs are designated. SACs and SPAs are known and referred to as European sites.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect such sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA. These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive States:

‘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 subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public’.

For the purposes of this assessment, the above definition relates to a project. The AA process relates to the protection of species listed in Annex I and Annex II of the Habitats Directive which form the Natura 2000 network (Article 3(1)). Species breeding and resting places of species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive are nationally protected in Ireland as per Articles 15 and 16 of the Habitats Directive. The actual species listed in Annex IV do not form part of the Natura 2000 network as they are not mentioned in Article 3(1) of the Directive which defines the Natura 2000 network.

Article 3(1) of the Habitats Directive States:

‘A coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation shall be set up under the title Natura 2000. This network, composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, shall enable the natural habitat types and the species’ habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range’.

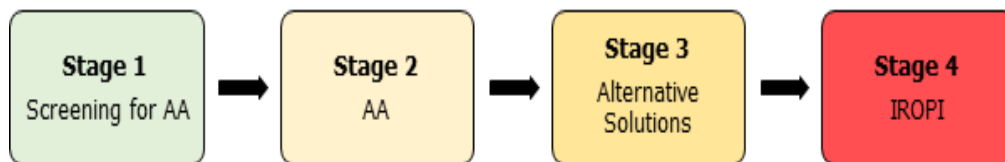
AA is an assessment of the likelihood of significant effects arising from a project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, to assess if the project will have potential for significant effect on any European site concerned, and implications in view of the European site’s Conservation Objectives (COs). These sites consist of SACs and SPAs and provide for the protection and long-term survival of Europe’s most valuable and threatened species and habitats. Where a formal consent process applies, the AA process is concluded by the relevant competent authority

making a determination in accordance with article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

Overview of the Habitats Directive and Appropriate Assessment process

The Habitats Directive itself promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. This approach aims to avoid any effects on European sites by identifying possible effects early in the project making process and avoiding such effects. Second, the approach involves the application of mitigation measures, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If potential significant effects on European sites remain, and no further practicable mitigation is possible, the approach requires the consideration of alternative solutions. If no alternative solutions are identified and the project is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effects.

There are four main stages in the AA process:



Stage one: Appropriate Assessment Screening

The process that identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) can be compiled to inform the competent authority on conducting a Screening for AA.

Stage two: Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse effects mitigation measures are required to avoid or minimise potential effects. The details of these mitigation measures are then assessed in the context of the ecological integrity of the plan/project characteristics to ensure no significant adverse effects on European sites. If this assessment process shows there are no residual significant effects, then the process may end at this stage, stage two, of the AA process which are formalised in Natura Impact Statements (NIS) reports which support the overall AA process. However, if the likelihood of significant impacts remains, then the process must proceed to Stage Three.

Stage three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

The process that examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site.

Stage four: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)

An assessment of compensatory measures, where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain, but in the light of an assessment of IROPI, it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

Appendix III Contributor competencies

Technical assistant - Callum O'Regan holds a B.Sc. degree in Zoology from University College Cork and a Master's in Conservation Behaviour from Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology in 2021. Callum has skills in data management and analysis, report writing and GIS mapping. Callum has also worked on preparation of a number of reports including Ecological Impact Assessments (EclAs) and Appropriate Assessment Screenings for private and public projects of various sizes and complexities.

Author - Karen Dylan Shevlin is a senior ecologist, with over 10 years' experience working in multiple capacities in ecology in Irish and international research institutions and conservation organisations, and holds a MSc in Biodiversity and Conservation from Trinity College Dublin (Dist. 2013). Karen has significant skills and experience in leading research and ecological surveys of bats, birds, insects, habitats and mammals, data analysis and managing resulting reports. Karen is also a specialist in ecological theory and the impacts/effects that altering natural dynamics may have on the surrounding environment. Karen has been the lead author and reviewed on many Appropriate Assessment Screenings, NISs, and EIARs for a range of public and private projects and plans ranging from residential and industrial projects, to County Development Plans, to major wind turbine sites. This combination of skills and knowledge provides the backbone of the assessment process, and ensure that all of the baseline and detailed data gathered in the field is interpreted in a manner that is grounded in best scientific knowledge.

Reviewer - Paul Fingleton has an MSc in Rural and Regional Resources Planning (with specialisation in EIA) from the University of Aberdeen. Paul is a member of the International Association for Impact Assessment as well as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. He has over twenty-five years' experience working in the area of Environmental Assessment. Over this period, he has been involved in a diverse range of projects including contributions to, and co-ordination of, numerous complex EIARs and EIA screening reports. He has also contributed to and supervised the preparation of numerous AAs and AA screenings.

Paul is the lead author of the EPA Guidelines and accompanying Advice Notes on EIARs. He has been involved in all previous editions of these statutory guidelines. He also provides a range of other EIA related consultancy services to the EPA. Paul is regularly engaged by various planning authorities and other consent authorities to provide specialised EIA advice.