

**Report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment
For a proposed Pedestrian Bridge at Donabate, Co. Dublin
in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats
Directive**



FINAL REPORT

6th December 2018

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Faith Wilson Ecological Consultant was commissioned by Glenveagh Homes Limited to prepare a report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment for a proposed pedestrian bridge at Donabate, Co. Dublin (Grid Reference O 22 49). This report contains the information required for the consenting authority, to undertake the Screening for Appropriate Assessment for this development.

1.2 Legislative Background

The aim of the European Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of wild habitats and of wild fauna and flora) is to create a network of protected wildlife sites across Europe, which are to be maintained at a favourable conservation status.

Each member state must designate their most important natural areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). The Directive specifies the scientific criteria on the basis of which SAC sites must be selected and very strictly curtails the grounds that can be used as justification for damaging a site. The network of sites is referred to as NATURA 2000 and includes SACs (Special Areas of Conservation) for protected habitats and species and SPAs (Special Protection Areas) for birds, which are designated under the European Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC as amended by Directive 2009/147/EC).

It is a requirement of the Habitats Directive ((92/43/EEC) that the competent consenting authority, which is either the planning authority or on planning appeal An Bord Pleanála, must ensure that a proposal, which is likely to have a significant effect on an SAC or SPA, is authorised only to the extent that the authority is satisfied it will not adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site and that an appropriate assessment of the implications of the development for the conservation status of the site is undertaken.

The European Parliament, in a communication to the European Council in September 2000, states:

“The implementation of the European Habitats Directive and Birds Directive, both with respect to species conservation and with respect to the establishment of the Natura 2000 network, is one of the most important tools for achieving

the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the European Union and member states (European Parliament 2000)".

Article 6 of the Habitats Directive provides a strict assessment procedure for any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a designated European site but which has the potential to have implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1).

Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

"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 or 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 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) states:

"If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the [Natura 2000] 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, 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 European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 were implemented to transpose the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive into Irish law as well as addressing transposition failures identified in the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) judgements.

This report has taken into consideration the relevant requirements of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended by the Planning and Development Act 2010).

References to Natura 2000 sites throughout this report are to be taken as referring to European sites as defined in the above Planning Act.

1.3 Methodology

This report is based on a desk study and a field visit conducted on 5th February 2019 by Faith Wilson. This report also builds on surveys conducted for the development of housing on the lands between the railway line and Hearse Road conducted by Faith Wilson in 2018 (Wilson, 2018) and previous field surveys of those lands by Padraic Fogarty of Openfield Ecological Services (Fogarty 2017a)).

The information for screening presented in this report is as follows:

- Description of the proposed development.
- Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development.
- Description of the existing ecological environment at the site.
- Assessment of likely significant adverse effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.
- Screening statement and conclusions.

If, based upon the currently available information, there are aspects of the proposed development that could have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 sites, then further analysis in the form of an Appropriate Assessment is required.

If the outcome of the screening exercise is that there are no significant impacts predicted, then an Appropriate Assessment is not required.

1.4 Guidance and Data Sources

This report has been prepared with regard to the following guidance documents where relevant:

- *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission Environment Directorate General, 2001)
- *Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (EC Environment Directorate General, 2000)
- *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10*
- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities.* (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision)
- *Guidelines for Good Practice, Appropriate Assessment of Plans under Article 6(3) Habitats Directive* (International Workshop on Assessment of Plans under the Habitats Directive, 2011)
- *Guidance Document on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.* Clarification of the Concepts of Alternative Solutions, Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence. Opinion of the European Commission (European Commission, January 2007)

The competent authority is required to carry out appropriate assessment, as required by Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, as follows:

- **Stage 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment**

The first step to establishing if an appropriate assessment is required is referred to as 'screening' and its purpose is to determine, in view of best scientific knowledge, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria if the plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, could have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site in view of the sites conservation objectives. The process identifies any likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 Site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

- **Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment**

This is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site.

The appropriate assessment must include a final determination by the competent authority as to whether or not a proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. In order to reach a final determination, the consenting authority must undertake examination, analysis and evaluation, followed by findings, conclusions and a final determination. The appropriate assessment must contain complete, precise and definitive findings and conclusions, and may not have lacunae or gaps.

Additionally, where there are deemed to be adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts is considered.

- **Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions**

This stage examines alternative means of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that aim to avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

- **Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain**

This stage is the main derogation process outlined in Article 6(4) which examines whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project, which will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, to proceed.

This report is to provide information to the consenting authority to carry out Stage 1 Screening for Appropriate Assessment. This report deems that it is not necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process (refer to Section 4 Conclusions).

2. OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN OR PROJECT

2.1.1 *Description of the Proposed Development.*

The proposed development consists of the construction of a pedestrian bridge linking the residential lands on the west of the railway line (which are located between Hearse Road and the railway line) to Donabate village east of the railway line.

2.1.2 *Desk Study*

A desk study was carried out to collate the available information on the ecological environment potentially impacted by the proposed development of the pedestrian bridge and to determine the proximity of the proposed development to designated areas for conservation. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht database of designated conservation areas and NPWS records of rare and protected plant species as listed under the Irish Red List - Vascular Plants (Wyse Jackson, *et al.* 2016) were checked with regard to the location of the proposed pedestrian bridge.

Information on protected species of fauna and flora listed for protection under Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), Annex I of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) and the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act* (2000) was also sought from NPWS, the National Biodiversity Data Centre and published sources. Recent, high resolution, colour aerial photographs were used to identify habitats of conservation value.

Other ecological sites and watercourses in the study area were identified by examining GIS datasets, maps and aerial photographs, and by drawing on existing information.

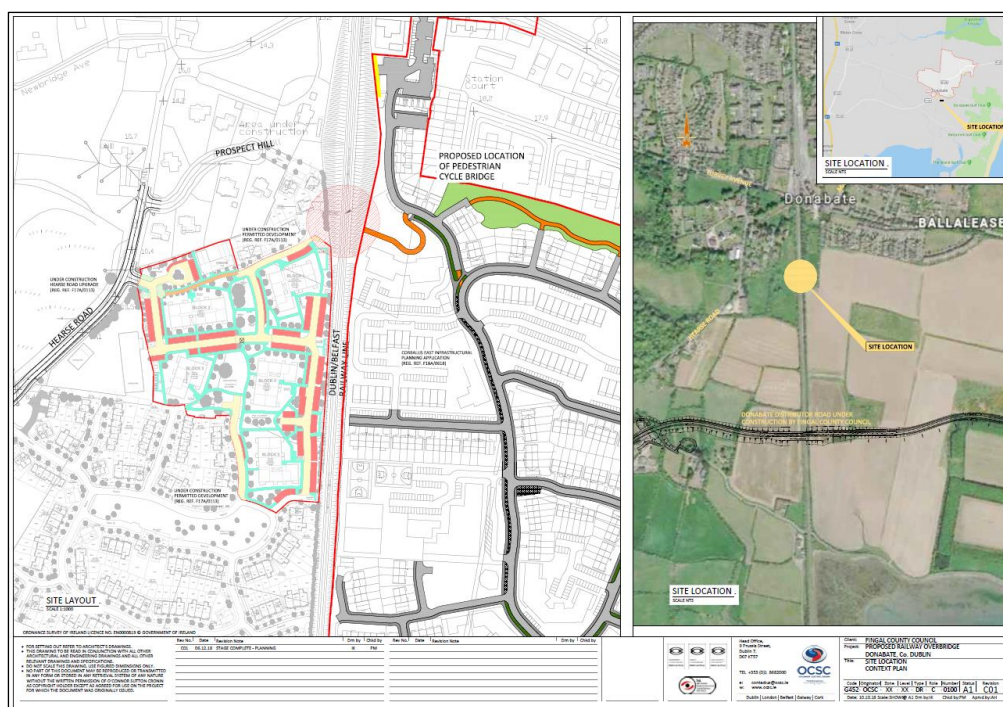


Figure 2.1 Indicative location of the pedestrian bridge at Donabate. The lands west of the railway line are currently under construction.

2.1.3 Field Surveys

The location for the proposed pedestrian bridge was visited on 5th February 2019. The lands to the west of the railway line had been previously visited on several occasions during June, July, August and September 2018. The lands were surveyed and the habitats present were surveyed using the habitat survey and mapping techniques described by Smith *et al.* (2011) and described using the Heritage Council Habitat Classification (Fossitt, 2000).

The embankment of the railway line had been recently cleared of all vegetative growth with a flail by Iarnród Éireann and the lands to the east of the line are currently abandoned agricultural land with no habitats of significant value beyond those of the field boundaries.

A survey for invasive and non-native terrestrial vascular plant species, which threaten biodiversity was completed during the site visit. The presence of three cornered leek (*Allium triquetrum*) was noted in one location. There are also large areas of winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*) present. An invasive species management plan will be required to ensure that the works do not result in the further spread of these species.

A dedicated large mammal survey was carried out during the site visit using the techniques as prescribed in Ecological Survey Techniques for Protected Flora and Fauna (NRA, 2008). This entailed searching for

and identification of signs, tracks and droppings of various mammals (including badger, pine marten, Irish stoat, Irish hare, red squirrel, hedgehog and pygmy shrew along with non-native species such as, American mink, grey squirrel and rabbit) within the general environs of the proposed bridge location. Badger setts, trails and foraging areas were looked for along the railway embankments below the proposed bridge location. None were recorded.



Plate 1. Railway cutting at Donabate, which has been recently cleared of vegetation by Iarnród Éireann. Note the winter heliotrope.



Plate 2. Abandoned agricultural lands on the eastern side of the railway line.



Plate 3. Construction has commenced on the western side of the railway line.



Plate 4. Three cornered leek on the eastern side of the railway line.

2.2 ASSESSMENT OF RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT TO NATURA 2000 SITES

In line with the European Commission Methodological Guidance (EC (2001)) and the DoEHLG Guidance (DoEHLG (2010)) a review of all Natura 2000 sites that could be potentially affected by the proposed development of a pedestrian bridge was made using the NPWS online map viewer.

These included any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the proposed bridge location, and any Natura 2000 sites within the likely

zone of impact of the proposed development (a 15km radius) including those downstream.

In addition to the identified Natura 2000 sites, consideration was also given to relevant species listed under Annexes I and II and IV of the Birds and Habitats Directives, respectively.

Best practice recommends assessing Natura 2000 sites located within 15km of a proposed plan or project. Details of Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development and their locations in relation to the proposed development are provided in **Table 2.1**.

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs):

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are also habitats or sites of interest to wildlife that have been identified by NPWS. These sites become NHAs once they have been formally advertised and land owners have been notified of their designation. NHAs are protected under the *Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000*, from the date they are formally proposed. NHA is a statutory designation according to the *Wildlife Act 1976 (as amended)* and requires consultation with NPWS if any development impacts on a pNHA.

NHAs are considered to be of national importance, while SACs and SPAs are of international importance for nature conservation.

In addition to the identified Natura 2000 sites consideration is also given to relevant species listed under Annexes I and II and IV of the Birds and Habitats Directives respectively.

Designations:

The lands where the pedestrian bridge is to be constructed at Donabate are not currently designated for any nature conservation purposes.

Eighteen Natura 2000 designated sites occur within a 15km radius of the proposed bridge location. These include;

- Baldoyle Bay SAC 000199
- Baldoyle Bay SPA 004016
- Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary SPA 004025
- Howth Head Coast SPA 004113
- Howth Head SAC 000202
- Ireland's Eye SAC 002193
- Ireland's Eye SPA 004117
- Lambay Island SAC 000204

- Lambay Island SPA 004069
- Malahide Estuary SAC 000205
- North Bull Island SPA 004006
- North Dublin Bay SAC 000206
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC 003000
- Rockabill SPA 004014
- Rogerstown Estuary SAC 000208
- Rogerstown Estuary SPA 004015
- Skerries Islands SPA 004122
- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024

There are fifteen proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)/Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within 15km of the proposed bridge location. These include:

- Booterstown Marsh pNHA 001205
- Bog of the Ring pNHA 001204
- Feltrim Hill pNHA 001208
- Howth Head pNHA 000202
- Ireland's Eye NHA 000203
- Knock Lake pNHA 001203
- Lambay Island pNHA 000204
- Loughshinny Coast pNHA 002000
- Malahide Estuary pNHA 000205
- North Dublin Bay pNHA 000206
- Portrane Shore pNHA 001215
- Rockabill Island pNHA 000207
- Rogerstown Estuary pNHA 000208
- Santry Demesne pNHA 001208
- Sluice River March pNHA 001763

Natura 2000 Site Conservation Objectives:

Detailed site management plans and site conservation objectives are available for many of the Natura 2000 sites identified as outlined in the reference list, and generic conservation objectives are identified for those remaining. The conservation objectives for each of the Natura 2000 sites outlined above were examined and are summarised below in **Table 2.2**. This report has examined the generic and detailed conservation objectives for each Natura 2000 site and the attributes and targets for each conservation objective and has not identified any potential risk of significant impact on any of these targets.

Hydrological Links to Natura 2000 sites:

There are no Natura 2000 sites located either within or directly adjacent to the proposed location of the pedestrian bridge. The most relevant of the protected sites is Malahide Estuary SAC/SPA/pNHA the

boundaries of which are in close proximity to the proposed location of the pedestrian bridge (c. 750m away to the south). This site will be hydrologically connected to the proposed bridge location as the surface waters from the proposed works area ultimately drain to this Natura 2000 site.

Table 2.1. Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the location of the proposed proposed bridge location.

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed bridge location	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
000205	Malahide Estuary SAC	0.75km S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1320) <i>Spartina</i> swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>) • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1320) <i>Spartina</i> swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>) • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes)

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed bridge location	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004025	Broadmeadow/ Swords Estuary SPA	0.75km S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) [A005] • Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] • Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054] • Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) [A067] • Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>) [A069] • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • 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] • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] • Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [wintering] <i>Podiceps cristatus</i> • [wintering] <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> • [wintering] <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • [wintering] <i>Anas acuta</i> • [wintering] <i>Bucephala clangula</i> • [wintering] <i>Mergus serrator</i> • [wintering] <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> • [wintering] <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • [wintering] <i>Calidris canutus</i> • [wintering] <i>Limosa limosa</i> • [wintering] <i>Limosa lapponica</i> • [wintering] <i>Tringa tetanus</i> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat in Malahide Estuary SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.</p>

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed bridge location	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
000208	Rogerstown Estuary SAC	1.5km N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1130) Estuaries • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1130) Estuaries • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed bridge location	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004015	Rogerstown Estuary SPA	1.5km N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] • Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] • Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056] • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130] • Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143] • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149] • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156] • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162] • Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [wintering] <i>Anser anser</i> • [wintering] <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> • [wintering] <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • [wintering] <i>Anas clypeata</i> • [wintering] <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> • [wintering] <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> • [wintering] <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • [wintering] <i>Calidris canutus</i> • [wintering] <i>Limosa limosa</i> • [wintering] <i>Tringa totanus</i> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetland habitat in Rogerstown Estuary SPA as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.</p>
003000	Rockabill to Dalkey Islands SAC	5.4km E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1170) Reefs • (1351) Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat and the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1170) Reefs • (1351) Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>)

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed bridge location	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
000199	Baldoyle Bay SAC	6.9km S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)
004016	Baldoyle Bay SPA	6.9km S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048] • Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137] • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140] • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141] • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157] • Wetlands & Waterbirds [A999] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [wintering] <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> • [wintering] <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> • [wintering] <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> • [wintering] <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> • [wintering] <i>Limosa lapponica</i> <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat in Baldoyle Bay SPA</p>

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed bridge location	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
000204	Lambay Island SAC	7.8km E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1230) Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts • (1170) Reefs • (1364) <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> • (1265) <i>Phoca vitulina</i> 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat and the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1230) Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts • (1170) Reefs • (1364) <i>Halichoerus grypus</i> • (1265) <i>Phoca vitulina</i>
004069	Lambay Island SPA	7.8km E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] • Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] • Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] ^ • Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] ^ • Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] • Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] • Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] • Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) [A009] • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] • Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) [A043] • Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) [A183] ^ • Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] ^ • Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] • Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] • Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] • Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) [A204]
002193	Ireland's Eye SAC	9.3km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230]

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed bridge location	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004117	Ireland's Eye SPA	9.4km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] • Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] • Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A199] • Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) [A200] 	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [breeding] <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> • [breeding] <i>Larus argentatus</i> • [breeding] <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> • [breeding] <i>Uria aalge</i> • [breeding] <i>Alca torda</i>
004122	Skerries Islands SPA	9.5km NE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] • Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] • Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) [A148] • Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] • Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A017] • Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) [A018] • Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046] • Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) [A148] • Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169] • Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A184]
000206	North Dublin Bay SAC	10.4km S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1210) Annual vegetation of drift lines • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1320) <i>Spartina</i> swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>) • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>) • (1395) Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia</i>) 	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1140) Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • (1210) Annual vegetation of drift lines • (1310) <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • (1320) <i>Spartina</i> swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>) • (1330) Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae</i>)

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed bridge location	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
			<p>maritimi)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (2110) Embryonic shifting dunes • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) • (2190) Humid dune slacks 	<p>Puccinellietalia maritimae)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (1395) Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>) • (1410) Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) • (2110) Embryonic shifting dunes • (2120) Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) • (2130) Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) • (2190) Humid dune slacks

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed bridge location	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004006	North Bull Island SPA	10.4km S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) • Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) • Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) • Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) • Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) • Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) • Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) • Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) • Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) • Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) • Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) • Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) • Black-headed Gull (<i>Larus ridibundus</i>) • Wetlands & Waterbirds 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> [wintering] • <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> [wintering] • <i>Anas crecca</i> [wintering] • <i>Anas acuta</i> [wintering] • <i>Anas clypeata</i> [wintering] • <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> [wintering] • <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> [wintering] • <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> [wintering] • <i>Calidris canutus</i> [wintering] • <i>Calidris alba</i> [wintering] • <i>Calidris alpina</i> [wintering] • <i>Limosa limosa</i> [wintering] • <i>Limosa lapponica</i> [wintering] • <i>Numenius arquata</i> [wintering] • <i>Tringa totanus</i> [wintering] • <i>Arenaria interpres</i> [wintering] • <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> [wintering] • Wetlands
004014	Rockabill Island SPA	10.9km NE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) [A148] • Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192] • Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] • Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194] 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>) [A148] • Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192] • Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193] • Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194]

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed bridge location	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
000202	Howth Head SAC	11.9km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] • European dry heaths [4030] 	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [1230] • European dry heaths [4030]
004113	Howth Head Coast SPA	11.9km SE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188] 	<p>To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [breeding] <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>

Site Code	Site Name and Designation	Approximate distance from the proposed bridge location	Qualifying Interest	General Conservation Objectives
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	13.7km S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>), • Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>), • Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>), • Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>), • Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>), • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>), • Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>), • Knot (<i>Calidris canuta</i>), • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>), • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>), • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) 	<p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brent goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>), • Sandwich Tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>), • Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>), • Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>), • Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>), • Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>), • Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>), • Knot (<i>Calidris canuta</i>), • Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>), • Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>), • Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) <p>To maintain the favourable conservation condition of wetland habitat in South Dublin and the River Tolka Estuary SPA as a resource for the regularly occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.</p>

3. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This section considers the list of Natura 2000 sites detailed in **Table 2.2** and their qualifying habitats and species under the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. All of the sites with the exception of the Malahide Estuary SAC/SPA were excluded from further assessment on the basis that potential impacts from the development of the pedestrian bridge in Donabate will have no adverse effects on the integrity of these sites as defined by their status and conservation objectives.

3.1 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The potential impacts of the proposed development of the pedestrian bridge in Donabate on nearby Natura 2000 sites are assessed using the following factors:

- size and scale;
- land-take;
- distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site;
- Likely connectivity/pathways from the proposed development to Natura 2000 sites;
- resource requirements (water abstraction etc.);
- emissions (disposal to land, water or air);
- excavation requirements;
- transportation requirements;
- duration/timing of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc;
- reduction of habitat area;
- disturbance to key species;
- habitat or species fragmentation;
- reduction in species density;
- changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.);
- climate change;
- key relationships that define the structure of the sites; and
- key relationships that define the function of the site.

Brief description of the project or plan	<p>The development of the pedestrian bridge in Donabate will result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permanent landtake; • construction activities (e.g. runoff and other pollution, increase of suspended solids, alteration of hydraulic conditions, noise and dust emissions, lighting, movement of vehicles, presence of construction personnel).
Brief description of the Natura 2000	There are no Natura 2000 sites within or

<p>sites</p>	<p>immediately adjoining the proposed development area. The Malahide Estuary SAC (Site Code: 000205) and the Swords/Broadmeadow Estuary SPA (Site Code: 004025) are within 750m of the proposed bridge location to the south. The Natura 2000 sites occurring within a 15km radius of the proposed bridge location are as described above in Table 2.1. The lands here ultimately drain to the south and hence are hydrologically linked to the Malahide Estuary SAC (Site Code: 000205) and the Swords/Broadmeadow Estuary SPA (Site Code: 004025) to the south.</p>
<p>Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 sites</p>	<p>The proposed residential housing developments located on the east and west side of the railway line which will be linked by the proposed pedestrian bridge have all been subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment.</p> <p>All of these developments sit within the frameworks of both the Donabate Local Area Plan 2016 and the Fingal County Development Plan 2017 – 2023, both of which have been subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment, there are no cumulative elements expected which are likely to give rise to impacts on Natura 2000 sites.</p>
<p>Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • size and scale; • land-take; • distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site; • resource requirements (water abstraction etc.); • emissions (disposal to land, water or air); • excavation requirements; • transportation requirements; • duration of construction, operation, decommissioning, etc.; • other 	<p>The proposed bridge location is not within any Natura 2000 site, therefore there will be no direct impacts arising from the project regarding size and scale or land-take.</p> <p>The Malahide Estuary SAC (Site Code: 000205) and the Swords/Broadmeadow Estuary SPA (Site Code: 004025) are within 750m of the proposed bridge location to the south. The lands ultimately drain to the south towards these sites but there are no drainage ditches present linking same.</p> <p>There are no requirements to abstract water from any Natura 2000 site for the proposed bridge development.</p> <p>The potential for emissions relates primarily to dust from construction during the construction phase of the bridge.</p> <p>Due to the location of the proposed bridge which is buffered by virtue of distance from the Natura 2000 sites to the south, there are no impacts to Natura 2000 sites expected from the construction or use of the proposed pedestrian bridge will provide connectivity between the village, residential developments and the amenities provided by Newbridge House and Demesne.</p>
<p>Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduction of habitat area • disturbance to key species; • habitat or species fragmentation; • reduction in species density; • changes in key indicators of 	<p>The lands where the proposed bridge is located do not contain any habitats that form part of the qualifying interests of the SAC nor do they support any of the species listed as qualifying interests of the SPA.</p> <p>There will be no reduction in species density or fragmentation of habitat on which these species rely arising from the development of the bridge.</p>

<p>conservation value (water quality etc.);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> climate change 	<p>Due to the nature of the proposed development there are no significant changes expected to any Natura 2000 site relating to habitat or species reduction or changes to key indicators of conservation value.</p> <p>The proposed pedestrian bridge will provide connectivity between the village, residential developments and the amenities provided by Newbridge House and Demesne and encourage people to walk or cycle instead of using their cars to access same. This will encourage behaviours favourable to mitigating climate change.</p>
<p>Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site interference with key relationships that define the function of the site 	<p>There will be no significant impacts to Natura 2000 sites relating to the key structures and functions of the sites from the development of the bridge.</p>
<p>Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss Fragmentation Disruption Disturbance Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.) 	<p>There will be no significant impacts to Natura 2000 sites relating to loss, fragmentation, disruption or disturbance from the proposed development of the bridge.</p>
<p>Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.</p>	<p>There will be no significant adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts from the proposed development on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.</p>

Cumulative/In Combination Impacts:

The EC Habitats Directive, the Planning Acts and the Habitats Regulations 2011 require that the impacts on Natura 2000 sites from the plan or project in question are assessed and that they are assessed in combination with other plans and projects that could affect the same Natura 2000 sites.

The Appropriate Assessment Screening Process identified other plans and projects that could act in combination with the proposed development of the pedestrian bridge to pose likely significant effects on European sites within the study area and its environs. These included:

- Housing developments at Hearse Road, which are currently under construction.
- Apartment developments at Hearse Road, which are currently in planning.

- Housing Developments (Phase V and VI) at Beverton, Donabate.
- The Donabate Distributor Road.
- The Fingal County Development Plan 2017-2023.
- The Donabate Local Area Plan 2016.

All of these plans and/or projects have been screened for Appropriate Assessment or undergone an Appropriate Assessment themselves and it is therefore assumed that if a plan has been adopted or a project given planning permission following an AA that it cannot pose likely significant adverse effects on a Natura 2000 site.

In addition the proposed development of a pedestrian bridge linking the residential lands between the railway line and Hearse Road west of the railway line to the village on the east side of the railway line in combination or cumulatively with the above plans and projects is not likely to have a significant effect on any of the Natura 2000 sites identified.

Table 3.1. Likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the proposed bridge development (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the proposed bridge location by virtue of:

Site Code, Site Name and Designation	004117 Ireland's Eye SPA	002193 Ireland's Eye SAC	003000 Rockabill to Dalkey Islands SAC	004113 Howth Head Coast SPA	000202 Howth Head SAC	004006 North Bull Island SPA	000206 North Dublin Bay SAC	004024 S Dublin Bay/River Tolka Estuary	004014 Rockabill Island SPA	004015 Rogerstown Estuary SPA	000208 Rogerstown Estuary SAC	004025 Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary SPA	004122 Skerries Islands SPA	004069 Lambay Island SPA	000204 Lambay Island SAC	00205 Malahide Estuary SAC	000199 Baldoye Bay SAC	004016 Baldoye Bay SPA
Land-take within Natura 2000 site	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Potential for impacts on Natura 2000 site from resource requirements (water abstraction, etc.)	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Potential for impacts on Natura 2000 site from emissions (disposal to land, water or air)	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Potential for impacts on Natura 2000 site from excavation requirements	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

Site Code, Site Name and Designation	004117 Ireland's Eye SPA	002193 Ireland's Eye SAC	003000 Rockabill to Dalkey Islands SAC	004113 Howth Head Coast SPA	000202 Howth Head SAC	004006 North Bull Island SPA	000206 North Dublin Bay SAC	004024 S Dublin Bay/River Tolka Estuary	004014 Rockabill Island SPA	004015 Rogerstown Estuary SPA	000208 Rogerstown Estuary SAC	004025 Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary SPA	004122 Skerries Islands SPA	004069 Lambay Island SPA	000204 Lambay Island SAC	00205 Malahide Estuary SAC	000199 Baldoyle Bay SAC	004016 Baldoyle Bay SPA
Potential for impacts on Natura 2000 site from transportation requirements	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Potential for reduction of habitat in any Natura 2000 site	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Potential for disturbance to key species within any Natura 2000 site	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Potential for habitat or species fragmentation within any Natura 2000 site	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Potential for reduction in density of key species within any Natura 2000 site	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

Site Code, Site Name and Designation	004117 Ireland's Eye SPA	002193 Ireland's Eye SAC	003000 Rockabill to Dalkey Islands SAC	004113 Howth Head Coast SPA	000202 Howth Head SAC	004006 North Bull Island SPA	000206 North Dublin Bay SAC	004024 S Dublin Bay/River Tolka Estuary	004014 Rockabill Island SPA	004015 Rogerstown Estuary SPA	000208 Rogerstown Estuary SAC	004025 Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary SPA	004122 Skerries Islands SPA	004069 Lambay Island SPA	000204 Lambay Island SAC	00205 Malahide Estuary SAC	000199 Baldoyle Bay SAC	004016 Baldoyle Bay SPA
Potential for changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality, etc.) within any Natura 2000 site	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Potential for likely impacts on key relationships that define the structure of any Natura 2000 site	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Potential for likely impacts on key relationships that define the function of any Natura 2000 site	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None

4. CONCLUSIONS

This report for screening has evaluated the proposed development of a pedestrian bridge linking lands west of the railway line at Hearse Road to the village, to determine whether or not significant negative impacts on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites are likely to arise by virtue of its construction and subsequent occupation and use.

It is concluded that there will be no negative impacts on the qualifying interests of any Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the proposed development.

This report finds that the proposed development of the pedestrian bridge will not, either individually or cumulatively in combination with the other identified plans and projects, adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

Based on the information provided above, and by applying the precautionary principle, it was determined that it was possible to rule out likely significant impacts on any Natura 2000 site and therefore it was not deemed necessary to undertake any further stage of the Appropriate Assessment process.

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