



**Natura Impact Statement**  
**Appendix 2**  
**SOUTH DUBLIN COUNTY COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY LETTER**

RECEIVED: 19/04/2024

Economic, Enterprise & Tourism  
Development Department

RECEIVED: 19/04/2024

22/12/2023

**Re: Grange Castle West Lands**

Dear Robbie,

In preparing your planning application for the Lens Media site in Grange Castle West, I'm just making you aware of some of the policy context and associated initiatives being put in place by South Dublin County Council to support biodiversity in the County.

South Dublin County has a rich and varied natural heritage that includes a number of unique habitats, areas of natural interest and species that are designated for conservation under national and European legislation. It is acknowledged that wildlife networks and areas located outside of protected sites can also host a diverse and rich variety of rare, protected, and vulnerable habitats and species. It is noted that many species of protected mammals and birds are not restricted to designated sites and can occur in other locations throughout the County.

It is also recognised that wildlife habitats that are not nationally designated may still be important at a County level by acting as Green Infrastructure stepping-stones within the wider ecological network. As such, the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the South Dublin County Biodiversity Action Plan recognise and support the enhancement and protection of habitats throughout the County, with the relevant policies outlined below:

<b>South Dublin County Development Plan</b>	
Policy NCBH2: Biodiversity	<i>Protect, conserve, and enhance the County's biodiversity and ecological connectivity having regard to national and EU legislation and Strategies.</i>
NCBH2 Objective 3	<i>To protect and conserve the natural heritage of the County, and to conserve and manage EU and nationally designated sites and non-designated locally important areas which act as 'stepping stones' for the purposes of green infrastructure and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.</i>
Policy NCBH5: Protection of Habitats and Species Outside of Designated Areas	<i>Protect and promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas and ensure that species and habitats that are protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2018, the Birds Directive 1979 and the Habitats Directive 1992, the Flora (Protection) Order 2015, and wildlife corridors are adequately protected.</i>
<b>South Dublin County Biodiversity Action Plan</b>	
	<i>It is the policy of the Council to protect the ecological, visual, recreational, environmental, and amenity value of the County's proposed Natural Heritage Areas and associated habitats.</i>

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<i>It is the policy of the Council to protect and promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas and to ensure that species and habitats that are protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, the Birds Directive (1979) and the Habitats Directive (1992) are adequately protected.</i>
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The habitats of certain species in particular have an important natural heritage and ecological value for the County and should be protected. This includes protection, where possible, of foraging habitats as well. As such, particular lands within the County play an active roll for winter feeding birds. There is a prevalence of arable land located within the County and it is considered that winter feeding birds benefit from this grassland.

As such, South Dublin County Council has actively identified and are making available an area of land in its ownership within an overall landholding comprising 37 hectares in provision with the policies and objectives set out in the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028 and the South Dublin Biodiversity Action Plan. The grazing lands at this location, which are within a distance of 9.1 km from the Grange Castle West lands contain large scale field systems and short sward management grassland, that can be maintained as a short sward during the winter months, thereby providing optimal conditions to support winter feeding birds. Land management strategies will be agreed with farmers and will form part of the conditions of relevant land management licences issued by the Council to farmers managing the relevant lands.

I trust that this further detail on some of the biodiversity policies and measures being implemented in the County by South Dublin County Council will serve to better inform the preparation of your planning application at the Grange Castle West lands.

Yours sincerely



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**Jason Frehill**  
**Director of Services**