

Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at  
Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin  
(DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)  
Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment



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## Contents

1	Introduction and Background.....	1
1.1	Background.....	1
1.2	The current project .....	1
2	Methodology.....	2
2.1	Baseline data collection and field visit.....	2
3	Screening for Appropriate Assessment.....	3
3.1	Background.....	3
3.2	Potential zone of influence .....	4
3.3	Study area and surrounding environment.....	4
3.3.1	Site location and European sites.....	4
3.3.2	Other designated areas (other than European sites).....	6
4	Description of the proposed development.....	7
5	Potential impacts from the proposed development, including in-combination effects.....	7
5.1	European sites and habitats with links to European sites.....	7
5.1.1	Potential impacts during construction.....	7
5.1.2	Potential impacts during operation .....	8
5.2	Summary of potential impacts of the proposed development.....	15
6	Other issues .....	15
7	Mitigation specific to European sites .....	15
8	In-combination effects.....	15
9	Screening conclusion .....	16
	Appendix I: Background.....	17
	Stages in the assessment .....	17
	Conservation Objectives of European sites .....	18



# 1 Introduction and Background

## 1.1 Background

The Dublin Urban Rivers LIFE (DURL) project, a collaboration between South Dublin County Council and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, seeks to improve water quality in County Dublin and promote water quality improvement in urban areas in Ireland and across Europe. Domestic misconnections, caused by incorrectly plumbed washing machines and dishwashers discharging to the rainwater drainage network, cause water pollution and reduce the habitat value of rivers and streams. This hinders Ireland's ability to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021. As part of the response to this challenge it is proposed to build integrated constructed wetlands (ICW) at several strategic locations in South County Dublin. South Dublin County Council is the lead authority on the project.

SDCC proposes to develop a total of five ICWs at four sites in the county:

- **Kilnamanagh:** A single site adjacent to a canalised stream – a tributary to the River Camac;
- **Griffen Valley Park, Lucan:** A single site adjacent to the River Griffen;
- **Dodder Valley Park:** Two sites within the park (DR033 and DR035), adjacent to the River Dodder, approximately 400m from each other;
- **Tymon Park/Poddle:** a single site within the existing park.

As part of the current project, the proposed ICWs at Kilnamanagh, Griffen Valley Park and Dodder Valley Park (four separate ICWs in total) are being assessed.

The purpose of the ICWs is to provide an element of treatment for contaminated surface water that currently flows into watercourses in the county (the Camac, the Griffen and the Dodder). It is intended that the ICWs will have several benefits – while water treatment is a priority, the ICWs are also expected to enhance local biodiversity and the amenity value of each site.

Given these objectives it is essential that each ICW proposal is subject to an appropriate level of biodiversity survey and appraisal.

The DURL Project (Agreement number: LIFE17 ENV/IE/000281) has received funding from the European Union.

The report reflects only the author's view and the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

## 1.2 The current project

As part of the overall project South Dublin County Council (SDCC) is seeking permission under Part 8<sup>1</sup> of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2019 (hereafter PDR 2001) for the development of the proposed ICW at Kilnamanagh.

Brady Shipman Martin was appointed by SDCC to undertake a screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment (AA). This will determine the effects, if any, on European sites, of the proposed development. This document constitutes an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report prepared for this purpose.

European sites are also known as Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA), and are designated for nature conservation. The requirements for an Appropriate Assessment are set out under *Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive (92/34/EEC)*, transposed into Irish law through the *European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015* and the *Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)*.

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<sup>1</sup> Provisions with respect to certain development by or on behalf of local authorities

## Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

### Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

A comprehensive desk study review and a site visit were undertaken and the potential impacts on European sites, both as a result of the proposed development and in-combination with other plans and projects, are appraised in this report.

The work was carried out by Senior Ecologist Matthew Hague BSc MSc Adv. Dip. Plan. & Env. Law CEnv MCIEEM. Matthew is a highly experienced and qualified ecologist, with a master's degree in Ecosystem Conservation and Landscape Management. He has over 18 years of experience in ecological and environmental consultancy, across a wide range of sectors. He has prepared numerous reports for AA Screening as well as Natura Impact Statements, for projects of all scales, from small residential developments to nationally important infrastructure projects.

Matthew is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). Matthew has also completed an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law, at King's Inns and is a member of the Irish Environmental Law Association (IELA).

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Baseline data collection and field visit

A desk-based assessment was undertaken between March and October 2020 of the site at Kilnamanagh and the wider area. This focused on habitats and species that are listed as Qualifying Interests (QI) (in the case of SACs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) (in the case of SPAs) in the designations for European sites. Ecological surveys were undertaken at the site, including habitat, invasive species, mammal and day-time bat surveys (i.e. a visual inspection of suitable features during the day-time), by the author on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

Birds present on the site were recorded during the survey and an assessment of habitat suitability for species with links to European sites was undertaken, in order to appraise the potential for *ex-situ* effects on European sites.

This report takes the following guidance documents into account:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities* (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision);
- *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting European sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001);
- *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Guidance issued by the European Commission (21<sup>st</sup> November 2018).

Information was collated from the organisations and websites listed below:

- Data on European sites and rare and protected plant and animal species contained in the following databases:
  - The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht ([www.NPWS.ie](http://www.NPWS.ie));
  - The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NDBC) ([www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie));
  - BirdWatch Ireland ([www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie));
  - Bat Conservation Ireland ([www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org)).

## Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

### Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

- Information on land-use zoning from the online mapping of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (<http://www.myplan.ie/en/index.html>);
- Recent and historical OSi mapping and aerial photography, including [www.geohive.ie](http://www.geohive.ie);
- Photographs taken at the site in 2020;
- Information on local watercourses from [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie);
- Information on water quality in the area ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie));
- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area ([www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie));
- Information on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (Article 17 report) (NPWS, August 2019);
- Third National Biodiversity Plan 2017 – 2021 (Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2017);
- South Dublin Development Plan 2016 – 2022, including the accompanying Appropriate Assessment documentation (Appropriate Assessment Screening Report).

The report has regard to the following legislative instruments:

- Planning and Development, Act 2000, as amended;
- European Commission (EC) Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- European Commission (EC) Birds Directive 2009/147/EC;
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015.

The report takes full account of the design of the proposed development and a detailed examination of all relevant elements of the proposed development was undertaken. This includes the following documents, among others submitted with the Part 8 planning application:

- South Dublin Integrated Constructed Wetlands Kilnamanagh Ecological Baseline Report (Roughan and O'Donovan, September 2020);
- Preliminary Examination (for the Purposes of EIA) in Accordance with Article 120 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 – 2019 (Brady Shipman Martin, October 2020).

Consultations were undertaken by the DURL project team with personnel from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI).

Given the amount of information available, including from South Dublin County Council and the DURL Project team, NPWS and other sources, it has been possible to gather adequate information on the site and the adjacent area (in particular, the European sites), in order to make an informed, sound judgement as to the potential impacts of the proposed development on the qualifying interests of the European sites.

## 3 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

### 3.1 Background

The first part of the Appropriate Assessment process is the Screening phase. Screening identifies the likely effects of the proposed development on European sites that could arise, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and considers whether these impacts are likely to have a significant effect on the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

In accordance with sections 177U and 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the AA screening test must be applied to the proposed development, as follows:

## Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

### Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

- To assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site;
- An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

Following Screening therefore, if there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This means that if the conclusions at the end of the screening exercise are that significant effects on any European sites, as a result of the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely, uncertain or unknown, then an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out. This is in accordance with established precedent and case law.

### 3.2 Potential zone of influence

For the risk of a significant effect to occur there must be a 'source', such as a construction site; a 'receptor', such as a designated site for nature conservation; and a pathway between the source and the receptor, such as a watercourse that links the construction site to the designated site. Although there may be a risk of an impact it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant.

Identification of a potential effect means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the potential effect and the characteristics of the receptor.

There are no set recommended distances for projects to consider European sites as being relevant for assessment. Rather, NPWS (2010) recommends that *'the distance should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects'*. It is often considered appropriate to include all European sites within 15km.

However, in some instances where there are hydrological connections a whole river catchment or a groundwater aquifer may need to be included. Similarly where bird flight paths are involved the impact may be on an SPA more than 15 km away. Taking this into account, as a starting point a search was carried out for all European sites within 15km of the proposed development site. This search was then extended in order to ensure that all European sites with any potential links to the proposed development were accounted for in the study.

### 3.3 Study area and surrounding environment

#### 3.3.1 Site location and European sites

The site proposed for the constructed wetland at Kilnamanagh is located immediately outside (to the south) of the M50 with the R838 Katharine Tynan Road to the west and the R819 Greenhills Road to the east. The Elmcastle Park residential development is on the southern site boundary.

The site is located in the Liffey sub-catchment of the Liffey and Dublin Bay catchment. In the southern/eastern part of the site is a stream<sup>2</sup>, effectively canalised, that eventually discharges to the River Camac, c.2.2km to the north east, via the Robinhood Stream. The area under assessment is one of the few places along its length where this stream is not culverted. The stream is located in an unmanaged triangle of land, c.45m across at its widest point, under a high voltage power line and transmission tower. To the west/north of this triangle is an area of managed grassland used as an amenity area.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

## Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

### Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

The proposed development site contains no features of any ecological significance. Further, the site contains no habitats or species and has no potential to contain any habitats or species that correspond to the Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests of any European site.

The proposed development site location is shown in **Figure 1**.



**Figure 1:** Location of proposed ICW development site (Source: Google Maps. Red line is indicative, refer to accompanying documentation for full details)

There are 9 European sites located within a 15km radius of the proposed development (see **Figure 2**). These are:

- **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**
  - Glenasmole Valley SAC (site code 001209), c.5.3km to the south;
  - Wicklow Mountains SAC (site code 002122), c.7.7km to the south;
  - South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), c.9.9km to the east;
  - Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (site code 001398), c.11.0 to the north west;
  - North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c.13.0km to the north east;
  - Knocksink Wood SAC (site code 000725), c.14.0km to the south east;
- **Special Protection Areas (SPA)**
  - Wicklow Mountains SPA (site code 004040), c.8.3km to the south;
  - South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024), c.9.9km to the east;
  - North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c.13.0km to the north east;

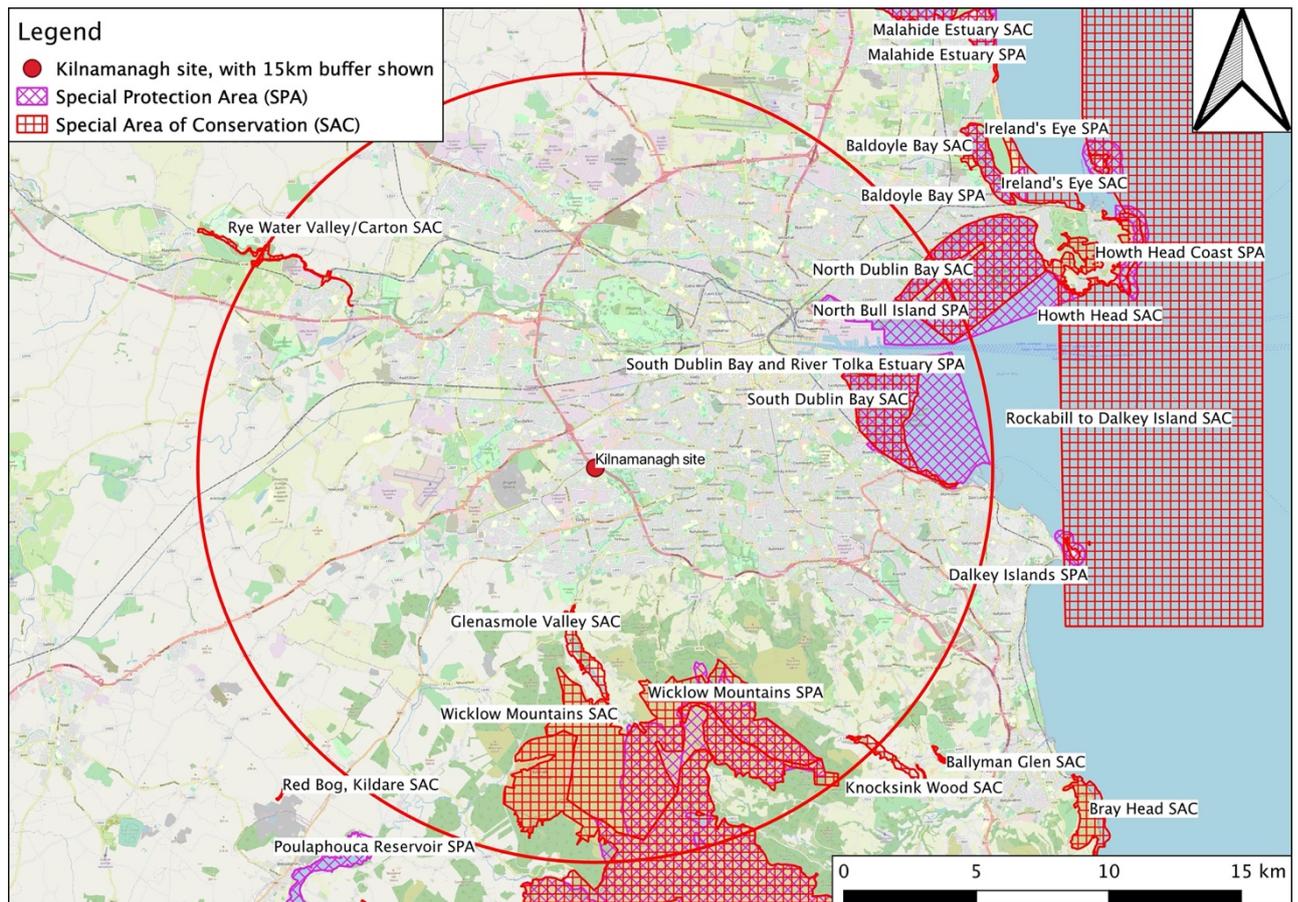
Beyond the 15km zone, there are a number of additional European sites:

- Ballyman Glen SAC (site code 000713), c.16.5km to the south east;

## Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

### Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

- Red Bog, Kildare SAC (site code 000397), c.16.9km to the south west;
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000), c.17.6km to the east;
- Baldoyle Bay SAC (site code 000199), c.18.1km to the north east;
- Howth Head SAC (site code 000202), c.18.6km to the north east;
- Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (site code 004063), c.16.3km to the south west;
- Dalkey Islands SPA (site code 004172), c.17.5km to the south east;
- Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016), c.18.3km to the north east.



**Figure 2:** Study site at Kilnamanagh, showing European sites (Source: OpenStreetMap)

### 3.3.2 Other designated areas (other than European sites)

The nearest site designated for nature conservation, not otherwise designated as a European site, is Dodder Valley proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA site code 000991), approximately 2.3km to the south. The Grand Canal pNHA (site code 002104) is c. 2.8km to the north. Lugmore Glen pNHA (site code 001212) is c.5.1km to the south west. Liffey Valley pNHA (site code 00128) is c.5.4km to the north (and c.2.6km north of the Grand Canal). The Slade of Saggart and Crooksling Glen pNHA (site code 000211) is c.7.4km to the south west. Another site, Fitzsimon's Wood pNHA (site code 001753), is located c.8.8km to the south east.

These are included in this report in order to address their potential to act as supporting sites for the European sites.

## 4 Description of the proposed development

The proposed ICW at Kilnamanagh will improve water quality through the treatment of storm water contaminated with misconnections from domestic dwellings which currently discharge directly into the watercourse. At this location it is proposed to provide a single cell ICW. The works proposed will involve the following:

- Temporary Access Works;
- New Surface Water manhole and flow controller with a 100 to 150mm diameter PVC pipe to the ICW. This will involve the provision of c.32m of pipework in total; with c.16m to the ICW from a new chamber, and c.16m from the ICW to discharge back to the existing stream;
- The development of the ICW will require excavation up to 2.4m deep. Spoil arising will be either removed from site or reused locally to raise the level of the surrounding green area by up to 700mm;
- The total ICW works area will be c.13,000m<sup>2</sup> (during construction);
- The ICW will be a single cell, 2 to 2.4m deep, with a total area of c.1980m<sup>2</sup>, and a treatment area of c.1560m<sup>2</sup>;
- The slope of the ICW banks will be 1:1 and the area will therefore be fenced;
- Following construction of the ICW any temporary works/access areas will be reinstated.

## 5 Potential impacts from the proposed development, including in-combination effects

### 5.1 European sites and habitats with links to European sites

The proposed ICW development site is not under any wildlife or conservation designation. Furthermore, no rare, threatened or legally protected plant species, as listed in the *Irish Red Data Book 1 – Vascular Plants (Curtis & McGough, 1988)*, the *Flora Protection Order, 2015* or the *EU Habitats Directive*, are known to occur within the site.

No features of any ecological significance in the context of European sites are present on the proposed development site. No evidence of any habitat suitable for breeding birds, or protected species such as badger, or rare or protected plants, was recorded during the surveys carried out, and the habitats present are not suitable for such species. No invasive alien plant species listed on the Third Schedule of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015* are known to be present on the site.

Overall the site has no key ecological receptors as defined by the ecological resource valuations presented in the National Roads Authority/Transport Infrastructure Ireland *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes (NRA/TII, 2009 (Rev. 2))*.

No evidence of any habitats or species with links to European sites was recorded during either the field surveys or desk study undertaken in 2020 and no 'reservoir' type habitats (habitats which have the potential to support Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest species in any European site) are present.

#### 5.1.1 Potential impacts during construction

At any development site, site clearance and construction activities pose a potential risk to water, as **surface/ground water** arising at a site may contain contaminants. The main contaminants arising from such activities may include suspended solids, hydrocarbons and concrete/cement products. If not properly managed, such pollutants could pose a temporary risk to surface water quality in the local surface water network during construction.

A potential surface water pathway, via the local surface water drainage network (i.e. the stream, which leads to the River Camac), exists between the proposed ICW development site and coastal European sites associated with

## Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

### Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Dublin Bay (c.10km from the proposed ICW development boundary). There is also a potential groundwater pathway between the proposed development site and the European sites should indirect discharges (i.e. spillages to ground) occur, or should any contamination on the site enter the ground water.

Despite the presence of these theoretical indirect pathways, the risk of contamination of any watercourses or groundwater is extremely low, and even in the event of a pollution incident significant enough to impact upon surface water quality locally, it is reasonable to assume that **this would not be perceptible in the offshore European sites**, for the following reasons:

- The distance to the European sites –the designated sites of Dublin Bay are c.10km distant (straight-line distance to the east) and the only pathway between the proposed development site and these European sites is the small stream that leads to the Camac. Any pollution entering this stream from the construction site would be so diluted as to be entirely undetectable by the time the water enters the Bay;
- The fact that a significant level of dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur in any event. Upon reaching the estuary any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters;
- In addition, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development;
- There is no conceivable pathway between the proposed ICW site at this location and any other European sites, the nearest of which – Glenasmole Valley – is, in any case, over 5km distant

There is no possibility of any other potential direct, indirect or secondary impacts on any European site during the construction phase. For example there will be no land-take from any European site and there will be no resource requirements such as water abstraction. Similarly there will be no emissions to air from construction vehicles that could remotely impact any European site. Dust, noise and vibration arising during construction will similarly be entirely remote from any European site.

There will be no loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance or other change to any element of any European site as a result of the construction of the proposed development, and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

Construction-related impacts as a result of the proposed development, on European sites or otherwise, can therefore be excluded.

### 5.1.2 Potential impacts during operation

The integrated constructed wetland, once operational, will improve the quality of surface water entering the Camac river system.

There will be no operational impacts related to surface water management, flooding, or foul water management, on European sites or otherwise, as a result of the proposed development.

There is no possibility of any other potential direct, indirect or secondary impacts on any European site once the proposed ICW development is operational. There will be no loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance or other change to any element of any European site as a result of the operation of the proposed development, and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

Operation-related impacts as a result of the proposed development, on European sites or otherwise, can therefore be excluded.

Full details of the potential impacts of the proposed development on European sites are presented in **Table 1**.

Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Table 1 lists relevant European sites and outlines their Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests and Conservation Objectives\*

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2020) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
<p>Glenasmole Valley SAC (site code 001209), c.5.3km to the south</p>	<p>6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)                      6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)                      7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)</p> <p>According to this SAC’s site Generic Conservation Objectives document (Version 7, dated 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed ICW development site at Kilnamanagh and this SAC. It is over 5km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>
<p>Wicklow Mountains SAC (site code 002122), c.7.7km to the south</p>	<p>3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae)                      3160 Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds                      4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i>                      4030 European dry heaths                      4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths                      6130 Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae                      6230 Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)                      7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog)                      8110 Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)                      8210 Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation                      8220 Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation                      91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles                      1355 <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter)</p> <p>According to this SAC’s site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed ICW development site at Kilnamanagh and this SAC. It is almost 8km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>



Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2020) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
	conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) for which the SAC has been selected.	
South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), c.9.9km to the east	<p>1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</p> <p>The following habitats are listed as Qualifying Interests on the NPWS website, but are not included in the Conservation Objectives document:</p> <p>(1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes)</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2013), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>No significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's QIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the site clearance, construction and operation of the proposed ICW development at the Kilnamanagh site could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, eventually, to Dublin Bay.</p> <p>There would be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, as described in Section 5.1. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality locally, this would not be perceptible in South Dublin Bay SAC.</p> <p>This is due to the significant separation between the proposed development site and the European site – the proposed development site is almost 10km (straight line distance) from the SAC and any pollution arising during development would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters Dublin Bay. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur. Upon reaching the bay any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters which are classified as unpolluted according to the EPA database of coastal water quality. Furthermore, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development.</p> <p>There will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p>In addition, no operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development, which will in fact result in improved water quality downstream of the site.</p>
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (site code 001398), c.11km to the north west	<p>7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* 1016 Desmoulin's Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) 1014 Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>)</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Generic Conservation Objectives document (Version 7, dated 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed ICW development site at Kilnamanagh and this SAC. It is approximately 11km distant and is completely unconnected.</p> <p>Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>

Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2020) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
	<p>habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	
<p>North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c.13km to the north east</p>	<p>1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide                      1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines                      1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand                      1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)                      1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)                      2110 Embryonic shifting dunes                      2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes)                      2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*                      2190 Humid dune slacks                      1395 Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>)</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 06<sup>th</sup> November 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>No significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's QIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the site clearance, construction and operation of the proposed ICW development at the Kilnamanagh site could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, eventually, to Dublin Bay.</p> <p>There would be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, as described in Section 5.1. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality locally, this would not be perceptible in North Dublin Bay SAC.</p> <p>This is due to the significant separation between the proposed development site and the European site – the proposed development site is over 13km (straight line distance) from the SAC and any pollution arising during development would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters Dublin Bay. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur. Upon reaching the bay any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters which are classified as unpolluted according to the EPA database of coastal water quality. Furthermore, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development.</p> <p>There will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p>In addition, no operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development, which will in fact result in improved water quality downstream of the site.</p>
<p>Knocksink Wood SAC (site code 000725), c.14km to the south east</p>	<p>7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)*                      91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i>, <i>Alnion incanae</i>, <i>Salicion albae</i>)*</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed ICW development site at Kilnamanagh and this SAC. It is approximately 14km distant and is completely unconnected.</p>



Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2020) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
	<p>According to this SAC's site Generic Conservation Objectives document (Version 7, dated 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>
<p>Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000), c.17.6km to the east</p>	<p>1170 Reefs 1351 Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>)</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 07<sup>th</sup> May 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat and the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>No significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's QIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the site clearance, construction and operation of the proposed ICW development at the Kilnamanagh site could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, eventually, to Dublin Bay.</p> <p>There would be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, as described in Section 5.1. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality locally, this would not be perceptible in Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC.</p> <p>This is due to the significant separation between the proposed development site and the European site – the proposed development site is almost 18km (straight line distance) from the SAC and any pollution arising during development would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters Dublin Bay. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur. Upon reaching the bay any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters which are classified as unpolluted according to the EPA database of coastal water quality. Furthermore, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development.</p> <p>There will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p>In addition, no operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development, which will in fact result in improved water quality downstream of the site.</p>



## Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

### Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2020) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
Wicklow Mountains SPA (site code 004040), c.8.3km to the south	<p>A098 Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) A103 Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)</p> <p>According to this SPA's site Generic Conservation Objectives document (Version 7, dated 7<sup>th</sup> April 2020), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objectives are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the species for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed ICW development site at Kilnamanagh and this SPA. It is over 8km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024), c.9.9km to the east	<p>A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) Wetlands</p> <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>No significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's SCIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the site clearance, construction and operation of the proposed ICW development at the Kilnamanagh site could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, eventually, to Dublin Bay.</p> <p>There would be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, as described in Section 5.1. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality locally, this would not be perceptible in South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA.</p> <p>This is due to the significant separation between the proposed development site and the European site – the proposed development site is almost 10km (straight line distance) from the SPA and any pollution arising during development would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters Dublin Bay. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur. Upon reaching the bay any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters which are classified as unpolluted according to the EPA database of coastal water quality. Furthermore, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development.</p> <p>There will be no loss of wetland habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p>In addition, no operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development, which will in fact result in improved water quality downstream of the site.</p>
North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c.13km to the north east	<p>A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)</p>	<p>No significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's SCIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the site clearance, construction and operation of the proposed ICW development at the Kilnamanagh site could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons</p>

Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnarnagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2020) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
	<p>A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)                      A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)                      A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)                      A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)                      A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)                      A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>)                      A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)                      A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)                      A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>)                      A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)                      A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)                      A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>)                      A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)                      A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)                      Wetlands</p> <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, eventually, to Dublin Bay.</p> <p>There would be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, as described in Section 5.1. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality locally, this would not be perceptible in North Bull Island SPA.</p> <p>This is due to the significant separation between the proposed development site and the European site – the proposed development site is approximately 13km (straight line distance) from the SPA and any pollution arising during development would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters Dublin Bay. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur. Upon reaching the bay any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters which are classified as unpolluted according to the EPA database of coastal water quality. Furthermore, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development.</p> <p>There will be no loss of wetland habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the proposed development.</p> <p>In addition, no operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development, which will in fact result in improved water quality downstream of the site.</p>

\*For completeness, this table includes all European designated sites within 15km of the proposed ICW site. It also includes Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, which is also, theoretically, within the potential Zone of Influence of the proposed ICW development. However, as confirmed in Section 5.1, only the European sites associated with Dublin Bay are linked in any way to the proposed development site. None of the other listed sites, and no sites further afield, are remotely linked to the proposed development site, by virtue of distance, lack of a pathway and the reasons for their designation.



## 5.2 Summary of potential impacts of the proposed development

There will be no loss of any habitat or species listed as a QI or SCI of any designated site as a consequence of the proposed ICW development. There is, therefore, no potential for the effects of habitat loss or fragmentation to occur.

There will also be no significant effects on any European sites as a result of:

- Land-take;
- Resource requirements such as water abstraction;
- Impacts to habitat structure;
- Mortality to species (such as roadkill);
- Noise pollution/vibration impacts;
- Light pollution;
- Air pollution.

## 6 Other issues

No invasive plant species (*i.e.* those species listed on Schedule 3 of the *Birds and Habitats Regulations, 2011-2015*, such as Japanese knotweed or giant hogweed) were identified on site.

Additionally, and for the reasons outlined in this report for the European sites, no impacts on any other designated sites including proposed Natural Heritage Areas, will occur.

## 7 Mitigation specific to European sites

In relation to European sites, there will be no impacts as a result of the proposed development. Therefore no mitigation is necessary or proposed for the protection of European sites or which was intended to avoid or reduce impacts on any European sites. Accordingly, this screening assessment is consistent with the judgment of the European Court in Case C-323/17, *People Over Wind & Sweetman v Coillte* (Judgment of the Court (Seventh Chamber) of 12 April 2018) and the recent case-law of the High Court, including *Heather Hill Management Company CLG v An Bord Pleanála* [2019] IEHC 450 and *Sweetman v An Bord Pleanála* [2020] IEHC 39.

## 8 In-combination effects

It is a requirement of Part XAB of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* that when considering whether a plan or project will have a significant effect on a European site the assessment must take into account in-combination effects with other current or reasonably foreseeable plans and projects. If there are identified effects arising from the plan or project even if they are perceived as minor and not likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European site alone, then these effects must be considered 'in-combination' with the effects arising from other plans and projects.

There are no developments proposed within the immediate vicinity of the site that would, in combination with the development under appraisal in this report, give rise to significant effects.

The South Dublin County Development Plan 2017-2023 has a series of objectives intended to protect and enhance the natural environment. For example the CDP includes policies for the protection of the county's flood plains, to prevent development in flood plains without satisfying the appropriate justification test and to require the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.

## Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

### Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

The proposed development will not impact on the flow of water through the area, nor increase potential flood impacts. It is in compliance with all of the relevant County Development Plan objectives. In fact, the proposed development will directly contribute to the improvement water quality in the wider area and downstream in the receiving waters. There are no developments that could act in-combination with any potential effects of the proposed ICW development to give rise to significant effects.

## 9 Screening conclusion

Following review of the characteristics of the proposed ICW development against the Conservation Objectives of the relevant European sites, it is concluded that there is no possibility that the proposed development could result in any likely significant effects on European sites on its own or in combination with other plans and projects. This assessment was reached without considering or taking into account mitigation measures or measures intended to avoid or reduce any impact on European sites.

In view of best scientific knowledge therefore, this report concludes that the proposed ICW development at Kilnamanagh, individually or in combination with another plan or project, is not likely to have a significant effect on European sites under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in light of their conservation objectives. The proposed development does not require Appropriate Assessment.

## Appendix I: Background

The European<sup>3</sup> network is a Europe-wide network of ecologically important sites (SPAs and cSACs – also known as ‘European Sites’ or ‘Natura 2000 sites’) that have been designated for protection under either the EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) or the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna).

The main aim of the Habitats Directive is “to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States to which the treaty applies”. Any actions taken must be designed to “maintain or restore, at a favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest”. Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, an assessment is required where a plan or project may give rise to significant effects upon a European site.

In addition, it is a matter of law that candidate SACs (cSACs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCI) are considered in this process;

Article 6 (paragraphs (3) and (4)) of the Habitats Directive states that:

(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

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

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest”

The requirements of the Habitats Directive are transposed into Irish law by means of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015* (hereafter referred to as the *Birds and Habitats Regulations*) and by the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended.

In Ireland, the statutory agency responsible for the designated areas is NPWS.

### Stages in the assessment

European Commission guidance (2001)<sup>4</sup> sets out the principles on how to undertake decision making in applying the Habitats Directive. The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise four distinct stages:

**Stage 1: Screening** is the process which initially identifies the likely significant effects upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts may be significant. It is important to note that the burden of evidence is to show, on the basis of objective information, that there will be no significant effect; if the effect may be significant, or is not known, that would trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment. There is European Court of Justice case law to the

<sup>3</sup> The EU Habitats Directive, Article 3.1, states “A Coherent European ecological network of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC shall be set up under the title European”

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2001) *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting European Sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*

## Proposed Integrated Constructed Wetland at Kilnamanagh, South County Dublin (DURL\_Project #Life17 ENV/IE/000281)

### Information for Screening for Appropriate Assessment

effect that unless the likelihood of a significant effect can be ruled out on the basis of objective information, then an Appropriate Assessment must be made.

**Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment** is the detailed consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's conservation objectives and its structure and function. This is to determine with scientific certainty whether or not there will be adverse effects on the integrity of the site in light of its conservation objectives. This stage also includes the development of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any possible impacts.

**Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions** is the process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that would avoid impacts on the integrity of the European site, should avoidance or mitigation measures be unable to cancel out adverse effects.

**Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.** At Stage 4 an assessment is made with regard to whether or not the development is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) and, if so, of the compensatory measures needed to maintain the overall coherence of the European network.

## Conservation Objectives of European sites

The conservation objectives for a European Site are intended to represent the aims of the Habitats and Birds Directives in relation to that site. To this end, habitats and species of European Community importance should be maintained or restored to 'favourable conservation status' (FCS), as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive below:

The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- Its natural range and the area 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;
- Conservation status of typical species is favourable as defined in Article 1(i).

The conservation status of a species will be taken as favourable 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.

Guidance from the European Commission<sup>5</sup> indicates that the Habitats Directive intends FCS to be applied at the level of an individual site, as well as to habitats and species across their European range. Therefore, in order to properly express the aims of the Habitats Directive for an individual site, the conservation objectives for a site are essentially to maintain (or restore) the habitats and species of the site at (or to) FCS.

The European Commission guidance recommends that screening should fulfil the following steps:

1. Determine whether the plan (or policy) is directly connected with or necessary for the management of European sites;
2. Describe the plan and describe and characterise any other plans or projects which, in combination, have the potential for having significant effects on European sites;
3. Identify the potential effects on European sites;

Assess the likely significance of any effects on European sites.

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<sup>5</sup> Managing European sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission 2000)

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