FEHILY TIMONEY

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT STOCKING LANE

Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Prepared for:

South Dublin County Council

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Date: **July 2025**

Document No:

P24080-FT-EGN-XX-RP-EN-0006

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REVISION CONTROL TABLE, CLIENT, KEYWORDS AND ABSTRACT

User is responsible for Checking the Revision Status of This Document

Rev. No.	Description of Changes	Prepared by:	Checked by:	Approved by:	Date:
2	Final	CM/NSC/AM	DOH	BG	25/07/2025

Client: South Dublin County Council

Keywords: Appropriate Assessment (AA), AA Screening, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, European (Natura 2000) sites, Stocking Lane, South Dublin County Council

Abstract: This document is to inform the Competent Authority in carrying out their statutory obligations relating to the Habitats Directive requirement for Appropriate Assessment for plans and projects seeking consent. Appropriate Assessment is required under Article 6 (3) of the Habitats Directive for any project or plan that may give rise to significant effects on a European (Natura 2000) site.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fehily Timoney and Company (FT) have been commissioned by South Dublin County Council (SDCC) to prepare this Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, for the proposed residential development operations on a grassy area located immediately adjacent to Stocking Avenue, Woodtown and Newtown, Dublin 14, Co. Dublin.

This report presents an examination of whether the proposed works are likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and is based on best available scientific knowledge. This report has been prepared to inform the competent authority in completing their statutory obligations in relation to Appropriate Assessment, as required by Article 6(3) under Council Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive).

1.1 Legislative Context

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitats Directive) provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The Directive requires that where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site, while not directly connected with or necessary to the nature conservation management of the site, it will be subject to 'Appropriate Assessment' to identify any implications for the European site in view of the site's Conservation Objectives. Specifically, Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

> *"6(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (Natura 2000 sites) 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."*

The competent authority must carry out a screening for appropriate assessment to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed project, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site. If it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed project, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site, an appropriate assessment of its implications for the European Site(s) in view of the Site's conservation objectives is required to be carried out.

The provisions of Article 6(3) do not apply where the proposed plan or project is 'connected with or necessary to the management of the site'. In this case, the proposed project is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of any European site(s).

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Guidance

The assessment was conducted in accordance with the following guidance:

- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. Commission Notice (2021) Brussels, 28.9.2021 C(2021) 6913 final (European Commission, 2021).
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin (2009, updated 2010) (Environment Heritage and Local Government, 2009).
- Managing Natura 2000 sites. The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission (2019). Brussels, (2019/C 33/01). OJ C 33, 25.1.2019.
- Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats. Version EUR 28. (European Commission, 2013)
- OPR Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management, (Office of the Planning Regulator, 2021).

1.2.2 Process

The process of determining the likelihood of significant effects from a proposed project on European sites is an iterative process centred around a Source-Pathway-Receptor model as per OPR, 2021. In order for an effect to be established, all three elements of this mechanism must be in place. The absence of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect cannot occur.

- Source(s) – e.g. pollutant run-off, noise, removal of vegetation, etc.;
- Pathway(s) – functional link, or ecological pathway e.g. groundwater connecting to nearby qualifying wetland habitats; and
- Receptor(s) – the qualifying habitats and species of European sites and ecological resources supporting those habitats/species.

In the context of this report, a source is any identifiable element of the proposed project that is known to interact with the receiving environment. A receptor is the Qualifying Interests (QI)[1] for an SAC or Special Conservation Interests (SCI)[2] for an SPA or an ecological feature that is known to be utilised by the QI/SCI. In practice, the term Qualifying Interests also applies to SCIs (and is used in this document for simplicity). A pathway is any connection or link between the source and the receptor.

[1] SACs are areas designated under the Habitats Directive to conserve habitats listed in Annex I of the Directive and plant and animal species listed in Annex II. Collectively these are referred to as the 'Qualifying Interests' or 'QIs' of the SAC.
[2] SPAs are sites classified under the Birds Directive to protect rare or vulnerable bird species listed in Annex I to the Directive as well as regularly occurring migratory species and wetlands. Wetland habitats that support internationally important populations of migratory birds may be coastal or inland. Collectively, these species and habitats are referred to as the 'Special Conservation Interests' of the SPA.

The European Commission Notice (2021) on the 'Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC', states that in identifying European sites (Natural 2000 sites), which may be affected by the project, the following should be identified:

- Any European sites geographically overlapping with any of the actions or aspects of the plan or project in any of its phases, or adjacent to them;
- Any European sites within the likely zone of influence of the plan or project. European sites located in the surroundings of the plan or project (or at some distance) that could still be indirectly affected by aspects of the project, including as regards the use of natural resources (e.g., water) and various types of waste, discharge or emissions of substances or energy;
- European sites whose connectivity or ecological continuity can be affected by the plan or project.

The ZoI of a proposed project is therefore the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have potential effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

2.1 Overview of the Project

SDCC seeks consent for the development of 25 no. own-door duplex-style residential units at a peri-urban greenfield site at Stocking Lane, Dublin 14. The footprint of the development site is 0.59 ha and is located in the townlands of Woodtown and Newtown, Dublin 14, South County Dublin.

The proposed development shall consist of:

1. The construction of 22 no. 3-storey duplex-style residential units in terraced buildings.
2. The construction of 3 no. 2-storey duplex-style residential units in a terraced building.
3. Creation of new vehicular entrances to Stocking Lane.
4. All site and development work necessary to facilitate the proposed development, including boundary treatments, upgrades to roadways and paths, provision of car and cycle parking spaces, hard and soft landscape works, SUDS infrastructure, lighting, and boundary structures.

2.2 Detailed Description of the Project

2.2.1 Construction Phase

2.2.1.1 Construction Methodology

An overview of the construction works required to complete the proposed development is:

- Installation of temporary construction site area.
- Breaking of hard-standing areas, as required.
- Excavation to formation levels – Excavated material will be reused on-site or dispatches to an appropriate waste management facility.
- Laying of building foundations
- Backfilling of excavated material and any imported fill required will take place.
- Construction of the residential buildings.
- Construction/installation of associated site infrastructure, including boundary treatments, roadways, paths, car and cycle parking, landscaping, surface water and wastewater drainage systems, lighting, boundary structures, and an electrical connection.
- Fit out and furnishing of buildings
- Site clean-up and commissioning.

The typical plant that will be utilised on-site during construction is:

- Tracked excavators
- Mobile crane
- Grader
- Front loader
- Dumper

- Ride-on roller
- Tipper lorry

2.2.1.2 Construction Timelines

It is anticipated that construction works will commence in Mid-2026 and be undertaken over a 16-month period.

Construction works will occur between the following hours:

- 07.00 to 19.00 on Monday to Friday;
- 08:00 to 16:30 on Saturdays.

No work will be undertaken on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

2.2.1.3 Operational Phase of the Proposed Development

All residential units will be designed to achieve an A1 Building Energy Rating. Specifics on how this will be achieved will be explored with the Mechanical & Electrical Engineer once appointed post planning. It is likely that either air source heat pumps or heat exchange systems will be utilised for all units. Photovoltaic (PV) panels are likely to be utilised.

Application for a connection to the existing wastewater system will be made to Uisce Éireann. Wastewater arising at the proposed development will be discharged via a proposed connection to the existing foul sewer system.

Surface water generated at the site will be collected by an on-site drainage system and then suitably managed and attenuated using a nature-based Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Surface water off rates will be commensurate with 'greenfield' run-off rates. Surface water exiting the drainage system will be discharged to the existing surface water drainage system serving the area.

Water supply will be provided to the proposed residential units from the existing water supply mains in the vicinity of the development site.

2.3 Existing Environment

The 0.59 ha proposed residential site is in the townlands of Woodtown and Newtown, Dublin 14, South County Dublin. Situated immediately south of Stocking Avenue on an area of improved grassland. The project is bounded by a path and grassy verges at its northern boundary. While improved grassland is common, residential developments and commercial developments are located to the north, west and south of the project.

2.3.1 Description of Existing Ecological Baseline

2.3.1.1 Desktop Assessment

A desk study was carried out in June 2025 to collate available information on the existing natural environment at the project location. This comprised a review of the following publications, data and datasets:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (on-line map-viewer including the Appropriate Assessment Tool);
- Department of Housing, Planning, and Local Government- EIA Portal;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – online European site network information, including site conservation objectives;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service – Information on the status of EU protected habitats and species in Ireland (including Article 17 and Article 12 Reports);
- National Biodiversity Data Centre records (viewed July 2025)

According to the National Land Cover Map, the project comprises Improved Grassland (510), Hedgerows (460) and Other Artificial Surfaces (130). The surrounding environment comprises Ways (120), Buildings (110) and Amenity Grassland (520) with interspersed areas of Broadleaved Forest and Woodland (440) and Wet Grassland (540).

The project is located within the Dodder waterbody sub-catchment (Dodder_SC_010) and is located ca. 468 m to the west of the Owenadoher River (IE_EA_09O011700), which flows into Dublin Bay approximately 11.1 km (instream distance) to the north-east.

Stormwater from the proposed develop will connect to the existing stormwater drainage system. This system flows into the Orlagh Stream (also known as Woodlands Stream) (EPA code: 09O11, Order: 2) at Knocklyon Wetlands Park, ca. 920m (direct distance) north-west of the proposed development. From there the stream travels ca. 16.9 km (instream distance) before entering Dublin Bay (Code: IE_EA_090_0000).

No 100m NBDC record for Otter (*Lutra lutra*) overlap with the project or is located within 150 m of the project, this is to be expected as the closest stream is located 468 m from the project.

No 100m or 2 km NBDC record for Light-bellied Brent Geese (*Branta bernicla hrota*) overlap with or are located within 500m of the project.

There were no records of alien invasive species documented within the proposed project site.

3. SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 Introduction

This section of the report examines whether the proposed works are likely to have a significant effect upon European Sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

NOTE: It is to be noted that SuDs that have been considered as part of the proposed development are not included within the design to avoid or reduce any potential harmful effects to any European Sites but are included for alignment with County and Regional development policies. This screening for Appropriate Assessment does not take SuDS into consideration in determining whether the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on European Sites.

3.2 Identification of European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the Proposed Project

The OPR (2021) AA Screening practice note states that the Zone of Influence (ZoI) must be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model.

The dominant ecological pathways to consider are:

- Direct physical interactions or changes to the local environment;
- Air dispersal (noise, dust, odour emissions etc.);
- Hydrological interactions; and
- Dispersal patterns of mobile species.

As such European sites for consideration are any which could be:

- hydrologically connected to the proposed project;
- designated for species which could use the habitats impacted by the proposed project (i.e. grass verge) and which are in the foraging / commuting range of the project; and
- are within a distance of the proposed project such that with potential impacts from habitat loss, noise, lighting, invasive species and dust.

In particular, the following was considered:

- Impacts on habitats - the potential for biophysical change by disturbance/damage/ degradation is taken as the footprint of the works (including site clearance) plus 10m beyond (based on Ryan Hanley, 2014)[3].

[3] Ryan Hanley (2014b) Stage 1: Appropriate Assessment Screening Methodology for the Maintenance of Arterial Drainage Schemes. Prepared by Ryan Hanley Consulting Engineers on behalf of the Office of Public Works

- The Institute of Air Quality Management (Holman et al, 2024)[4] states that for sensitive ecological receptors, sensitivity to dust is 'High' up to 20m from the source and reduces to 'Medium' over 50m from the source. The guidelines also stipulate that dust deposition from construction typically occurs up to 500 m from large sites, 200 m from medium sites and 50 m from small sites. A 50m ZoI for dust is adopted given the small scale of the proposed project.
- For potential for impacts on surface waters, regard is had to IFI (2020) guidelines[5] which states that "The recommended [riparian] buffer zone width for larger river channels (>10m) is 35m to 60m and for smaller channels (<10m) is 20m or greater".
- For groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE), regard is had to SEPA guidelines[6] which prescribes a potential hydrogeological effect zone of 250m from ground works.
- The potential disturbance zone for marine mammals is taken as 500m having regard DEAHG (2014) 'Guidance to Manage the Risk to Marine Mammals from Man-made Sound Sources in Irish Waters'. However, the proposed development works are located beyond a 500m distance from the coast and as such there is no marine environment within the ZoI.
- The NRA (2008) Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes notes a 150m potential disturbance zone for otter for breeding holts and 20m for non-breeding active holts. As such the study area included the proposed development site plus a 150m buffer to assess habitat suitability for otter and potential association with an SAC population.
- The potential disturbance zone for birds beyond the footprint of the proposed development was considered having regard to Cutts et al (2013)[7] and was defined as 500m.
- For SPA avian SCIs, regard was had to the SNH guidelines[8] for the core foraging ranges of SPA birds and a 15km range was adopted for consideration. That is, an assessment was made as to whether the habitats within the ZoI of the proposed development could act as foraging or roosting habitat for any avian SCIs of SPAs which are located within 15km of the Project, having regard to the conservation objective backing documents for each SPA.

There are no European sites within 3.9 km from the project. Based upon the above, there are no European sites within the Zone of Influence of the proposed project.

For SACs, consideration was given to existing records for qualifying features in the locality of the proposed development and an assessment of the potential for mobile qualifying features of European sites to use the lands within the disturbance and impact ZoIs. The habitats within the zone of impact of the proposed development include Improved Grassland (510), Hedgerows (460) and Other Artificial Surfaces (130). The surrounding environment comprises Ways (120), Buildings (110) and Amenity Grassland (520) with interspersed areas of Broadleaved Forest and Woodland (440) and Wet Grassland (540). These habitats and their urban context make them unsuitable to support any qualifying features associated with any SAC.

[4] Holman et al (2024). IAQM Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction, Institute of Air Quality Management, London.
[5] Inland Fisheries Ireland (2020) A Guide to the Protection of Watercourses through the use of Buffer Zones, Sustainable Drainage Systems, Instream Rehabilitation, Climate / Flood Risk and Recreational Planning.
[6] Scottish Environment Protection Agency (2014) Land Use Planning System SEPA Guidance Note 31. Guidance on Assessing the Impacts of Development Proposals on Groundwater Abstractions and groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems.
[7] Cutts N, Hemingway K and Spencer J (2013). The Waterbird Disturbance Mitigation Toolkit Informing Estuarine Planning and Construction Projects. Produced by the Institute of Estuarine and Coastal Studies (IECS). Version 3.2.
[8] Scottish Natural Heritage (2016) Guidance on Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Stormwaters from the project collected by the existing stormwater drainage system flow into the Orlagh Stream (EPA code: 09O11, order: 2) at Knocklyon Park, ca. 920m (direct distance) north-west of the proposed and exit at Dublin Bay (Code: IE_EA_090_0000) ca. ca. 16.9 km (instream distance) downstream. Dublin Bay is designated as South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (IE004024) and South Dublin Bay SAC (IE0000210). Given the remote instream distance storm waters from the project will be assimilated by the time they enter Dublin Bay. S-P-R connectivity can be ruled out.

The closest SPA is located 8.4 km from the project. In terms of birds there are no SPAs within 500 m potential disturbance zone for birds. There is also no S-P-R connectivity for significant effects on the supporting/wetland habitat of SPAs. However, consideration is given to the potential for landscape/ecological connectivity. The following SPAs are located within 15 km of the Project: Wicklow Mountains SPA (IE0004040) (ca. 3.9 km), South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (IE0004024) (ca. 8.4 km), North Bull Island SPA (IE0004006) (ca. 12.9 km), North-west Irish Sea SPA (IE0004236) (ca. 13.3 km) and Dalkey Island SPA (IE0004172) (ca. 14.3 km).

- Wicklow Mountains SPA (IE0004040): This SPA is located ca. 3.9 km from the project. Although the project lies outside of the core foraging range of 2km for Peregrine, the proposed site and 500m disturbance zone overlap with the core foraging range of 5km for Merlin (Nature Scot, 2023[9]). According to the Conservation Objectives, foraging habitats for this SCI include open and semi-open habitats. This SPA is considered further in terms of potential S-P-R connectivity and potential for significant effects in Table 3-1.
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (IE0004024): This SPA is located 8.4 km from the project. The project is located outside of the core foraging range of all avian SCIs with the exceptions of Tern species, Black-headed Gull and Light-bellied Brent Goose. Foraging ranges for Arctic tern, Common tern and Roseate tern lie between 23.2-40.5 km (Nature Scot, 2023[10]), approximately 18.5 km for Black-headed Gull (Nature Scot, 2023[10]) and the core foraging range of Light-bellied Brent Goose is assumed to be ca. 15 km based on the data provided in (SNH, 2016 [10]). The project and 500 m disturbance distance does not provide suitable habitat for Tern species which are largely marine species. Light-bellied Brent Goose will forage on improved grassland, which is present within 500m of the project. This SPA is considered further in terms of potential S-P-R connectivity and potential for significant effects in Table 3-1.
- North Bull Island SPA (IE0004063): This SPA is located approximately 12.9 km from the project. This SPA is located outside of the core foraging range of all avian SCIs with the exception of Black-headed Gull and Light-bellied Brent Goose. Core foraging range for Black-headed Gull is 18.5 km (Nature Scot, 2023[10]) and the core foraging range of Light-bellied Brent Goose is assumed to be ca. 15 km based on the data provided in (SNH, 2016[9]). The project and 500 m disturbance distance does not provide suitable breeding habitat for Black-headed Gull and provides suboptimal foraging habitat for the species. Light-bellied Brent Goose will forage on improved grassland, which is present within 500 m of the project. This SPA is considered further in terms of potential S-P-R connectivity and potential for significant effects in Table 3-1.

[9] Nature Scot (2023) Guidance Note 3: Guidance to support Offshore Wind applications: Marine Birds - Identifying theoretical connectivity with breeding site Special Protection Areas using breeding season foraging ranges. Version 1: January 2023. Nature Scot, Scotland's Nature Agency

[10] Scottish Natural Heritage (2016) Guidance on Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

- North-west Irish Sea SPA (IE0004236): This SPA is located approximately 13.3 km from the project. The project is located within the core foraging range of several avian SCIs, including Tern species, Gull species, Cormorant and Manx Shearwater (Nature Scot, 2023[11]). The project contains sub-optimal habitat for these predominantly marine SCIs. Therefore, there is no S-P-R connectivity for significant effects on North-west Irish Sea SPA and listed SCIs.
- Dalkey Island SPA (IE0004172): This SPA is located approximately 14.3 km from the project. The SPA is located within the core foraging range for Arctic tern, Common tern and Roseate tern which lie between 23.2-40.5 km (Nature Scot, 2023[10]). The project and 500 m disturbance distance does not provide suitable habitat for Tern species which are largely marine species. Therefore, there is no S-P-R connectivity for significant effects on Dalkey Island SPA and listed SCIs.

Based on the above, the following European sites are considered further in terms of potential S-P-R connectivity and potential for significant effects (see Table 3-1):

[11] Nature Scot (2023) Guidance Note 3: Guidance to support Offshore Wind applications: Marine Birds - Identifying theoretical connectivity with breeding site Special Protection Areas using breeding season foraging ranges. Version 1: January 2023. Nature Scot, Scotland's Nature Agency

Table 3-1: Identification of European Sites within the Zone of Influence of the proposed project

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Features (qualifying interests & special conservation interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	3.9	Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) [A098] Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) [A103]	The SPA is located outside of the ZoI of the Project and as such there is no potential for direct impacts on the SPA. However, consideration is given to potential for landscape/ecological connectivity. This SPA is located ca. 3.9 km from the Project. Core foraging ranges for Peregrine and Merlin are 2 km and 5 km (SNH, 2016[12]) respectively. In relation to Peregrine, the project is located outside of the core foraging range for this species. Therefore, there is no S-P-R connectivity and no significant effects on SCI Peregrine. Theoretically, the Project and 500 m disturbance zone overlap with the core foraging ranges of Merlin associated with the SPA. The Conservation Objectives document indicates that this species predominantly nests in mature trees and forages in open semi-natural grassland. However, the project is located in an urban context, does not comprise suitable breeding habitat and the grassland within 500 m of the project is disturbed, amenity grassland and sub-optimal. More valuable grassland habitat is present within the wider landscape. There will be no significant effects on SCI Merlin.	No
(004024)	South Dublin Bay and	8.4	Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) [A046] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A130] Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [A137]	The SPA is located outside of the ZoI of the Project and as such there is no potential for direct impacts on the SPA. However,	No

[12] Scottish Natural Heritage (2016) Guidance on Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Features (qualifying interests & special conservation interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects
	River Tolka Estuary SPA		Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141] Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [A143] Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [A144] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) [A192] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) [A194] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	consideration is given to potential for landscape/ecological connectivity. This SPA is located ca. 8.4 km from the Project. The project is located outside of the core foraging range of all avian SCIs with the exception of Black-headed Gull, Tern species and Light-bellied Brent Goose. Foraging ranges for Arctic tern, Common tern and Roseate tern lie between 23.2-40.5 km (Nature Scot, 2023[12]). The project and 500 m disturbance distance do not provide suitable habitat for Tern species which are largely marine species. Core foraging range for Black-headed Gull is 18.5 km (Nature Scot, 2023[13]). Birdwatch Ireland indicates that this species forages on insects within arable fields in coastal and inland habitats. The grassland within 500 m of the project is built environment and disturbed, amenity grassland and is sub-optimal. More valuable habitat is present within the wider landscape. There will be no significant effects on SCI Black-headed Gull. The core foraging range of Light-bellied Brent Goose is assumed to be ca. 15 km based on the data provided in (SNH, 2016[14]). Theoretically, the Project and 500 m disturbance zone overlap with the core foraging ranges of this SCI associated with the SPA. According to the Conservation Objective supporting document,	

[13] Nature Scot (2023) Guidance Note 3: Guidance to support Offshore Wind applications: Marine Birds - Identifying theoretical connectivity with breeding site Special Protection Areas using breeding season foraging ranges. Version 1: January 2023. Nature Scot, Scotland's Nature Agency

[14] Scottish Natural Heritage (2016) Guidance on Assessing Connectivity with Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Features (qualifying interests & special conservation interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects
				Light-bellied Brent Goose, have a preference for foraging in intertidal areas with the Eelgrass (*Zostera* sp) and will feed on improved grassland when their primary source of food becomes depleted. Amenity grassland is located within the 500 m disturbance zone of the project. However, there are no records of Light-bellied Brent Goose within 500m of the project and improved grassland is common in the greater landscape. There will be no significant effects on SCI Light-bellied Brent Goose.	
(004063)	North Bull Island SPA	12.9 km	Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) [A046] Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*) [A048] Teal (*Anas crecca*) [A052] Pintail (*Anas acuta*) [A054] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A130] Golden Plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) [A140] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141] Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [A143] Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [A144] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157] Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) [A160] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162] Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) [A169] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*) [A857]	The SPA is located outside of the ZoI of the Project and as such there is no potential for direct impacts on the SPA. However, consideration is given to potential for landscape/ecological connectivity. This SPA is located approximately 12.9 km from the Project. The project is located outside of the core foraging range of all avian SCIs with the exceptions of Light-bellied Brent Goose and Black-headed Gull. The core foraging range of Light-bellied Brent Goose is assumed to be ca. 15 km based on the data provided in (SNH, 2016[13]). Theoretically, the Project and 500 m disturbance zone overlap with the core foraging ranges of these SCIs associated with the SPA. According to the Conservation Objective supporting document, Light-bellied Brent Goose, have a preference for foraging in intertidal areas with the Eelgrass (*Zostera* sp) and will feed on improved grassland when their primary source of food becomes depleted. Amenity grassland is located within the 500 m disturbance zone of the project. However, there are no records of Light-bellied Brent Goose within 500m of the project and improved grassland is common in the greater landscape.	No

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Qualifying Features (qualifying interests & special conservation interests)	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects
			Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	There will be no significant effects on SCI Light-bellied Brent Goose. In relation to Black-headed Gull, Birdwatch Ireland indicates that this species forages on insects within arable fields in coastal and inland habitats. The grassland within 500 m of the project is built environment and disturbed, amenity grassland and is sub-optimal. More valuable habitat is present within the wider landscape. There will be no significant effects on SCI Black-headed Gull.	

3.3 Other plans and projects considered for potential in-combination effects

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires that:

> *"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".*

It is therefore required that the likely significant effects of the proposed project are considered in-combination with any other plans or projects within the zone of influence.

As there are no meaningful pathways for effects identified with respect to European sites - given the nature of the habitats that will be affected by the project and the distance from relevant SPA location for SCI species. There are no further considerations required as the S-P-R model has been completed with no potential effects that could arise from the proposed project.

3.4 Screening Conclusion

The results of the S-P-R modelling process identified that - given the scale and nature of the potential sources identified in Section 3.1 - there are **no likely significant effects** identified to any European sites.

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

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