Planning and Environmental Consultants

Article 6 (3) Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Knocklyon to Ballyboden Active and Sustainable Travel Scheme

DOCUMENT DETAILS

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Knocklyon to Ballyboden Active and Sustainable Travel Scheme is a project to be delivered by South Dublin County Council (SDCC), funded by the National Transport Authority (NTA). MKO has been commissioned by SDCC to provide the information necessary to allow the competent authority to conduct an Article 6(3) Screening for Appropriate Assessment of a proposed Active Travel Scheme located between Knocklyon and Ballyboden, in South Dublin County. The proposed development, which will be submitted under Part VIII of the Planning and Development Regulations (2001), as amended, and Part XI of the Planning and Development Act (2000), as amended, consists of new and upgraded cycle lanes and footpaths constructed on existing roadways and green spaces.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment is required under Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive). Where it cannot be excluded that a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site then same shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The current project is not directly connected with, or necessary for, the management of any European site consequently, the project has been subject to the Appropriate Assessment Screening process.

The Proposed Development consists of improvements to the public realm, walking and cycling infrastructure along Firhouse Road, Knocklyon Road, Templeroan Road, Ballyboden Way, Ballyboden Road and Scholarstown Road and several secondary links connecting the main corridor with residential streets and local trip attractors

The assessment in this report is based on a desk study and field surveys of the proposed development site. It specifically assesses the potential for the proposed development to result in significant effects on European sites in the absence of any best practice, mitigation, or preventative measures.

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AASR) has been prepared in accordance with the following guidance:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010)
- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. Office of the Planning Regulator, OPR (2021).
- European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2021)
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018)

The Knocklyon to Ballyboden Active and Sustainable Travel Scheme is referenced as follows:

- For the purpose of this report, the term 'Study Area' or 'site' refers to the red line boundary, comprising the entire area shown in **Figure 2-1.**
- The proposed Active Travel Scheme Development, including all ancillary works, is referred to as 'the Active Travel Scheme' or 'the Proposed Development'.
- For the purpose of this report, the term 'Likely Zone of Impact' of the proposed development refers to the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. This is established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework.

1.2 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Screening is the process of determining whether an Appropriate Assessment is required for a plan or project. Screening for Appropriate Assessment is required under Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive). The Habitats Directive and the associated Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) are transposed into Irish legislation by the Planning and Development Act 2000 and the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011[1]. The legislative provisions for appropriate assessment screening for planning applications are set out in Section 177U of the 2000 Act (as amended). Where it cannot be excluded that a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site[2] then same shall be subject to an Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Under Section 177U—(1) it states "A screening for appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or application for consent for proposed development shall be carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site. The competent authority's determination as to whether an Appropriate Assessment is required must be made on the basis of objective information and should be recorded. The competent authority may request information to be supplied to enable it to carry out screening. This AASR has been prepared in compliance with the provision of section 177U of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Where it cannot be excluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt at the Screening stage, that a proposed plan or project, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of a European site, an Appropriate Assessment is required. Where an Appropriate Assessment is required, the competent authority will require the applicant to prepare a Natura Impact Statement.

The term Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is defined in legislation. An NIS, where required, should present the data, information, and analysis necessary to reach a definitive determination as to 1) the implications of the plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, for a European site in view of its conservation objectives, and 2) whether there will be adverse effects on the integrity of a European site. The NIS should be underpinned by best scientific knowledge, objective information and by the precautionary principle.

1.3 Statement of Authority

This report has been prepared by David Mesarcik and reviewed by Sara Fissolo. David has 2 years of experience in ecological consultancy and holds a B.Sc. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and an Honours Degree in Terrestrial Ecology. Sara is a Project Ecologist at MKO with over 5 years of ecological consultancy experience and holds a B.Sc. in Ecology and Environmental Biology. This assessment was based on baseline ecological surveys conducted by David Mesarcik of MKO in November 2025.

[1] *S.I. No 477/2011 – European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations*
[2] *Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)*

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Site Location

The proposed development is located in South Dublin, spanning the suburban areas of Firhouse, Ballyboden, and Knocklyon. The primary route of the scheme begins to the west at Firhouse Road and continues through Knocklyon Road, Dargle Wood Park, Templeroan Road, Scholarstown Road, Ballyboden Way and terminates to the east at the junction between Scholarstown and Edmondstown Road. The Active Travel Scheme consists of 4 km of mainline improvements and over 1.5 km of secondary link improvements through residential roads. The scheme will enhance sustainable travel links between these well-established communities and integrate with South Dublin's wider active travel network. The location of the Proposed Development in shown in **Figure 2-1**.

2.2 Characteristics of Proposed Development

2.2.1 Objectives of the Scheme

The purpose of the Active Travel Scheme, as set out by SDCC, is to improve the public realm and create a safer and more attractive environment for residents by implementing traffic calming measures and neighbourhood enhancement. Additionally, the scheme aims to make the area more accessible and liveable by improving pedestrian and cyclist accessibility, linking residential communities in Firhouse, Knocklyon and Ballyboden to trip generators such as schools and educational centres, recreation zones, employment and business hubs, and "third spaces."

There will also be links to the wider active travel network in the county by enhancing walking and cycling facilities. Upgrades will be made to existing junctions along the main route and secondary links, providing segregated cycling facilities through the junctions in addition to enhanced pedestrian crossings.

When the project is delivered, it will enhance the streetscape of the area, provide continuous walking and cycling infrastructure, and improve safety for all road users. The provision of safe, continuous, legible active travel infrastructure will be a catalyst for an increased number of journeys being made by walking, cycling, and public transport by:

- Encouraging modal shift by improving the public realm and fostering a safer, more attractive environment for residents through traffic calming measures and neighbourhood enhancement.
- Encouraging modal shift to walking and cycling as safe and convenient means of making local trips (work, school, college, recreation etc.) and creating a network of high-quality walking and cycling facilities.
- Developing secondary links in the vicinity of the main scheme to increase the usability of the main route by improving access and destination options.
- Improving the landscape along the route to enhance biodiversity and create a more pleasant environment for walking and cycling.
- Installing safe school treatments outside schools to create safe and welcoming environments that encourage walking and cycling to school and promote positive social interaction at the school gate.

- Ensuring the delivery of high-quality linkages between residential areas and key trip attractors (e.g., schools, colleges, sports clubs, shopping centres), as well as other planned and existing cycle and walking routes.
- Reprioritising crossings of side roads by tightening corner radii and providing raised entry treatments that allow for pedestrian and cyclist priority through junctions and encourage slower vehicle speeds.
- Developing signalised junctions that cater for all pedestrian and cyclist movements, providing segregated and kerb-protected cycle facilities along with single-movement pedestrian crossings on each junction arm.
- Upgrading bus stops to limit conflict between pedestrians and cyclists, and between cyclists and stopping buses, by routing cyclists around the bus stop and providing permeability between bus stops and destinations.
- Improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists in accordance with the Cycle Design Manual (CDM) and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS).

2.2.2 Development Description

The primary route of the scheme begins to the west at Firhouse Road and continues through Knocklyon Road, Dargle Wood, Templeroan Road, Scholarstown Road, Ballyboden Way and terminates to the east at the junction between Scholarstown and Edmondstown Road. The Active Travel Scheme consists of 4 km of mainline improvements and over 1.5 km of secondary link improvements through residential roads.

The design of the scheme adopts the design principles of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and the Cycle Design Manual (CDM), following a hierarchy outlined in DMURS that prioritises pedestrians, followed by cyclists, public transport, and lastly private motor vehicles. While the scheme adopts this hierarchy, it also recognises that private car trips remain an essential part of daily life, and therefore, impacts on private car journeys will be minimised as far as practical while still achieving the project objectives.

Segregated cycle lanes with kerb protection will be provided along the majority of the scheme. Existing shared surfaces will be utilised on Knocklyon Road (outside SuperValu) and through Dargle Wood Park. The secondary links will comprise small interventions such as the removal of kissing gates, raised entry treatments with continuous footpaths at side roads, new trees and grass planting, and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) treatments.

It is intended to use shared streets on secondary links. To facilitate this safely, the streets will be designed to ensure the 85th percentile speed limit is below 30 km/h, as per the requirements of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS).

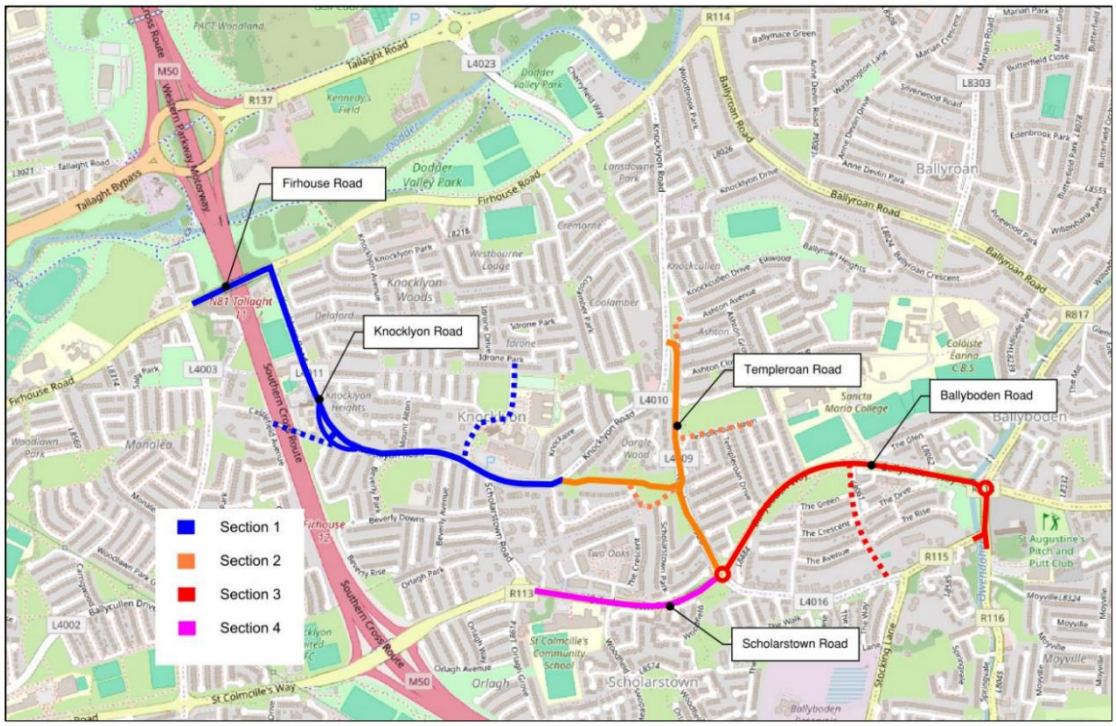

Figure 2-2: Knocklyon to Ballyboden Active and Sustainable Travel Scheme Sections. Extracted from Part 8 Planning Report by Arup.

For the purpose of this report, the route has been divided into several sections, as shown in **Figure 2-2**.

The works proposed for each subsection are described in the summary below:

- **Section 1** – Firhouse Road & Knocklyon Road (between Firhouse Road and Dargle Wood Park)
- **Section 2** – Dargle Wood Park & Templeroan Road
- **Section 3** – Ballyboden Way & Ballyboden Road (between Scholarstown Roundabout and Scholarstown Road)
- **Section 4** – Scholarstown Road (between Orlagh Roundabout and Scholarstown Roundabout)

Section 1 – Firhouse Road & Knocklyon Road

This section of the proposed route, between Firhouse Road and Dargle Wood Park, will be upgraded with raised and kerb-protected cycle tracks in both directions, new and improved pedestrian and cyclist crossings, and shared streets in low-traffic environments. At the eastern end of this section, the Active Travel Scheme will connect with the Firhouse Road Active Travel Improvement Scheme, which will be delivered in advance of the Active Travel Scheme. Several secondary links have been identified, creating connections between the mainline, residential streets and local trip attractors.

The M50 bridge has footpaths on both sides, and the existing cycling infrastructure includes an eastbound cycle track adjacent to and level with the footpath. The current westbound cycling provision consists of on-road mandatory cycle lanes, which terminate at the approach to the bridge, requiring cyclists to share space with buses.

To provide continuous cycle tracks along the M50 bridge in both directions, the carriageway lane width will be reduced to a maximum of 3.0 m. The reclaimed space will be used to provide 1.5 m cycle tracks and 1.8 m footpaths where site constraints do not allow wider dimensions.

The T-junction connecting Firhouse Road with Knocklyon Road currently has limited cycling infrastructure. It will be upgraded to a protected T-junction with segregated and protected crossings for cyclists and pedestrians.

The proposed scheme will retain the existing footpaths on Knocklyon Road and provide kerb-protected and raised cycle tracks in both directions between Firhouse Road and the existing shared space outside Knocklyon Shopping Centre. The minimum cycle track width is 1.5 m at constrained locations such as the M50 bridge. Where feasible, a 2.0 m width will be provided. At locations where residential boundaries or mature trees constrain available space, widths will be adjusted accordingly.

Carriageway lanes will be reduced to 3.0 m on Knocklyon Road. This reduction allows improvements to walking and cycling facilities and encourages reduced vehicular speeds. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) design principles will be applied outside Gaelscoil Chnoc Liamhna. The existing school set-down will be relocated approximately 100 m north of its current location, pencil bollards will be installed along the full school zone, and high-friction surfacing will be provided at crossing approaches. The existing uncontrolled crossing will be upgraded to a raised zebra crossing with Belisha beacons.

On Idrone Avenue outside St. Colmcille's Senior and Junior National Schools, SRTS treatments will also be implemented. The carriageway will be narrowed to 6.0 m, and the reclaimed space will be used to widen the footpath on the eastern side. Existing crossings will be upgraded: the warden crossing south of Knocklyon Grove will become a raised zebra crossing, and the crossing between the school and the green area opposite will also be upgraded to a zebra crossing. A new 3.0 m shared surface will link the school to the laneway at the top of Knocklyon Grove.

Section 2 – Dargle Wood Park & Templeroan Road

The existing route through Dargle Wood Park consists of a paved footpath. To provide a safe and accessible link between Knocklyon Road and Ballyboden, this route will be upgraded to a 3.0 m wide shared space for pedestrians and cyclists. Kissing gates at both ends will be removed to improve accessibility. A new 3.0 m shared surface will be provided between the main park route, Scholarstown Park, and the Two Oaks development, following an existing desire line.

Currently, Templeroan Road has no formal cycling provision and limited pedestrian crossing facilities. Cyclists must share the carriageway or use the footpath, and side roads have large corner radii, contributing to higher vehicle speeds. The scheme proposes reducing Templeroan Road to 6.0 m (3.0 m per lane) and using the reclaimed space to provide a protected two-way cycle track on the eastern side. As the existing road is 9.0 m wide, a 3.0 m cycle track (including protection kerb) can be constructed while retaining existing kerb lines. This approach preserves drainage infrastructure and avoids tree removal.

The junction between Templeroan Road and Templeroan Lawn will be upgraded to a signalised junction with a new parallel crossing across Templeroan Lawn and a 3.0 m crossing across Templeroan Road, linking to Sancta Maria College and nearby estates. Corner radii will be tightened, and raised crossings installed along side roads between the new signalised crossing and Sancta Maria College.

North of Templeroan Road, the two-way cycle track and footpath will merge into a 3.0 m shared surface connecting Templeroan Road with Ashton Avenue and Knockcullen Rise. Segregated pedestrian and cycle crossings will be provided between the two-way cycle track and Dargle Wood Park. To the south, the cycle track will connect into the proposed protected roundabout.

All existing crossing facilities will be retained or upgraded, and side roads will incorporate speed-reduction measures such as continuous raised crossings.

Section 3 – Ballyboden Way & Ballyboden Road

The section of Ballyboden Way consists of a 9.0 m carriageway with adjacent parallel footpath and cycle track, separated from the carriageway by a landscaped verge. The combined path width varies between 2–3 m and is affected in places by hedge overgrowth. Active travel infrastructure at the roundabouts is limited: Scholarstown Road roundabout has unprotected on-road cycle lanes, and Taylor's Lane roundabout has no cycling facilities. Both were designed for high-speed vehicle movement.

As part of the scheme, both roundabouts will be upgraded to protected roundabouts with pedestrian and cyclist priority. The available space enables adaptation of the CDM standard detail (TL701) to a more cost-effective layout while maintaining safety and continuity. Narrower carriageways and tighter radii will reduce vehicle speeds. Retaining much of the existing road surface will reduce construction cost and disruption.

Carriageway width on Ballyboden Way will be reduced to 6.0 m (3.0 m per lane). The reclaimed space will accommodate a 3.0 m westbound bus lane for approximately 150 m between Scholarstown Road roundabout and bus stop 7446, and an eastbound bus lane for approximately 650 m between bus stop 7446 and the Taylor's Lane roundabout. Bus lane placement has been informed by observed delays to bus operations.

The existing parallel cycle track and footpath will be retained and tied into the new protected roundabout layouts. Local vegetation clearance will restore full cycle track width. A raised delineator kerb will be installed between the footpath and cycle track at conflict points to aid visually impaired users.

Bus stops along Ballyboden Way will be upgraded with clear delineation between the cycle track and shared boarding areas, using pavement changes, markings, and tactile paving. Stops 7443 and 7446 will be relocated by about 15 m to accommodate the bus lane transition and a proposed signalised crossing. Bus stop 7442 will be removed, with route 15B instead serving stops 7974 and 7909.

Two new permeability links will be created between Ballyboden Way and The Lawn, Boden Park, and Templeroan Green to improve access to bus routes and the walking/cycling network. A pedestrian crossing will be introduced between bus stops 7443 and 7446.

Additionally, a secondary link was identified, which will create an active travel link between Ballyboden Way and Scholarstown Road through Boden Park Green, along an existing route. The works associated with establishing this secondary link would include new crossings and the widening of existing footpaths to 3.0 m to create a shared space.

On Ballyboden Road, existing on-road mandatory cycle lanes will be replaced with 2.0 m raised and kerb-protected cycle tracks. The carriageway will be reduced to 6.0 m (3.0 m per lane) and the existing grass verge removed to accommodate the cycle tracks. The junction of Ballyboden Road and Scholarstown Road will be upgraded to a fully signal-controlled protected junction, incorporating access to the proposed residential development at Taylors Lane and Edmondstown Road.

Section 4 – Scholarstown Road

Limited interventions are proposed for Scholarstown Road due to recently constructed infrastructure at the Two Oaks development. Approximately 200 m of roadway between the roundabout and the existing shared surface will be modified to include 2.0 m raised and kerb-protected cycle tracks in both directions. The carriageway will be reduced to 6.0 m (3.0 m per lane).

The existing bus stop will be upgraded to include a cycle bypass, and new shelters will be installed at each stop. A 2.4 m signal-controlled crossing will also be provided to create a formal link between the two bus stops. At the western end of Scholarstown Road, near Orlagh roundabout, raised crossings with continuous footpath surfaces will be provided at access roads to create a seamless link between the Two Oaks shared surface and Orlagh roundabout.

690,000
700,000
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740,000
730,000
720,000

N

Scale: 1:18,000

PHOENIX PARK
Páirc an Fhionnuisce

DUBLIN HARBOUR

0 2.5 5 km

Map Legend

Study Area

Spatial Reference
Name: IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
Datum: IRENET95
Projection: Transverse Mercator

N

SITE LOCATION - NOT TO SCALE

Drawing Title
Site Location Map

Project Title
Knocklyon to Ballyboden Active Travel Scheme

Project No.	Drawing No.	Scale
251045	Figure 2-1	1:100,000
Drawn By: JB	Checked By: DM	Date: 11/12/2025

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3. DESCRIPTION OF THE BASELINE ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Local Hydrology and Water Quality

The EPA web-mapper was consulted on the 11th November 2025 regarding the water quality and status of waterbodies that are located downstream of the Proposed Development site.

The proposed Active Travel Scheme is situated entirely within the WFD Catchment 09, Liffey and Dublin Bay[3]. The site is located in the Dodder_SC_010 sub-catchment. Existing surface water drainage within the proposed Active Travel Scheme Area is conveyed via stormwater drains, which ultimately discharge into the River Dodder (IE_EA_09D010620).

The Active Travel Scheme crosses over two watercourses, the 2nd order Orlagh Stream (IE_EA_09D010620) to the northwest, along Firhouse Rd and the Owenadoher River (IE_EA_09O011700) to the southeast, along Edmondstown Rd. Both of these watercourses flow downstream into the River Dodder, which flows roughly parallel to the proposed site. The Orlagh Stream is culverted under the M50 motorway, and two existing bridges, which form part of the proposed scheme, cross the Owenadoher River, at Ballyboden Way and Scholarstown Road. The River Dodder flows closest to the proposed scheme at the northwest section along Firhouse Rd, (Approx 140m).

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) Transitional Waterbody risk score for the section of Liffey and Dublin Bay closest to the development site, known as Liffey Estuary Lower, has been assessed as "Intermediate".

The site is located within the Dublin (IE_EA_G_008) groundwater catchment. The Water Framework Directive (WFD) Groundwater Monitoring Programme (2019-2024) assigned the groundwater catchment as having 'good' status.

The Biotic Index of Water Quality (BIWQ) was developed in Ireland by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Q-values are assigned using a combination of habitat characteristics and structure if the macro-invertebrate community within the waterbody. Individual macro-invertebrate families are classified according to their sensitivity to organic pollution, and the Q-value is assessed based primarily on their relative abundance within a sample. The EPA sampling station result provides a baseline against which any water quality changes occurring in the future can be measured. Q-values of downstream monitoring stations of the study area were available for the Owenadoher River, and the River Dodder, and are presented in **Table 2-1** below.

[3] https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/

Table 2.1: Q-values at downstream monitoring stations for the Owenadoher and River Dodder

River Waterbody	Monitoring Station	Year	River/ Stream section	Q values with Status
Owenadoher River	Scholarstown Road Br, (RS09O011300)	2010	Owenadoher_010	4, Good
	Br u/s Dodder R confl, (RS09O011700)	2022	Owenadoher_010	3-4, Moderate
River Dodder	Dodder - Footbridge Firhouse (Balroth Weir) (RS09D010400)	1984	Dodder_050	3-4, Moderate
	New Br, Firhouse(RS09D010420)	1998	Dodder_050	4, Good
	Dodder - New Br u/s Templeogue Br(RS09D010430)	2002	Dodder_050	3, Poor
	Dodder - Templeogue Br (RS09D010500)	1991	Dodder_050	3, Poor
	Dodder - Springfield Crescent (RS09D010600)	1988	Dodder_050	2-3, Poor
	Br on Springfield Ave (RS09D010620)	2022	Dodder_050	3-4 Moderate
	Dodder - Dodder Rd d/s Weir (RS09D010700)	1991	Dodder_050	2-3, Poor

3.2 Survey Methodology

A multi-disciplinary ecological walkover survey of the entire site was undertaken by David Mesarcik of MKO on the 18th and 19th of November 2025, in accordance with TII's *Guidelines on Ecological Surveying Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna on National Road Schemes* (TII, 2008). This survey provided baseline data on the ecology of the Study Area. Walkover surveys are designed to detect the presence or suitable habitat for a range of protected faunal species that may occur in the vicinity of the Proposed Development.

Habitats were classified in accordance with the Heritage Council's '*Guide to Habitats in Ireland*' (Fossitt, 2000). Habitat mapping was undertaken with regard to guidance set out in '*Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping*' (Smith et al., 2011).

During the multidisciplinary surveys, a search for Invasive Alien Species (IAS), with a focus on those listed under the Third Schedule of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011* (S.I. 477 of 2015) or under the First Schedule of the *European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024* (S.I. No 374 of 2024), was also conducted.

3.2.1.1 Limitations

The information provided in this document accurately and comprehensively describes the baseline ecological environment and provides an accurate prediction of the likely impacts of the proposed development on any Designated Sites. Ecological surveys were undertaken at the site outside the optimal survey season for botanical assessments, and outside the bird breeding season, however, this is not considered to have resulted in significant limitations to the assessment, due to the nature of the site, which consists of highly urbanised areas along roadsides in South Dublin County, and the scale of the proposed development, which primarily consists of modifications of existing artificial environments. No significant limitations in the scope, scale or context of the assessment have been identified.

3.3 Habitats within the Proposed Development Boundary

Habitats recorded during the multi-disciplinary ecological walkover survey are described below. Photographs taken of representative habitats across the proposed development are also included in the following section. No habitats considered to be of ecological significance and having the potential to correspond to those listed in *Annex I* of the *EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* were identified during the walkover survey. No invasive species listed under the Third Schedule of the *European Communities Regulations 2011* (S.I. 477 of 2015) or under the First Schedule of the *European Union (Invasive Alien Species) Regulations 2024* (S.I. No 374 of 2024) were recorded within the Proposed Development site.

The proposed Active Travel Scheme crosses two watercourses, the Orlagh Stream (IE_EA_09D010620) to the northwest, and the Owenadoher River (IE_EA_09O011700) to the southeast of the Study Area. The watercourse crossings associated with the proposed scheme comprise existing infrastructure: the Orlagh Stream is culverted under the M50 motorway, and two existing bridges, which form part of the proposed scheme, cross the Owenadoher River, at Ballyboden Way and Scholarstown Road. The Proposed Development Site does not include any aquatic habitats, and no interaction with such habitats is anticipated.

Habitat descriptions below are in the past tense to reflect their accuracy at a point in the recent past.

Table 3-2: Habitats recorded within the site during surveys undertaken in November 2025

Habitat Type	Fossitt Code
Flower Beds and Borders	BC4
Stone Walls and other stonework	BL1
Buildings and Artificial Surfaces	BL3
Improved Amenity Grassland	GA2
Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges	GS2
(Mixed) Broadleaved Woodland	WD1
Scattered Trees and Parkland	WD5
Hedgerows	WL1
Treelines	WL2
Scrub	WS1

3.3.1 Flower Beds and Borders (BC4)

Ornamental Flower Beds and Borders (BC4) occur at several locations along pedestrian paths across the proposed Active Travel Scheme. (**Plate 3-1**) These are usually associated with gardens and parks, on roadsides and roundabouts, and in front of various buildings. The majority have been deliberately planted for decorative or landscaping purposes and are regularly maintained. They typically contain a high proportion of non-native species such as, but not limited to, New Zealand broadleaf (*Griselinia littoralis*), Australian bottlebrush (*Callistemon* spp.) and verbena (*Verbena* spp.). as well as other common species such as broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), dogwood (*Cornus* spp.) and rugosa rose (*Rosa rugosa*). These planted habitats are very small, isolated and highly modified, comprising a high proportion of non-native, ornamental species with limited potential to support biodiversity.

Plate 3-1: Ornamental planted ***flower beds (BC4)*** *containing dogwood, rugosa rose, holly and cleavers in front of the Gaelscoil Chnoc Liamhna Primary School on Knocklyon Road to the west of the proposed scheme.*

3.3.2 Stone Walls and other stonework (BL1)

A number of low stone walls were recorded across the proposed Active Travel Scheme (**Plates 3-2 – 3-3**). These built structures can be colonised by ivy (*Hedera helix / H. hibernica*) and red valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) and were classified as **Stone Walls and other stonework (BL1).** They are modified artificial habitats with low potential to support biodiversity.

*Plate 3-1: **Stone Wall (BL1)** habitat colonised with bryophytes on bridge crossing the Owenadoher River along Scholarstown Road to the southeast of the scheme*

*Plate 3-3: Low **Stone Wall (BL1)** with ivy recorded along Ballyboden Road to the east of the scheme.*

3.3.3 Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3)

The proposed Active Travel Scheme is proposed to be constructed along existing roads and pedestrian walkways, which comprise the **Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3)** habitat type (**Plates 3-4 – 3-6**). This includes the majority of the Study Area and is made up of domestic dwellings, schools, hotels/guesthouses, abandoned buildings, concrete bridges and tarmac roadways. These built surfaces are modified artificial habitats with negligible potential to support biodiversity.

*Plate 3-4: Roads and pedestrian walkways classified as **Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3)** along Firhouse Road at the northwest of the scheme.*

*Plate 3-5: Roads, pedestrian crossing and walkways classified as **Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3)** at Knocklyon Road, opposite the shopping Centre at the west of the scheme.*

*Plate 3-6: Roads, bus lane and existing cycle lane classified as **Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3)** along Taylor's Lane at the eastern edge of the scheme.*

3.3.4 Improved Amenity Grassland (GA2)

Patches of **Amenity Grassland (GA2)** were very common along roadsides throughout the proposed Active Travel Scheme (**Plates 3-7 – 3-8**). Many patches were associated with gardens along with road verges and grassed amenity areas, as well as lawns in public parks where the proposed cycle route will pass, including Beverly Park, Boden Park and Dargle Wood (**Plate 3-9**). This habitat was actively managed and was characterised by a low sward height and low species diversity. Amenity grasslands within the proposed Active Travel Scheme area were characterised by common species such as Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), and creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), meadow grasses (*Poa spp.*), and abundant common daisy (*Bellis perennis*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale agg.*), rib-wort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), and white clover (*Trifolium repens*). Often, species such as creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), and common yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) were frequent with occasional lesser knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), field-speedwell (*Veronica persica*) and greater plantain (*Plantago major*). These areas were almost always short and homogenous in appearance, with limited ecological value.

*Plate 3-7: Patch of short-mown **Improved Amenity Grassland (GA2)** dominated by perennial ryegrass, Yorkshire fog and annual meadow grass with lime treeline recorded along Knocklyon Road to the west of the proposed scheme.*

*Plate 3-8: Patch of **Improved Amenity Grassland (GA2)** along Firhouse Road at the northwest of the scheme.*

*Plate 3-9: Short-mown **Improved Amenity Grassland (GA2)** perennial ryegrass-dominated field within Dargle Wood Park, bordered with sycamore treelines.*

3.3.5 Dry Meadows and Grassy Verges (GS2)

Grassy verges (GS2) were recorded throughout the site along roadsides and within public parks (**Plate 3-10**). These areas are not mown regularly. Species characteristic of this habitat type include cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium* arvense), creeping and meadow buttercup meadow buttercup (Ranunculus repens, R. acris), tansy ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), broadleaf dock (*Rumex* obtusifolius), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), hedge bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*), field-speedwell, red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), hawksbeard (*Crepis* spp.), white clover, perennial ryegrass, Yorkshire fog, dandelion, ribwort plantain and nettle (*Urtica dioica*).These areas were left unmown with variable sward height, which creates ecological niches for a number of faunal species. Despite being small, these habitat patches were widespread in this urban environment, providing ecological value to species and improving ecological connectivity for wildlife in this urban environment.

*Plate 3-10: Unmown **Grassy Verge (GS2)** dominated by creeping buttercup, nettle, broad-leaved dock and dandelion along the pedestrian path connecting Scholarstown Road and Ballyboden Way to the west of the proposed scheme.*

3.3.6 Mixed Broadleaved Woodland (WD1)

Areas of **Mixed Broadleaved Woodland (WD1)** were recorded in several locations across the scheme. (**Plates 3-11 – 3-12**). These woodland areas include a mix of species, including poplar (*Populus* spp.), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), lime (*Tilia* spp.), Italian alder (*Alnus cordata*), hawthorn (*Crataegus* spp.), willow (*Salix* spp.), with occasional aspen (*Populus tremula*), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) and Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). The understorey varies between the woodlands and often includes ivy (*Hedera helix*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), bramble and holly, with the ground flora often dominated by ivy, common hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), cocksfoot and bramble and occasional wood avens (*Geum urbanum*), hedge bindweed, willowherb (*Epilobium hirsitum*) and herb robert (*Geranium robertianum*). This habitat comprises some of the only unmanaged patches of biodiversity within the highly urbanised environment. Although these areas of woodland are relatively small and isolated, they provide an important refuge for faunal species in this urban landscape.

*Plate 3-11: An area of **Mixed Broadleaved Woodland (WD1)** dominated by beech with occasional hazel, sycamore and silver birch recorded along Templeroad Road to the south of the scheme.*

*Plate 3-12: **Mixed Broadleaved Woodland (WD1)** patch along Firhouse Road at the westernmost edge of the site dominated by grey willow, with frequent silver birch, Norway maple and occasional sycamore and dogwood/hazel understorey.*

3.3.7 Scattered Trees and Parkland (WD5)

Areas of **Scattered trees and Parkland (WD5)** were recorded throughout the Proposed Scheme and were commonly associated with public amenity areas within residential neighbourhoods (**Plate 3-13**). They were generally comprised of a well-managed amenity grassland sward with tree species including beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) and lime (*Tilia cordata*) scattered throughout. These habitats are fairly widespread in the environment and provide a refuge for a range of species in this urban landscape.

*Plate 3-13: Area of **Scattered** alder **trees (WD5)** within amenity grassland field opposite St. Colmcille's Senior National School at the west of the scheme.*

3.3.8 Hedgerows (WL1)

Hedgerows (WL1) were recorded frequently throughout the Proposed Scheme, with the general species composition and management varying throughout. Hedgerows were most frequently recorded along the boundaries of private dwellings, comprising predominantly ornamental shrub species with some native hedgerow species present (**Plate 3-14 – 3-15**).

Common non-native / ornamental shrub hedgerow species included New Zealand broadleaf (*Griselenia littoralis*), spotted laurel (*Aucuba japonica*), privet (*Ligustrum* spp.), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), *Cotoneaster* spp., *Hypericum* spp., red tip photinia (*Photinia x fraseri*), and cypress hedging (*Cupressus spp.*). Native hedgerow species included hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), bramble, willow (*Salix spp.*), with bracken (*Pteridium aquilinium*) and ivy frequently present in the ground flora. Hedgerows act as strips of linear woodland that serve to connect isolated habitat patches and provide ecological corridors for species to move across the urban environment. They have the potential to support high levels of biodiversity and provide habitat for many floral and faunal species in the highly urbanised environment.

*Plate 3-14: Hawthorn **Hedgerow (WL1)** with ivy and bramble dominated understory along fence running parallel to existing cycle lane on Ballyboden Way to the south of the scheme.*

*Plate 3-15: Non-native New Zealand broadleaf **Hedgerow (WL1)** recorded on Knocklyon Road to the west of the scheme.*

3.3.9 Treelines (WL2)

Treelines (WL2) were recorded frequently throughout the proposed Active Travel Scheme. The general mix of species within treelines and the management regimes for the treelines varied. Treelines were most commonly recorded adjacent to roadways and associated with areas of amenity grassland. (**Plates 3-16 – 3-18**)

Treelines comprised a mix of native and non-native species, including lime, ash, sycamore, birch, alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), beech, rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), sitka spruce (*Pichea sitchensis*), hornbeam (*Carpinus spp.*) and cypress (*Cupressus*) species. Native hedgerows provide important ecological value to the urban environment, creating ecological corridors for species to move across the landscape.

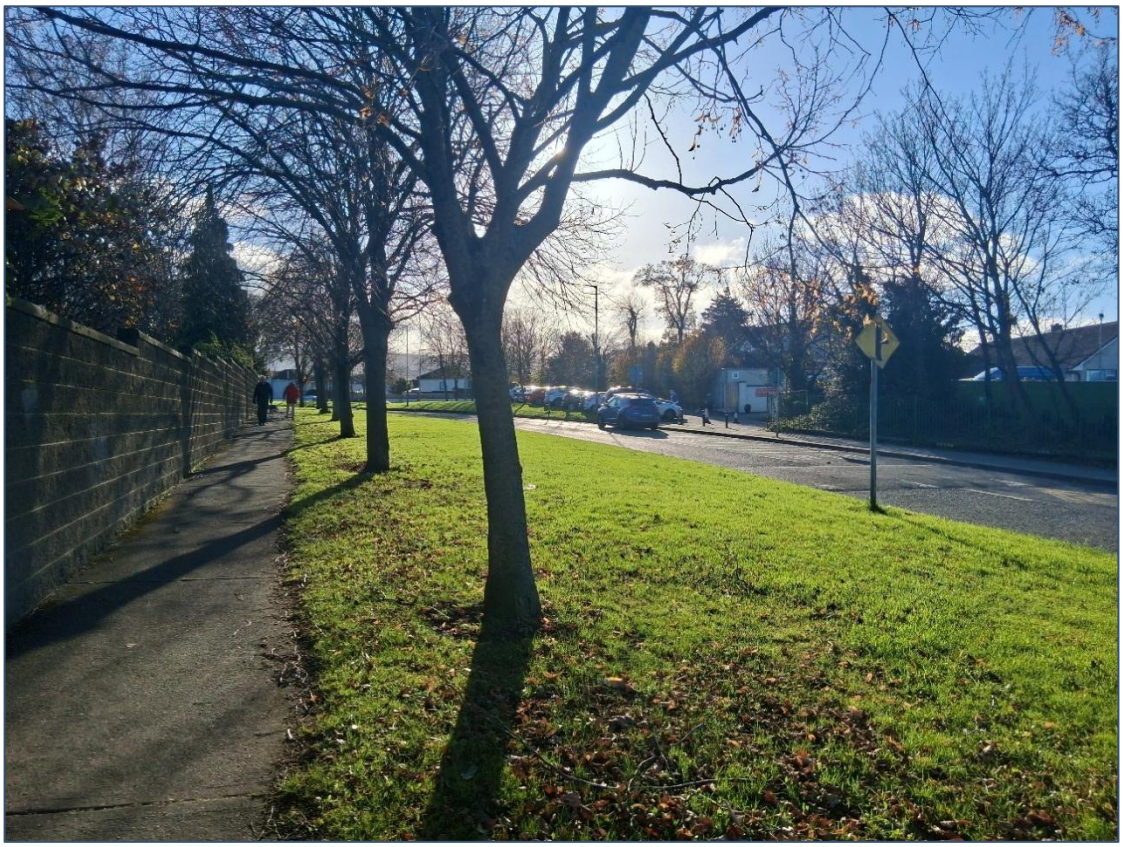

*Plate 3-16: Lime **Treeline (WL2)** over amenity grassland along Knocklyon Road to the northwest of the scheme*

*Plate 3-17: Immature beech **Treeline (WL2)** along Templeroan Road to the north of the scheme.*

*Plate 3-18: Mature Sycamore **Treeline (WL2)** with occasional Norway maple and blackthorn/dogwood understorey recorded at the edge of amenity grassland field opposite St. Colmcille's Senior National School at the west of the scheme.*

3.3.10 Scrub (WS2)

Areas of **Scrub (WS2)** occur in a few locations, with bramble often the dominant species, and frequent broadleaf dock, hedge bindweed, hawthorn, creeping thistle, cock's-foot, false oatgrass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and tufted vetch (*Vicia cracca*). Non-native buddleja (*Buddleja davidii*) is also common in scrub patches, especially on disturbed land or waste ground (**Plate 3-19**). Patches of unmanaged native scrub provide biodiversity value within the highly urbanised environment. Although they are relatively small and isolated, they provide ecological refugia for faunal species in this urban landscape.

Plate 3-19: Area of buddleja scrub with cow parsnip, cock's-foot and invasive winter heliotrope recorded behind stone wall on Ballyboden Road to the east of the scheme.

3.4 Protected Species

The Multi-disciplinary Ecological Walkover surveys did not record any protected fauna or floral species that are qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 site.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES

4.1 Data Sources Informing the Assessment

In preparation of the report, the below sources were consulted on 11.11.2025 to inform the assessment.

- Review of NPWS Site Synopses, Conservation Objectives for the European Sites
- Review of 2019, 2013 and 2007 EU Habitats Directive (Article 17) Reports.
- Review of online web-mappers: National Parks and Wildlife Service[4](NPWS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)[5], Environmental Sensitivity Mapping tool[6] and National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC)[7].
- Review of other plans and projects within the area.

4.2 Identification of the European Sites within the Likely Zone of Influence

The following methodology was used to establish any European Sites upon which there is a potential for a likely significant effect to occur either individually or in combination with other plans and projects as a result of the Proposed Development:

- Initially the most up to date GIS spatial datasets for European designated sites and water catchments were downloaded from the NPWS website (www.npws.ie) and the EPA website (www.epa.ie).
- All European sites that could potentially be affected were identified using a source-pathway - receptor model. To provide context for the assessment, European sites within the proximity of the Proposed Development site are shown in **Figure 4-1**. Information on these sites according to the site-specific conservation objectives is provided in **Table 3-1**. Sites that were further away from the Proposed Development were also considered and no complete source-pathway-receptor chain for significant effect was identified for any other European Site.
- In relation to Special Protection Areas, in the absence of any specific European or Irish guidance in relation to such sites, the Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) Guidance, '*Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPA)*' (2016) was consulted. This document provides guidance in relation to the identification of connectivity between Proposed Development and Special Protection Areas. The guidance takes into consideration the distances species may travel beyond the boundary of their SPAs and provides information on dispersal and foraging ranges of bird species which are frequently encountered when considering plans and projects. **Table 4-1** provides details of all relevant European Sites as identified in the preceding steps and assesses the potential for likely significant effects on each.
- The assessment considers any likely direct or indirect impacts of the Proposed Development, both alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on European Sites by virtue of criteria including the following: size and scale, land-take, distance from the European Site or key features of the site, resource requirements, emissions, excavation requirements, transportation requirements and duration of construction, operation and decommissioning were considered in this assessment.

[4] https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/edf34d92e28040fd87d3d14f55d8d95f
[5] https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/
[6] https://enviromap.ie/
[7] https://biodiversityireland.ie/

- The site synopses and conservation objectives of these sites, as per the NPWS website (www.npws.ie), were consulted and reviewed at the time of preparing this report.
- The potential for the Proposed Development to result in cumulative impacts on any European Sites in combination with other plans and projects was considered in the assessment that is presented in **Section 4.3**.

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Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC

Baldoyle Bay SPA

Baldoyle Bay SAC

Ireland's Eye SPA

Howth Head Coast SPA

Howth Head SAC

North Dublin Bay SAC

North Bull Island SPA

North-west Irish Sea SPA

South Dublin Bay SAC

South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA

Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC

Dalkey Islands SPA

River Dodder

Dodder Sub Catchment

Jobstown Stream

River Orlagh

Owendoher River

Glenasmole Valley SAC

Wicklow Mountains SPA

Wicklow Mountains SAC

Knocksink Wood SAC

Ballyman Glen SAC

Bray Head SAC

Red Bog, Kildare SAC

Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA

0 2.5 5 km

Map Legend

- Study Area
- Special Protection Areas
- Special Area of Conservation
- WFD Rivers
- WFD Sub Catchments

Spatial Reference
Name: IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
Datum: IRENET95
Projection: Transverse Mercator

SITE LOCATION - NOT TO SCALE

Drawing Title
European Designated Sites within the Vicinity of the Site

Project Title
Knocklyon to Ballyboden Active Travel Scheme

Project No.	Drawing No.	Scale
251045	Figure 4-1	1:100,000
Drawn By: JB	Checked By: DM	Date: 11/12/2025

MKO
Email: info@mkoireland.ie/ Website: www.mkoireland.ie

Table 4-1: Identification of Designated Sites within the Likely Zone of Influence

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie.	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE's).
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)			
Glenasmole Valley SAC [001209] **Distance: 3.90 km** **Hydrological Distance:** No hydrological connectivity.	**Habitats** › Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (* important orchid sites) [6210] › Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) [6410] › Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*) [7220]	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, December, 2021[8]) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at: www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO001209.pdf	There will be no direct impact on the SAC or its QIs as it is located entirely outside of the footprint of the Proposed Development Site. Due to the intervening distance and the nature and scale of the proposed works, there is no potential for indirect effects on the terrestrial QI habitats for which the SAC has been designated. No surface water connectivity exists from the site of the Proposed Development to the SAC. The Proposed Development site is located in the same Water Framework directive (WFD) catchment (09: Liffey and Dublin Bay) as this SAC which drains into Dublin Bay, however, due to the nature and scale of the proposed works, no impacts on groundwater quality are anticipated. Therefore, no pathway for potential significant indirect effects on the aquatic QI habitat of the SAC has been identified. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any**

[8] *NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Glenasmole Valley SAC 001209. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie.	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE's).
			mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects. This site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is not considered further in this assessment.
Wicklow Mountains SAC [002122] **4.63 km** **Hydrological Distance:** No hydrological connectivity.	**Habitats** › Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) [3110] › Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160] › Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* [4010] › European dry heaths [4030] › Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] › Calaminarian grasslands of the *Violetalia calaminariae* [6130] › Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230] › Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130]	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, July 2017[9]) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at: www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002122.pdf	There will be no direct impact on the SAC or its QIs as it is located entirely outside of the footprint of the Proposed Development Site. Due to the intervening distance and the nature and scale of the proposed works, there is no potential for indirect effects on the terrestrial QI habitats for which the SAC has been designated. No surface water connectivity exists from the site of the Proposed Development to the SAC. The Proposed Development site is located in the same Water Framework directive (WFD) catchment (09: Liffey and Dublin Bay) as this SAC which drains into Dublin Bay, however, due to the nature and scale of the proposed works, no impacts on groundwater quality are anticipated. Therefore, no pathway for potential significant indirect effects on the aquatic QI habitats and species of the SAC has been identified.

[9] *NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Wicklow Mountains SAC 002122. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.*

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie.	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE's).
	› Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (*Androsacetalia alpinae* and *Galeopsietalia ladani*) [8110] › Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210] › Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220] › Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0] **Species** › Otter (*Lutra lutra*) [1355]		**No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects. This site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is not considered further in this assessment.**
South Dublin Bay SAC [000210] **Approx. distance: 7.35 km**	**Habitats** › Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, August 2013[10]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000210.pdf	There will be no direct impact on the SAC or its QIs as it is located entirely outside of the footprint of the Proposed Development Site. The Proposed Development crosses two watercourses with direct surface water connectivity to Dublin Bay. In addition, the site is located in the same Water Framework directive (WFD) catchment (09: Liffey and Dublin Bay) as this SAC, which drains into Dublin Bay.

[10] *NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.*

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie.	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE's).
Hydrological Distance: Approx 10.90 km (via Owenadoher River and River Dodder)			Existing surface water drainage within the proposed Active Travel Scheme Area is conveyed via stormwater drains into adjacent watercourses, which discharge into the River Dodder. As such, indirect connectivity with the SAC exists via this watercourse. However, due to the nature and scale of the proposed works, which are comparable in scale, methodology, and duration to typical road resurfacing or routine operational road maintenance activities, no significant effects on water quality are anticipated. As such, the potential for direct or indirect impact on this SAC can be excluded. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects. This site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is not considered further in this assessment.**
North Dublin Bay SAC [000206]	**Habitats** › Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] › Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, November 2013[11]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000206.pdf	There will be no direct impact on the SAC or its QIs as it is located entirely outside of the footprint of the Proposed Development Site. The Proposed Development crosses two watercourses with direct surface water connectivity to Dublin Bay.

[11] *NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: North Dublin Bay SAC 000206. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs*

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie.	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE's).
Approx. distance: 11.80 km **Hydrological Distance: Approx 10.90** km (via Owenadoher River and River Dodder)	› *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] › Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330] › Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) [1410] › Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] › Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) [2120] › Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] › Humid dune slacks [2190] **Species** › *Petalophyllum ralfsii* (Petalwort) [1395]		In addition, the site is located in the same Water Framework directive (WFD) catchment (09: Liffey and Dublin Bay) as this SAC, which drains into Dublin Bay. Existing surface water drainage within the proposed Active Travel Scheme Area is conveyed via stormwater drains into adjacent watercourses, which discharge into the River Dodder. As such, indirect connectivity with the SAC exists via this watercourse. However, due to the nature and scale of the proposed works, which are comparable in scale, methodology, and duration to typical road resurfacing or routine operational road maintenance activities, no significant effects on water quality are anticipated. As such, the potential for direct or indirect impact on this SAC can be excluded. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects. This site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is not considered further in this assessment.**

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie.	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE's).
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC [001398] **Distance: 13.55 km** **Hydrological Distance**: No hydrological connectivity.	**Habitats** › Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] **Species** › Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail (*Vertigo angustior*) [1014] › Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (*Vertigo moulinsiana*) [1016]	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (Version 1, December, 2021[12]) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at: www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO001398.pdf	There will be no direct impact on the SAC or its QIs as it is located entirely outside of the footprint of the Proposed Development Site. The Proposed Development Site does not provide suitable supporting habitat for the two SCI species for which the SAC has been designated. Therefore, there is no potential for indirect effects on the species for which the SAC has been designated. No surface water connectivity exists from the site of the Proposed Development to the SAC. The Proposed Development site is located in the same Water Framework directive (WFD) catchment (09: Liffey and Dublin Bay) as this SAC which drains into Dublin Bay, however, due to the nature and scale of the proposed works, no impacts on groundwater quality are anticipated. Therefore, no pathway for potential significant indirect effects on the aquatic QI habitat of the SAC has been identified. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects.**

[12] *NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie.	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE's).
			This site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is not considered further in this assessment.
Special Protection Areas (SPA)			
Wicklow Mountains SPA [004040] **Distance to site: 4.59 km** **Hydrological Distance:** No hydrological connectivity.	› Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) [A098] › Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) [A103]	First order site-specific conservation objectives for this site (October 2022[13]) were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at: www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004040.pdf	There will be no direct effects on the SPA as it is located entirely outside of the footprint of the proposed development. The site does not provide supporting habitat for the SCI species for which the SPA is designated. As such, there will be no loss of any supporting habitat or ex-situ disturbance to SCI species of the SPA. No pathway for potential significant indirect effects on SCI species of the SPA has been identified. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects. This site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is not considered further in this assessment.**

[13] *NPWS (2022) Conservation objectives for Wicklow Mountains SPA 004040. First Order Site-specific Conservation Objectives Version 1.0. Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.*

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie.	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE's).
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA **Distance to Site: 7.18 km** **Hydrological Distance: Approx 10.90 km** (via Owenadoher River and River Dodder).	› Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) [A046] › Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A130] › Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [A137] › Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141] › Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [A143] › Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [A144] › Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149] › Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157] › Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162] › Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] › Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) [A192] › Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] › Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) [A194] › Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	Detailed conservation objectives for this site (March 2015[14])were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at: www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004024.pdf	There will be no direct effects on the SPA as it is located entirely outside of the footprint of the proposed development. The site does not provide supporting habitat for the SCI species for which the SPA is designated. As such, there will be no loss of any supporting habitat or ex-situ disturbance to SCI species of the SPA. The Proposed Development crosses two watercourses with direct surface water connectivity to Dublin Bay. In addition, the site is located in the same Water Framework directive (WFD) catchment (09: Liffey and Dublin Bay) as this SPA, which drains into Dublin Bay. Existing surface water drainage within the proposed Active Travel Scheme Area is conveyed via stormwater drains into adjacent watercourses, which discharge into the River Dodder. As such, indirect connectivity with the SPA exists via this watercourse. However, due to the nature and scale of the proposed works, which are comparable in scale, methodology, and duration to typical road resurfacing or routine operational road maintenance activities, no significant effects on water quality are anticipated. As such, the potential for direct or indirect impacts on the marine habitat of the SCI species of this SPA can be excluded.

[14] *NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.*

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie.	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE's).
			No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects. This site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is not considered further in this assessment.
North Bull Island SPA [004006] **Approx. distance:** 11.75 km **Hydrological Distance: Approx 10.90 km** (via Owenadoher River and River Dodder)	› Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) [A046] › Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A048] › Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052] › Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [A054] › Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A130] › Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140] › Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141] › Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [A143] › Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [A144] › Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149] › Black-tailed Godwit *(Limosa limosa*) [A156]	Detailed conservation objectives for this site, (Version 1, March 2015[15]), were reviewed as part of the assessment and are available at www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004006.pdf	There will be no direct effects on the SPA as it is located entirely outside of the footprint of the proposed development. The site does not provide supporting habitat for the SCI species for which the SPA is designated. As such, there will be no loss of any supporting habitat or ex-situ disturbance to SCI species of the SPA. The Proposed Development crosses two watercourses with direct surface water connectivity to Dublin Bay. In addition, the site is located in the same Water Framework directive (WFD) catchment (09: Liffey and Dublin Bay) as this SPA, which drains into Dublin Bay.

[15] *NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: North Bull Island SPA 004006. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht*

European Sites and distance from proposed development	Qualify Interests/Special Conservation Interests for which the European site has been designated (Sourced from NPWS online Conservation Objectives, www.npws.ie.	Conservation Objectives	Identification of Source-Pathway-Receptor chain and potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE's).
	› Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157] › Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [A160] › Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162] › Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) [A169] › Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] › Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) [A857] › Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]		Existing surface water drainage within the proposed Active Travel Scheme Area is conveyed via stormwater drains into adjacent watercourses, which discharge into the River Dodder. As such, indirect connectivity with the SPA exists via this watercourse. However, due to the nature and scale of the proposed works, which are comparable in scale, methodology, and duration to typical road resurfacing or routine operational road maintenance activities, no significant effects on water quality are anticipated. As such, the potential for direct or indirect impacts on the marine habitat of the SCI species of this SPA can be excluded. **No pathway for likely significant effect on this European Site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects. This site is not within the Likely Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. Therefore, it is not considered further in this assessment.**

4.3 Likely Cumulative Impact of the Proposed Works on European Sites, in-combination with other plans and projects

4.3.1 Projects

The Knocklyon to Ballyboden Active and Sustainable Travel Scheme forms part of a wider initiative to deliver a comprehensive walking and cycling route between Tallaght and Ballyboden. This active travel network comprises three interconnecting projects (Firhouse Road Active Travel Improvement Scheme; Knocklyon to Ballyboden Active and Sustainable Travel Scheme; Old Bawn Road Active Travel Scheme). Upon completion, these schemes will link directly to create a unified active travel network. It is noted that the three schemes will be delivered separately.

The nature, scale and design of each of the three schemes are similar, consisting of localised, linear active travel improvements within the existing urban road network. In light of the staggered delivery of the projects, their comparable characteristics, and the lack of potential for significant effects identified for Knocklyon to Ballyboden Active and Sustainable Travel Scheme, no potential for significant in-combination effects on European Sites has been identified when considered alongside the other two Active Travel Schemes.

A search of relevant online Planning Registers, reviews of relevant documents, planning application details and planning drawings served to identify past and future projects, their activities, and their environmental impacts. All relevant projects were considered in relation to the potential for cumulative effects. All relevant data were reviewed (e.g., individual EISs/EIARs, layouts, drawings etc.) for all relevant projects where available. The projects considered include extensions to houses, retention permission, change of use, small alterations and the following:

- **Planning Ref: SD25A/0150 –** Permission for: a) The demolition of the 4 no. existing shed structures on site within the curtilage of the protected structure. b) The retention, alteration and conversion of Scholarstown House (Protected Structure) into two no. residential units comprised of 1 no. 2-bed and 1 no. 3-bed units served by private open space in the form of ground floor terraces. The proposed works to Scholarstown House include but are not limited to internal re-configuration; the re-location of the staircase to its original location within the house; the removal of non-original features including the closing up of non-original openings; and the creation of a new door opening within the existing alcove, and the blocking up of a window opening both located on the northern elevation. c) The construction of an apartment block ranging in height from 3 to 5 storeys containing 55 no. apartment units comprised of 16 no. 1-bed apartments, 26 no. 2-bed apartments, and 13 no. 3-bed apartments all served by private open space in the form of balconies and/or ground floor terraces. d) The proposed development also includes residential amenities, car and cycle parking accessed via a new pedestrian and vehicular access off Orlagh Grove with the existing entrances on Scholarstown Road and Orlagh Grove being re-configured to provide for pedestrian and cycle access and all ancillary development works required to facilitate the development including but not limited to, plant rooms, a substation, bin stores, landscaping, boundary treatments and lighting. The proposed development comprises the carrying out of works to a protected structure: Scholarstown House (RPS Ref: 322). Decision due date 18/12/2025 (Active application). The AASR and EcIA for this development were consulted and it was determined that the Proposed Development combined with this project would not have the potential to result in any significant in-combination effects on any European site. Approx. distance from site – overlapping proposed development area.

- **Planning Ref: LRD23A/0002 –** The development will consist of the demolition of the existing former Institutional buildings and associated outbuildings (c.5,231 sq.m) and construction of a new residential development comprising 402 no. apartments (39 no. 1 beds, 302 no. 2 beds and 61 no. 3 beds) within 3 no. blocks ranging in height from 2 to 5 storeys over basement/lower ground floor. All residential units will be provided with associated private balconies/ terraces to the north/ south/ east/ west elevations. The development will include the following: Block A up to 5 storeys over basement/lower ground floor providing 118 no. units. Block B up to 5 storeys over basement providing 123 no. units. Block C up to 5 storeys over basement/lower ground floor providing 161 no. units. The development will also include a creche (c.656 sq.m) and 2 no. retail units (c.262 sq.m and c.97 sq.m) all located within Block A, along with c.322 sq.m of internal residential communal space located in Block C. The development will include the provision of a new public park in the north of the site along Taylor's Lane. The development will include 290 no. car parking spaces and 1,054 no. cycle parking spaces provided at basement/surface level. The development will include for a revised vehicular access from Edmondstown Road and an emergency vehicular access from Taylor's Lane along with pedestrian/cyclist accesses to/from the site. The development will include for road improvement works along Edmondstown Road including the existing junction of Scholarstown Road/ Edmondstown Road. The development will include for all associated site development works, open spaces, landscaping, SuDs features, boundary treatments, plant areas, waste management areas/bin stores, car/cycle parking areas (including EV parking), and services provision (including ESB substation/ kiosks). Permission granted after appeal on 23/09/2025. The AASR/NIS and EcIA for this development were consulted and it was determined that the Proposed Development combined with this project would not have the potential to result in any significant in-combination effects on any European site. Approx. distance from site – overlapping proposed development area.
- **Planning Ref: SD24A/0265 –** The Retention Planning Permission for the following as built alterations (previously granted layout Ref. No. SD20A/0095): (I) Change of use from Store Areas and Stairs Access to First Floor Level to Retail Area. (ii) Change of use from previously permitted Seating Area to Stores Area, relocated stairs to First Floor Store and public toilets accessed from the Retail Area. (iii) As constructed layout of Offices and Strong Room. (iv) As constructed lift to First Floor Store. (v) Increase in size of permitted Post Office Unit. (vi) Change of use from Retail Area to Seating Area. (vii) New Fire Escape Door on the Northern Elevation. (viii) Relocation of the existing fire escape door on the Eastern Elevation. (ix) As Constructed Canopy for the "Click and collect" facility on the Eastern side of the SuperValu Unit. (x) Relocation of the existing fire escape door and omission of the part of the Glazing permitted on the Southern Elevation. (xi) First Floor External cladding on the Southern and Western Elevation. (xii) Additional Cladding on the Western Facade of the Shopping Centre. (xiii) As constructed mono pitched glazed wind barrier on the Western side of the Entrance Tower to the Supervalu Unit. (xiv) As constructed location of the Trolley Bay on the on the Western side of the Entrance Tower to the Supervalu Unit. Permission granted 25/03/2025. The relevant documentation for this project was consulted, and it was determined that the Proposed Development combined with this project would not have the potential to result in any significant in-combination effects on any European site. Approx. distance from site: <100m.
- **Planning Ref: SD19A/0115 –** Completion of works previously granted (SD11A/0254) to include: the construction of a PE hall, changing rooms, wc's, ancillary plant and storage; stage and fly tower to the existing assembly hall; 2 hard courts; improvements to existing paths, internal roadways; parking and drop off facilities; new entrance signage; 23 car parking spaces; bicycle parking; covered walkway; fencing; landscaping and associated site development works which lies within the curtilage of St. Mary's Convent, a Protected Structure; making good external walls to ancillary buildings to St. Mary's Convent; upgrade of access road as part of the improved access to the school; Retention of the previously granted demolition of a 1947 classroom wing; water tower and prefabs. Permission granted 10/04/2024. The relevant documentation for this project was consulted, and it was determined that the Proposed Development combined with this project would not have the potential to result in any significant in-combination effects on any European site. Approx. distance from site: <100m.
- **Planning Ref: SD20A/0140 –** Permission for the construction of 2 grass playing pitches: pitch No.1 will measure some 145m long by 90m wide and pitch No.2 will measure some 133m long by 80m wide; club facilities including 4 changing rooms measuring 51sq.m each; storage facilities; function rooms; meeting rooms; physiotherapy facilities; kitchen facilities; wc and circulation space; site works include removal of existing hedgerows and trees; replanting areas; formation of a new pedestrian and

vehicular entrance on Firhouse road; 67 car parking spaces; 24 bicycle spaces; perimeter pathway; fencing and attendant landscaping works. Permission granted 20/07/2021. The AASR and Ecological Impact Statement for this development were consulted and it was determined that the Proposed Development combined with this project would not have the potential to result in any significant in-combination effects on any European site. Approx. distance from site: <100m.

- **Planning Ref: SD20A/0146 –** Permission for the installation of a cluster of solar PV panels measuring approximately 65sq.m lying flat on the roof of the technology rooms measuring approximately 350sq.m. Permission granted 14/09/2020. The relevant documentation for this project was consulted, and it was determined that the Proposed Development combined with this project would not have the potential to result in any significant in-combination effects on any European site. Approx. distance from site: <100m.
- **Planning Ref: SHD3ABP-305878-19 –** Permission for the Demolition of all existing structures on site which include a single storey dwelling known as 'Beechpark' (172sq.m), a 2 storey dwelling known as 'Maryfield' (182sq.m), with associated garage/shed (33.5sq.m) and associated outbuildings (47.1sq.m); and the construction of 590 residential units (480 Build-to-Rent apartment units and 110 Build-to-Sell duplex units and apartments), ancillary residential support facilities and commercial floorspace. The total gross floor space of the development is 51,252sq.m over a partial basement of 5,888sq.m (which principally provides car and bicycle parking, plant and bin stores). The 480 'Build-to-Rent' units will be provided in 8 blocks as follows: 7 blocks ranging in height from part 5 to part 6 storeys (Blocks B1-B5, C1 and C3) and 1 block ranging in height from part 4 to part 6 storeys (Block C2) and will comprise 246 one bed units and 234 two bed units. The 110 'Build-to-Sell' units will be provided in 9 duplex blocks which will be 3 storeys in height (Blocks A1-A9) and will comprise 55 two bed units and 55 three bed units. The development will also consist of the provision of a part 1 to part 2 storey ancillary amenity block (Block D1) (414sq.m) within the central open space which comprises a gymnasium, lobby, kitchenette and lounge at ground floor level and lounge at first floor level in addition to a roof terrace (facing north, south and west) to serve the 'Build-to-Rent' residents; a 2 storey retail/café/restaurant building(Block D2 - 657sq.m) comprising 2 retail units at ground floor level (328.5sq.m) and a café/restaurant unit at first floor level (328.5sq.m); a creche (438sq.m) within Block C2 at ground floor level; and a Management Suite (261sq.m) and café/restaurant (288sq.m) within Block C3 at ground floor level all at a 5.35 hectare site located north of Scholarstown Road incorporating dwellings known as 'Beechpark' and 'Maryfield', Scholarstown Road, Dublin 16, D16 X3X8 and D16 N6V6. Works are also proposed to Scholarstown Road and Woodfield junction including new traffic signals, the elimination of the left-turn slip-lane into Woodfield off Scholarstown Road, upgraded public lighting and upgraded cycle and pedestrian facilities on an area measuring 0.7 hectares, providing a total application site area of 6.05 hectares. Permission granted 09/03/2020. The EIAR and AASR/NIS for this development were consulted and it was determined that the Proposed Development combined with this project would not have the potential to result in any significant in-combination effects on any European site. Approx. distance from site – overlapping proposed development area.

4.3.2 Plans

The following development plans have been reviewed and taken into consideration as part of this assessment:

- South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2022-2028
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019 - 2031
- 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027

The review detailed in **Table 3-2** below focused on policies and objectives that relate to European sites and natural heritage. Policies and objectives relating to sustainable land use were also reviewed.

Table 4-2: Assessment of Development Plans

Plans	Key Policies and Objectives directly related to European Sites and Biodiversity in the Zone of Influence	Assessment of Potential Impact on Ecological Receptors and Designated Sites
South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2022 - 2028	**Policy SM1: Overarching – Transport and Movement** • **SM1 Objective 1:** To achieve and monitor a transition to more sustainable travel modes including walking, cycling and public transport over the lifetime of the County Development Plan, in line with the County mode share targets. **Policy SM2: Walking and Cycling** • **SM2 Objective 2:** To create a comprehensive and legible County-wide network of safe cycling and walking routes that link communities to key destinations, amenities and leisure activities through implementation of the Cycle South Dublin project, the recommendations of the Sustainable Movement Studies and other permeability measures. • **SM2 Objective 3:** To ensure that connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists is maximised and walking and cycling distances are reduced by promoting compact growth and permeability in the design and layout of new development areas. • **SM2 Objective 4:** To ensure that connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists is maximised and walking and cycling distances are reduced in existing built-up areas, by removing barriers to movement and providing active travel facilities in order to increase access to local shops, schools, public transport services and other amenities, while also taking account of existing patterns of anti-social behaviour and other unintended consequences of removal of such barriers. • **SM2 Objective 6:** To ensure that facilities for pedestrians and cyclists are designed in accordance with the principles, approaches and standards contained in the National Cycle Manual or any updated guidance and to promote off-road cycle infrastructure where feasible, subject to any design having regard to environmental sensitivities. • **SM2 Objective 14:** To ensure that all walking and cycling routes have regard to environmental conditions and sensitivities including biodiversity, protected species and designated sites and to incorporate appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures as part of any environmental assessments.	The development plan was reviewed, with particular reference to Policies and Objectives that relate to the biodiversity, protected species and designated sites. No potential for LSEs on any European site as a result of the proposed development was identified and no potential for significant in-combination impacts on European Sites when considered in conjunction with this Plan. **No potential for significant in-combination effects on European site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects.**

Plans	Key Policies and Objectives directly related to European Sites and Biodiversity in the Zone of Influence	Assessment of Potential Impact on Ecological Receptors and Designated Sites
	Policy NCBH2: Biodiversity • **NCBH2 Objective 1:** To support the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan (2017- 2021) and the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (2021-2025) and to support the adoption and implementation of the South Dublin County Biodiversity Action Plan (2020-2026) and Pollinator Action Plan (2021-2025) and any superseding plans. • **NCBH2 Objective 2:** To ensure the protection of designated sites in compliance with relevant EU Directives and applicable national legislation. • **NCBH2 Objective 3:** To protect and conserve the natural heritage of the County, and to conserve and manage EU and nationally designated sites and non-designated locally important areas which act as 'stepping stones' for the purposes of green infrastructure and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive. • **NCBH2 Objective 4:** To protect our rivers and in particular to avoid overdevelopment which could have an adverse effect on the biodiversity and ecosystems of the river. **Policy NCBH3: Natura 2000 Sites** • **NCBH3 Objective 1:** To prevent development and activities that would adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site located within or adjacent to the County and promote the favourable conservation status of the habitats and species integral to these sites. • **NCBH3 Objective 2:** To ensure that plans, including land use plans, will only be adopted, if they either individually or in combination with existing and / or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant adverse effect on a European Site, or where such a plan is likely or might have such a significant adverse effect (either alone or in combination), South Dublin County Council will, as required by law, carry out an appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92 / 43 / EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the plan will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will South Dublin County Council adopt the plan, incorporating any necessary mitigation measures. A plan which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be adopted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation.	

Plans	Key Policies and Objectives directly related to European Sites and Biodiversity in the Zone of Influence	Assessment of Potential Impact on Ecological Receptors and Designated Sites
	• **NCBH3 Objective 3:** To ensure that planning permission will only be granted for a development proposal that, either individually or in combination with existing and / or proposed plans or projects, will not have a significant adverse effect on a European Site, or where such a development proposal is likely or might have such a significant adverse effect (either alone or in combination), the planning authority will, as required by law, carry out an appropriate assessment as per requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive 92 / 43 / EEC of the 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, as transposed into Irish legislation. Only after having ascertained that the development proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of any European site, will the planning authority agree to the development and impose appropriate mitigation measures in the form of planning conditions. A development proposal which could adversely affect the integrity of a European site may only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive as transposed into Irish legislation. **Policy NCBH5: Protection of Habitats and Species Outside of Designated Areas** Protect and promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas and ensure that species and habitats that are protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2018, the Birds Directive 1979 and the Habitats Directive 1992, the Flora (Protection) Order 2015, and wildlife corridors are adequately protected. • **NCBH5 Objective 1:** To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact on biodiversity, including known rare and threatened species, and that biodiversity enhancement measures are included in all development proposals. • **NCBH5 Objective 2:** To ensure that an Ecological Impact Assessment is undertaken for developments proposed in areas that support, or have the potential to support, protected species or features of biodiversity importance, and that appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into all development proposals. **Policy NCBH10: Invasive Species** Protect against and prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species within the County and require landowners and developers to adhere to best practice guidance in relation to the control of invasive species.	

Plans	Key Policies and Objectives directly related to European Sites and Biodiversity in the Zone of Influence	Assessment of Potential Impact on Ecological Receptors and Designated Sites
	• **NCBH10 Objective 1:** To ensure that development proposals do not lead to the spread or introduction of invasive species. If developments are proposed on sites where invasive species are or were previously present, applicants should submit a control and management programme with measures to prevent, control and / or eradicate the particular invasive species as part of the planning process and to comply with the provisions of the *European Communities Birds and Habitats Regulations 2011* (S.I. 477 / 2011). • **NCBH10 Objective 2:** To ensure that the Council promptly and appropriately treats invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed, including where notified by members of the public that such species, located on public lands, pose a potential threat to property. **Policy NCBH11: Tree Preservation Orders and Other Tree / Hedgerow Protections** Review Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) within the County and maintain the conservation value of trees and groups of trees that are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order while also recognising the value of and protecting trees and hedgerows which are not subject to a TPO. • **NCBH11 Objective 1:** To review Tree Preservation Orders within the County and maintain the conservation value of trees and groups of trees that are the subject of any Tree Preservation Order. • **NCBH11 Objective 2:** To regularly evaluate and identify trees of amenity value within the County with a view to making them the subject of Tree Preservation Orders or otherwise protecting them and to furnish information to the public in this regard. • **NCBH11 Objective 3:** To protect and retain existing trees, hedgerows, and woodlands which are of amenity and / or biodiversity and / or carbon sequestration value and / or contribute to landscape character and ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management taking into account Living with Trees: South Dublin County Council's Tree Management Policy (2015-2020) or any superseding document and to ensure that where retention is not possible that a high value biodiversity provision is secured as part of the phasing of any development to protect the amenity of the area. • **NCBH11 Objective 4:** To protect the hedgerows of the County, acknowledging their role as wildlife habitats, biodiversity corridors, links within the County's green infrastructure network, their visual amenity and landscape character value and their significance as demarcations of historic field patterns and townland boundaries. (Refer also to Chapter 4: Green Infrastructure).	

Plans	Key Policies and Objectives directly related to European Sites and Biodiversity in the Zone of Influence	Assessment of Potential Impact on Ecological Receptors and Designated Sites
	• **NCBH11 Objective 5:** To ensure that intact hedgerows / trees will be maintained above the 120m contour line within the County ensuring that the strong rural character will not be diluted and that important heritage features and potential wildlife corridors are protected. **Policy GI1: Green Infrastructure - Overarching:** Protect, enhance and further develop a multifunctional GI network, using an ecosystem services approach, protecting, enhancing and further developing the identified interconnected network of parks, open spaces, natural features, protected areas, and rivers and streams that provide a shared space for amenity and recreation, biodiversity protection, water quality, flood management and adaptation to climate change. • **GI1 Objective 1:** To establish a coherent, integrated and evolving GI Network across South Dublin County with parks, open spaces, hedgerows, trees including public street trees and native mini woodlands (Miyawaki-Style), grasslands, protected areas and rivers and streams and other green and blue assets forming strategic links and to integrate and incorporate the objectives of the GI Strategy throughout all relevant land use plans and development in the County • **GI1 Objective 3:** To facilitate the development and enhancement of sensitive access to and connectivity between areas of interest for residents, wildlife and biodiversity, and other distinctive landscapes as focal features for linkages between natural, semi natural and formalised green spaces where feasible and ensuring that there is no adverse impact (directly, indirectly or cumulatively) on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites and protected habitats outside of Natura 2000 sites. **Policy GI2: Biodiversity:** Strengthen the existing Green Infrastructure (GI) network and ensure all new developments contribute towards GI, in order to protect and enhance biodiversity across the County as part of South Dublin County Council's commitment to the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2025 and the South Dublin County Council Biodiversity Action Plan, 2020-2026, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Eastern and Midlands Region Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES).	

Plans	Key Policies and Objectives directly related to European Sites and Biodiversity in the Zone of Influence	Assessment of Potential Impact on Ecological Receptors and Designated Sites
	• **GI2 Objective 1:** To reduce fragmentation and enhance South Dublin County's GI network by strengthening ecological links between urban areas, Natura 2000 sites, proposed Natural Heritage Areas, parks and open spaces and the wider regional network by connecting all new developments into the wider GI Network. • **GI2 Objective 2:** To protect and enhance the biodiversity and ecological value of the existing GI network by protecting where feasible (and mitigating where removal is unavoidable) existing ecological features including tree stands, woodlands, hedgerows and watercourses in all new developments as an essential part of the design and construction process, such proactive approach to include provision to inspect development sites post construction to ensure hedgerow coverage has been protected as per the plan. • **GI2 Objective 5:** To protect and enhance the County's hedgerow network, in particular hedgerows that form townland, parish and barony boundaries recognising their historic and cultural importance in addition to their ecological importance and increase hedgerow coverage using locally native species including a commitment for no net loss of hedgerows on any development site and to take a proactive approach to protection and enforcement. • **GI2 Objective 7:** To enhance the biodiversity value of publicly owned hard infrastructure areas by incorporating the planting of new trees, grasses and other species, thereby integrating this infrastructure into the overall GI network.	
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019 - 2031	**Biodiversity and Natural Heritage** **RPO 7.16:** Support the implementation of the Habitats Directives in achieving an improvement in the conservation status of protected species and habitats in the Region and to ensure alignment between the core objectives of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and local authority development plans. **RPO 7.17:** Facilitate cross boundary co-ordination between local authorities and the relevant agencies in the Region to provide clear governance arrangements and coordination mechanisms to support the development of ecological networks and enhanced connectivity between protected sites whilst also addressing the need for management of alien invasive species and the conservation of native species.	The development plan was reviewed, with particular reference to Policies and Objectives that relate to the biodiversity, protected species and designated sites. No potential for LSEs on any European site as a result of the proposed development was identified and no potential for significant in-combination impacts on European Sites when considered in conjunction with this Plan. **No potential for significant in-combination effects on European site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects.**

Plans	Key Policies and Objectives directly related to European Sites and Biodiversity in the Zone of Influence	Assessment of Potential Impact on Ecological Receptors and Designated Sites
	RPO 7.18: Work with local authorities and state agencies to promote the development of all aspects of park management in the Wicklow National Park and the Slieve Bloom Mountains. **RPO 7.19:** Support the consideration of designating a National Park for the peatlands area in the Midlands. **RPO 7.20:** Promote the development of improved visitor experiences, nature conservation and sustainable development activities within the Dublin Bay Biosphere in cooperation with the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Partnership. **RPO 7.22:** Local authority development plan and local area plans, shall identify, protect, enhance, provide and manage Green Infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner and should also have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species.	
4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027	Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2024) (the "NBAP"). The NBAP strives for a "whole of government, whole of society" approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. It demonstrates Ireland's continuing commitment to meeting and acting on its obligations to protect Ireland's biodiversity for the benefit of future generations and will implement this through a number of key targets, actions and objectives. The Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023 introduced a new public sector duty on biodiversity. The legislation provides that every public body, as listed in the Act, is obliged to have regard to the objectives and targets in the NBAP. The NBAP sets out five key objectives as follows. **Objective 1:** Adopt a Whole-of Government, Whole of-Society Approach to Biodiversity. Proposed actions include capacity and resource reviews across Government; determining responsibilities for the expanding biodiversity agenda providing support for communities, citizen scientists and business; and mechanisms for the governance and review of this National Biodiversity Action Plan.	The objectives set out in the NBAP aim to protect and enhance and promote biodiversity, nature restoration on the Island of Ireland and also contribute to International biodiversity initiative. No potential for cumulative impacts were identified upon review of the Plan in conjunction with the Proposed development. **No potential for significant in-combination effects on European site was identified, when considered in the absence of any mitigation, individually or cumulatively with other plans or projects.**

Plans	Key Policies and Objectives directly related to European Sites and Biodiversity in the Zone of Influence	Assessment of Potential Impact on Ecological Receptors and Designated Sites
	Objective 2: Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs. Supporting actions will build on existing conservation measures. Efforts to tackle Invasive Alien Species will be elevated. The protected area network will be expanded to include the Marine Protected Areas. The ambition of the EU Biodiversity Strategy will be considered as part of an evolving work programme across Government **Objective 3:** Secure Nature's Contribution to People. Actions highlight the relationship between nature and people in Ireland. These include recognising the tangible and intangible values of biodiversity, promoting nature's importance to our culture and heritage and recognising how biodiversity supports our society and our economy. **Objective 4:** Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity. This objective focuses on biodiversity research needs, as well as the development and strengthening of long-term monitoring programmes that will underpin and strengthen future decision-making. Action will also focus on collaboration to advance ecosystem accounting that will contribute towards natural capital accounts. **Objective DS 10** – Impacts of Developments on Protected Sites Have regard to any impacts of development on or near existing and proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Wildfowl Sanctuaries, Salmonoid Waters, Refuges for Flora and Fauna, Conamara National Park, shellfish waters, freshwater pearl mussel catchments and any other designated sites including future designations. **Objective 5:** Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives. Collaboration with other countries and across the island of Ireland will play a key role in the realisation of this Objective. Ireland will strengthen its contribution to international biodiversity initiatives and international governance processes, such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.	

4.3.3 Conclusion of in-combination/cumulative assessment

In light of the information provided in Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 above, it is concluded that there is no potential for in-combination effects to undermine the integrity of any European sites from the Proposed Development with other plans and/or projects. The potential for in-combination effects to undermine the integrity of any European site acting in-combination with other plans or projects can be excluded.

There were no Annex I habitats identified within the works site boundary and there was no evidence of Annex II species or SCI species using the areas of habitat surveyed. There was no evidence of protected fauna using the proposed Study Area.

No pathway or mechanism for the development works to result in any significant effect on any European Site, was identified when considered on its own during the assessment process and therefore, there is no potential for it to contribute to any such effects when considered in-combination with any other development.

5. ARTICLE 6(3) APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING STATEMENT AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this Screening Assessment are presented following the European Commission's Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2021) and Managing Natura 2000 Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2018) as well as the Department of the Environment's Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2010).

5.1 Concluding Statement

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant data and information set out within this Screening Report, it can be concluded beyond reasonable scientific doubt, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of objective information and in light of the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites, that the proposed Active Travel Scheme, individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will not have any significant effect on any European Designated Sites.

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