

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT WITH REGARD TO PART 8 PUBLIC
CONSULTATION FOR THREE PLAYSPACES AND FOR A PLAY/SCULPTURE TRAIL IN
DODDER VALLEY PARK
*IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ARTICLE 6(3) OF THE HABITATS
DIRECTIVE (COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 92/43/EEC)*



Prepared July 2019 by:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Dublin County Council (SDCC) has prepared documentation for the public consultation phase of Dodder Valley Park Part 8 Play Space Project which proposes the provision of three large play spaces at Old Bawn, Mount Carmel and Cherrywood and for a play/sculpture trail to connect these play spaces through Dodder Valley Park. The location of the Dodder Valley Park Part 8 Play Space Project is within 15 km of 14 Natura 2000 sites. In accordance with the Precautionary Principle, the Project requires the preparation of an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

In June of 2019, FERS Ltd were successful in a competitive tender to provide, amongst other deliverables, an Appropriate Assessment screening report of the Dodder Valley Park Part 8 Play Space Project.

In order for AA to comply with the criteria set out in the Habitats Directive and Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, an AA undertaken by the Competent Authority must include an examination, analysis, evaluation, findings, conclusions and a final determination. The information to enable the Competent Authority to perform its statutory function in this regard is presented within this Appropriate Assessment Screening report.

Appropriate Assessment screening having identified no significant potential impacts on the conservation objective(s) of the qualifying interest(s) of any Natura 2000 site associated with the proposed project, Phase II Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Statement is not deemed necessary.

1 Introduction

1.1 FERS Ltd. Company background

Forest, Environmental Research and Services have been conducting ecological surveys and research since the company's formation in 2005 by Dr Patrick Moran and Dr Kevin Black. Dr Moran, the principal ecologist with FERS, holds a 1st class honours degree in Environmental Biology (UCD), a Ph.D. in Ecology (UCD), a Diploma in EIA and SEA management (UCD) a Diploma in Environmental and Planning Law (King's Inn) and a M.Sc. in Geographical Information Systems and Remote Sensing (University of Ulster, Coleraine). Patrick has in excess of 20 years of experience in carrying out ecological surveys on both an academic and a professional basis. Dr Emma Reeves, senior ecologist with FERS holds a 1st class honours degree in Botany, and a Ph.D. in Botany. Emma has in excess of 10 years of experience in undertaking ecological surveys on an academic and professional basis. Ciarán Byrne, a senior ecologist with FERS holds a 1st class honours degree in Environmental Management (DIT) and a M.Sc. in Applied Science/Ecological Assessment (UCC). Ciarán has in excess of 5 years in undertaking ecological surveys on both an academic and a professional basis.

FERS client list includes National Parks and Wildlife Service, An Bord Pleanála, various County Councils, the Heritage Council, Teagasc, University College Dublin, the Environmental Protection Agency, Inland Waterways Association of Ireland, the Department of Agriculture, the Office of Public Works and Coillte in addition to numerous private individuals and companies. FERS Ltd. has prepared in excess of 300 Appropriate Assessment Screenings/Natura Impact Statements for a wide range of plans and projects.

1.2 The aim of this report

This report has been prepared in compliance with Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2009, February 2010) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (DoEHLG 2011) in support of the Appropriate Assessment of the Dodder Valley Park Part 8 Play Space Project (South Dublin Co. Council) which proposes the provision of three large play spaces at Old Bawn, Mount Carmel and Cherrywood and for a play/sculpture trail to connect these play spaces in Dodder Valley Park. The location of the proposed project is within 15 km of 14 Natura 2000 sites and as such, the works require Appropriate Assessment screening in accordance with article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This Appropriate Assessment screening report provides the information required in order to establish whether or not the proposed project is likely to have a significant potential for

negative impacts on any Natura 2000 sites, in the context of their conservation objectives and specifically on the habitats and species for which the sites have been designated. It must be noted there have been several recent judgements in Europe relating to Appropriate Assessment screening, and that this report must defer to the decisions made in those cases.

The most pertinent cases with regards to this project are:

(C323/17), among the findings of which was:

“...Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out, subsequently, an appropriate assessment of the implications, for a site concerned, of a plan or project, it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site...”.

This finding has implications for any mitigation/preventative measures put in place to avoid or reduce potential impacts – if such measures are required, a Natura Impact Statement must be prepared.

(C461/17), which found that:

“...The AA must also identify and examine the implications of the proposed project for the species present on that site and for which that site has not been listed – as well as the implications for habitat types and species outside the boundaries of that site, insofar as those implications are liable to affect the conservation objectives of the site...”.

This finding has implications for a situation where a qualifying interest of a Natura 2000 site is found outside of the boundary of that site, but with the potential to occur within, or interact with a population occurring within the site.

1.3 An outline of the Appropriate Assessment process

The “Habitats Directive” (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna) is the main 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, considered to be important at a European as well as at a national level. A “Special Conservation Area” or SAC is a designation under the Habitats Directive.

The “Birds Directive” (Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) provides for a network of sites in all member states to protect birds at their breeding, feeding, roosting and wintering areas. This directive identifies species that are rare, in danger of extinction or vulnerable to changes in habitat and which need protection. A “Special Protection Area” or SPA, is a designation under The Birds Directive.

Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas form a pan-European network of protected sites known as Natura 2000 sites.

The Habitats Directive sets out the protocol for the protection and management of SACs. The Directive sets out key elements of the system of protection including the requirement for Appropriate

Assessment of plans and projects. The requirements for an Appropriate Assessment are set out in the EU Habitats Directive. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Directive respectively, state:

“...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 over-riding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted....”

1.4 Methodology for Appropriate Assessment

A number of guidance documents on the appropriate assessment process have been consulted during the preparation of this NIS. These are:

- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC (2000);
- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (Nov. 2001 – published 2002);
- EU Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC (2007);
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2009, Revised February 2010); and
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (DoEHLG 2011).

The assessment requirements of Article 6 are generally dealt with in a stage by stage approach. The stages as outlined in “Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities” are:

1.4.1 Stage (1) Screening

This initial process identifies the likely impacts of a proposed project or plan upon a Natura 2000 site, either alone, or in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant. A recent judgement in the ECJ (C323/17) that has large implications for appropriate assessment screening in Ireland has found that:

“...Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out, subsequently, an appropriate assessment of the implications, for a site concerned, of a plan or project, it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site...”.

1.4.2 Stage (2) Appropriate Assessment

The consideration of the impact of the project or plan on the integrity of the Natura 2000 Site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans to the sites structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts.

1.4.3 Stage (3) Assessment of Alternative Solutions

The process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

1.4.4 Stage (4) Assessment where Adverse Impacts Remain

An assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

At each stage, there is a determination as to whether a further stage in the Appropriate Assessment process is required. If, for example, the conclusions of the Screening stage indicate that there will be no significant impacts on the Natura 2000 site, there is no requirement to proceed further. Appropriate Assessment stages 1 and 2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6.3. Stage 3 may be part of Article 6(3) or a necessary precursor for Stage 4. This report is comprised of the ecological impact assessment and testing required under the provisions of Article 6(3) by means of the first stage of Appropriate Assessment, the screening process (as set out in the EU Guidance documents).

EU guidance states:

“...This stage examines the likely effects of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, upon a Natura 2000 site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant...”.

This report has been undertaken in accordance with the European Commission's Guidance on Appropriate Assessment (European Commission, 2001) which comprises the following:

1. Description of the Plan.
2. Identification of Natura 2000 sites potentially affected by the Plan.
3. Identification and description of individual and cumulative impacts likely to result from the Plan.
4. Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified on the conservation objectives of the site(s).
5. Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant impacts on conservation objectives.

1.5 Consultations

The primary body consulted with regard to matters involving Natura 2000 sites is the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). The role of the NPWS is:

- To secure the conservation of a representative range of ecosystems and maintain and enhance populations of flora and fauna in Ireland.
- To implement the EU Habitats and Birds Directives.
- To designate and advise on the protection of Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) having particular regard to the need to consult with interested parties.
- To make the necessary arrangements for the implementation of National and EU legislation and policies and for the ratification and implementation of the range of international Conventions and Agreements relating to the natural heritage.
- To manage, maintain and develop State-owned National Parks and Nature Reserves.

Information pertaining to Natura 2000 sites within the Republic of Ireland is typically held by NPWS and is publicly accessible through their on-line database at www.npws.ie . Consultations carried out involved querying the NPWS database for information pertaining to Natura 2000 sites within 15 km of the proposed project.

1.5.1 NBDC Database

The National Biodiversity Database Centre database was queried for records of species of conservation concern present within the immediate vicinity of the proposed project.

2 Screening

Following the guidelines set out by NPWS (2009), Appropriate Assessment Screening (Phase I Appropriate Assessment) is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive. According to the guidelines as laid by NPWS (2009), Appropriate Assessment Screening is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3):

- (1) Is the plan or project directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site?
- (2) Is the plan or project, alone or in combination with other such plans or projects likely to have significant negative effects on a Natura 2000 site(s) in view of the conservation objectives of that site(s)?

The proposed project does not comply with the first screening test (i.e. the proposed development is not directly connected to, or necessary for the management of any Natura 2000 site). The screening exercise will therefore inform the Appropriate Assessment process in determining whether the proposed project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, has any potential to have significant negative impacts on the conservation status of the qualifying interest of the Natura 2000 sites within the study area. If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then applying the Precautionary Principle and in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is required stage, i.e., *“The consideration of the impact of the project or plan on the integrity of the Natura 2000 Site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans to the sites structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts.”*

2.1 Description of proposed project

South Dublin County Council (SDCC) has prepared documentation for the public consultation phase of Dodder Valley Park Part 8 Play Space Project which proposes the provision of three play spaces at Old Bawn, Mount Carmel and Cherrywood and for a play/sculpture trail to connect these play spaces with a new proposed play space at Dodder Valley Park. The approximate location of the project area is indicated in Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3.



Figure 1: Approximate location of Dodder Valley Park (1:100,000)

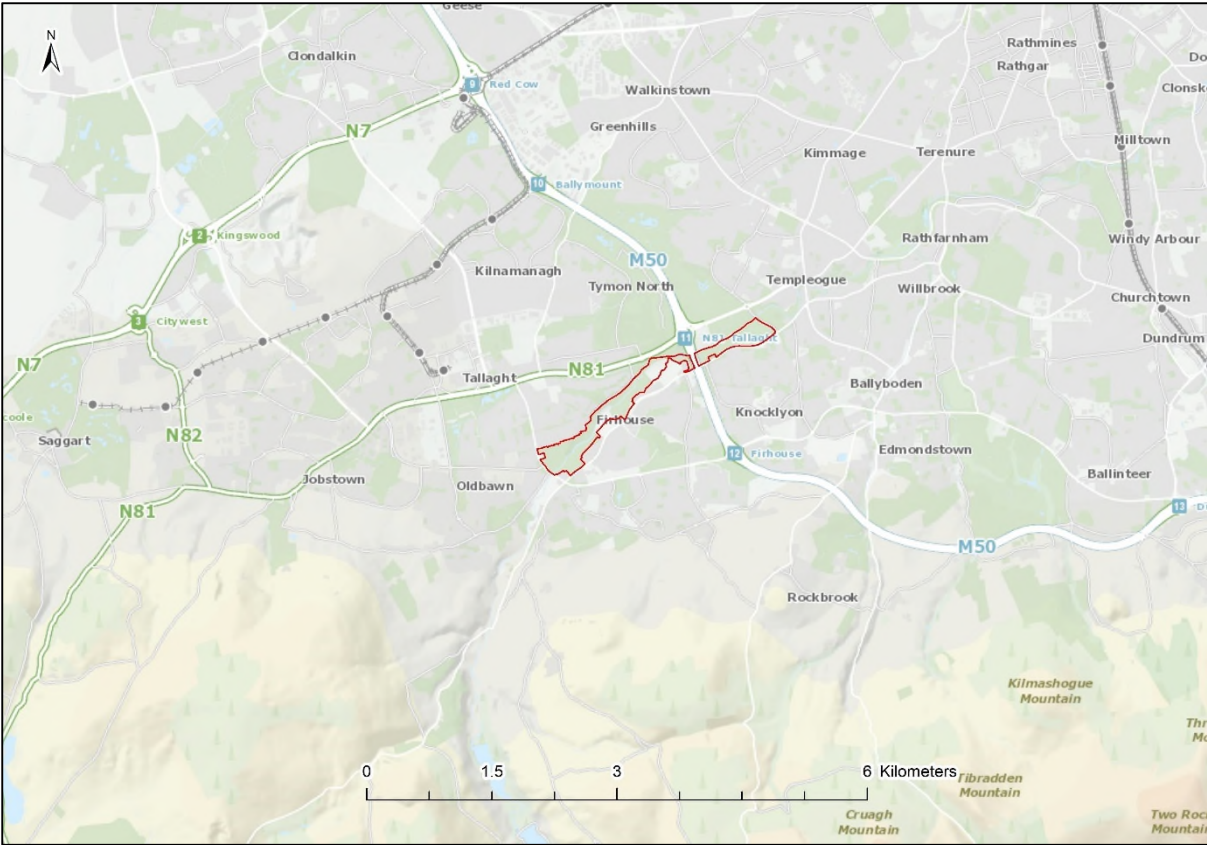


Figure 2: Approximate location of Dodder Valley Park (1:50,000)



Figure 3: Approximation location of Dodder Valley Park (1:15,000)

The precise description of the project has not yet been developed. The design brief is currently at the “Preliminary Design” stage. The following descriptions are excerpts from documentation provided by South Dublin County Council:

“Section 1: Old Bawn to Mount Carmel

Access to Park at Old Bawn, Parking at Ahearn’s Pub and access to Park at Mount Carmel Car park off the Firhouse Road.

Section 2: Mount Carmel to Cherrywood

Access to Park at Mount Carmel Car park off the Firhouse Road and access to Park from Cherrywood Car Park off the Spawell Roundabout.

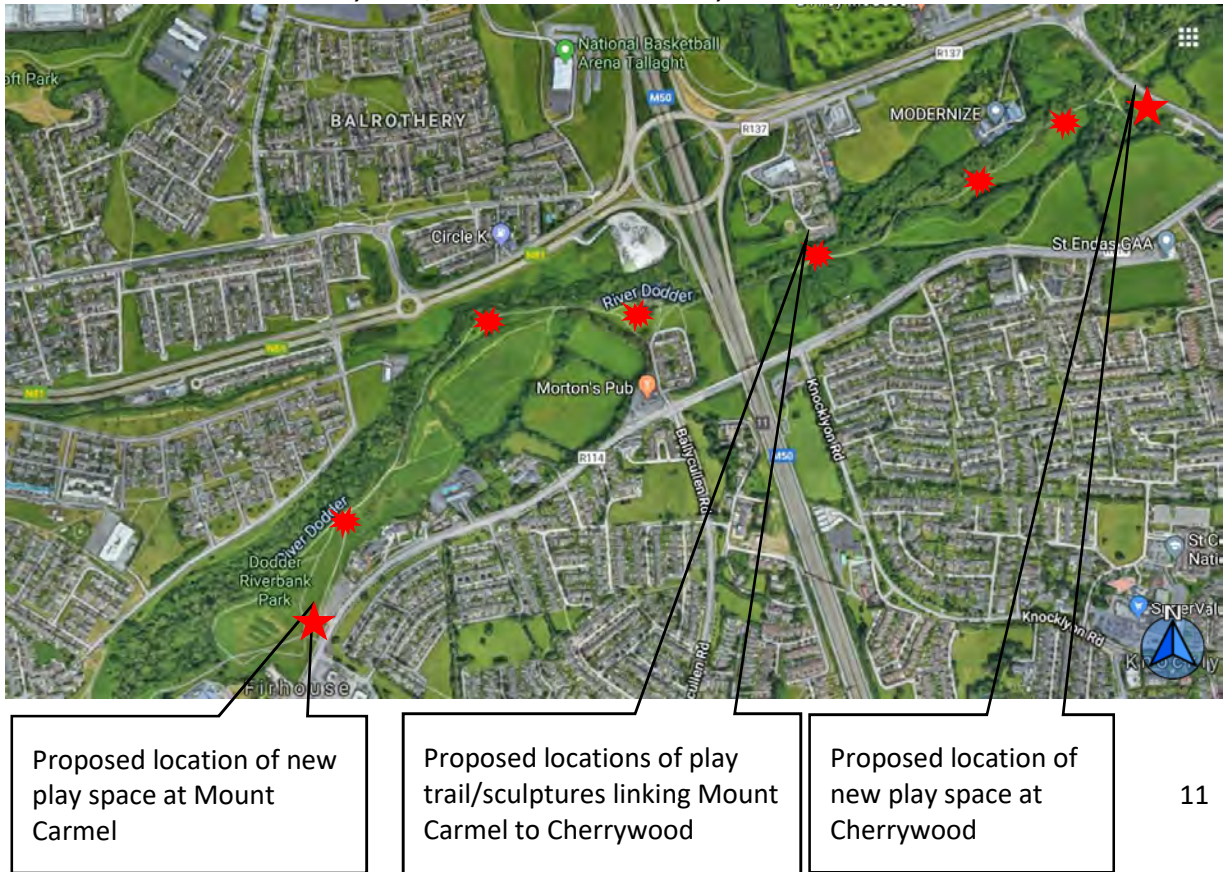
MAP 1: Location Map showing Extent of area for ecological surveys within Ballymount Park



MAP 2: Location of proposed play spaces at Old Bawn and Mount Carmel including play trail within Section 1 Dodder Valley Park, Old Bawn to Mount Carmel.



MAP 3: Location of proposed play spaces at Mount Carmel and Cherrywood including play trail within Section 2 Dodder Valley Park, Mount Carmel to Cherrywood.



...As part of the over plan to development a system of playspaces including a play/sculpture trail in Dodder Valley Park, it is proposed to divide the Park into 3 sections; with each section/area containing a large play area and each of the play areas then linked by a play/sculpture trail. The overall concept is that the play areas in conjunction with the play trail which will be located along the length of the park, encouraging movement and exploration throughout.

These larger play areas will be located at:

- 1 Dodder Valley Park, Old Bawn;*
- 2 Dodder Valley Park, Mount Carmel; and*
- 3 Dodder Valley Park, Cherrywood.*

...The Park currently features formal surfaced pathways along the river bank and through areas containing pitches and more informal meadow/wild areas..."



Figure 4 – Dodder Valley Park and proposed location for play space at old bawn

It is proposed that the Dodder Valley Park Playspace, Old Bawn comprise a large natural children's play area incorporating a harmoniously created playscape, set against the back-drop of the Dublin Mountains and the Dodder River for all ages.



Figure 2 – detailed location for the play space at Old Bawn

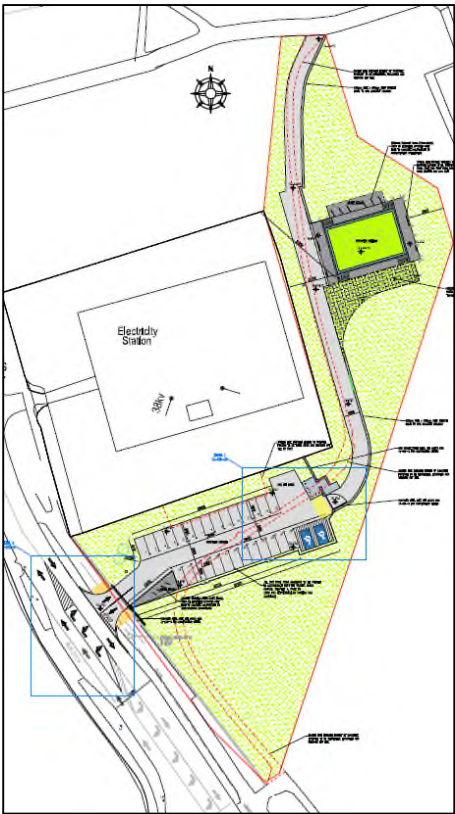


Figure 3 – location of the new pavilion and car park at old bawn



Figure 4 – detailed location for the play space at old bawn

...Design Concept and Requirements

This project involves installation of natural play features, sculptural elements and play equipment through the park. The play trail should highlight elements of the landscape such as spectacular trees, the meadow landscape and gain views/perspective over the river valley.

Design proposals should include for imaginative play, constructive play, group play and include natural play opportunities. It should be durable and limit opportunities for anti-social activity e.g. no hidden areas/roofs, large surfaces that could be graffiti targets, no light materials. It should look as naturalistic as possible. Engineered woodchip is our preferred safety surfacing. Play areas to be landscaped and no edgings or other trip hazards to be present. Signage is to be specified which includes a “young lungs at play”/smoking prohibited message...”

2.2 Description of Receiving Environment

The survey area was visited on Tuesday 18th June by Dr Patrick Moran in order to determine the nature of the habitats occurring at the site. The Dodder Valley Park is a linear park with the River Dodder at its heart, much of which is associated with woodland. The River Dodder is a Nationally important ecological corridor, and the associated habitats within the Dodder Valley Park are regionally important as ecological stepping-stones along this corridor. In addition to the river and associated woodland habitats, there are also large areas of both amenity and semi-natural grassland and pockets of woodland. The nature of the River Dodder is quite variable along its length within the Dodder River Valley Park. Some photographs of habitats occurring are presented in Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9, Figure 10, Figure 11, Figure 12 and Figure 13.



Figure 5: River Dodder



Figure 6: River Dodder



Figure 7: River Dodder



Figure 8: River Dodder



Figure 9: River Dodder



Figure 10: Area of amenity grassland, widespread throughout the park



Figure 11: Semi-natural grassland habitat widespread throughout the park



Figure 12: Pathways through woodland and grassland habitats are present throughout the park



Figure 13: Pathways throughout the park are heavily utilised as an amenity

2.3 Description of scope

The primary geographical scope of the assessment is limited to the 15 km buffer zone around the project location (Dodder Valley Park). The scope of the assessment is to determine if the proposed project has the potential to have any significant negative impact on the Natura 2000 sites occurring within 15 km of the proposed works.

The NBDC database was accessed on 24/06/19 to query records occurring within the vicinity of the project area. This area is very well recorded and for this reason, a custom polygon surrounding the survey area was created and queried. (see Figure 14). The species of conservation concern as recorded within this polygon are illustrated in

Table 1.

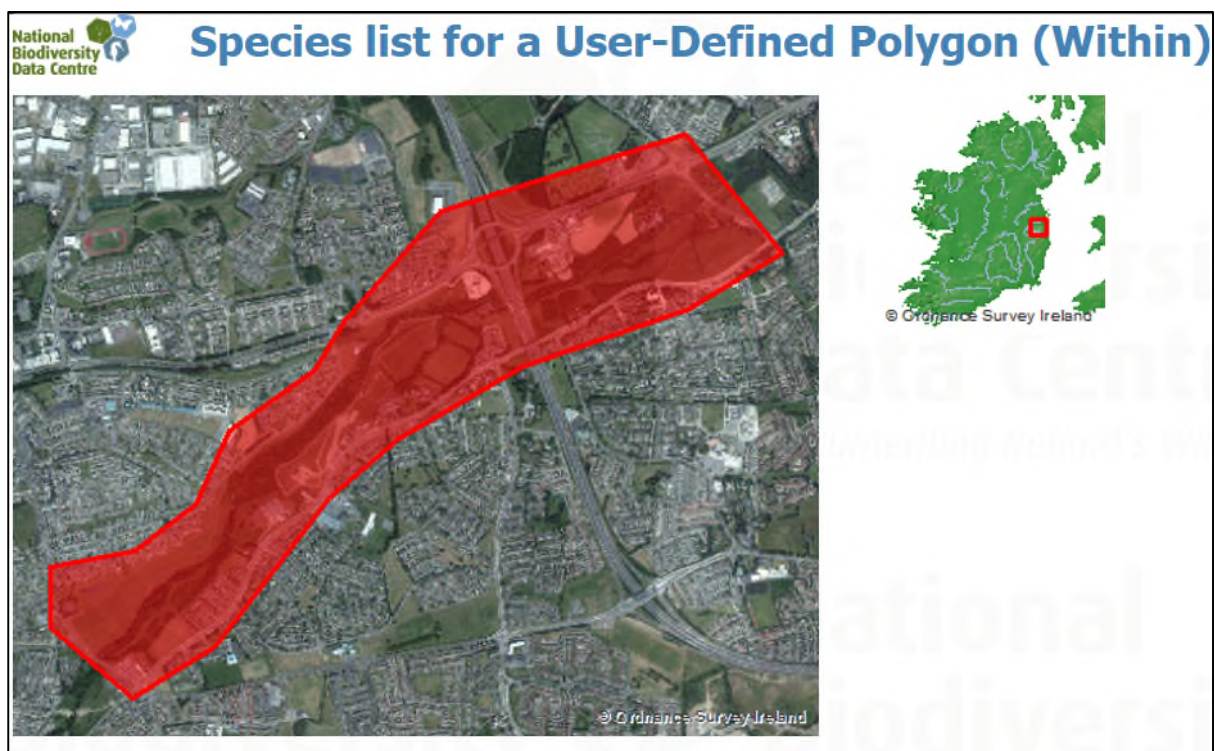


Figure 14: Location of polygon queried (National Biodiversity Data Centre)

Table 1: Species recorded within the user-defined polygon

Common Name	Scientific Name
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>
Common Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>
Great Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
Hedge Accentor	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
Hooded Crow	<i>Corvus cornix</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
White-throated Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>
Giant Hogweed	<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>
Indian Balsam	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>
Winter Heliotrope	<i>Petasites fragrans</i>
Yellow-rattle	<i>Rhinanthus minor</i>
Harlequin Ladybird	<i>Harmonia axyridis</i>
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>
Green-veined White	<i>Pieris napi</i>
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>
Large White	<i>Pieris brassicae</i>
Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola jurtina</i>
Orange-tip	<i>Anthocharis cardamines</i>
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>
Peacock	<i>Inachis io</i>
Red Admiral	<i>Vanessa atalanta</i>
Ringlet	<i>Aphantopus hyperantus</i>
Small Copper	<i>Lycaena phlaeas</i>
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>
Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais urticae</i>
Small White	<i>Pieris rapae</i>
Speckled Wood	<i>Pararge aegeria</i>
White tailed Bumblebee	<i>Bombus lucorum agg.</i>
Buff-tailed Bumblebee	<i>Bombus terrestris</i>
Common Carder Bee	<i>Bombus (thoracombus) pascuorum</i>
Early Bumble Bee	<i>Bombus (Pyrobombus) pratorum</i>
Large Red-tailed Bumble Bee	<i>Bombus (melanobombus) lapidarius</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Moss Carder-bee	<i>Bombus (thoracombus) muscorum</i>
Mayfly	<i>Alainites muticus</i>
Mayfly	<i>Baetis rhodani</i>
Mayfly	<i>Centroptilum luteolum</i>
Mayfly	<i>Electrogena lateralis</i>
Mayfly	<i>Rhithrogena semicolorata</i>
Mayfly	<i>Serratella ignita</i>
Cinnabar	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>
Garden Grass-veneer	<i>Chrysoteuchia culmella</i>
Red Underwing	<i>Catocala nupta</i>
	<i>Udea lutealis</i>
Stonefly	<i>Amphinemura sulcicollis</i>
Stonefly	<i>Isoperla grammatica</i>
American Mink	<i>Mustela vison</i>
Daubenton's Bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>
Eastern Grey Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>
Eurasian Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>
European Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>
European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>
Lesser Noctule	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>
Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu lato</i>
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Soprano Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>

In addition to these species, Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), a species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, is known to occur along the Dodder.

2.4 Identification of Natura 2000 sites potentially impacted upon by the development

It is general practice, when screening a plan or project for compliance with the Habitats Directive, to identify all Natura 2000 sites within the functional area of the plan/project itself and within 15 km of the boundaries of the area the plan/project applies to (with an appropriate “Zone of Influence” identified from any Source-Pathway-Receptor linkages). This approach is currently recommended in the Department of the Environmental, Heritage and Local Government’s document Guidance for Planning Authorities and as a precautionary measure, to ensure that all potentially affected Natura 2000 sites are included in the screening process. The maintenance of habitats and species within individual Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition contributes to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level. It is therefore necessary to identify any potential impacts of the proposed development on the conservation status of Natura 2000 sites. The National Parks and Wildlife Service deem that the favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing.
- The ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future.
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service deem that the favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- Population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself.
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced, or likely to be reduced in the foreseeable future.
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

There are nine SACs and five SPAs within 15 km of the proposed works (see [Table 2](#), Figure 15 and Figure 16— mapping based on NPWS shapefiles SAC_ITM_2016_09 and SPA_ITM_2016_09).

Table 2: Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development

N2K Site Code	Designation	Site Name
000206	SAC	NORTH DUBLIN BAY SAC
000210	SAC	SOUTH DUBLIN BAY SAC
000397	SAC	RED BOG KILDARE SAC
000713	SAC	BALLYMAN GLEN SAC
000725	SAC	KNOCKSINK WOOD SAC
001209	SAC	GLENASMOLE VALLEY SAC
001398	SAC	RYE WATER VALLEY/CARTON SAC
002122	SAC	WICKLOW MOUNTAINS SAC

003000	SAC	ROCKABILL TO DALKEY ISLAND SAC
004006	SPA	NORTH BULL ISLAND SPA
004024	SPA	SOUTH DUBLIN BAY AND RIVER TOLKA ESTUARY SPA
004040	SPA	WICKLOW MOUNTAINS SPA
004060	SPA	POULAPHOUCA RESERVOIR SPA
004172	SPA	DALKEY ISLANDS SPA

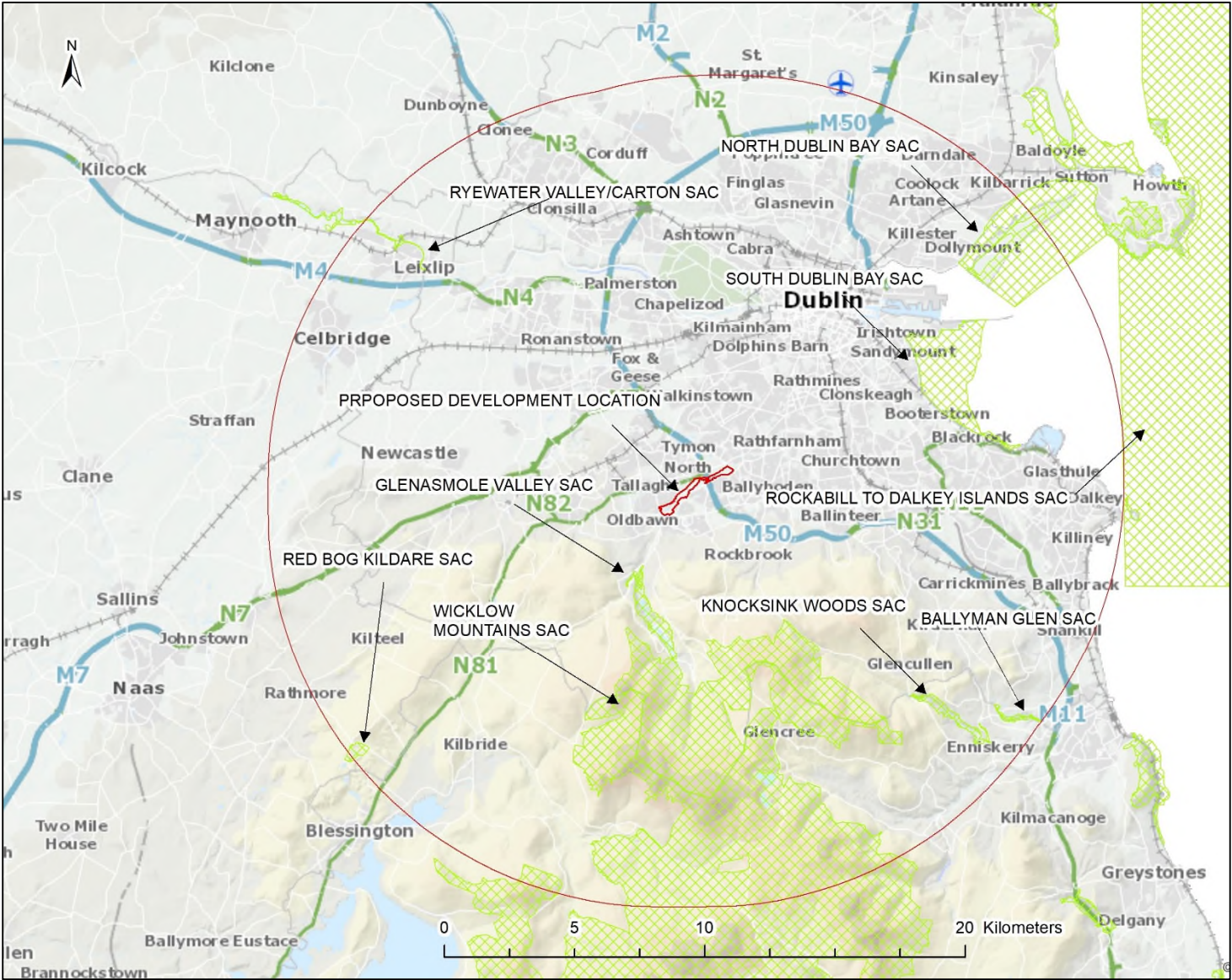


Figure 15: Location of SACs within 15 km of Dodder River Valley Park

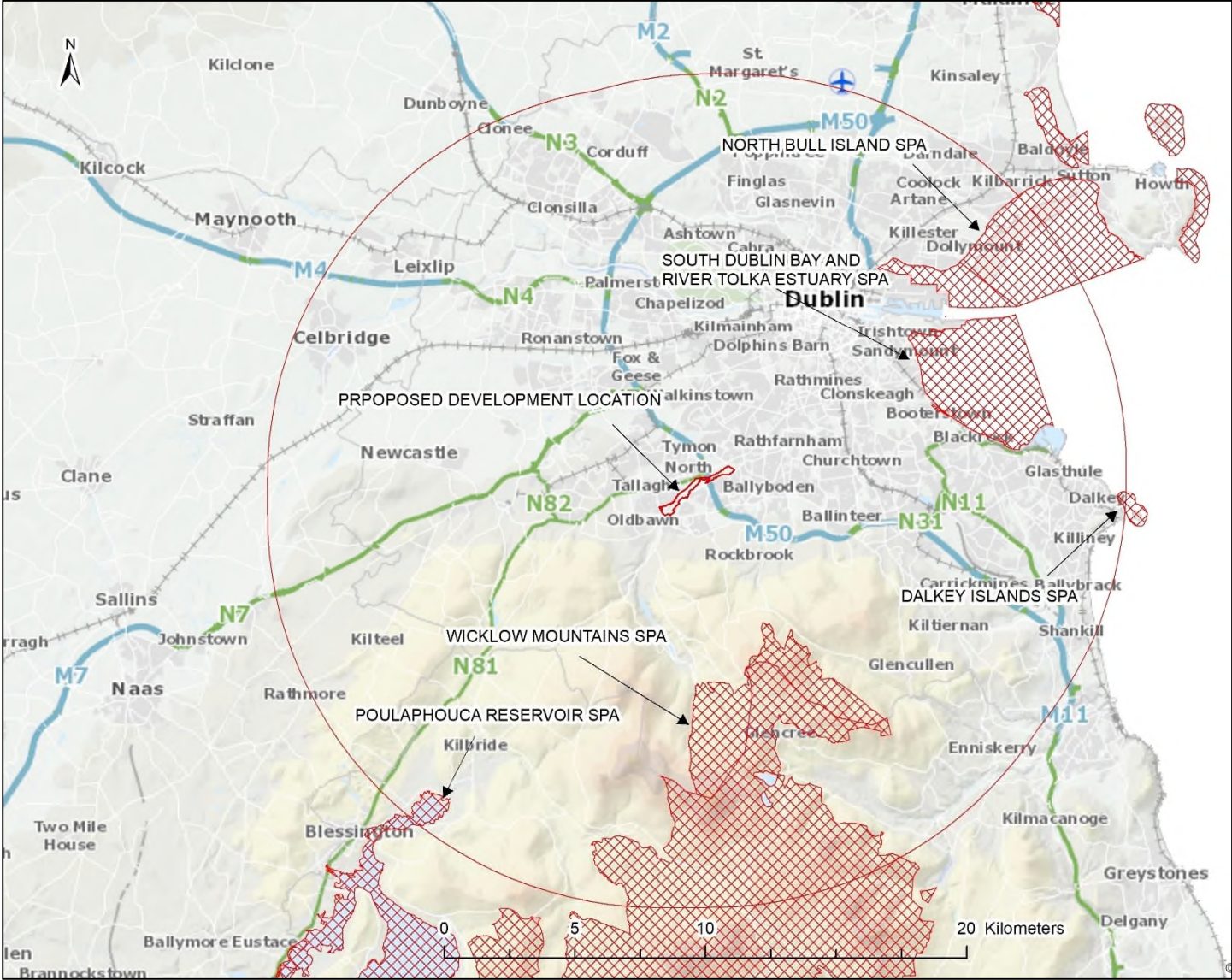


Figure 16: Location of SPAs within 15 km of Dodder River Valley Park

2.5 Summary of Natura 2000 sites potentially impacted upon by the proposed works

There are 14 Natura 2000 sites within 15 km of the proposed development. There are no Natura 2000 sites within the envelope of the proposed project, but the River Dodder is contained within the Dodder Valley Park and there a potential Source-Pathway-Linkage Receptor between the proposed project Natura 2000 sites linked with the River Dodder (Glenasmole Valley SAC, Wicklow Mountains SAC and Wicklow Mountains SPA). A summary of the qualifying interests, availability of detailed conservation objectives, general conservation objectives and whether or not the Natura 2000 site is directly linked with the River Dodder is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Natura 2000 sites within 15000 km

SITE CODE	SITE NAME	QUALIFYING INTEREST(S)	DETAILED CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES DOCUMENT	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES (GENERIC)	DIRECT LINKAGE WITH RIVER DODDER
000206	NORTH DUBLIN BAY SAC	[1140], [1210], [1310], [1330], [1395], [1410], [2110], [2120], [2130], [2190]	YES	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	NO
000210	SOUTH DUBLIN BAY SAC	[1140]	YES	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	NO
000397	RED BOG KILDARE SAC	[7140]	NO	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	NO
000713	BALLYMAN GLEN SAC	[7220], [7230]	NO	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	NO
000725	KNOCKSINK WOOD SAC	[7220], [91E0]	NO	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	NO
001209	GLENASMOLE VALLEY SAC	[6210], [6410], [7220]	NO	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	YES
001398	RYE WATER VALLEY/CARTON SAC	[7220], [1014], [1016]	NO	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	NO
002122	WICKLOW MOUNTAINS SAC	[1355], [3110], [3130], [3160], [4010], [4030], [4060], [6130], [6230], [7130] (priority if active), [8110], [8210], [8220], 91A0.	YES	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	YES

SITE CODE	SITE NAME	QUALIFYING INTEREST(S)	DETAILED CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES DOCUMENT	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES (GENERIC)	DIRECT LINKAGE WITH RIVER DODDER
003000	ROCKABILL TO DALKEY ISLAND SAC	[1170], [1351]	YES	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NO
004006	NORTH BULL ISLAND SPA	A046, A048, A052, A054, A056, A130, A140, A141, A143, A144, A149, A156, A157, A160, A162, A169, A179, A999	YES	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NO
004024	SOUTH DUBLIN BAY AND RIVER TOLKA ESTUARY SPA	A046, A130, A137, A141, A143, A144, A149, A157, A162, A179, A192, A193, A194, A999.	YES	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NO
004040	WICKLOW MOUNTAINS SPA	A098, A103	YES	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	YES
004060	POULAPHOUCA RESERVOIR SPA	A043, A183	NO	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NO
004172	DALKEY ISLANDS SPA	A192, A193, A194	NO	To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NO

2.6 Identification and evaluation of likely significant effect

2.6.1 Description of source-pathway-receptor linkages and identification of “Zone of Influence”

The basis for identifying potential impacts/significance thereof and defining the zone of influence is the “Source-Pathway-Receptor” (S-P-R) model. This model underpins all groundwater protection schemes in Ireland, as well as the EU Water Framework Directive on which both surface water and groundwater regulations are based. When examining S-P-R relationships in regard to impacts on Natura 2000 sites, the main questions to be considered, in an iterative fashion are:

- 1) Source characterisation – Identification of potential source(s) of the impact(s);
- 2) Pathways analysis – Identification of means through which potential impacts could take place, for example is there a hydrogeological or hydrological link that can deliver a pollutant source to a nearby receptor; and
- 3) Receptor identification – identification of Natura 2000 sites/qualifying interests potentially affected.

The SPR model is iterative. If for example there is no potential source identified, the existence of a pathway and receptor is inconsequential.

Owing to the nature, scale and location of the project, the “Zone of Influence” is confined to the immediate vicinity of the works (50 m). The River Dodder (much of the length of which occurring within the Dodder Valley Park is designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area) is within this Zone of Influence. This is a freshwater ecosystem, and the sources of impact most likely to impact on the Natura 2000 sites are any impacts on surface/ground water.

Therefore, the key questions to be considered are:

- 1) Is there any source(s) of impact(s) within the schedule of proposed project, and in particular any source of impacts on surface and/or ground water?
- 2) Is there a pathway present between the source of impact and any Natura 2000 sites?
- 3) What are the Natura 2000 sites/qualifying interests potentially impacted upon?

2.6.2 Sources of potential impacts

While the project is still at the “Preliminary Design” stage, the project will entail only minor construction works. The Dodder is a sensitive ecological receptor, forming a Source-Pathway-Receptor linkage between the location of the proposed project and at minimum three Natura 2000 sites (all of which are located upstream). No construction works entailing elements such as the mass-pouring of concrete, etc. (any construction activities with the potential to impact on ground/surface water quality) will be carried out within the Zone of Influence (50m of the River Dodder). There are unlikely to be any sources of impact on the Glenasmole Valley SAC, Wicklow Mountains SAC or the Wicklow Mountains SPA as pertains to the conservation objectives of the qualifying interests of that site owing to the scale, nature and location of the proposed development. It is assumed that any new drainage associated with any aspect of the project will be SUDS-compliant and will discharge to existing facilities in a sustainable manner. It is assumed that the proposed development will have no impact on hydrology/water quality.

The proposed project will be outside the zone of influence and as such will not have any significant impact on flora and/or fauna during construction or operation.

There are two Alien Invasive Plant Species listed in Part (1) of the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations of 2011 occurring within the park. These species are not present at the sites of the proposed development. It is not likely, therefore that given the nature, location and scale of the proposed development that propagules of Alien Invasive Plant Species listed in Part (1) of the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations of 2011 will be dispersed/spread as a result of the proposed development.

2.7 Summary of identification and evaluation of likely significant effect

A summary of the potential for impacts upon Natura 2000 sites within the zone of influence of the proposed works is summarized in Table 4. The potential for impacts upon the Natura 2000 sites identified in the event of negative impacts is summarized in Table 5. For the purposes of Appropriate Assessment, a significant effect is any effect that may affect the Conservation Objectives for which a site was designated but excluding inconsequential effects. If the effect is not relevant to the conservation objective, then it cannot be a significant effect for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment. A likely significant effect, for the purpose of Appropriate Assessment must be:

- (a) Significant;
- (b) Relevant to the conservation objective for that site; and
- (c) The possibility of effects (please note findings of C323/17).

The significant potential negative impacts on the qualifying interests of identified Natura 2000 sites foreseen are summarized in Table 6 .

Table 4: Summary of the potential for impacts upon Natura 2000 sites within 15 km of project

Site Name	Direct Impacts	Indirect/ Secondary Impacts	Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.)	Emissions (to land, water or air)	Excavation requirements	Duration of construction, operation and decommissioning
Site Name	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
NORTH DUBLIN BAY SAC	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
SOUTH DUBLIN BAY SAC	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
RED BOG KILDARE SAC	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
BALLYMAN GLEN SAC	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
KNOCKSINK WOOD SAC	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
GLENASMOLE VALLEY SAC	None foreseen	None Foreseen	None foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen
RYE WATER VALLEY/CARTON SAC	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
WICKLOW MOUNTAINS SAC	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
ROCKABILL TO DALKEY ISLAND SAC	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
NORTH BULL ISLAND SPA	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
SOUTH DUBLIN BAY AND RIV ER TOLKA ESTUARY SPA	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
WICKLOW MOUNTAINS SPA	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
POULAPHOUCA RESERVOIR SPA	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen
DALKEY ISLANDS SPA	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen

Table 5: Summary of the potential for changes to Natura 2000 sites within zone of influence.

Site Name	Reduction of habitat area	Disturbance to key species	Habitat/species fragmentation	Reduction in species density	Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value	Climate change
NORTH DUBLIN BAY SAC	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen
SOUTH DUBLIN BAY SAC	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen
RED BOG KILDARE SAC	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen
BALLYMAN GLEN SAC	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen
KNOCKSINK WOOD SAC	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen
GLENASMOLE VALLEY SAC	None Foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None Foreseen
RYE WATER VALLEY/CARTON SAC	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen
WICKLOW MOUNTAINS SAC	None Foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None Foreseen
ROCKABILL TO DALKEY ISLAND SAC	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen
NORTH BULL ISLAND SPA	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen
SOUTH DUBLIN BAY AND RIVER TOLKA ESTUARY SPA	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen
WICKLOW MOUNTAINS SPA	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen	None Foreseen
POULAPHOUCA RESERVOIR SPA	None Foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None Foreseen
DALKEY ISLANDS SPA	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen	None foreseen

Table 6: Summary of potential impacts on Qualifying Interests of Natura 2000 sites identified as at risk of impact

SITE CODE	SITE NAME	QUALIFYING INTEREST(S)	CONSERVATION DOCUMENT	OBJECTIVES	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES (GENERAL)	POTENTIAL FORESEEN	IMPACTS
000206	NORTH DUBLIN BAY SAC	[1140], [1210], [1310], [1330], [1395], [1410], [2110], [2120], [2130], [2190]	YES		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	NONE	
000210	SOUTH DUBLIN BAY SAC	[1140]	YES		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	NONE	
000397	RED BOG KILDARE SAC	[7140]	NO		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	NONE	
000713	BALLYMAN GLEN SAC	[7220], [7230]	NO		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	NONE	
000725	KNOCKSINK WOOD SAC	[7220], [91E0]	NO		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	NONE	
001209	GLENASMOLE VALLEY SAC	[6210], [6410], [7220]	NO		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	NONE	
001398	RYE WATER VALLEY/CARTON SAC	[7220], [1014], [1016]	NO		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	NONE	
002122	WICKLOW MOUNTAINS SAC	[1355], [3110], [3130], [3160], [4010], [4030], [4060], [6130], [6230], [7130] (priority if active), [8110], [8210], [8220], 91A0.	YES		To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NONE	

SITE CODE	SITE NAME	QUALIFYING INTEREST(S)	CONSERVATION DOCUMENT	OBJECTIVES	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES (GENERAL)	POTENTIAL FORESEEN	IMPACTS
003000	ROCKABILL TO DALKEY ISLAND SAC	[1170], [1351]	YES		To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NONE	
004006	NORTH BULL ISLAND SPA	A046, A048, A052, A054, A056, A130, A140, A141, A143, A144, A149, A156, A157, A160, A162, A169, A179, A999	YES		To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NONE	
004024	SOUTH DUBLIN BAY AND RIVER TOLKA ESTUARY SPA	A046, A130, A137, A141, A143, A144, A149, A157, A162, A179, A192, A193, A194, A999.	YES		To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NONE	
004040	WICKLOW MOUNTAINS SPA	A098, A103	YES		To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NONE	
004060	POULAPHOUCA RESERVOIR SPA	A043, A183	NO		To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NONE	
004172	DALKEY ISLANDS SPA	A192, A193, A194	NO		To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:	NONE	

2.7.1 Potential cumulative impacts in association with other plans

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan/project to consider other plans/projects that might, in combination with the proposed plan/project, have the potential to adversely impact upon Natura 2000 sites.

Table 7: Potential cumulative impacts.

Plan	Purpose	Cumulative impact
EU Water framework Directive	Maintain and enhance water quality within the EU	None predicted
EU Freshwater Fish Directive	Protect freshwater bodies within the EU suitable for sustaining fish populations	None predicted
EU Groundwater Directive	Maintain and enhance the quality of groundwater within the EU	None predicted
EU Floods Directive	The Floods Directive applies to river basins and coastal areas at risk of flooding	None predicted
Nitrates Directive	Reducing water pollution within the EU	None predicted
Urban Waste-water treatment Directive	Protecting the environment from adverse impacts of waste-water discharge	None predicted
Sewage Sludge Directive	Regulate the use of sewage sludge	None predicted
The IPPC Directive	To achieve a high level of environmental protection	None predicted
National Development Plan	To promote more balanced spatial and economic development	None predicted
National Spatial Strategy	To achieve a better balance of social, economic and physical development across Ireland	None predicted
Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study	To meet the requirements of the Floods Directive	None predicted
Various Co. Development Plans	Sustainable development of counties in question	None predicted
Future phases of flood defence repairs	Repairing flood defences	None predicted
Local Area Development Plans	Various	None predicted
Quarrying activities, water abstraction, discharge, etc	Various	None predicted
Current and future planning permissions –	There do not appear to be any pending or granted planning permissions in the immediate vicinity	None predicted
Dodder Greenway	Establishing a Greenway along the River Dodder	This project is a component of the Dodder Greenway
Land spreading of organic waste by farmers in the locality	Fertilising land, disposing of organic waste	None predicted

Based on the location, scale and nature of the proposed project, there will be no significant cumulative impacts associated with the proposed project. It is assumed that there will be no impact on hydrology/water quality owing to the scale and nature of the proposed development. The Relevant Authority should satisfy themselves that this assumption is correct.

2.7.2 “Do nothing” scenario

No significant negative impacts are foreseen. The “Do nothing” scenario is identical.

2.7.3 Gauging of Impacts on Natura 2000 sites – Integrity of site checklist

The potential impacts of the proposed project on Natura 2000 sites are gauged using a checklist, which aids in determining whether the works have the potential to have a significant negative impact on any Natura 2000 site. This checklist consists of a number of pertinent questions as set out in Table 8.

Table 8: Potential of the proposed project to negatively impact on any Natura 2000 site(s) in the absence of suitable mitigation/preventative measures

Does the Plan have the potential to:	Yes/No
Cause delays in progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site?	NO
Interrupt progress toward achieving the conservation objectives of the Natura 2000 site?	NO
Disrupt those factors helping to maintain the favourable conditions at the Natura 2000 site?	NO
Interfere with the balance, distribution and density of key species that are the indicators of the favourable condition of the Natura 2000 site?	NO
Cause changes to the vital defining aspects (e.g. nutrient balance) that determine how the Natura 2000 site functions as a habitat or ecosystem?	NO
Change the dynamics of the relationships (between, for example, soil and water or plants and animals) that define the structure and/or function of the Natura 2000 site?	NO
Interfere with predicted or expected natural changes to the Natura 2000 site (such as water dynamics or chemical composition)?	NO
Reduce the area of key habitats within the Natura 2000 site?	NO
Reduce the population of key species of the Natura 2000 site?	NO
Alter the balance between key species of the Natura 2000 site?	NO
Reduce the biodiversity of the Natura 2000 site?	NO
Result in disturbance that could affect population size or density or the balance between key species within the Natura 2000 site?	NO
Result in fragmentation?	NO
Result in the loss or reduction of key features of Natura 2000 sites?	NO

2.8 Conclusions of screening

According to the guidance published by the NPWS (DoEHLG, 2009), Screening for Appropriate Assessment can either identify that a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is not required where:

- (1) A project/proposal is directly related to the management of the site.
- (2) There is no potential for significant negative impacts affecting the Natura 2000 network

Where the screening process identifies that significant effects are certain, likely or uncertain the project must either proceed to Stage II Appropriate Assessment or be rejected.

The potential impacts that will arise from the proposed development have been examined in the context of a number of factors that could potentially impact upon the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. On the basis of the findings of this Screening for Appropriate Assessment, it is concluded that the development:

- (1) Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site and
- (2) Does not have the potential to impact on any Natura 2000 site.

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the relevant information and the potential for significant effects on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites, and applying the Precautionary Principle, it is possible to exclude on the basis of objective information (assuming no hydrological impacts), that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will not a significant negative impact on the Natura 2000 network. The preparation of a Natura Impact Statement is, therefore, not required.

3 References and Bibliography

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www.sdcc.ie – official website of South Dublin Co Council.

www.npws.ie – website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, source of information for data regarding Natura 2000 sites and Article 17 Conservation Assessments.

www.europa.eu – official website of the European Union, source of information on EU Directives.

www.epa.ie – official website of the Environmental Protection Agency.

www.biodiversityireland.ie – official website of the National Biodiversity Data Centre.