

# DRAFT COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN **2016-2022**

*Screening for Appropriate Assessment*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT .....	1
1.2	STAGES OF APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT .....	2
<b>2</b>	<b>SCREENING .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	DÚN LAOGHAIRE RATHDOWN COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN .....	4
2.1.1	Plan Vision, Policies and Objectives.....	5
2.2	APPROACH TO AA SCREENING .....	7
2.2.1	Strategic Environmental Assessment .....	7
2.3	OVERVIEW OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENT .....	12
2.3.1	Natura 2000 Sites.....	12
2.3.2	Other Natural Heritage .....	13
2.3.3	Water Quality.....	13
2.3.4	Hydrogeology.....	15
2.3.5	Water Supply and Wastewater Facilities.....	16
2.3.6	Surface Water Management / Flood Protection .....	16
2.3.7	Existing Threats and Pressures .....	17
<b>3</b>	<b>BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF NATURA 2000 SITES .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>POLICY AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT IMPACT .....</b>	<b>30</b>
4.1	APPROACH TO IMPACT ASSESSMENT.....	30
4.2	POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON NATURA 2000 SITES.....	30
<b>5</b>	<b>DIRECT, INDIRECT OR SECONDARY IMPACTS .....</b>	<b>32</b>
5.1	DIRECT IMPACTS.....	32
5.1.1	Greenways and Cycleways.....	32
5.2	INDIRECT IMPACTS .....	33
5.2.1	Watercourses.....	33
5.2.2	Hydrogeological features.....	33
5.2.3	Water Supply and Wastewater Facilities.....	34
5.2.4	Transport .....	35
5.2.5	Development at ‘The Gut’ .....	35
5.2.6	Leisure Facilities.....	35
5.2.7	Renewable Energy .....	36
5.2.8	Natural Heritage Policies .....	36

5.3	CUMULATIVE AND IN-COMBINATION IMPACTS .....	41
<b>6</b>	<b>LIKELY CHANGES TO NATURA 2000 SITES .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN WITH POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>SCREENING CONCLUSIONS AND STATEMENT .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT MATRIX .....</b>	<b>47</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1 - Natura 2000 sites within a 15km range of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan Boundary.....	26
Figure 3.2 - River and Stream Networks within Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan Boundary .....	27
Figure 3.3 - Arrows show Sections of South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA Extending Across County Development Plan Boundary.....	28
Figure 3.4 - Arrows Indicate Slight Sections of South Dublin Bay cSAC Intersecting County Development Plan Boundary.....	28
Figure 3.5 - Arrow shows Intersection of Knocksink Wood cSAC across County Development Plan Boundary .....	29
Figure 3.6 - Ballyman Glen cSAC Intersecting County Development Plan Boundary.....	29

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 - Suggested Policy Wording for Inclusion into the draft County Development Plan .....	8
Table 2.2 - Rivers flowing through Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown Catchment Area ( <i>EPA and WFD Status Report 2007 - 2009</i> ).....	14
Table 3.1 - cSACs within 15km of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Boundary .....	18
Table 3.2 - SPAs within 15km of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Boundary.....	21
Table 4.1 - Policy Areas with Potential for Significant Impacts .....	31
Table 6.1 - Likely Effects on Natura 2000 Sites .....	43

# 1 INTRODUCTION

This report comprises information in support of screening for an Appropriate Assessment of the Draft County Development Plan for Dún Laoghaire 2016-2022 in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora; the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended); and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011).

## 1.1 REPORT LAYOUT

This report is presented as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides a description of the draft Dún Laoghaire County Development Plan 2016-2022; a description of the approach of the AA screening; and an overview of the existing environment of Dún Laoghaire, including the existing threats and pressures;
- Chapter 3 provides a brief description of the Natura 2000 sites both within Dún Laoghaire County itself, and within a 15 kilometre radius;
- Chapter 4 summarises the policy areas with potential for significant impacts;
- Chapter 5 describes the policies with potential for significant impacts;
- Chapters 6 summarises the likely changes to Natura 2000 sites;
- Chapter 7 summarises the elements of the plan with potential for significant impacts;
- Chapter 8 provides the screening conclusion; and
- Chapter 9 sets out the Finding of No Significant Effects matrix.

## 1.2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as the “Habitats Directive”, provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. These are Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/ECC) as codified by Directive 2009/147/EC.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA) as follows:

*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In 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.*



The County Development Plan is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the Natura 2000 sites in the Plan area. However, it does include, inter alia, measures to protect, conserve and manage the County's natural heritage in a prudent and sustainable manner, including Natura 2000 sites, and to seek its enhancement where appropriate and feasible.

Article 6(4) states:

*If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the [Natura 2000] site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.*

These articles together with the National Regulations (S.I. No. 477/2011) mean that where the implementation of the Plan has potential to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, the relevant Local Authority (in this case Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council) must ensure that an appropriate assessment is carried out in view of that site's conservation objectives. The Plan can only be approved by Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown Council if it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site(s) concerned, or in the case of a negative assessment and where there are no alternative solutions, the plan can only be approved for reasons of overriding public interest.

### **1.3 STAGES OF APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT**

The AA process progresses through four stages. If at any stage in the process it is determined that there will be no significant effect on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site in view of the sites conservation objectives, the process is effectively completed. The four stages are as follows:-

- Stage 1 – Screening of the proposed plan or project for AA;
- Stage 2 – An appropriate assessment of the proposed plan or project;
- Stage 3 – Assessment of alternative solutions; and
- Stage 4 – Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)/ Derogation.

Stages 1 and 2 relate to Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive; and Stages 3 and 4 to Article 6(4).

#### **Stage 1: Screening**

The aim of Stage 1, 'Screening' is to determine whether or not the proposed plan or project is likely to *adversely affect the integrity of* any Natura 2000 site and to determine whether or not Stage 2, the AA, is required. This is done by examining the proposed plan or project; and the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 sites that might potentially be affected.

## **Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment**

The aim of Stage 2 is to identify any adverse impacts that the plan or project might have upon the integrity of relevant Natura 2000 sites. As part of the assessment, a key consideration is 'in combination' with other plans or projects. Where adverse impacts are identified, the AA will propose changes to the plan or project that would avoid, reduce or remedy any such negative impacts and the plan or project should then be amended accordingly, thereby avoiding the need to progress to Stage 3.

## **Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions**

If it is not possible during the Stage 2 assessment to reduce impacts to acceptable, non-significant levels by avoidance and/or mitigation, Stage 3 of the process must be undertaken, which is to objectively assess whether alternative solutions exist by which the objectives of the plan or project can be achieved. Explicitly, this means alternative solutions that do not have negative impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

The process must return to Stage 2 as alternatives will require assessment in order to proceed. Demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives have been considered and assessed, and that the least damaging option has been selected, it is necessary to progress to Stage 4.

It should also be noted that EU guidance on this stage of the process states that, 'other assessment criteria, such as economic criteria, cannot be seen as overruling ecological criteria' (EC, 2002). In other words, if alternative solutions exist that do not have negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites; they should be adopted regardless of economic considerations.

## **Stage 4: Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI)/ Derogation**

This stage of the AA process is undertaken when it has been determined that negative impacts on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site will result from a plan or project, but that no alternatives exist. At this stage of the AA process, it is the characteristics of the plan or project itself that will determine whether or not the competent authority can allow it to progress. This is the determination of 'overriding public interest'.

It is important to note that in the case of Natura 2000 sites that include in their qualifying features 'priority' habitats or species, as defined in Annex I and II of the Directive, the demonstration of 'overriding public interest' is not sufficient, and it must be demonstrated that the plan or project is necessary for 'human health or safety considerations'.

Where plans or projects meet these criteria, they can be allowed, provided adequate compensatory measures are proposed. Stage 4 of the process defines and describes these compensation measures.

## 2 SCREENING

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown covers an area of 125 km<sup>2</sup> to the south of Dublin City. The County consists of extensive suburban areas as well as agricultural lands. Land uses mainly comprise residential, commercial and industrial, with agricultural uses mainly occurring in the southern half of the County. Along the east of the County there is approximately 17 kilometres of coastline, which includes beaches cliffs and marshes.

### 2.1 DÚN LAOGHAIRE RATHDOWN COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The draft County Development Plan sets out Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's policies for the continuing sustainable development of the County for the period 2016 to 2022. The Draft Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Act sets out the mandatory requirements which must be included in a Development Plan. These include the objectives and zoning of land, the provision of infrastructure, the conservation and protection of the environment, and the integration of planning and sustainable development with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population. It is also required that a Core Strategy is prepared, which, as far as is practicable, is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines.

This document concentrates on the draft County Development Plan and the potential for impacts on Natura 2000 sites within the administrative area and within a 15km range of the County Development Plan boundary, arising from implementation of policies, objectives and zonings.

Under section 9 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, every planning authority must make a development plan, setting the Framework for all future development in the planning authority's area for the stated period, for the whole functional area of the authority every six years. In the context of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, the draft County Development Plan sets out the policies for the continuing sustainable development of the County for the period 2016 – 2022.

The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022, which relates to the entire functional area of the Authority, will, when adopted, replace the current 2010-2016 County Development Plan.

The draft Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 - 2010 (as amended) Act sets out the mandatory requirements which must be included in a Development Plan.

The County Development Plan consists of:

- The Written Statement – the main policy document
- A volume of supporting Appendices
- County Zoning Maps
- Strategic Environmental Assessment Report
- Appropriate Assessment Screening Report



The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 introduces the requirement for an evidence-based “Core Strategy” to be incorporated as part of the County Development Plans. The primary focus of the Core Strategy is on residential development and in ensuring that there is an acceptable balance between the supply of zoned, serviced land for residential development and the projected demand for new housing, over the lifetime of the Plan. In this respect, two key datasets are examined:

- Housing Land Availability Study (Supply of zoned land)
- Regional Planning Guidelines for the GDA (Population Targets)

The County Development Plan sets the scale, location and nature of new development areas but it is other mechanisms such as Local Area Plans and Strategic Development Zones that provide the crucial detail for creating sustainable neighbourhoods. The draft County Development Plan for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council includes the provision for a range of statutory Local Area Plans and one Strategic Development Zone highlighted in the plan.

### **2.1.1 County Development Plan Vision, Policies and Objectives**

The overall vision in the County Development Plan is for the County to achieve three goals by 2022:

1. To deliver Ireland’s best quality of residential life by 2022. Every resident in every community and village will share in this.
2. To co-ordinate and facilitate economic actors towards achieving full employment in sustainable, meaningful jobs by 2022.
3. To support and sustain economic and natural resources of Regional significance to 2022 and beyond.

Further to the overall vision, the written statement contains vision statements, policies and objectives in relation to the following:

- **Strategic Overview**

Vision: To continue to facilitate appropriate levels of sustainable development predicated on the delivery of high quality community, employment and recreational environments - allied to the promotion of sustainable transportation and travel patterns - but all the while protecting Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown’s unique landscape, natural heritage and physical fabric, to ensure the needs of those living and working in the County can thrive in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable manner.

- **Sustainable Communities Strategy**

Vision: To develop sustainable and successful communities across the County both through the continuing consolidation and redevelopment of the established built up areas, and the promotion of new, compact mixed-use urban villages optimally located in greenfield areas well served by existing or planned public transport networks and where residents will be within walking distance of supporting social and community infrastructure – including shops, services, employment opportunities, schools and leisure facilities.

- **Enterprise and Employment Strategy**

Vision: To encourage, support and facilitate further sustainable employment creation, economic growth and business development across a range of sectors - including retailing - by strengthening existing employment areas and revitalising town and district centres, by focusing on appropriate business support mechanisms and by capitalising upon the many inherent advantages available to the County – as evidenced by its economic profile – to improve the overall attractiveness of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown as a vibrant place in which to set up and do business.

- **Green County Strategy**

Vision: To promote and develop a coherent and integrated green infrastructure network across Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown which will secure and enhance biodiversity - including the protection of Natura 2000 sites - provide readily accessible parks, open spaces and recreational facilities, maintain historic and landscape character areas and provide for the sustainable management of water through facilitating the retention and development of a network of green spaces in urban and countryside locations to serve the needs of all citizens and communities in the County.

- **Physical Infrastructure Strategy**

Vision: To continue protecting both the environment and the citizens of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown through the provision of high quality, resilient environmental infrastructure and by aspiring to a carbon–neutral County through the promotion of resource preservation and energy efficiency and through the application of considered climate change mitigation policies for the duration of this Development Plan and beyond. At a more strategic level, and where considered necessary and appropriate, the Council will promote and champion the development of evidence - based climate change adaptation systems targeted at moderating the negative effects of climate change.

- **Built Heritage Strategy**

Vision: To ensure that the protection and conservation of the outstanding architectural and archaeological built heritage of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown forms an integral and component part in the continuing sustainable development of the County and that this valuable, and in many instances non-renewable, resource continues to be safeguarded through proper management, sensitive enhancement and appropriate development and re-development.

- **Community Strategy**

Vision: To promote social inclusion and enhanced ‘quality of life’ through integrating the continued sustainable growth and planning of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown with its social and community development by ensuring the retention, provision and maintenance of well considered and appropriate levels of social, community and cultural infrastructure readily accessible to all citizens of, and visitors to, the County.

- **Principles of Development**

Vision: To ensure that all new development and redevelopment proposals in the County adhere to the principles of good urban design and contribute to the delivery of a ‘sense of space’, through the promotion of a high quality built environment utilising considered design and development standards. The orderly and sustainable delivery of new developments, of many diverse types and scales, will be realised through the application of the various standards and objectives embedded in the Development Plan via the Development Management process and adherence to the overarching Land Use Zoning imperatives.

- **Specific Local Objectives**

Vision: To initiate and/or give effect to the package of Specific Local Objectives within the lifetime of the 2016-2022 County Development Plan.

Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan contains a vision statement in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment as follows: To ensure that the implementation of the various policies, objectives, projects and actions embedded in the County Development Plan will have no likely significant effect on the environment nor will they adversely effect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

## **2.2 APPROACH TO AA SCREENING**

The preparation of this Plan has been an iterative process and this assessment has been used to inform the development of appropriate policies and objectives commencing at the early stages of the Plan review.

As a proactive measure, prior to compilation of the draft County Development Plan, the AA team provided protection policies to the Plan team to ensure that protection policies for the Natura 2000 network within and in the vicinity of the County boundary were interwoven into the fabric of the plan (**Table 2.1** - Suggested Policy Wording for Inclusion into the draft County Development Plan). In addition, other policies including those relating to water supply, waste water, surface water drainage and groundwater were provided to ensure the protection of supporting features, including water quality. As a result, the draft Dún Laoghaire County Development Plan contains numerous policies and objectives focussed on the protection of the Natura 2000 Network, which will contribute to the conservation of Natura 2000 sites in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Following this initial proactive step, the Plan team developed draft policies and objectives. The AA team has reviewed all policies and objectives for potential to impact on the identified Natura 2000 sites in the administrative area and within 15km. In many cases, the objectives and policies are general measures which have no specific potential for impacts, however a small number present potential for impact and these have been further considered in this Screening Report.

### **2.2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a process for evaluating, at the earliest appropriate stage, the environmental effects of plans or programmes before they are adopted. It also gives the public and other interested parties an opportunity to comment and to be kept informed of decisions and how they were made. An early consideration of environmental concerns in the planning process creates an opportunity for environmental factors to be considered explicitly alongside other factors such as social, technical or economic aspects. The European Directive (2001/42/EC) on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (the SEA Directive), was transposed into national legislation through S.I. 435/2004 and S.I. 436/2004 as amended by S.I. 200/2011 and S.I. 201/2011.

The draft County Development Plan will undergo SEA in a parallel process to the screening for Appropriate Assessment.

**Table 2.1 - Suggested Policy Wording for Inclusion into the draft County Development Plan**

<b>POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Included Within the Final Draft County Development Plan</b>
<b>General Overarching Policy/ Objectives</b>	
<p>The Council will ensure that any plan/project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Where a plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed imperative for reasons of overriding public interest, all in accordance with the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive.'</p> <p>It is recommended that this policy is included in the strategic policy section at the front of the County Development Plan and again in relevant chapters throughout the County Development Plan.</p>	Yes- included as an overarching policy in the Introduction and the Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity chapters.
<b>Biodiversity and Natural Heritage</b>	
Conserve, enhance and manage the County's natural heritage including its biodiversity, landscapes and geological heritage and promote understanding of and sustainable access to it.	Yes- Section 4.1.3.1
Protect the ecological integrity of proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and Annex I habitats.	Yes- Section 4.1.3.1
Ensure that all plans and projects in the County which could, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site (or sites) will be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening.	Yes- included as an overarching policy in the Introduction and the Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity chapters, Section 4.1.3.2, 8.2.2(v) and 8.2.9.4.
To ensure that a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is produced once Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening has indicated likely significant effects on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any Natura 2000 sites.	Yes- included as an overarching policy in the Introduction and the Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity chapters, Section 4.1.3.2, 8.2.2(v) and 8.2.9.4.
To promote the maintenance and, as appropriate, the achievement of favourable conservation status of Natura 2000 sites and their associated habitats and species, in association with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).	Yes- Section 4.1.3.4
To promote the approach of an Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment (IBIA) where suited as an efficient framework in order to streamline biodiversity consideration while assessing environmental impacts within the SEA, EIA and AA objectives, targets and indicators.	Yes- Section 4.1.3.1

POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES	Included Within the Final Draft County Development Plan
To support the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) in the maintenance and, as appropriate, the achievement of favourable conservation status for the habitats and species to which the EU Habitats Directive applies.	Yes- Section 4.1.3.1
To consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) when undertaking, approving and authorising development which is likely to affect plant, animal or bird species protected by law. In the event of a proposed development impacting on a site known, or likely to be, a breeding or resting site of species listed in Habitats Regulations a derogation licence, issued by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) will be required in advance of a permission.	Yes- Section 8.2.7.1
To ensure the implementation of the EU Freshwater Fish Directive and its transposition into Irish legislation in order to protect any fish and shellfish habitat in the County Development Plan area.	No
Invasive non-native plant and animal species (Alien Species) can represent a major threat to local, regional and national bio-diversity. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. The Council is committed to controlling invasive species and will monitor public lands such as open spaces, verges and river valleys for such species. However, vigilance is required by all landowners as invasive species can spread quickly across boundaries. Preventative measures include ensuring that good site hygiene practices are employed for the movement of materials into, out of and around the site and ensuring that imported soil is free of seeds and rhizomes of key invasive plant species. Suggest that this goes in to the Heritage and Biodiversity section of the County Development Plan.	Yes- Section 4.1.3.11
To implement measures to control and manage alien / invasive species (e.g. Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, etc.) and noxious weeds (e.g. ragwort, thistle, dock, etc.) within the County Development Plan.	Yes- Section 4.1.3.1
To ensure the monitoring and control of EIA sub-threshold development within the County Development Plan through the document <i>Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Consent Authorities regarding sub-threshold development (DEHLG, 2003)</i> with specific reference to the requirement of Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening.	Yes- Section 8.2.9.3
<p><b>Article 10</b></p> <p>Article 10 of the Habitats Directive states that;</p> <p><i>‘Member States shall endeavour, where they consider it necessary, in their landuse planning and development policies and, in particular, with a view to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network, to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.’</i></p> <p>Many habitats of conservation concern particularly designated sites are linked to the surrounding landscape by natural and manmade features, such as water courses (rivers, streams, canals and drainage ditches), hedgerows, treelines, roads and railways. Therefore, areas of conservation concern must not be considered in isolation, their linkages and buffer zones must also be protected to ensure the continued migration of species and genetic diversity throughout the entire area.</p>	Yes- Section 4.1.3.6

<b>POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Included Within the Final Draft County Development Plan</b>
<p>Issues related to connectivity, including maintaining and establishing connections between protected areas, play an integral role in land-use planning. The County Development Plan aims to improve the ecological situation in Dún Laoghaire, and enhance connectivity between small fragmented areas.</p> <p>Within the County Development Plan area and its immediate surroundings, ecological surveys have been completed to identify those habitats which would improve the ecological coherence throughout the entire area. The specific habitats identified include treelines, hedgerows, scrub and woodland, watercourses and semi-natural areas such as mixed broadleaved woodland, sand dunes and saltmarshes, which were mapped and are shown in the Ecological Network Maps.</p> <p>Suggest that this goes in to the Heritage and Biodiversity section of the County Development Plan.</p>	
To promote the protection of habitats which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (e.g. rivers and their banks) or their contribution as stepping stones (e.g. ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.	Yes- Sections 4.1.3.6, 4.1.3.7 and 4.1.3.8
To work with local communities, groups, landowners, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and other relevant parties to identify, protect, manage and, where appropriate, enhance and promote sites of local biodiversity value.	Yes- Section 4.1.3.1
Ensure that no development, including clearance and storage of materials, takes place within a minimum distance of 10-15m measured from each bank of any river, stream or watercourse in the County Development Plan area.	Yes- Section 4.1.3.7
In the event of lighting being proposed along river or canal corridors an Ecological Impact Assessment (and where necessary an Appropriate Assessment) including bat and otter surveys shall be conducted by specialists. The recommendations of the specialist studies shall be implemented. No lighting will be installed without prior consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and shall be in line with advances in knowledge into the impact of lighting on bats and other species and also to reflect advances in technology in the lighting industry.	Yes- Section 8.2.7.1
<b>Water Supply and Management</b>	
To require that all development relating to water supply and waste water treatment are subject to Appropriate Assessment to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any Natura 2000 sites and that the requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive are met.	Yes- Section 5.1.1.2
<b>Wastewater</b>	
To provide adequate wastewater treatment facilities to serve the existing and future population of the County, subject to complying with the Water Framework Directive, the Eastern River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015 or any updated version of this document, Pollution Reduction Programmes for Designated Shellfish Areas, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the Habitats Directive.	Yes- Section 5.1.1.2, and Section 4.1.3.1
<b>Surface Water Drainage</b>	
To require that a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) is applied to any development and that site specific solutions to surface water drainage systems are developed, which meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin Management Plans.	Yes- Section 8.2.9.7
<b>Groundwater Protection</b>	
To ensure the protection of the groundwater resources in and around the County Development Plan and associated habitats and species.	Yes- Section 5.1.1.4

<b>POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>Included Within the Final Draft County Development Plan</b>
<b>Coastal Protection</b>	
To have regard to the EU guidance document <i>The Implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive in Estuaries and Coastal Zones (EU 2011)</i> when assessing development in or near coastal areas which is likely to have significant effects on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any designated sites, coastal and marine fauna, flora and amenities.	Yes- Section 8.2.7.4
<b>Flood Risk Management</b>	
To require that all proposed flood protection or alleviation works will be subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA) to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any Natura 2000 sites and that the requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive are met.	Yes- Section 5.2.5.2
To implement the <i>Planning System and Flood Risk Management for Planning Authorities</i> (DoEHG/OPW 2009) and the National Flood Hazard Mapping (OPW) while referring to the relevant Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) for the County Development Plan.	Yes- Section 5.2.5.2
To ensure riparian buffer zones are created between all watercourses and any development for a minimum of 10-15m, to militate against flood risk. The extent of these buffer zones shall be determined in consultation with a qualified ecologist and following a Flood Risk Assessment. Any hard landscaping proposals shall be located outside of these buffer zones.	Yes- Section 4.1.3.7
<b>Economic Development</b>	
To ensure that any industry development will be subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any Natura 2000 sites and that the requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive are met.	Yes- Sections 8.2.2(v), 8.2.9.4 and 8.2.7.1
To require that all development proposals are subject to AA screening to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any Natura 2000 sites and that the requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive are met.	Yes- Sections 8.2.2(v), 8.2.9.4 and 8.2.7.1
<b>Open Space and Recreation</b>	
It is an objective of the Council to promote the development of the S2S promenade and cycleway. It should be noted that this coastal route will be subject to a feasibility study, including an assessment of the route options. Any development proposals shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated cSAC's, SPA's and pNHA's in Dublin Bay and the surrounding area.	Yes- Sections 2.2.7.3 and 4.2.2.7
<b>Sustainable Travel and Transportation</b>	
It is an objective of the Council to promote the development of the S2S promenade and cycleway. It should be noted that this coastal route will be subject to a feasibility study, including an assessment of the route options. Any development proposals shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated cSACccSAC's, SPA's and pNHA's in Dublin Bay and the surrounding area.	Yes- Sections 2.2.7.3 and 4.2.2.7



## 2.3 OVERVIEW OF EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

### 2.3.1 Natura 2000 Sites

There are eight Natura 2000 sites situated either within Dún Laoghaire Rathdown or less than 1km off the coast. The following provides a brief description of the location of these sites, and is derived from the Site Synopsis for each site ([www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)).

**Wicklow Mountains cSAC** is a complex of upland areas in Counties Wicklow and Dublin, flanked by the Blessington Reservoir to the west and Vartry reservoir in the east, Cruagh Mountain in the north and Lybagh Mountain in the south.

**Wicklow Mountains SPA** is an extensive upland site, comprising a substantial part of the Wicklow Mountains. Most of the site is in Co. Wicklow, but a small area lies in Co. Dublin.

**South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA** comprises a substantial part of Dublin Bay. It includes the intertidal area between the River Liffey and Dún Laoghaire, and the estuary of the River Tolka to the north of the River Liffey, as well as Booterstown Marsh. A portion of the shallow marine waters of the bay is also included.

**South Dublin Bay cSAC** lies south of the River Liffey in Co. Dublin, and extends from the South Wall to the west pier at Dún Laoghaire. It is an intertidal site with extensive areas of sand and mudflats.

**Knocksink Wood cSAC** is situated in the valley of the Glencullen River, just north-west of Enniskerry in Co. Wicklow.

**Ballyman Glen cSAC** is situated approximately 3 km north of Enniskerry and straddles the County boundary between Dublin and Wicklow.

**Dalkey Islands SPA** comprises Dalkey Island, Lamb Island and Maiden Rock, the intervening rocks and reefs, and the surrounding sea to a distance of 200 m. Dalkey Island, which is the largest in the group, lies approximately 400 m off Sorrento Point on the Co. Dublin mainland from which it is separated by a deep channel.

**Rockabill to Dalkey Island cSAC** includes a range of dynamic inshore and coastal waters in the western Irish Sea. This site extends southwards, in a strip approximately 7 km wide and 40 km in length, from Rockabill, running adjacent to Howth Head, and crosses Dublin Bay to Frazer Bank in South County Dublin. The site encompasses Dalkey, Muglins and Rockabill islands.

In addition there are a further 15 Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the County boundary. These are:-

- Glenasmole Valley cSAC;
- North Dublin Bay cSAC;
- Howth Head cSAC;
- Ireland's Eye cSAC;

- Baldoyle Bay cSAC;
- Malahide Estuary cSAC;
- Bray Head cSAC;
- Glen of the Downs cSAC;
- Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA;
- The Murrough SPA;
- North Bull Island SPA;
- Howth Head Coast SPA;
- Ireland's Eye SPA;
- Baldoyle Bay SPA; and
- Malahide Estuary SPA.

### **2.3.2 Other Natural Heritage**

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, stretching from the coastal strip along Dublin Bay to the uplands of the Dublin Mountains, contains a wide range of diverse habitats. These include coastal habitats, urban gardens, parks and other areas of managed amenity grassland, woodlands (natural, semi-natural and commercial), hedgerows, rivers and streams, areas of upland grassland and upland heath and bog. Agricultural and upland habitats are predominant in the southern/south-western area of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, while urban environments dominate the northern and eastern areas of the County.

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are designated due to their national conservation value for ecological and/or geological/geomorphological heritage. They cover nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms or geomorphological features, plant and animal species or a diversity of these natural attributes. NHAs are designated under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. Proposed NHAs in the Plan area include:-

- Booterstown Marsh;
- Dalkey Coastal Zone and Killiney Hill;
- Fitzsimons Wood;
- Loughlinstown Woods;
- Dingle Glen; and
- Ballybetagh Bog.

In addition to their inclusion within the Natura 2000 network, South Dublin Bay SAC, Ballyman Glen SAC and Knocksink Wood SAC are also designated as pNHAs.

### **2.3.3 Water Quality**

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown is located within the Eastern River Basin District (ERBD). The main rivers within the administrative boundary are the Loughlinstown River, the Glencullen River, the Little Dargle River and the River Dodder.

The Loughlinstown-Coastal catchment is the largest catchment in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown comprising the Loughlinstown River and a number of tributaries including the Shanganagh River, Carrickmines Stream and Brides Glen Stream. The Loughlinstown River discharges into Killiney Bay (**Figure 3.2**). The ecological characteristics of the Loughlinstown River tributaries are as follows:

- The Shanganagh system is a regionally important salmonid system;
- The Carrickmines system supports a resident population of *Salmo trutta* (Brown Trout) and a migratory population of Sea Trout;
- The Brides Glen stream holds populations of *Salmo trutta* (Brown Trout) with *Lutra lutra* (Otter) and Kingfisher present along sections of the stream.

The Glencullen River rises on Glendoo Mountain in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and flows to the south east through Glencullen before entering County Wicklow where it merges with the Dargle River, which flows into the sea at Bray in Wicklow.

- A tributary section of the Dargle flows through the south eastern corner of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (**Figure 3.2**). The Dargle is designated and protected as a Salmonid Water under the European Communities (Quality of Salmonid Waters) Regulations 1998 (SI No. 293 of 1988).

The River Dodder rises to the south east of the County and flows along the north-east boundary (**Figure 3.2**). Several of its tributaries are exceptional in the area in supporting *Salmo salar* (Atlantic Salmon) and *Salmo trutta* (Brown Trout).

- The Little Dargle River, a tributary of the River Dodder flows to the north through Ballinteer where it merges with another stream and continues north where it merges with the Dodder at Rathfarnham, in the north west of the County, before discharging into Dublin Bay (**Figure 3.2**).

The status of these rivers within Water Framework Directive categories is detailed in **Table 2.22**.

**Table 2.2 – Rivers flowing through Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown Catchment Area (EPA and WFD Status Report 2007 - 2009)**

Rivers	Macro Invertebrate Status	Physico-Chemical Status	Ecological Status	Overall Risk Result	Overall Objective
Loughlinstown (Main Channel)	Poor	Moderate	Poor	1a – At Risk	Restore - 2021
Carrickmines (Trib of Loughlinstown)	Moderate	Good	Moderate	1a – At Risk	Restore -2021
Shanganagh (Trib of Loughlinstown)	Moderate	Good	Good	1a – At Risk	Protect
Glencullen	Good	Good	Good	2a – Probably Not At Risk	Protect
Dodder Lower	Poor	Moderate	Poor	1a – At Risk	Restore - 2027

In terms of achieving the WFD's objectives by 2015, all of these rivers, apart from the Glencullen River, are currently classified by the EPA as being (1a) at significant risk of failing to achieve the WFD's objectives by 2015.

There are three streams within the County that discharge directly to the South Dublin Bay cSAC and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA. These are the Booterstown Stream, Priory Stream and Carysfort Maretimo/ Brewery Stream.

- Booterstown Stream - No baseline information is available for this short and narrow watercourse. The Booterstown Stream discharges into Booterstown Marsh, a brackish habitat due to freshwater stream inputs (**Figure 3.2**). The marsh is an important habitat for birds along the coastal area;
- Carysfort Maretimo Stream - Originates in Three Rock Mountain, flowing across the heavily urbanised areas of Sandyford, Leopardstown and Stillorgan before finally discharging into the sea at Blackrock (**Figure 3.2**). The Environmental Report carried out as part of the *Carysfort Maretimo Stream Improvement Scheme* (June 2011) found that there was no evidence of fish or invertebrate species of conservation importance within the stream; all species found within the stream were identified as common. The river is not known for populations of salmon, trout or lamprey as significant culverting has made it unsuitable for many fish species; and
- The Priory Stream which rises in the Kilmacud area and makes its way to sea at the Old Blackrock Baths site, mostly in culvert. As a result the watercourse would not be suitable for populations of fish species (**Figure 3.2**).

### 2.3.4 Hydrogeology

While it is recognised that coastal and riverine habitats within the County boundary are vulnerable to impact arising from developments, it is worth examining the more groundwater dependant Natura 2000 sites located inland, namely Knocksink Wood cSAC and Ballyman Glen cSAC. See descriptions below:

- Knocksink Wood cSAC - A wooded valley cut through calcareous glacial drift, with the fast flowing Glencullen River flowing west to east through it. Vegetation types include broadleaf deciduous woods, including wet woodland near the river, heath and a number of tufa – forming springs and seepage areas. Intersects the County boundary at Glencullen covering a 63m<sup>2</sup> area (**Figure 3.5**);
- Ballyman Glen cSAC - A small glen cut through calcareous sands and gravels, with a tributary stream of the Dargle river flowing west to east through it. The site is notable for the presence of many petrifying springs, for alkaline fen and for wet woodland. It is vulnerable to nutrient run-off and over extraction of water locally. A section of this Natura site intersects the County boundary south of Ballyman covering a 71m<sup>2</sup> area (**Figure 3.6**).

Policies and objectives are in place to control adjacent land uses to ensure prevention of pollution.

### **2.3.5 Water Supply and Wastewater Facilities**

As of January 2014, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council no longer has any direct control in relation to the provision of Water or Wastewater Services in the County. The delivery and integration of projects and facility improvements is now the responsibility of the newly established State body 'Irish Water'. The County Council will work closely with Irish Water to ensure that the County Development Plan and - in particular the Core Strategy - continue to align with both the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines and that the provision of water/wastewater services will not be a limiting factor in terms of forecasted growth.

Protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment throughout the County is ensured by providing a range of high quality and efficient water supply and wastewater facilities. The delivery and maintenance of this infrastructure is also paramount to the continued sustainable development and economic growth of the County, in line with national and regional designations and targets.

Since 2010, significant progress has been made in the delivery of water services infrastructure serving the County including:

- The opening of the Shanganagh Wastewater Treatment Works;
- The opening of the Sandyford High Level Water Supply Scheme; and
- The completion of the Glencullen water supply and improvement scheme.

The Old Connaught/Woodbrook Water and Sewerage Schemes are considered critical to servicing the south of the County (and north Wicklow). There are still major water and wastewater infrastructural shortcomings in existence with these schemes. The Council intends to work with Irish Water to address the region's water and wastewater infrastructural shortcomings in the south of the County to facilitate development potential of Old Conna, Woodbrook, Shanganagh, Rathmichael and Fassaroe (County Wicklow).

It is noted that two significant water / wastewater projects are underway in the adjoining counties. These are the Water Supply Project Dublin Region, which is addressing a new water supply for the Greater Dublin Region; and the Greater Dublin Drainage Project which is developing a new wastewater treatment plant to service the Dublin Region. Both these projects have previously undergone SEA and AA and have now moved from plan to project level. They are both in the preliminary design stage and will be the subject of both an EIS and AA.

### **2.3.6 Surface Water Management / Flood Protection**

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is vulnerable to adverse effects from changes in the occurrence of severe rainfall events and associated flooding of the County's rivers combined with small changes in sea level. Much of the flooding in the County occurs during adverse weather conditions along with the presence of debris and land use changes increasing the risk of flooding.

The locations of the most significant recent flooding events in the County are accessible from the OPW's National Flood Hazard Mapping website. Clusters of flood events occur at the mouth of the Loughlinstown River at Ballybrack. Flood events at the south east of the County occur along a

tributary of the River Dargle. Many flood events are recorded at other various locations in the lower-lying parts of the County also.

The Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies which are underway for the Eastern Region (which includes Dún Laoghaire County) will provide tools to address existing and future flood risk. The CFRAM Studies comprise three phases, as follows:

1. The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA): 2011 - This screening exercise identified where there may be significant risk associated with flooding, based on available and/or easily derivable information. The objective of the PFRA was to identify Areas for Further Assessment (AFAs);  
Two areas were identified as probable or possible Areas of Further Assessment (AFAs);-
  - Loughlinstown – Many of the watercourses at Loughlinstown were identified as being culverted and thus the flood risk is likely to be less than that identified in the PFRA as the mapping assumed open watercourses. However, as there are still extensive lengths of open watercourse at Loughlinstown it was recommended that Loughlinstown be considered an AFA; and
  - Old Connaught/Wilford – Analysis of the PFRA indicated that 6 to 9 properties and the secondary school at Wilford lie within the 10% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) flood extent thus justifying inclusion of Wilford as an AFA.
2. 2013 Flood Hazard Mapping - Draft CFRAM maps have been prepared for the above areas. The draft maps are not yet in the public domain (November 2014). Identification of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures required in these areas is also deemed to be premature until the maps are finalised; and
3. 2015 Flood Risk Management Plans – To be produced pending 2013 Mapping Results.

### **2.3.7 Existing Threats and Pressures**

Pollution of water bodies as a result of development along river catchments or along the coastline may adversely impact aquatic biodiversity and flora and fauna, including salmonid species and other species protected under Annex II of the Habitats Directive. Aquatic flora and fauna is vulnerable to all forms of pollution including those arising from industrial and municipal effluents and run-off from development sites.

The coastal area of Dún Laoghaire is a popular destination for leisure activities in the County. Leisure activities and developments along the coastline of Dún Laoghaire are likely to place increasing pressure on the ecology of coastal areas. Cycle routes, road developments and leisure facilities in close proximity to the coast line add to this pressure, with potential impacts to coastal/ marine Natura 2000 sites including direct habitat loss, disturbance or fragmentation; reduction in water quality; destruction of wetlands; bird disturbance; and the risk of introducing invasive species.

### 3 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF NATURA 2000 SITES

This section of the Screening process describes the Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the administrative boundary of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown. A 15km buffer zone has been chosen as a precautionary measure to ensure that all potentially affected Natura 2000 sites are considered within the Screening process. This is in line with, *Appropriate Assessments of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*, produced by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The integrity of a Natura 2000 site (referred to in Article 6.3 of the Habitat’s Directive) is determined based on the conservation status of the qualifying features of the cSAC or SPA. The qualifying features for each site have been obtained through a review of the Conservation Objectives available from the NPWS.

**Table 3.1** lists the cSACs and Table 3.2 lists the SPAs that are within 15km of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. **Figure 3.1** shows their locations in relation to the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown administrative boundary and **Figure 3.2** displays river and stream networks within the County Development Plan boundary.

**Table 3.1- cSACs within 15km of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Boundary**

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Habitats	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>	Qualifying Species	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>
000210	South Dublin Bay cSAC	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]	Good		
000713	Ballyman Glen cSAC	Petrifying springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> ) [7220]; and	Average/reduced		
		Alkaline fens [7230]	Excellent		
000725	Knocksink Wood cSAC	Petrifying springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> ) [7220]; and	Excellent		
		Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> ) [91E0]	Good		
001209	Glenasmole Valley cSAC	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates ( <i>Festuco Brometalia</i> )(*important orchid sites) [6210];	Good		
		<i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils ( <i>Molinion caeruleae</i> ) [6410]; and	Average/Reduced		
		Petrifying springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> ) [7220]	Good		



Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Habitats	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>	Qualifying Species	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>
002122	Wicklow Mountains cSAC	Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or of the <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> [3130];	Good	Otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> ) [1355]	Good
		Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160];	Good		
		Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010];	Good		
		European dry heaths [4030];	Good		
		Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060];	Good		
		Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230];	Good		
		Blanket bog (*active only) [7130];	Good		
		Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels ( <i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i> ) [8110];	Excellent		
		Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210];	Good		
		Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220];and	Good		
		Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles [91A0]	Average/reduced		
003000	Rockabill to Dalkey Island cSAC	Reefs [1170]	-	Harbour porpoise ( <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> ) [1351]	-
000206	North Dublin Bay cSAC	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140];	Good	Petalwort ( <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> ) [1395]	Good
		Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210];	Good		
		<i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand [1310];	Excellent		
		Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) [1330];	Good		

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Habitats	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>	Qualifying Species	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>
		Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410];	Good		
		Embryonic shifting dunes [2110];	Excellent		
		Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120];	Good		
		*Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]; and	Excellent		
		Humid dune slacks [2190]	Excellent		
000202	Howth Head cSAC	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]; and	Excellent		
		European dry heaths [4030]	Excellent		
002193	Ireland's Eye cSAC	Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220]; and	Excellent		
		Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]	Excellent		
000199	Baldoyle Bay cSAC	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140];	Good		
		<i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand [1310];	Average/reduced		
		Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) [1330]; and	Average/reduced		
		Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410]	Average/reduced		
000205	Malahide Estuary cSAC	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140];	Good		
		<i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand [1310];	Good		
		Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) [1330];	Good		
		Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) [1410];	Average/reduced		
		Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]; and	Average/reduced		
		*Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]	Good		

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Habitats	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>	Qualifying Species	Conservation Status <sup>1</sup>
000714	Bray Head cSAC	Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]; and	Good		
		European dry heaths [4030]	Good		
000719	Glen of the Downs cSAC	Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in British Isles [91A0]	Good		

**Table 3.2- SPAs within 15km of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Boundary**

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature Annex I species	Conservation Status
004172	Dalkey Islands SPA	Roseate Tern ( <i>Sterna dougallii</i> ) [A192];	Excellent
		Common Tern ( <i>Sterna hirundo</i> ) [A193]; and	Excellent
		Arctic Tern ( <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> ) [A194]	Excellent
004024	South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA	Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> ) [A046];	Excellent
		Oystercatcher ( <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> ) [A130];	Good
		Ringed Plover ( <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> ) [A137];	Good
		Grey Plover ( <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ) [A140];	Good
		Knot ( <i>Calidris canutus</i> ) [A143];	Good
		Sanderling ( <i>Calidris alba</i> ) [A144];	Excellent
		Dunlin ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> ) [A149];	Good
		Bar-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ) [A157];	Good
		Redshank ( <i>Tringa totanus</i> ) [A162];	Good
		Black-headed Gull ( <i>Croicocephalus ridibundus</i> ) [A179];	Good
		Roseate Tern ( <i>Sterna dougallii</i> ) [A192];	Excellent
		Common Tern ( <i>Sterna hirundo</i> ) [A193];	Excellent

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature Annex I species	Conservation Status
		Arctic Tern ( <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> ) [A194]; and	Excellent
		Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]	-
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	Merlin ( <i>Falco columbarius</i> ) [A098]; and	Excellent
		Peregrine ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> ) [A103]	Excellent
004063	Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA	Greylag Goose ( <i>Anser anser</i> ) [A043]; and	Good
		Lesser Black-backed Gull ( <i>Larus fuscus</i> ) [A183]	Good
004186	The Murrough SPA	Red-throated Diver ( <i>Gavia stellata</i> ) [A001];	Good
		Greylag Goose ( <i>Anser anser</i> ) [A043];	Excellent
		Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> ) [A046] ;	Excellent
		Wigeon ( <i>Anas penelope</i> ) [A050];	Good
		Teal ( <i>Anas crecca</i> ) [A052];	Good
		Black-headed Gull ( <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> ) [A179];	Good
		Herring Gull ( <i>Larus argentatus</i> ) [A184];	Good
		Little Tern ( <i>Sterna albifrons</i> ) [A195]; and	Excellent
		Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]	-
004006	North Bull Island SPA	Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> ) [A046];	Excellent
		Shelduck ( <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> ) [A048];	Excellent
		Teal ( <i>Anas crecca</i> ) [A052];	Excellent
		Pintail ( <i>Anas acuta</i> ) [A054];	Excellent
		Shoveler ( <i>Anas clypeata</i> ) [A056];	Excellent
		Oystercatcher ( <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> ) [A130];	Excellent

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature Annex I species	Conservation Status
		Golden Plover ( <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> ) [A140];	Good
		Grey Plover ( <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ) [A141];	Excellent
		Knot ( <i>Calidris canutus</i> ) [A143];	Excellent
		Sanderling ( <i>Calidris alba</i> ) [A144];	Excellent
		Dunlin ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> ) [A149];	Excellent
		Black-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa limosa</i> ) [A156];	Excellent
		Bar-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ) [A157];	Excellent
		Curlew ( <i>Numenius arquata</i> ) [A160];	Excellent
		Redshank ( <i>Tringa totanus</i> ) [A162];	Excellent
		Turnstone ( <i>Arenaria interpres</i> ) [A169];	Excellent
		Black-headed Gull ( <i>Larus ridibundus</i> ) [A179]; and	Excellent
		Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]	-
004113	Howth Head Coast SPA	Kittiwake ( <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> ) [A188]	Excellent
004117	Ireland's Eye SPA	Cormorant ( <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> ) [A017];	Excellent
		Herring Gull ( <i>Larus argentatus</i> ) [A184];	-
		Kittiwake ( <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> ) [A188];	Excellent
		Guillemot ( <i>Uria aalge</i> ) [A199]; and	Excellent
		Razorbill ( <i>Alca torda</i> ) [A200]	Excellent
004016	Baldoyle Bay SPA	Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> ) [A046];	Excellent
		Shelduck ( <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> ) [A048];	Good
		Ringed Plover ( <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> ) [A137];	Good
		Golden Plover ( <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> ) [A140];	Good
		Grey Plover ( <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ) [A141];	Excellent

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature Annex I species	Conservation Status
		Bar-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ) [A157]; and	Good
		Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]	-
004025	Malahide Estuary SPA	Great Crested Grebe ( <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> ) [A005];	Good
		Light-bellied Brent Goose ( <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> ) [A046];	Excellent
		Shelduck ( <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> ) [A048];	Excellent
		Pintail ( <i>Anas acuta</i> ) [A054];	Excellent
		Goldeneye ( <i>Bucephala clangula</i> ) [A067];	Excellent
		Red-breasted Merganser ( <i>Mergus serrator</i> ) [A069];	Excellent
		Oystercatcher ( <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> ) [A130];	Excellent
		Golden Plover ( <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> ) [A140];	Good
		Grey Plover ( <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> ) [A141];	Excellent
		Knot ( <i>Calidris canutus</i> ) [A143];	Excellent
		Dunlin ( <i>Calidris alpina</i> ) [A149];	Excellent
		Black-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa limosa</i> ) [A156];	Excellent
		Bar-tailed Godwit ( <i>Limosa lapponica</i> ) [A157];	Good
		Redshank ( <i>Tringa totanus</i> ) [A162]; and	Excellent
		Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999]	-

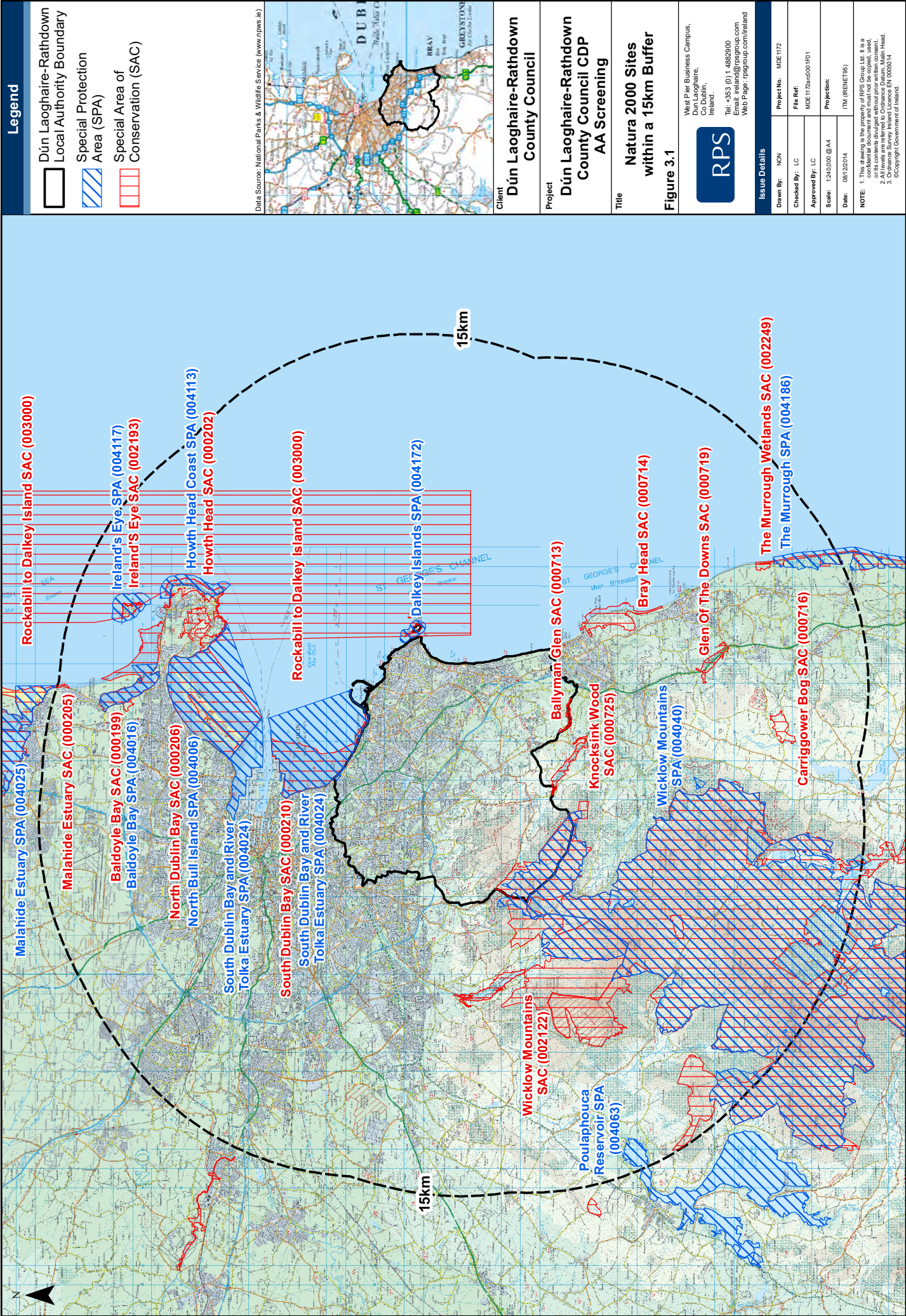
1 = Information on conservation status for each habitat and species within the cSACs and SPAs was extracted from the Natura 2000 Standard Data Forms (in July 2014) on the NPWS website <http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites/>. This information provides specific details on the conservation status of each habitat and species within the cSAC and SPA rather than status of the habitats which is available in The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland.

There are twenty three Natura 2000 sites in the administrative area for Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown and within a 15km range of the boundary, comprising thirteen cSACs and ten SPAs. Eight of these Natura 2000 sites lie inside the boundary of the County. Rockabill to Dalkey Islands cSAC and Dalkey Islands SPA are situated just off the coast, and are considered to be within Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County. Wicklow Mountains cSAC and Wicklow Mountains SPA cover the greatest area on land,

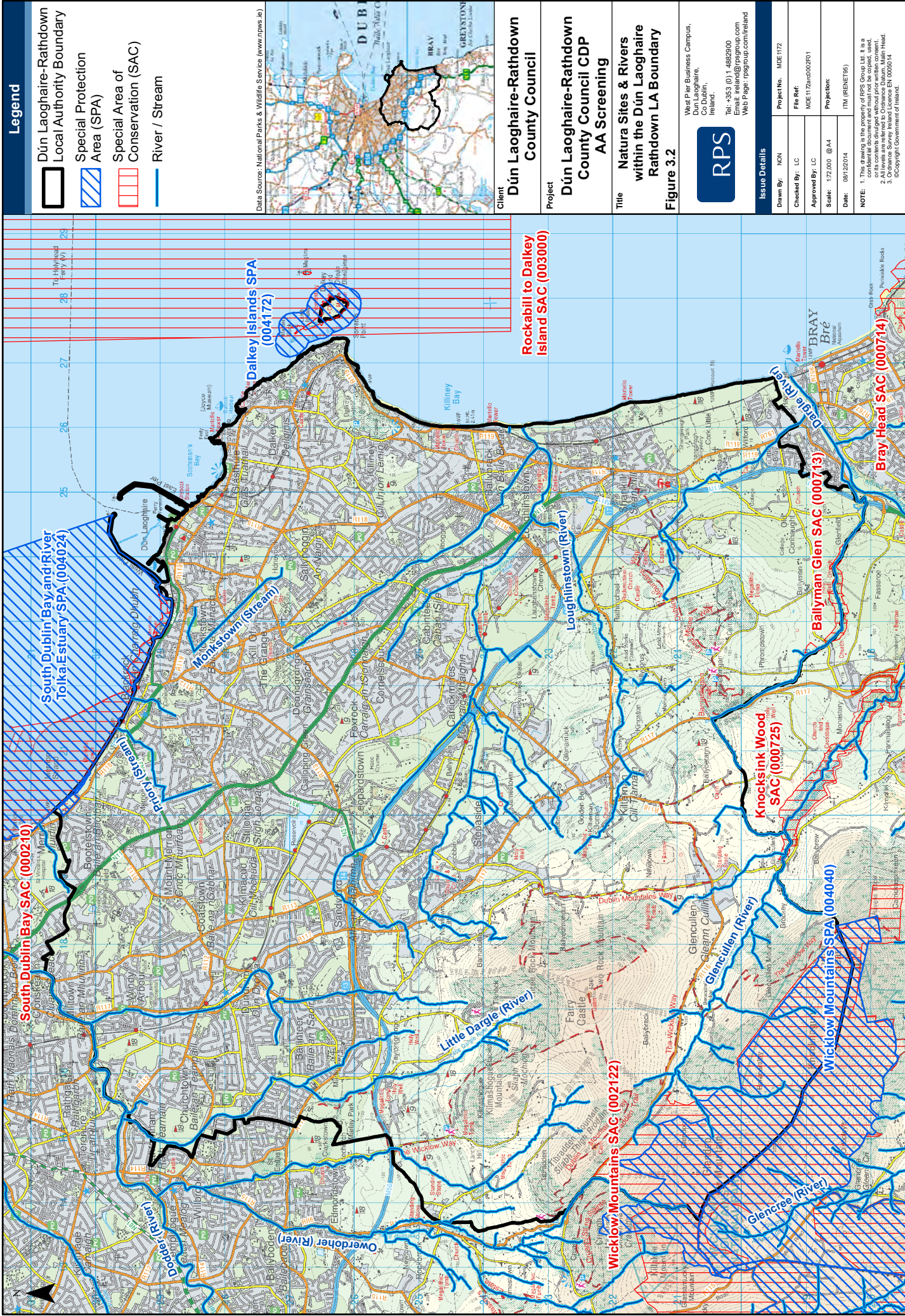
extending across the Wicklow Mountains (**Figure 3.1**). The remaining four Natura sites do not cover an extensive area within the County boundary. These sites are listed below along with the approximate area (m) extended inside the County boundary.

- South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA - Loops inside the County boundary and extends 157m onto Booterstown Marsh (**Figure 3.3**);
- South Dublin Bay cSAC - Remains outside the County boundary for the most part but does move inside the boundary at several points, most notably at Blackrock Dart Station (**Figure 3.4**);
- Knocksink Wood - Intersects the County boundary at Glencullen covering a 63m<sup>2</sup> area (**Figure 3.5**); and
- Ballyman Glen cSAC – Intersects the County Development Plan boundary south of Ballyman covering a 71m<sup>2</sup> area (**Figure 3.6**).

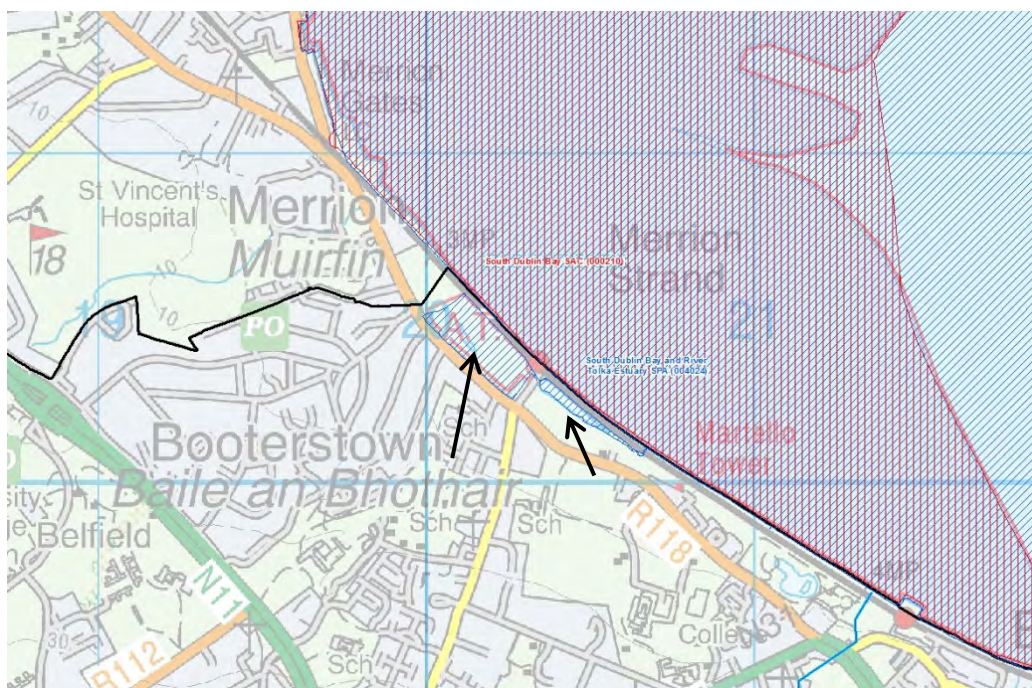




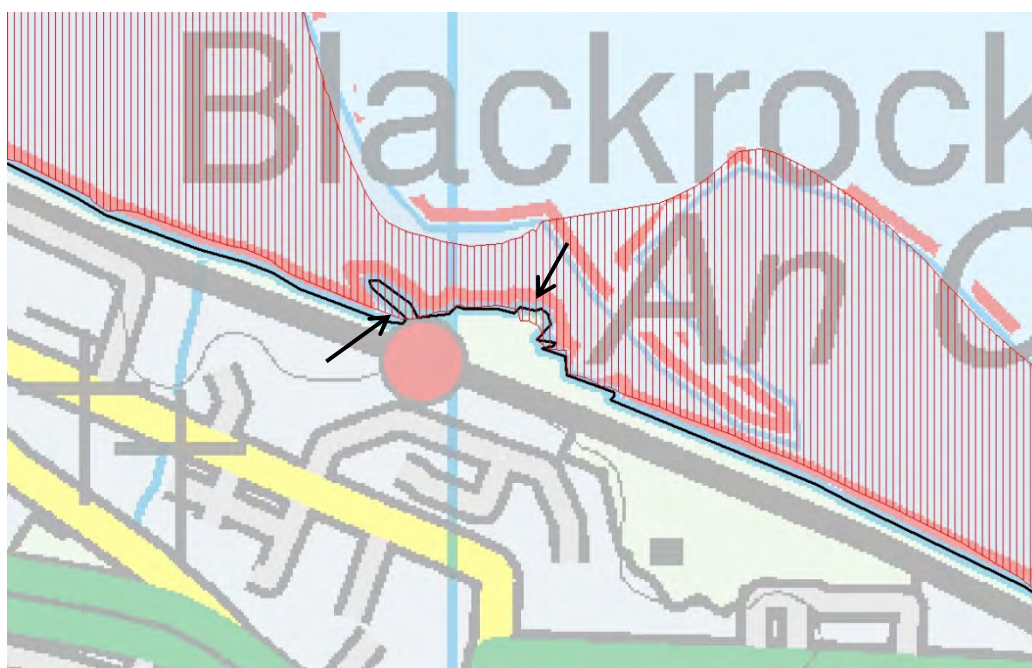






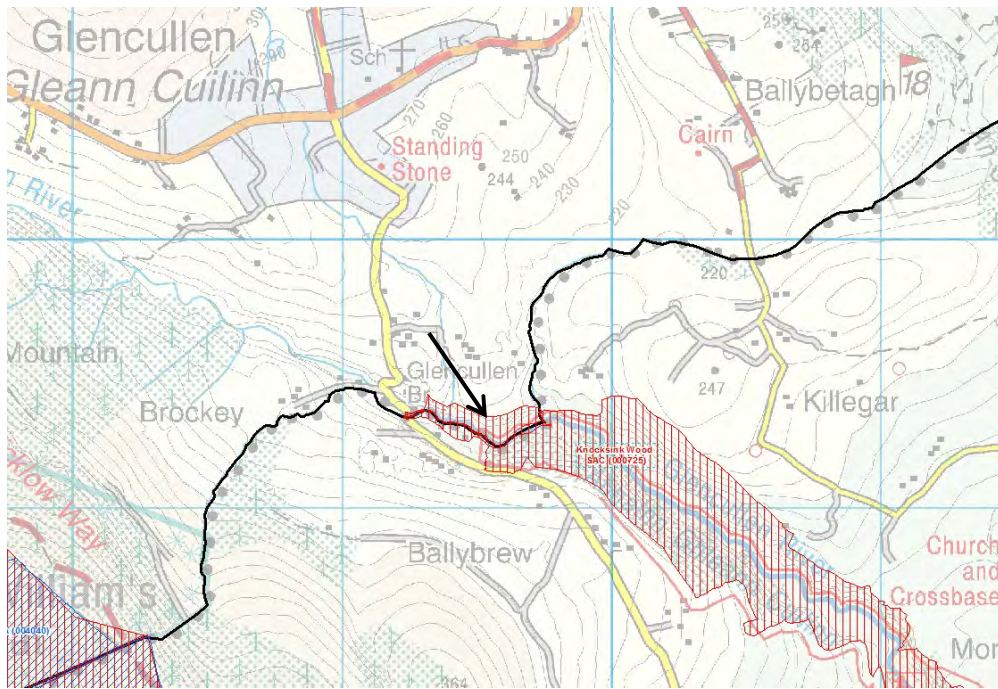


**Figure 3.3 - Arrows show Sections of South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA Extending Across County Development Plan Boundary**

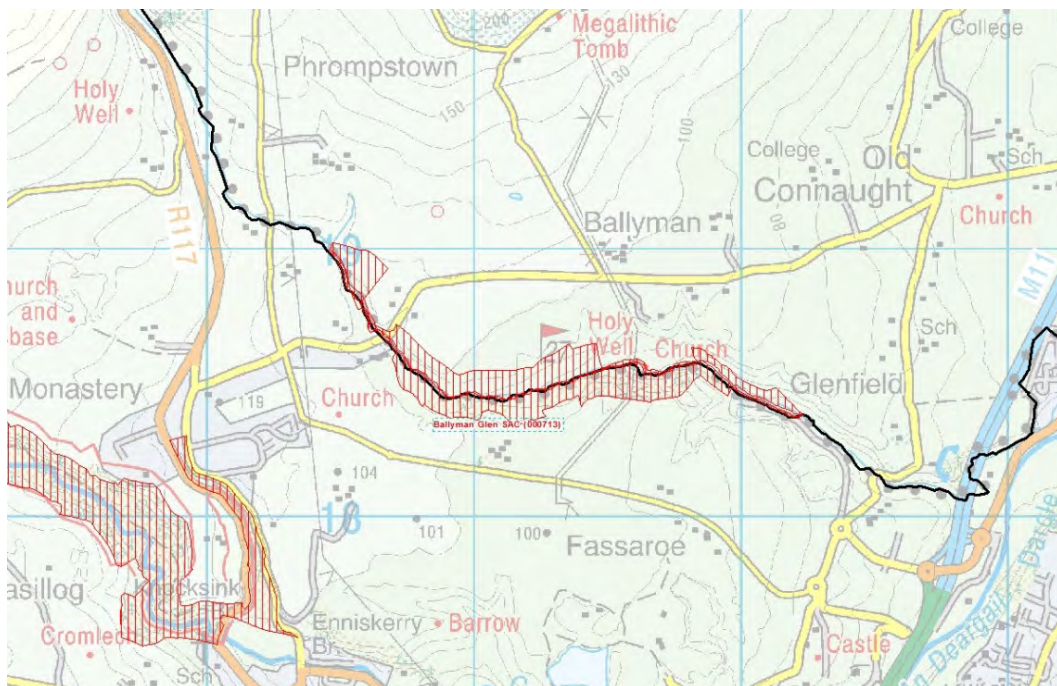


**Figure 3.4 - Arrows Indicate Slight Sections of South Dublin Bay cSAC Intersecting County Development Plan Boundary**





**Figure 3.5 - Arrow shows Intersection of Knocksink Wood cSAC across County Development Plan Boundary**



**Figure 3.6- Ballyman Glen cSAC Intersecting County Development Plan Boundary**

\*All maps produced by RPS included in this report, utilising Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi) background mapping, are covered under Ordnance Survey Ireland – Licence Number EN 0005014 (Copyright Government of Ireland)

## **4 POLICY AREAS WITH POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

### **4.1 APPROACH TO IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

All policies and objectives within the draft County Development Plan have been reviewed by the AA team. It is noted that in many cases, the objectives and policies of the draft County Development Plan are general supporting policies which have no specific potential for impacts. In these cases, the integration of the extensive protection policies recommended in **Table 2.1** of this report is considered an important positive effect of the AA process as they frame these supporting policies in the context of the importance of protecting the Natura 2000 network. In addition to these more general policies and objectives, there are a number of specific policies with potential for impact. Those policies that are considered to have potential for impact are described further in **Section 5**. It should be noted that after reviewing the policies and objectives within the draft County Development Plan, it is considered that there is no potential for significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites outside the immediate vicinity of the Plan area, therefore only the eight Natura 2000 sites within the County boundary will be considered in further detail in this section of the Appropriate Assessment.

### **4.2 POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON NATURA 2000 SITES**

Chapters containing policies that are considered to have potential for significant negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites are shown in **Table 4.1** (an x indicates a potential significant impact, – indicates that no significant negative impact is anticipated).

**Table 4.1 - Policy Areas with Potential for Significant Impacts**

Policy Area	Wicklow Mountains cSAC	Wicklow Mountains SPA	South Dublin Bay cSAC	South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA	Knocksink Wood cSAC	Ballyman Glen cSAC	Dalkey Islands SPA	Rockabill to Dalkey Island cSAC
Strategic Overview	x	-	x	x	x	x	-	-
Sustainable Communities Strategy	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Enterprise and Employment Strategy	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-
Green County Strategy	x	-	x	x	x	x	x	x
Physical Infrastructure Strategy	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Built Heritage Strategy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community Strategy	-	-	x	-	-	-	-	-
Principles of Development	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Specific Local Objectives	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

## 5 DIRECT, INDIRECT OR SECONDARY IMPACTS

**Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** list the Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the draft County Development Plan. There are twenty three sites in all, thirteen cSACs and ten SPAs. Eight Natura sites lie within the boundary of the draft County Development Plan. They are the Wicklow Mountains cSAC, Wicklow Mountains SPA, South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA, South Dublin Bay cSAC, Knocksink Wood cSAC, Ballyman Glen cSAC, Dalkey Islands SPA and Rockabill to Dalkey Island cSAC. Policies in the draft County Development Plan with potential for significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites are discussed in this section, along with details of the protective measures that have been included within the draft County Development Plan.

### 5.1 DIRECT IMPACTS

#### 5.1.1 Greenways and Cycleways

Policy OSR8 states that *'It is Council policy to develop a comprehensive network of County Greenways linking parks and public open spaces and to liaise with adjoining local authorities and other stakeholders to achieve and improve wider external linkages and corridors'*. A number of potential cycle routes have been identified in the draft County Development Plan in order to form a network of Greenway routes. There is potential for greenway routes to have a direct impact on Natura 2000 sites through construction of pathways within or in proximity to a designated site, or indirectly by providing new or improved access to sites that are sometimes highly sensitive to disturbance and visitor pressures. Several coastal habitats have been identified as being sensitive to the development of paths and cycle ways, and the associated increase in visitor pressure. Potential impacts include direct habitat loss; fragmentation of habitats; habitat disturbance, including increased visitor pressure and trampling; reduction in water quality; destruction of wetlands; bird disturbance; and the risk of introducing invasive species. The Council has committed to ensuring the protection of the Natura 2000 network by stating in Section 4.2.2.7 that *'the Greenway projects will comply fully with the requirements and objectives of the Habitats Directive'*.

The draft County Development Plan also includes specific local objective SL093, *'To promote the development of the S2S Promenade and Cycleway as a component part of the National East Coast Trail Cycle Route'*. The biodiversity and habitat of Dublin Bay is of national and international importance and large sections are designated as cSAC's, SPA's and pNHA's. The indicative S2S route traverses sections of these designated areas, and it is recognised that there are significant potential negative impacts associated with the indicative S2S route, including direct habitat loss; fragmentation of habitats; habitat disturbance, including increased visitor pressure and trampling; reduction in water quality; destruction of wetlands; bird disturbance; and the risk of introducing invasive species. Therefore, feasibility studies of this coastal route shall be carried out, including an assessment of route options. It is an objective of the Council to promote the development of the S2S promenade and cycleway. However, the Council do recognise the potential negative impacts on the Natura 2000 network associated with the proposed S2S cycle route, and have included a statement in Section 2.2.7.3 as follows:

*It should be noted that these coastal routes will be subject to a feasibility study, including an assessment of the route options. Any development proposals shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated SAC's, SPA's, and pNHA's in Dublin Bay and the surrounding area.*



The Councils commitment to a feasibility study and Appropriate Assessment of the proposed S2S development will ensure the protection of the Natura 2000 sites in the Dublin Bay area.

## 5.2 INDIRECT IMPACTS

### 5.2.1 Watercourses

There are three non-designated streams within the County. These are the Booterstown Stream, Carysfort Maretime Stream and the Priory Stream, all of which discharge to the South Dublin Bay cSAC and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (**Figure 3.2**). As such, they provide a pathway for indirect impacts to the receiving cSAC and SPA downstream. To prevent downstream impacts, it is essential that the natural character and ecological value of these watercourses is maintained and protected.

The draft County Development Plan clearly sets out the Councils commitment to protecting the watercourses within the County and the designated sites within and adjacent to the County. There are a number of policies within Chapter 4 - Green County Strategy of the draft County Development Plan which focus on maintaining and protecting the natural character and ecological value of these watercourses. Most importantly, development proposals will be required to provide a buffer zone along watercourses (minimum of 10m each side of the waters' edge) to prevent loss of suspended soils, physical damage and release of pollutants. It is an objective of the Council to facilitate compliance with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive and any relevant legislation. In this regard, the Council will facilitate compliance with the relevant objectives and measures for individual water bodies set out in the Eastern River Basin Management Plan and associated Programme of Measures, where relevant. These policies to protect the natural character and ecological value of these watercourses will ensure that the receiving South Dublin Bay cSAC and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA are also protected, and therefore, will not result in any indirect impacts on these Natura 2000 sites.

In recognition of the importance of rivers and waterways to the character of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, the council has committed to consult, as appropriate, with Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to any development that could potentially impact on the aquatic ecosystems and associated riparian habitats and/or salmonid waters as per *Policy LHB22 - Rivers and Waterways* which states *'It is Council policy to maintain and protect the natural character and ecological value of the river and stream corridors in the County and where possible to enhance existing channels and to encourage diversity of habitat. It is also policy (subject to the sensitivity of the riverside habitat) to provide public access to riparian corridors to promote improved passive recreational activities'*

### 5.2.2 Hydrogeological features

It is an objective of the Council to implement and develop Local Area Plans for Kiltiernan/Glenamuck, Woodbrook and Shanganagh and Glencullen in accordance with the associated adopted policies and objectives. Associated developments included within these three LAPs could potentially pose impact on both Knocksink Wood cSAC and Ballyman Glen cSAC. Any changes to the groundwater regime or surface water quality within the County boundary could have adverse effects on the petrifying spring habitat for which both Knocksink Wood cSAC and Ballyman Glen cSAC are designated. These springs are groundwater fed and their presence in these sites supports a diverse range of flora that is indicative of these habitats. Any changes to the groundwater regime could cause these springs to dry up, resulting in a loss of biodiversity.

Any draft County Development Plan developments with potential impacts to Knocksink Wood cSAC or Ballyman Glen cSAC will be bound by the following policies set out in the draft County Development Plan:

- *Policy E14 - Groundwater Protection & Appropriate Assessment* which states that: *'It is Council policy to ensure the protection of the groundwater resources in and around the County and associated habitats and species in accordance with the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (groundwater) Regulations, 2010'*;
- *Policy EI23: Rathmichael Ground and Surface Water Protection* - *It is Council policy to refuse planning permission for any new developments which include an on-site wastewater treatment facility within the Rathmichael area until the groundwater issues in the area are resolved or ameliorated (See SLO 126 on Maps 10 & 14). This policy will be implemented through the Development Management process through the refusal of planning permission for any new developments - which include an on-site wastewater treatment facility – within the Rathmichael area (See SLO 126 on Maps 10 & 14 for the boundary of this area). Proposals for change of use, alteration to, or extension of existing approved developments within these areas involving on-site wastewater treatment facilities will be assessed in the context of there being no potential deterioration of ground or surface waters; and*
- *Policy LHB22 - Rivers and Waterways* which states *'It is Council policy to maintain and protect the natural character and ecological value of the river and stream corridors in the County and where possible to enhance existing channels and to encourage diversity of habitat. It is also policy (subject to the sensitivity of the riverside habitat) to provide public access to riparian corridors to promote improved passive recreational activities'*.

### **5.2.3 Water Supply and Wastewater Facilities**

With regard to water supply and wastewater facilities within the County, medium to large scale development may be required to upgrade sections of the existing network to ensure adequate security of supply as deemed necessary by Irish Water. It is an objective of the Council to facilitate Irish Water in ensuring that all wastewater generated is collected, treated and discharged after treatment in a safe and sustainable manner, having regard to the standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation and guidance. Complying with the standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation will ensure that sewage will be treated to an appropriate standard such that it will not impact on receiving waters, and therefore, will not result in any indirect impacts on the Natura 2000 sites. The treatment of sewage and wastewater from areas within Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown County is shared by both Ringsend wastewater treatment plant and Shanganagh wastewater treatment plant.

*Policy EI2 - Wastewater Treatment & Appropriate Assessment* states that *'It is Council policy to provide adequate wastewater treatment facilities to serve the existing and future population of the County, subject to complying with the Water Framework Directive and the associated River Basin Management Plan or any updated version of this document, 'Water Quality in Ireland 2007-2009' (EPA 2011) or any updated version of the document, Pollution Reduction Programmes for Designated Shellfish Areas, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the Habitats Directive'*.

## **5.2.4 Transport**

### **5.2.4.1 The Eastern Bypass**

The Draft County Development Plan includes Roads Policy ST24: *‘It is Council policy, in conjunction and co-operation with other transport bodies and authorities such as the NRA and the NTA, to secure improvements to the County road network – including improved pedestrian and cycle facilities’*. The list of long-term road objectives includes the Eastern Bypass.

The main potential impacts of the Eastern Bypass on Natura 2000 sites are related to noise disturbance and a reduction in water quality to coastal cSACs and SPAs. Policy ST24 goes on to state that *‘Any road proposals will be subject to Appropriate Assessment’*. In addition, SLO72 states: *‘The line of the Eastern Bypass between the N11 and Dublin Bay is not fixed. The route will be determined following environmental assessment including appropriate assessment and a process of public consultation’*. The inclusion of an environmental assessment at the route selection stage, together with an Appropriate Assessment of the proposed Eastern Bypass will ensure the protection of the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

### **5.2.5 Development at ‘The Gut’**

It is an objective of the Council to encourage the redevelopment of ‘The Gut’ adjacent to the West Pier to include improved access to the area (SLO 14). The Gut is in close proximity to the South Dublin Bay & Tolka Estuary SPA, and it is considered that there is potential for noise disturbance to the qualifying species of this SPA. However, as stated in Section 8.2.7.4 *‘In relation to coastal development regard shall be had to the EU Guidance document ‘The Implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive in Estuaries and Coastal Zones’ (2011) when assessing development in or near coastal areas which is likely to have significant effects on the integrity - defined by the structure and function - of any designated sites, coastal and marine fauna, flora and amenities*. In addition, any development proposals will undergo screening for Appropriate Assessment as per the overarching wording in the Introduction and the Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity chapters of the draft County Development Plan.

### **5.2.6 Leisure Facilities**

It is an objective of the Council to promote Water Leisure Facilities for public use at the coastal fringe of the Gut and rear of the West Pier. The potential impacts associated water leisure facilities may include noise disturbance to the qualifying species of South Dublin Bay & Tolka Estuary SPA. However, as the Council state within SLO95, the development of water leisure facilities: *‘is subject to the appropriate environmental assessments including any assessment required under the Habitats Directive in co-operation with the relevant agencies’*.

With regards to both potential development at the Gut, and water leisure facilities at the coastal fringe of the Gut/ rear of West Pier, the Council has further emphasised its commitment to the protection of Natura 2000 sites by including the following wording in Section 8.2.10.5 of the draft County Development Plan:

## *(ii) Water Sports and Development*

*The Planning Authority will normally only permit proposals for development associated with water sports where all the following criteria are satisfied:*

- *Will not result in damage to sites of nature conservation importance or features of archaeological and built heritage.*
- *Will not result in over intensification of use leading to pollution, excessive noise and nuisance.*
- *Development complies with the Habitats Directive.*

## **5.2.7 Renewable Energy**

It is Council policy to support and promote wind energy initiatives, both on-shore and offshore, when these are undertaken in an environmentally acceptable manner. The 2010 - 2016 County Development Plan included an analysis of wind speeds and the sensitive landscapes of the County at a broad level, and their relationship to the existing electricity grid network was undertaken. It was concluded that there was no realistic or practical potential for economic on-shore wind farm development in the County without significant and overriding adverse visual and environmental impacts. This earlier analysis has been subsequently updated, and the same were reaffirmed. The Council remains supportive of offshore wind energy initiatives. Potential impacts associated with offshore windfarms include habitat disturbance; noise disturbance to marine life; changes to seabed habitats and marine life and, in turn, indirect effects on the marine life that feeds on them. However, as the Council states in Section 5.2.4.2 *any additional wind and wave projects in the Irish Sea, will be subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.*

## **5.2.8 Natural Heritage Policies**

### **5.2.8.1 Overarching Policy**

The Council is committed to protecting and conserving the biodiversity of Dún Laoghaire, and have included a number of specific policies to ensure the protection and enhancement of Natura 2000 sites. Policy LHB16 is an overall policy for the protection of the natural heritage:

*“It is Council policy to protect and conserve the environment including, in particular, the natural heritage of the County and to conserve and manage Nationally and Internationally important and EU designated sites - such as Special Protection Areas, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, proposed Natural Heritage Areas and Ramsar sites - as well as non-designated areas of high nature conservation value which serve as ‘Stepping Stones’ for the purposes of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive”.*

The policy goes on to state that the implementation of this policy will involve, inter alia:

- *Retention of trees, hedgerows and woodlands wherever practical.*
- *Designation of High Amenity zones.*
- *Retention of Green Belt areas.*
- *Identification of Views and Prospects of special amenity value or special interest.*

- *Identification, and mapping, of public rights-of-way and other strategic access routes.*
- *Protection of sites of geological and geomorphological importance.*
- *Protection of a Special Protection Area (SPA).*
- *Protection of proposed Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (pcSAC).*
- *Protection of proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA).*
- *Protection of existing access (including established rights-of-way) to such sites where feasible and the promotion of public access where it does not exist at present – but subject to ensuring and maintaining the highest environmental standards.*
- *Development of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Ecological Network.*
- *Identification and protection of non-designated sites of local and high nature conservation value - including those identified in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Ecological Network - and management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.*
- *Maintenance and, as appropriate, achievement of “favourable conservation status” of habitats and species within cSACs as per the requirements and obligations of the Habitats Directive.*
- *Control and management of alien/invasive species (e.g. Japanese knotweed, Giant Hogweed etc.) and noxious weeds (e.g. Ragwort etc.) where possible.*
- *Working with local communities, groups, landowners, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and other relevant parties to identify, protect, manage and, where appropriate, enhance and promote understanding of sites of local biodiversity value.*
- *Protection of the ecological integrity of proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and Annex 1 Habitats.*
- *Promotion of the Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment (IBIA) approach- a methodological framework for biodiversity impact assessment that integrates SEA requirements with AA.*
- *Working with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and other parties to identify, protect where appropriate and manage, enhance and promote sites of local biodiversity value.*
- *Recognition of the proposed UN Dublin Bay Biosphere designation.*
- *Implement any relevant recommendation contained in the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaelteacht’s National Peatland Strategy, when finalised.*

There is an overarching policy in the introduction to the Draft County Development Plan which confirms that ‘*The Council will ensure that any plan/project and any associated works in the County, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied*’. This commitment is also made at the start of the Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity chapter.

Individual policies LHB17 and LHB19 confirm the Councils commitment to the protection of the Natura 2000 network, in accordance with the EU Directives, national legislation and national plans and guidelines.

Policy LHB17: *It is Council policy to ensure the protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, in accordance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines.*

Policy LHB19: *It is Council policy to protect and preserve areas designated as proposed Natural Heritage Areas, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, and Special Protection Areas. It is Council policy to promote the maintenance and as appropriate, delivery of 'favourable' conservation status of habitats and species within these areas.*

#### **5.2.8.2 Protective Policies for Individual Natura 2000 Sites**

Specific local objectives 49, 51, 84, 85, 129, 133 confirm the Councils commitment to the conservation of individual Natura 2000 sites within the draft County Development Plan area:

- SLO49: *To protect and conserve the Wicklow Mountains National Park Candidate Special Area of Conservation.*
- SLO51: *To protect and conserve the Knocksink Wood Candidate Special Area of Conservation.*
- SLO84: *To protect and conserve South Dublin Bay Candidate Special Area of Conservation.*
- SLO85: *To protect and conserve Ballyman Glen Candidate Special Area of Conservation.*
- SLO129: *To implement the objectives of the Dalkey Island Conservation Plan 2013 - 2023.*
- SLO133: *To protect and conserve Rockabill to Dalkey Island Candidate Special Area of Conservation.*

#### **5.2.8.3 Appropriate Assessment and Development**

Section 8.2.2 (v) and 8.2.9.4 of the draft County Development Plan sets out the requirement for Appropriate Assessment screening of new developments:

*Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive there is a requirement to establish whether, in relation to plans and projects, appropriate assessment (AA) is required. If, following screening, it is considered that AA is required, then the proponent of the plan or project must prepare a Natura Impact Statement. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:*

- *The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or*
- *The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest - including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or*

*The plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest - restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the*

*Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.*

Section 8.2.7.1 includes the following wording:

*Any development proposals for sites designated as, or immediately adjacent to, a pNHA, SPA or cSAC shall be accompanied by an EIS and/or Appropriate Assessment and shall be referred to the NPWS. Regard shall be had to 'Guidance for Local - Authorities Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) 2009).*

#### **5.2.8.4 Biodiversity**

The second National Biodiversity Plan *Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016* sets out the strategy for conserving and enhancing Ireland's biodiversity through a series of actions. At a local level the plan highlights the key role that local authorities can play in promoting local natural heritage and requires each local authority to prepare a Biodiversity Plan in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has produced a County Biodiversity Plan 2009-2013. The primary features of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Biodiversity Plan are:

- To translate International, European and Irish policies and obligations into effective local action on the ground.
- To provide a framework for the conservation of biodiversity of National and local importance.
- To collect biodiversity information on the County.
- To raise public awareness of biodiversity issues and to coordinate existing and new initiatives.
- To provide a basis for monitoring the success of biodiversity conservation at a National and local level.

Policy LHB18 confirms the Council's commitment to produce a second Biodiversity Plan, which will be set within the context of the second National Biodiversity Plan. Policy LHB18: *It is Council Policy to implement the provisions of the County Biodiversity Plan 2009-2013 and to produce a second Biodiversity Plan which will be set within the context of the second National Biodiversity Plan, 'Actions for Biodiversity, 2011 – 2016' prepared by the Department of the Arts, Heritage, Gaelteacht and the Islands. Due regard shall be had to the recommendations arising from the implementation of the current 2009 – 2013 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Biodiversity Plan or its successor plan.*

#### **5.2.8.5 Article 10 of the Habitats Directive**

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive refers to features of the landscape outside designated sites which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna, as follows:

*‘Member States shall endeavour, where they consider it necessary, in their land-use planning and development policies and, in particular, with a view to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network, to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora.*

*Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species’.*

The requirements of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive are not specifically considered under the AA (except in so far as they support a qualifying feature) but it is noted that draft County Development Plan includes Policy LHB21: *‘It is Council policy to develop an Ecological Network throughout the County which will improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive. The network will also include non-designated sites’.* The inclusion of this policy will have indirect positive impacts on the Natura 2000 network as ecological connectivity within the County Development Plan area is maintained or improved, which will in turn improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 network. The draft County Development Plan also includes policies LHB20, LHB22, LHB23 and LHB25 which all contribute to the protection and enhancement of ecological corridors in Dún Laoghaire.

*LHB20: It is Council policy to protect and promote the conservation of biodiversity in areas of natural heritage importance outside Designated Areas and to ensure that notable sites, habitats and features of biodiversity importance - including species protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, the Birds Directive 1979, the Habitats Directive 1992, and rare species - are adequately protected. Ecological assessments will be carried out for all developments in areas that support, or have potential to support, features of biodiversity importance or rare and protected species and appropriate mitigation/avoidance measures will be implemented. In implementing this policy regard shall be had to the recommendations and objectives of the Green City Guidelines (2008) and ‘Ecological Guidance Notes for Local Authorities and Developers’ (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Version 2014).*

*LHB23: It is Council policy to protect hedgerows in the County from development, which would impact adversely upon them. It is Council policy to promote the County’s hedgerows by increasing coverage, where possible, using locally native species and to develop an appropriate code of practice for road hedgerow maintenance.*

*LHB25: It is Council policy to retain the individual physical character of towns and development areas by the designation of green belt areas where appropriate.*

These Natural Heritage policies ensure that not only are Natura 2000 Sites protected and enhanced, but that the ecological corridors connected to Natura 2000 Sites are also managed appropriately.

#### **5.2.8.6 Invasive Species**

Invasive non-native plant and animal species (Invasive Alien Species) can represent a major threat to national, regional and local biodiversity, including the integrity of Natura 2000 sites. To this end an EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species has recently been introduced (Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 22 October 2014) on the prevention and



management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species. The Council is committed to assist in controlling invasive species, and to this end has included Policy LHB26 within the draft County Development Plan:

*It is Council policy to support as appropriate the National Parks and Wildlife Service efforts to seek to control and manage alien / invasive species (e.g. Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, etc.) and noxious weeds (e.g. ragwort, thistle, dock, etc.) within the County.*

### 5.3 CUMULATIVE AND IN-COMBINATION IMPACTS

This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant in-combination or cumulative effects/impacts of the proposed Draft County Development Plan with other Plans and projects on the twenty three Natura 2000 sites. Other Plans and projects specific to the relevant Natura 2000 site include the following:

- Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017;
- Greater Dublin Area Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022;
- National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020;
- Wicklow County Development Plan 2010-2016
- South Dublin Development Plan 2010-2016
- Cherrywood SDZ Planning Scheme, April 2014.
- Greater Dublin Area Draft Transport Strategy, 2011 – 2030
- Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future, A new Transport policy for Ireland, 2009 – 2020.
- Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study, 2002-2031.
- Greater Dublin Water Supply Strategic Study, 1996-2016.
- Dublin Mountains Strategic Plan for Development of Outdoor Recreation 2007-2017.
- Greater Dublin Area Draft Transport Strategy. 2011 – 2030 Vision, NTA, June 2011.
- Dún Laoghaire Harbour Masterplan (2011);
- Eastern RBD Management Plan 2009-2015 ;
- IPC Programme;
- Groundwater Pollution Reduction Programmes;
- Surface Water Pollution Reduction Programmes;
- Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study; and
- Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans.
- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Coastal Defence Strategy Study, Final Report, Malachy Walsh and Partners, 2010.

As identified in **Section 2.3.7**, leisure activities and developments along the coastline of Dún Laoghaire are likely to place increasing pressure on the ecology of coastal areas. The Dún Laoghaire Harbour Masterplan area lies in close proximity to the South Dublin Bay cSAC and South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA.

The purpose of the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Masterplan is to:

- Position Dún Laoghaire Harbour as a major marine/leisure/tourism destination;
- Enhance Dún Laoghaire's attractiveness as a gateway for tourists to Ireland by offering state-of-the-art berthing and terminal facilities to ferry and cruise operators at Dún Laoghaire Harbour;
- Maintain and enhance the recreational amenity value of the harbour in the interest of all our stakeholders;
- Promote investment in the harbour; and
- Generate sufficient revenue from commercial operations to secure the long term maintenance and development of the harbour and the government guideline dividend figure for commercial state companies.

It should be noted that the Dun Laoghaire Harbour Master plan is a non-statutory plan and any development in the Harbour area must accord with the provisions of the County Development Plan. Any development arising from the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Masterplan or the draft Dún Laoghaire County Development Plan shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment screening. In addition to the aforementioned policies that emphasise the Councils commitment to the protection of Natura 2000 sites (i.e. the overarching policy in the Introduction and Landscape, Heritage & Biodiversity chapters, wording in sections 8.2.2, 8.2.9.4, and 8.2.7.1 and Policy LHB19), the draft County Development Plan includes commitment to the protection to coastal/ marine Natura 2000 sites:

#### 8.2.7.4 Development in the Coastal and 'Nearshore' area:

*In dealing with planning applications in the coastal or 'nearshore' area regard shall be had to the Maritime and Foreshore (Amendment) Bill 2013 and to the findings of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council 'Coastal Defence Strategy Study', (2010).*

*In relation to coastal development regard shall be had to the EU Guidance document 'The Implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive in Estuaries and Coastal Zones' (2011) when assessing development in or near coastal areas which is likely to have significant effects on the integrity - defined by the structure and function - of any designated sites, coastal and marine fauna, flora and amenities.*

With the inclusion of these protective policies within the draft County Development Plan, it is not anticipated that there will be any significant in-combination or cumulative effects/impacts arising from the draft County Development Plan.

No other pathway has been identified by which any of the Plans and programmes identified could have a significant 'in combination' effect on any of the Natura 2000 sites identified. In fact, it is considered that the in combination effect of the above water related Plans and programmes would have positive effects on water quality resulting in positive indirect impacts on the coastal cSACs and SPAs.

## 6 LIKELY CHANGES TO NATURA 2000 SITES

The likely changes that could arise from the implementation of the draft County Development Plan have been examined in the context of a number of factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the identified Natura 2000 site. It has been determined that no Natura 2000 site will be potentially impacted as a result of the draft County Development Plan. **Table 6.1** shows the Likely Changes to Natura 2000 Sites as a result of the draft County Development Plan.

**Table 6.1 - Likely Effects on Natura 2000 Sites**

Site Name	Reduction of Habitat Area	Disturbance to Key Species	Habitat or Species Fragmentation	Reduction in Species Density	Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality, etc.)	Climate Change
South Dublin Bay cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Ballyman Glen cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Knocksink Wood cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Glenasmole Valley cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Wicklow Mountains cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Rockabill to Dalkey Island cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
North Dublin Bay cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Howth Head cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Ireland's Eye cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Baldoye Bay cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Malahide Estuary cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Bray Head cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Glen of the Downs cSAC	None	None	None	None	None	None
Dalkey Islands SPA	None	None	None	None	None	None
South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA	None	None	None	None	None	None
Wicklow Mountains SPA	None	None	None	None	None	None
Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA	None	None	None	None	None	None
Howth Head Coast SPA	None	None	None	None	None	None

Site Name	Reduction of Habitat Area	Disturbance to Key Species	Habitat or Species Fragmentation	Reduction in Species Density	Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality, etc.)	Climate Change
Ireland's Eye SPA	None	None	None	None	None	None
North Bull Island SPA	None	None	None	None	None	None
Howth Head Coast SPA	None	None	None	None	None	None
Malahide Estuary SPA	None	None	None	None	None	None

## **7 ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN WITH POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**

Several policies with potential for significant negative impacts were brought forwards for screening, as detailed in **Section 5**. In the absence of mitigation, these include potential direct impacts arising from the development of coastal cycle routes; and potential indirect impacts arising from surface water quality issues, water supply and waste water issues, transport development and leisure facilities at the coast.

However, the draft Dún Laoghaire County Development Plan contains numerous general and specific policies and objectives focussed on the protection of the Natura 2000 Network, which will contribute to the conservation of Natura 2000 sites in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive. The Council will have regard to its responsibilities in relation to the requirements of the Habitats Directive, and any development proposal within the vicinity of, or potentially having an effect on the designated site, will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive.

Assuming all protection policies are fully adhered to, it is envisaged that no elements of the draft County Development Plan are likely to cause significant impacts on Natura 2000 sites.

## 8 SCREENING CONCLUSIONS AND STATEMENT

As a proactive measure, prior to compilation of the draft County Development Plan, the AA team provided wording to the Plan team to ensure that protection policies for the Natura 2000 network within and in the vicinity of the County boundary were interwoven into the fabric of the plan (**Section 2.2**). In addition, other policies including those relating to water supply, waste water, surface water drainage and groundwater were provided to ensure the protection of supporting features, including water quality. The plan team have incorporated these policies into the draft Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan. The text of the draft County Development Plan now ensures that the protection of the Natura 2000 network is integrated into the draft County Development Plan. In line with the amended text of the County Development Plan, all plans / projects arising from the policy actions and recommendations will be required to carry out Screening for Appropriate Assessment as required under the Habitats Directive.

The likely impacts that will arise from the draft County Development Plan have been examined in the context of a number of factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. It is anticipated that no Natura 2000 site within 15km of the County boundary will be adversely affected. A Finding of No Significant Effects Matrix has been completed and is presented in **Section 9** of this Screening Statement.

On the basis of the findings of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment of Natura 2000 sites, it is concluded that the proposed draft County Development Plan will not have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 network and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

## 9 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT MATRIX

Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
Name and location of Natura 2000 site	<p>Baldoyle Bay cSAC;  Malahide Estuary cSAC;  Howth Head cSAC;  Howth Head Coast SPA;  Bray Head cSAC;  North Dublin Bay cSAC;  South Dublin Bay cSAC;  Wicklow Mountains cSAC;  Bray Head cSAC;  Knocksink Wood cSAC;  Ballyman Glen cSAC;  Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA;  The Murragh SPA;  Glen of The Downs cSAC;  Glenasmole Valley cSAC;  Rockabill to Dalkey Island cSAC;  North Bull Island SPA;  Baldoyle Bay SPA;  Malahide Estuary SPA;  Howth Head Coast SPA;  South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA;  Dalkey Island SPA;  Irelands Eye SPA;  Wicklow Mountains cSAC;  Wicklow Mountains SPA.</p>
Description of the project or Plan	<p>The draft County Development Plan sets out Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's policies for the continuing sustainable development of the County for the period 2016 to 2022. The Draft Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Act sets out the mandatory requirements which must be included in a Development Plan. These include the objectives and zoning of land, the provision of infrastructure, the conservation and protection of the environment, and the integration of planning and sustainable development with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population. It is also required that a Core Strategy is prepared, which, as far as is practicable, is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines.</p> <p>This document concentrates on the draft County Development Plan and the potential for impacts on Natura 2000 sites within the administrative area and within a 15km range of the County Development Plan boundary, arising from implementation of policies, objectives and zonings.</p>

Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
	<p>Under section 9 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, every planning authority must make a development plan, setting the Framework for all future development in the planning authority's area for the stated period, for the whole functional area of the authority every six years. In the context of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, the draft County Development Plan sets out the policies for the continuing sustainable development of the County for the period 2016 – 2022.</p> <p>The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022, which relates to the entire functional area of the Authority, will, when adopted, replace the current 2010-2016 County Development Plan.</p> <p>The draft Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 - 2010 (as amended) Act sets out the mandatory requirements which must be included in a Development Plan.</p> <p>The County Development Plan consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Written Statement – the main policy document</li> <li>▪ A volume of supporting Appendices</li> <li>▪ County Zoning Maps</li> <li>▪ Strategic Environmental Assessment Report</li> <li>▪ Appropriate Assessment Screening Report</li> </ul> <p>The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 introduces the requirement for an evidence-based “Core Strategy” to be incorporated as part of the County Development Plans. The primary focus of the Core Strategy is on residential development and in ensuring that there is an acceptable balance between the supply of zoned, serviced land for residential development and the projected demand for new housing, over the lifetime of the Plan. In this respect, two key datasets are examined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Housing Land Availability Study (Supply of zoned land)</li> <li>▪ Regional Planning Guidelines for the GDA (Population Targets)</li> </ul> <p>The County Development Plan sets the scale, location and nature of new development areas but it is other mechanisms such as Local Area Plans and Strategic Development Zones that provide the crucial detail for creating sustainable neighbourhoods. The draft County Development Plan for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council includes the provision for a range of statutory Local Area Plans and one Strategic Development Zone highlighted in the plan.</p> <p><b>County Development Plan Vision, Policies and Objectives</b></p> <p>The overall vision in the County Development Plan is for the County to achieve three goals by 2022:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To deliver Ireland's best quality of residential life by 2022. Every resident in every community and village will share in this.</li> <li>2. To co-ordinate and facilitate economic actors towards achieving full employment in sustainable, meaningful jobs by 2022.</li> </ol>



Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
	<p>3. To support and sustain economic and natural resources of Regional significance to 2022 and beyond.</p> <p>Further to the overall vision, the written statement contains vision statements, policies and objectives in relation to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Strategic Overview</b> Vision: To continue to facilitate appropriate levels of sustainable development predicated on the delivery of high quality community, employment and recreational environments - allied to the promotion of sustainable transportation and travel patterns - but all the while protecting Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown’s unique landscape, natural heritage and physical fabric, to ensure the needs of those living and working in the County can thrive in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable manner.</li> <li>▪ <b>Sustainable Communities Strategy</b> Vision: To develop sustainable and successful communities across the County both through the continuing consolidation and redevelopment of the established built up areas, and the promotion of new, compact mixed–use urban villages optimally located in greenfield areas well served by existing or planned public transport networks and where residents will be within walking distance of supporting social and community infrastructure – including shops, services, employment opportunities, schools and leisure facilities.</li> <li>▪ <b>Enterprise and Employment Strategy</b> Vision: To encourage, support and facilitate further sustainable employment creation, economic growth and business development across a range of sectors - including retailing - by strengthening existing employment areas and revitalising town and district centres, by focusing on appropriate business support mechanisms and by capitalising upon the many inherent advantages available to the County – as evidenced by its economic profile – to improve the overall attractiveness of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown as a vibrant place in which to set up and do business.</li> <li>▪ <b>Green County Strategy</b> Vision: To promote and develop a coherent and integrated green infrastructure network across Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown which will secure and enhance biodiversity - including the protection of Natura 2000 sites - provide readily accessible parks, open spaces and recreational facilities, maintain historic and landscape character areas and provide for the sustainable management of water through facilitating the retention and development of a network of green spaces in urban and countryside locations to serve the needs of all citizens and communities in the County.</li> </ul>

Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <p>▪ <b>Physical Infrastructure Strategy</b></p> <p>Vision: To continue protecting both the environment and the citizens of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown through the provision of high quality, resilient environmental infrastructure and by aspiring to a carbon–neutral County through the promotion of resource preservation and energy efficiency and through the application of considered climate change mitigation policies for the duration of this Development Plan and beyond. At a more strategic level, and where considered necessary and appropriate, the Council will promote and champion the development of evidence - based climate change adaptation systems targeted at moderating the negative effects of climate change.</p> </li> <li> <p>▪ <b>Built Heritage Strategy</b></p> <p>Vision: To ensure that the protection and conservation of the outstanding architectural and archaeological built heritage of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown forms an integral and component part in the continuing sustainable development of the County and that this valuable, and in many instances non-renewable, resource continues to be safeguarded through proper management, sensitive enhancement and appropriate development and re-development.</p> </li> <li> <p>▪ <b>Community Strategy</b></p> <p>Vision: To promote social inclusion and enhanced ‘quality of life’ through integrating the continued sustainable growth and planning of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown with its social and community development by ensuring the retention, provision and maintenance of well-considered and appropriate levels of social, community and cultural infrastructure readily accessible to all citizens of, and visitors to, the County.</p> </li> <li> <p>▪ <b>Principles of Development</b></p> <p>Vision: To ensure that all new development and redevelopment proposals in the County adhere to the principles of good urban design and contribute to the delivery of a ‘sense of space’, through the promotion of a high quality built environment utilising considered design and development standards. The orderly and sustainable delivery of new developments, of many diverse types and scales, will be realised through the application of the various standards and objectives embedded in the Development Plan via the Development Management process and adherence to the overarching Land Use Zoning imperatives.</p> </li> <li> <p>▪ <b>Specific Local Objectives</b></p> <p>Vision: To initiate and/or give effect to the package of Specific Local Objectives within the lifetime of the 2016-2022 County Development Plan.</p> </li> </ul> <p>Chapter 10 of the County Development Plan contains a vision statement in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment as follows: To ensure that the</p>

Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
	implementation of the various policies, objectives, projects and actions embedded in the County Development Plan will have no likely significant effect on the environment nor will they adversely effect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.
Is the project or Plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site	No
Are there other Plans or projects that together with the project of Plan being assessed could affect the site	No
The Assessment of Significance of Effects	
Describe how the project or Plan (alone or in combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site	The proposed development is not likely to affect Natura 2000 sites
Explain why these effects are not considered significant	<p>There are twenty three sites in all, thirteen cSACs and ten SPAs. Eight Natura sites lie within the boundary of the draft County Development Plan. They are the Wicklow Mountains cSAC, Wicklow Mountains SPA, South Dublin Bay &amp; River Tolka Estuary SPA, South Dublin Bay cSAC, Knocksink Wood cSAC, Ballyman Glen cSAC, Dalkey Islands SPA and Rockabill to Dalkey Island cSAC.</p> <p><b>DIRECT IMPACTS</b></p> <p><b>Greenways and Cycleways</b></p> <p>Policy OSR8 states that <i>‘It is Council policy to develop a comprehensive network of County Greenways linking parks and public open spaces and to liaise with adjoining local authorities and other stakeholders to achieve and improve wider external linkages and corridors’</i>. A number of potential cycle routes have been identified in the draft County Development Plan in order to form a network of Greenway routes. There is potential for greenway routes to have a direct impact on Natura 2000 sites through construction of pathways within or in proximity to a designated site, or indirectly by providing new or improved access to sites that are sometimes highly sensitive to disturbance and visitor pressures. Several coastal habitats have been identified as being sensitive to the development of paths and cycle ways, and the associated increase in visitor pressure. Potential impacts include direct habitat loss; fragmentation of habitats; habitat disturbance, including increased visitor pressure and trampling; reduction in water quality; destruction of wetlands; bird disturbance; and the risk of introducing invasive species. The Council has committed to ensuring the protection of the Natura 2000 network by stating in Section 4.2.2.7 that <i>‘the Greenway projects will comply fully with the requirements and objectives of the Habitats Directive’</i>.</p> <p>The draft County Development Plan also includes specific local objective SL093, <i>‘To promote the development of the East Coast Trail Cycle Route (incorporating the S2S promenade and cycleway)’</i>. The biodiversity and habitat of Dublin Bay is of national and international importance and large sections are designated as cSAC’s, SPA’s and pNHA’s. The indicative S2S route traverses sections of these designated areas, and it is recognised that there are significant potential negative</p>

Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
	<p>impacts associated with the indicative S2S route, including direct habitat loss; fragmentation of habitats; habitat disturbance, including increased visitor pressure and trampling; reduction in water quality; destruction of wetlands; bird disturbance; and the risk of introducing invasive species. Therefore, feasibility studies of this coastal route shall be carried out, including an assessment of route options. It is an objective of the Council to promote the development of the S2S promenade. However, the Council do recognise the potential negative impacts on the Natura 2000 network associated with the proposed S2S cycle route, and have included a statement in Section 2.2.7.3 as follows:</p> <p><i>It should be noted that these coastal routes will be subject to a feasibility study, including an assessment of the route options. Any development proposals shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated SAC's, SPA's, and pNHA's in Dublin Bay and the surrounding area.</i></p> <p>The Councils commitment to a feasibility study and Appropriate Assessment of the proposed S2S development will ensure the protection of the Natura 2000 sites in the Dublin Bay area.</p> <p><b>INDIRECT IMPACTS</b></p> <p><b>Watercourses</b></p> <p>There are three non-designated streams within the County. These are the Booterstown Stream, Carysfort Maretime Stream and the Priory Stream, all of which discharge to the South Dublin Bay cSAC and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA. As such, they provide a pathway for indirect impacts to the receiving cSAC and SPA downstream. To prevent downstream impacts, it is essential that the natural character and ecological value of these watercourses is maintained and protected.</p> <p>The draft County Development Plan clearly sets out the Councils commitment to protecting the watercourses within the County and the designated sites within and adjacent to the County. There are a number of policies within Chapter 4 - Green County Strategy of the draft County Development Plan which focus on maintaining and protecting the natural character and ecological value of these watercourses. Most importantly, development proposals will be required to provide a buffer zone along watercourses (minimum of 10m each side of the waters' edge) to prevent loss of suspended soils, physical damage and release of pollutants. It is an objective of the Council to facilitate compliance with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive and any relevant legislation. In this regard, the Council will facilitate compliance with the relevant objectives and measures for individual water bodies set out in the Eastern River Basin Management Plan and associated Programme of Measures, where relevant. These policies to protect the natural character and ecological value of these watercourses will ensure that the receiving South Dublin Bay cSAC and South</p>

Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
	<p>Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA are also protected, and therefore, will not result in any indirect impacts on these Natura 2000 sites.</p> <p>In recognition of the importance of rivers and waterways to the character of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, the council has committed to consult, as appropriate, with Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to any development that could potentially impact on the aquatic ecosystems and associated riparian habitats and/or salmonid waters as per <i>Policy LHB22 - Rivers and Waterways</i> which states <i>‘It is Council policy to maintain and protect the natural character and ecological value of the river and stream corridors in the County and where possible to enhance existing channels and to encourage diversity of habitat. It is also policy (subject to the sensitivity of the riverside habitat) to provide public access to riparian corridors to promote improved passive recreational activities’</i></p> <p><b>Hydrogeological features</b></p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to implement and develop Local Area Plans for Kiltiernan/Glenamuck, Woodbrook and Shanganagh and Glencullen in accordance with the associated adopted policies and objectives. Associated developments included within these three LAPs could potentially pose impact on both Knocksink Wood cSAC and Ballyman Glen cSAC. Any changes to the groundwater regime or surface water quality within the County boundary could have adverse effects on the petrifying spring habitat for which both Knocksink Wood cSAC and Ballyman Glen cSAC are designated. These springs are groundwater fed and their presence in these sites supports a diverse range of flora that is indicative of these habitats. Any changes to the groundwater regime could cause these springs to dry up, resulting in a loss of biodiversity.</p> <p>Any draft County Development Plan developments with potential impacts to Knocksink Wood cSAC or Ballyman Glen cSAC will be bound by the following policies set out in the draft County Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Policy E14 - Groundwater Protection &amp; Appropriate Assessment</i> which states that: <i>‘It is Council policy to ensure the protection of the groundwater resources in and around the County and associated habitats and species in accordance with the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (groundwater) Regulations, 2010’;</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Policy EI23: Rathmichael Ground and Surface Water Protection - It is Council policy to refuse planning permission for any new developments which include an on-site wastewater treatment facility within the Rathmichael area until the groundwater issues in the area are resolved or ameliorated (See SLO 126 on Maps 10 &amp; 14).</i> This policy will be implemented through the Development Management process through the refusal of planning permission for any new developments - which include an on-site wastewater treatment facility – within the Rathmichael area (See SLO 126 on Maps 10 &amp; 14 for</li> </ul>

Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
	<p>the boundary of this area). Proposals for change of use, alteration to, or extension of existing approved developments within these areas involving on-site wastewater treatment facilities will be assessed in the context of there being no potential deterioration of ground or surface waters; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Policy LHB22 - Rivers and Waterways</i> which states ‘It is Council policy to maintain and protect the natural character and ecological value of the river and stream corridors in the County and where possible to enhance existing channels and to encourage diversity of habitat. It is also policy (subject to the sensitivity of the riverside habitat) to provide public access to riparian corridors to promote improved passive recreational activities’.</li> </ul> <p><b>Water Supply and Wastewater Facilities</b></p> <p>With regard to water supply and wastewater facilities within the County, medium to large scale development may be required to upgrade sections of the existing network to ensure adequate security of supply as deemed necessary by Irish Water. It is an objective of the Council to facilitate Irish Water in ensuring that all wastewater generated is collected, treated and discharged after treatment in a safe and sustainable manner, having regard to the standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation and guidance. Complying with the standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation will ensure that sewage will be treated to an appropriate standard such that it will not impact on receiving waters, and therefore, will not result in any indirect impacts on the Natura 2000 sites. The treatment of sewage and wastewater from areas within Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown County is shared by both Ringsend wastewater treatment plant and Shanganagh wastewater treatment plant.</p> <p><i>Policy EI2 - Wastewater Treatment &amp; Appropriate Assessment</i> states that ‘It is Council policy to provide adequate wastewater treatment facilities to serve the existing and future population of the County, subject to complying with the Water Framework Directive and the associated River Basin Management Plan or any updated version of this document, ‘Water Quality in Ireland 2007-2009’ (EPA 2011) or any updated version of the document, Pollution Reduction Programmes for Designated Shellfish Areas, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the Habitats Directive’.</p> <p><b>Transport</b></p> <p><b>The Eastern Bypass</b></p> <p>The Draft County Development Plan includes Roads Policy ST24: ‘It is Council policy, in conjunction and co-operation with other transport bodies and authorities such as the NRA and the NTA, to secure improvements to the County road network – including improved pedestrian and cycle facilities’.</p> <p>The list of long-term road objectives includes the Eastern Bypass.</p> <p>The main potential impacts of the Eastern Bypass on Natura 2000 sites are related to noise disturbance and a reduction in water quality to coastal cSACs and SPAs. Policy ST24 goes on</p>

Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
	<p>to state that <i>‘Any road proposals will be subject to Appropriate Assessment’</i>. In addition, SLO72 states: <i>‘The line of the Eastern Bypass between the N11 and Dublin Bay is not fixed. The route will be determined following appropriate environmental assessment – including a process of public consultation’</i>. The inclusion of an environmental assessment at the route selection stage, together with an Appropriate Assessment of the proposed Eastern Bypass will ensure the protection of the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.</p> <p><b>Development at ‘The Gut’</b></p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to encourage the redevelopment of ‘The Gut’ adjacent to the West Pier to include improved access to the area (SLO 14). The Gut is in close proximity to the South Dublin Bay &amp; Tolka Estuary SPA, and it is considered that there is potential for noise disturbance to the qualifying species of this SPA. However, as stated in Section 8.2.7.4 <i>‘In relation to coastal development regard shall be had to the EU Guidance document ‘The Implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directive in Estuaries and Coastal Zones’ (2011) when assessing development in or near coastal areas which is likely to have significant effects on the integrity - defined by the structure and function - of any designated sites, coastal and marine fauna, flora and amenities</i>. In addition, any development proposals will undergo screening for Appropriate Assessment as per the overarching wording in the Introduction and the Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity chapters of the draft County Development Plan.</p> <p><b>Leisure Facilities</b></p> <p>It is an objective of the Council to promote Water Leisure Facilities for public use at the coastal fringe of the Gut and rear of the West Pier. The potential impacts associated water leisure facilities may include noise disturbance to the qualifying species of South Dublin Bay &amp; Tolka Estuary SPA. However, as the Council state within SLO95, the development of water leisure facilities: <i>‘is subject to the appropriate environmental assessments including any assessment required under the Habitats Directive in co-operation with the relevant agencies’</i>.</p> <p>With regards to both potential development at the Gut, and water leisure facilities at the coastal fringe of the Gut/ rear of West Pier, the Council has further emphasised its commitment to the protection of Natura 2000 sites by including the following wording in Section 8.2.10.5 of the draft County Development Plan:</p> <p><i>(ii) Water Sports and Development</i></p> <p><i>The Planning Authority will normally only permit proposals for development associated with water sports where all the following criteria are satisfied:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Will not result in damage to sites of nature conservation importance or features of archaeological and built heritage.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Will not result in over intensification of use leading to</i></li> </ul>

Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
	<p><i>pollution, excessive noise and nuisance.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Development complies with the Habitats Directive.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Renewable Energy</b></p> <p>It is Council policy to support and promote wind energy initiatives, both on-shore and offshore, when these are undertaken in an environmentally acceptable manner. The 2010 - 2016 County Development Plan included an analysis of wind speeds and the sensitive landscapes of the County at a broad level, and their relationship to the existing electricity grid network was undertaken. It was concluded that there was no realistic or practical potential for economic on-shore wind farm development in the County without significant and overriding adverse visual and environmental impacts. This earlier analysis has been subsequently updated, and the same were reaffirmed. The Council remains supportive of offshore wind energy initiatives. Potential impacts associated with offshore windfarms include habitat disturbance; noise disturbance to marine life; changes to seabed habitats and marine life and, in turn, indirect effects on the marine life that feeds on them. However, as the Council states in Section 5.2.4.2 <i>any additional wind and wave projects in the Irish Sea, will be subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.</i></p> <p><b>Natural Heritage Policies</b></p> <p><b>Overarching Policy</b></p> <p>The Council is committed to protecting and conserving the biodiversity of Dún Laoghaire, and have included a number of specific policies to ensure the protection and enhancement of Natura 2000 sites. Policy LHB16 is an overall policy for the protection of the natural heritage:</p> <p><i>“It is Council policy to protect and conserve the environment including, in particular, the natural heritage of the County and to conserve and manage Nationally and Internationally important and EU designated sites - such as Special Protection Areas, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, proposed Natural Heritage Areas and Ramsar sites - as well as non-designated areas of high nature conservation value which serve as ‘Stepping Stones’ for the purposes of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive”.</i></p> <p>The policy goes on to state that the implementation of this policy will involve, inter alia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Retention of trees, hedgerows and woodlands wherever practical.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Designation of High Amenity zones.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Retention of Green Belt areas.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Identification of Views and Prospects of special amenity value or special interest.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Identification, and mapping, of public rights-of-way and other strategic access routes.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Protection of sites of geological and geomorphological importance.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Protection of a Special Protection Area (SPA).</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Protection of proposed Candidate Special Areas of</i></li> </ul>



Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
	<p><i>Conservation (pcSAC).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Protection of proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA).</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Protection of existing access (including established rights-of-way) to such sites where feasible and the promotion of public access where it does not exist at present – but subject to ensuring and maintaining the highest environmental standards.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Development of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Ecological Network.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Identification and protection of non-designated sites of local and high nature conservation value - including those identified in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Ecological Network - and management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Maintenance and, as appropriate, achievement of “favourable conservation status” of habitats and species within cSACs as per the requirements and obligations of the Habitats Directive.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Control and management of alien/invasive species (e.g. Japanese knotweed, Giant Hogweed etc.) and noxious weeds (e.g. Ragwort etc.) where possible.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Working with local communities, groups, landowners, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and other relevant parties to identify, protect, manage and, where appropriate, enhance and promote understanding of sites of local biodiversity value.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Protection of the ecological integrity of proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and Annex 1 Habitats.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Promotion of the Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment (IBIA) approach- a methodological framework for biodiversity impact assessment that integrates SEA requirements with AA.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Working with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and other parties to identify, protect where appropriate and manage, enhance and promote sites of local biodiversity value.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Recognition of the proposed UN Dublin Bay Biosphere designation.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Implement any relevant recommendation contained in the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaelteacht’s National Peatland Strategy, when finalised.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>There is an overarching policy in the introduction to the Draft County Development Plan which confirms that ‘The Council will ensure that any plan/project and any associated works in the County, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the</i></p>

Name of Project or Plan	Draft Dún Laoghaire / Rathdown County Development Plan
	<p><i>EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied</i>'. This commitment is also made at the start of the Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity chapter.</p> <p>Individual policies LHB17 and LHB19 confirm the Councils commitment to the protection of the Natura 2000 network, in accordance with the EU Directives, national legislation and national plans and guidelines.</p> <p>Policy LHB17: <i>It is Council policy to ensure the protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, in accordance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines.</i></p> <p>Policy LHB19: <i>It is Council policy to protect and preserve areas designated as proposed Natural Heritage Areas, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, and Special Protection Areas. It is Council policy to promote the maintenance and as appropriate, delivery of 'favourable' conservation status of habitats and species within these areas.</i></p> <p><b>Protective Policies for Individual Natura 2000 Sites</b></p> <p>Specific local objectives 49, 51, 84, 85, 129, 133 confirm the Councils commitment to the conservation of individual Natura 2000 sites within the draft County Development Plan area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SLO49: <i>To protect and conserve the Wicklow Mountains National Park Candidate Special Area of Conservation.</i></li> <li>▪ SLO51: <i>To protect and conserve the Knocksink Wood Candidate Special Area of Conservation.</i></li> <li>▪ SLO84: <i>To protect and conserve South Dublin Bay Candidate Special Area of Conservation.</i></li> <li>▪ SLO85: <i>To protect and conserve Ballyman Glen Candidate Special Area of Conservation.</i></li> <li>▪ SLO129: <i>To implement the objectives of the Dalkey Island Conservation Plan 2013 - 2023.</i></li> <li>▪ SLO133: <i>To protect and conserve Rockabill to Dalkey Island Candidate Special Area of Conservation.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Appropriate Assessment and Development</b></p> <p>Section 8.2.2 (v) and 8.2.9.4 of the draft County Development Plan sets out the requirement for Appropriate Assessment screening of new developments:</p> <p><i>Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive there is a requirement to establish whether, in relation to plans and projects, appropriate assessment (AA) is required. If, following screening, it is considered that AA is required, then the proponent of the plan or project must prepare a Natura Impact Statement. A plan or project will only be authorised after the competent authority has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment where necessary, that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or</i></li> </ul>

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	<p>▪ <i>The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest - including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or</i></p> <p><i>The plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest - restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000.</i></p> <p>Section 8.2.7.1 includes the following wording:</p> <p><i>Any development proposals for sites designated as, or immediately adjacent to, a pNHA, SPA or cSAC shall be accompanied by an EIS and/or Appropriate Assessment and shall be referred to the NPWS. Regard shall be had to 'Guidance for Local - Authorities Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland' (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) 2009).</i></p> <p><b>Biodiversity</b></p> <p>The second National Biodiversity Plan <i>Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016</i> sets out the strategy for conserving and enhancing Ireland's biodiversity through a series of actions. At a local level the plan highlights the key role that local authorities can play in promoting local natural heritage and requires each local authority to prepare a Biodiversity Plan in consultation with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has produced a County Biodiversity Plan 2009-2013. The primary features of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Biodiversity Plan are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To translate International, European and Irish policies and obligations into effective local action on the ground.</li> <li>▪ To provide a framework for the conservation of biodiversity of National and local importance.</li> <li>▪ To collect biodiversity information on the County.</li> <li>▪ To raise public awareness of biodiversity issues and to coordinate existing and new initiatives.</li> <li>▪ To provide a basis for monitoring the success of biodiversity conservation at a National and local level.</li> </ul>

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	<p>Policy LHB18 confirms the Councils commitment to produce a second Biodiversity Plan, which will be set within the context of the second National Biodiversity Plan. Policy LHB18: <i>It is Council Policy to implement the provisions of the County Biodiversity Plan 2009-2013 and to produce a second Biodiversity Plan which will be set within the context of the second National Biodiversity Plan, 'Actions for Biodiversity, 2011 – 2016' prepared by the Department of the Arts, Heritage, Gaelteacht and the Islands. Due regard shall be had to the recommendations arising from the implementation of the current 2009 – 2013 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Biodiversity Plan or its successor plan.</i></p> <p><b>Article 10 of the Habitats Directive</b></p> <p>Article 10 of the Habitats Directive refers to features of the landscape outside designated sites which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna, as follows:</p> <p><i>'Member States shall endeavour, where they consider it necessary, in their land-use planning and development policies and, in particular, with a view to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network, to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora.</i></p> <p><i>Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species'.</i></p> <p>The requirements of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive are not specifically considered under the AA (except in so far as they support a qualifying feature) but it is noted that draft County Development Plan includes Policy LHB21: <i>'It is Council policy to develop an Ecological Network throughout the County which will improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive. The network will also include non designated sites'.</i> The inclusion of this policy will have indirect positive impacts on the Natura 2000 network as ecological connectivity within the County Development Plan area is maintained or improved, which will in turn improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 network. The draft County Development Plan also includes policies LHB20, LHB22, LHB23 and LHB25 which all contribute to the protection and enhancement of ecological corridors in Dún Laoghaire.</p> <p>LHB20: <i>It is Council policy to protect and promote the conservation of biodiversity in areas of natural heritage importance outside Designated Areas and to ensure that notable sites, habitats and features of biodiversity importance - including species protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, the Birds Directive 1979, the Habitats Directive 1992, and rare species - are adequately protected. Ecological assessments will be carried out for all developments in areas that support, or have potential to support, features of biodiversity importance or rare and protected species and</i></p>

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	<p><i>appropriate mitigation/avoidance measures will be implemented. In implementing this policy regard shall be had to the recommendations and objectives of the Green City Guidelines (2008) and 'Ecological Guidance Notes for Local Authorities and Developers' (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Version 2014).</i></p> <p><i>LHB23: It is Council policy to protect hedgerows in the County from development, which would impact adversely upon them. It is Council policy to promote the County's hedgerows by increasing coverage, where possible, using locally native species and to develop an appropriate code of practice for road hedgerow maintenance.</i></p> <p><i>LHB25: It is Council policy to retain the individual physical character of towns and development areas by the designation of green belt areas where appropriate.</i></p> <p>These Natural Heritage policies ensure that not only are Natura 2000 Sites protected and enhanced, but that the ecological corridors connected to Natura 2000 Sites are also managed appropriately.</p> <p><b>Invasive Species</b></p> <p>Invasive non-native plant and animal species (Invasive Alien Species) can represent a major threat to national, regional and local biodiversity, including the integrity of Natura 2000 sites. To this end an EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species has recently been introduced (Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 22 October 2014) on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species. The Council is committed to assist in controlling invasive species, and to this end has included Policy LHB26 within the draft County Development Plan:</p> <p><i>It is Council policy to support as appropriate the National Parks and Wildlife Service efforts to seek to control and manage alien/invasive species (e.g. Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, etc.) and noxious weeds (e.g. ragwort, thistle, dock, etc.) within the County.</i></p>
List of agencies consulted	NPWS
Response to consultation	None to date
<b>Data Collected to Carry Out the Assessment</b>	
Who carried out the assessment?	RPS Ecologists
Sources of Data	NPWS database Information from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
Level of assessment completed	Desktop
Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed?	Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Planning Department
Overall Conclusion	Stage 1 Screening indicates that the draft County Development Plan will not have a significant negative impact on the Natura 2000 network. Therefore, a Stage 2 'Appropriate Assessment' under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC is not required.



## **Determination as to Whether or Not the Draft County Development Plan would Adversely Affect the Integrity of a European Site**

RPS on behalf of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, has carried out a formal Screening process of the Draft Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022 to determine whether Appropriate Assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive is required.

The Screening exercise, which was carried out in accordance with EU and National guidance, was undertaken to determine a) whether the Plan is directly connected to, or necessary for the management of a European Site and b) whether the Plan, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a European site in view of the site(s) conservation objectives.

RPS has determined that an Appropriate Assessment of the Draft Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022 is not required having regard to:

- This information presented in this AA Screening Report (March 2015);
- The characteristics of the Draft Plan;
- The objectives of the Draft Plan to protect European Sites and the Natura 2000 network;
- The Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report for the draft Plan; and
- Consultations, in particular with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

It is noted that this Determination relates to the Draft CDP dated March 2015. It is anticipated that amendments may be required to the Draft Plan following statutory public consultation. The AA Screening will be revisited for all subsequent changes to the Draft CDP and this Determination will be reviewed by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council in line with the outcome of the subsequent screening exercises.

**County Development Plan Team  
March 2015.**





