

Tallaght Village Enhancement Scheme

Appropriate Assessment Screening

February 2026

PREPARED FOR

South Dublin County Council



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1. Introduction

1.1. Aims

Civic has been commissioned by South Dublin County Council to provide an Appropriate Assessment Screening in support of the Part 8 application for public realm enhancement at Tallaght Village centre.

The Tallaght Village Enhancement Scheme is a public realm and active travel project by South Dublin County Council designed to deliver a transformative upgrade for the historic core of Tallaght Village, focusing on Main Street and its key junctions with Old Blessington Road and Greenhills Road. The scheme aims to address long-standing issues identified through extensive public consultation, including traffic dominance, a poor and unsafe pedestrian environment, a lack of accessibility for all users, and the need to revitalise the village's social and commercial heart.

Under the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act (as amended), it is a requirement that each project submitted for planning consent undergoes assessment of its implications on any European site. This process is referred to as Appropriate Assessment (AA).

This report provides the Appropriate Assessment Screening at the current detailed design stage.

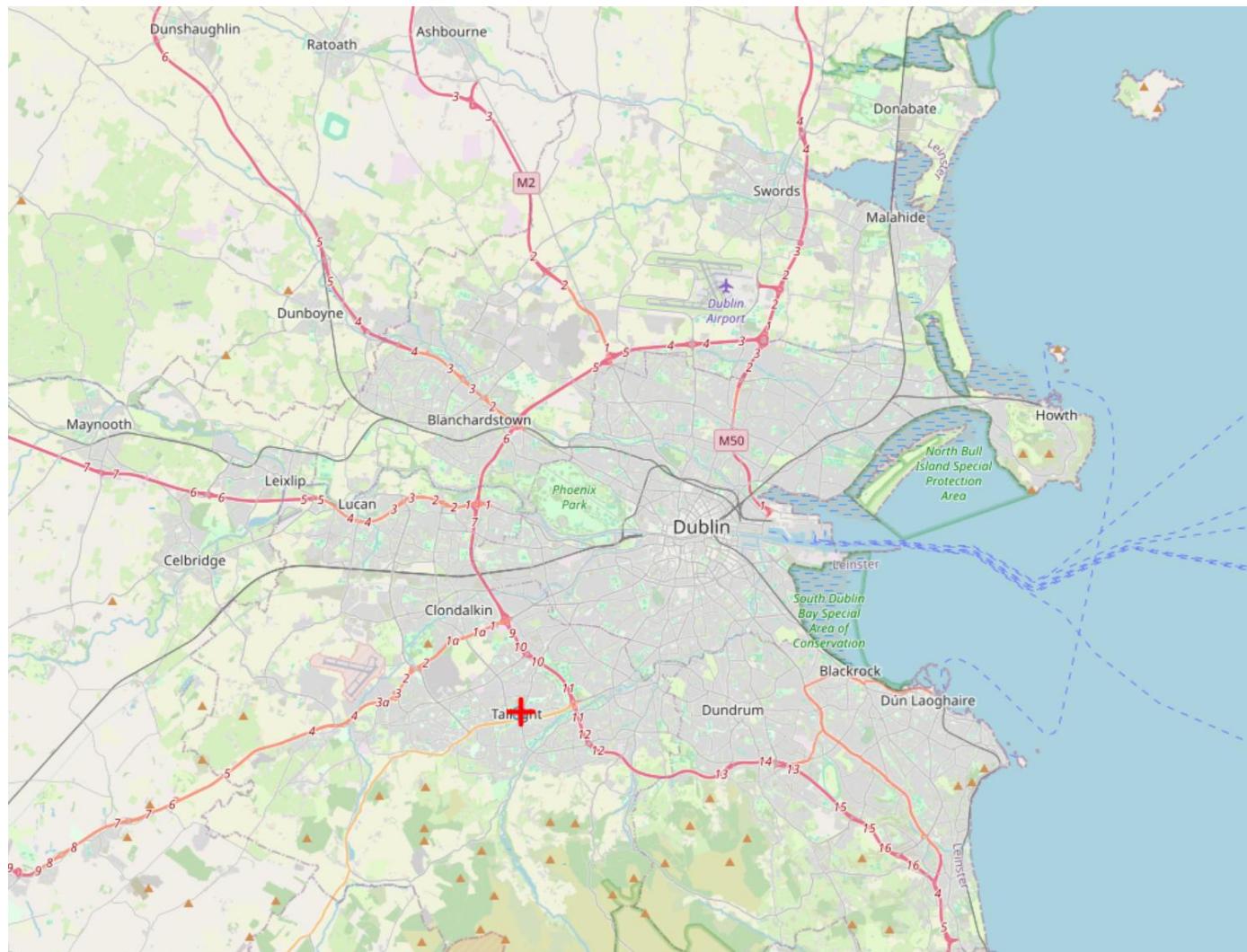
The aims of this report are to:

- Assess the potential for the public realm enhancement to incur likely significant adverse effect/s on the qualifying interests of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and/or Ramsar site if present within the zone of influence; and
- Collate all AA Screening information for the competent authority to determine whether full AA will be required for the works proposed.

This report has been prepared by Sophia Reeve, MSc. Reviews and Becky McLean BSc (Hons), FISEP (Fellow), CEnv (Chartered Environmentalist), who has over 23 years' experience.

1.2. Project Overview

The site is located within Tallaght Village, South Dublin and the approximate centre point of the site is located at 53°17'17.2"N, 6°21'34.7"W (see **Figure 1**).

Figure 1: Location of proposed project in Tallaght Village¹

The project area is illustrated in **Figure 1**. The area runs from the Dragon Inn in the west along Main Street where it meets Old Blessington Road and right along to the crossroads with the R819, the main junction in the centre of Tallaght Village. This stretch captures the entrance to Village Green, Leisureplex, the New Bancroft Centre and the other numerous shops and facilities located to the south of Main Street. It also has car parking facilities and access to St Mary's Priory, located on the northern side of Main Street.

Given the town centre location of the proposals, all works are within existing urban land, typically highways, hardstanding or associated verge (**Figure 2**).

There are no visible drainage ditches or watercourses that run through the proposed site.

The Whitestown Stream lies approximately 200m to the south of the boundary of the project. This flows eastwards along the side of the Tallaght Bypass until it connects to the River Dodder (1.4km to the east) of the project boundary. The River Dodder then flows east and north for another 13kms where it enters the River Liffey. The River Dodder's source comes from Bohernabreena Reservoir upstream, which lies approximately 13.4km of the project area (measured by direct distance 'as the crow flies').

The nearest designated site is Glenasmole Valley SPA, located 3.2km upstream from the site (see **Figure 3**). There are no other watercourses within or adjacent to the proposed site boundary.

¹ Map extract from the publicly available European Protection Agency Maps [online]. Available at: <https://gis-stg.epa.ie/EPAMaps/> [Accessed 22.01.2026]

Figure 2: Red line boundary for the assessed Tallaght Village Enhancement Scheme²Figure 3: Direction of flow of the waterways and closest location of designated sites³² Drawing prepared by Civic, January 2026.³ Drawing prepared by Civic with mapping data taken from <https://gis-stg.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

1.3. Appropriate Assessment: An Overview

The European 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 listed in the ‘Habitats Directive’ (Council Directive 92/43/EEC⁴) and the ‘Wild Birds Directive’ (Council Directive 2009/147/EC⁵). SAC established under the Habitats Directive, and SPA designated under the Birds Directive are collectively known as European Protected Sites and form a framework for the Natura 2000⁶ network.

The Habitats Directive is transposed into Irish legislation by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act (as amended). Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required under the Habitats Regulations to assess the potential for adverse effects of a plan or project, in isolation or in-combination with other plans or projects, on the conservation objectives of a European site.

AA focuses on the qualifying interests⁷ of qualifying (European) sites, and on the designation’s conservation objectives. It is completed by the competent authority⁸, informed by information provided by the applicant. An initial Screening Assessment identifies likely significant effects (LSE). Full AA is subsequently conducted for any LSE which cannot be screened out at the initial stage.

The initial Screening stage of AA identifies whether significant effects on a European site are likely to arise from the project assessed. If significant effects are likely to occur or if it is unclear whether significant effects are likely to occur, then the process moves on to full AA and is reported in a Natura Impact statement (NIS). Further information on the stages of AA is provided in **Chapter 3**.

1.4. Part 8 Planning Applications: An Overview

The proposed development has been identified as a Part 8 planning application. Part 8 developments are not subject to the standard planning application process and do not normally require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Appropriate Assessment (AA), unless specific statutory thresholds or the screening assessments indicate that the requirements have been triggered by the proposals.

The Part 8 application process, following submission to the planning authority, is summarised below:

- **Public consultation:** minimum of six weeks (comprising four weeks of public display and a further two weeks during which submissions and observations may be made).
- **Chief Executive’s Report:** preparation of a report by the planning authority’s Chief Executive for consideration by elected members within eight weeks of the close of public consultation (unless modifications or material alterations are proposed).
- **Elected Members’ consideration:** members to consider the proposals and make a decision within six weeks of receipt of the Chief Executive’s report.
- **Indicative minimum duration:** approximately 20 weeks in total.

⁴ Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/habitatsdirective/index_en.htm

⁵ Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective/index_en.htm

⁶ Pan-European network of all sites designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives, to which the requirements for appropriate assessment under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive apply.

⁷ The designation features of SACs are referred to as Qualifying Interests (and the designation features of SPAs are referred to as Special Conservation Interests which comprise bird species as well as wetland bird habitats. The term ‘qualifying interests’ will however be used throughout this report for simplicity to encompass both.

⁸ The ‘competent authorities’ are those charged with or responsible for consenting, authorising, adopting or deciding to proceed with a plan or project; typically considered to be the planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála (Irish Planning Appeals Board).

1.5. Structure of Report

This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 sets out the legal context and supporting guidance for this assessment.
- Chapter 3 details the AA Screening methodology.
- Chapters 4 to 6 provide the Screening assessment.
- Chapter 7 sets out the Screening conclusions.

2. Legislative Context

This AA Screening Report is based on best scientific knowledge and follows the approach outlined in current legislation and case law, guidance documents and Departmental Circulars as set out below.

2.1. Legislation

2.1.1. European Directive

The 'Habitats Directive' (Directive 92/43/EEC)⁹ is the principal legislative instrument for the protection and conservation of biodiversity within the European Union and lists certain habitats and species that must be protected within wildlife conservation areas. The 'Birds Directive' (Directive 2009/147/EC)¹⁰ provides for a network of sites within the European Union which protect birds at their breeding, feeding, roosting and wintering areas. The Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive form the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy.

The requirement for AA is set out in Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) which states:

"3. 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.

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

2.1.2. National Legislation

The Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive are transposed into Irish legislation by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011¹³, and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended¹⁴.

This AA Screening Report has been prepared with regard to relevant rulings by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), the High Court, and the Supreme Court, including but not limited to the following rulings. The rulings have been grouped into relevant topics.

2.2. Guidance Documents

This AA Screening Report has been prepared with regard to the following European and national guidance documents. The list is ordered by publication date.

⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/43/oj/eng>

¹⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2009/147/oj/eng>

2.2.1. European

The relevant European legislation is set out below.

- Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites – Methodological guidance on of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC
- The strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive – Guidance document – A summary¹¹
- Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC¹²
- Commission guidance on streamlining environmental assessments conducted under Article 2(3) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU)¹³
- Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the ‘Habitats Directive’ 92/43/EEC. Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solutions, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence, Opinion of the Commission¹⁴
- Communication from the Commission on the precautionary principle¹⁵

2.2.2. National Legislation

The Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive are transposed into Irish legislation by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011¹⁶, and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended¹⁷.

Other relevant legislation is provided below.

- OPR Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management¹⁸
- Guidance on the strict protection of certain animal and plant species under the Habitats Directive in Ireland¹⁹
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities²⁰
- Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10. Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities²¹
- Circular SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08. Appropriate Assessment of Land Use Plans²²
- Circular PD 2/07 & NPWS 1/07. Compliance conditions in respect of developments requiring (1) Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); or (2) having potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites²³

¹¹ [The strict protection of animal species of Community interest under the Habitats Directive – Guidance document – A summary - Environment](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XC0727(01))

¹² [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XC0727\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016XC0727(01))

¹³ <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a796c5ce5274a2acd18cb66/habitats-directive-iropi-draft-guidance-20120807.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2000:0001:FIN:en:PDF>

¹⁵ S.I. No 477 of 2011 – European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.

¹⁶ Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended

¹⁷ <https://www.opr.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/9729-Office-of-the-Planning-Regulator-Appropriate-Assessment-Screening-booklet-15.pdf>

¹⁸ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/files/strict-protection-of-certain-animal-and-plant-species.pdf>

¹⁹ https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf

²⁰ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/Circular%20NPW1-10%20%26%20PSSP2-10%20Final.pdf#:~:text=Ultimately%20it%20is,Directive%2C%20this%20guidance%20should%20be>

²¹ <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

²² <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-pd-02-07.pdf>

3. Assessment Methodology

3.1. Purpose

The purpose of this Screening assessment is to determine the potential of the proposed Tallaght Village enhancements to result in likely significant effects to the conservation objectives of European sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. It has been undertaken to comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive Article 6(3).

The following NPWS Generic Conservation Objectives have been considered in the Screening:

- For SACs, 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; and
- For SPAs, to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA. Where available, Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) designed to define favourable conservation status for a particular habitat or species at that site have been considered.

3.2. Consultation

South Dublin County Council (SDCC) hosted a series of public consultation events in October and November 2025 as part of the ongoing Tallaght Village Active Travel and Public Realm Improvement Scheme.

Over the two sessions, a wide cross-section of the community participated, including:

- Local residents and community groups
- Local businesses and service providers
- Representatives from St Maelruain's Church
- Representatives from the Priory
- Representatives from disability advocacy groups and accessibility stakeholders
- Elected representatives
- SDCC and the Design Team

Over 70 attendees came along to the four sessions held in October and a further 50 were present at the two sessions held in November.

Residents' key concerns focus on accessibility, safety, and the overall quality of the public realm. There is strong feedback that Tallaght Village is currently difficult to navigate for wheelchair users, people with buggies, and older residents due to uneven surfaces, steep gradients (particularly at the bypass bridge), narrow footpaths, and obstructive street furniture such as bollards and planters. Residents want improved lighting, consistent paving, accessible seating, and more inclusive spaces such as sensory gardens and autism-friendly areas. Safety was highlighted as an issue, with widespread concern about antisocial behaviour, poor Garda presence, and the village feeling unsafe after 22:00. Traffic-related dangers were also highlighted, including speeding, weak pedestrian crossing provision, and scooters using footpaths. Alongside this, residents want the village's heritage and identity better reflected, with suggestions for trails, public art, and interpretive signage, and there is a strong desire to restore "*pride of place*" through **greener, cleaner, more sociable and welcoming streets**.

Businesses share many of these concerns but place particular emphasis on practical access, parking/loading, and commercial viability. Traders repeatedly raised the need for short-term parking and timed loading bays to support deliveries, noting that illegal and dual parking creates hazards and blocks footpaths, particularly near the Dragon Inn. Poor signage to existing nearby car parks was seen as a simple but important fix. Businesses also flagged antisocial behaviour, vandalism, and lack of CCTV/Garda presence as damaging to evening trade and customer confidence. Traffic congestion—especially around key junctions—was described as severe and directly affecting footfall and accessibility for customers. Finally, derelict sites such as the Esso site and other vacant buildings were consistently described as major eyesores undermining the village's image and economic potential, alongside concerns about litter, bin overflow, and a need for stronger cleaning and maintenance regimes.

With specific regard to the environment – residents feedback included suggestions for rewilding, rain gardens, a preference for natural landscaping and solar-powered street lighting and support for waste management improvements, addressing litter and cleanliness concerns. They also commented that environmental quality and maintenance are crucial for the long-term success of the project.

The consultation provides general support for the proposed development and the environmental improvements.

3.3. The Stages of Appropriate Assessment

AA is a four-stage process with tests at each stage, as summarised in **Table 1**. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required. This report delivers **Stage 1: Screening**.

Table 1: Stage of Appropriate Assessment

Stage	Process	Output
Stage 1: Screening	Identifies whether the proposed project is directly connected to, or necessary for, the management of a European site(s). Identifies whether the project may have significant impact/s upon European site/s, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.	The output from this stage is a determination of not significant, significant, potentially significant, or uncertain effects. The latter three determinations will cause the project to be brought forward to Stage 2.
Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment	Assess impact/s of the proposed development on the integrity of a European site(s), either alone or in-combination. Integrity is assessed with respect to: (i) site conservation objectives; and (ii) site structure, function and overall integrity.	The output from this stage is a Natura Impact Statement (NIS). This document must include sufficient information for the competent authority to carry out the appropriate assessment. If the assessment is negative, i.e. adverse effects on the integrity of a site cannot be excluded despite incorporation of measures to avoid or reduce the adverse effects, then the process must consider alternatives (Stage 3).
Stage 3: Assessment of Alternatives	Assess alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of a European site. May be carried out concurrently with Stage 2 in order to find the most appropriate solution.	If no alternatives exist or all alternatives would result in negative impacts to site integrity, then the process either moves to Stage 4 or the project is abandoned. Also reported in the NIS.
Stage 4: Assessment where Adverse Impacts Remain	Undertaken when it has been determined that a project will have adverse effects on the integrity of a European site, but where no alternatives exist. Identifies compensatory measures where, in the context of Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.	This stage should be avoided, if at all possible, the test of IROPI and the requirements for compensation are extremely onerous. Also reported in the NIS.

3.4. Stage 1: Screening

This is a preliminary assessment to determine if a proposal is likely to have a significant effect on conservations objectives. Even small/modest effects can be classified as significant. If no significant effects are likely, further stages are not required. There are four key steps to the screening process.

1. Project Description and Site Context
2. Identify all relevant European site within the Zone of Influence (ZoI)
3. Assess likely significant effects on the conservation objectives of the site/s in relation to the project alone and in combination with other plans and projects
4. Produce screening conclusion statement

The methodology to each step is set out below

3.4.1. Project Description and Site Context

The Tallaght Village Enhancement Scheme is a public realm and active travel project by South Dublin County Council designed to deliver a transformative upgrade for the historic core of Tallaght Village, focusing on Main Street and its key junctions with Old Blessington Road and Greenhills Road.

The scheme aims to address long-standing issues identified through extensive public consultation, including traffic dominance, a poor and unsafe pedestrian environment, a lack of accessibility for all users, and the need to revitalise the village's social and commercial heart.

The project's vision is to create a people-first, accessible, and vibrant village centre. This will be achieved through a multi-disciplinary design approach that includes:

- Re-assignment of road space to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, with options including one-way systems, bus-only corridors, and partial pedestrianisation being considered.
- The creation of new and enhanced public realm spaces, including plazas, seating areas, and social gathering spots.
- Significant greening and biodiversity enhancement through the planting of trees and the integration of nature-based solutions like Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).
- The celebration of Tallaght's unique heritage by weaving its stories into the design of the streetscape.
- A focus on safety and accessibility for all, with improved lighting, consistent surfaces, and the removal of street clutter.

The ultimate goal is to create a high-quality, safe, and sustainable environment that promotes socialising, supports local businesses, encourages active travel, and fosters a renewed sense of community pride in Tallaght Village.

As outlined in **Chapter 1** 'Project Overview' and shown on the redline boundary plan, the project lies entirely within an urban footprint. The majority is existing hardstanding. The overall benefit will bring an increase in vegetated area. All works within the highways will be subject to DMRB specification, including drainage to maintain water quality and quantity within the local ditch and watercourse system. The wider development will also comply with the requirements stipulated in DMRB.

Connectivity of pedestrian or cycle access beyond the town centre into the wider landscape may benefit as a result of a shift in the population toward these modes of active transport. However, increased levels of recreational activity beyond the urban centre such that may incur adverse impact are anticipated to be minimal and, as such, are reasonably excluded from this assessment.

Further detail of the project description and site context are provided in **Chapter 4**.

3.4.2. Spatial Scope: Identification of Relevant European Sites

Identification of relevant sites to include in the assessment followed the Source-Pathway-Receptor model. If there is no pathway or the Qualifying Interests of the European site are not vulnerable (either directly or indirectly) to any impact predicted from the proposed development, then a site has not been screened in.

European sites are taken to include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and candidate SAC designated under the Habitats Directive for particular habitat types (Annex I) and species (Annex II).
- Special Protection Areas (SPA) and proposed SPA designated under Article 4(1) of the Birds Directive for rare and vulnerable birds listed in Annex I, or Article 4(2) for regularly occurring migratory species not listed in Annex I; and
- Ramsar sites identified as internationally important wetland habitat under the 'Ramsar Convention' 1971³⁰ are also considered in the assessment despite being at the wider international level.

Zone of Influence

The ZOI for a project is the area over which qualifying interests may be subject to significant effects as a result of the proposed project and associated activities. The ZOI is likely to extend beyond the project site where there are ecological or hydrological links beyond the site boundaries which may result in an impact upon qualifying interests, in line with the Source-Pathway-Receptor model. The zone of influence will vary for different ecological features depending on their sensitivity to an environmental change.

An initial 2km ZOI was applied to the project area, to identify European Sites for consideration in this Screening. Habitats within the project area do not include Annex 1 habitats, nor do they serve as Functionally Linked Land (FLL)³¹ for Annex I species. In addition, a wider precautionary review of European Sites within a 15 km radius of the project area was undertaken, in line with established Appropriate Assessment screening practice and guidance. This wider review was carried out to identify any European Sites that could potentially be affected via indirect pathways such as hydrological connectivity, air emissions, or ecological linkages.

As noted earlier under '*Project Description and Site Context*', the project focuses on enhancing connectivity for users within the town centre. Increased levels of recreational activity beyond the urban centre are anticipated to be minimal and, as such, are reasonably excluded from this assessment. With no protected habitats immediately adjacent to the project area, no extension of the ZOI was considered appropriate for specific consideration of recreational impact.

South Dublin Bay SAC and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA are located outside the initial 2 km ZOI but fall within the wider 15 km precautionary review area when measured as the crow flies (approximately 11 km). When measured along the route of the relevant watercourse, the distance increases to approximately 17.5 km.

Tallaght is located in the greater Dublin area and the closest European Site to the project area is the Glenasmole Valley SAC – located 3.2km south from the project area (measured by direct distance or 5.6km when measured along the route of connected watercourses (from Whitestown Stream to the River Dodder).

The SAC is located upstream of the site, and the River Dodder flows from the designation, past the site (connecting to Whitestown Stream and then heading east and entering the River Liffey at the Dublin Docks and the Grand Canal (14.5km when measured along the route of the connected watercourses).

Typically, a 500m ZOI is applied for fresh water hydrological pathways to reflect potential pollution impacts that may result from construction. Risk of pollution impacts beyond this distance are considered proportionately. The Whitestown Stream is located approximately 190m south of the proposed development, it is not hydrologically connected to the project area and is also downstream of the closest designated SAC area (Glenasmole).

Consideration of potential LSE's and in combination effects is provided below for all sites within the 15km precautionary ZOI.

Spatial mapping of European sites was downloaded from NPWS. Qualifying interests and conservation objectives of the sites concerned were determined from the NPWS designated site website³².

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

A risk-based approach using the precautionary principle was adopted in the assessment of LSE. A conclusion of 'no significant effect' therefore has only been reached where it is considered very unlikely, based on current knowledge and the information available.

³¹ Functionally Linked Land (FLL) refers to areas of land or sea that are outside the boundaries of officially designated protected sites (like Special Protection Areas or Special Areas of Conservation) but are critical to supporting the populations of species for which those sites were designated.

When assessing impact, qualifying interests of conservation interest are only considered relevant where a tangible Source-Pathway-Receptor link exists between the proposed development and qualifying species or habitats. In order for an impact to occur, there must be a risk initiated by having a 'source' (e.g. construction works), a 'receptor' (e.g. a protected species, associated aquatic, terrestrial or marginal habitats), and an impact pathway between the source and the receptor (e.g. a watercourse which connects the proposed development site to the designated site).

If there is no pathway or the qualifying interests of the European site are not vulnerable (either directly or indirectly) to any impact resulting from the proposed development, then a likely significant effect has been ruled out.

Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objectives Potentially Affected

Knowledge of the proposed construction and operation was used to determine which qualifying interests/conservation objectives could be affected by the proposed development. Consideration has been given to the potential for the development proposed to result in significant effects associated with:

- Physical loss of/damage to habitat (including FLL).
- Non-physical disturbance (noise, vibration and light).
- Air pollution (including that resulting from increased traffic, dust); and
- Recreational pressure.

In-combination Effects

In-combination assessment considers those impacts of the project that may not be significant but, in-combination with other plans or projects, may collectively become so. It focuses on the plans or projects which may incur impact on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the European sites already screened in.

Where no LSE has been found for a project alone, an in-combination assessment is conducted as part of the Appropriate Assessment Screening. In contrast, where LSEs are identified, in-combination assessment is later conducted at the NIS stage.

An initial list of Plans, and proposals within such Plans, were identified for consideration in the assessment by the Civic team (see **Table 2**). The list includes adopted and finalised draft plans where these are formally published or submitted for consultation or adoption.

Table 2: Plans and projects to be considered in-combination

Plan/Project Name	Description
Plans	
Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly ²⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three cross cutting key principles (healthy placemaking, climate action and economic opportunity). • Includes key future priorities with regards to major town centres and county (principal) town centres including Tallaght. • Identifies potential development of strategic employment development areas in the Dublin Metropolitan Area (considering Tallaght Town Centre and Cookstown as potential for intensification of industrial lands and the development of a new-mixed use district). All linked to improved bus connections. • Identifies key pressure topics such as drinking water and water management in general so that water is used as efficiently as possible, address water wastage, water conservation and reduce leakage. • Suggesting approaches to manage surface water through SUDS to support biodiversity amongst a number of other things.
South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 ²⁵	<p>The Plan provides a framework for land use development and activities with potential for construction and operation source effects throughout the county.</p> <p>The County Development Plan sets out the framework to guide future development in South Dublin, with Tallaght noted as a major retail town centre and also an energy district. Key designations close to the site include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use Zoning around the village to protect, improve and provide for the future development of Village Centres

²⁴ <https://www.emra.ie/rses-download/EMRA-RSES.pdf>

²⁵ <https://www.sdcc.ie/en/services/planning-building-control/development-plan/plan-2022-2028/>

Plan/Project Name	Description
Plans	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tallaght Village Architectural Conservation Area Designation to protect the character of the village • An area is proposed to protect and/or provide for a Burial Ground at Saint Maelruains's. • Open Space Designation located to the west of the Westpark housing area. This area has been designated for uses such as Allotments, Community Centre, Cultural Use, Open Space, Recreational Facility, Sports Club/Facility. <p>No specific reference to developments which would impact the SAC or the waterways noted above.</p>
Tallaght Town Centre Local Area Plan (adopted in 2020)²⁶	<p>A strategic framework for the sustainable development of Tallaght Town Centre. Key suggestions include greening the urban environment and to recognise the key role the Dodder River plays in the County's green infrastructure network as a linear park, greenway and an area of special amenity, recreational, heritage, geology, biodiversity and conservation value. It is an objective of the Plan to develop strategic and green linkages and corridors between the Dodder Valley and Tallaght Town Centre (Objective CC 1). This would provide improved connectivity to the river that is downstream of the designated SAC.</p>
Water Action Plan 2024 - A River Basin Management Plan for Ireland²⁷	<p>It is proposed that IFI will lead a multi-agency whole of catchment pilot project on the River Dodder from source to sea with the aim of examining the feasibility of opening up this heavily urbanised catchment to migratory fish species by mitigating the five most significant barriers in the lower reaches and progressing to the next stage, as appropriate.</p>
Projects	
	<p>A search was conducted for other plans and projects within the vicinity of the Proposed Development using the South Dublin County Council planning portal²⁸ map viewer and through consultation with the project team. The search was limited to the five-year period preceding the date of issue of this report and excluded retention applications (which are typically local-scale developments where impacts have already occurred), as well as withdrawn and refused applications.</p> <p>The following plans and projects were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nursing Home Development (SD22A/0035; SD24A/0202W): Permission was granted in February 2023 and subsequently amended in February 2025 for the construction of a four-storey nursing home comprising 120 bedrooms and associated services on lands to the east of, and within the curtilage of, St. Mary's Priory, Old Greenhills Road, Tallaght. • Mixed-Use / Residential Development (SD24A/0893W): An application for the demolition of the former Ulster Bank building and construction of a mixed-use building and a residential block is currently under appeal. As the proposal has not been permitted at the time of writing, and its implementation is uncertain, it has not been considered further in the in-combination assessment. • Potential Future Development – N81 / Old Esso Site: While the project team area aware that there is potential for future development at the junction of Main Street and Greenhills Road, no planning applications have been submitted to the planning authority to date. In the absence of any confirmed proposals or available information, this has not been considered further. <p>Having regard to the scale and nature of the Proposed Development, the degree of separation from European Sites, and while acknowledging the presence of a potential indirect pathway via the foul drainage network, it is not predicted that the Proposed Development would give rise to likely significant effects on any European Site, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will improve the existing drainage arrangements through its design, representing a betterment of the current baseline rather than mitigation relied upon to avoid effects in an Appropriate Assessment context. As such, no increase in loading or adverse</p>

²⁶ [tallaght-town-centre-local-area-plan-2020.pdf](https://planning.agileapplications.ie/southdublin/search-applications/)

²⁷ [water-action-plan-2024.pdf](https://planning.agileapplications.ie/southdublin/search-applications/)

²⁸ <https://planning.agileapplications.ie/southdublin/search-applications/> (Accessed 10.02.26)

Plan/Project Name	Description
Plans	
	effects on downstream receiving waters or European Sites is anticipated. In addition, the AA Screening undertaken for the permitted nursing home development concluded that it would not result in likely significant effects on Natura 2000 sites, either alone or in-combination. Accordingly, no significant in-combination effects are predicted.

3.5. Screening Conclusion Statement

To support the decision-making of the competent authority, clear statement of the conclusion reached, and the basis upon which it was reached is provided in **Chapter 7**. Where significant effects cannot be excluded – either alone or in-combination – full appropriate assessment is required to inform determination of the planning decision.

4. Project Description and Site Context

4.1. Project Objective/s

The project's vision is to create a people-first, accessible, and vibrant village centre, a high-quality, safe, and sustainable environment that promotes socialising, supports local businesses, encourages active travel, and fosters a renewed sense of community pride in Tallaght Village.

The proposed urban realm enhancements at Tallaght Village are not in direct connection with, nor are they currently considered necessary to, the conservation management of any nearby European sites.

4.2. Project Location and Site Context

The project location is described in **Chapter 1 - 'Project Overview'**.

A summary of the 'Project Description and Site Context' is provided in **Chapter 3, Section 3.4.1**.

4.3. Proposed Development Works

The proposed General Arrangement Plan is provided in **Appendix A**.

4.3.1. Construction

The project brief outlines a rapid pre-construction programme. However, the full timeline includes several distinct, sequential stages. A specific start date for construction has not been set and is dependent on the successful completion of the preceding phases.

SDCC have also indicated there is likely to be trial periods before construction occurs, these will likely be temporary bollards trailing the traffic management scenarios developed in the Phase I and ii stages.

The indicative timeline is as follows:

- **Phase 1: Design & Planning (Current Phase - Late 2025 / Early 2026)**

The project brief specifies an ambitious 6-month programme for Stages i (Preliminary Design), ii (Detailed Design), and iii (Tender Preparation). This phase includes public consultation, the development of a preferred design option, full technical design, and the preparation of the Part 8 planning application and construction tender documents.

- **Phase 2: Part 8 Statutory Planning Process (Indicative: Early 2026)**

Once the design is finalised, the project must go through the formal Part 8 public planning process. This involves a minimum 4-week period of public display, a further 2-week period for submissions, and a final vote by the elected councillors of South Dublin County Council. This statutory process typically takes several months to complete.

- **Phase 3: Contractor Procurement (Indicative: Early – Mid 2026)**

Following a successful Part 8 planning approval, SDCC will run a procurement competition to appoint a suitable construction contractor.

- **Phase 4: Construction (Stage iv)**

The construction timeline itself has not yet been determined. The start date and duration will depend on:

1. The successful outcome of the Part 8 planning process.
2. The successful and timely appointment of a contractor.
3. The final project budget and funding allocation.
4. The complexity of the chosen design option.
5. Coordination with the wider BusConnects programme, which has its own implementation schedule.

Based on these necessary preceding stages, the earliest indicative start for construction on site would likely be in late 2026 / Early 2027.

The proposed development would consist of the following:

- Upgrading and realignment of the existing footpath/walkway
- Public realm improvement works in Tallaght Village; including traffic calming, provision of cycle facilities, footpath upgrade and realignment of road (if required)
- Provision of a pedestrian crossing on main street (location & design subject to consideration)
- Provision of public lighting & CCTV (if required)
- Enhancement/enlargement of public realm space
- Additional pedestrian and cyclist connections
- Efficient car park layouts that maximise functionality (caters for deliveries)
- New entry detail on approaches to the village
- Removal of street clutter and minimisation of signage
- Landscape design that will increase trees, planting, SUDs and biodiversity
- EV Charging options
- Active Play & teen space with the focus on natural measures
- Street Art
- All ancillary works

Design of the changes to the road layouts and associated drainage will be in accordance with the current best practice requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).

With the exception of excavations to accommodate tree pits and any required underground utilities, the works are typically superficial. Modification of ground levels will be required only to deliver safe transfer of people, cycles and vehicles between adjacent existing levels.

Construction will be carried out in accordance with the standard contractual requirements of the council for best environmental practice. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (or equivalent) will be in place as a standard requirement from the successful contractor detailing the delivery of the works whilst minimising environmental impacts.

4.3.2. Operation

The project is anticipated to be in place for perpetuity.

As the project supports the shift from vehicular to active transport modes within Tallaght Village, no adverse air quality impacts are predicted during operation in relation to traffic.

As described in **Chapter 3: Project Description and Site Context**, “*increased levels of recreational activity beyond the urban centre are anticipated to be minimal and, as such, are reasonably excluded from this assessment*”.

Consideration of climate change will form part of the proposals during the detailed design stage. This will include tree/planting species selection, use of sustainable urban drainage systems, hard landscape materials selection etc.

4.3.3. Decommissioning

As the project is anticipated to continue in perpetuity, decommissioning is not assessed.

5. Identification of Relevant European Sites

European Sites and their associated qualifying interests that represent receptors to potential impacts occur in the project Zol where an impact pathway establishes a link between the project site and European site receptor. Alternatively, where the project site is likely to play an important role in supporting populations of mobile species listed as qualifying interests (i.e. 'functionally linked land') for surrounding European sites.

Relevant European Sites were identified using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model, and information on the qualifying interests and conservation objectives. This information was used to conduct a high-level assessment with consideration of the nature, extent and programme of work in order to screen out European sites. Adopting the precautionary principle, all SACs within a 2km radius of the proposal sites were included. There are no Ramsar sites or SPAs within this radius.

5.1. Zone of Influence

The relevant Zols applied to this assessment, as detailed in **Chapter 3**, are:

- 2km for all European sites
- A wider precautionary review of European Sites within a 15 km radius
- 500m for freshwater hydrological connectivity.

5.2. European Sites Screened

There are no European sites within the 2km Zol. The closest designated site is Glenasmole Valley SAC, which is 3.2km upstream from the project area and does not have any direct hydrological connectivity to the proposed development. On this basis, the potential for likely significant effects can be excluded and the site is not considered further. The location of Glenasmole Valley SAC in relation to the project area is illustrated in **Figure 4**. The figure also shows the location of the Wicklow Mountains SPA and SAC which are located to the south of Glenasmole Valley SAC.

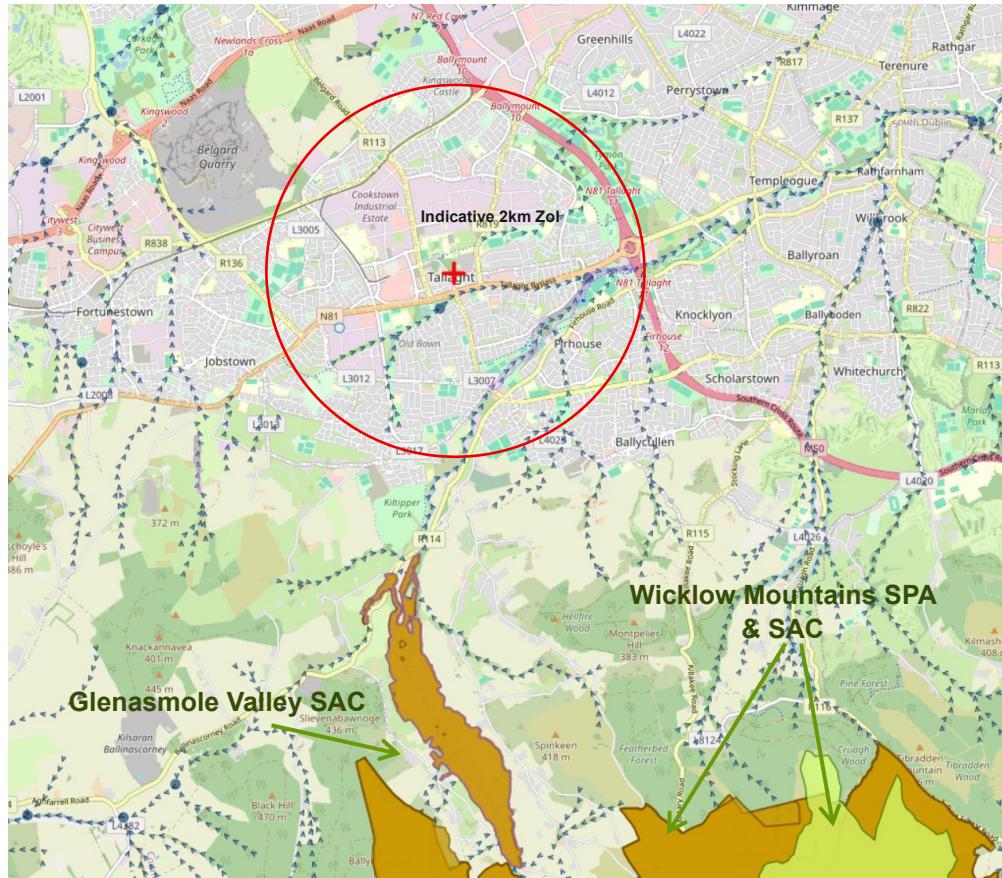


Figure 4 – Location of Glenasmole Valley SAC and other neighbouring designated sites

Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC lies outside the initial 2 km Zone of Influence but also within the wider 15 km precautionary review area. The SAC is located within a separate river catchment to the proposed development and there is no hydrological connectivity or plausible impact pathway. On this basis, the potential for likely significant effects can be excluded and the site is not considered further.

South Dublin Bay SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and Sandymount Strand/Tolka Estuary RAMSAR Site are located outside the initial 2 km Zone of Influence but fall within the wider 15 km precautionary review area when measured as the crow flies (approximately 11 km). When measured along the route of the relevant watercourse, this distance increases to approximately 17.5 km. Notwithstanding this, a potential indirect pathway exists via the wastewater collection and treatment network, with treated effluent ultimately discharging to Dublin Bay. Therefore, these European sites are retained for further consideration as part of the screening assessment.

All sites considered are provided in **Table 3**.

Table 3 – Summary of European Sites Considered at Screening Stage

European Site	Site Code	Distance from Project	Potential Pathway (Source–Pathway–Receptor)	Screening Outcome	Justification
Glenasmole Valley SAC	001209	3.2 km south (upstream); 5.6 km via hydrological route	No pathway: Site is upstream of the project; no hydrological connection from works area to SAC. No airborne, disturbance, or recreational pathways due to distance and urban separation.	Screened Out	The SAC lies upstream of the project area. There is no hydrological, ecological or disturbance pathway, and habitats/species are not vulnerable to project activities.
Wicklow Mountains SAC	002122	~9–10 km south	No pathway: No hydrological link; no mobile species supported by the project area; no functional linkage.	Screened Out	The SAC is remote with no hydrological connectivity and no relevant mobile species likely to use the site as functionally linked land.
Wicklow Mountains SPA	004040	~9–10 km south	No pathway: Distance and lack of suitable habitat eliminate any potential linkage.	Screened Out	The SPA is far outside any plausible Zol. The project area does not support qualifying bird species, nor are there pathways for noise or visual disturbance.
Rye Water Valley / Carton SAC	001398	~15 km (different catchment)	No pathway: Lies in a separate river catchment; no hydrological or other link.	Screened Out	No Source–Pathway–Receptor link due to complete hydrological separation.
South Dublin Bay SAC	000210	~11 km (17.5 km via watercourse)	Potential indirect pathway via wastewater network.	Screened In	Although theoretically connected via the urban foul network, the project does not generate additional wastewater flows or pollutant loadings. Further consideration to confirm no LSE.
South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA	004024	~11 km (17.5 km via watercourse)	Potential indirect pathway via wastewater network.	Screened In	As above: no increase in foul loading; no impact pathway to qualifying bird species. Further consideration to confirm no LSE.

European Site	Site Code	Distance from Project	Potential Pathway (Source–Pathway–Receptor)	Screening Outcome	Justification
Sandymount Strand / Tolka Estuary RAMSAR Site	RAMSAR	~11 km (≈17.5 km via watercourse)	Potential <i>indirect</i> pathway via public wastewater network, identical to that for South Dublin Bay SAC & SPA.	Screened In	The project results in no increase in foul water loading and no pollutant pathways and therefore cannot influence the ecological character of the RAMSAR site. The site overlaps with the SAC/SPA and with the theoretical pathway, it has been considered further to confirm no LSE.

6. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

6.1. Introduction

In accordance with Regulation 42(7) of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and NPWS/OPR guidance, no mitigation measures have been relied upon in reaching the conclusions of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment. Only the project as described, without any avoidance or reduction measures, has been assessed. Any environmental improvements forming part of the proposed design (e.g. surface water management enhancements) are considered inherent elements of the project and not mitigation for screening purposes.

The maintenance of habitats and species within individual European sites at favourable conservation condition contributes to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national and international level. It is therefore necessary to identify any potential impacts of the proposed development on the conservation status of European sites.

6.2. The Proposed Development

The Tallaght Village Enhancement Scheme comprises small-scale public realm works within an established urban environment and will not result in the creation of new foul drainage connections or any increase in wastewater loading beyond the existing baseline. An indirect pathway to European sites exists via the public wastewater network, however, the scheme will not contribute additional flows, or pollutant loads to this system. Accordingly, there is no mechanism by which the proposal could exacerbate existing pressures within the wastewater network or affect downstream Natura 2000 sites (South Dublin Bay SAC and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA).

Surface water represents the only plausible environmental pathway associated with the proposed works. The scheme is specifically designed to reduce surface water runoff rates and volumes through improved surface treatments and sustainable drainage principles. These measures will ensure that surface water discharges are maintained at, or reduced below, existing urban baseline conditions in both quality and quantity. As a result, the proposal will not increase sediment, nutrient or contaminant transfer to the local drainage network or downstream receiving waters and therefore cannot give rise to effects on European sites.

During construction, works will be temporary, localised and of short duration, and will take place within a heavily urbanised area remote from the designated European site or sensitive aquatic receptor. No in-stream works, dewatering, or direct discharges to watercourses are proposed. Standard construction management practices will be implemented, ensuring that the risk of accidental runoff, sediment mobilisation or pollution is negligible. Given the absence of nearby surface waters and the highly modified receiving environment, any potential construction-phase effects would be strictly local and transient and are not predicted to interact with identified pathways to Natura 2000 sites.

Further assessment provided below to rule out potential significant effects.

6.3. Direct and Indirect Impacts of Proposed Development

6.3.1. Physical Loss of/Damage to Habitat

South Dublin Bay SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and Sandymount Strand / Tolka Estuary RAMSAR Site are located approximately 11 km from the site as the crow flies.

Habitats within the site do not include those listed as of qualifying interest, nor may they support species of qualifying interest, for European sites within the Zol. There is no risk of habitat loss or damage from any FLL.

6.3.2. Non-physical Disturbance

There will be no risk of non-physical disturbance, such as noise vibration or lighting, upon qualifying species for any of the identified sites given the localised extent of work within the centre of Tallaght Village.

6.3.3. Changes to Hydrology

An indirect pathway to South Dublin Bay SAC and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA exists via the public wastewater network, however, the scheme will not contribute additional flows, or pollutant loads to this system.

The nature of proposed works does not change the existing urban land use in anything other than a localised scale. Further, the nature of change is typically surface reconfiguration of the road and active transport layout, rationalisation of car and bus movements, parking, or from existing hard standing to natural surface green infrastructure.

Given that the proposed development will not result in any additional wastewater flows or pollutant loading during operation, and taking account of the absence of a plausible mechanism for significant pollution or sediment release to reach the designated sites, any pollution or silt-laden run-off event during construction or operation can be excluded from resulting in likely significant effects on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the SAC.

6.3.4. Air Pollution

Risk of air pollution through increased vehicular activity during construction is considered minimal and temporary. Once operable, the proposed project is predicted to reduce the overall level of vehicular activity in favour of active transport within the town centre.

There is no tangible risk of air pollution to the designated sites during construction or operation.

6.3.5. Recreational Pressure

Increased levels of recreational activity are not expected to occur beyond the urban centre. There is no tangible risk of recreational pressure on European sites or associated FLL as a result of the urban realm village enhancements proposed.

6.4. Potential Effects on European Sites

The sites are designated for the following qualifying interests

South Dublin SAC

- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [Code - 1140]
- Annual vegetation of drift lines [Code - 1210]
- Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [Code - 1310]
- Embryonic shifting dunes [Code - 2110]

South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA

- Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) [Code - A046]
- Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [Code - A130]
- Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [Code - A137]
- Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [Code - A141]
- Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [Code - A143]
- Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [Code - A144]
- Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [Code - A149]
- Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [Code - A157]
- Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [Code - A162]
- Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [Code - A179]
- Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) [Code - A192]
- Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [Code - A193]
- Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) [Code - A194]
- Wetland and Waterbirds [Code - A999]

Sandymount Strand / Tolka Estuary RAMSAR Site

*Extensive intertidal mud and sand flats which extend for almost three kilometres at their widest, and an intertidal biogenic reef and a small section of saltmarsh. The sands support the largest stand of seagrass beds (*Zostera noltii*) on Ireland's east coast. South Dublin Bay is the premier site in Ireland for the Mediterranean gull (*Larus melanocephalus*) and is a regular autumn roosting ground for significant numbers of terns. More than 1% of the global population of light-bellied brent goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*), black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*) and bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) are present in the Site.*

Although an indirect pathway exists via the public wastewater network, the proposed development will not result in additional flows or pollutant loads to this system, and there is no mechanism by which it could affect the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the designated sites. In summary, no likely significant effects are predicted.

6.5. In-combination Effects

Although an indirect pathway exists via the public wastewater network, the proposed Tallaght Village Enhancement Scheme will not result in additional wastewater flows or pollutant loads to the system. Consequently, there is no mechanism by which the development could affect the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of these designated sites. On this basis, likely significant effects can be excluded, and no further assessment, including in-combination effects, is required.

7. Screening Conclusions

7.1. Screening Conclusion Statement

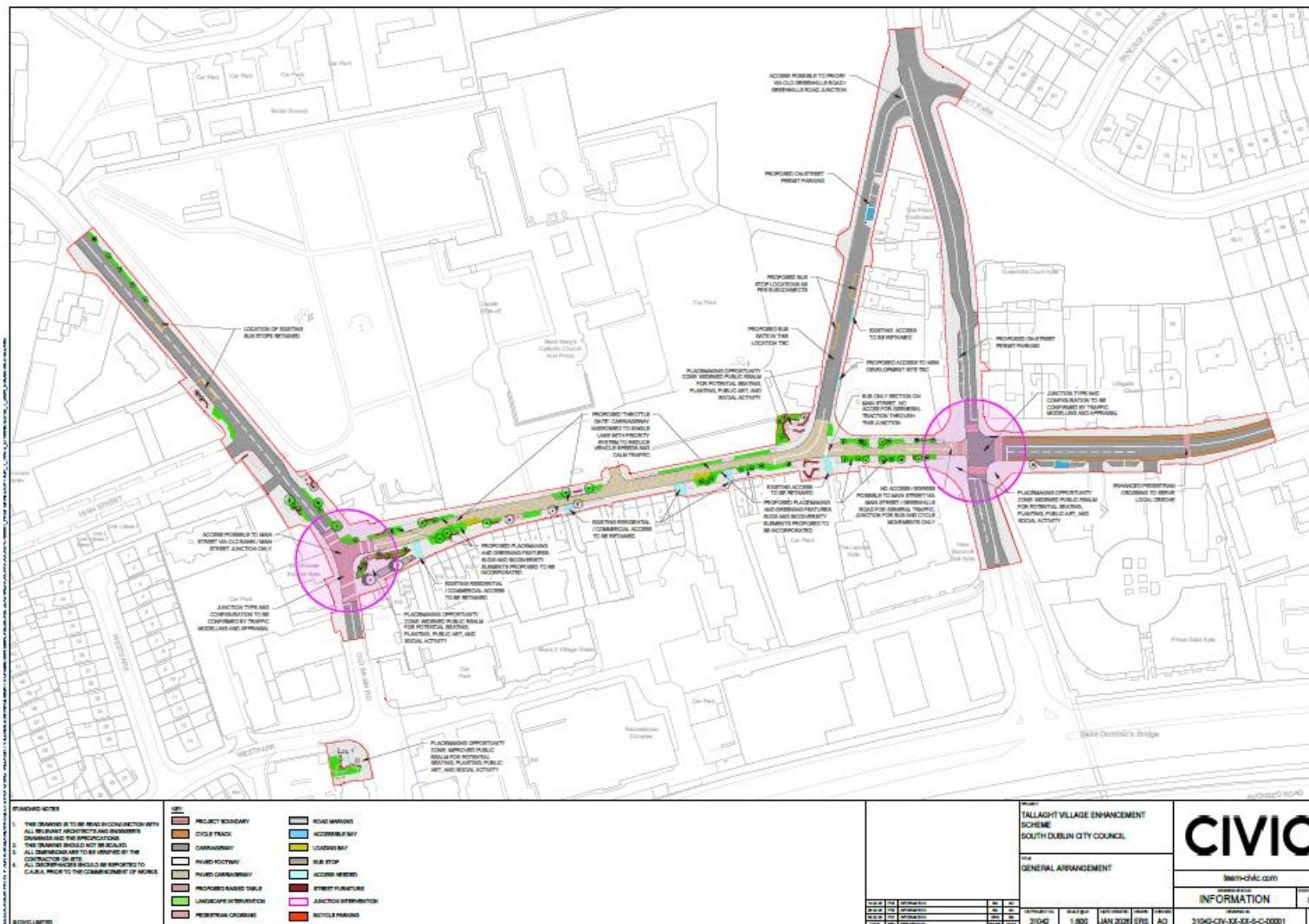
The AA Screening has been completed in accordance with best practice guidance, based on the available detailed design information.

Potential impacts associated with the Proposed Development are summarised in **Chapter 6**. This Screening concludes that the Proposed Development would not give rise to likely significant effects on any European Site, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

This conclusion is based on the nature and scale of the works proposed, which are confined to the established urban setting of Tallaght Village Centre, and the fact that, while an indirect pathway exists via the public wastewater network, the Proposed Development will not result in any increase in wastewater flows or pollutant loading to that system.

Accordingly, there is no mechanism by which the Proposed Development could exacerbate existing pressures within the wastewater network or result in adverse effects on downstream Natura 2000 sites.

Appendix A – General Arrangement Plan



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