

Appropriate Assessment Screening & Natura Impact Statement - Information for a Stage 1 (AA Screening) and Stage 2 (Natura Impact Statement) AA for the Proposed Redevelopment of the Former Windmill Bar and Restaurant at Seatown Place, Dundalk, Co. Louth.



29th May 2025

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On behalf of: Flood Francis Developments.

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Document Control Sheet			
Project	Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement – Information for a Stage 1 (AA Screening) and Stage 2 (Natura Impact Statement) AA for a proposed redevelopment of the former windmill bar and restaurant at Seatown Place, Dundalk, Co. Louth.		
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Introduction

The following Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement – Information for a Stage 1 (AA Screening) and Stage 2 (Natura Impact Statement) AA has been prepared by **Altamar Ltd.** for a proposed redevelopment of the former Windmill Bar & Restaurant at Seatown Place, Dundalk, Co. Louth.

An Appropriate Assessment is an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed project or plan, on its own, or in combination with other plans or projects, on one or more European sites. European sites are those sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPA).

The AA Screening stage examines the likely significant effects of a plan or project, either on its own, or in combination with other plans and projects, upon a European site and considers whether, on the basis of objective scientific evidence, it can be concluded that there are no likely significant effects on any European site, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites.

The Natura Impact Statement examines whether the plan or project, either alone, or in combination with other plans and projects, in the view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the sites' conservation objectives, will adversely affect the integrity of the European sites.

Altamar Ltd.

Since its inception in 2001, Altamar has been delivering ecological and environmental services to a broad range of clients. Operational areas include residential, infrastructural, renewable, oil & gas, private industry, local authorities, EC projects and State/semi-State Departments. Bryan Deegan is the managing director of Altamar. Bryan is an environmental scientist and marine biologist with 31 years' experience working in Irish terrestrial and aquatic environments, providing services to the State, Semi-State and industry. Bryan Deegan (MCIEEM) holds a MSc in Environmental Science, BSc (Hons.) in Applied Marine Biology, NCEA National Diploma in Applied Aquatic Science and a NCEA National Certificate in Science (Aquaculture). Bryan Deegan carried out all elements of this Appropriate Assessment Screening and Natura Impact Statement.

Background to the Appropriate Assessment

The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (together with the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)) forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. The Directive protects over 1000 animals and plant species and over 200 "habitat types" which are of European importance. In the Habitats Directive, Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of European Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of conservation sites (NATURA, 2000). These are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Birds Directive. Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect European sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [NATURA 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implication for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the component 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."

As outlined in "Managing European sites, The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC" (European Commission, 21 November 2018) *"The purpose of the appropriate assessment is to assess the implications of the plan or project in respect of the site's conservation objectives, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. The conclusions should enable the competent authorities to ascertain whether the plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned. The focus of the appropriate assessment is therefore specifically on the species and/or the habitats for which the European site is designated."*

As outlined in the EC guidance document on Article 6(4) (January 2007)¹:

“Appropriate assessments of the implications of the plan or project for the site concerned must precede its approval and take into account the cumulative effects which result from the combination of that plan or project with other plans or projects in view of the site's conservation objectives. This implies that all aspects of the plan or project which can, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, affect those objectives must be identified in the light of the best scientific knowledge in the field.

Assessment procedures of plans or projects likely to affect European sites should guarantee full consideration of all elements contributing to the site integrity and to the overall coherence of the network, both in the definition of the baseline conditions and in the stages leading to identification of potential impacts, mitigation measures and residual impacts. These determine what has to be compensated, both in quality and quantity. Regardless of whether the provisions of Article 6(3) are delivered following existing environmental impact assessment procedures or other specific methods, it must be ensured that:

- *Article 6(3) assessment results allow full traceability of the decisions eventually made, including the selection of alternatives and any imperative reasons of overriding public interest.*
- *The assessment should include all elements contributing to the site's integrity and to the overall coherence of the network as defined in the site's conservation objectives and Standard Data Form, and be based on best available scientific knowledge in the field. The information required should be updated and could include the following issues:*
 - *Structure and function, and the respective role of the site's ecological assets;*
 - *Area, representativity and conservation status of the priority and nonpriority habitats in the site;*
 - *Population size, degree of isolation, ecotype, genetic pool, age class structure, and conservation status of species under Annex II of the Habitats Directive or Annex I of the Birds Directive present in the site;*
 - *Role of the site within the biographical region and in the coherence of the European network; and,*
 - *Any other ecological assets and functions identified in the site.*
- *It should include a comprehensive identification of all the potential impacts of the plan or project likely to be significant on the site, taking into account cumulative impacts and other impacts likely to arise as a result of the combined action of the plan or project under assessment and other plans or projects.*
- *The assessment under Article 6(3) applies the best available techniques and methods, to estimate the extent of the effects of the plan or project on the biological integrity of the site(s) likely to be damaged.*
- *The assessment provides for the incorporation of the most effective mitigation measures into the plan or project concerned, in order to avoid, reduce or even cancel the negative impacts on the site.*
- *The characterisation of the biological integrity and the impact assessment should be based on the best possible indicators specific to the European assets which must also be useful to monitor the plan or project implementation.”*

¹ European Commission. (2007). Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission;

Stages of the Appropriate Assessment

This Appropriate Assessment screening was undertaken in accordance with the European Commission Methodological Guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001), Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in addition to the December 2009 publication from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government; 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities' and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. In order to comply with the above Guidelines and legislation, the Appropriate Assessment process must be structured as follows:

1) Screening stage:

- Description of plan or project, and local site or plan area characteristics;
- Identification of relevant European sites, and compilation of information on their qualifying interests and conservation objectives
- Identification and description of individual in combination effects likely to result from the proposed project;
- Assessment of the likely significance of the effects identified above. Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no likely significant effects; and,

Conclusions

2) Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement):

- Description of the European sites that will be considered further;
- Identification and description of potential adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of these sites likely to occur from the project or plan; and,
- Mitigation Measures that will be implemented to avoid, reduce or remedy any such potential adverse impacts
- Assessment as to whether, following the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, it can be concluded, beyond all reasonable scientific doubt, that there will be no adverse impact on the integrity of the relevant European Site in light of its conservation objectives"
- Conclusions.

If it can be demonstrated during the AA screening phase (Stage 1), that the proposed project will not have a significant effect, whether alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site, then no further AA (Stage 2) will be required. It is important to note that there is a requirement to apply a precautionary approach to AA screening. Therefore, where effects are possible, certain or unknown at the screening stage, AA will be required.

In addition, it should be noted that Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out, subsequently, an AA 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.

Stage 1 Screening Assessment

Management of the Site

The plan or project is not directly connected with, or necessary to the management of Natura 2000 sites.

Description of the Proposed Project

The development will consist of the change of use of the site to residential use and alterations to the current structure to provide 3 no. 2 bedroom apartments and 11 no. 1 bedroom apartments. The proposed development includes all associated site development works including; the retention and conservation of the historic elements of the facade of the Windmill Bar, landscaped communal open space, secure bicycle storage, bin storage, boundary treatments and all associated site strip and excavation works above and below ground. The subject site is located within the Jocelyn Street/Seatown Place ACA and does not contain any Protected Structures.

The site outline, site location and architectural plans are shown in Figures 1-4.

Drainage

The engineering strategy for the proposed development has been prepared by Joseph Cotter Civil Engineering. As outlined in the SUDS design report:

"The rain water runoff from the roofs

It is proposed to divert the rainwater from the roofs of the existing and proposed buildings in to the Storm-Tech water attenuation unit with a controlled discharge of 2l/s and divert to the existing public storm drain located in Seatown. The design procedure is based on "BRE Digest 365"- Soak pits Design. This standard requires the soakage pits to be capable of catering for rainfall storms 1 in 30 year & 1 in 100.

Conclusion

The results for the storm tech design show that during extreme storm events, there is sufficient storage available to ensure no flooding of the site occurs. This design would also be conservative as it is allowing for the worse case infiltration and does not take into account storage capacity within the surface water pipes.

In our professional opinion the development as proposed will have no significant impact on the drainage to the adjoining properties."

As shown in the associated drainage plans (Figures 5 & 6), both surface and foul water from the proposed development will be discharged into the existing combined sewer on Seatown Place, ultimately out falling to Dundalk WWTP for treatment under license.

Flood-Risk Assessment

A site-specific flood risk assessment has been prepared by Joseph Cotter Civil Engineering. As outlined in the report:

"The results for the Justification test show the proposed development with the measures outlined in section 10 of the report will not represent a flood risk.

In our professional opinion the granting of a development of 140no. units on the site of a former bar and restaurant in this location will have no impact on flooding or of flood risk to the development site or the surrounding area. "

No flood risk is foreseen from the proposed development.



Figure 1. Proposed site outline



Project: Windmill Apartments
 Location: Dundalk, Co. Louth
 Date: 26th May 2025
 Drawn By: Bryan Deegan (Altamar)

ALTEMAR
 Marine & Environmental Consultancy



Figure 2. Proposed site location

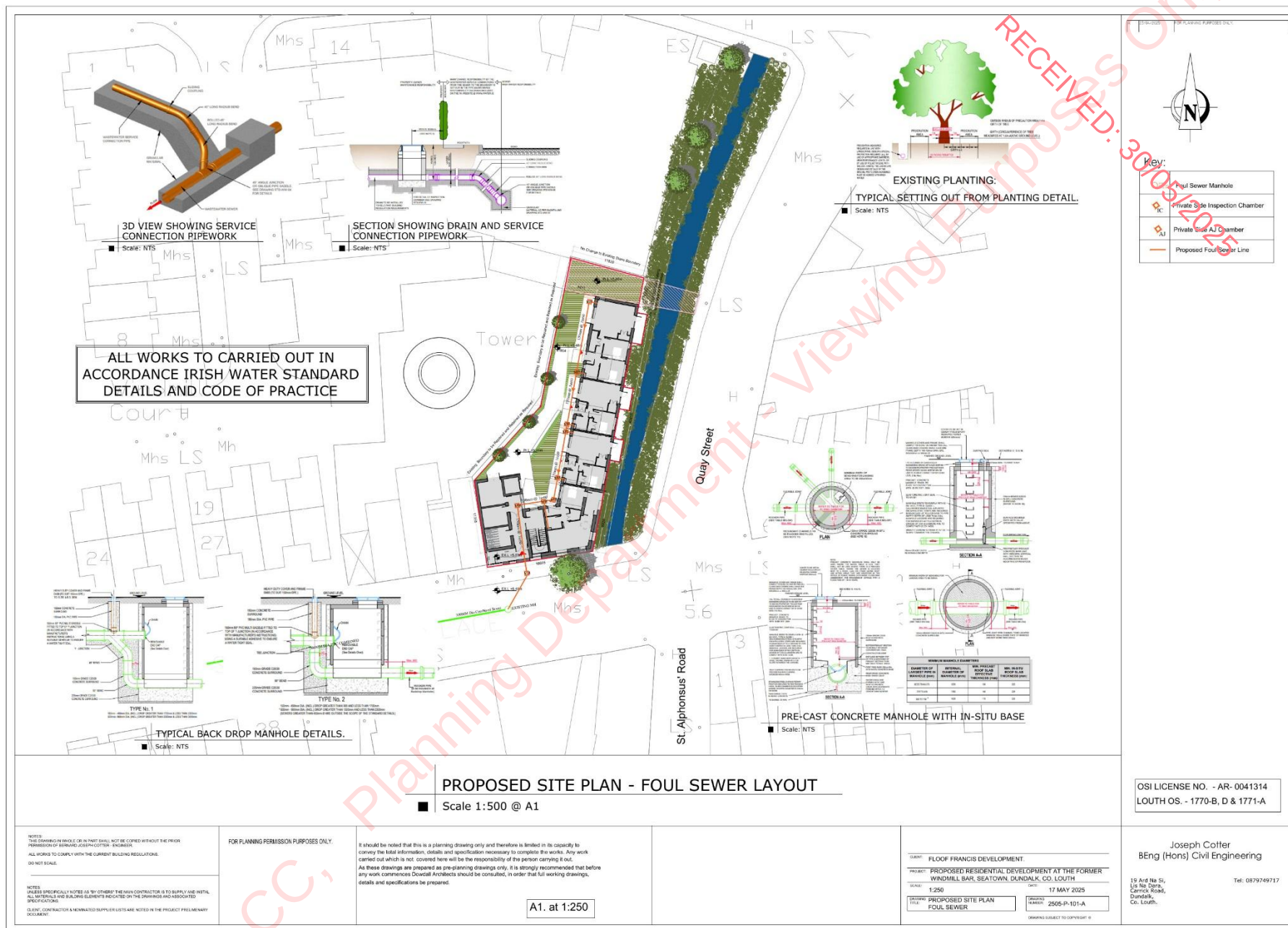


Figure 6. Proposed foul water layout

Identification of Relevant Natura 2000 Sites

The proposed development site is not within a European site and is not necessary for the management of a Natura 2000 site. As outlined in Office of the Planning Regulator (2021) *'The zone of influence of a proposed development is the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. This should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source- Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km).'*

A key factor in the consideration as to whether a particular European site is likely to be affected by a development is its distance from the location of the subject site. It is generally, but not necessarily, the case that the greater the distance from the plan or project the smaller the likelihood of impacts. In this case, the nearest European sites to the subject site are the Dundalk Bay SAC and SPA which are located approximately 250 m from the site boundary (Figure 7 & 8). The nearest official EPA Water Framework Directive watercourse to the subject site is the Castletown Stream (Rampart River) which traverses along the eastern site boundary (Figure 11). This watercourse flows a short distance (c. 230m) into Dundalk Bay, where Dundalk Bay SAC and SPA are located (Figures 12 & 13). Given the proximity to these designated sites and the direct hydrological pathway via the Castletown Stream, it is considered that there is a direct hydrological connection between the proposed development site and two Natura 2000 sites at Dundalk Bay (Dundalk Bay SAC & SPA).

Both surface water and foul wastewater from the proposed development site will be discharged to an existing combined sewer network to the front of the site on Seatown Place. The surface and foul water generated onsite will be treated under license in the Dundalk Water Treatment Plant which discharges into Dundalk Bay. The Dundalk Water Treatment Plant has a Peak Hydraulic Capacity of 56706 m³/day, a remaining Organic Capacity (PE) of 6960 and the capacity of this treatment plant is not expected to be exceeded in the next three years (2022)². Out of an abundance of caution and because of the indirect pathway it is considered that the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA are within the potential zone of influence of surface and foul water drainage from the site.

The features of interest and the potential impact of the development on each European site and features of interest, are displayed in Table 1. SPAs and SACs within 15 km are seen in Figures 9 and 10. Watercourses, SPAs, and SACs proximate to the subject site are seen in Figures 11-13. No potential impacts are foreseen on European sites beyond 15 km as there are no direct or indirect pathways to these sites.

Table 1. Proximity to designated sites of conservation importance

Code	European Site	Distance	Direct Hydrological / Biodiversity Connection
Special Areas of Conservation			
000455	Dundalk Bay SAC	250 m	Yes
000453	Carlingford Mountain SAC	6.1 km	No
002306	Carlingford Shore SAC	12.2 km	No
Special Protected Areas			
004026	Dundalk Bay SPA	250 m	Yes
004091	Stabannan-Braganstown SPA	13.2 km	No

² https://www.water.ie/sites/default/files/2025-02/D0053-01_2023_AER.pdf

Table 2. Screening of European sites.

NIS Required for the following sites

NATURA Code	Name	Screened IN/OUT	Details/Reason
Special Areas of Conservation			
IE000455	Dundalk Bay SAC	IN	Conservation Objectives 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. Qualifying Interests Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] Potential Impact The proposed works site is approximately 250m from this SAC (Figure 9). There is a direct hydrological pathway from the proposed development site to this SAC via the Castletown River which runs adjacent to the eastern site boundary. Both surface and foul water from the development will be discharged to an existing combined sewer to the front of the site on Seatown Place and thereafter will be processed in the Dundalk Wastewater Treatment Plant prior to discharge into Dundalk Bay. No significant effects are foreseen from surface and foul water drainage. In a strict application of the precautionary principle, it has been concluded that significant effects on the Dundalk Bay SAC are likely, in the absence of mitigation measures during construction, primarily due to the potential for dust and contaminated surface water runoff which would contain silt and petrochemical pollutants from the proposed works. This is primarily as a result of the direct hydrological connection to the Dundalk Bay SAC via the onsite Castletown Stream. For this reason, it is necessary to proceed to a NIS on the effects of the project on this site in view of its conservation objectives. Significant effects are likely in the absence of mitigation measures. NIS is Required.
Special Protection Areas			
IE004026	Dundalk Bay SPA	IN	Conservation Objectives To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SPA has been selected. Qualifying Interests Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]

NATURA Code	Name	Screened IN/OUT	Details/Reason
			Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] Potential Impact The proposed works site is approximately 250 m from this SPA (Figure 10). There is a direct hydrological pathway from the proposed development site to this SPA via the Castletown River. Both surface and foul water from the development will be discharged to an existing combined sewer to the front of the site on Seatown Place and thereafter will be processed in the Dundalk Wastewater Treatment Plant prior to discharge into Dundalk Bay. No significant effects are foreseen from surface and foul water drainage. In a strict application of the precautionary principle, it has been concluded that significant effects on the Dundalk Bay SPA are likely, in the absence of mitigation measures during construction, primarily due to the potential for dust and contaminated surface water runoff which would contain silt and petrochemical pollutants from the proposed works. This is primarily as a result of the direct hydrological connection to the Dundalk Bay SPA via the onsite Castletown stream. For this reason, it is necessary to proceed to a NIS on the effects of the project on this site in view of its conservation objectives Significant effects are likely in the absence of mitigation measures. NIS is Required.

European sites screened OUT (NIS not required)

NATURA Code	Name	Screened IN/OUT	Details/Reason
Special Areas of Conservation			
IE000455	Carlingford Mountain SAC	OUT	Conservation Objectives 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. Qualifying Interests Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> [4010] European dry heaths [4030] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)* [6230] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140] Alkaline fens [7230] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) [8110] Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220] Potential Impact The proposed works site is a minimum of 6.1 km from this SAC (Figure 9). There is no 'direct' or 'indirect' Source-Pathway linkage between the proposed development site and the SAC. No potential impact is foreseen. There is no direct or indirect pathway from this site to the SAC. The construction and operation of the proposed development will not impact on the conservation interests of the site. No significant effects are likely
IE004091	Carlingford Shore SAC	OUT	Conservation Objectives 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. Qualifying Interests Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Potential Impact The proposed works site is a minimum of 12.2 km from this SAC (Figure 9). There is no 'direct' or 'indirect' Source-Pathway linkage between the proposed development site and the SAC. No potential impact is foreseen. There is no direct or indirect pathway from this site to the SAC. The construction and operation of the proposed development will not impact on the conservation interests of the site. No significant effects are likely

NATURA Code	Name	Screened IN/OUT	Details/Reason
Special Protection Areas			
IE004091	Stabannan-Braganstown SPA	OUT	Conservation Objectives To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA. Qualifying Interests A043 Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) Potential Impact The proposed works site is a minimum of 13.2 km from this SPA (Figure 9). There is no 'direct' or 'indirect' Source-Pathway linkage between the proposed development site and the SPA. The site is brownfield and does not contain suitable habitat for Greylag goose (<i>Anser anser</i>). No potential impact is foreseen. There is no direct or indirect pathway from this site to the SPA. The construction and operation of the proposed development will not impact on the conservation interests of the site. No significant effects are likely

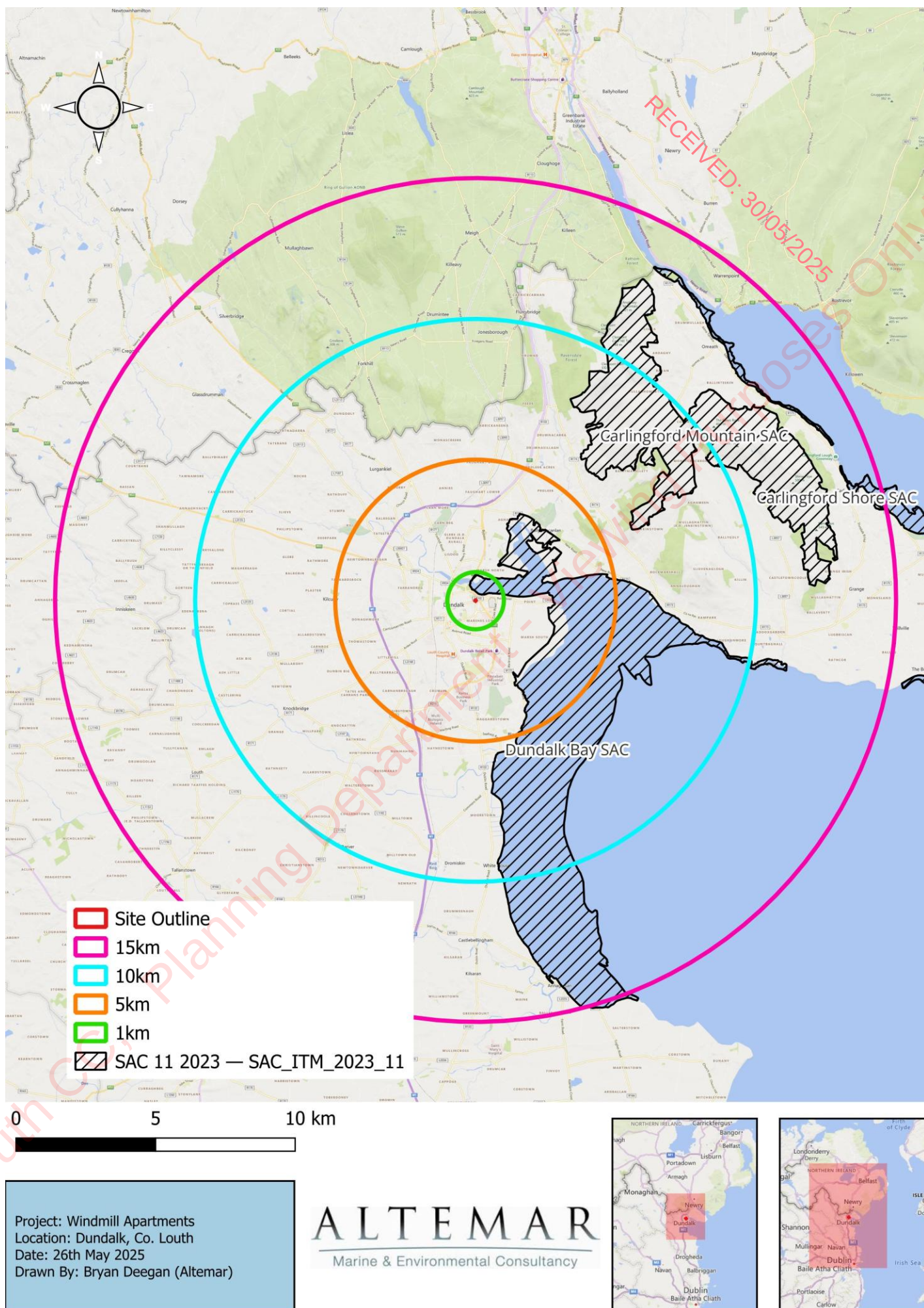


Figure 9. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) within 15km of the proposed works site

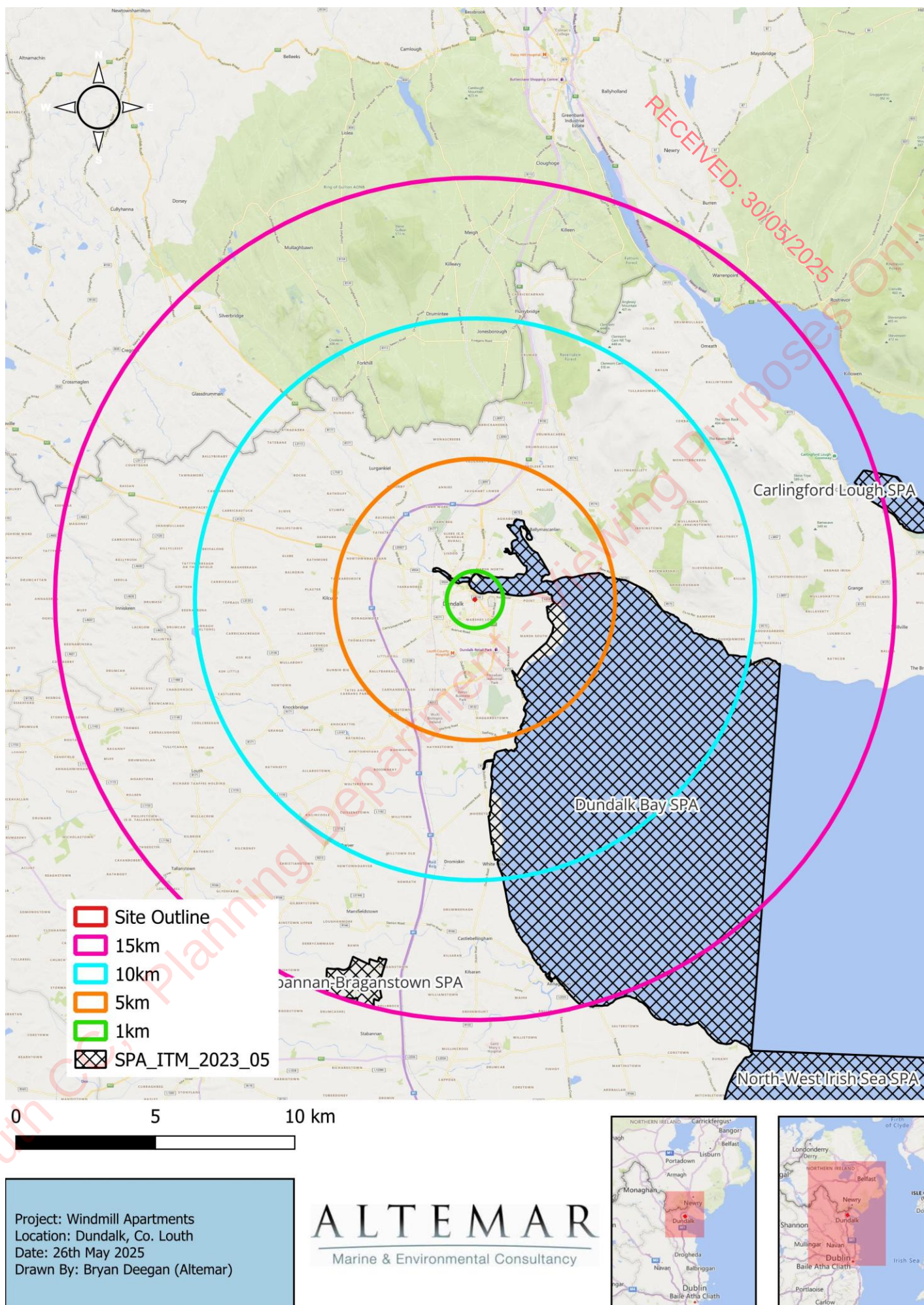


Figure 10. Special Protection Areas (SPA) within 15km of the proposed works site



Figure 11. Waterbodies proximate the subject site

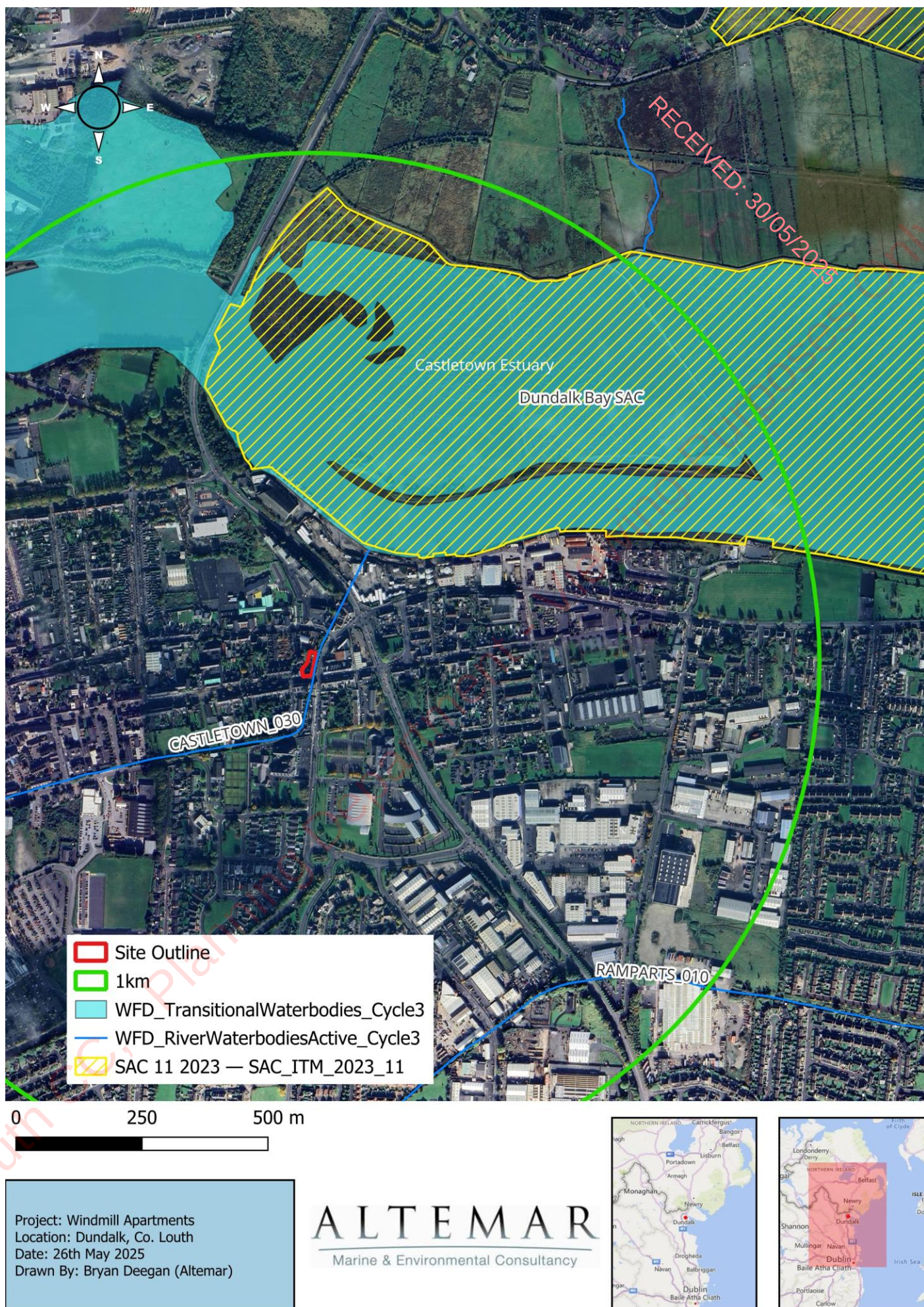


Figure 12. Waterbodies and SACs within 1km of the proposed works site

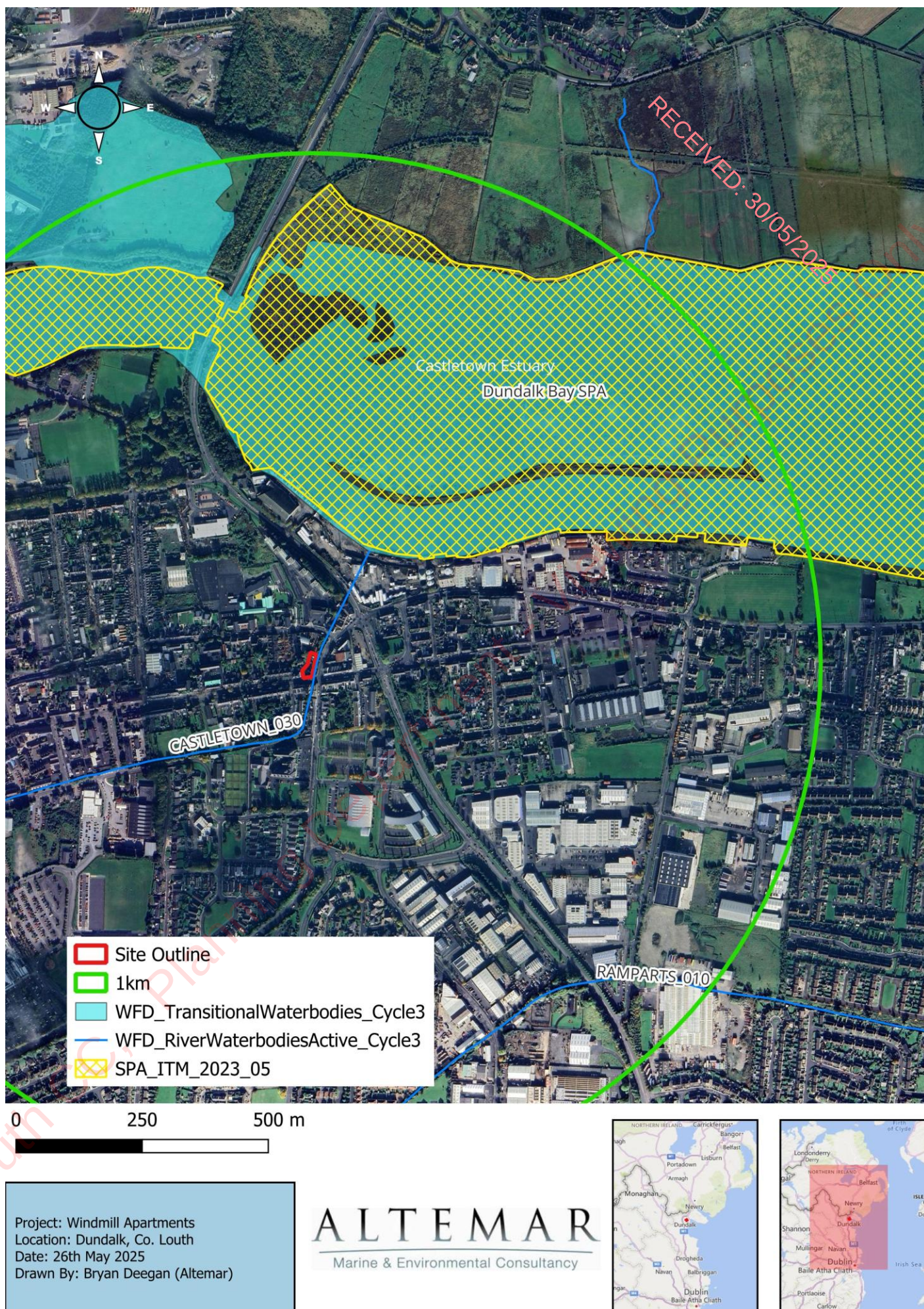


Figure 13. Waterbodies and SPAs within 1km of the proposed works site

In-Combination Effects

In-combination effects can be defined as “*impacts that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together with the project*”. Effects which are caused by the interaction of effects, or by associated or off-site projects, are classed as indirect effects. In combination, effects are often indirect, arising from the accumulation of different effects that are individually minor. Such effects are not caused or controlled by the project developer.

A review of developments and proposed developments was completed as part of this assessment. The following projects and plans were reviewed and considered for possible in combination effects with the Proposed Development.

Table 3 details the existing, proposed and granted planning permissions on record in the area:

Table 3: Potential in-combination effects

Ref. No.	Address	Proposal
21667	The Windmill Bar , Seatown Place , Dundalk Co Louth	Permission sought for elevational changes to the existing front and side elevations of the existing building. The elevational changes will include the reduction of height of the southern elevation, the construction of a new bar/restaurant shop front including new hardwood doors and also the replacement of an existing bay window with a flush window on the eastern elevation
16311	Cosy Bar , No.6 Barrack Street & No.8 Barrack Street , Dundalk	Permission for development for the following, 1) Construct new 3 storey building on the site of the Cosy Bar with retail unit on ground floor and 2 No. Apartments overhead 2) Erect new 2 storey terrace dwelling on the site of No. 8 Barrack Street. 3) All necessary site development works at the site of the Cosy Bar 6 Barrack Street & No. 8 Barrack Street. **Significant Further Information received on 15/12/2016**
2360152	4 Seatown Gardens , Dundalk , Co. Louth	Permission to 1) construct single storey extension to rear of existing three storey dwelling, 2) convert existing outbuilding into car port, new vehicle entrance onto existing rear laneway leading to Mill St. and all associated site development works
21765	The Cosy Bar , 6 & 8 Barrack Street , Dundalk	EXTENSION OF DURATION application on parent planning permission reference 16311 which consisted of Permission for development for the following, 1) Construct new 3 storey building on the site of the Cosy Bar with retail unit on ground floor and 2 No. Apartments overhead 2) Erect new 2 storey terrace dwelling on the site of No. 8 Barrack Street. 3) All necessary site development works at the site of the Cosy Bar 6 Barrack Street & No. 8 Barrack Street. **Significant Further Information received on 15/12/2016**
19294	Peak Physique Fitness Club , Mill Street , Dundalk	Permission for the material change of use and material alterations from commercial fitness centre to day care/office use. It is proposed to change the use of the building to a day care centre providing supported living services to people experiencing mental ill health. It is proposed to change the use of the first floor to office use also. Material alterations consist of new render finish to external walls, increase existing window openings including new window openings to both floors at front and rear elevations, new external signage to building. Internal alterations including new layout, with new stair and lift core and all associated construction works, including 14 no. car parking spaces.

There are no significant projects that have been granted planning or currently under construction, proximate to the development, that could potentially cause in combination effects on European sites.

Given this, it is considered that in combination effects with other existing and proposed developments in proximity to the application area would be unlikely, neutral, not significant and localised. It is concluded that no significant effects on Natura 2000 sites are likely as a result of the proposed development in combination with other projects. No in combination effects are foreseen.

No projects in the vicinity of the proposed development would be seen to have a significant in combination effect on European sites.

Conclusions

An initial screening of the proposed project, using the precautionary principle (without the use of any mitigation measures) and the Source/Pathway/Receptor links between the proposed works and Natura 2000 sites with the potential to result in significant effects on the conservation objectives and qualifying interests of the Natura 2000 sites was carried out in Table 2. Based on best scientific knowledge and objective information and assessment, the possibility of significant effects caused by the proposed project was excluded for the following Natura 2000 sites:

IE 000453	Carlingford Mountain SAC
IE 002306	Carlingford Shore SAC
IE 004091	Stabannan-Braganstown SPA

The proposed development site is a brownfield site. The nearest European sites are the Dundalk Bay SAC and SPA approximately 250m from the subject site (Figure 9 and 10). Noise pollution created during the construction of the development will be localised to the immediate site area and will not have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of the features of interest of any European sites. The nearest official EPA Water Framework Directive watercourse to the subject site is the Castletown stream (Rampart River) which traverses along the eastern site boundary. This watercourse flows a short distance (c. 250m) into Dundalk Bay, where Dundalk Bay SAC and SPA are located. Given the close proximity to these designated sites and the direct hydrological pathway via the Castletown Stream (Rampart River), it is considered that there is a direct hydrological connection between the proposed development site and Natura 2000 sites at Dundalk Bay.

Both surface water and foul wastewater from the proposed development site will be discharged to an existing combined sewer network to the front of the site on Seatown Place. The foul water generated onsite will be treated under license at Dundalk Water Treatment Plant which discharges into Dundalk Bay. The Dundalk Water Treatment Plant has a Peak Hydraulic Capacity of 56,706 m³/day, a remaining Organic Capacity (PE) of 6,960 and the capacity of this treatment plant is not expected to be exceeded in the next three years (2022). Out of an abundance of caution as a result of the indirect pathway it is considered that the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA are within the potential zone of influence of surface and foul water drainage from the site.

There is the potential for dust and contaminated surface water to enter the Castletown stream during construction and operation and impact on aquatic biodiversity, thus negatively impacting on downstream sites. There is, therefore, a direct pathway via the surface water drainage network to Dundalk Bay SAC and SPA which are hydrologically connected to the Castletown River.

Having taken into consideration the proposed project, the effluent discharge from the proposed development construction works and operation and the distance between the proposed development site to designated conservation sites, it is concluded that this development that could possibly give rise to significant effects on designated downstream sites. The construction and operation of the proposed development could possibly impact on the conservation objectives of features of interest of European sites. In the absence of mitigation, significant effects on the conservation objectives or features of interest of any European site are likely as a result of the proposed development. The potential zone of influence is restricted to the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site with potential for downstream effects on European sites (Dundalk Bay SAC & SPA).

An NIS or Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required for the effects of the project on all other listed Natura sites above because it can be excluded based on the best objective scientific information following screening that the plan or project, individually and/or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on the European Site/s. Acting on a strictly precautionary basis, an NIS is required in respect of the effects of the project Dundalk Bay SAC & SPA because it cannot be excluded on the basis of best objective scientific information following screening, in the absence of control or mitigation measures that the plan or project, individually and/or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on the named European Site/s.

A Natura Impact Statement is required for the proposed development.

Stage 2: Natura Impact Statement

A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process. In the case of the proposed development at Seatown Place, Dundalk, Co. Louth, acting on a strictly precautionary basis, an NIS is required in respect of the effects of the project on the Dundalk Bay SAC and the Dundalk Bay SPA (due to the potential for stormwater or silt laden material to enter the Castletown stream (Ramparts River) and flow downstream of the works into the associated SAC and SPA, because it cannot be excluded on the basis of best objective scientific information, in the absence of control or mitigation measures, following screening that the plan or project, individually and/or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on the named European Site/s.

A Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment or NIS is not required for the effects of the project on all other listed Natura sites within, and sites beyond, 15km because, it can be excluded, on the basis of the best objective scientific information following screening, that the plan or project, individually and/or in combination with other plans or projects, will have not a significant effect on the European Site/s.

The NIS evaluates the potential for direct, indirect effects, alone or in combination with other plans and projects having considered the use of mitigation measures.

A further review of the Conservation Objectives and qualifying interests is necessary to determine if significant effects are likely to impact the identified Natura 2000 sites.

Dundalk Bay SAC (Site Code: 000455)

As outlined in the Dundalk Bay SAC Site Synopsis (NPWS, Version date 31.01.2014):

'Dundalk Bay, Co. Louth, is a very large open, shallow sea bay with extensive saltmarshes and intertidal sand/mudflats, extending some 16 km from Castletown River on the Cooley Peninsula in the north, to Annagassan/Salterstown in the south. The bay encompasses the mouths and estuaries of the Rivers Dee, Glyde, Fane, Castletown and Flurry.

*Saltmarsh vegetation occurs in four main areas: at Lurgangreen, Marsh South, Dundalk Harbour and Bellurgan. Two types are represented – Atlantic and Mediterranean salt meadows. The Atlantic salt meadows are commonest and are characterised by Sea-purslane (*Halimione portulacoides*) (often as a dominant band), along with Common Saltmarsh-grass (*Puccinellia maritima*), Thrift (*Armeria maritima*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Common Scurvygrass (*Cochlearia officinalis*), Sea Plantain (*Plantago maritima*) and Sea Rush (*Juncus gerardi*). Common Cord-grass (*Spartina anglica*) is frequent and often dominant over substantial areas. Glassworts (*Salicornia* spp.) occur on the lower zones of the saltmarshes, and in places extend out onto the sandflats. Mediterranean salt meadows are mostly confined to the upper levels of the saltmarshes or along stream sides where they merge with grassland habitats (though the transitional zone is now absent in many places). The habitat contains Sea Rush (*Juncus maritimus*), Sea Arrowgrass (*Triglochin maritima*) and Sea Aster (*Aster tripolium*). The saltmarshes at Lurgangreen and Marsh South are partially fenced and grazed by sheep.*

*Shingle beaches are particularly well represented in Dundalk Bay, occurring more or less continuously from Salterstown to Lurgan White House in the south bay, and from Jenkinstown to east of Giles Quay in the north bay. The shingle is mostly stable, occurring on post-glacial raised beaches. The shingle often occurs in association with intertidal shingle, saltmarsh and or shingle-based grassland. The shingle supports species such as Spear-leaved Orache (*Atriplex prostrata*), Sea Mayweed (*Matricaria maritima*), Sea Beet (*Beta vulgaris* subsp. *maritima*), Sea Rocket (*Cakile maritima*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Sea-holly (*Eryngium maritimum*), Sea Sandwort (*Honkenya peploides*) and Sea Radish (*Raphanus raphanistrum* subsp. *maritimus*). Yellow Hornedpoppy (*Glaucium flavum*) and Lyme-grass (*Leymus arenarius*) occur here at their most northern locality on the east coast, while the Red Data Book species Sea-kale (*Crambe maritima*) has recently been recorded.*

The extensive sandflats and mudflats (over 4,000 ha) occur and are comprised of ecological communities such as muddy fine sand communities and fine sand community complexes. In the centre of Dundalk Bay there is a gravel community dominated by polychaetes. These habitats host a rich fauna of bivalves molluscs, marine worms and crustaceans and are the main food resource of the tens of thousands of waterfowl (including waders

and gulls) which feed in the intertidal area of Dundalk Bay. The saltmarshes are used as high-tide roosts by all of these species, while the grazing birds (notably Brent Goose and Wigeon) feed on the saltmarsh grasses, areas of *Zostera* and other grassland vegetation. Brent Goose also feed on the mats of green algae on the mudflats. At night the wintering Greylag and Greenland White-fronted Goose, and Whooper Swans, from Stabannan/Braganstown (inland from Castlebellingham) roost in Dundalk Bay.

The site is internationally important for waterfowl (numbers in brackets refers to the average maximum over the period 1994/95 to 1997/98) because it regularly holds over 20,000 birds (up to 57,000 have been recorded) and supports over 1% of the North-West European/East Atlantic Flyway populations of Brent Goose (366), Bartailed Godwit (2,312) and Knot (11,948). Additionally, it is nationally important for Golden Plover (4,266), Great Crested Grebe (193), Greylag Goose (312), Shelduck (463), Mallard (657), Pintail (100), Red-breasted Merganser (148), Oystercatcher (6,940), Grey Plover (218), Ringed Plover (133), Wigeon (565), Dunlin (9,112), Blacktailed Godwit (754), Curlew (1,593), Lapwing (4,822), Greenshank (20) and Redshank (1,455). Both Golden Plover and Bar-tailed Godwit are Annex I species. The site has been designated a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive and it is also a designated Ramsar site.

This is a site of significant conservation value because it supports good examples of a range of coastal habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, as well as large numbers of bird species, some of which are listed in the Birds Directive.'

As outlined in the Conservation objectives supporting document:

'Dundalk Bay SAC is designated for a range of marine and coastal habitats including vegetated shingle and saltmarsh. The following four coastal habitats are included in the qualifying interests for the site:

- Perennial vegetation of stony banks (1220)
- *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand (1310)
- Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima*) (1330)
- Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) (1410)

The first habitat is associated with shingle, while the other three are found in saltmarshes, where they occur in complex mosaics.

This backing document sets out the conservation objectives for the four coastal habitats listed above in Dundalk Bay SAC, which is defined by a list of parameters, attributes and targets. The main parameters are (a) Range (b) Area and (c) Structure and Functions, the latter of which is broken down into a number of attributes, including physical structure, vegetation structure and vegetation composition.

The targets set for the shingle is based in part on the findings of the National Shingle Beach Survey (NSBS), which was carried out in 1999 on behalf of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) (Moore & Wilson, 1999). The targets set for the saltmarsh habitats are based primarily on the results of the Saltmarsh Monitoring Project (SMP) (McCorry, 2007; McCorry & Ryle, 2009) and this document should be read in conjunction with those reports.'

Dundalk Bay SPA (Site code: 004026)

As outlined in the Dundalk Bay SPA Site Synopsis (NPWS, Version date 07.07.2014):

'Dundalk Bay is a large open shallow sea bay with extensive saltmarshes and intertidal sand/mudflats, extending some 16 km from Castletown River on the Cooley Peninsula, in the north, to Annagassan/Salterstown in the south.

The extensive sand flats and mud flats have a rich fauna of bivalves, molluscs, marine worms and crustaceans which provides the food resource for most of the wintering waterfowl. The outer part of the bay provides excellent shallow-water habitat for divers, grebes and sea duck. In summer, it is thought to be a major feeding area for auks from the Dublin breeding colonies. The bay is used at night for roosting by wintering flocks of Greylag Goose, Greenland White-fronted Goose and Whooper Swan from Stabannan/Braganstown (inland of Castlebelligham) and other inland sites.

The site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the E.U. Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species: Great Crested Grebe, Greylag Goose, Light-bellied Brent Goose, Shelduck, Teal, Mallard, Pintail, Common Scoter, Redbreasted Merganser, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Lapwing, Knot, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Common Gull and Herring Gull. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands and, as these form part of this SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

The site is of international importance because it regularly supports an assemblage of over 20,000 wintering waterbirds. It also qualifies as a site of international importance for supporting populations of Light-bellied Brent Goose (370), Knot (9,710), Black-tailed Godwit (1,100) and Bar-tailed Godwit (1,950) - all figures, unless stated otherwise, are five year mean peaks for the period 1995/96 to 1999/2000. A variety of other species occur in numbers of national importance, i.e. Great Crested Grebe (303), Greylag Goose (435), Shelduck (522), Teal (538), Mallard (765), Pintail (117), Common Scoter (581 - five year mean peak for the period 2000/01 to 2004/05), Red-breasted Merganser (121), Oystercatcher (8,746), Ringed Plover (151), Golden Plover (5,967), Grey Plover (204), Lapwing (4,892), Dunlin (11,518), Curlew (1,264) and Redshank (1,659). Other wintering species which occur include Red-throated Diver, Great Northern Diver, Cormorant, Grey Heron, Little Egret, Mute Swan, Wigeon, Goldeneye, Greenshank and Turnstone.

The site also supports nationally important populations of three wintering gull species - Black-headed Gull (6,643), Common Gull (551) and Herring Gull (754). In spring and autumn the site attracts a range of passage migrants, including Little Stint, Curlew Sandpiper and Ruff.'

Status of Qualifying Interests & Conservation Objectives

The Qualifying Interests (QI) (Features of Interest), Special Conservation Interests (SCIs) for the SAC and SPA sites and the National conservation status of the Natura 2000 sites subject to the NIS are seen in Table 4. The site-specific conservation Objectives for Natura 2000 sites are seen in Table 5

Table 4. Qualifying Interests, Conservation Status, Management Objectives, Conditions underpinning site integrity for Natura 2000 sites

Table 4. Qualifying Interests, Conservation Status, Management Objectives, Conditions underpinning site integrity for relevant European sites		
European Site Name & Code	Qualifying Interests	Current Conservation Status & Trend
Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)		
Dundalk Bay SAC (000455)	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]	Unfavourable-Inadequate & Declining Unfavourable-Inadequate & Declining Unfavourable-Inadequate & Stable Favourable & Stable Unfavourable-Inadequate & Declining Unfavourable-Inadequate & Declining
Special Protection Areas (SPA)		
Dundalk Bay SPA (004026)	Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	Amber Amber Amber Amber Amber Green Red Red Green Amber Green Red Amber Red Amber Red Amber Amber Red Red Red Amber Red

Table 5. Site specific conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites

Table 5. The site specific conservation Objectives for European sites		
Dundalk Bay SAC (000455)		
Attribute	Measure	Target
1130 Estuaries - To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Estuaries in Dundalk Bay SAC		
Habitat Area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes
Community Distribution	Hectares	The Subtidal fine sand community complex should be conserved in a natural condition
1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide - To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide at Dundalk Bay SAC		
Habitat Area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes
Community Distribution	Hectares	The Muddy fine sand community and Intertidal fine sand community complex should be conserved in a natural condition
1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks - To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Perennial vegetation of stony banks in Dundalk Bay SAC		
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes
Physical Structure: Functionality and sediment supply	Presence/absence of physical barriers	Maintain the natural circulation of sediment and organic matter, without any physical obstructions
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain range of habitat zonations including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession
Vegetation Composition: Typical species and sub-communities	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities with characteristic species: <i>Honckenia peploides</i> , <i>Beta vulgaris ssp. maritima</i> , <i>Crithmum maritimum</i> , <i>Tripleurospermum maritimum</i> , <i>Glaucium flavum</i> and <i>Silene uniflora</i>
Vegetation Composition: Negative indicator species	Percentage cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover
1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand - To restore the favourable conservation condition of Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand in Dundalk Bay SAC		
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. For sub-site surveyed: 35.00ha
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes
Physical Structure: Sediment supply	Presence/absence of physical barriers	Maintain/restore natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain/restore creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession
Physical Structure: Flooding regime	Hectares flooded; frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain range of saltmarsh habitat zonations including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward

Vegetation Structure: Vegetation cover	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated
Vegetation Structure: Typical species and sub-communities	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain range of sub- communities with characteristic species listed in Saltmarsh Monitoring Project (McCorry & Ryle, 2009)
Vegetation Structure: Negative indicator species – <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Hectares	No significant expansion of <i>Spartina</i> . No new sites for this species and an annual spread of less than 1% where it is already known to occur.
1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) - To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows in Dundalk Bay SAC		
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. For the sub-site (357.57ha) and potential areas (22.42ha) mapped: 379.98ha.
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes.
Physical Structure: Sediment supply	Presence/absence of physical barriers	Maintain/restore natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain/restore creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession
Physical Structure: Flooding regime	Hectares flooded; frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain range of saltmarsh habitat zonations including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession.
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation cover	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated
Vegetation Structure: Typical species and sub-communities	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain range of sub- communities with characteristic species listed in Saltmarsh Monitoring Project (McCorry & Ryle, 2009)
Vegetation Structure: Negative indicator species – <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Hectares	No significant expansion of <i>Spartina</i> . No new sites for this species and an annual spread of less than 1% where it is already known to occur
1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) - To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mediterranean salt meadows in Dundalk Bay SAC		
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. For sub-site mapped: 0.045ha.
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes.
Physical Structure: Sediment supply	Presence/absence of physical barriers	Maintain/restore natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain/restore creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession
Physical Structure: Flooding regime	Hectares flooded; frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime

Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain range of saltmarsh habitat zonations including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession.
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation cover	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated
Vegetation Structure: Typical species and sub-communities	Percentage cover at a representative sample of monitoring stops	Maintain range of sub-communities with characteristic species listed in Saltmarsh Monitoring Project (McCorry & Ryle, 2009)
Vegetation Structure: Negative indicator species – <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Hectares	No significant expansion of <i>Spartina</i> . No new sites for this species and an annual spread of less than 1% where it is already known to occur

Dundalk Bay SPA (004026)		
Attribute	Measure	Target
Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005]; Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043]; Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]; Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]; Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053]; Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065]; Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069]; Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]; Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]; Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]; Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]; Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]; Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]; Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]; Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]; Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]; Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184]		
Population Trend	Percentage Change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Number and range of areas used by waterbirds	No significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by waterbird species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation
A999 Wetlands & Waterbirds - To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat in Dundalk Bay SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it		
Habitat Area	Hectares	The permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat is stable and not significantly less than the areas of 8136, 4374 and 649 hectares respectively for subtidal, intertidal, and supratidal habitats, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation. S

Analysis of the Potential Impacts on Natura 2000 Sites.

Impacts of the proposed works

The proposed development is not within a designated conservation site. The nearest Natura 2000 sites are the Dundalk Bay SAC and SPA (250m both). Given the nature of the construction works, operational impacts and recognising that there is a direct pathway from the construction and operation phases of the proposed development to European sites, it is deemed out of an abundance of caution there is potential for effects on designated sites in the absence of mitigation.

There are potential direct pathways to European sites via the Castletown Stream (Ramparts River) which traverses along the eastern boundary of the site and outfalls into Dundalk Bay c. 250m north of the site. It is considered therefore that there is a direct hydrological pathway to Dundalk Bay SAC and SPA. Out of an abundance of caution, it is considered that there is the potential for dust and contaminated surface water runoff to enter the Castletown River during construction and operation and impact on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.

The potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites are seen in Table 6. The proposed construction works would impact on the existing ecology of the site and the surrounding area. In the absence of mitigation, this indirect pathway could lead to the transportation of dust and contaminated surface water runoff to the Castletown River, with the potential for downstream impacts on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites (Table 6).

Construction and operational phase mitigation measures are required on site particularly as clearance of the site is proposed which will remove all existing terrestrial habitats and in the absence of mitigation could lead to silt laden and contaminated runoff entering the Castletown River and downstream designated sites.

Mitigation Measures

Construction and operational mitigation will be incorporated into the proposed development project to minimise the potential negative impacts within the Zone of Influence (Zoi) including the Castletown River and downstream European sites (Table 7).

Table 6. Potential impacts on European sites.

Potential for adverse effects on the qualifying interests and conservation objectives of European sites		
European Site & Site Code	Qualifying Interests	Potential for Adverse Effects
Dundalk Bay SAC [000455]	Estuaries [1130] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]	Surface water runoff on site during construction or operation may lead to silt or contaminated materials from site entering the Castletown Stream. Concrete, silt or pollution could enter watercourses during dewatering of foundations or drainage trenches, if required during construction. If on-site concrete production is required or cement works are carried out in the vicinity of watercourses there is potential for contamination of watercourses. Localised activity on site and noise may be generated during works. The use of plant and machinery, as well as the associated temporary storage of construction materials, oils, fuels and chemicals could lead to pollution on site or in adjacent watercourses. The storage of topsoil or works in the vicinity or the watercourse on onsite could lead to dust, soil or silt laden runoff entering adjacent watercourse. Given the nature of the works in all of these effects would be expected to be localised in nature restricted to the immediate vicinity of the site and would have little effect on European sites. However, without the presence of mitigation measures there is a potential for downstream effects if significant quantities of pollution or silt were introduced into the Castletown Stream which leads to Dundalk Bay. Given the nature of the potential effects outlined above, the proposed project would not be expected to effect the: 1. Habitat Area; Habitat Distribution; Physical Structure: Functionality and sediment supply; Vegetation Structure: Zonation; Vegetation Composition: Typical species and sub-communities; Vegetation Composition: Negative indicator species of Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] 2. Habitat Area; Habitat Distribution; Physical Structure: Sediment supply; Physical Structure: Creeks and pans; Physical Structure: Flooding regime; Vegetation Structure: Zonation; Vegetation Structure: Vegetation height; Vegetation Structure: Vegetation cover; Vegetation Structure: Typical species and sub-communities; Vegetation Structure: Negative indicator species – <i>Spartina anglica</i> of Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] 3. Habitat Area; Habitat Distribution; Physical Structure: Sediment supply; Physical Structure: Creeks and pans; Physical Structure: Flooding regime; Vegetation Structure: Zonation; Vegetation Structure: Vegetation height; Vegetation Structure: Vegetation cover; Vegetation Structure: Typical species and sub-

		communities; Vegetation Structure: Negative indicator species – <i>Spartina anglica</i> of Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) [1330] 4. Habitat Area; Habitat Distribution; Physical Structure: Sediment supply; Physical Structure: Creeks and pans; Physical Structure: Flooding regime; Vegetation Structure: Zonation; Vegetation Structure: Vegetation height; Vegetation Structure: Vegetation cover; Vegetation Structure: Typical species and sub-communities; Vegetation Structure: Negative indicator species – <i>Spartina anglica</i> of Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410] It would be expected that some settlement, dilution and mixing would occur. However, out of an abundance of caution, silt entering Dundalk Bay could impact: 1. Habitat Area; Community Distribution of Estuaries (1130) 2. Habitat Area; Community Distribution of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide (1140) The mitigation measures outlined should be carried out to ensure that no silt or pollution enters the Castletown Stream from the construction or operation phases of the proposed project.
Dundalk Bay SPA [004026]	Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052] Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053] Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065] Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]	The use of plant and machinery, as well as the associated temporary storage of construction materials, oils, fuels and chemicals could lead to pollution on site or in adjacent watercourses. The storage of topsoil or works in the vicinity or the watercourse on onsite could lead to dust, soil or silt laden runoff entering adjacent watercourses. Surface water runoff on site during construction or operation may lead to silt or contaminated materials from site entering the Castletown Stream. Concrete, silt or pollution could enter watercourses during dewatering of foundations or drainage trenches, if required during construction. If on-site concrete production is required or cement works are carried out in the vicinity of watercourses there is potential for contamination of watercourses. Localised activity on site and noise may be generated during works. Given the nature of the works all of these effects would be expected to be localised in nature restricted to the immediate vicinity of the site. However, without the presence of mitigation measures there is a potential for downstream effects if significant quantities of pollution or silt were introduced into the Castletown Stream with potential for downstream impacts on this SPA at Dundalk Bay. Given the nature of the potential effects outlined above, the proposed project would not be expected to effect the:

	Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179] Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	1. Distribution, Number and Range of areas used by: Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005]; Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043]; Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]; Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]; Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]; Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>) [A053]; Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054]; Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) [A065]; Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069]; Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]; Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]; Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]; Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]; Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>) [A142]; Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]; Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]; Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]; Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]; Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]; Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]; Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]; Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) [A182]; and, Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] Large quantities of silt could enter the watercourse and lead to downstream impacts. Out of an abundance of caution as there is a direct pathway to the European site, in the absence of any mitigation, the area of Wetlands [A999] may be impacted.
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Table 7. Mitigation measures to prevent impacts on sensitive receptors

Sensitive Receptors	Potential Impacts on SPA & SAC	Mitigation Measures to Prevent Impacts on sensitive receptors
Dundalk Bay SAC Dundalk Bay SPA Castletown Stream (Ramparts River)	• Habitat degradation • Dust deposition • Pollution • Silt ingress from site runoff • Downstream impacts • Negative impacts on the aquatic environment, aquatic species and qualifying interests.	The following mitigation measures will be implemented during the construction of the proposed development: Construction Mitigation • An ecologist will be appointed prior to enabling works commencing on site • All works methodologies will have prior approval of a project ecologist. • Best available technology (BAT) mitigation measures designed by project ecologist • Staging of project will be carried out to reduce risks to drainage ditches and the local watercourse from contamination • Mitigation measures on site include dust control, stockpiling away from drains. • Stockpiling of loose materials will be kept to a minimum of 20m from drains. • Stockpiles and runoff areas following clearance will have suitable barriers to prevent runoff of fines into the drainage system. • Fuel, oil and chemical storage will be sited within a bunded area. The bund will be at least 50m away from drains, ditches, excavations and other locations where it may cause pollution. • Bunds will be kept clean and spills within the bund area will be cleaned immediately to prevent groundwater contamination. Any water-filled excavations, including the attenuation tank during construction, that require pumping will not directly discharge to the drainage, without interception. Prior to discharge of water from excavations adequate filtration will be provided to ensure no deterioration of water quality. • Mitigation measures on site include dust control, stockpiling away from drains • During the construction works silt traps will be put in place in the vicinity of all runoff channels to prevent sediment entering the drainage ditch or marine environment. • Petrochemical interception and bunds in refuelling area • On-site inspections to be carried out by project ecologist. • Maintenance of any drainage structures (e.g. de-silting operations) must not result in the release of contaminated water to the surface water network. • No entry of solids to the Castletown stream or drainage network during the connection of pipework • Full compliance with the Water Pollution Acts will be carried out on site. • Silt traps established throughout site including a double silt fence between the site and the Castletown Stream. • Sufficient onsite cleaning of vehicles prior to leaving the site and on nearby roads, will be carried out, particularly during groundworks. • The Site Manager will be responsible for the pollution prevention programme and will ensure that at least daily checks are carried out to ensure compliance. A record of these checks will be maintained. • The site compound will include a dedicated bund for the storage of dangerous substances including fuels, oils etc. Refuelling of vehicles/machinery will only be carried out within the bunded area.

- A project ecologist will be appointed and consulted in relation to all onsite drainage during construction works. Consultation with the project ecologist will not involve the formulation of new mitigation measures for the purposes of protecting any European Site and relate only to the implementation of those mitigation measures already stated in the submission or the formulation of mitigation for other purposes.
- Dewatering of excavations may be necessary. Appropriate monitoring of groundwater levels during site works will be undertaken. Standard construction phase filtering of surface water for suspended solids will be carried out. Unfiltered surface water discharges or runoff are not permitted from the site into the onsite drain during the works.
- Concrete trucks, cement mixers or drums/bins are only permitted to wash out in designated wash out area greater than 50m from sensitive receptors including drains and drainage ditches.
- Spill containment equipment shall be available for use in the event of an emergency. The spill containment equipment shall be replenished if used and shall be checked on a scheduled basis.
- All site personnel will be trained in the importance of good environmental practices including reporting to the site manager when pollution, or the potential for pollution, is suspected. All persons working on-site will receive work specific induction in relation to surface water management and run off controls. Daily environmental toolbox talks / briefing sessions will be conducted to outline the relevant environmental control measures and to identify any environment risk areas/works.

Hydrology

- Prior to construction, the Contractor will be required to develop a Construction Environmental Management Plan which will incorporate the mitigation measures detailed below. These mitigation measures apply for the prevention of pollution to all waters during construction:
- Prepare an Emergency Response Plan detailing the procedures to be undertaken in the event of flooding, a spill of chemical, fuel or other hazardous wastes, a fire, or noncompliance incident.
- Ensure site staff are trained in the implementation of the Emergency Response Plan and the use of any spill control equipment;
- Prepare method statements for the control, treatment and disposal of potentially contaminated surface water;
- Prepare a site plan showing the location of all surface water drainage lines and proposed infiltration areas/discharge to combined sewer. This shall include the location of all existing and proposed surface water protection measures, including monitoring points and treatment facilities;
- All necessary facilities will be incorporated such as settlement ponds/tanks, oil/grit interceptors with shut down valves, bunded oil storage tanks adjacent to a petrol interceptor for storage of any recovered oil.
- A monitoring program including sampling for water quality before discharge to the Council sewer during construction will be carried out to ensure that only clean surface water is discharged to the receiving systems.
- Ensure that all appropriate licences required for construction are obtained from the relevant authorities;
- The Contractor will comply with the following guidance documents:
- CIRIA – Guideline Document C532 Control of Water Pollution from Construction Sites (CIRIA, 2001); and
- CIRIA – Guideline Document C624 Development and Flood Risk - guidance for the construction industry (CIRIA, 2004).

		The following construction mitigation measures will be utilised to control the interaction of wash down water from concrete and cementitious material with surface water: • All batching and mixing activities will be located in areas away from watercourses and drains. • Surface water drainage around the batching plant will be controlled; • There will be no hosing into surface water drains of spills of concrete, cement, grout or similar materials; and • Washout from mixing plant or concrete lorries will be carried out in a designated, contained impermeable area. The following control measures will be put in place to avoid the release of cement-based pollutants: • Use of ready-mixed supply of wet concrete products will be maximized; • Where possible, pre-cast elements for concrete works will be used; • No washing out of any plant used in concrete transport or concreting operations will be allowed on-site; • Where concrete is delivered on site, only the chute will need be cleaned, using the smallest volume of water possible. No discharge of cement contaminated waters to the construction phase drainage system or directly to any artificial drain or watercourse will be allowed. Chute cleaning water is to be tanked and removed from the site to a suitable, non-polluting, discharge location; • Use weather forecasting to plan dry days for pouring concrete; • Ensure pour site is free of standing water, and plastic covers will be ready in case of sudden rainfall event; • Disposal of raw or uncured waste concrete will be controlled to ensure that watercourses or other sensitive areas will not be impacted. As per the above listed guidelines, protection measures will be put in place to ensure that all materials used during the construction phase are appropriately handled, stored and disposed of in accordance with recognised standards and manufacturer's guidance. Water from dewatering and various other processes during construction will be disposed of appropriately. Rainwater will also accumulate on the site during construction. This water will be discharged directly via suitable pollution control and attenuation measures either directly to ground within the site or to foul sewer systems via portions of the existing sewer network. Where available proposed permanent connections to the public sewer systems required for the operational phase will be used temporarily for the construction phase, to optimise efficiencies and avoid the creation of new outfalls for temporary construction only. All precautions will be taken to avoid spillages of diesel, oil or other polluting substances during the construction phase. The following measures to prevent contamination of watercourses will be implemented: • In order to reduce the risk of contamination arising as a result of spills or leakages, all fuels, chemicals and liquid will be stored on impermeable surfaces ; • All tanks and drums are to be bunded in accordance with established best practice guidelines. Fuels will be stored in double-skinned (self-bunded) tanks (bund of 110% of the storage capacity); • The integrity and water tightness of all the bunding structures and their resistance to penetration by water or other materials stored therein shall also be tested and demonstrated with records retained on site for inspection;
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		• Re-fuelling of construction equipment and the addition of hydraulic oil or lubricants to vehicles or equipment will take place in designated bunded areas within the main construction compound and not on-site where reasonably practicable. If it is not possible to bring machinery to the refuelling point, fuel will be brought to site by a 4x4 in a double-skinned bowser with drip trays. The bowser/4x4 will be fully stocked with spill kits and absorbent material, with delivery personnel being fully trained to deal with any accidental spills. The bowser will be bunded appropriately for the fuel usage volume for the time period of the construction; • The plant and machinery used will be regularly inspected for leaks and fitness for purpose; • Spill kits will be readily available to deal with accidental spillages • All plant and machinery will be fully stocked with spill kits, hydrocarbon absorbent packs and absorbent material and operators will be fully trained in the use of this equipment; • An inventory of all chemicals on site will be kept. <i>Air & Dust</i> In summary the measures which will be implemented will include: <u><i>Communications</i></u> • Develop and implement a stakeholder communications plan that includes community engagement before works commence on site. Community engagement includes explaining the nature and duration of the works to local residents and businesses. • The name and contact details of a person to contact regarding air quality and dust issues shall be displayed on the site boundary, this notice board should also include head/regional office contact details. <u><i>Site Management</i></u> • During working hours, dust control methods will be monitored as appropriate, depending on the prevailing meteorological conditions. Dry and windy conditions are favourable to dust suspension therefore mitigations must be implemented if undertaking dust generating activities during these weather conditions. • A complaints register will be kept on site detailing all telephone calls and letters of complaint received in connection with dust nuisance or air quality concerns, together with details of any remedial actions carried out. Make the complaints log available to the local authority when asked. • Record any exceptional incidents that cause dust and/or air emissions, either on- or off-site, and the action taken to resolve the situation in the log book. • Hold regular liaison meetings with other high risk construction sites within 250 m of the site boundary where feasible, to ensure plans are co-ordinated and dust and particulate matter emissions are minimised. It is important to understand the interactions of the off-site transport/deliveries which might be using the same strategic road network routes. <u><i>Preparing and Maintaining the Site</i></u> • Plan site layout so that machinery and dust causing activities are located away from receptors, as far as is possible. • Erect solid screens or barriers around dusty activities or the site boundary that are at least as high as any stockpiles on site.
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		• Avoid site runoff of water or mud. • Keep site fencing, barriers and scaffolding clean using wet methods. • Remove materials that have a potential to produce dust from site as soon as possible, unless being re-used on site. If they are being re-used on-site cover as described below. • Cover, seed or fence stockpiles to prevent wind whipping. <u>Operating Vehicles / Machinery and Sustainable Travel</u> • Ensure all vehicles switch off engines when stationary - no idling vehicles. • Avoid the use of diesel or petrol powered generators and use mains electricity or battery powered equipment where practicable. • Impose and signpost a maximum-speed-limit of 15 kph haul roads and work areas (if long haul routes are required these speeds may be increased with suitable additional control measures provided, subject to the approval of the nominated undertaker and with the agreement of the local authority, where appropriate). • Produce a Construction Logistics Plan to manage the sustainable delivery of goods and materials. • Implement a Travel Plan that supports and encourages sustainable travel (public transport, cycling, walking, and car-sharing) <u>Operations</u> • Only use cutting, grinding or sawing equipment fitted or in conjunction with suitable dust suppression techniques such as water sprays or local extraction, e.g., suitable local exhaust ventilation systems. • Ensure an adequate water supply on the site for effective dust/particulate matter suppression/mitigation, using non-potable water where possible and appropriate. • Use enclosed chutes and conveyors and covered skips. • Minimise drop heights from conveyors, loading shovels, hoppers and other loading or handling equipment and use fine water sprays on such equipment wherever appropriate. • Ensure equipment is readily available on site to clean any dry spillages and clean up spillages as soon as reasonably practicable after the event using wet cleaning methods. <u>Waste Management</u> • Avoid bonfires and burning of waste materials. <u>Measures Specific to Earthworks</u> • Implement a wheel washing system (with rumble grids to dislodge accumulated dust and mud prior to leaving the site where reasonably practicable). • Ensure there is an adequate area of hard surfaced road between the wheel wash facility and the site exit, wherever site size and layout permits. • Access gates to be located at least 10 m from receptors where possible.
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		<u>Monitoring</u> - Undertake daily on-site and off-site inspections, where receptors (including roads) are nearby, to monitor dust, record inspection results in the site inspection log. This should include regular dust soiling checks of surfaces such as street furniture, cars and windowsills within 100 m of site boundary, with cleaning to be provided if necessary. Carry out regular site inspections to monitor compliance with the CEMP, record inspection results, and make an inspection log available to the local authority when asked. - Increase the frequency of site inspections by the person accountable for air quality and dust issues on site when activities with a high potential to produce dust are being carried out and during prolonged dry or windy conditions. Agree dust deposition monitoring locations with DCC. Where possible commence baseline monitoring at least three months before work commences on site or, if it a large site, before work on a phase commences. <i>Operational Mitigation</i> <i>The project ecologist will inspect the drainage network on site (post construction).</i>
Birds (National Protection)	Destruction and/or disturbance to nests (injury/death).	Pre construction inspection in line with “Relevant guidelines and legislation (Section 40 of the Wildlife Acts, 1976 to 2012)”. Should this not be possible, a pre-works check by a qualified ecologist should be undertaken to ensure nesting birds are absent. This would include nesting gulls on buildings if present. NPWS will be informed if nesting birds are present.

Adverse Effects on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites likely to occur from the project (post mitigation)

A robust series of mitigation measures are proposed. These would ensure that surface water runoff from the proposed works site is clean, uncontaminated and that dust from the works would not significantly impact on the Castletown River (existing waterbody which traverses the eastern site boundary and flows c. 250m to Dundalk Bay SAC & SPA). It should be noted that the early implementation of ecological supervision on site will be at the initial mobilisation and enabling works. This is seen as an important element to the project, particularly in relation to the implementation of surface water runoff mitigation strategies.

With the successful implementation of the mitigation measures to limit surface water impacts on the Castletown River including mitigation/supervision, no significant impacts are foreseen from the construction works and operation of the proposed project. Residual impacts of the proposed project will be localised to the immediate vicinity of the proposed works and would not impact on the integrity of downstream Natura 2000 sites.

The construction and operational mitigation proposed for the development satisfactorily addresses the mitigation of potential impacts on Dundalk Bay SAC and SPA, through the application of the standard construction phase controls as outlined above. In particular, the mitigation measures to ensure compliance with Water Pollution Acts, Inland Fisheries Ireland guidance and to prevent silt and pollution entering the Castletown Stream will satisfactorily address the potential impacts on downstream biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites. No significant adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites are likely following the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined above.

It is essential that these measures outlined are complied with, to ensure that the proposed development does not have “downstream” environmental impacts. These measures are to protect the surface water, which is the primary vector of impacts from the site, and to ensure that it is not impacted during construction and operation.

Conclusion

In a strict application of the precautionary principle, it has been concluded that significant effects on the integrity of Dundalk Bay SAC and SPA are likely from the proposed works in the absence of mitigation measures, primarily as a result of the direct hydrological connection to the site via dust and contaminated surface water drainage to the adjacent Castletown River, which flows c. 250m downstream into the Dundalk Bay SAC and SPA. For this reason, an NIS was carried out to assess whether the proposed project, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the sites’ conservation objectives, will adversely affect the integrity of the European Site. All other Natura 2000 sites were screened out at initial screening.

Following the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined, the construction and operation of the proposed development will not result in direct, indirect or in-combination effects which would have the potential to adversely affect the integrity of the European sites screened in for NIS with regard to the range, population densities or conservation status of the habitats and species for which these sites are designated (i.e. conservation objectives).

This report presents an Appropriate Assessment Screening and NIS for the proposed development. It outlines the information required for the competent authority to screen for appropriate assessment and to determine whether or not the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the sites’ conservation objectives, will adversely affect the integrity of the European site.

On the basis of the content of this report, the competent authority is enabled to conduct an Appropriate Assessment and consider whether, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of best

scientific knowledge and in view of the sites' conservation objectives, will adversely affect the integrity of the European site.

No significant effects are likely on Natura 2000 sites, their features of interest or conservation objectives that were screened out at AA Screening. Following the implementation of mitigation measures, the proposed project will not will adversely affect the integrity of the Dundalk Bay SAC and Dundalk Bay SPA.

Data used for the AA Screening/NIS Assessment

NPWS site synopses and Conservation objectives of sites within 15km were examined. There is no direct pathway to any Natura 2000 sites beyond 15km of the proposed development site. The most recent SAC and SPA boundary shapefiles were downloaded and overlaid on Bing maps and satellite imagery. Several site visits were carried out to determine if the site or project contained possible threats to a Natura 2000 site or any Natura 2000 species or habitats.

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