Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

for proposed

Mobility Hub at Tallaght Luas Stop, Tallaght, Co. Dublin

in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive

for: **South Dublin County Council**
County Hall,
Belgard Square North
Tallaght
Co. Dublin

by: **CAAS Ltd.**
1st Floor,
24-26 Ormond Quay
Co. Dublin

JULY 2021

Document Control

	Author/Reviewer	Date
Prepared by	Karen Dylan Shevlin	Various dates to 21 July 2021
Reviewed by	Andrew Torsney	26 July 2021
	Paul Fingleton	26 July 2021
Status of this version	Final - subject to any client comments	

Table of Contents

Figures

Tables

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

CAAS Ltd. has been appointed by South Dublin County Council to prepare this Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report (also known as *Stage One* AA) to support AA procedures to determine whether or not a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) (*Stage Two* AA) is required for the proposed Mobility Hub at Tallaght Luas Stop, Dublin 24 (the proposed development), in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the "Habitats Directive").

1.2. Report Structure

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

1.3. Legislative Context

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

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive States:

> *'Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public'.*

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

Article 3(1) of the Habitats Directive States:

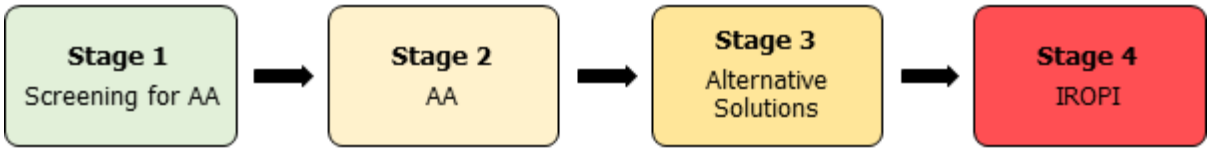
> *'A coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation shall be set up under the title Natura 2000. This network, composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, shall enable the natural habitat types and the species'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

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

1.4. Overview of the Habitats Directive and Appropriate Assessment Process

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

There are four main stages in the AA process:



Stage One: Screening

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

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

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

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

1.5. Approach

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

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

- Identification of European sites within 15km[1] of the subject lands;
- Identification of European sites within 15km of the site with identification of potential pathways to specific sites (if relevant) greater than 15km from the subject lands;
- Review of the NPWS site synopses and conservation objectives for European sites within 15km and for which potential pathways from the proposed site have been identified; and
- Examination of available information on protected species.

[1] While the actual zone of impact is likely to be much smaller, the default 15km zone extent has been applied on a precautionary basis

Source-Pathway Receptor Model

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

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

In the interest of this report, receptors are the ecological features that are known to be utilised by the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of a European site. A source is any identifiable element of the proposed Mobility Hub at Tallaght Luas Stop that is known to interact with ecological processes. The pathways are any connections or links between the source and the receptor. This report provides information on whether direct, indirect and cumulative adverse effects could arise from the proposed development.

Guidance

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

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

1.6. Author Details

Karen Dylan Shevlin is an Ecologist with over 7 years' experience working in multiple capacities in ecology in Ireland and international research organisations, and holds a MSc degree in Biodiversity and Conservation from Trinity College Dublin (2013). karen has undertaken stage 2 AAs, NISs, and EIARs for a number of large and local development projects ranging from smaller facilities upgrades projects, to major wind turbine sites. karen has significant skills in leading ecological surveys of bats, birds, insects, habitats and mammals and data analysis, mapping and compiling reports. karen is also a specialist in ecological theory and the impacts/effects that altering natural dynamics may have on the surrounding environment. This combination of skills and knowledge provides the backbone of the assessment process, and ensure that all of the baseline and detailed data gathered in the field is interpreted in a manner that is grounded in best scientific knowledge.

2. Description of proposed development

2.1. Overview of the proposed development

The proposed development is located in a highly urbanised area of Tallaght, located in South West Dublin. The proposed development involves the construction of a Mobility Hub and landscaped area at Tallaght Luas Stop on Blessington Road, Co. Dublin.

The proposal involves the development of two sites along the Tallaght Luas stop, one located at the Blessington Road and Belgard Square West junction (approx. 0.31 ha in area) (Figure 2.3), and the other located between Rua Red café and the Civic Theatre (approx. 0.13 ha in area) (Figure 2.4).

2.2. Details of Proposal

The proposed development comprises:

- Construction of Mobility Hub at the existing Tallaght Luas stop including hard and soft landscaping works.
- Provision of information point totem and a feature bench.
- Provision of feature streetlighting.
- Provision of outdoor seating to Rua Red and Betelnut cafes to include parasols, tables and chairs.
- Associated ancillary works.

The total proposed site area is approx. 0.4 ha.

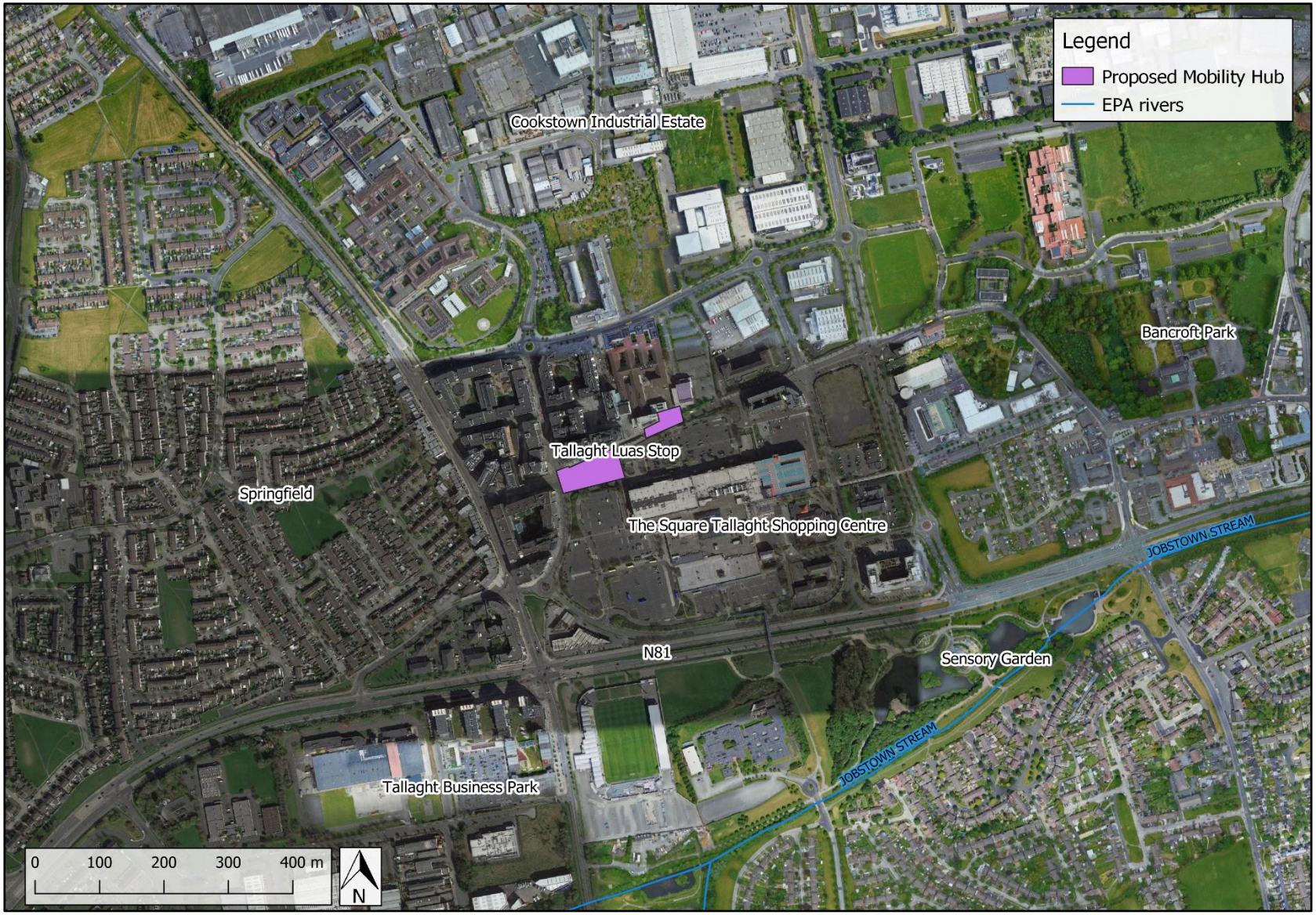


Figure 2.1 Location of proposed development

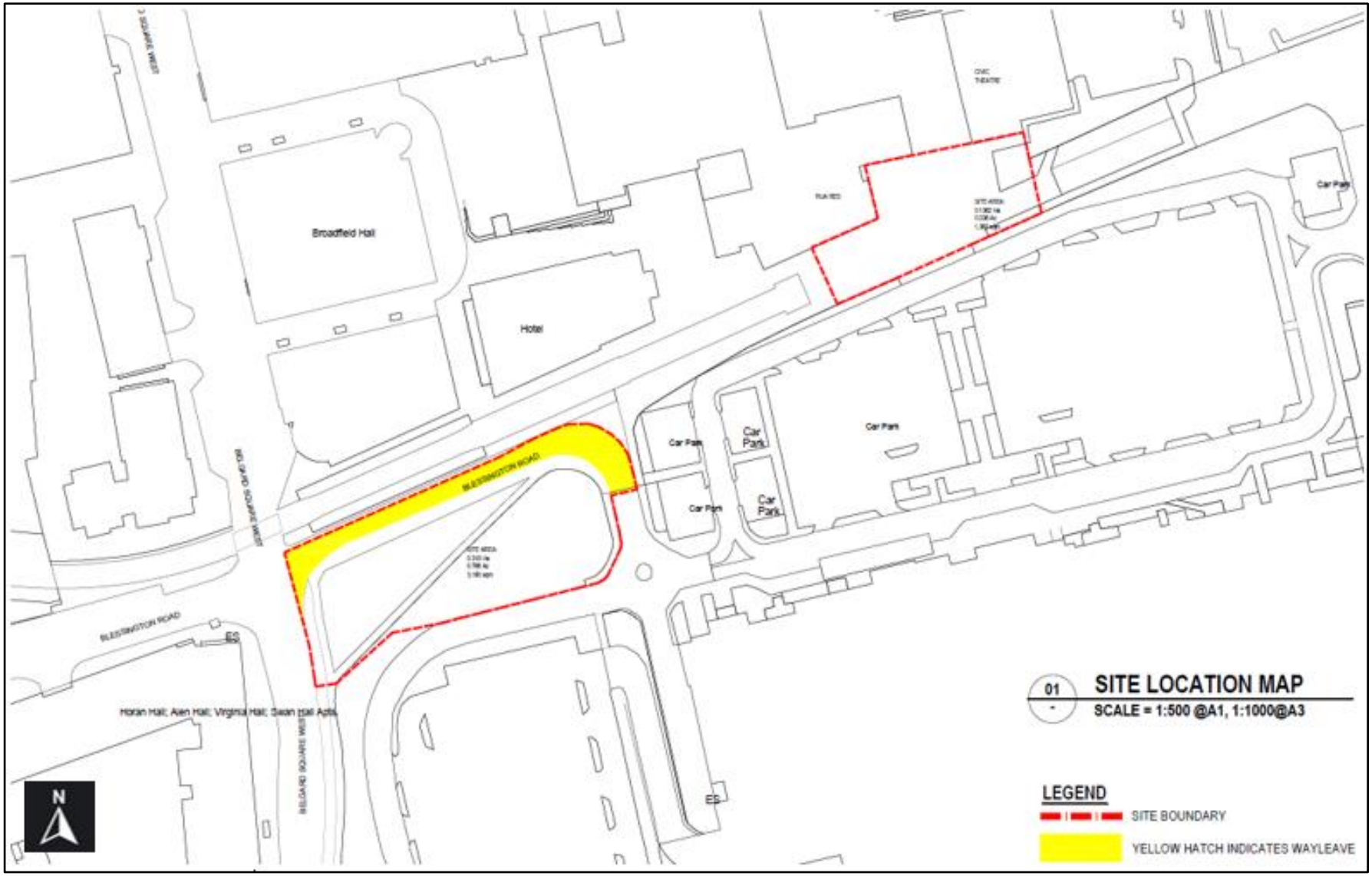


Figure 2.2 Outlinec of proposed development site

Figure 2.3 Proposed site plan (Blessington Road and Belgard Square West junction)

Figure 2.4 Proposed site plan (Rua Red café and the Civic Theatre)

3. Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1. Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

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

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis of the Appropriate Assessment where they were deemed relevant to the European sites and their QIs/SCIs.

3.2. Identification of relevant European sites

This section of the screening process describes the European sites which are located within the Zone of Influence (ZoI[2]) of the site as well as those considered within a buffer area beyond the ZoI. The Department of the Environment (2009) Guidance on AA recommends for a 15km buffer zone to be considered. On a precautionary basis, this radius has been adopted for this AA.

An assessment of the sources of effects (see Section 3.3 below) identified that effects from the proposed project are localised – in the absence of hydrological pathways. However, due to potential for ecological receptors of European sites to interact with landscape scale resources, the scope for potential effects could span beyond this ZoI. Therefore, considerations were given to landscape scale pathways for effects.

It was identified that sites beyond 15km from the proposed development which did not have hydrological pathways to European sites are not likely to have significant effects. Specifically, for sites that are designated for vagile species, it is recognised that these species use isolated resources across a broad niche, with dynamic ranging patterns. Therefore, potential effects to such species at this scale are not identified to be significant due to the broad home range available to these species, and the availability of alternate resources on a landscape scale.

European sites that occur within 15km, are or hydrologically connected to the proposed development, are listed in Table 1 and illustrated in the Figure below. Details on the specific QIs and SCIs of each European site are also identified in Appendix I, as well as site-specific threats and vulnerabilities of each of the sites.

ZoI

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

- Ireland's Article 17 Report to the European Commission *"Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland"* (NPWS, 2019);
- Site Synopses[3]; and
- NATURA 2000 Standard Data Forms[3].

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

[2] The zone of influence is the area for which the sources for effects from the proposed works may extend outward from the subject lands.

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

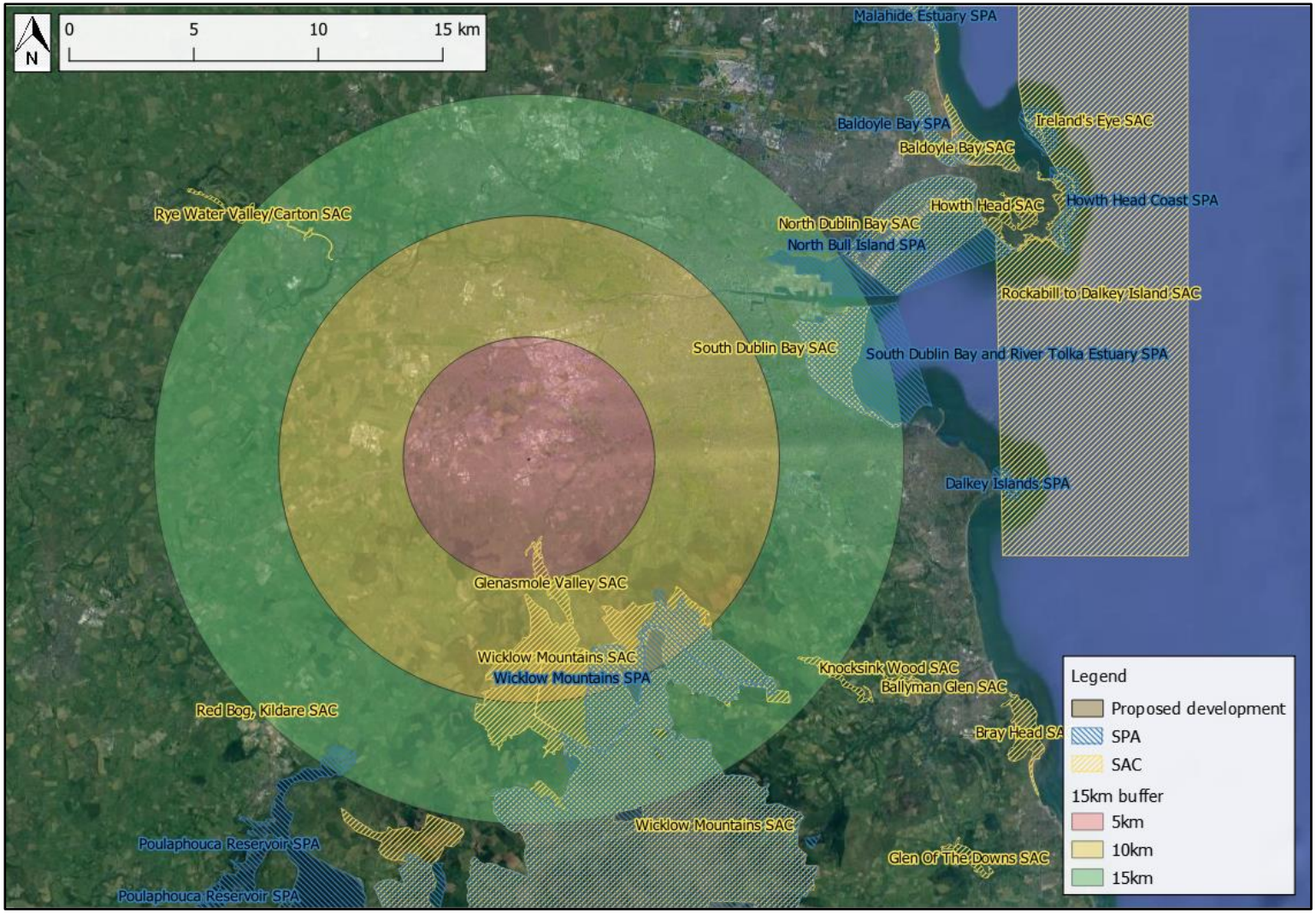


Figure 3.1 European sites within 15km of the proposed development boundary[4]

[4] Source: NPWS (datasets downloaded 20th June 2021)

3.3. Assessment criteria

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

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

The primary purpose of the proposed development is not the nature conservation management of the sites, but generally to provide for development of a Mobility Hub and landscaped area at Tallaght Luas Stop. Therefore, the proposed development would not be considered by the Habitats Directive to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

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

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

For the purposes of this assessment the proposed development is identified to have potential to have construction phase effects but not have operational phase effects. The operational phase of the project will be conistent with the existing site use within the current functioning Luas Stop in an urban context. The operations of the Mobility Hub will be consistent with existing operations on site; therefore, is not foreseen to interact with European sites. The construction phase elements of the project also introduce potential sources for effects to ecological processes such as:

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

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

3.3.3. Identification of potential effects and screening of sites

This section documents the final stage of the screening process. It has used the information collected on the sensitivity of each European site and describes any potential effects on European sites resulting from the proposed development. This assumes the absence of any controls, conditions, or mitigation measures. In determining the potential for effects, a number of factors have been taken into account. Firstly, the sensitivity and reported threats to European sites. Secondly, the individual elements of the proposed development and the potential effects they may cause on the sites were considered. The elements of the proposed development with potential to affect the integrity of European sites are presented in Table 3.1.

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

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

3.4. Characterising potential significant effects

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

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

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines for ecological impact assessment (2016) define: an ecologically significant impact as an impact (negative or positive) on the integrity of a defined site or ecosystem and/or the conservation status of habitats or species within a given geographic area; and the integrity of a site as the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified.

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

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

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

A Generic Conservation Objective for a cSAC is provided below:

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.

A Generic Conservation Objective for a SPA is provided below:

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

3.4.1. Types of potential Effects

EC guidance[5] outlines the types of effects that may affect European sites. These include effects from the following activities:

- Land take
- Resource requirements (drinking water abstraction etc.)

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

- Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)
- Excavation requirements
- Transportation requirements
- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

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

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

The elements detailed above were considered with specific reference to each of the European sites identified below.

Loss/reduction of habitat area

There are no European sites present within the proposed development boundary and the closest European site is 3.17 km away. Similarly, there were no Annex I habitats or supporting habitat for Annex II species identified on site. Therefore, there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect.

Habitat or species fragmentation

The proposed development site is already a hard surface site in an urban context. In addition, there are no surface hydrological connections to any European sites. Therefore, there are no direct surface ecological corridors connecting any of the European sites identified above. Similarly, there were no Annex I habitats or supporting habitats for Annex II species identified within the proposed development area. Therefore, there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect.

Disturbance to key species

None of the species and/or habitats identified in Table 3.1 were recorded within the proposed development area. The nearest European site is 3.17 km away from the proposed site and therefore disturbance effects due to noise or lighting etc. are not present.

Reduction in species density

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

Changes of indicators of conservation value

As mentioned, the site is 3.17 km from the closest European site. There are no direct surface hydrological linkages identified between the site and any European site. The works relate to the provide for development of a Mobility Hub and landscaped area at Tallaght Luas Stop and there are there are no ecological pathways for effects between European sites and the proposed development area. Given the nature of the proposed development; i.e., the small scale, localised and temporary nature of the construction phase and operational phase in keeping with the current condition of the site, there is no potential identified for significant adverse effects to any European sites. Therefore, there are no sources for effects and no pathways that will affect any conservation indicators related to European sites.

Climate change

When operational, the proposed development will not give rise to any significant change from existing greenhouse gas emissions. The construction phase work will give rise to minor increased temporary emissions. However, given the small scale and temporary frame of the work, these are determined to be negligible. Therefore, there are no effects predicted arising from climate change to the degree that it would affect the QIs or SCIs of any European sites as a result of the proposed development.

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

Site Code	Site Name	Distance	Qualifying Feature	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects
001209	Glenasmole Valley SAC	3.17	Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco-Brometalia)* * important orchid sites [6210], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils *(Molinion caeruleae)* [6410]	There are no effects foreseen due to the absence of pathways between the areas covered by the proposed project and SAC.	No	No
002122	Wicklow Mountains SAC	5.51	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0], Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220], European dry heaths [4030], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210], Otter *(Lutra lutra)* [1355], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels *(Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)* [8110], Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas - and submountain areas in Continental Europe [6230], Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains *(Littorelletalia uniflorae)* [3110], Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae [6130]	There are no effects foreseen due to the absence of pathways between the areas covered by the proposed project and SAC.	No	No
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	7.31	Merlin *(Falco columbarius)* [A098], Peregrine falcon *(Falco peregrinus)* [A103]	There are no effects foreseen due to the absence of pathways between the areas covered by the proposed project and SPA.	No	No
001398	Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	11.34	Desmoulin`s whorl snail *(Vertigo moulinsiana)* [1016], Narrow-mouthed whorl snail *(Vertigo angustior)* [1014], Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220]	There are no effects foreseen due to the absence of pathways between the areas covered by the proposed project and SAC.	No	No

Site Code	Site Name	Distance	Qualifying Feature	Potential Effects	Pathway for Significant Effects	Potential for In-Combination Effects
000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	11.72	Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]	Due to distance and dilution effects combined with the nature of the project it is not foreseen that there will be any potential significant effects on the ecological integrity of this site.	No	No
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	11.72	Ringed Plover *(Charadrius hiaticula)* [A137], Grey Plover *(Pluvialis squatarola)* [A141], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Redshank *(Tringa totanus)* [A162], Bar-tailed Godwit *(Limosa lapponica)* [A157], Knot *(Calidris canutus)* [A143], Common tern *(Sterna hirundo)* [A193], Dunlin *(Calidris alpina)* [A149], Sanderling *(Calidris alba)* [A144], Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus)* [A179], Oystercatcher *(Haematopus ostralegus)* [A130], Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii)* [A192], Light-bellied Brent Goose *(Branta bernicla hrota)* [A046], Arctic tern *(Sterna paradisaea)* [A194]	Due to distance and dilution effects combined with the nature of the project it is not foreseen that there will be any potential significant effects on the ecological integrity of this site.	No	No
000725	Knocksink Wood SAC	13.49	Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior *(Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)* [91E0], Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0], Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220]	There are no effects foreseen due to the absence of pathways between the areas covered by the proposed project and SAC.	No	No
004063	Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA	13.87	Lesser Black-backed Gull *(Larus fuscus)* [A183], Greylag Goose *(Anser anser)* [A043]	There are no effects foreseen due to the absence of pathways between the areas covered by the proposed project and SPA.	No	No
000397	Red Bog, Kildare SAC	14.48	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]	There are no effects foreseen due to the absence of pathways between the areas covered by the proposed project and SAC.	No	No

3.5. Other plans and projects

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

As part of this assessment each plan or project is considered within a radius of the red line boundary of the proposed area as defined by the ecologist. The distance of this radius works from a standard 200m, but can be extended if the ecologist deems it necessary depending on whether certain characteristics are present, such as:

- Direct or indirect connectivity to a European site;
- In close proximity to a European site;
- The proposal is of a substantial scale relative to the conditions and/or current works taking place in the surrounding landscape.

These factors are considered particular to each proposal for each particular location and specification. Considering the characteristics of the proposed development with respect to the scale and nature of the works, the 200m search for in-combination effects was deemed to be sufficient

Plans of relevance in the context of this proposal include:

- South Dublin County Development Plan 2016-2022
- Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022

The plans identified have been subject to their own ecological considerations and are supported with Natura Impact Reports which outline the mitigation measures built into them. These measures reduce potential interaction effects and considering that the proposed development has a small-scale temporary construction phase and the operational phase is consistent with the existing land use, it is not foreseen that proposed development will have any significant in-combination effects with the above plans.

Projects of relevance to this development:

To identify projects for consideration for the in-combination effects section, the National Planning and Housing development database was used[6]. A review of all planning applications within the identified 200m zone was conducted focusing on all application within the past 5 years[7] and presented in Table 3.2.

All local applications within the last five years are found to be small to medium in scale, with short term, minor scale construction phases, which utilise current site resources and are in keeping with current site conditions and surrounding urban environment; or are seeking changes to current permissions, or the current usage of a site; or are seeking retentions of current permission. Therefore, there are no significant in-combination effects identified that could result in significant adverse effects to the integrity of European sites.

[6] Accessed at: https://data-housinggovie.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/planning-application-sites-2010-onwards; 5th May 2021

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

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

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project area (sq m)	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Possible Significant in-combination effects
SD18A/0399	Grant Permission	Internal modifications/reconfiguration to the mall area and reconfiguration of existing retail units and kiosks/concessions at Levels 1-3 of the existing shopping centre; revisions/modifications are as follows on a level by level basis; (1) Level 1, reconfiguration of the existing mall floor space and existing retail/kiosk units to provide a new kiosk zone (150sq.m); revisions to circulation areas involving the removal of stairs and escalator between Level 1 and Level 2 and provision of a new travellator between Level 1 and Level 2; (2) Level 2, reconfiguration of existing mall floor space and existing retail/kiosk units to provide a new kiosk zone (1073sq.m); revisions to circulation areas involving the removal of escalators between Level 2 and Level 3; (3) Level 3 formation of a new retail unit (38sq.m) and associated mall floor space (9sq.m) in the area created by the removal of the escalator between Levels 2 and 3; the kiosk zones on Level 1 and Level 2 will be flexible in terms of layout and all individual kiosks will be subject to design parameters set out in the Planning Report. The proposed use of any new kiosks within the kiosk zones will be shops (Class 1), professional/financial services (Class 2) and food and beverage uses (including any associated seating areas). There will be no net increase in floor area for the provision of food and beverage uses within the overall centre. The revisions/modifications proposed will result in an increase of c.106sq.m. of gross floor space within the overall shopping centre arising from the various changes to the mall circulation areas and creation of floor space in areas currently void. Permission is also sought for all associated site and development works.	89,331	This is a medium-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No
SD20A/0105	Grant Permission	Revisions to previously permitted internal modifications as approved under Ref. SD18A/0399 resulting in the reductions in the kiosk zone at Level 2 only by 196sq.m (from 1073sq.m to 877sq.m) to accommodate a new partially enclosed restaurant/café unit (196sq.m) and associated setting; the new restaurant and seating area will correspond with the footprint of the existing Units 260/262 and 263 and will contain associated facilities including a kitchen, front and rear counters, condiment unit, dining tables, chairs, booths and benches; associated signage and development works.	89,297	This is a medium-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project area (sq m)	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Possible Significant in-combination effects
SD19A/0394	Grant Permission	Mixed use commercial extension (9,956sq.m gross floor space) to the southern side of The Square Shopping Centre and a new public plaza and all associated site and development works including new signage; Level 1 - no changes; Level 2 - removal of southern mall entrance lobby and construction of new extension to existing Level 2 mall to include 6 retail units (2,611sq.m), a food hall/market hall area for multiple restaurant/food and beverage type uses with associated seating areas (2,041sq.m), a restaurant/cafe unit (67sq.m) and associated ancillary accommodation and circulation (1,534sq.m) and plant rooms (176sq.m) and introduction of new internal service corridor; Level 2 extension is replacing surface parking spaces (140) to the south of the shopping centre and an existing parking area (34 spaces) to the east of the proposed extension is to be reconfigured; creation of Level 3 entrance and creation of new public plaza to replace roof car park (111 spaces) and the new outdoor public plaza (0.74ha) will be used for multi-purpose events, civic and recreational uses and retail and food and beverage concessions involving temporary moveable structures erected on a seasonal basis; the creation of the new Level 3 entrance involves replacement of existing retail unit at Level 3 (Unit 307A) with mall area to include flexible kiosk type retail concession areas; 2 buildings accommodating 9 restaurant/bar units (3,324sq.m) and ancillary accommodation (175sq.m) and associated outdoor seating areas in the new plaza on south facing terraces; Level 4 - ancillary accommodation and service areas (28sq.m) on roof of 2 restaurants buildings within provision for screened plant areas and solar panels; the proposed extension has a maximum building height of 18 metres above existing ground levels; the extension is to replace and supersede the Plot B development previously permitted under Reg. Ref. SD13A/0192 (Bod Ref. PL06S.243280) which included a gross floor space of 5,684sq.m; the permitted northern extension (Plot A) remains unchanged. Permission is sought to amend Condition 3(a) of the Reg. Ref. SD13A/0132 (Bord Ref. PL06S.243280) to facilitate the construction of the proposed southern extension prior to the permitted northern extension (Plot A) subject to a phasing programme to be agreed.	49,291	This is a medium-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project area (sq m)	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Possible Significant in-combination effects
SD18A/0043	Grant Permission	Sub-division and change of use of existing Unit F-05 from Hotel/Bar/Restaurant use at ground floor level (260sq.m) and mezzanine floor level (390sq.m) to office unit at ground floor level (225sq.m) and to NCBI Offices use and associated staff facilities at mezzanine floor level (390sq.m) through new access doors on the northern elevation of the existing building, new access stairs and existing lift to mezzanine floor level (35sq.m) at ground floor level, extend the mezzanine floor area (48sq.m) within the existing approved development Reg. Ref. No. SD02A/0392 and SD08A/0197.	43,714	This is a medium-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No
SD20A/0083	Grant Permission	Works to the existing roof including installation of 173sq.m of solar pv panels; the erection of a new guardrail on the existing parapet to the perimeter of the roof; alteration to a portion of the existing roof from a pitched roof to a flat roof, installation of roof access hatches and all associated site development works.	23,617	This is a medium-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No
SD20A/0083	Grant Permission	Works to the existing roof including installation of 173sq.m of solar pv panels; the erection of a new guardrail on the existing parapet to the perimeter of the roof; alteration to a portion of the existing roof from a pitched roof to a flat roof, installation of roof access hatches and all associated site development works.	23,616	This is a medium-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project area (sq m)	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Possible Significant in-combination effects
SD17A/0412	Grant Permission	Changes of use within the existing Tallaght Cross West development: from permitted crèche uses to residential (9 units) at first floor level; from permitted retail uses to crèche (414sq.m) at ground and mezzanine floor levels; from permitted retail management suite and plant room use to part residential (3 units) at mezzanine floor level; from permitted retail and food court uses to third level education (2228sq.m) at ground, mezzanine and first floor levels; from permitted gymnasium use to residential (7 units) at mezzanine level; from permitted retail to gymnasium use (1918sq.m) at ground and mezzanine floor levels and from permitted retail to medical use (2885sq.m) at ground floor level all on site bounded principally by Belgard Square West, Cookstown Way and the Luas Red Line. The proposed changes will result in the provision of 19 additional residential units comprising 4 x 1 bedroom units, 14 x 2 bedroom units and 1 x 3 bedroom unit with associated balconies/winter gardens. The development will also include the provision of a crèche drop-off/collection area at Belgard Square West, minor elevational works including the repair, replacement, reconfiguration of existing curtain walling, windows and cladding with materials and all ancillary site development works.	21,069	This is a medium-scale project with a temporary construction phase, and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding urban built environment.	No	No
SD20A/0145	Grant Permission	Subdivision of the existing retail department store (Unit 116 - 5,396sq.m. - formerly Debenhams) to comprise 2 retail units - 116A (2,431sq.m) and 116B (2,270sq.m) and new service corridor (176sq.m) to the rear of the proposed unit 116B to provide access to the existing service yard; associated modifications including the removal of the existing mezzanine floor within Unit 116 (497sq.m); creation of new retail frontage within the internal mall and associated signage; revisions to existing retail Unit 117 (113sq.m) and 118 (102sq.m) to form a single amalgamated unit (169sq.m) and creation of additional mall floor space (47sq.m) arising from the unit reconfiguration; all associated site and development works including minor revisions to the layout of the existing service yard	15,081	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project area (sq m)	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Possible Significant in-combination effects
SD20A/0088	Grant Permission	Replacement of a portion of the facade; removal of escalators and infill of voids at first floor (ex. mezzanine 93.5sq.m and second floor (ex. food courts 64sq.m); change of use of the mezzanine floor of the previously approved and constructed retail known as C4 to a Primary Care Centre (Class 8); change of use for ground floor, first floor and second floor of the previously approved and constructed retail unit known as Food Court, to a Primary Care Centre (Class 8); 6 external signage locations: (1) at unit C5 entrance (8.17sq.m); (2) at unit C4 entrance (9.36sq.m); (3) above first/second floors entrance (11.4sq.m); (4) to east elevation (6,25sq.m); (5) above unit C5 entrance (1.5sq.m); (6) above unit C4 entrance (0.75sq.m); the change of use area when completed will form an integral part of the previously approved Academic & Primary Care Centre (SD14A/0041, SD14A/0227, SD15A/0147, SD16A/0046 and SD19A/0158 at Tallaght Cross West, Tallaght, Dublin 24.	5,782	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No
SD15A/0384	Grant Permission	Conversion of existing two 6 person group housing units in Block C to two 3 bed apartments and six 6 person group housing units in Block D to six 2 bed apartments and six 1 bed apartments.	4,746	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project area (sq m)	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Possible Significant in-combination effects
SD17A/0418	Grant Permission	Change of use from previously permitted retail use on the ground and first floor of units D-03 and D-07 and associated circulation cores, to medical clinic use and internal modification to the circulation cores. This will extend the existing medical clinic as permitted under planning permission Ref. SD15A/0357. The development will consist of: (a) a change of use from retail to medical use of the first floor Unit D-03 (existing 676sq.m), Unit D-07 (existing 482sq.m) and the associated circulation cores on the ground and first floors (existing 194sq.m) resulting in an additional medical clinic use of 1352sq.m including associated support, patient and office administration areas. (b) internal modifications to circulation cores to form a new dedicated access/goods lift. The development will be served by existing basement car and cycle parking provision.	3,666	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No
SD19A/0052	Grant Permission	Internal reorganisation of the existing ground floor bar/dining/reception area resulting in the relocation of the main entrance door and reception area; provision of a toilet; an increase in area of the existing bar/dining area of 35sq.m; change of use from retail to a 12sq.m kitchen store, accessed from the existing kitchen; 895sq.m hotel extension, providing 24 bedrooms and ancillary spaces is proposed on the first floor consisting of the change of use of 790sq.m retail and a 105sq.m extension within the existing perimeter; 12 residents and 3 staff car parking spaces are provided within the existing basement car park, the allocated spaces are currently associated with first floor retail use; an additional 4 bicycle spaces have been provided as an addition to the current provision.	3,154	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No
SD16A/0385	Grant Permission	Permission for the change of use and modifications to previously permitted office use to form new six storey medical clinic. The proposed development will consist of: change of use from office to medical clinic (2,648sq.m); internal modifications and extension of the existing roof plant enclosure; installation of new services plant at roof level; new external building signage; a new dedicated ambulance drop off bay adjoining the main entrance on Cookstown Way; The development will be served by existing basement car and cycle parking provision.	2,019	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project area (sq m)	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Possible Significant in-combination effects
SD20A/0126	Grant Permission	3 externally mounted hotel signs which include: (1) a high-level wall mounted sign to the northeast facade complete with individual lettering and LED halo backlighting; (2) a double fronted suspended soffit sign with integrated LED lighting located adjacent to the main entrance at the northeast corner of the site; (3) a sign with integrated LED backlighting installed into the existing glazed facade located over the main entrance door to the north of the site.	1,773	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No
SD15A/0357	Grant Permission	Change of use, subdivision, and modifications to previously permitted retail uses at Units D-01 and D-03 to form a new 2 storey medical clinic of 575sq.m on the ground and first floors, and comprising: (a) ground floor change of use of part of Unit D-01 (existing 366sq.m) from retail to new Medical Clinic use, sub-division of ground floor Unit D-01 comprising revised retail Unit D-01 of 300sq.m, new Medical Clinic use of 66sq.m new glazed external ground floor entrance doors, and new signage to east elevation; (b) first floor change of use of Unit D-01 (existing 437sq.m) and part of D-03 (existing 748sq.m) from retail to Medical Clinic use, resulting in new Medical Clinic use of 509sq.m including associated ancillary staff, patient and administration areas, and reduced retail Unit D-03 of 676sq.m; (c) internal modifications will include associated new building serviced and access lift. The development will be served by existing basement car and cycle parking provision. Compliance with condition 3.	1,489	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No
SD17A/0284	Grant Permission	Modifications to existing retail Unit 6 (previously approved plans (Reg Ref SD03A/0323, SD05A/0720), An Bord Pleanala Ref No. PL06S.204123) consisting of 467sq.m retail food store (to include Off Licence) with associated provision of seated dining, kitchen, wc, office and storage facilities; alteration to the front facade to introduce a new pedestrian entrance with new signage over and all ancillary site works and services.	1,254	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project area (sq m)	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Possible Significant in-combination effects
SD16A/0063	Grant Permission	Change of use from permitted retail use to restaurant with ancillary takeaway use (floor area 415.6sq.m.) including all associated site works.	1,211	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No
SD20A/0289	Grant Permission	Alterations to existing external service area to the north eastern side of The Square Shopping Centre at the entrance to the existing service yard comprising of construction of an external plant area (c.135sq.m) enclosed by 2.4 metre high galvanised fencing to accommodate an Air Handling Unit (AHU) and a Chiller Unit ancillary to the shopping centre; new flat roof boiler room building (c.34sq.m gross floor area) within the proposed new enclosed plant enclosure; installation of a metal frame (2.4 metres wide x 1 metre high and located 2-3 metres above the ground supported by metal stilts) to facilitate the connection of the Air Handling Unit and Chiller within the plant area to the covered service yard area; replacement of mesh panels on existing wall on the western and norther side of the service yard with metal louvered panels; all associated site and development works.	1,045	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No
SD19A/0158	Grant Permission	Change of use for a portion (351sq.m) of the previously approved and constructed ground floor retail unit known as C4 to a Primary Care Centre (class 8) which will form an integral part of the previously approved Academic and Primary Care Centre (SD14A/0041, SD14A/0227, SD15A/0147 and SD16A/0046).	973	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project area (sq m)	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Possible Significant in-combination effects
SD17A/0351	Grant Permission	Change of use for part of previously approved retail unit (SD03A/0323) from retail to retail and off licence sales area.	642	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No
SD18A/0312	Grant Permission	Change of use from retail to coffee shop/take-away/restaurant use (area 135sq.m).	385	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No
SD16A/0046	Grant Permission	Change of use for a portion (80sq.m) of the previously approved and constructed ground floor retail unit known as Unit C4 to a Primary Care Centre (Class 8) at ground floor level. The change of use use when completed will form an integral part of the previously approved Academic and Primary Care Centre (SD14A/0027 & SD14A/0041).	234	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No

Project Code	Status	Overview	Project area (sq m)	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Possible Significant in-combination effects
SD20A/0342	Grant Permission	3 signs (1m metre high x 4.5 metres wide aluminium back panels with individual raised illuminated lettering) on the existing tower feature on the western elevation of The Square; 1 sign (1.2m meter high x 6.1 metres wide aluminium back panel with individual raised illuminated lettering) positioned externally on the southern elevation of The Square (south eastern corner).	74	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No
SD18A/0386	Grant Permission For Retention	Retention of part change of use from gym facility to retail unit at ground floor level.	25	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operation phase will have localised effects that are in keeping with the surrounding sub-urban built environment.	No	No

4. Conclusion

This stage one screening for AA of the proposed Mobility Hub at Tallaght Luas Stop, Dublin 24 finds that the proposed development is not likely to have significant effects on any European sites.

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

The proposed development is 3.17 km away from the closest SAC and 7.31 km away from the closest SPA. Given the nature of the proposed work, the scale and the localised and temporary nature of the potential effects, the proposed project will not lead to any significant effects in-combination with effects arising from any other plans or projects.

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

Appendix I European sites within 15km of the project area with the Qualifying Interests and known threats and pressures

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature	Pressures Codes	Known Threats and Pressures
000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310], Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210], Embryonic shifting dunes [2110], Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]	F02.03.01, G01.01.02, G01.01, M01, D01.02, E02, H03, K02.02, G01.02, K02, E01, D01.01, E03, J02.01.02	Bait digging or collection, Non-motorized nautical sports, Nautical sports, Changes in abiotic conditions, Roads, motorways, Industrial or commercial areas, Marine water pollution, Accumulation of organic material, Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles, Biocenotic evolution, succession, Urbanised areas, human habitation, Paths, tracks, cycling tracks, Discharges, Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh
000397	Red Bog, Kildare SAC	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]	F03.01, F02.03, A04, E01.03, C01.01, A08	Hunting, Leisure fishing, Grazing, Dispersed habitation, Sand and gravel extraction , Fertilisation
000725	Knocksink Wood SAC	Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0], Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior *(Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)* [91E0], Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220]	B01, D05, E03.01, G05.06, I01, G05.07, D01.02, B02.03, G03, D01.01, A04, B01.02, G05.04, E01.02, G02.08, G01.02	Forest planting on open ground, Improved access to site, Disposal of household or recreational facility waste, Tree surgery, felling for public safety, removal of roadside trees, Invasive non-native species, Missing or wrongly directed conservation measures, Roads, motorways, Removal of forest undergrowth, Interpretative centres, Paths, tracks, cycling tracks, Grazing, Artificial planting on open ground (non-native trees), Vandalism, Discontinuous urbanisation, Camping and caravans, Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles
001209	Glenasmole Valley SAC	Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220], Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco-Brometalia)* * important orchid sites [6210], Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils *(Molinion caeruleae)* [6410]	A03, A03.03, J02, B01.02, B02.01.02, B02.02, E01.02, A08, H01.05, D01.03, F02.03, A04, A04.02.01, A04.02.02, A04.02.03, B01.01, C01.03, H01.08, I01, H02.07, D01	Mowing or cutting of grassland, Abandonment or lack of mowing , Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions, Artificial planting on open ground (non-native trees), Forest replanting (non native trees), Forestry clearance, Discontinuous urbanisation, Fertilisation, Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to agricultural and forestry activities, Car parcs and parking areas, Leisure fishing, Grazing, Non intensive cattle grazing, Non intensive sheep grazing, Non intensive horse grazing, Forest planting on open ground (native trees), Peat extraction, Diffuse pollution to surface waters due to household sewage and waste waters, Invasive non-native species, Diffuse groundwater pollution due to non-sewered population, Roads, paths and railroads
001398	Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	Desmoulin`s whorl snail *(Vertigo moulinsiana)* [1016], Narrow-mouthed whorl snail *(Vertigo angustior)* [1014], Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)* [7220]	A04, B, E01.03, A08, E01.01, D01.02, J02.05.02, A10.01	Grazing, Sylviculture, forestry, Dispersed habitation, Fertilisation, Continuous urbanisation, Roads, motorways, Modifying structures of inland water courses, Removal of hedges and copses or scrub

Site Code	Site Name	Qualifying Feature	Pressures Codes	Known Threats and Pressures
002122	Wicklow Mountains SAC	European dry heaths [4030], Blanket bogs * if active bog [7130], Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels *(Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)* [8110], Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010], Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0], Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220], Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160], Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060], Otter *(Lutra lutra)* [1355], Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains *(Littorelletalia uniflorae)* [3110], Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210], Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae [6130], Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas - and submountain areas in Continental Europe [6230]	G05.01, B06, D01.01, I01, G04.01, G05.09, G01.04, B02.05, L05, G05.04, K04.05, A05.02, K01.01, J01.01, F03.02.02, G01, C01.03, G01.03.02, A04, G02.09, E01, F03, E03.01, G01.02, G05.07, F04.02, G05.06	Trampling, overuse, Grazing in forests or woodland, Paths, tracks, cycling tracks, Invasive non-native species, Military manouvres, Fences, fencing, Mountaineering, rock climbing, speleology, Non- intensive timber production (leaving dead wood or old trees untouched), Collapse of terrain, landslide, Vandalism, Damage by herbivores (including game species), Stock feeding, Erosion, Burning down, Taking from nest (e.g. falcons), Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities, Peat extraction, Off-road motorized driving, Grazing, Wildlife watching, Urbanised areas, human habitation, Hunting and collection of wild animals (terrestrial), Disposal of household or recreational facility waste, Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles, Missing or wrongly directed conservation measures, Collection (fungi, lichen, berries etc.), Tree surgery, felling for public safety, removal of roadside trees
004024	Sandymount Strand/Tolka Estuary SPA	Ringed Plover *(Charadrius hiaticula)* [A137], Dunlin *(Calidris alpina)* [A149], Wetland and Waterbirds [A999], Knot *(Calidris canutus)* [A143], Common tern *(Sterna hirundo)* [A193], Oystercatcher *(Haematopus ostralegus)* [A130], Redshank *(Tringa totanus)* [A162], Black-headed Gull *(Chroicocephalus ridibundus)* [A179], Grey Plover *(Pluvialis squatarola)* [A141], Light-bellied Brent Goose *(Branta bernicla hrota)* [A046], Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii)* [A192], Sanderling *(Calidris alba)* [A144], Bar-tailed Godwit *(Limosa lapponica)* [A157], Arctic tern *(Sterna paradisaea)* [A194]	G01.02, F02.03, E01, J02.01.02, D01.02, G01.01, K02.03, E02, F02.03.01, E03	Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles, Leisure fishing, Urbanised areas, human habitation, Reclamation of land from sea, estuary or marsh, Roads, motorways, Nautical sports, Eutrophication (natural), Industrial or commercial areas, Bait digging or collection, Discharges
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	Peregrine falcon *(Falco peregrinus)* [A103], Merlin *(Falco columbarius)* [A098]	A04, C01.03, G01.02, G03, B, D01.01	Grazing, Peat extraction, Walking, horseriding and non-motorised vehicles, Interpretative centres, Sylviculture, forestry, Paths, tracks, cycling tracks
004063	Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA	Lesser Black-backed Gull *(Larus fuscus)* [A183], Greylag Goose *(Anser anser)* [A043]	D01.05, F02.03, B01, G01.01, F03.01	Bridge, viaduct, Leisure fishing, Forest planting on open ground, Nautical sports, Hunting

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

Qualifying Interests	EU Code	Current threats to Qualifying Interests	Sensitivity of Qualifying Interests
Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail *(Vertigo angustior)*	[1014]	Loss of riverside and canalside habitat; exploitation of esker sites and drainage of wetlands, and sheep grazing and overexploitation of dune sites.	Changes to ground vegetation condition, groundwater dependent and is highly sensitive to hydrological changes.
Desmoulin's Whorl Snail *(Vertigo moulinsiana)*	[1016]	Loss of riverside and canalside habitat; exploitation of esker sites and drainage of wetlands, and sheep grazing and overexploitation of dune sites.	Changes to ground vegetation condition, groundwater dependent and is highly sensitive to hydrological changes.
Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	[1140]	Aquaculture, fishing, bait digging, removal of fauna, reclamation of land, coastal protection works and invasive species, particularly cord-grass; hard coastal defence structures; sea-level rise.	Surface and marine water dependent. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Moderate sensitivity to pollution. Changes to salinity and tidal regime. Coastal development.
Annual vegetation of drift lines	[1210]	Grazing; sand and gravel extraction; recreational activities; coastal protection works.	Overgrazing and erosion. Changes in management.
Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand	[1310]	Invasive Species; erosion and accretion.	Marine water dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Infilling, reclamation, invasive species.
Otter *(Lutra lutra)*	[1355]	Decrease in water quality: Use of pesticides; fertilization; vegetation removal; professional fishing (including lobster pots and fyke nets); unting; poisoning; sand and gravel extraction; mechanical removal of peat; urbanised areas; human habitation; continuous urbanization; drainage; management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes; and canalization or modifying structures of inland water course.	Surface and marine water dependent. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Sensitivity to pollution.
Embryonic shifting dunes	[2110]	Natural erosion processes exacerbated by recreation and sand extraction. Coastal protection interfering with natural processes.	Overgrazing, and erosion. Changes in management.
Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains *(Littorelletalia uniflorae)*	[3110]	Nutrient enrichment; afforestation; waste water; invasive alien species; sport and leisure activities.	Surface and groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution.

Qualifying Interests	EU Code	Current threats to Qualifying Interests	Sensitivity of Qualifying Interests
Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds	[3160]	Nutrient alterations; management shifts in the associated peatland habitat, afforestation; waste water; invasive alien species; sport and leisure activities.	Surface and groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution
Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix	[4010]	Reclamation, afforestation and burning; overstocking; invasion by non-heath species; exposure of peat to severe erosion.	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management.
European dry heaths	[4030]	Afforestation, overburning, over-grazing, under-grazing and bracken invasion.	Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Changes in management. Changes in nutrient status.
Alpine and Boreal heaths	[4060]	Abandonment; overgrazing; burning; outdoor recreation; quarries; communication networks; and wind farm developments.	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change.
Calaminarian grasslands of the Murawy galmanowa *(Violetalia calaminariae)*	[6130]	Land reclamation, afforestation; drainage; and infrastructural development.	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management.
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates *(Festuco-Brometalia)** important orchid sites	[6210]	Land reclamation, afforestation; drainage; and infrastructural development.	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management.
Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)	[6230]	Bracken encroachment, succession, inappropriate grazing, afforestation; drainage; and infrastructural development.	Erosion, overgrazing and recreation.
Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils *(Molinion caeruleae)*	[6410]	Agricultural intensification; drainage; abandonment of pastoral systems.	Surface and groundwater dependent. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Changes in management. Changes in nutrient status.
Blanket bogs (* if active bog)	[7130]	Land reclamation, peat extraction; afforestation; erosion and landslides triggered by human activity; drainage; burning and infrastructural development.	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management.
Transition mires and quaking bogs	[7140]	Drainage; burning; peat extraction; overgrazing; afforestation; erosion; and climate change.	Surface and groundwater dependent. Low sensitivity to hydrological changes. Erosion, land-use changes.

Qualifying Interests	EU Code	Current threats to Qualifying Interests	Sensitivity of Qualifying Interests
Petrifying springs with tufa formation *(Cratoneurion)*	[7220]	Ground water interactions, on site management activities.	Surface and groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution.
Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels *(Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)*	[8110]	Overgrazing, undergrazing and succession were recorded as medium-importance pressures in this reporting period, and Structure and functions were again assessed as Inadequate, the trend is considered to be stable rather than improving. This change is due to improved knowledge and the habitat is considered to have been stable since before the last assessment.	Erosion, overgrazing and recreation.
Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	[8210]	Overgrazing; extractive industries; recreational activities and improved access.	Erosion, overgrazing and recreation.
Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation	[8220]	Pressures associated with the non-native invasive species New Zealand willowherb (Epilobium brunnescens).	Erosion, overgrazing and recreation.
Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles	[91A0]	The introduction of alien species; sub-optimal grazing patterns; general forestry management; increases in urbanisation and human habitation adjacent to oak woodlands; and the construction of communication networks through the woodland.	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Introduction of alien species.

Appendix III Special Conservation Interests of SPAs that have undergone assessment including vulnerabilities of the SCIs

Special Conservation Interest Species identified for the SPAs within connected to the proposed development

Special Conservation Interest (SCI) Species
Greylag goose *(Anser anser)* [A043]
Greylag goose *(Anser anser [Iceland/UK/Ireland])* [A043]
Merlin *(Falco columbarius)* [A098]
Peregrine falcon *(Falco peregrinus)* [A103]
Eurasian oystercatcher *(Haematopus ostralegus)* [A130]
Ringed plover *(Charadrius hiaticula)* [A137]
Grey plover *(Pluvialis squatarola)* [A141]
Red knot *(Calidris canutus)* [A143]
Sanderling *(Calidris alba)* [A144]
Bar-tailed godwit *(Limosa lapponica)* [A157]
Common redshank *(Tringa totanus)* [A162]
Black-headed gull *(Larus ridibundus)* [A179]
Lesser black-backed gull *(Larus fuscus)* [A183]
Roseate tern *(Sterna dougallii)* [A192]
Common tern *(Sterna hirundo)* [A193]
Arctic tern *(Sterna paradisaea)* [A194]

Vulnerabilities of Special Conservation Interests

- Bird species are particularly vulnerable to direct disturbance due to noise and/or vibration. These effects are localised, and disturbance effects are foreseen to be low at distances beyond 2km[8].
- Direct habitat loss is a serious concern for bird species, as well as the reduction in habitat quality. Habitat degradation could occur through effects such as local enrichment due to agricultural practices or damage to habitat through activities such as trampling.
- Prey species diversity and availability is a key element of species conservation. Community dynamics and ecosystem functionality are complex concepts and require site specific information. The site synopsis and conservation objectives for the SPAs identified within the ZoI were used to identify any specific prey sensitivities.
- Availability of nesting/roosting habitat. Particularly for the Hen Harrier.
- Vegetation composition, structure and functionality.

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

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