



APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

**Neilstown District Centre Enhancement, Neilstown,
Co. Dublin**

Nicolas De Jong Architects

October 2026

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Appendix 1 – Stages of Appropriate Assessment

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Summary of Findings

Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Project Title	Supporting Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the Application for Neilstown District Centre Enhancement in Neilstown, Co. Dublin.
Project Proponent	Nicolas De Jong Architects
Project Location	Neilstown, Co. Dublin
Screening for Appropriate Assessment	The Screening for Appropriate Assessment report is undertaken to determine the potential for likely significant effects of the works, individually, or in combination with other plans or projects, on Natura 2000 sites, in view of the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 sites.
Conclusion	It has been objectively concluded during the screening process that the Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence of the works will not be significantly impacted by the enhancement works at Neilstown District Centre in Neilstown, Co. Dublin. The sites are: • South Dublin Bay SAC (000210); • North Dublin Bay SAC (000206); • South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024); • North Bull Island SPA (004006); • Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (001398); • Wicklow Mountains SAC (002122); and • Wicklow Mountains SPA (004040).

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Assessment

Malachy Walsh and Partners (MWP), Engineering and Environmental Consultants, have been commissioned by Nicolas De Jong Architects to prepare a Screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA) report in support of the proposed Neilstown District Centre Enhancement (NDCE) project within Neilstown, Dublin. The proposed development comprises the enhancement and reconfiguration of the existing public realm within Neilstown District Centre and associated minor works within adjoining public open spaces. The development site encompasses approximately 1.91 ha of predominantly previously developed urban land, including existing roads, footways, parking areas, hard landscaping and public open space.

This Screening for Appropriate Assessment report has been undertaken to determine whether the works site is likely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 Site (i.e. European Sites), in view of the sites' conservation objectives.

This Screening for Appropriate Assessment report has been undertaken by staff ecologists from Malachy Walsh and Partners (MWP), Engineering and Environmental Consultants.

1.2 Statement of Competency

This assessment was undertaken by Emma Phelan and Orla van der Noll.

Emma Phelan has a BSc. (Hons) in Geology and MSc. in Applied Environmental Geoscience and is a graduate Environmental Scientist at MWP. Emma has worked on assisting with the preparation of EIAR chapters, Environmental Impact Assessment Screenings, Construction and Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs), Resource Waste Management Plans (RWMPs), Water Framework Directive Assessments (WFDs) and Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports (AAs) since joining MWP in May 2025.

Orla is an Ecologist at MWP with experience in consultancy since 2021. She has completed a number of ecological reports including screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA), Natura Impact Statement (NIS), and Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) reports for a range of projects across Ireland. Orla has strong ecological field survey skills, particularly in ornithology, bats (NPWS bat survey licence (DER-BAT-2026-137)) and aquatics (electrofishing, freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera* and white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*). In 2020 she qualified with a first-class honours master's degree in Marine Biology from Bangor University in Wales, after graduating from University College Cork in 2018 with a Bachelor's (Hons) degree in Ecology and Environmental Biology. She also holds a C-permit under the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) ringing scheme in Ireland, and is registered with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) as a Qualifying member, working towards an Associate membership.

1.3 Legislative Context

The Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) seeks to conserve natural habitats of wild fauna and flora by the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) seeks to protect birds of special importance by the designation of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). It is the responsibility of each member state to designate SPAs and SACs, both of which form part of Natura 2000, a network of protected sites throughout the European Community. The Habitats Directive has been transposed into Irish law and the relevant Regulations are the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. The requirement for Appropriate

Assessment of the implications of plans and projects on the Natura 2000 network of sites comes from Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

Under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 S.I. No. 477 of 2011, as amended), the Competent Authority is required to carry out a screening for Appropriate Assessment of a works site prior to issuing consent, to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge and the sites' conservation objectives, if that project or plan, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. The screening for Appropriate Assessment will determine whether an Appropriate Assessment of the works site is required.

If it cannot be excluded, on the basis of the above objective information, that the works site will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, then Appropriate Assessment of the works site is required and in this case a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) must be prepared.

The information presented in this screening for Appropriate Assessment report will be used by the Competent Authority, in this case South Dublin County Council, to assist them in undertaking their own screening for Appropriate Assessment of the works site.

1.4 Stages of Appropriate Assessment

The Appropriate Assessment process is a four-stage process with defined tests at each stage. The purpose of the screening assessment is to record, in a transparent and reasoned manner, the likely effects on Natura 2000 sites as a result of the works. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. The stages are set out in **Appendix 1**. This project has proceeded as far as Stage 1: Screening Process. No mitigation measures have been taken into account in this screening assessment.

2. Methodology

2.1 Appropriate Assessment Guidance

This screening for Appropriate Assessment report has been undertaken in accordance with the European Commission Methodological Guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2021), the European Commission Guidance '*Managing Natura 2000 Sites*' (EC, 2018), Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, OPR Practice Note PN01 (Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021) and '*Appropriate Assessment of Plans & Projects - Guidance for Planning Authorities*' prepared by the NPWS (DoEHLG, 2010).

2.1.1 Screening Steps

The screening analysis comprises four steps:

1. Ascertaining whether the plan or project is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site;
2. Identifying the relevant elements of the plan or project and their likely impacts;

3. Identifying which (if any) Natura 2000 sites may be affected, considering the potential effects of the plan or project alone or in combination with other plans or projects;
4. Assessing whether likely significant effects on the Natura 2000 site can be ruled out, in view of the site's conservation objectives.

2.1.2 Assessment Criteria

As set out in the NPWS guidance, the task of establishing whether a plan or project is likely to have an effect on a Natura 2000 site(s) is based on a preliminary impact assessment using available information and data, including that outlined above, and other available environmental information, supplemented as necessary by local site information and ecological surveys. This is followed by a determination of whether there is a risk that the effects identified could be significant. The precautionary principal is required.

Establishing whether a plan or project is likely to affect a Natura 2000 site is based on an assessment of potential impacts using the following key indicators:

- Reduction of habitat area, habitat degradation or fragmentation;
- Disturbance to species, reduction in species populations and density;
- Changes in ecological functions and/or features that are essential for the ecological requirements of
- habitats and species (e.g. water quality and quantity);
- Interference with the key relationships that define the structure and function of the site.

Once the potential impacts that may arise from the works site are identified, the significance of these is assessed through the use of the following key indicators:

- Water quality;
- Habitat loss and alteration;
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species; and
- Habitat or species fragmentation.

In the context of AA, there is a clear difference between the 'impact' which is the source and the 'effect', which is how it relates to the conservation objectives. When assessing impact, Natura 2000 sites are only considered relevant where a credible or tangible source-pathway-receptor (S-P-R) link exists between the works site and a protected species or habitat type. In order for an impact to occur there must be a risk initiated by having a 'source' (e.g. excavation), and an impact pathway between the source and the receptor (e.g. a waterbody which connects the works site to the protected species or habitats).

The criteria for assessing significance, in view of the site-specific conservation objectives is as follows:

- Degree of habitat loss (absolute, relative), changes in habitats structure;
- Risk of species populations' displacement, level of disturbance, reduction of species home range, feeding area, refuge areas, alteration of favourable condition for breeding
- Importance of the habitats and species affected, e.g. representativeness, local variety;
- Importance of the site (e.g. limit of distribution area for certain habitats and species, stepping stone, important for ecological connectivity);
- Disruption or alteration of ecological functions; and

- Changes to key ecological features of the site (e.g. water quality).

2.2 Desktop Study

In order to complete the Screening for Appropriate Assessment report certain information on the existing environment is required. A desktop study was carried out to collate available information on the works site's natural environment. This comprised a review of the following publications, data and datasets:

- Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSI) Aerial photography and 1:50,000 mapping
- National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) online datasets and literature
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) (online mapping)
- BirdWatch Ireland (online datasets)
- Teagasc soil area maps (via NBDC website)
- Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) area maps (including CORINE)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) water quality data and on-line mapping
- River Basin District (RBD) datasets (Water Framework Directive)
- South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028
- Biodiversity Action Plan for South Dublin County 2020-2026
- Other information sources and reports footnoted and referenced during the course of the report.

2.3 Field Surveys

No field surveys or site inspections were undertaken as part of this Appropriate Assessment Screening. The assessment is based solely on a desk-based review of the proposed development site and relevant environmental information, including available mapping, aerial imagery, published datasets and documentation relating to European sites and their conservation objectives. Given the nature of the proposed works and the location of the site within a highly modified urban environment comprising predominantly made ground, hardstanding, roads, buildings and limited managed green space, additional field surveys were not considered necessary. The works site is located in 10 km square grid O03.

2.3.1 Habitats and Flora

The desktop study undertaken to identify habitats and flora within the vicinity of the works site identified the dominant habitat type as **Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3)**. The site comprises predominantly built land, hardstanding and made ground associated with the existing urban environment. Small areas of **Scattered Trees and Parkland (WD5)** and **Amenity Grassland (Improved) (GA2)** occur within the site and surrounding area. The wider landscape is characterised by residential and commercial development, road infrastructure and other urban land uses, with limited semi-natural habitat present.

2.3.2 Non-native/Invasive Species

The presence of Invasive Alien Species (IAS), including species listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended, was reviewed using National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) records for the works site.

Records for hectad O03 identified a number of invasive alien plant species within the wider area. High-impact invasive plant species recorded include Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Giant-rhubarb (*Gunnera tinctoria*), Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and Nuttall's Waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*). Medium-impact invasive species recorded include Butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*), Three-cornered Garlic (*Allium triquetrum*), Russian-vine (*Fallopia baldschuanica*), Himalayan Honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*).

The desk study also identified several invasive faunal species within the wider area, including Eastern Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*), American Mink (*Neovison vison*), Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*), Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*), Harlequin Ladybird (*Harmonia axyridis*), Ring-necked Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*) and Pond Terrapin (*Trachemys scripta*).

No field survey was undertaken as part of this Appropriate Assessment Screening and therefore the presence or absence of invasive species within the footprint of the works site has not been confirmed. Should invasive species be encountered during construction, they will be managed in accordance with relevant legislation and best practice guidance.

2.3.3 Bats

A review of available bat records from NBDC was undertaken to identify the potential for bat activity within the vicinity of the works site.

Records obtained from the NBDC indicate the presence of a number of bat species within the surrounding grid square, refer to **Section 2.4.2.5** for more information. All bat species are protected under the Wildlife Acts and are listed on Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive.

No field survey was undertaken as part of this Appropriate Assessment Screening and therefore the presence or absence of bats within the proposed development site has not been confirmed. However, given the highly urbanised nature of the site and the absence of extensive woodland, watercourses or other high-quality bat habitat, the site is considered to provide limited suitability for roosting, commuting and foraging bats.

2.3.4 Otter

A review of National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) records identified records of Otter (*Lutra lutra*) within the O03 square grid. Otter is protected under the Wildlife Acts and is listed on Annex II and Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive.

The NBDC dataset contains 13 records of otter within the O03 grid square, with the most recent record dating from 2025. The presence of these records indicates that otter occurs within the wider landscape. However, the records relate to the wider 10 km square and do not necessarily indicate the presence of otter within the works site. No watercourses, riparian habitats or wetlands occur within the footprint of the Proposed Development and the site provides limited suitability for otter foraging, commuting, breeding or resting activities. Suitable habitat for otter is more likely to occur along watercourses within the wider Dublin area.

No field surveys were undertaken as part of this Appropriate Assessment Screening and therefore the presence or absence of otter within the vicinity of the Proposed Development has not been confirmed. However, given the

urban nature of the site and the absence of aquatic and riparian habitats within the development footprint, the site is considered to provide negligible habitat suitability for otter.

2.4 Description of the Project

2.4.1 Site Location and Context

The works site is located within the suburb of Neilstown, Dublin, in the townlands of Collinstown and Neillstown. The works site extends over approximately 1.91 ha and comprises a linear area extending from St. Ronan's Avenue in the west, eastwards through existing public open space and Neilstown Shopping Centre, crossing Neilstown Road and terminating at Neilstown Avenue (**Figure 1-1**).

The works site is situated within a highly urbanised environment characterised by residential development, commercial uses, community facilities, roads, footpaths, parking areas and other associated urban infrastructure. The site is bounded by existing residential properties to the north and south and encompasses the Neilstown Shopping Centre and surrounding public realm. St. Peter Apostle Junior National School is located immediately south of the eastern portion of the Proposed Development. The wider area is characterised by established residential neighbourhoods, local road infrastructure and community facilities interspersed with managed public open spaces.

Access to the works site is available from a number of directions. Access from the south and west is provided via Ninth Lock Road, which connects to the R113, while access from the north is available via Neilstown Road, which connects to the R833. The M50 motorway is located to the east of the Proposed Development, with access available via Junctions 7 and 9.

The Proposed Development is located within a heavily modified urban environment that is subject to ongoing residential, commercial and transport-related activity. No rivers, streams or other notable natural features are present within the works site, and the surrounding landscape is dominated by built development and managed amenity areas.

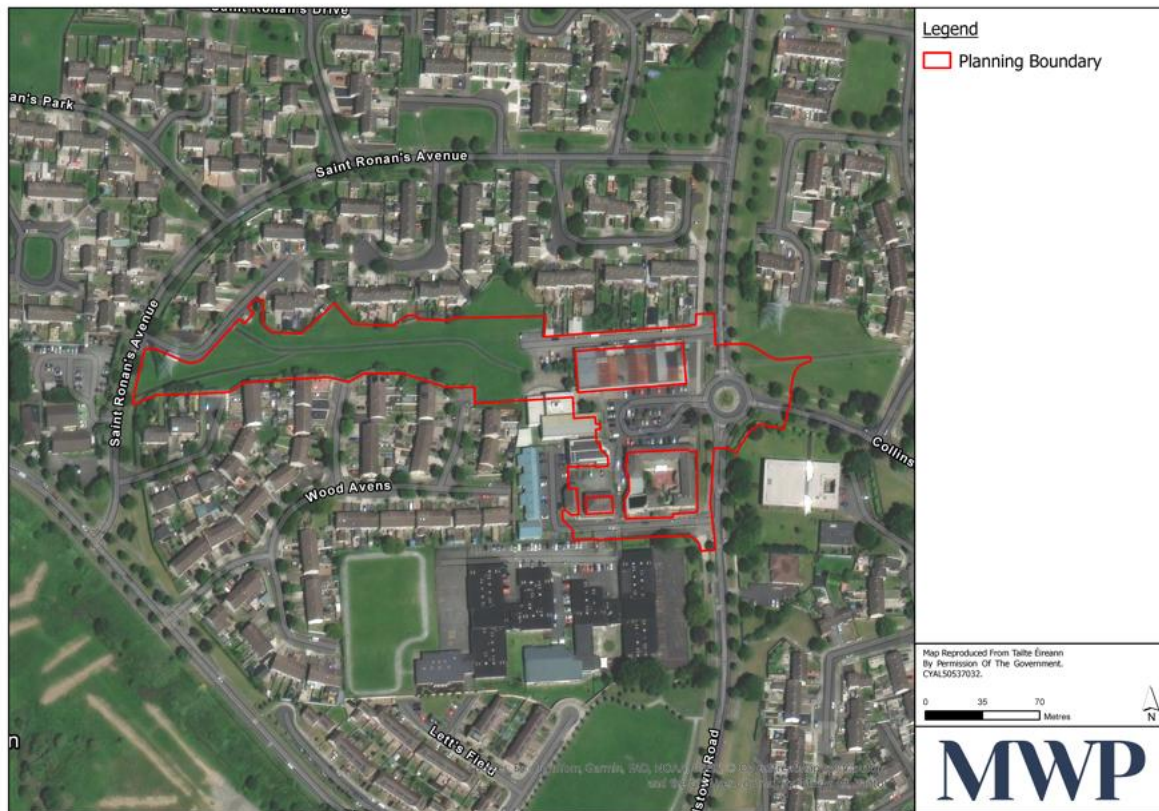


Figure 2-1: Aerial Site Location

2.4.2 Description of Existing Site

2.4.2.1 General Site Description

The CORINE 2024 Land Cover dataset (available on EPA' interactive map viewer¹) indicates that the works site is described as 'Artificial surfaces' (Code: 112). It is surrounded by 'Industrial, commercial and transport units' (Code: 121), 'Road and rail network' (Code: 122) and 'Agricultural area' (Code: 231).

According to the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) online map viewer², the works site is underlain by 'Lucan Formation', described as dark limestone & shale (calp). GSI define groundwater vulnerability as "a term used to represent the intrinsic geological and hydrogeological characteristics that determine the ease with which groundwater may be contaminated by human activities". Groundwater vulnerability in the area is classified as 'Extreme Vulnerability (E)' and defined as groundwater that has 'natural characteristics that make it extremely vulnerable to contamination by human activities'.

The bedrock aquifer is classified as a 'Locally Important (LI)' defined as 'bedrock that is Moderately Productive only in Local Zones'.

¹ [EPA Maps](#)

² [GeoHive Map Viewer](#)

SPAs and SACs occurring within the zone of influence (ZOI) of the works site are identified in **Section 3.3**. These sites are collectively known as Natura 2000 sites.

2.4.2.2 Hydrology and Hydrogeology

The works site is located within the Liffey_SC_090 WFD Sub-Catchment, which forms part of the Liffey and Dublin Bay Catchment (WFD Catchment 09). The wider area is drained by the Grand Canal Main Line (Liffey and Dublin Bay) (IE_09_AWB_GCMLE) waterbody, located approximately 900 m south of the works site and flows east towards the Liffey Estuary Upper (IE_EA_090_0400) and Liffey Estuary Lower (IE_EA_090_0300) before discharging into Dublin Bay (IE_EA_090_0000). The Liffey_170 (IE_EA_09L012100) waterbody is located approximately 2.7 km west of the works site and flows north before joining the Liffey_180 (IE_EA_09L012350) and flowing east towards the Liffey Estuary. No in-stream works, watercourse crossings, drainage works, water abstractions, groundwater dewatering activities or surface water discharges are proposed as part of the development.

The Grand Canal Main Line (Liffey and Dublin Bay) waterbody has been assigned a WFD Surface water Status of 'Good' and is classified as 'Not at risk' of not meeting its WFD objectives. The Liffey_170 waterbody has been assigned a WFD Status of 'Poor' and is classified as 'At risk' of not meeting its WFD objectives. The principal pressure affecting water quality within the catchment is urban run-off.

The works site is underlain by Dublin GWB (IE_EA_G_008), which has been assigned a 'Good' WFD Groundwater Status and is classified as being 'Not at risk'. The site is not located within a Source Protection Area for any public water supply and no abstraction of groundwater or surface water is required as part of the works.

Compliance with the reporting requirements of the WFD (Directive 2000/60/EC) obliges each Member State to publish reports providing summary information about individual waterbodies relating to their status, risks and objectives.

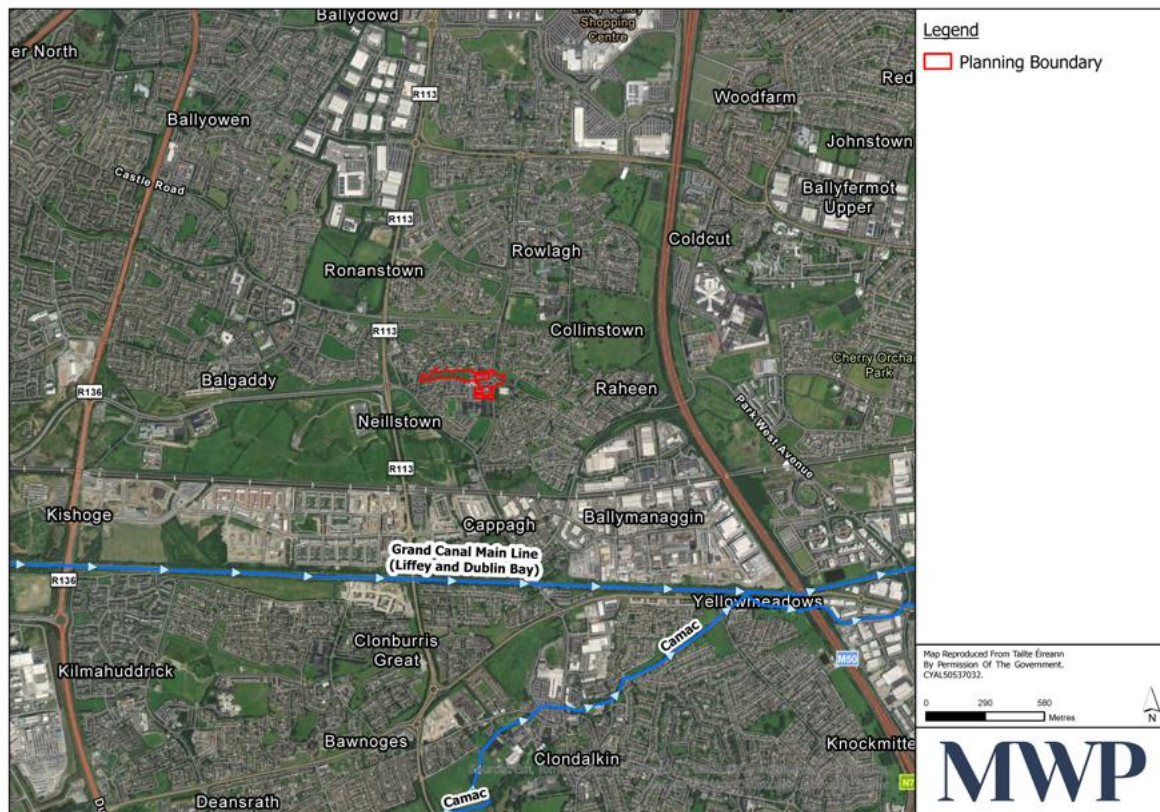


Figure 2-2: Surface waterbodies within the vicinity of the works site

2.4.2.3 Habitats and Flora

A desktop review of available mapping, aerial imagery and ecological information was undertaken to identify habitats and flora within and surrounding the works site. Habitat classifications follow 'A guide to Habitats in Ireland' (Fossitt, 2000).

The desktop study identified the dominant habitat within the works site as **Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3)**. The site comprises predominantly built land, hardstanding, roads, footpaths, parking areas and made ground associated with the existing urban environment. Small areas of **Amenity Grassland (Improved) (GA2)** and **Scattered Trees and Parkland (WD5)** occur throughout the site, particularly within public open spaces and landscaped areas. The surrounding landscape is characterised by an established urban environment comprising residential housing, commercial premises, community facilities, schools, road infrastructure and managed public open spaces.

No Annex I habitat types listed under the Habitats Directive occur within the footprint of the works site.

2.4.2.4 Invasive Species

Documented NBDC records of high/medium impact invasive species listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011, as amended) exist within the hectad O03 encompassing the works site. Hectad records exist for 8 No. high impact species and 14 No. medium impact species for hectad O03. Of these, 9 No. IAPS are listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds

and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011, as amended). Water Fern (*Azolla filiculoides*) is recorded as a moderate-risk invasive species. See **Table 2-1** for a summary.

Table 2-1: National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) desktop records of non-native/invasive species of flora within hectad O03

Species name	Closest Species Record to the Works Site	Invasiveness NBDC ³	Listed on Regulation S.I. 477 ⁴
Canadian Waterweed (<i>Elodea canadensis</i>)	1.5 km southeast of works site	High	✓
Cherry Laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>)	5 km west of works site	High	
Giant Hogweed (<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>)	200 m east of works site	High	✓
Giant-rhubarb (<i>Gunnera tinctoria</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	High	✓
Himalayan Balsam (<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	High	✓
Japanese Knotweed (<i>Fallopia japonica</i>)	1.2 km southeast of works site	High	✓
Nuttall's Waterweed (<i>Elodea nuttallii</i>)	2.3 km southeast of works site	High	✓
Rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	High	
American Skunk-cabbage (<i>Lysichiton americanus</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
Black Currant (<i>Ribes nigrum</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
Butterfly-bush (<i>Buddleja davidii</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
Canadian Fleabane (<i>Conyza canadensis</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
Common Broomrape (<i>Orobancha minor</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
Douglas Fir (<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
False-acacia (<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
Himalayan Honeysuckle (<i>Leycesteria formosa</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	

³ Species Profile Browser · Species Profile (biodiversityireland.ie)

⁴ Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI 477 of 2011, as amended)

Species name	Closest Species Record to the Works Site	Invasiveness NBDC ³	Listed on Regulation S.I. 477 ⁴
Japanese Rose (<i>Rosa rugosa</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
Least Duckweed (<i>Lemna minuta</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
Russian-vine (<i>Fallopia baldschuanica</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
Sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
Three-cornered Garlic (<i>Allium triquetrum</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	✓
Traveller's-joy (<i>Clematis vitalba</i>)	Within the 10 km square grid	Medium	
Water Fern (<i>Azolla filiculoides</i>)	3.8 km northwest of the works site	Moderate	

2.4.2.5 Bats

A review of bat records and available information from the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) was undertaken to identify the potential for bat activity within the vicinity of the works site. The overall Bat Suitability Index (BSI) for the relevant 10 km square is 26.67 out of 100, indicating low suitability for bats. The highest species-specific suitability scores are associated with Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) (41/100).

Records within O03 grid square indicate the presence of nine bat species, refer to **Table 2-2**. The most frequently recorded species within the grid square are Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) (342 records), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) (173 records), Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) (165 records) and Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) (103 records).

All bat species are protected under the Wildlife Acts and are listed on Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive. In addition, Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) and Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*) are listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. While small areas of amenity grassland and scattered trees occur within and adjacent to the site, the predominance of hardstanding and built development limits its suitability for roosting bats. It is noted that scattered trees and landscaped areas may provide limited local commuting and foraging habitat within the wider urban landscape.

No field surveys were undertaken as part of this Appropriate Assessment Screening and therefore the presence or absence of bats within the works site has not been confirmed.

Table 2-2: Suitability index for individual bat species within the 10 km square grid O03

Species Common Name	Scientific name	Suitability Index O03	Overall Rating	BSI
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	35	26.67	
Brown long-eared bat	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	40		

Species Common Name	Scientific name	Suitability Index O03	Overall Rating	BSI
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	41		
Leisler's bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	41		
Whiskered bat	<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>	19		
Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	19		
Nathusius' pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	19		
Natterer's bat	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	26		
Lesser horseshoe bat	<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	0		

2.4.2.6 Otter

There are 13 records of Otter (*Lutra lutra*) within the relevant hectad O03, with the most recent record dating from 2025. The European otter is protected under the Wildlife Acts and is listed on Annex II and Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive.

The works site is located within a highly urbanised environment comprising residential development, commercial premises, roads, footpaths, parking areas, amenity grassland and associated urban infrastructure. The site itself does not contain any watercourses or wetland habitats suitable for otter. While otters may occur within the wider landscape, particularly along watercourses within the broader Dublin area, the works site provides negligible habitat for foraging, commuting, breeding or resting otters.

The proposed development comprises public realm enhancement works within an existing urban setting and does not involve in-stream works, watercourse crossings, modification of riparian habitats or impacts on known otter breeding or resting sites. Given the highly urbanised nature of the site, the absence of suitable otter habitat within the works area and the localised and temporary nature of the proposed works, significant effects on otter are not anticipated.

2.4.3 Description of Proposed Development

The proposed works comprises the enhancement and regeneration of the existing public realm within Neilstown District Centre, Dublin, including associated works within adjoining public open spaces. The purpose of the development is to improve the quality, accessibility, functionality and appearance of the district centre through upgraded public realm infrastructure, landscaping and associated urban realm improvements.

The characteristics of the works site are detailed further in **Table 2-3**. The principal elements of the development comprise:

- Removal and alteration of existing paving, kerbs and sections of hardstanding;
- Reconfiguration and enhancement of pedestrian routes and public spaces;
- Alterations to existing roads, parking and circulation arrangements;
- Installation of new paving, hard landscaping and public realm finishes;
- New soft landscaping, tree planting and associated landscape works;
- Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) interventions where required;

- Installation of street furniture, signage and public lighting;
- Utility diversions, protection works and associated ancillary infrastructure;
- Temporary construction compounds, traffic management measures and site reinstatement works.

Table 2-3: Characteristics of the Proposed Development

Criteria	Description
Size, Scale, Area, Land take	The NDCE comprises of approximately 1.91 ha within Neilstown. The area is largely residential, with some commercial and community buildings within the development boundary. The Proposed Development principally comprises enhancement and reconfiguration of the existing Neilstown District Centre public realm and with minor works to adjoining public open space. The site is predominantly previously developed urban land, existing roads, footways, parking areas, hard landscape and established public open space. The proposals are primarily concerned with enhancement and reconfiguration of existing public realm rather than significant new development or expansion onto previously undeveloped land. No significant additional permanent land-take outside the identified project boundary is currently anticipated. No significant loss of habitat will occur as a result of the works site. The site is located within a highly modified urban environment characterised by Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3), with smaller areas of Amenity Grassland (Improved) (GA2) and Scattered Trees and Parkland (WD5). The project boundary and extent are shown on the current NDCE Context Plan.
Details of physical changes that will take place during the various stages of implementing the proposal	The scheme is currently undergoing design development, and the precise extent of individual interventions remains subject to further coordination and completion of the Part 8 proposals. Based on the current design, the works are anticipated to comprise a combination of: <u>Site Preparation and Construction</u> • Site clearance and preparation works where required; • Removal and/or alteration of existing paving, kerbs and other hard landscape surfaces; • Reconfiguration and enhancement of pedestrian routes and public spaces; • Alterations to existing roads, parking and circulation arrangements where required; • New and replacement paving, kerbing and associated public-realm finishes; • New and enhanced soft landscape, including tree, shrub and other planting; • Minor works within the existing western and eastern open space corridors; • Drainage and SuDS interventions where required; • Installation and/or alteration of street lighting, street furniture, signage and associated infrastructure; • Local excavation for pavement construction, drainage, services, tree pits and landscape works; • Protection, diversion or adjustment of existing utilities where required, and; • Associated temporary construction works, site compounds, traffic/pedestrian management and reinstatement. <u>Operation</u> Following completion of construction, the development will function as an enhanced public realm and community space. Operational activities will be limited to routine maintenance of landscaping, paving, lighting, drainage infrastructure and public realm features.

Criteria	Description
Description of resource requirements for the construction/operation and decommissioning of the proposal (water resources, construction material, human presence etc)	<u>Materials</u> Construction will involve conventional resources and materials associated with an urban public realm enhancement project, potentially including the following materials: • Paving and surfacing materials; • Kerbs and edging materials; • Concrete and aggregates; • Drainage and utility infrastructure components; • Topsoil, planting materials, trees and shrubs; • Street furniture and signage; • Public lighting infrastructure. The design will seek to minimise the consumption of new construction materials through the retention and reuse of existing materials where practicable. Existing paving and kerbs that are suitable for reuse will be considered for incorporation within the proposed works. Suitable existing sub-base and other pavement construction materials will similarly be considered for retention and/or recovery and reuse on site, subject to their condition, technical suitability and relevant engineering and environmental requirements. This approach is intended to reduce the requirement for imported primary construction materials; minimise the quantity of material transported off site and reduce associated construction traffic and resource consumption.
	<u>Machinery</u> Normal construction plant and equipment will be required, together with temporary water and electrical supplies where necessary. The following plant is expected to be used during the construction phase: • Dumpers; • Delivery vehicles; • Rollers and compaction equipment; • Cranes and lifting equipment where required; • General construction plant and hand tools. <u>Human Presence</u> Construction activities will involve a temporary workforce and associated vehicle movements. Temporary traffic management measures and localised rerouting of pedestrian movements may be required during construction works to facilitate safe access and maintain public access through the site. Human presence during operation will be limited to routine maintenance activities. Once completed, the scheme will principally comprise permanent public realm and landscape infrastructure. Operational resource requirements are therefore anticipated to be limited to normal inspection, cleansing, landscape maintenance, lighting/electrical requirements and routine maintenance of public-realm infrastructure. No defined decommissioning phase is envisaged, as the works comprise permanent enhancement of existing public infrastructure.
Description of timescale for the various activities that will take place as a result of implementation (including likely start and finish dates)	The project is currently at design development/pre-Part 8 stage. The programme is being progressed with a view to completing the necessary environmental screening and other supporting documentation to enable the scheme to proceed through the Part 8 planning process. Precise construction commencement and completion dates have not yet been established and will depend upon completion of the statutory approval process, detailed design, funding, procurement and appointment of a Works Contractor.

Criteria	Description
	The construction period will be confirmed as the design and procurement programme develops and is expected to be between 9-12 months. Works will be undertaken in appropriate phases in order to maintain safe pedestrian, vehicular, business, community and service access through and around the District Centre insofar as practicable.
Description of wastes arising and other residues (including quantities) and their disposal	The project is at pre-planning/design development stage and detailed construction waste quantities are not presently available. Construction waste and material arisings are anticipated to comprise materials normally associated with public realm works, potentially including: • Excavated soil and subsoil; • Existing paving and kerbs; • Existing sub-base and other pavement construction materials; • Concrete and road construction materials; • Asphalt/bituminous materials where existing carriageway surfaces are altered; • Vegetation and landscape arisings; • Surplus soils and aggregates; • Drainage and utility materials; and • Normal construction packaging and miscellaneous construction waste. The design will seek to apply a materials-retention and reuse approach wherever practicable. Existing paving and kerbs suitable for reuse will be retained, salvaged and considered for incorporation within the proposed works. Suitable existing sub-base and other recovered pavement construction materials will similarly be considered for reuse within the project, subject to confirmation of their condition, technical suitability and compliance with relevant engineering and environmental requirements. This approach has the potential to reduce both the volume of construction material requiring off-site recovery or disposal and the quantity of new materials required to be imported to the site. Where materials cannot practicably be reused within the works, opportunities for appropriate recovery will be considered in preference to disposal. Remaining waste will be appropriately characterised, segregated where practicable and removed by appropriately authorised waste collectors to authorised recovery or disposal facilities. Detailed quantities, material suitability, reuse opportunities and final recovery/disposal arrangements will be established during detailed design and construction planning. No significant waste streams are anticipated during the operational phase beyond normal landscape maintenance, cleansing and maintenance/replacement of public-realm components.
Identification of wastes arising and other residues (including quantities) that may be of particular concern in the context of the Natura 2000 network	No specific waste stream of particular concern to the Natura 2000 network has been identified at the current stage of design. Potential construction-related pollutants associated with conventional public realm works may include suspended solids/sediment from excavation, cementitious materials, fuels, oils and other substances associated with construction plant and activities. Detailed construction environmental controls and pollution prevention measures will be developed at the appropriate subsequent stage having regard to the findings of the environmental screening and detailed design No operational waste or residue is likely to be of particular concern to Natura 2000 network has presently been identified.
Description of any additional services required to implement the project or plan, their location and means of construction	The project will utilise existing urban infrastructure and services insofar as practicable. Works may include modification, protection, relocation and/or extension of existing services within the project area, including: • Surface-water drainage and SuDS infrastructure;

Criteria	Description
	- Public lighting and associated electrical infrastructure; - Utility chambers, ducts and service covers; - Signage and other public-realm infrastructure; and - Existing utility services affected by the proposed works. The Context Plan and utilities information identify existing electricity infrastructure, including an ESB substation and overhead electricity infrastructure/ESB towers within or adjoining the wider project area. These have been taken into account in developing the landscape proposals. The precise extent of service alterations is not yet determined and will be established through ongoing design development, utility information and consultation/coordination with the relevant service providers. Service works are expected to involve conventional urban construction methods including local excavation, ducting, chambers, drainage connections and reinstatement. Any works affecting existing utility infrastructure will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the relevant utility provider.

3. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

The purpose of the screening assessment is to record in a transparent and reasoned manner the likely effects, on relevant Natura 2000 Sites, of the project, and whether these likely effects are significant.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment (Stage 1) determines the need for a full Appropriate Assessment (Stage 2) and consists of a number of steps, each of which is addressed in the following sections of this report:

- 3.1 Establish whether the project is necessary for the management of a Natura 2000 site;
- 3.2 Identification of other plans, projects and activities with which the works site could interact to create in-combination effects;
- 3.3 Identification of Natura 2000 sites potentially affected;
- 3.4 Identification and description of potential individual and cumulative impacts (in-combination effects) of the project;
- 3.5 Conclusion of screening stage.

3.1 Management of Natura 2000 Sites

The works site is not connected with or necessary to the conservation management of a Natura 2000 Site.

3.2 Identification of Other Projects or Plans or Activities

3.2.1 Plans

With regard to the potential for in-combination effects, the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 was considered. This plan provides the statutory framework for development within the county and includes policies relating to land use, infrastructure, and environmental protection. The Proposed Development aligns with these objectives through the enhancement and regeneration of Neilstown District Centre, including improvements to the public realm, pedestrian infrastructure, landscaping, community amenities and overall accessibility of the area. The Proposed Development will support the existing residential community by improving

the quality, safety and attractiveness of the district centre, while enhancing the function of existing public open spaces and community facilities. The scheme will also contribute to the ongoing regeneration of Neilstown and improve the local environment for residents, businesses and visitors.

Given the small scale and localised nature of the works, and the absence of identified impact pathways linking the project to other plans, no likely significant in-combination effects are identified.

3.2.2 Other Permitted and Proposed Developments in the Locality

A search of South Dublin County Council's⁵ and An Coimisiún Pleanála's⁶ online planning viewers for granted or on-going planning applications in the last five years for the townland of 'Neilstown' which encompasses the works site, and within a 2 km radius of the works site was undertaken on 2nd October 2026. Majority of developments in the area of the works site include construction, alteration, extension, and retention of private residences. Given the separation distance and absence of any hydrological or ecological pathways linking these developments to the works area, no potential for significant in-combination effects is identified.

The works site is located in proximity to the Clonburris Strategic Development Zone (SDZ), which is subject to a substantial programme of residential, community and infrastructure development. A number of significant developments have been granted permission or are currently progressing within the SDZ, including strategic infrastructure works (Refs. SD20A/0021 and SDZ24A/0033W), residential developments (Refs. SD22A/0017, SDZ22A/0010, SD25A/0019W and SDZ25X/0001), a temporary logistics and storage facility to facilitate the build-out of the SDZ lands (Ref. SD23A/0016), amendments to previously permitted residential development (Ref. SD24A/0019W), social housing development (Ref. SD218/0006) and educational development (Ref. SD21A/0065).

These developments comprise residential, educational, community and infrastructure projects within an established urban environment. The Proposed Development comprises public realm enhancement works within an existing district centre and does not introduce any new ecological or hydrological pathways beyond those already present within the wider urban environment.

Having regard to the nature, scale and location of the identified developments, together with the absence of any direct ecological or hydrological pathways linking the Proposed Development to any European site, no likely significant in-combination effects on any European site are anticipated.

3.2.3 EPA Licenced/Registered Facilities

A review of the EPA mapping tool identified no IPPC, IPC or IEL licensed facilities within the immediate vicinity of the works site. The nearest licensed facility is Metal Processors Limited (IEL Licence No. P0401-02), located approximately 650 m southeast of the works site. Green Circular Economy Unlimited Company (IEL Licence No. W0205-01) is situated approximately 670 m southeast, next to Metal Processors Limited. Crag Digital Limited (IEL License No. P1066-01) is located 700 m southeast of the works site.

It is not envisaged that the project has any potential for interaction with any EPA licenced/registered facilities, which could result in significant in-combination effects on Natura 2000 sites. This is due to the small scale and localised nature of the works, the absence of emissions to air, soil or water, and the lack of any identified impact

⁵ <https://sdublincoco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=38b4ed7109614ebba5da50b8a60c0c80>
(Accessed: 02/10/2026)

⁶ <https://www.pleanala.ie/en-ie/Map-Search> (Accessed: 02/10/2026)

pathways. However, based on the precautionary principle, the potential for in-combination effects as a result of the works site will be evaluated in **Section Error! Reference source not found.**

3.2.4 Existing Land Use and On-going Activities

The surrounding landscape is characterised by residential developments, commercial premises, educational facilities, community infrastructure and local road networks. Existing land uses within the wider area include residential, commercial, community and recreational activities, together with associated traffic movements and urban drainage infrastructure.

Ongoing land-use pressures within the wider urban environment include road traffic, urban runoff, residential and commercial activities, utility and infrastructure maintenance works and construction activities associated with ongoing development within the Clonburris Strategic Development Zone. These pressures have the potential to contribute to localised surface water runoff, noise, dust generation and increased human activity.

The works involved in this public realm enhancement and regeneration works are within an existing urban environment and does not involve significant habitat loss, agricultural changes, watercourse modification or hydromorphological alteration. As such, the development is not considered likely to interact significantly with existing land-use pressures in the area.

An assessment of the potential for significant in-combination effects is provided in **Section 3.5.7**.

3.3 Identification of Natura 2000 Sites

3.3.1 Zone of Impact (ZOI) Influence and the Source Pathway Receptor (SPR) Model

The screening stage of Appropriate Assessment involves compiling a list of Natura 2000 sites within a potential zone of influence (ZOI). The ZOI of a works site is 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 Natura 2000 site. The zone of influence will vary for different ecological features depending on their sensitivity to an environmental change (CIEEM, 2018). This was established using the Source-Pathway-Receptor (S-P-R) framework, whereby a potential effect can only occur where a source (e.g. construction activity), a pathway (e.g. hydrological or ecological connectivity), and a receptor (e.g. a European site) are all present. The ZOI for this project was identified through a review of the nature of the project, known impacts and effects likely to arise as a result of the project, distance from Natura 2000 sites and their qualifying interests and any landscape or ecological connectivity between the works site and Natura 2000 sites.

Once the Natura 2000 sites within the likely ZOI have been identified, an assessment is made in relation to these sites of the likely significance of the potential effects associated with the works site (see **Section 3.4** to **3.5** below). As described above, the test for the screening for Appropriate Assessment is to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the development, individually or in combination with other plans/projects, is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site. If, following the assessment, there are any significant, potentially significant, or uncertain effects, it will be necessary to proceed to Appropriate Assessment and submit an NIS.

3.3.2 Identification of Natura 2000 Sites with the potential ZOI

Designated SACs and SPAs within the potential ZOI of the works site, including their proximity, are shown in **Table 3-1**. The locations of these designated sites in relation to the works site are shown on a map in **Figure 3-1** below.

During the preparation of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment, the recent designation of Lambay Island SAC (000204) and Codling Fault Zone SAC (003015) was noted. These SACs were reviewed as part of the screening process. Given their offshore locations, significant separation distances from the works site, and the absence of any ecological, hydrological or other source-pathway-receptor linkage between the works site and these sites, neither SAC is considered to fall within the Zone of Influence of the works site. Accordingly, likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of these SACs can be excluded.

Table 3-1: Natura 2000 Sites within the potential ZOI

Designated Site	Site Code	Proximity of Designated Site to Nearest Point of Works site	Hydrological/ Ecological Connection? (Yes/No)
South Dublin Bay SAC	000210	Approximately 11 km east of the works site	No
North Dublin Bay SAC	000206	Approximately 16 km west of the works site	No
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	004024	Approximately 11 km east of the works site	No
North Bull Island SPA	004006	Approximately 16 km west of the works site	No
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	001398	Approximately 7 km northwest of the works site	No
Wicklow Mountains SAC	002122	Approximately 11 km south of the works site	No
Wicklow Mountains SPA	004040	Approximately 11 km south of the works site	No

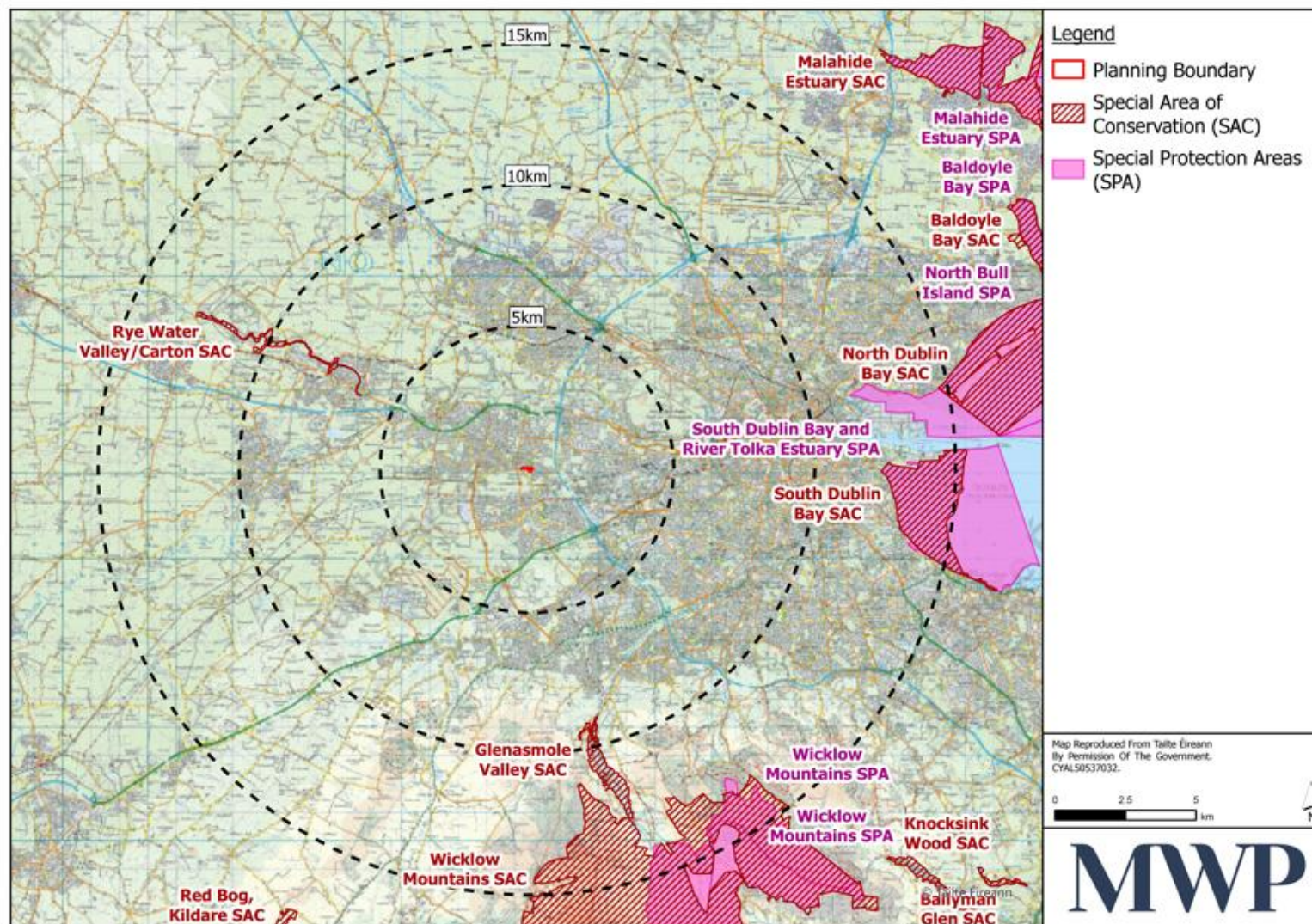


Figure 3-1: SACs and SPAs within the potential ZOI of the works site

3.3.3 Characteristics of Natura 2000 Sites

The following table lists the qualifying features of conservation interest for the Natura 2000 sites identified in the previous table. Information pertaining to the Natura 2000 sites is from site synopses, conservation objectives and other information available on www.npws.ie.

Table 3-2: Qualifying features of conservation interest of Natura 2000 sites within the potential ZOI

Designated Site	Site Code	Proximity of Designated Site to Nearest Point of Works site	Qualifying Features of Conservation Interest (QI's)/ Species of Conservation Interest (SCI's)	Hydrological/ Ecological Connection? (Yes/No)
South Dublin Bay SAC	000210	Approximately 11 km east of the works site	• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] • Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] • Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] • Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]	No
North Dublin Bay SAC	000206	Approximately 16 km west of the works site	• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] • Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] • Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] • Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330] • Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] • Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] • Humid dune slacks [2190] • <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (<i>Petalwort</i>) [1395]	No
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	004024	Approximately 11 km east of the works site	• Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] • Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] • Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] • Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192] • Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] • Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	No
North Bull Island SPA	004006	Approximately 16 km west of the works site	• Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] • Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]	No

Designated Site	Site Code	Proximity of Designated Site to Nearest Point of Works site	Qualifying Features of Conservation Interest (QI's)/ Species of Conservation Interest (SCI's)	Hydrological/ Ecological Connection? (Yes/No)
			• Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144] • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] • Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] • Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] • Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] • Shoveler (<i>Spatula clypeata</i>) [A857] • Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	
Rye Water Valley/Carlton SAC	001398	Approximately 7 km northwest of the works site	• Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] • <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] • <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]	No
Wicklow Mountains SAC	002122	Approximately 11 km south of the works site	• Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) [3110] • Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160] • Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010] • European dry heaths [4030] • Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] • Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i> [6130] • Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230] • Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] • Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110] • Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210] • Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220] • Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles [91A0] • <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter) [1355]	No
Wicklow Mountains SPA	004040	Approximately 11 km south of the works site	• Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A098] • Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A103]	No

3.3.4 Conservation Objectives

According to the Habitats Directive, the *conservation status of a natural habitat* will be taken as 'favourable' within its biogeographic range when:

- its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing,
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined below.

According to the Habitats Directive, the conservation status of a species means the sum of the influences acting on the species concerned that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its populations. The conservation status will be taken as 'favourable' within its biogeographical range when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future;
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Individual conservation objectives for each site are available on www.npws.ie. These have been accessed for the sites listed in the tables above on the 2nd October 2026.

- South Dublin Bay SAC (000210). Version 2. Produced April 2026.
- North Dublin Bay SAC (000206). Version 1. Produced November 2013.
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024). Version 1. Produced March 2015.
- North Bull Island SPA (004006). Version 1. Produced March 2015.
- Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (0013938). Version 1. Produced December 2021.
- Wicklow Mountains SAC (002122). Version 1. Produced July 2017.
- Wicklow Mountains SPA (004040). Version 1. Produced July 2024.

Management plans were not available for most of the sites. All conservation objectives together with other designated site information are available on www.npws.ie/protectedsites.

3.4 Identification of Potential Impacts

Potential likely direct, indirect or secondary ecological impacts arising from the works site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) are identified in this section. Refer to **Table 3-3** and **Table 3-4**.

Table 3-3: Description of elements of the project likely to give rise to potential ecological impacts

Construction Phase Impacts
• Site establishment and access by construction personnel, vehicles and plant;
• Delivery and storage of construction materials, equipment and machinery;

Removal and replacement of existing paving, kerbs, road surfacing and hardstanding;
Localised excavation works associated with drainage, utility diversions, landscaping and public realm improvements;
Construction of new paved areas, pedestrian routes and public realm features;
Installation of street furniture, signage and public lighting infrastructure;
Tree planting, landscaping and SuDS interventions;
Generation of construction waste, excavated material and surface water runoff;
Use and storage of fuels, oils, concrete products and other construction materials;
Increased human activity, traffic movements, noise, vibration and dust generation during construction;
Potential accidental release of sediment or pollutants to surface water drainage infrastructure;
Potential accidental introduction and/or spread of invasive alien species.
Operational Phase Impacts
Continued use of the enhanced public realm by pedestrians, cyclists and other users;
Routine maintenance of paving, landscaping, lighting, drainage infrastructure and street furniture;
Increased public use of upgraded amenity and public realm areas;
Surface water runoff from existing and proposed hard surfaces;
Operation and maintenance of SuDS and drainage infrastructure;
Routine vehicle movements associated with maintenance activities.

Table 3-4: Direct, indirect or secondary ecological impacts of the construction and operational phases (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) which have the potential for having significant effects

<i>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary ecological impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) by virtue of:</i> - Size and scale; - Land-take; - Distance from Natura 2000 Site or key features of the Site; - Resource requirements; - Emissions; - Excavation requirements;	The nearest European site is the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (001398), located approximately 7 km northwest of the works site. No direct hydrological or ecological connection between the works site and any European site has been identified. Construction Phase <u>Habitat loss/alteration/fragmentation</u> - The development is located entirely within a highly modified urban environment comprising Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3), Amenity Grassland (Improved) (GA2) and Scattered Trees and Parkland (WD5). - No Natura 2000 site will be affected. - No Annex I habitats or other habitats of conservation significance will be lost, fragmented or altered. - No direct habitat connectivity exists between the works site and any European site. <u>Water quality</u>
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• <i>Transportation requirements;</i> • <i>Duration of construction, operation etc.; and</i> • <i>Other.</i>	Potential impact pathways include: • Accidental release of fuels, oils, concrete washings or other construction-related pollutants; • Localised sediment generation associated with excavation and ground disturbance activities; • Surface water runoff entering the existing drainage network during construction. <u>Species disturbance/displacement</u> Impacts to habitats and species related to Natura 2000 sites may potentially occur through: • Temporary increases in noise and vibration; • Increased human presence and vehicular activity; • Temporary dust generation; • Disturbance associated with construction plant and machinery. Given the highly urbanised nature of the receiving environment and the absence of direct ecological pathways to any European site, significant effects on habitats or species associated with European sites are not anticipated. Operational Phase <u>Habitat loss/alteration/fragmentation</u> • No habitat loss will occur during operation. • The Proposed Development will comprise an enhanced public realm and landscaped environment within an existing urban area. <u>Water quality</u> • No water quality impacts identified as a result of the operational phase of the works. <u>Species disturbance/displacement</u> • Increased public use of the improved public realm may occur. • Routine maintenance activities associated with landscaping, paving, lighting and drainage infrastructure may be required. • No disturbance pathways to species associated with European sites have been identified.
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3.5 Assessment of Significance of Potential Impacts

This section considers the list of sites identified in **Section 3.3.2**, together with the potential ecological impacts identified in the previous section and determines whether the project is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site. When assessing impact, Natura 2000 sites are only considered relevant where a plausible or potential source-pathway-receptor link exists between the works site and a protected species or habitat type. The evaluation takes cognisance of the scope, scale, nature and size of the project, its location relative to the Natura 2000 sites and the degree of connectedness that exists between the project and each Natura 2000 site's potential ecological receptors.

3.5.1 Natura 2000 Sites outside the likely Zone of Influence

With regard to the Proposed Development, it is considered that all seven European sites identified during the screening process are located outside the likely Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the Proposed Development, due to the absence of plausible source-pathway-receptor linkages and/or the attenuating effect of distance. As such, the Proposed Development does not include any element with the potential to significantly affect the conservation objectives for which these sites are designated.

Therefore, it is objectively concluded that significant effects on the conservation objectives of these sites are not reasonably foreseeable as a result of the works. These sites, which are listed in **Table 3-5** below, along with their distance from the works site and the rationale for exclusion, are excluded from further consideration within this report.

Table 3-5: Natura 2000 Sites excluded from further consideration

Designated Site and code	Proximity of Designated Site to Nearest Point of Works site	Rationale for Exclusion
South Dublin Bay SAC (000210)	Approximately 11 km east of the works site	- Designated for estuarine and coastal habitats including Mudflats and Sandflats [1140], Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines [1210], Salicornia and Other Annuals Colonising Mud and Sand [1310] and Embryonic Shifting Dunes [2110]. - No spatial overlap with the SAC. - The works site is located within a highly urbanised environment approximately 11 km from the SAC. - No direct ecological connection with the qualifying habitats of the SAC has been identified. - No plausible source-pathway-receptor linkage exists by which the works site could affect the qualifying interests of the SAC.
North Dublin Bay SAC (000206)	Approximately 16 km northeast of the works site	- Designated for coastal, estuarine and dune habitats, including Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>). - No spatial overlap with the SAC. - No direct hydrological or ecological connection with the works site. - The works site will not affect any habitats supporting the qualifying interests of the SAC. - No plausible pathway exists for significant effects on the SAC.
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)	Approximately 11 km east of the works site	- Designated for wintering and breeding bird species and Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]. - No spatial overlap with the SPA. - No direct ecological connection with the works site. - The highly urbanised nature of the site and separation distance preclude significant disturbance effects on SCI bird species. - No plausible pathway exists for significant effects on the SPA.

Designated Site and code	Proximity of Designated Site to Nearest Point of Works site	Rationale for Exclusion
North Bull Island SPA (004006)	Approximately 16 km northeast of the works site	- Designated for wintering waterbirds, breeding bird species and Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]. - No spatial overlap with the SPA. - No direct ecological connection with the works site. - The works site will not affect habitats supporting the SCI species. - No plausible pathway exists for disturbance, displacement or habitat impacts affecting the SPA.
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (001398)	Approximately 7 km northwest of the works site	- Designated for Petrifying Springs with Tufa Formation [7220], Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) [1014] and Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) [1016]. - No spatial overlap with the SAC. - No direct hydrological connection between the works site and the SAC has been identified. - The works site is separated from the SAC by extensive urban development, transport infrastructure and intervening catchments. - No plausible pathway exists for significant effects on the qualifying interests of the SAC.
Wicklow Mountains SAC (002122)	Approximately 11 km south of the works site	- Designated for upland habitats and Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) [1355]. - No spatial overlap with the SAC. - No hydrological or ecological connection with the works site. - The works site will not affect habitats supporting the qualifying interests of the SAC. - No plausible pathway exists for significant effects on the SAC.
Wicklow Mountains SPA (004040)	Approximately 11 km south of the works site	- Designated for Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A098] and Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) [A103]. - No spatial overlap with the SPA. - No ecological connection with the works site. - The urban location, nature and scale of the Proposed Development preclude disturbance effects on the SCI species. - No plausible pathway exists for significant effects on the SPA.

3.5.2 Natura 2000 Sites outside the likely Zone of Influence

No European sites were identified as being within the likely zone of influence of the works site.

The likelihood/unlikelihood of significant effects from the project to the Natura 2000 sites outlined above was determined based on several indicators including:

- Water quality
- Habitat loss/alteration
- Disturbance and/or displacement of species
- Habitat or species fragmentation

The likelihood of significant in-combination effects is assessed in **Section 3.5.7**.

3.5.3 Water Quality

The works site is located within an established urban environment and does not contain any watercourses or drainage channels within the works site or in close proximity. Surface water runoff from the site is directed to the existing urban drainage network.

Potential impact pathways are limited to the accidental release of sediment, fuels, oils, concrete washings or other construction-related pollutants during excavation, landscaping, drainage and public realm improvement works.

However, no in-stream works, watercourse crossings or direct discharges to any European site are proposed. Excavation works will be localised and temporary in nature and will be confined to existing urban land comprising roads, footpaths, hardstanding and managed amenity areas. Given the scale and nature of the Proposed Development, the absence of any direct hydrological connection to a European site, and the limited potential for pollutant release, significant effects on water quality within any downstream European site are not anticipated.

3.5.4 Habitat Loss and Alteration

The works site is located within a highly urbanised environment and comprises predominantly Buildings and Artificial Surfaces (BL3), with smaller areas of Amenity Grassland (Improved) (GA2) and Scattered Trees and Parkland (WD5). The works site extends across approximately 1.91 ha and comprises public realm enhancement works within an existing urban centre.

No Annex I habitats, Qualifying Interest (QI) habitats or Special Conservation Interest (SCI) habitats associated with any European site occur within the footprint of the works site. The works will be undertaken entirely outside the boundaries of any European site and will not result in the loss, fragmentation or deterioration of any Natura 2000 habitat.

Given the urban location, nature and scale of the works site, there is no potential for direct loss, alteration or fragmentation of Qualifying Interest habitats within the South Dublin Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC, or any other European site. The works will be undertaken entirely outside the boundaries of any European site and will not affect habitats supporting the Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests of these sites. Therefore, significant effects arising from habitat loss, habitat alteration or habitat fragmentation can be excluded.

3.5.5 Disturbance and/or Displacement of Species

The European sites identified in the wider area are designated for a range of habitats, bird species and protected fauna, including otter (*Lutra lutra*) within the Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC and Wicklow Mountains SAC, and numerous waterbird species associated with the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and North Bull Island SPA.

As mentioned in **Section 3.5.4**, there is no potential for disturbance or displacement of Qualifying Interest (QI) or Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species through habitat loss, habitat fragmentation or deterioration in water quality. The Proposed Development is located within a highly urbanised environment comprising existing roads, footpaths, public realm areas, amenity grassland, buildings and associated infrastructure. No European site occurs within or adjacent to the works site.

There is potential for temporary disturbance associated with construction activities, including increased noise, vehicle movements, vibration and human presence. However, these activities will occur within an existing urban environment that is already subject to ongoing residential, commercial, educational and traffic-related activity. The development does not involve works within habitats supporting QI or SCI species, nor will it affect breeding, resting, roosting, nesting, sheltering, commuting or foraging habitats associated with any European site.

While records of otter have been identified within the wider grid square, the works site does not contain suitable otter habitat and no watercourses occur within the footprint of the works site. Similarly, the site does not provide habitat supporting the SCI bird species for which the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA or North Bull Island SPA are designated.

Construction activities will be temporary, localised and limited to an existing urban area. Given the absence of habitat connectivity, the lack of any source-pathway-receptor linkage to European sites, and the nature and scale of the development, significant disturbance or displacement effects on the Qualifying Interests or Special Conservation Interests of any European site are not anticipated.

3.5.6 Habitat or Species Fragmentation

Habitat fragmentation is defined as the reduction and isolation of areas of habitat, resulting in the separation of habitats that were previously more continuous (Franklin et al., 2002; Morrison et al., 2012).

The development will not result in the loss of significant linear habitat features, ecological corridors, watercourses or other habitat linkages that may facilitate the movement of species. No new roads, barriers or other infrastructure that could fragment habitats or impede species movement are proposed.

Ecological connectivity within the wider urban landscape will remain unchanged following completion of the works. Given the highly modified nature of the site, the absence of direct habitat connectivity to any European site, and the limited scale of habitat alteration proposed, there is no potential for habitat or species fragmentation affecting the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of any European site.

Therefore, significant effects arising from habitat or species fragmentation can be excluded.

3.5.7 In-Combination Effects

As well as individual effects, the potential for in-combination effects with other plans and projects has been considered.

Potential impact pathways associated with the works site are limited to temporary construction-related disturbance, including noise, vibration, dust generation, increased vehicle movements and the accidental release of sediment or pollutants during public realm enhancement works. The development comprises enhancement and regeneration works within an existing urban environment and is confined to previously developed land, existing roads, footpaths, public spaces and managed amenity areas.

A review of other plans and projects identified a number of developments within the wider area, including Planning Ref. SD21A/0065, Planning Refs. SDZ22A/0010, SDZ24A/0033W, SDZ25A/0019W and SDZ25X/0001,

together with other residential, community and infrastructure developments within the Clonburris Strategic Development Zone and wider South Dublin area.

The identified developments primarily comprise residential, educational, community and infrastructure projects within an established urban environment. While these developments may generate localised construction and operational effects, no direct ecological or hydrological pathways have been identified linking the works site, either alone or in combination with these projects, to any European site.

Given the nature, scale and location of the works site, the absence of any direct habitat loss within a European site, the absence of any identified source-pathway-receptor linkage to a European site, and the temporary and localised nature of the construction activities, the development will not contribute to cumulative effects on the habitats or species for which any European site is designated.

Accordingly, no plausible source-pathway-receptor linkage has been identified through which the Neilstown District Centre Enhancement could act in combination with other plans or projects to result in likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of any European site. Therefore, it is concluded that the Proposed Development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site

3.6 Conclusion of the Screening Stage

This report for screening for Appropriate Assessment was compiled to assist the consenting authority in carrying out the screening for Appropriate Assessment.

It is concluded, on the basis of objective scientific information, that the works, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, will not give rise to any likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of any European site. This conclusion is based on the absence of any plausible source–pathway–receptor link between the works and the qualifying interests of the identified Natura 2000 sites. Accordingly, Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required. No mitigation measures have been relied upon in reaching this conclusion.

There are 7 No. European sites located within the potential Zone of Influence of the works site. It has been objectively concluded during the screening process that significant effects on the conservation objectives of any of these designated sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are not likely. Therefore, no further assessment is required in relation to these sites. These sites are:

- South Dublin Bay SAC (000210)
- North Dublin Bay SAC (000206)
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (004024)
- North Bull Island SPA (004006)
- Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (001398)
- Wicklow Mountains SAC (002122); and
- Wicklow Mountains SPA (004040).

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Appendix 1

Stages of Appropriate Assessment

Stage 1 - Screening

This is the first stage of the Appropriate Assessment process and that undertaken to determine the likelihood of significant impacts as a result of a proposed project or plan. It determines need for a full Appropriate Assessment.

If it can be concluded that no significant impacts to Natura 2000 Sites are likely, then the assessment can stop here. If not, it must proceed to Stage 2 for furthermore detailed assessment.

Stage 2 - Natura Impact Statement (NIS)

The second stage of the Appropriate Assessment process assesses the impact of the works site (either alone or in combination with other projects or plans) on the integrity of the Natura 2000 Site with respect to the conservation objectives of the site and its ecological structure and function. This is a much more detailed assessment than Stage 1. A Natura Impact Statement containing a professional scientific examination of the works site is required and includes any mitigation measure to avoid, reduce or offset negative impacts.

If the outcome of Stage 2 is negative i.e. adverse impacts to the sites cannot be scientifically ruled out, despite mitigation, the plan or project should proceed to Stage 3 or be abandoned.

Stage 3 - Assessment of alternative solutions

A detailed assessment must be undertaken to determine whether alternative ways of achieving the objective of the project/plan exists.

Where no alternatives exist the project/plan must proceed to Stage 4.

Stage 4 - Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain

The final stage is the main derogation process examining whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project to adversely affect a Natura 2000 Site where no less damaging solution exists.