Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

for the proposed

Synthetic Grass Sports Pitches at Belgard Community Centre, Tallaght, Dublin 24

in accordance with the requirements of

Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive

for: **South Dublin County Council**

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

CAAS Ltd. has been appointed by South Dublin County Council to examine planning and ecological considerations the proposed sports pitches at Belgard Community centre (the proposed development). This Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report (also known as *Stage One* AA) has been prepared to assess whether or not a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) (also known as *Stage Two* AA) is required for the proposed development. AA is a procedure carried out in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the "Habitats Directive").

1.2. Report Structure

This report sets out the legislative context for the assessment process with reference to relevant guidelines and highlight the experience and qualifications of the author (See Appendix IV for author qualifications). It then details the proposed development and the works associated with this which are then interrogated to identify any possible effects which may be ecologically relevant for European sites. Following this, the metrics for the assessment of 'significance' of these effects are explained and applied to each of the European sites with ecological connectivity to the proposed development area. This assessment is undertaken in view of the conservation objectives and known sensitivities of the qualifying interests and special conservation interests for each European site. Other plans and projects aFre then considered to identify any likely in combination effects which may result in significant adverse effects to European sites.

1.3. Legislative Context

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the "favourable conservation status" of habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Habitats Directive as above and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds) with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable among them. These two designations are collectively known and referred to as European sites. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect such sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA. These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive States:

> *'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent*

national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public'.

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

Article 3(1) of the Habitats Directive States:

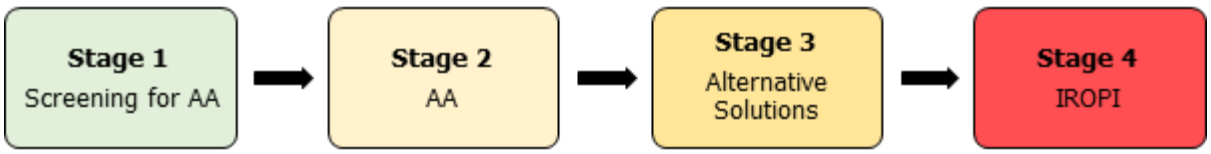
'A coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation shall be set up under the title Natura 2000. This network, composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, shall enable the natural habitat types and the species'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

AA is an assessment of the likely significant effects arising from a plan or project, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, to assess if the plan or project will adversely affect any European site concerned including implications in view of the European site's conservation objectives. These sites consist of SACs and SPAs and provide for the protection and long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats. Where a formal consent process applies, the AA process is concluded by the relevant competent authority making a determination in accordance with article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

1.4. Overview of the Habitats Directive and Appropriate Assessment Process

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

There are four main stages in the AA process:



Stage One: Screening
The process that identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

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

Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions
The process that examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site.

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain
An assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

1.5. Approach

This AA screening is based on best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature and 'grey' literature was conducted. This included a detailed review of the National Parks and Wildlife Website including mapping and available reports for relevant sites and in particular sensitive qualifying interests/special conservation interests described and their conservation objectives. The EPA Envision map viewer (www.epa.ie) and available reports were also reviewed, as was the NPWS (2019) publication "The Status of Protected EU Habitats and Species in Ireland".

The ecological desktop study that has been completed for the AA screening of the proposed project, comprised the following elements:

- Identification of European sites within 15km[1] of the subject lands;
- Identification of European sites within 15km of the site with identification of potential pathways to specific sites (if relevant[2]) greater than 15km from the subject lands;

[1] While the actual zone of impact is likely to be much smaller, the default 15km zone extent has been applied on a precautionary basis
[2] This is particularly relevant for all sites with hydrological connectivity

- Review of the NPWS site synopses and conservation objectives for European sites within 15km and for which potential pathways from the proposed site have been identified; and
- Examination of available information on protected species.

Source-Pathway Receptor Model

Ecological impact assessment of potential effects on European sites is conducted following a standard source-pathway-receptor model, where, in order for an effect to be established, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect is not of any relevance or significance.

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

In the context of this report, a receptor is an ecological feature that is known to be utilised by the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of a European site. A source is any identifiable element of the proposed development that is known to interact with ecological processes. A pathway is any connection or link between the source and the receptor[3].

This report provides information on whether direct, indirect and cumulative adverse effects could arise from the proposed development.

Guidance

The AA screening has been prepared taking into account legislation including the aforementioned legislation and guidance including the following:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009;*
- *Commission Notice: Managing Natura 2000 sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC", European Commission 2018;*
- *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC", European Commission Environment DG, 2002;*
- *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC", European Commission, 2000; and*
- *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021.*

[3] qualifying interest or special conservation interests of the European site in question and the known sesnitivities of these key ecological receptors

2. Description of proposed development

2.1. Receiving Environment Overview

The Belgard Community centre is an existing building with associated amenity grassland surrounding it. It is in a dense subburban area with extensive areas of buildings and hard surfaced areas. There are a series of agricultural landholdings and golf club areas etc to the north of the site (over 300m) and about 800m to the north west there is a large quarry facility.

2.2. Overview of the proposed development

The proposed development involves the construction of 3 synthetic grass (all-weather) sports pitches beside the existing Community Centre in Belgard, Tallaght, located in South West Dublin. The entrance to the site is located on the Old Belgard Road. The total area of the site is 0.945 ha.

In addition to the 3 all-weather sports pitches, the proposed development includes installation of sports pitch lighting, fencing and walkways.

2.3. Project details

The proposed development comprises:

- The construction of 3 synthetic grass '4G[4]' all-weather sports pitches.
- A weld-mesh type fence to surround the pitches with an additional ball stop fence and netting.
- 4 floodlighting columns to allow evening use.
- Installation of CCTV Cameras for monitoring by An Garda Siochána and South Dublin County Council.
- All necessary landscaping works including storage areas, footpaths and planting.
- All ancillary works.

The total proposed site area is approx. 0.945 ha.

[4] 4th generation synthetic pitch surface ~ synthetic grass without a need for rubber crumb

Figure 1 Site location map
Source: Google maps, the perimeter of the site is approximate

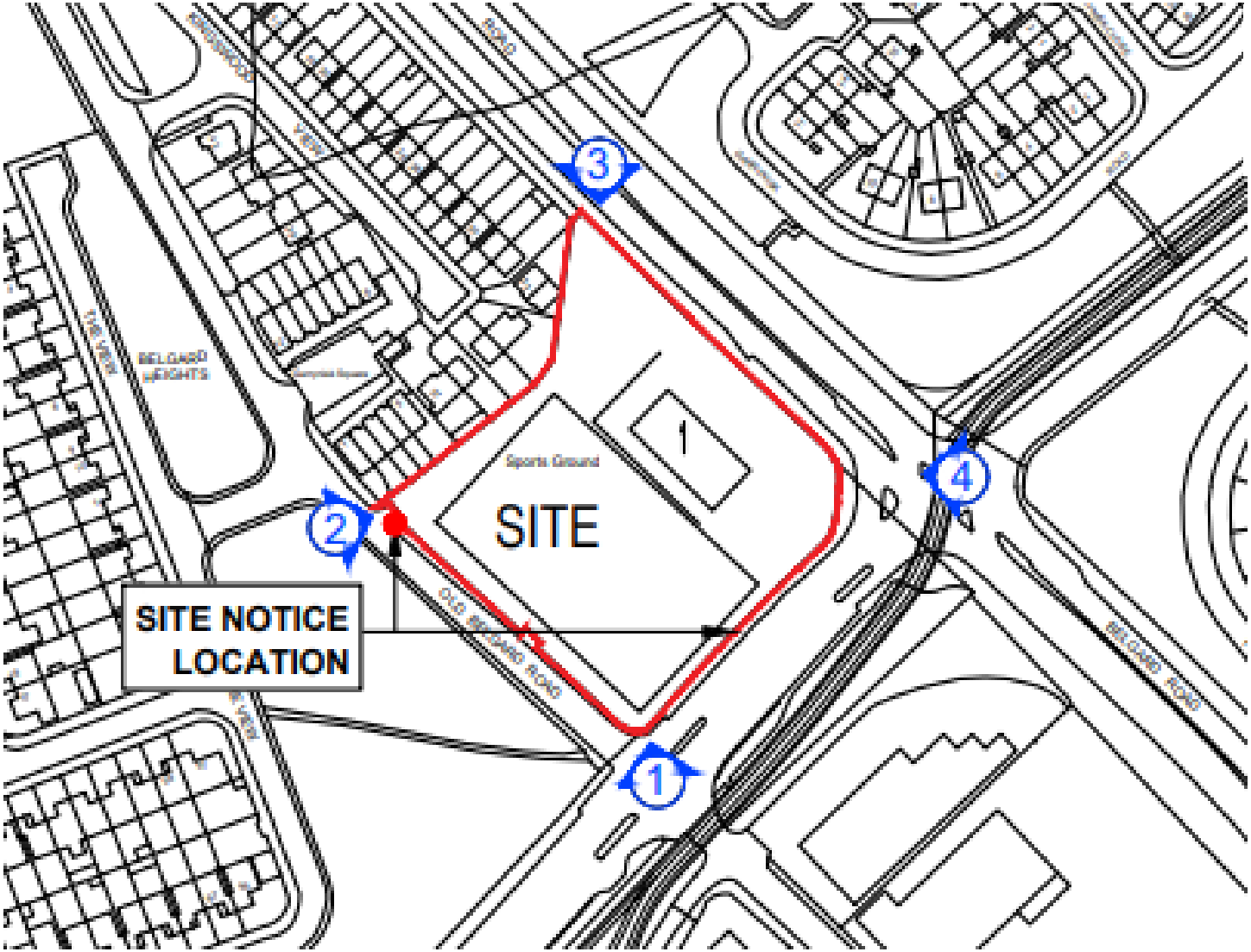


Figure 2 Site environs map
Source: SDCC project drawings

Note
The blue numbers correspond to location of views included as figure 5

Figure 3 Ariel view of site and environs
Source: SDCC project drawings

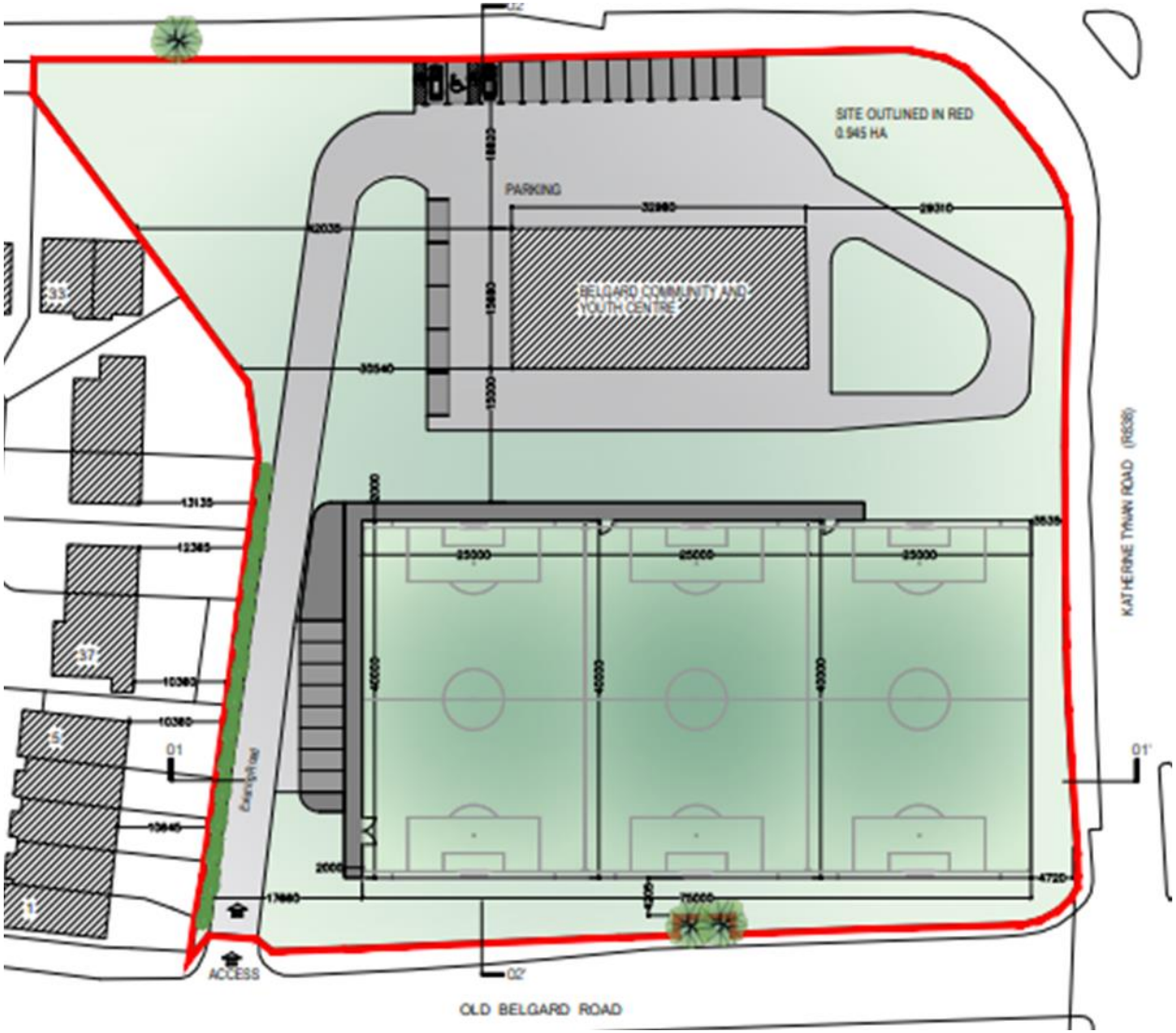


Figure 4 Overview of proposed development
Source: SDCC project drawings

Figure 5 Site context images
Source: SDCC project drawings

3. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1. Introduction

This stage of the process identifies any likely significant effects on European sites from the project, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. A series of questions are asked in order to determine:

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

An important element of the AA process is the identification of the "'Conservation Objectives", "Qualifying Interests" (QIs) and/ or "Special Conservation Interests" (SCIs) of European sites requiring assessment. QIs are the habitat features and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive for which each European site has been designated and afforded protection. SCIs are wetland habitats and bird species listed within Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive. It is also vital that the threats to the ecological / environmental conditions that are required to support QIs and SCIs are considered as part of the assessment.

Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) have been designed to define favourable conservation status for a particular habitat or species at that site. According to the European Commission interpretation document 'Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC', paragraph 4.6(3):

> *"The integrity of a site involves its ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the site's conservation objectives."*

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range, and 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; and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved 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; and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

3.2. Identification of relevant European sites

This section of the screening process describes the European sites which exist within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the site. An assessment of the sources of effects (see Section 3.3 below) identified

that effects from the proposed development are likely to be localised – in the absence of hydrological pathways. The Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009) Guidance on AA recommends a 15km zone to be considered.

There are two key considerations when identifying ecological pathways - the first is the distance from which potential sources for effects can radiate and the second is the potential for sensitive receptors (QIs/SCIs) to interact with the zone of influence. It is understood that sites designated for vagile species are known to utilise isolated resources across the landscape could intersect with the localised zone of influence; however, beyond 15km potential effects to such species at this scale are not identified to be significant due to the broad home range available to these species and the availability of alternate resources. Therefore, on a precautionary basis the radius of 2km has been adopted for this AA - however, further considerations were given to hydrological pathways from the proposed development.

European sites identified to have ecological connectivity pathways for potential effects from the proposed development are listed in Table 3.1 and illustrated in Figure 3.1 below. Details on the specific QIs and SCIs of each European site are also identified in the Appendix, as well as site-specific threats and vulnerabilities of each of the sites.

In order to determine the potential effects of the proposal, information on the qualifying features, known vulnerabilities and threats to site integrity pertaining to any potentially affected European sites has been reviewed. Background information on threats to individual sites and vulnerability of habitats and species that was used during this assessment included the following:

- Ireland's Article 17 Report to the European Commission *"Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland"* (NPWS, 2019);
- Ireland's Article 12 Report to the European Commission *"Bird species' status and trends reporting format for the period 2008-2012-"* (NPWS, 2012)
- Site Synopses[5]; and
- NATURA 2000 Standard Data Forms[6].

The assessment considers the SSCOs of each of the sites within the ZOI. Since the conservation objectives for the European sites focus on maintaining the favourable conservation condition of the QIs/SCIs of each site, the screening process has concentrated on assessing the potential effects of the proposed development against the QIs/SCIs of each site. The conservation objectives for each site have been taken into account throughout the assessment process.

[5] NPWS (2019); NPWS Database of protected site data and associated documents for each European site; available at https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites: last accessed 21st October 2021

[6] NPWS (2019); NPWS Database of protected site data and associated documents for each European site; available at https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites: last accessed 21st October 2021

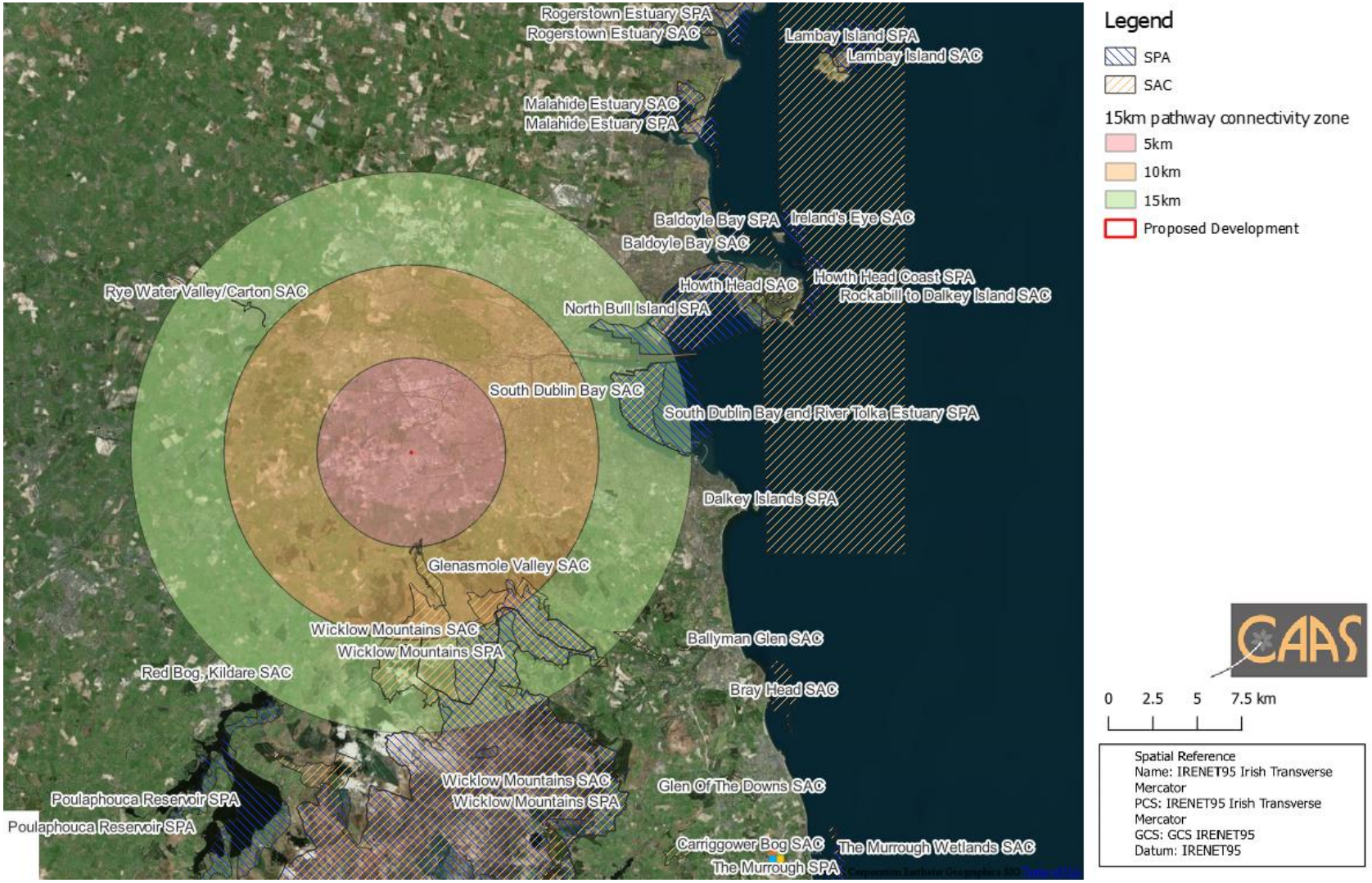


Figure 3.1 European sites within 15km of the proposed development boundary[7]

[7] Source: NPWS (datasets downloaded 21st October 2021)

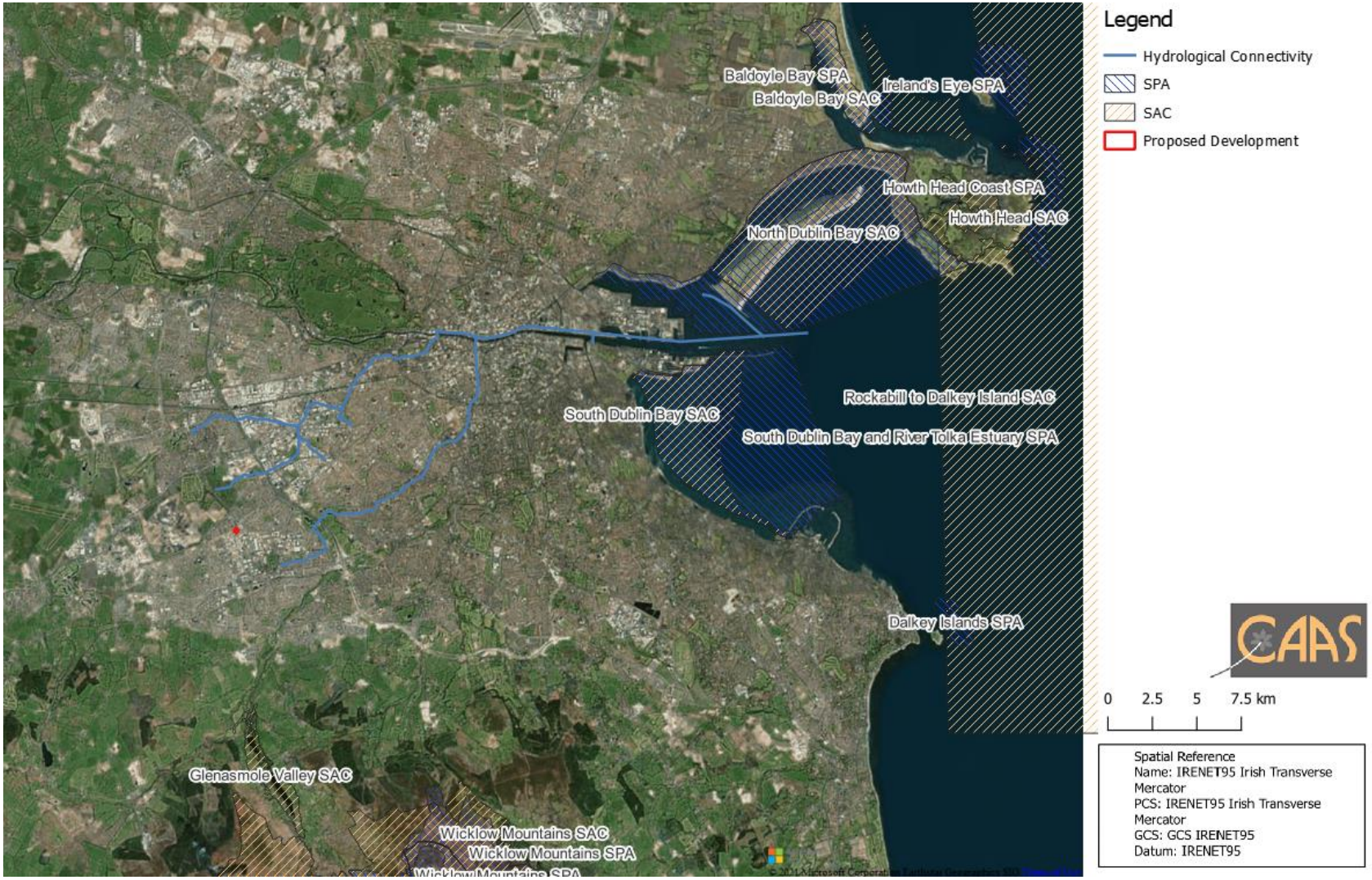


Figure 3.1 Hydrological connectivity to European sites beyond 15km of the proposed development boundary[8]

[8] Source: NPWS Protected Sites and EPA River Routes (datasets downloaded 21st October 2021)

3.3. Assessment criteria

3.3.1. Is the development necessary to the management of European sites?

Under the Habitats Directive, projects that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site do not require AA. For this exception to apply, management is required to be interpreted narrowly as nature conservation management in the sense of Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive. This refers to specific measures to address the ecological requirements of annexed habitats and species (and their habitats) present on a site(s). The relationship should be shown to be direct and not a by-product of the project, even if this might result in positive or beneficial effects for a site(s).

The primary purpose of the proposed development is not the nature conservation management of the sites, but to provide for sports facilities. Therefore, the proposed development would not be considered by the Habitats Directive to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

3.3.2. Elements of the proposed development with potential to give rise to effects

This screening assessment process identifies whether the changes brought about by the proposal are likely to cause any direct, indirect or secondary effects (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the European sites. During this assessment a number of factors have been taken into account including the sites' conservation objectives and known threats. The overall aim of the assessment is to predict the consequences that can be reasonably foreseen by implementation of the proposed development.

For the purposes of this assessment the proposed development is identified to have potential to have only construction phase effects (in relation to Europeans sites). The operational phase of the project will be consistent with the existing site use and is anticipated to have low levels of use; the only operational phase effect identified is additional light pollution however, given the site conext and distances to European sites these are not considered to have pathways for effects. The operational phase of the sports pitches will be consistent with existing site use; therefore, there are no additional sources for potential effects to European sites. The construction phase elements of the project also introduce potential sources for effects to ecological processes such as:

- Disturbance effects through noise;
- Earthworks (removal of vegetation etc.);
- Dust; and
- Surface water run-off.

The construction phase will be small-scale and temporary. The construction phase effects identified are considered in the context of European sites identified above, their sensitivities and conservation objectives.

3.3.3. Identification of potential effects and screening of sites

This section documents the final stage of the screening process. It has used the information collected on the sensitivity of each European site and describes any potential effects on European sites resulting from the proposed development. This assumes the absence of any controls,

conditions, or mitigation measures. In determining the potential for effects, a number of factors have been taken into account. Firstly, the sensitivity and reported threats to European sites. Secondly, the individual elements of the proposed development and the potential effects they may cause on the sites were considered. The elements of the proposed development with potential to affect European sites are presented in Table 3.1.

Sites are screened out based on one or a combination of the following criteria:

- where it can be shown that there are no significant pathways such as hydrological links between activities of the proposed development and a site;
- where a site is located at such a distance from proposed development area that effects are not foreseen; and
- where known threats or vulnerabilities of a site cannot be linked to potential impacts that may arise from the proposed development.

3.4. Characterising potential significant effects

This section of the report explains the metrics used when assessing if the potential effects (previously identified) will have significant implications for European sites. The following parameters are described when characterising impacts (following guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Environmental Protection Agency and National Roads Authority):

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

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines for ecological impact assessment (2016) define: an ecologically significant impact as an impact (negative or positive) on the integrity of a defined site or ecosystem and/or the conservation status of habitats or species within a given geographic area; and the integrity of a site as the coherence of its ecological

structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified.

The Habitats Directive requires the focus of the assessment at this stage to be on the integrity of the site as indicated by its Conservation Objectives. It is an aim of NPWS to draw up conservation management plans for all areas designated for nature conservation. These plans will, among other things, set clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest within a site.

SSCOs have been prepared for a number of European sites. These detailed SSCOs aim to define favourable conservation condition for the qualifying habitats and species at that site by setting targets for appropriate attributes which define the character habitat. The maintenance of the favourable condition for these habitats and species at the site level will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

> **Favourable conservation status** of a **species** can be described as being achieved when: '*population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.*'
>
> **Favourable conservation status** of a **habitat** can be described as being achieved when: '*its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable*'.

A Generic Conservation Objective for a SAC is provided below:

- 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.

A Generic Conservation Objective for a SPA is provided below:

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

3.4.1. Types of potential Effects

EC guidance[9] outlines the types of effects that may affect European sites. These include effects from the following activities:

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

[9] Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Commission Environment DG, 2001

- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

The 2001 European Commission AA guidance outlines the following potential changes that may occur at a designated site, which may result in effects on the integrity and function of that site:

- Reduction of habitat area
- Disturbance to key species
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Reduction in species density
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)
- Climate change

The elements detailed above were considered with specific reference to each of the European sites identified in Table 3.1 but are also considered in a broader sense below.

Loss/reduction of habitat area

There are no European sites present within the redline boundary and the closest European site is 4.58 km away. Similarly, there were no Annex I habitats or supporting habitat for Annex II species identified on site. Therefore, there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect.

Habitat or species fragmentation

The site is an amenity grassland area with an existing mowing regime. Given the open nature of the site and the highly urbanised receiving environment this has very low ecological value. The alterations to the habitat will result in the amenity grassland being replaces by sports pitches. The area has been considered at a landscape scale with respect to connectivity and ecological corridors between European sites; there are no functional pathways that will be interupted by the proposed development. Furthermore, there are no direct surface hydrological connectins to any European sites as the site is serviced by existing drainage networks. Therefore, there are no ecological corridors connecting any of the European sites identified above. Similarly, there were no Annex I habitats or supporting habitat for Annex II species identified on site. Therefore, there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect.

Disturbance to key species

None of the species and/or habitats identified in Table 3.1 were recorded on site. The nearest European site is 4.58 km away from the proposed site and therefore disturbance effects due to noise or lighting etc. are not present. Given the urban setting and the availability of alternate resources in the area – as well as the temporary small-scale nature of the development – there are no significant effects related to ex-situe foraging identified.

Reduction in species density

There are no ecological corridors between the site and any European site. Similarly, there are no habitats identified on site of any ecological significance. As there is no supporting habitat and/or connectivity between the proposed development and any European site, there will be no reduction in species density of any of the QI or SCI species.

Changes of indicators of conservation value

The site is 4.58 km from the closest European site, the proposed development is Given the nature of the proposed work, the scale and the localised and temporary nature of the potential effects with negligible effects identified. There are no direct hydrological linkages identified between the site and any European site. The works relate to the to provide for sports facilities and there are there are no ecological pathways for effects beyond construction related dust and noise effects; however, the construction phase is is temporary and small in scale between European sites and the proposed development. Therefore, there are no sources for effects with pathways that will affect any conservation indicators related to European sites.

Climate change

The proposed works will not result in any greenhouse gas emissions to air during the operational phase. The construction phase works will have increased temporary emissions which will be localised however, given the distance to the nearest European site these are determined to be negligible. Such effects upon greenhouse gas emissions will not affect changes projected to arise from climate change to the degree that it would affect the QIs or SCIs of the European sites considered.

Table 3.1 Screening assessment of the potential effects arising from the proposed development

Site Code	Site Name	Distance	Qualifying Feature	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects
001209	Glenasmole Valley SAC	4.58	Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils *(Molinion caeruleae)* [6410], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco-Brometalia)* * important orchid sites [6210]	There are no Annex I habitats or supporting habitats for Annex II species within the proposed development area. There are no pathways for effects from the site to the SAC. Furthermore, the operational phase is consistent with the existing land use and the construction phase will be small scale temporary. Therefore, there are no potential effects to this European site identified.	No	No
002122	Wicklow Mountains SAC	6.92	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels *(Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)* [8110], Otter *(Lutra lutra)* [1355], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010], Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220], Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas - and submountain areas in Continental Europe [6230], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], European dry heaths [4030], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210], Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains *(Littorelletalia uniflorae)* [3110], Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae [6130]	There are no Annex I habitats or supporting habitats for Annex II species within the proposed development area. There are no pathways for effects from the site to the SAC. Furthermore, the operational phase is consistent with the existing land use and the construction phase will be small scale temporary. Therefore, there are no potential effects to this European site identified.	No	No
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	8.45	Merlin *(Falco columbarius)* [A098], Peregrine falcon *(Falco peregrinus)* [A103]	There are no Annex I habitats or supporting habitats for Annex II species within the proposed development area. There are no pathways for effects from the site to the SPA. Furthermore, the operational phase is consistent with the existing land use and the construction phase will be small scale temporary. Therefore, there are no potential effects to this	No	No

Site Code	Site Name	Distance	Qualifying Feature	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects
				European site identified.		
001398	Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	10.27	Narrow-mouthed whorl snail *(Vertigo angustior)* [1014], Desmoulin`s whorl snail *(Vertigo moulinsiana)* [1016], Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220]	There are no Annex I habitats or supporting habitats for Annex II species within the proposed development area. There are no pathways for effects from the site to the SAC. Furthermore, the operational phase is consistent with the existing land use and the construction phase will be small scale temporary. Therefore, there are no potential effects to this European site identified.	No	No
000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	11.33	Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]	There are no Annex I habitats or supporting habitats for Annex II species within the proposed development area. There are no pathways for effects from the site to the SAC. Furthermore, the operational phase is consistent with the existing land use and the construction phase will be small scale temporary. Therefore, there are no potential effects to this European site identified.	No	No
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	11.36	Bar-tailed Godwit *(Limosa lapponica)* [A157], Oystercatcher *(Haematopus ostralegus)* [A130], Dunlin *(Calidris alpina)* [A149], Common tern *(Sterna hirundo)* [A193], Ringed Plover *(Charadrius hiaticula)* [A137], Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii)* [A192], Light-bellied Brent Goose *(Branta bernicla hrota)* [A046], Sanderling *(Calidris alba)* [A144], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Arctic tern *(Sterna paradisaea)* [A194], Redshank *(Tringa totanus)* [A162], Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus)* [A179], Grey Plover *(Pluvialis squatarola)* [A141], Knot *(Calidris canutus)* [A143]	There are no Annex I habitats or supporting habitats for Annex II species within the proposed development area. There are no pathways for effects from the site to the SPA. Furthermore, the operational phase is consistent with the existing land use and the construction phase will be small scale temporary. Therefore, there are no potential effects to this European site identified.	No	No
004006	North Bull Island	14.41	Pintail *(Anas acuta)* [A054], Dunlin *(Calidris alpina)* [A149],	There are no Annex I habitats or supporting	No	No

Site Code	Site Name	Distance	Qualifying Feature	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects
	SPA		Curlew *(Numenius arquata)* [A160], Light-bellied Brent Goose *(Branta bernicla hrota)* [A046], Black-tailed Godwit *(Limosa limosa)* [A156], Turnstone *(Arenaria interpres)* [A169], Shelduck *(Tadorna tadorna)* [A048], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus)* [A179], Sanderling *(Calidris alba)* [A144], Shoveler *(Anas clypeata)* [A056], Redshank *(Tringa totanus)* [A162], Teal *(Anas crecca)* [A052], Grey Plover *(Pluvialis squatarola)* [A141], Bar-tailed Godwit *(Limosa lapponica)* [A157], Oystercatcher *(Haematopus ostralegus)* [A130], Knot *(Calidris canutus)* [A143], Golden Plover *(Pluvialis apricaria)* [A140]	habitats for Annex II species within the proposed development area. There are no pathways for effects from the site to the SPA. Furthermore, the operational phase is consistent with the existing land use and the construction phase will be small scale temporary. Therefore, there are no potential effects to this European site identified.		
000206	North Dublin Bay SAC	14.42	Mediterranean salt meadows *(Juncetalia maritimi)* [1410], Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Petalwort *(Petalophyllum ralfsii)* [1395], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Atlantic salt meadows *(Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae)* [1330], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210], Humid dune slacks [2190], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria - white dunes [2120]	There are no Annex I habitats or supporting habitats for Annex II species within the proposed development area. There are no pathways for effects from the site to the SAC. Furthermore, the operational phase is consistent with the existing land use and the construction phase will be small scale temporary. Therefore, there are no potential effects to this European site identified.	No	No
000725	Knocksink Wood SAC	14.46	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0], Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220], Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior *(Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)* [91E0]	There are no Annex I habitats or supporting habitats for Annex II species within the proposed development area. There are no pathways for effects from the site to the SAC. Furthermore, the operational phase is consistent with the existing land use and the construction phase will be small scale temporary. Therefore, there are no potential effects to this European site identified.	No	No

3.5. Other plans and projects

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other plans or projects that might, in combination with the plan or project, have the potential to adversely affect European sites.

As part of this assessment a search of the South Dublin County Council planning database was undertaken to identify relevant plans and programmes which relate to the proposed development. Similarly, all developments from the receiving area were considered; this was achieved through a search of the national planning database using a distance parameter around the red line boundary to search. The radius is defined by the authoring ecologist using criteria which depend on the characteristics of the proposed development and the associated sources (identified above); these criteria include:

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

These factors are considered in the context of characteristics of the proposed development and a distance buffer of 200m was used to search for projects within the receiving environment. The sources for effects from the proposed development are considered in combination with the potential sources for effects from the receiving environment for potential additive or interactive effects to the receiving environment.

Plans of relevance within the receiving environment or in-combination with effects arising from the proposed development:

- South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016 - 2022
- Tallaght Town Centre Local Area Plan 2020

Considering that the proposed development has a small-scale temporary construction phase and the operational phase is consistent with the existing land use, it is not foreseen that proposed development will have any significant in-combination effects with the above plans.

Projects within the receiving environment assessed for in-combination with effects arising from the proposed development:

To identify projects for consideration for the in-combination effects section, the National Planning and Housing development database was used[10]. A review of all planning applications within the identified zone was conducted focusing on all application within the past 5 years[11].

All of the projects in the receiving area are small scale demolition or extension works as well as

[10] https://data-housinggovie.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/planning-application-sites-2010-onwards; 21st October 2021

[11] planning application have a standard lifespan of 5 years as per Section 40 (3)(b) of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended; therefore, these are viewed to be the 'live' applications, all other projects are considered as part of the site context

change of use applications. There are no projects with sources for effects that are likely to cause significant effects to European sites in combination with the proposed development.

Table 3.2 Local planning applications within the receiving environment of the proposed development

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project Area (sq m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Are significant in-combination effects likely
SD17A/0295	Grant Permission	The demolition of the existing public house and associated units and adjacent multi-deck car park and the development of a licensed, discount foodstore including ancillary off-licence area; creation of a single vehicular entrance and exit at the Cookstown Road; free standing and building mounted signage; refrigeration and air conditioning plant and equipment; car park; short term and long term bicycle parking; trolley bay, external bin storage, hard and soft landscaping, ESB substation building with services to connect to existing connections and all other ancillary and associated site development works (including any retaining structures as required) above and below ground level to complete the development. In addition the development includes four retail units (adaptable for a variety of commercial uses) and a public house. The development also includes a new road access off Cookstown Road to service the reservoir lands located immediately south of the application site. The proposed development also includes improvements to the footpaths an additional crossing point on the Old Belgard Road.	43,841	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No
SD21A/0006	Grant Permission	Change of use of 58.4sq.m of the front ground floor single storey part of Unit 1 from office/light industrial use to click-and-collect retail use and ancillary site works.	21,333	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project Area (sq m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Are significant in-combination effects likely
SD18A/0259	Grant Permission	Demolition and removal of existing single & two storey showroom extensions (485sq.m) on north-east façade (facing onto Belgard Road), plus removal of existing canopies on south-west, north-west facades, re-fenestration to south-west, north-west & north-east facades, including fitting of new curtain-walling with matching entrance doors plus new wall cladding, provision of new two-storey infill extension (21sq.m) at front (south-west façade) to accommodate new vehicle inspection bays, new roller shutter door on side (south-east) façade to internal valeting bays, filling-in of 2 existing floor voids at first floor level in showroom (108sq.m), provision of new external car wash facility to side (south-east), new external illuminated building signage and new pylon sign on north-west boundary, 3 freestanding signs to external feature display areas.	13,861	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No
SD18A/0375	Grant Permission	Construction of a single point of vehicular entrance/exit from and onto the Old Belgard Road, for dedicated use by the public house granted under Ref. SD17A/0295; reconfiguration of the car parking in the area of the permitted public house to provide dedicated parking and a pedestrian access linking the public house to the wider permitted neighbourhood centre; all associated site development works necessary, landscaping and boundary treatment; amend Condition 6 of ref. SD17A/0295 to allow the public house to operate normal trading hours Monday-Thursday 10:30-23:30 & Friday & Saturday 10:30-00:30 and Sunday 12:30-23:00.	7,546	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project Area (sq m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Are significant in-combination effects likely
SD20A/0064	Grant Permission & Grant Retention	Change the use of Unit 1 of Block 3 to a veterinary clinic as well as permission for signage areas. Retention of a new entrance door on Block 3; sub-division of Unit 1, Block 2, in to two units (1a and 1b) and the change of use to a barber (Unit 1a) and takeaway (Unit 1b); new signage zones; all associated works to complete the development.	3,324	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No
SD20A/0326	Grant Permission	Permission to change the use of Unit 3 of Block 2, from retail to a medical practice as well as permission for associated signage area and all associated works to complete the development.	1,957	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No
SD19A/0054	Grant Permission & Grant Retention	Completion of the development of Block 2 (granted permission under PA Ref. SD17A/0295) subject to: Permission for the change of use of the ground and first floor of the southerly unit (Unit 2) in the permitted Block 2, from retail to coffee shop and their amalgamation into a single operational unit; Retention for amendments to the external facade of entire of Block 2 including signage areas; all amendments are illustrated on the plans lodged with the application.	1,917	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No
SD19A/0265	Grant Permission	A two storey dwelling consisting of 3 bedrooms, bathroom, open plan kitchen dining space and living room with a total combined area of approximately 116sq.m.	966	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No
SD18B/0515	Grant Permission	Single storey extension to side of dwelling and all associated site works.	807	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project Area (sq m)	Characteristics of the potential interactions between the projects; sources and pathways	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Are significant in-combination effects likely
SD19A/0221	Grant Permission	2.4m x 2.4m internally illuminated Costa Coffee roundel to southeast elevation; southwest elevation to have 1m high grey aluminium fascia with 0.64m high Costa Coffee internally illuminated individual letters (colour white) above window opening; door to have Costa red 'goal post' frame surround with aluminium weather canopy above; northwest elevation to have grey aluminium fascia with Costa Coffee internally illuminated individual letters (colour white); northeast elevation window opening to have Costa red frame around window opening with 0.64m high Costa coffee internally illuminated letters (colour white) above window opening.	670	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No
SD17B/0381	Grant Permission	Two storey extensions to the rear of the existing semi-detached dwelling with a tiled roof with roof lights, external finishes to match existing, new store to the rear garden, internal alterations and associated site works.	555	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No

4. Conclusion

This stage one screening for AA of the proposed sports pitches at Belgard Community centre demonstrates that the proposed development is not likely to have significant effects on any European site.

The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases as a result of the implementation of the project. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the project characteristics, taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that there are no likely significant adverse effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interest or the conservation objectives of any designated European site.

The proposed development is 4.58 km away from the closest SAC and 8.45 km away from the closest SPA. Given the nature of the proposed work, the scale and the localised and temporary nature of the potential effects, the proposed project will not lead to any significant effects in-combination with effects arising from any other plans or projects.

It is concluded that the proposed development is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on any designated European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This evaluation is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. Consequently, a Stage Two AA (NIS) is not required.

Appendix I Background information on European sites

European sites with functional connectivity (ecological pathways) to the proposed development area including their Qualifying Interests, known threats and pressures

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature	Pressures Codes	Known Threats and Pressures
000206	North Dublin Bay SAC	Humid dune slacks [2190], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210], Petalwort *(Petalophyllum ralfsii)* [1395], Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria - white dunes [2120], Atlantic salt meadows *(Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae)* [1330], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation - grey dunes [2130], Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Mediterranean salt meadows *(Juncetalia maritimi)* [1410]	A04, F02.03.01, E01, J01.01, G01.01, E03, E02, G05.05, H01.03, H01.09, K03.06, G01.02, F02.03, G02.01, I01	Grazing, Bait digging or collection, Urbanised areas, human habitation, Burning down, Nautical sports, Discharges, Industrial or commercial areas, Intensive maintenance of public parcs or cleaning of beaches, Other point source pollution to surface water, Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to other sources not listed, Antagonism with domestic animals, Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles, Leisure fishing, Golf course, Invasive non-native species
000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]	E03, G01.01, G01.01.02, E02, E01, F02.03.01, J02.01.02, K02.02, D01.02, M01, H03, K02, G01.02, D01.01	Discharges, Nautical sports, Non-motorized nautical sports, Industrial or commercial areas, Urbanised areas, human habitation, Bait digging or collection, Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh, Accumulation of organic material, Roads, motorways, Changes in abiotic conditions, Marine water pollution, Biocenotic evolution, succession, Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles, Paths, tracks, cycling tracks
000725	Knocksink Wood SAC	Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220], Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior *(Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)* [91E0], Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0]	G01.02, B02.03, B01, G02.08, D01.01, I01, G05.04, D01.02, A04, B01.02, E03.01, G05.07, G05.06, G03, E01.02, D05	Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles, Removal of forest undergrowth, Forest planting on open ground, Camping and caravans, Paths, tracks, cycling tracks, Invasive non-native species, Vandalism, Roads, motorways, Grazing, Artificial planting on open ground (non-native trees), Disposal of household or recreational facility waste, Missing or wrongly directed conservation measures, Tree surgery, felling for public safety, removal of roadside trees, Interpretative centres, Discontinuous urbanisation, Improved access to site

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature	Pressures Codes	Known Threats and Pressures
001209	Glenasmole Valley SAC	Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils *(Molinion caeruleae)* [6410], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco-Brometalia)* * important orchid sites [6210]	A03, A03.03, J02, D01.03, H01.05, H01.08, E01.02, B01.01, A04, D01, I01, B02.02, A04.02.01, A04.02.02, A04.02.03, B02.01.02, F02.03, C01.03, A08, B01.02, H02.07	Mowing or cutting of grassland, Abandonment or lack of mowing , Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions, Car parcs and parking areas, Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to agricultural and forestry activities, Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to household sewage and waste waters, Discontinuous urbanisation, Forest planting on open ground (native trees), Grazing, Roads, paths and railroads, Invasive non-native species, Forestry clearance, Non intensive cattle grazing, Non intensive sheep grazing, Non intensive horse grazing, Forest replanting (non native trees), Leisure fishing, Peat extraction, Fertilisation, Artificial planting on open ground (non-native trees), Diffuse groundwater pollution due to non-sewered population
001398	Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220], Desmoulin`s whorl snail *(Vertigo moulinsiana)* [1016], Narrow-mouthed whorl snail *(Vertigo angustior)* [1014]	E01.03, A04, A10.01, E01.01, D01.02, A08, J02.05.02, B	Dispersed habitation, Grazing, Removal of hedges and copses or scrub, Continuous urbanisation, Roads, motorways, Fertilisation, Modifying structures of inland water courses, Sylviculture, forestry
002122	Wicklow Mountains SAC	Otter *(Lutra lutra)* [1355], Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0], Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas - and submountain areas in Continental Europe [6230], European dry heaths [4030], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels *(Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)* [8110], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains *(Littorelletalia uniflorae)* [3110], Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210], Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae [6130]	C01.03, A04, G02.09, J01.01, G01.04, G01, B06, B02.05, F03, A05.02, D01.01, G05.01, G05.04, G01.03.02, E03.01, I01, L05, G05.09, G05.07, E01, F04.02, G04.01, G01.02, K01.01, G05.06, K04.05, F03.02.02	Peat extraction, Grazing, Wildlife watching, Burning down, Mountaineering, rock climbing, speleology, Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, Grazing in forests or woodland, Non-intensive timber production (leaving dead wood or old trees untouched), Hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial), Stock feeding, Paths, tracks, cycling tracks, Trampling, overuse, Vandalism, Off-road motorized driving, Disposal of household or recreational facility waste, Invasive non-native species, Collapse of terrain, landslide, Fences, fencing, Missing or wrongly directed conservation measures, Urbanised areas, human habitation, Collection (fungi, lichen, berries etc.), Military manouvres, Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles, Erosion, Tree surgery, felling for public safety, removal of roadside trees, Damage by herbivores (including game species), Taking from nest (e.g. falcons)

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature	Pressures Codes	Known Threats and Pressures
004006	North Bull Island SPA	Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Black-tailed Godwit *(Limosa limosa)* [A156], Oystercatcher *(Haematopus ostralegus)* [A130], Light-bellied Brent Goose *(Branta bernicla hrota)* [A046], Turnstone *(Arenaria interpres)* [A169], Pintail *(Anas acuta)* [A054], Bar-tailed Godwit *(Limosa lapponica)* [A157], Shelduck *(Tadorna tadorna)* [A048], Knot *(Calidris canutus)* [A143], Grey Plover *(Pluvialis squatarola)* [A141], Redshank *(Tringa totanus)* [A162], Curlew *(Numenius arquata)* [A160], Teal *(Anas crecca)* [A052], Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus)* [A179], Dunlin *(Calidris alpina)* [A149], Golden Plover *(Pluvialis apricaria)* [A140], Sanderling *(Calidris alba)* [A144], Shoveler *(Anas clypeata)* [A056]	D03.02, E03, D01.05, E02, G01.02, G02.01, G03, G01.01, E01.01, D01.02, E01.04, F02.03.01	Shipping lanes, Discharges, Bridge, viaduct, Industrial or commercial areas, Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles, Golf course, Interpretative centres, Nautical sports, Continuous urbanisation, Roads, motorways, Other patterns of habitation, Bait digging or collection
004024	South Dublin Bay and Tolka Estuary SPA	Ringed Plover *(Charadrius hiaticula)* [A137], Dunlin *(Calidris alpina)* [A149], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Knot *(Calidris canutus)* [A143], Common tern *(Sterna hirundo)* [A193], Oystercatcher *(Haematopus ostralegus)* [A130], Redshank *(Tringa totanus)* [A162], Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus)* [A179], Grey Plover *(Pluvialis squatarola)* [A141], Light-bellied Brent Goose *(Branta bernicla hrota)* [A046], Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii)* [A192], Sanderling *(Calidris alba)* [A144], Bar-tailed Godwit *(Limosa lapponica)* [A157], Arctic tern *(Sterna paradisaea)* [A194]	F02.03, G01.01, E03, J02.01.02, E01, F02.03.01, G01.02, K02.03, D01.02, E02	Leisure fishing, Nautical sports, Discharges, Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh, Urbanised areas, human habitation, Bait digging or collection, Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles, Eutrophication (natural), Roads, motorways, Industrial or commercial areas
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	Peregrine falcon *(Falco peregrinus)* [A103], Merlin *(Falco columbarius)* [A098]	G01.02, C01.03, A04, G03, B, D01.01	Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles, Peat extraction, Grazing, Interpretative centres, Sylviculture, forestry, Paths, tracks, cycling tracks

Appendix II Further information on the Qualifying Interests of SACs that have undergone assessment

Qualifying Interests of SACs that have undergone assessment including summaries of current threats and sensitivities

Qualifying Interests	EU Code	Current threats to Qualifying Interests	Sensitivity of Qualifying Interests
Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail *(Vertigo angustior)*	[1014]	Loss of riverside and canalside habitat; exploitation of esker sites and drainage of wetlands, and sheep grazing and overexploitation of dune sites.	Changes to ground vegetation condition, groundwater dependent and is highly sensitive to hydrological changes.
Desmoulin's Whorl Snail *(Vertigo moulinsiana)*	[1016]	Loss of riverside and canalside habitat; exploitation of esker sites and drainage of wetlands, and sheep grazing and overexploitation of dune sites.	Changes to ground vegetation condition, groundwater dependent and is highly sensitive to hydrological changes.
Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	[1140]	Aquaculture, fishing, bait digging, removal of fauna, reclamation of land, coastal protection works and invasive species, particularly cord-grass; hard coastal defence structures; sea-level rise.	Surface and marine water dependent. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Moderate sensitivity to pollution. Changes to salinity and tidal regime. Coastal development.
Annual vegetation of drift lines	[1210]	Grazing; sand and gravel extraction; recreational activities; coastal protection works.	Overgrazing and erosion. Changes in management.
Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand	[1310]	Invasive Species; erosion and accretion.	Marine water dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Infilling, reclamation, invasive species.
Atlantic salt meadows *(Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae)*	[1330]	Overgrazing; erosion; invasive species, particularly common cordgrass (Spartina anglica); infilling and reclamation.	Marine and groundwater dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Overgrazing, erosion and accretion.
Otter *(Lutra lutra)*	[1355]	Decrease in water quality: Use of pesticides; fertilization; vegetation removal; professional fishing (including lobster pots and fyke nets); unting; poisoning; sand and gravel extraction; mechanical removal of peat; urbanised areas; human habitation; continuous urbanization; drainage; management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes; and canalization or modifying structures of inland water course.	Surface and marine water dependent. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Sensitivity to pollution.
Petalwort*(Petalophyllum ralfsii)*	[1395]	There are no significant impacts affecting this species.	None identified.
Mediterranean salt meadows *(Juncetalia maritimi)*	[1410]	Over-grazing by cattle or sheep; infilling and reclamation.	Marine and groundwater dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Coastal development and reclamation.
Embryonic shifting dunes	[2110]	Natural erosion processes exacerbated by recreation and sand extraction. Coastal protection interfering with natural processes.	Overgrazing, and erosion. Changes in management.
Shifting dunes along the shoreline with white dunes*(Ammophila arenaria)*	[2120]	Recreation and coastal defences, which may interfere with local sediment dynamics.	Overgrazing, and erosion. Changes in management.

Qualifying Interests	EU Code	Current threats to Qualifying Interests	Sensitivity of Qualifying Interests
Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation *(grey dunes)*	[2130]	Recreation; overgrazing and inappropriate grazing: non-native plant species, particularly sea buckthorn (Hippophae rhamnoides).	Overgrazing, and erosion. Changes in management.
Humid dune slacks	[2190]	Agricultural improvement; overgrazing and inappropriate grazing; forestry; recreational activity.	Overgrazing, and erosion. Changes in management. Sensitive to hydrological change.
Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains *(Littorelletalia uniflorae)*	[3110]	Nutrient enrichment; afforestation; waste water; invasive alien species; sport and leisure activities.	Surface and groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution.
Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds	[3160]	Nutrient alterations; management shifts in the associated peatland habitat, afforestation; waste water; invasive alien species; sport and leisure activities.	Surface and groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution
Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix	[4010]	Reclamation, afforestation and burning; overstocking; invasion by non-heath species; exposure of peat to severe erosion.	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management.
European dry heaths	[4030]	Afforestation, overburning, over-grazing, under-grazing and bracken invasion.	Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Changes in management. Changes in nutrient status.
Alpine and Boreal heaths	[4060]	Abandonment; overgrazing; burning; outdoor recreation; quarries; communication networks; and wind farm developments.	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change.
Calaminarian grasslands of the Murawy galmanowa*(Violetalia calaminariae)*	[6130]	Land reclamation, afforestation; drainage; and infrastructural development.	Changes in management such as grazing regime. Changes in nutrient or base status. Changes to vegetation composition. Introduction of alien species.
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco-Brometalia)** important orchid sites	[6210]	Land reclamation, afforestation; drainage; and infrastructural development.	Changes in management such as grazing regime. Changes in nutrient or base status. Changes to vegetation composition. Introduction of alien species.
Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas *(and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)*	[6230]	Bracken encroachment, succession, inappropriate grazing, afforestation; drainage; and infrastructural development.	Changes in management such as grazing regime. Changes in nutrient or base status. Changes to vegetation composition. Introduction of alien species.
Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils *(Molinion caeruleae)*	[6410]	Agricultural intensification; drainage; abandonment of pastoral systems.	Changes in management such as grazing regime. Changes in nutrient or base status. Changes to vegetation composition. Introduction of alien species.
Blanket bogs (* if active bog)	[7130]	Land reclamation, peat extraction; afforestation; erosion and landslides triggered by human activity; drainage; burning and infrastructural development.	Surface water interactions. Drainage and land use management are the key things.
Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)*	[7220]	Ground water interactions, on site management activities.	Surface and groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution.

Qualifying Interests	EU Code	Current threats to Qualifying Interests	Sensitivity of Qualifying Interests
Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (*Androsacetalia alpinae* and *Galeopsietalia ladani*)	[8110]	Overgrazing, undergrazing and succession were recorded as medium-importance pressures in this reporting period, and Structure and functions were again assessed as Inadequate, the trend is considered to be stable rather than improving. This change is due to improved knowledge and the habitat is considered to have been stable since before the last assessment.	Erosion, overgrazing and recreation.
Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	[8210]	Overgrazing; extractive industries; recreational activities and improved access.	Erosion, overgrazing and recreation.
Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	[8220]	Pressures associated with the non-native invasive species New Zealand willowherb (Epilobium brunnescens).	Erosion, overgrazing and recreation.
Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles	[91A0]	The introduction of alien species; sub-optimal grazing patterns; general forestry management; increases in urbanisation and human habitation adjacent to oak woodlands; and the construction of communication networks through the woodland.	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Introduction of alien species.

Appendix III Further information on the Special Conservation Interests of SPAs that have undergone assessment

Special Conservation Interests and Vulnerabilities of SPAs that have undergone assessment

Special Conservation Interest (SCI) Species
Common shelduck (Tadorna tadorna) [A048]
Eurasian teal (Anas crecca) [A052]
Northern pintail (Anas acuta) [A054]
Northern shoveler (Anas clypeata) [A056]
Merlin (Falco columbarius) [A098]
Peregrine falcon (Falco peregrinus) [A103]
Eurasian oystercatcher (Haematopus ostralegus) [A130]
Ringed plover (Charadrius hiaticula) [A137]
European golden plover (Pluvialis apricaria) [A140]
Grey plover (Pluvialis squatarola) [A141]
Red knot (Calidris canutus) [A143]
Sanderling (Calidris alba) [A144]
Bar-tailed godwit (Limosa lapponica) [A157]
Eurasian curlew (Numenius arquata) [A160]
Common redshank (Tringa totanus) [A162]
Ruddy turnstone (Arenaria interpres) [A169]
Black-headed gull (Larus ridibundus) [A179]
Roseate tern (Sterna dougallii) [A192]
Common tern (Sterna hirundo) [A193]
Arctic tern (Sterna paradisaea) [A194]

Vulnerabilities of Special Conservation Interests

- Bird species are particularly vulnerable to direct disturbance due to noise and/or vibration. These effects are localised, and disturbance effects are foreseen to be low at distances beyond 2km[12].
- Direct habitat loss is a serious concern for bird species, as well as the reduction in habitat quality. Habitat degradation could occur through effects such as local enrichment due to agricultural practices or damage to habitat through activities such as trampling.
- Prey species diversity and availability is a key element of species conservation. Community dynamics and ecosystem functionality are complex concepts and require site specific information. The site synopsis and conservation objectives for the SPAs identified within the ZOI were used to identify any specific prey sensitivities.
- Availability of nesting/roosting habitat. Particularly for the Hen Harrier.
- Vegetation composition, structure and functionality.

Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] Direct land take is a common vulnerability to all sites; as well as significant water quality effects. The conservation objective of all SPAs designated for Wetland and Waterbirds is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds using it.

[12] SNH (2007) A Review of Disturbance Distances in Selected Bird Species: Scottish Natural Heritage; M. Ruddock & D.P. Whitfield

Appendix IV Author Details

Lead Author - Karen Dylan Shevlin is an ecologist with over 7 years' experience working in multiple capacities in ecology in Ireland and international research organisations, and holds a MSc degree in Biodiversity and Conservation from Trinity College Dublin (2013). Karen has significant skills in leading ecological surveys of bats, birds, insects, habitats and mammals and data analysis, mapping and compiling reports. Karen is also a specialist in ecological theory and the impacts/effects that altering natural dynamics may have on the surrounding environment. This combination of skills and knowledge provides the backbone of the assessment process, and ensure that all of the baseline and detailed data gathered in the field is interpreted in a manner that is grounded in best scientific knowledge.

Karen has been involved in AA screenings, NISs, and EIARs for a range of projects ranging from smaller facilities upgrades projects to major wind turbine sites.

Supervisor - Andrew Torsney is a Principal Ecologist with 9 years' experience working on major national and local scale projects. Andrew graduated from University College Dublin in 2011 with a B.Sc. degree in Zoology and obtained Master's degree in Biodiversity and Conservation from the University of Leeds in 2012. He has a range of ecological skills which include habitat mapping, ecological surveying, data interpretation and report writing. Andrew is a vegetative plant specialist, who has a wealth of experience classifying riparian habitats and identifying rare floral species. Andrew has a vast knowledge of riparian and freshwater ecosystems and undertakes freshwater surveys regularly. Andrew holds 4 national protected species licenses and has a lot of experience optioning surveying licenses for aquatic species such as the white clawed crayfish. He is also a Bat specialist with a wealth of experience, in acoustic surveying and monitoring of bats. Throughout Andrews's career he has worked on a number of large-scale multifaceted projects such as the Killaloe to Dublin water supply project NIS. For this work, Andrew designed and oversaw all ecological field work relating to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and AA.

Andrew has been the principal ecologist for a range of projects including the AA of the National Wind Energy Guidelines, a number of AAs for County Councils and a range of large-scale infrastructure projects.

Reviewer - Paul Fingleton has an MSc in Rural and Regional Resources Planning (with specialisation in EIA) from the University of Aberdeen. Paul is a member of the International Association for Impact Assessment as well as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment. He has over twenty-five years' experience working in the area of Environmental Assessment. Over this period, he has been involved in a diverse range of projects including contributions to, and co-ordination of, numerous complex EIARs and EIA screening reports. He has also contributed to and supervised the preparation of numerous AAs and AA screenings.
Paul is the lead author of the current EPA Guidelines and accompanying Advice Notes on EIARs. He has been involved in all previous editions of these statutory guidelines. He also provides a range of other EIA related consultancy services to the EPA. Paul is regularly engaged by various planning authorities and other consent authorities to provide specialised EIA advice.