

Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: SD-C226-15

Údar: Ne Graver

Stádas: Submitted

Submission:

Extension of walking trail connections between Rathcoole Woodlands and Rathcoole Park

Comhairliúchán:

Proposed Material Amendments to the Draft South Dublin County Development Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report Vol 2

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Addition to Section 4.3.2 – Strategic Corridor 5: Camac River Corridor – Table 4.1

Insert under Stepping Stones in the first column:

Rathcoole Alluvial Woodlands within RU zoning.

Add the following objective to the second column:

- **To preserve and protect the Alluvial Woodlands at Rathcoole within the zoning RU as an environmentally sensitive area for biodiversity and ecosystems services of importance having full regard to their Annex 1 status.**

We are disappointed that the Chief Executive considers that Rathcoole Woodlands is not of suitable size to be considered a core area in the Green Infrastructure Network:

Given the size of the woodlands, it is considered that they are more properly identified as a stepping stone and should be included in that list. It should be noted that the inclusion of the woodlands as a stepping stone rather than as a core area does not in any way diminish their habitat or amenity value and that the objectives associated with both apply.

At 12.8 ha (Hodd, 2021 unpublished), the Alluvial Woodland component of woodlands at Rathcoole is considerable given that the National Survey of Native Woodlands found[1]: *The majority of surveyed woodlands were small or very small in extent, with 50% of sites being 6 ha or less..., over two thirds (67.8%) of sites were 10 ha or less and only 3.3% of sites surveyed were 50 ha or more, with just ten sites over 100 ha...This reflects the highly fragmented nature of the Irish woodland resource..'*

We note that the Corkagh Park is identified as a Core Area, which has no direct continuous land or water connectivity with any of the stepping stones identified in Corridor 5: Camac River Corridor given that both the land and water is intercepted for example by the M7 with no biodiversity land bridges and all water culverted.

The enactment of the new proposed CS10 SLO1:

Ensure the provision of a primary school, library hub, 2 full sized GAA pitches and 1 junior pitch and associated pavilion, access road and open space is provided in tandem with new residential development.

will result in:

- the reduction in existing woodland area from 14.8 ha (Hodd, unpublished, 2021) to 12.8 ha and
- the disconnection of Rathcoole Woodlands from Rathcoole Park by grey infrastructure (roads and buildings)

Additional grey infrastructure (roads and buildings) development will be facilitated by rezoning land along its eastern perimeter to Res_N. This will result in enveloping the remaining woodland on 3 sides with grey infrastructure. The reduction in Woodland area and in connectivity will diminish the Woodlands habitat and amenity value. Therefore, the Woodlands prospects as a core area of Green Infrastructure Network will also be considerably reduced. In the light of reduced connectivity and area as a result of the new proposed CS10 SLO1 and the associated rezoning, it is reasonable to propose Rathcoole Woodlands as a stepping stone but it is not the desired outcome.

We note that for L7 – Citywest-Saggart Link (see Appendix 4 Green Infrastructure Local Objectives and Case Studies of the Draft County Development Plan 2022-2027) is stated as presenting:

“a difficult spatial situation as several green spaces (stepping stones) have been separated from each other by residential and industrial development.

These spaces include Rathcoole Park, Citywest Golf Club and smaller pockets of green space at Citywest Business Campus and the Brookfield residential area.

It is a pity to see that the spatial situation is further exacerbated by what appears to be the inevitable separation of Rathcoole Woodlands from Rathcoole Park as a result of implementation of the new CS10 SLO1 and the associated proposed rezoning.

[1] <http://www.botanicalenvironmental.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Volume-I.pdf>

Documents Attached: Níl