

**Noreen McLoughlin, MSc**

Environmental Consultant

Whitehill  
Edgeworthstown  
Co. Longford  
☎ (087) 4127248 / (043) 6672775  
✉ noreen.mcloughlin@gmail.com

## **STATEMENT OF SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT OF A PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT (SHD) AT AIRTON ROAD, TALLAGHT, DUBLIN 24**

IN LINE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ARTICLE 6(3) OF THE  
EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE



*Greenleaf Homes Ltd  
c/o McGill Planning Ltd.  
7 Fitzwilliam Street Upper  
Dublin 2*

*February 2020*

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 BACKGROUND**

Article 6 of the EU Habitat's Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) requires that all plans and projects be screened for potential impacts upon Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The aim of this screening process is to establish whether or not a full Appropriate Assessment of the proposed plan or project is necessary.

A comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts on European designated sites of a proposed development in Airtion Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24 was carried out in February 2020 by Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM of Whitehill Environmental. This assessment allowed areas of potential ecological value and potential ecological constraints associated with the development to be identified and it also enabled potential ecological impacts associated with the facility to be assessed and mitigated for.

The location of the proposed development is within 10km of sites designated under European Law. As such and in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitat's Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) regarding Appropriate Assessment, this screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment was carried out in order to identify whether any significant impacts on designated sites are likely. This exercise will also determine the appropriateness of the proposed project, in the context of the conservation status of the designated sites.

## **1.2 REGULATORY CONTEXT**

### **RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC) implies that particular protection is given to sites (Special Protection Areas) which support certain bird species listed in Annex I of the Directive and that surveys of development sites should consider the status of such species.

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) gives protection to sites (Special Areas of Conservation) which support particular habitats and species listed in annexes to this directive. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive call for the undertaking of an Appropriate Assessment for plans and projects likely to have an effect on designated sites. This is explained in greater detail in the following section.

The Wildlife Act 1976 (and its amendment of 2000) provides protection to most wild birds and animals. Interference with such species can only occur under licence. Under the act it is an offence to "wilfully interfere with or destroy the breeding place or resting place of any protected wild animal". The basic designation for wildlife is the Natural Heritage Area

(NHA). This is an area considered important for the habitats present or which holds species of plants and animals whose habitat needs protection. Under the Wildlife Amendment Act (2000) NHAs are legally protected from damage. NHAs are not part of the Natura 2000 network and so the Appropriate Assessment process does not apply to them.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC), which came into force in December 2000, establishes a framework for community action in the field of water policy. The WFD was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003). The WFD rationalises and updates existing legislation and provides for water management on the basis of River Basin Districts (RBDs). RBDs are essentially administrative areas for coordinated water management and are comprised of multiple river basins (or catchments), with cross-border basins (i.e. those covering the territory of more than one Member State) assigned to an international RBD. The aim of the WFD is to ensure that waters achieve at least good status by 2021 and that status doesn't deteriorate in any waters.

#### **APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT AND THE HABITATS DIRECTIVE**

Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora – the 'Habitats Directive' - provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of European Community interest, at a favourable conservation status. Articles 3 - 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as *Natura 2000*. *Natura 2000* sites are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive sets out the decision-making tests for plans or projects affecting *Natura 2000* sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

"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.”

Article 6(4) deals with the steps that should be taken when it is determined, as a result of appropriate assessment, that a plan/project will adversely affect a European site. Issues dealing with alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures need to be addressed in this case.

Article 6(4) states:

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

Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.”

### **THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

The aim of Appropriate Assessment is to assess the implications of a proposal in respect of a site’s conservation objectives.

Appropriate Assessment is an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed plan - ‘in combination’ with other plans and projects - on one or more European sites. The ‘Appropriate Assessment’ itself is a statement which must be made by the competent authority which says whether the plan affects the integrity of a European site. The actual process of determining whether or not the plan will affect the site is also commonly referred to as ‘Appropriate Assessment’.

If adverse impacts on the site cannot be avoided, then mitigation measures should be applied during the Appropriate Assessment process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site remain (European Commission, 2000, 2001).

The conclusions of the appropriate assessment report should enable the competent authority to ascertain whether the proposal would adversely affect the integrity of the site (European Commission, 2000, 2001).

Under the terms of the directive (European Commission, 2000, 2001), consent can only be granted for a project if, as a result of the appropriate assessment either (a) it is concluded that the integrity of the site will not be adversely affected, or (b) where an adverse effect is anticipated, there is shown to be an absence of alternative solutions, and there exists imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project should go ahead.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

This Statement of Screening for Appropriate Assessment (Stage 1) has been prepared with reference to the following:

- European Commission (2000). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2002). 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 (2006). Nature and Biodiversity Cases: Ruling of the European Court of Justice.
- European Commission (2007). Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solution, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence, Opinion of the Commission.
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities.

The EC Guidance sets out a number of principles as to how to approach decision making during the process. The primary one is 'the precautionary principle' which requires that the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 should prevail where there is uncertainty.

When considering the precautionary principle, the emphasis for assessment should be on objectively demonstrating with supporting evidence that:

- There will be no significant effects on a Natura 2000 site;
- There will be no adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site;
- There is an absence of alternatives to the project or plan that is likely to have an adverse effect to the integrity of a Natura 2000 site; and
- There are compensation measures that maintain or enhance the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

This translates into a four stage process to assess the impacts, on a designated site or species, of a policy or proposal.

The EC Guidance states that "each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required". Consequently, the Council may not need to proceed through all four stages in undertaking the Appropriate Assessment.

The four stage process is:

**Stage 1: Screening** – The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether or not these impacts are likely to be significant;

**Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment** – The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 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 impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts;

**Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions** – The process which examines alternative ways of achieving objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;

**Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain** – An assessment of the 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.

In complying with the obligations set out in Articles 6(3) and following the guidelines described above, this screening statement has been structured as a stage by stage approach as follows:

- Description of the proposed project;
- Identification of the Natura 2000 sites close to the proposed development;
- Identification and description of any individual and cumulative impacts on the Natura 2000 sites likely to result from the project;
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on site integrity. Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects;
- Screening statement with conclusions.



## 2.2 DESK STUDIES

Information on the site and the area of the proposed development was studied prior to the completion of this statement. The following data sources were accessed in order to complete a thorough examination of potential impacts:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service - aerial photographs and maps of designated sites, information on habitats and species within these sites and information on protected plant or animal species; conservation objectives, site synopses and standard data forms for relevant designated sites.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- Information pertaining to water quality, geology and licensed facilities within the area;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) – Information pertaining to protected plant and animal species within the study area;
- McGill Planning – Information pertaining to the plan and project;
- Ferreira Architects – Plans, Specifications and Design Statement;
- South Dublin County Council – Information on planning history in the area to assess potential cumulative impacts.

## 2.3 FIELD BASED STUDIES

A visit to the site of the proposed development at Airton Road was conducted on May 21<sup>st</sup> 2019, when relevant field notes, species lists and photographs were taken. The site was surveyed in accordance with the Heritage Council's *Habitat Survey Guidelines* (Smith et al., 2010) and the Institute of Environmental Assessment's *Guidelines for Baselines Ecological Assessment* (IEA, 1995). Habitats within the application site were classified in accordance to Level 3 of *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland* (Fossit, 2000). These habitats are denoted in the text along with their habitat code, e.g., the habitat code for improved agricultural grassland is GA1. Any bird and mammal and bird activity was also noted

The species nomenclature for vascular plants conforms with *The New Flora of the British Isles* (Stace, 2010).

A separate bat survey for the site was carried out on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019 by Donna Mullen and Brian Keely of Wildlife Surveys.

### 3 SCREENING

#### 3.1 DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

Greenleaf Homes Limited have indicated their intention to shortly apply to An Bord Pleanála for planning permission (Strategic Housing Development) for a mixed use residential development on a site of c. 2.79ha. The proposal consists of:

- Demolition of existing factory/ warehouse buildings on site;
- Construction of 502 residential units comprising of 197 no. 1-Bed; 257 no. 2-Bed; and 48 no. 3-Bed Apartments all with associated private balconies/terraces to the north/south/east/west elevations;
- Construction of 3 no. Retail Units; a creche; and communal facilities;
- The development will take place over 6 no. Blocks (A-F) ranging in height up to 8 storeys;
- The development will have 202 no. car parking spaces located at undercroft level of blocks A, B and C and at basement level of blocks E and F. 584 no. secure bike parking spaces. The site is accessed through 2 no. vehicular access to the north and east of the scheme. There will be a number of pedestrian entrances along Airton Road and Greenhills Road which also provide access for emergency vehicles.
- In addition to all of the new facilities all other site services and works to enable the development of the site will also be provided including bins, ESB substations, boundary treatments and landscaping.
- Additional pedestrian crossing points and road improvements will also be provided along Greenhills Road and Airton Road.

An extract from the planning drawings can be seen in Figure 1.

#### Wastewater

Wastewater from the proposed development site will be directed to the existing public sewer.

#### Proposed Surface Water Drainage

The proposed development will be designed in accordance with the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as embodied in the recommendations of the Greater Dublin

Strategic Drainage Study (GSDS) and it will significantly reduce run-off rates and improve the storm water quality discharging to the public storm water system. All rain falling on the site will be dealt with using the SuDs strategy, as outlined in the Civil Engineering Infrastructure Report prepared by Barrett Mahony Consulting Engineers. Surface water in the southern end of the site currently discharges to the Tymon Stream. The provision of SuDs on the site of the proposed development will intercept much of the flow to the Tymon Stream compared to current rates.



Figure 1 – Landscape masterplan and Site Plan by Mitchell Associates

### 3.2 SITE LOCATION AND SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

The site in question is approximately 2.5 hectares in area. It is located in Tallaght, approximately 8.2km south-west of Dublin City Centre, on the corner junction of where Airtion Road meets the Greenhills Road. It is close to the Tallaght Institute of Technology, to the Tallaght Athletic Club and the Hibernian Industrial Estate. The site is surrounded by the urban areas of Tallaght and Greenhills. These areas mostly consist of mixed commercial, industrial, residential, education and amenity areas. Under the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016 – 2022, the site is zoned as Objective REGEN, i.e., to facilitate enterprise and / or residential-led regeneration.

Site location maps can be seen in Figures 2 and 3.

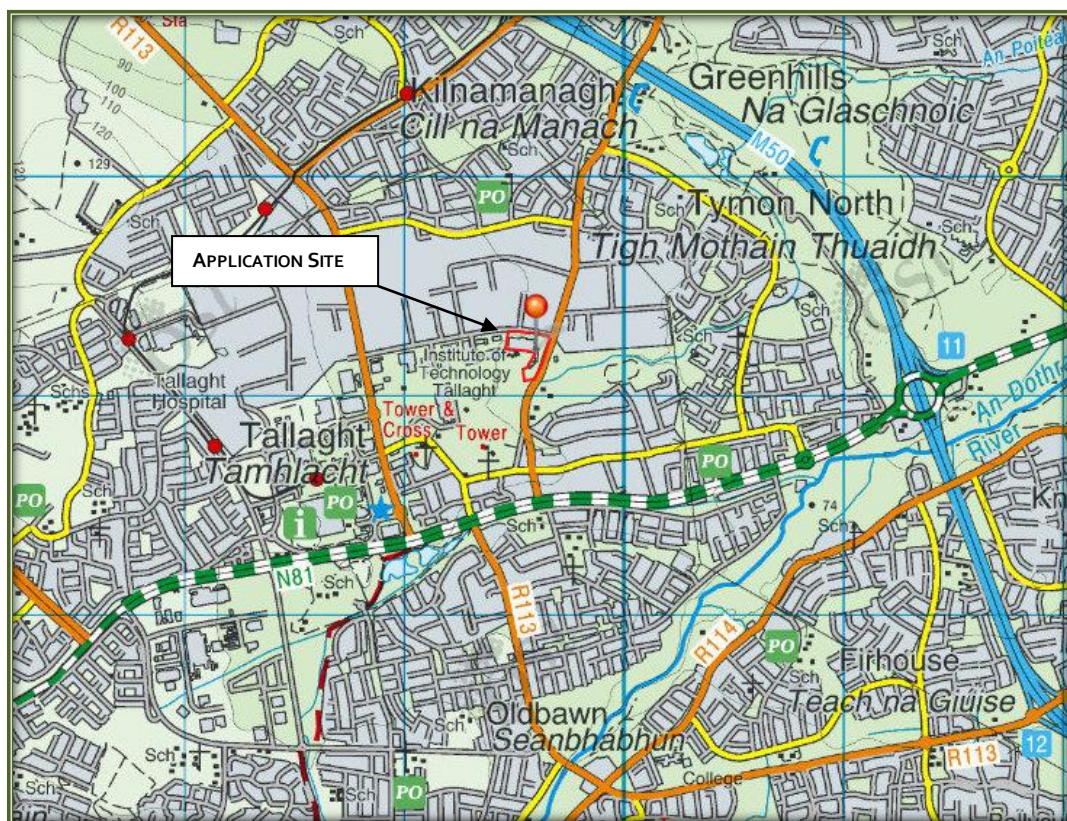


Figure 2 – Site Location Map



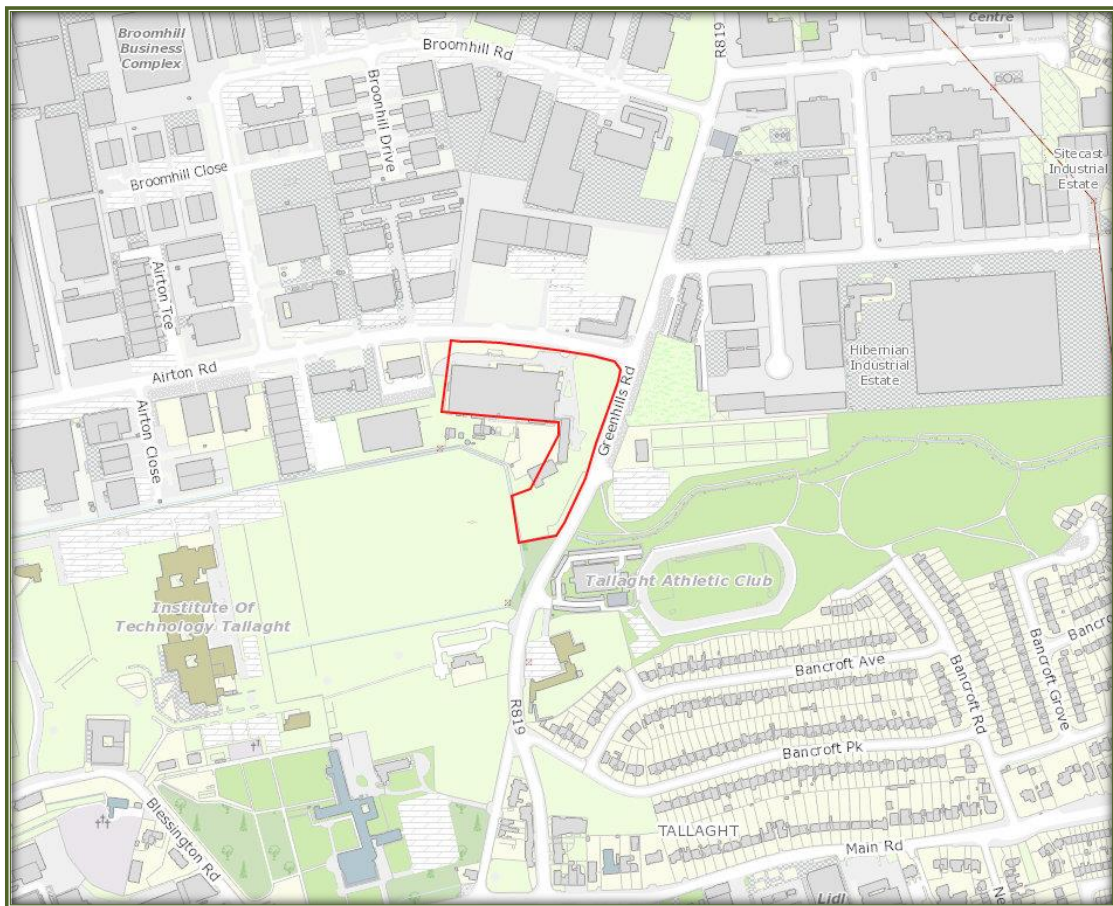


Figure 3 – Site Location Map (Site Outlined in Red)

### HABITATS AND NOTABLE SPECIES

Using up to date aerial photographs, an overview of the habitats surrounding the application site was assessed and noted. The lands are generally urban in nature and they consist mostly of buildings and artificial surfaces, amenity grasslands and gardens and scattered trees and parkland. An overview of the local habitats surrounding the application site can be seen in the aerial photograph in Figure 4.

All proposed development works within the application site will take place on areas of low biodiversity value. Buildings and artificial surfaces are the dominant features of the application site, whilst the natural habitats within the study area are limited and mainly consist of a former amenity grassland habitat that has been left unmanaged. This habitat has been classed as dry meadows and grassy verges (GA2). Grasses are the dominant species overall and fescues *Festuca sp*, meadow grasses *Poa sp* and cock's foot grass *Dactylis glomerata* were all common. Broad-leaved plants recorded are common locally and were typical of this type of habitat and included speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*, tufted vetch *Vicia cracca*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, red clover *Trifolium pratense*, sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium* and spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*. Other

habitats present within the application site included scattered trees, scrub, treelines and hedgerows.

Species within the application site include swallows and bats may also roost in timbers at the back of the building.

### **WATER FEATURES AND QUALITY**

The application site lies within the Liffey and Dublin Bay Hydrometric Area and Catchment, the Dodder Sub-Catchment and the Poddle Sub-Basin. There is a small stream / drain occurring along the western and southern site boundaries. This watercourse is referred to by the EPA as the Tymon Stream (referred to as the River Tymon / Poddle throughout the remaining planning documents). It comes from the west and it flows past the site in an easterly direction. It flows through the amenity areas of Bancroft Park to the east of the site whereupon it flows in a westerly and then northerly direction. The EPA refer to it at this stage as the Poddle. This river continues its complex and altered journey through South suburban and urban Dublin, until its confluence with the River Liffey. Much of the later stages of the Poddle though south Dublin city is underground through culverts. The confluence of the Poddle and the Liffey is visible at low tide at a grated opening in the Liffey walls at Wellington Quay.

The EPA have not classified the ecological status of the Poddle River in any area. However, it is generally considered to be At Risk of not achieving good ecological status within the required time frame. Under the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, this is unsatisfactory, and all waterbodies must achieve good status by 2021.



Figure 4 – Aerial Photograph of the Site (Outlined in Red) and its Surrounding Habitats.

### 3.3 NATURA 2000 SITES IDENTIFIED

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, a list of Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development have been identified and described according to their site synopses, qualifying interests and conservation objectives. In addition, any other sites further than this, but potentially within its zone of interest were also considered. The zone of impact may be determined by an assessment of the connectivity between the application site and the designated areas by virtue of hydrological connectivity, atmospheric emissions, flight paths, ecological corridors etc.

For significant effects to arise, there must be a potential impact facilitated by having a *source*, i.e., the proposed development and activities arising out of its construction or operation, a *receptor*, i.e., the European site and its qualifying interests and a subsequent *pathway* or *connectivity* between the source and receptor, e.g., a water course. The likelihood for significant effects on the European site will largely depend on the characteristics of the source (e.g., nature and scale of the construction works), the characteristics of the existing pathway and the characteristics of the receptor, e.g., the sensitivities of the Qualifying Interests (habitats or species) to changes in water quality.

There are nine Natura 2000 designated sites within 15km of the application site. These designated areas and their closest points to the application site are summarised in Table 1 and a map showing their locations relative to the application site is shown in Figure 5. A full description of all these sites can be read on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (npws.ie).

Site Name & Code	Distance	Qualifying Interests	Impacts / Connetivity
Glenasmole Valley SAC 001209	3.9km south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)</li> <li>Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)</li> <li>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)</li> </ul>	<i>No source-pathway-receptor linkages, therefore, impacts upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.</i>
Wicklow Mountains SAC 002122	6.3km south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae)</li> <li>Natural dystrophic lakes</li> </ul>	<i>No source-pathway-receptor linkages, therefore, impacts upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.</i>



		<p>and ponds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></li> <li>• European dry heaths</li> <li>• Alpine and Boreal heaths</li> <li>• Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i></li> <li>• Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)</li> <li>• Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</li> <li>• Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>)</li> <li>• Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation</li> <li>• Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation</li> <li>• Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</li> <li>• <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter)</li> </ul>	
Wicklow Mountains SPA 004040	7.2km south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>)</li> <li>• Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)</li> </ul>	<i>No source-pathway-receptor linkages, therefore, impacts upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.</i>
South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024	10km north-east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)</li> <li>• Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)</li> <li>• Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>)</li> <li>• Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)</li> <li>• Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)</li> <li>• Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)</li> <li>• Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)</li> <li>• Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)</li> <li>• Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)</li> <li>• Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>)</li> <li>• Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)</li> <li>• Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds</li> </ul>	<i>There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 17km. Impacts upon the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.</i>
South Dublin Bay SAC 000201	10.4km east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>• Annual vegetation of drift</li> </ul>	<i>There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 17km. Impacts upon</i>

		lines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand</li> <li>• Embryonic shifting dunes</li> </ul>	<i>the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.</i>
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC 001398	11km north-west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)</li> <li>• <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail)</li> <li>• <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail)</li> </ul>	<i>No source-pathway-receptor linkages, therefore, impacts upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.</i>
Knocksink Woods SAC 000725	13.1km south-west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*</li> <li>• Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*</li> </ul>	<i>No source-pathway-receptor linkages, therefore, impacts upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.</i>
North Bull Island SPA 004006	13.8km north-east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)</li> <li>• Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>)</li> <li>• Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)</li> <li>• Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)</li> <li>• Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>)</li> <li>• Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)</li> <li>• Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)</li> <li>• Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)</li> <li>• Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)</li> <li>• Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)</li> <li>• Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)</li> <li>• Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)</li> <li>• Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)</li> <li>• Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>)</li> <li>• Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds</li> </ul>	<i>There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 17km. Impacts upon the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.</i>
North Dublin Bay SAC 000206	13.8km north-east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>• Annual vegetation of drift lines</li> <li>• Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand</li> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</li> <li>• Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)</li> </ul>	<i>There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 17km. Impacts upon the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embryonic shifting dunes</li> <li>• Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes)</li> <li>• Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)</li> <li>• Humid dune slacks</li> <li>• <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort)</li> </ul>	
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**Table 1 – Natura 2000 Sites Within 15km of the Proposed Site**

The Generic Conservation Objective of all these sites is:

*To maintain / restore the favourable conservation status of the qualifying interests of the SAC / SPA.*

The favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range and area it covers within that range is stable or increasing and 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;
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- The 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;

There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

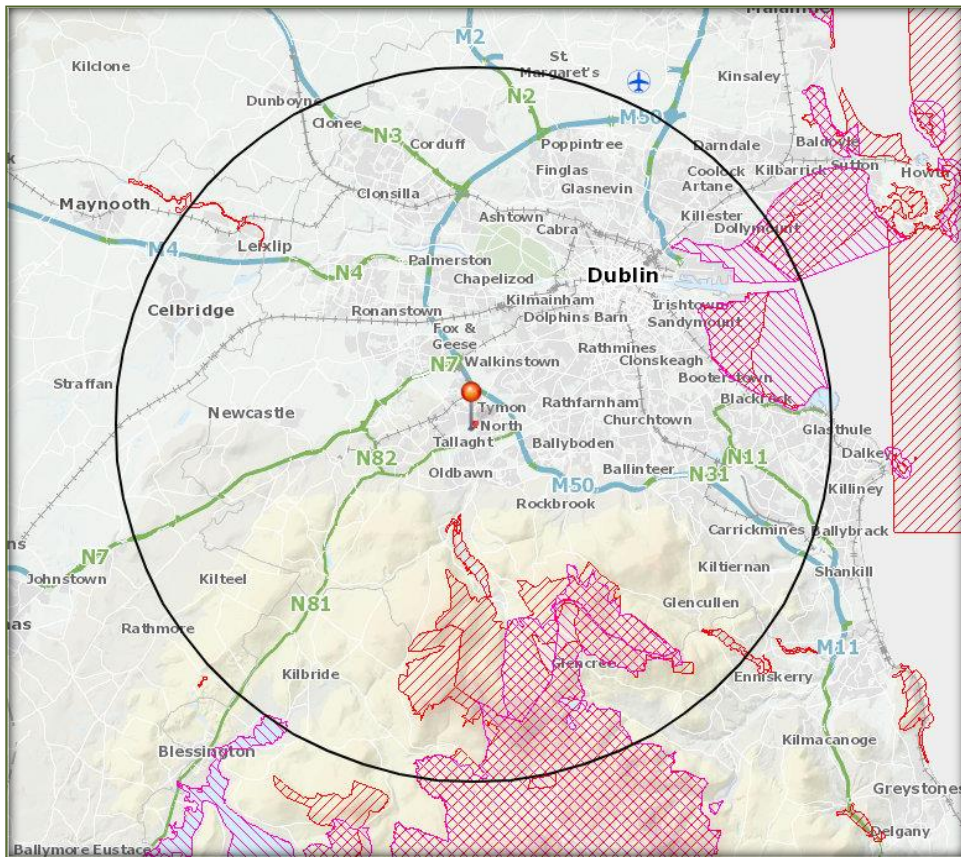


Figure 5 – The Application Site (Pinned) in relation to the Natura 2000 Sites (SACs – Red Hatching; SPAs – Pink Hatching). 15km Boundary Shown.

## SITE SPECIFIC CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

There are four Natura 2000 potentially downstream of the application site. These sites are approximately 17km downstream of the application site and impacts upon these sites arising from the construction and operation of the proposed development are unlikely. Nonetheless, the impacts of the proposed development were considered in light of the Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) of the sites.

These SSCO's aim to define the favourable conservation condition for the particular habitats or species at the Natura 2000 site. They outline certain attributes (e.g., distribution, population structure, water quality) for different species and habitats with targets, which define the favourable condition for a habitat or species at a particular site. The maintenance of habitats and species within the Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at national level.

For each Qualifying Interest of the SAC or SPA, the SSCO is either to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of that interest, by defining a list of attributes and targets which are indicative of the conservation status of that interest. For habitats, the main attributes include habitat area; habitat and community distribution; vegetation structure/composition and physical structure. The main target is to ensure that the habitats are stable or increasing in area and that the other attributes are maintained or restored. For the Annex II species of the SAC or Annex I species of SPAs, the main attributes are population trend and distribution, whilst the targets aim to ensure that the long term population trends of the species are stable or increasing and that there is no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by the species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.

### South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024

SSCOs for this site were produced by NPWS in 2015. They are summarised in Table 2 below:

Qualifying Interest	SSCO
Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	Maintain
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Maintain
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Maintain
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	No SSCO – Species set for Removal as a QI of this SPA
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	Maintain
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>	Maintain
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	Maintain
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Maintain
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	Maintain
Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Maintain
Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i>	Maintain

Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Maintain
Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Maintain
Wetland and Waterbirds	Maintain

**Table 2 – SSCOs for the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA**

The objectives for all these bird species,/habitats with the exception of the tern species, are the same and are presented in Tables 3a-3c.

Attribute	Measure	Target
Population trend	Percentage Change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by the QI, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation

**Table 3a – Attributes, Measures and Targets for the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA**

The SSCOS for the three tern species include:

Attribute	Measure	Target
Passage population: individuals	Number	No significant decline
Distribution: roosting areas	Number; location; area (ha)	No significant decline
Prey biomass available	Kg	No significant decline
Disturbance at roosting site	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the number of roseate tern/common tern/artic tern among the post-breeding aggregation of terns.
Breeding population abundance: apparently occupied nests	Number	No significant decline
Productivity rate: fledged young per breeding pair	Mean number	No significant decline
Passage population: Individuals	Number	No significant decline
Distribution: breeding colonies	Number; location; area (ha)	No significant decline
Prey biomass available	Kg	No significant decline
Barriers to connectivity	Number; location; shape; area (ha)	No significant increase
Disturbance at the breeding site	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the breeding common tern population

**Table 3b – Attributes, Measures and Targets for the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA (Tern Species)**

The SSCOS for the wetlands are:

Attribute	Measure	Target
Habitat Area	Hectares	The permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat should be stable and not significantly less than the area of 2,587ha, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.

**Table 3c – Attributes, Measures and Targets for Wetlands in South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA**

**North Bull Island SPA 004006**

SSCOs for this site were produced by NPWS in 2015. They are summarised below:

Qualifying Interest	SSCO
Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	Maintain
Shelduck Tadorna <i>tadorna</i>	Maintain
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	Maintain
Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>	Maintain
Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>	Maintain
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Maintain
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Maintain
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Maintain
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	Maintain
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>	Maintain
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	Maintain
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>	Maintain
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Maintain
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	Maintain
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	Maintain
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Maintain
Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Maintain
Wetland and Waterbirds	Maintain

**Table 4 – SSCOs for the North Bull Island SPA**

The attributes, measures and targets for all these bird species are the same as that listed for the QIs of the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA. The attributes, measures and targets for the wetlands are also the same as the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA.

Potential Impacts upon the QIs of these SPAs

The application site is 17km upstream of the areas designated for these bird species. The proposed development will not occur in an area used by the bird species listed above. The habitats within the application site are not suitable for these wading bird species. The proposed development will not lead to decreases in the population trend of any bird species. The proposed development will not lead to any decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of any areas within the SPA by the QI bird species. The proposed development will not lead to the loss of any wetland habitat area within either SPA.



**South Dublin Bay SAC 000201 / North Dublin Bay SAC 000206**

SSCOS for these SACs were produced by the NPWS in 2013. These QIs and the potential impacts arising on their attributes and targets from the proposed development at Airton Road are considered below.

**1. Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide (Both Sites)**

The SSCO for this habitat is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes.	No
Community Extent	Hectares	Maintain the extent of the <i>Zostera</i> -dominated community and the <i>Mytilus edulis</i> -dominated community complex, subject to natural processes.	No
Community Structure: <i>Zostera</i> Density	Shoots / m <sup>2</sup>	Conserve the high quality of the <i>Zostera</i> -dominated community, subject to natural processes	No
Community Structure: <i>Mytilus edulis</i> density	Individuals / m <sup>2</sup>	Conserve the high quality of the <i>Mytilus edulis</i> dominated community, subject to natural processes	No
Community Distribution	Hectares	Conserve the following community types in a natural condition: Fine sands with <i>Angulus tenuis</i> community complex.	No

**2. Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines (Both Sites)**

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities with typical species: sea rocket; sea sandwort; prickly saltwort and oraches	No
Vegetation Composition;	Hectares	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5%	No



Negative Indicator Species		cover.	
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### 3. *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud and sand (Both Sites)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. For sub-site mapped: Malahide Estuary- 1.93ha	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain, or where necessary restore, natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	No
Physical Structure: Flooding Regime	Hectares Flooded: Frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Cover	% Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities listed in SMP	No
Vegetation Structure: Negative Indicator Species – <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Hectares	No significant expansion of common cordgrass ( <i>Spartina anglica</i> ). No new sites for this species and an annual spread of less than 1% where it is already known to occur	No

#### 4. Embryonic Shifting Dunes (Both Sites)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without and physical obstructions	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Composition: Plant health of dune grasses	% Cover	95% of marram grass <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> and or lyme'grass <i>Leymus arenarius</i> should be healthy (i.e., green plant parts above ground and flowering heads present)	
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities with typical species: sand couch and/or lyme grass.	No
Vegetation Composition: Negative Indicator Species – <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	No

#### 5. Atlantic Salt Meadows (North Dublin Bay SAC only)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	No
Physical Structure: Flooding Regime	Hectares Flooded: Frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion	No

		and succession	
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Cover	% Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in SMP	No
Vegetation Structure: Negative Indicator Species – <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Hectares	No significant expansion of common cordgrass ( <i>Spartina anglica</i> ), with an annual spread of less than 1% where it is known to occur.	No

### 6. Mediterranean Salt Meadows (North Dublin Bay SAC only)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. For sub-site mapped: Malahide Estuary- 0.64 ha	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain/restore natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	No
Physical Structure: Flooding Regime	Hectares Flooded: Frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of saltmarsh habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Cover	% Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in SMP	No
Vegetation Structure: Negative Indicator Species	Hectares	No significant expansion of common cordgrass ( <i>Spartina anglica</i> ), with an annual spread of less than 1% where it is known to occur.	No

– <i>Spartina anglica</i>		
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### 7. Shifting Dunes along the Shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) (North Dublin Bay SAC only)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. Total area mapped - 1.8 ha	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without and physical obstructions	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Composition: Plant health of dune grasses	% Cover	95% of marram grass <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> and or lyme'grass <i>Leymus arenarius</i> should be healthy (i.e., green plant parts above ground and flowering heads present)	
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities dominated by marram grass ( <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ) and/or lyme-grass ( <i>Leymus arenarius</i> )	No
Vegetation Composition: Negative Indicator Species – <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	No

### 8. Fixed Coastal Dunes with Herbaceous Vegetation (Grey Dunes) (North Dublin Bay Only)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without and physical obstructions	No
Vegetation Structure:	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones,	No

Zonation		subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	
Vegetation Structure: Bare Ground	Percentage cover	Bare ground should not exceed 10% of fixed dune habitat, subject to natural processes	No
Vegetation Structure: Sward Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in Ryle et al. (2009)	No
Vegetation Composition: Negative Indicator Species-including <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	No
Vegetation Composition: Scrub and trees	Percentage Cover	No more than 5% cover or under control	No

### 9. Humid Dune Slacks (North Dublin Bay only)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without and physical obstructions	No
Physical structure:hydrological and flooding regime	Water table levels' groundwater fluctuations	Maintain natural hydrological regime	
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Structure: Bare Ground	Percentage cover	Bare ground should not exceed 5% of dune slack habitat, with the exception of pioneer slacks which can have up to 20% bare ground.	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in Delaney et al. (2013)	No
Vegetation composition: Cover of <i>Salix repens</i>	Percentage cover; centimetres	Maintain less than 40% cover of creeping willow ( <i>Salix repens</i> )	
Vegetation	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species	No

Composition: Negative Indicator Species		(including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	
Vegetation Composition: Scrub and trees	Percentage Cover	No more than 5% cover or under control	No

**10. Petalwort (North Dublin Bay SAC only)**

The SSCO for this species is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Distribution of Populations	No and geographical spread of populations	No decline	No
Population size	Number of individuals	No decline	No
Area of suitable habitat	Ha	No decline	No
Hydrological conditions: soil moisture	Occurrence		No
Vegetation Structure: Height and cover	Centimetres and Percentage	Maintain open, low vegetation with a high percentage of bryophytes and bare ground/	No

Potential Impacts upon the QIs of the South Dublin Bay SAC 000201 / North Dublin Bay SAC 000206

Potential impacts upon all the QIs of these SACs arising from the proposed application have been considered. There is a weak hydrological link (17km) between the application site and the habitats and species of the Natura 2000 sites in Dublin Bay via the River Poddle. Water quality is not a target for the maintenance of any of the QIs within either SAC of Dublin Bay. The targets relate to habitat distribution and area, as well as vegetation structure and control of negative indicator species and scrub. The proposed development will not lead to any impacts upon these QIs, by virtue of changes to the physical structure of the habitats or to the vegetation structure which defines their favourable conservation status.

### 3.4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The potential impacts of the proposed development on the Natura 2000 sites identified above are described below.

**Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on nearby Natura 2000 site:**

The construction and operation of the proposed development will have **no impacts** upon the integrity or the site structure of the designated sites identified. There are no individual elements of the proposed project that are likely to give rise to negative impacts on these sites. There is a sufficient downstream distance (~17km) between the application site and the designated habitats of Dublin Bay, therefore potential direct and indirect impacts will be avoided. There will be no impacts upon the Qualifying Interests of the Natura 2000 sites of Dublin Bay arising from the proposed development.

**Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the nearby Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:**

**Size and scale:** Given the small size and scale of the development in relation to the overall size of the Natura 2000 sites identified, the likelihood of any direct, indirect or cumulative impacts on these designated sites arising from the construction and operation of the proposed development are low.

**Land-take:** There will be no land-take from any designated site. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site. There will be no loss of undesignated habitats of biodiversity value.

**Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site:** The closest Natura 2000 site to the application site is the Glenasmole Valley SAC. This is 3.9km south of the application site. In this instance, this distance is sufficient to ensure that no impacts will arise. Hydrological distance (~17km) between the application site and the SACs / SPAs of Dublin Bay is sufficient to ensure that no impacts will arise.

**Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.):** No resources will be taken from any Natura 2000 site and there are no resource requirements that will impact upon any designated site.

**Emissions:** There will be no emissions from the application site to any designated site during the constructional phase of the project. The site is adjacent to the head waters of the Tymon / Poddle River, and this eventually leads to the River Liffey. The River Liffey flows into Dublin Bay, which contains sites that are designated under the Natura 2000 network. Clean, attenuated surface water from the site will emit to the River Tymon/Poddle in small volumes, and with the SuDs methods proposed the water emitting to this stream will be less than the current situation on site.

The downstream distance between the application site and the designated areas is a minimum of

17km. Given this distance and the overall volume of water entering Dublin Bay from the Poddle system, which is small, then the likelihood of any impact or effects upon the designated habitats and species of Dublin Bay arising from emissions into the Tymon / Poddle during construction or operation will be minimal.

**Excavation requirements:** Construction and demolition waste and excavated material from the construction will be used on site. Any remaining will be disposed of in a responsible manner in a licensed facility away from any designated sites.

**Transportation requirements:** No access to any areas of any designated site will be required during any phase of project.

**In-Combination / Cumulative Impacts:** The proposed application was considered in combination with other developments or proposed developments in the Tallaght area and potential cumulative impacts were considered. Any individual application that has the potential to impact upon a Natura 2000 site will be subject to Appropriate Assessment as required under Articles 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. The construction and operation of the proposed development will have no impacts when considered in combination with other plans and projects that have been screened for Appropriate Assessment or where mitigation measures have been included as part of Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement).

**Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc:** Construction will take approximately two years.

#### Describe any likely changes to the nearby Natura 2000 sites arising as a result of:

**Reduction of habitat area:** The proposed development lies outside the boundaries of the Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 3.3. There will be no reduction of designated habitat area or interference with any protected habitat within any SAC or SPA. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site. There will be no loss or fragmentation or disturbance to any of the riparian habitats along any watercourse.

**Disturbance to key species:** The bird species identified as using the SPAs within 15km of the site are wading species that use the estuarine and coastal habitats of Dublin Bay and the surrounding areas. They will not be impacted upon by the construction or operation of the proposed development. There will be no deterioration in water quality within any SPA that may lead to indirect impacts upon these bird species. There are no suitable feeding sites within the application site for these birds.

**Habitat or species fragmentation:** There will be no habitat or species fragmentation within any SAC or SPA. No ecological corridors between the site and any Natura 2000 site will be damaged or destroyed. There will be no loss of any habitat of biodiversity value.

**Reduction in species density:** There will be no reduction in species density within any SAC and SPA. There will be no reduction of bird density in any SPA arising from the application. There will be no loss of any non designated feeding areas used by birds that are listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive.



**Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.):** There will be no negative impacts upon surface or ground water quality within any SAC or SPA. There will be no negative impacts upon the water quality in any designated site. There will be no deterioration in water quality in any watercourse.

**Describe any likely impacts on the nearby Natura 2000 sites as a whole in terms of:**

**Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site:** It is not considered likely that there will be any impacts on the key relationships that define the structure or function of the Natura 2000 sites identified.

**Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:**

**Loss** - Estimated percentage of lost area of habitat: None

**Fragmentation:** None

**Disruption & disturbance:** None

**Change to key elements of the site** (e.g. water quality etc.): None

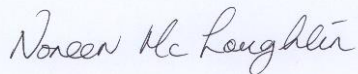
### 3.5 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

Finding of No Significant Effects Report Matrix	
<b>Name of project</b>	Proposed Mixed Use Development in Airton Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24.
<b>Name and location of Natura 2000 site</b>	The closest Natura 2000 site to the application site is the Glenasmole Valley SAC. This is 3.9km south of the application site. In this instance, this distance is sufficient to ensure that no impacts will arise.
<b>Description of project</b>	A Mixed Use Development
<b>Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?</b>	No
<b>Are there other projects or plans that together with project being assessed could affect the site?</b>	No
The Assessment of Significance of Effects	
<b>Describe how the project is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site</b>	Having regard to the location, nature and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects either from the proposed development on its own or in combination with other plans and projects.
<b>Explain why these effects are not considered significant</b>	Not applicable as there is no potential for negative impacts
<b>Describe how the project is likely to affect species designated under Annex II of the Habitats Directive.</b>	No impacts likely
Data Collected to Carry out the Assessment	
<b>Who carried out the assessment</b>	Noreen McLoughlin, MSC, MCIEEM. Consultant Ecologist
<b>Sources of data</b>	NPWS, EPA, National Biodiversity Data Centre, Dublin County Council
<b>Level of assessment completed</b>	Stage1 Appropriate Assessment Screening
<b>Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed</b>	Full results included

## 4 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, the relevant case law, established best practice and the precautionary principle, this AA Screening Report has examined the details of the project in relation to the relevant Natura 2000 sites within 10km of the application site. This report has analysed the potential impacts and effects of the proposed project on the Special Conservation Interests of these designated sites. It has evaluated the significance of these potential impacts and effects in view of these sites' conservation objectives.

In view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, it can be concluded that this application, whether individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will have no impacts upon the Natura 2000 sites. The integrity of these sites will be maintained and the habitats and species associated with these sites will not be adversely affected. It is of the opinion of this author that this application does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment process.



Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM.  
Ecologist.

(PI Insurance details available on request)