

DRAFT FINGAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2022 – 2030 SEA SCREENING REPORT

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1 Introduction

Brady Shipman Martin (BSM) has been appointed by Fingal County Council to carry out screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) in respect of the *Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 – 2030* (the ‘Draft Plan’ hereafter).

This report documents the screening exercise for SEA in respect of the Draft Plan for the purposes of public consultation, in accordance with Article 9(7) of S.I. 435 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011.

2 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

2.1 Introduction

Directive 2001/42/EC¹ of the European Parliament and of the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (the ‘SEA Directive’) requires EU Member States to assess the ‘likely significant environmental effects’ of plans and programmes prior to their adoption. This provides for the assessment of strategic environmental considerations at an early stage in the decision-making process.

Article 1 of the SEA Directive states that:

“The objective of this directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.”

The SEA Directive was transposed into Irish law through:

- Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No. 435 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011); and
- S.I. No. 436 of 2004 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes prepared for *“agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use”*².

S.I. No. 436 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 201 of 2011, relates to SEA as it applies to plans or programmes where the context requires, *“a development plan, a variation of a development plan, a local area plan (or an amendment thereto), regional planning guidelines or a planning scheme”*³.

As a non-statutory plan, the *Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 – 2030* is being screened for the requirement for SEA under the requirements of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011.

¹ SEA Directive: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001L0042&from=EN>

² See Section 9(1)(a)

³ Section 5(c)

2.2 SEA Screening

Article 3(4) of the SEA Directive requires that “Member States shall determine whether plans and programmes, other than those referred to in paragraph 2, which set the framework for future development consent of projects, are likely to have significant environmental effects.” This process for deciding whether a particular plan, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects and, therefore, would require SEA, is known as ‘screening’.

The criteria for screening, i.e. determining whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects are set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. These criteria are reproduced in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The criteria are set out under two principal headings, each of which have a number of sub-criteria (refer to **Section 6** of this report):

- Characteristics of a Plan / Programme; and
- Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

Article 9(1) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, states that:

“Subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes:

- (a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and town and country planning or land use, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or*
- (b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site.”*

Article 9(2) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, further states that:

“A plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) which determines the use of a small area at local level or a minor modification to a plan or programme referred to in sub-article (1) shall require an environmental assessment only where the competent authority determines that it is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, for this purpose, the competent authority shall make any necessary determination.”

2.3 Requirement for SEA Screening

The *Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 – 2030* is a non-statutory land use plan and is being screened for the requirement for SEA in accordance with the requirements of:

- The SEA Directive, particularly Articles 3(3), 3(4) and 3(5) in relation to ‘screening’; and
- The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004), as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 200 of 2011), particularly Schedule 1, which sets out the “Criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment”.

This report constitutes a screening of the Draft Plan for the requirement for SEA in accordance with the above legislation for the purposes of public consultation and notification to the SEA environmental authorities in accordance with Article 9(7) of S.I. 435 of 2004 (the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004), as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011.

2.4 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive') require Appropriate Assessment (AA) to be carried out where a plan or project is likely to have a significant impact on a Natura 2000 site. Natura 2000 sites include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC), designated for the conservation of Annex I habitats and Annex II species of the Habitats Directive; and
- Special Protection Areas (SPA), designated for the protection of Annex I birds of Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (the 'Birds Directive') and other regularly occurring migratory birds and their habitats.

Stage 1 in the AA process is to establish whether AA is required for the particular plan or project. This stage is referred to as 'screening for the requirement for AA', and its purpose is to determine:

- Whether a plan or project is directly connected to or necessary for the management of the site; and
- Whether a plan or project, alone or in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives.

As set out in Department Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08⁴ (15th February 2008), Screening for AA is of relevance to SEA screening in that *"where following screening, it is found that the draft plan or amendment may have an impact on the conservation status of a Natura 2000 site or that such an impact cannot be ruled out, adopting the precautionary approach:*

- *An AA of the plan must be carried out, and*
- *In any case where SEA would not otherwise be required, it must also be carried out."*

Hence, where the Draft Plan requires AA, it shall also require SEA.

The *Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 – 2030* has been screened for the requirement for AA. The AA Screening Report, prepared by BSM (refer to standalone report under separate cover) has concluded that:

"Following review of the draft objectives of the Biodiversity Action Plan against the Conservation Objectives of the relevant European sites, it is concluded that there is no possibility that the implementation of the Draft BAP could result in any likely significant effects on European sites on its own or in combination with other plans and programmes.

In view of best scientific knowledge, this report concludes that the implementation of the Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 – 2030, individually or in combination with another plan or project, will not have a significant effect on any European sites. This assessment was reached without considering or taking into account mitigation measures or measures intended to avoid or reduce any impact on European sites. The Draft Plan does not require an Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of a Natura Impact Report."

2.5 Consultation with Environmental Authorities

Prior to making a final determination on the requirement, or not, for SEA, consultation was undertaken with the SEA environmental authorities in accordance with Articles 9(5) and 9(6) of S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011.

⁴ NPWS SEA letter: <https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/circular-sea-01-08.pdf>

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In accordance with Article 9(5) of S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011, the relevant SEA environmental authorities (as updated in accordance with structure of the current Government departments⁵) are as follows:

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (MfHLGH);
- The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (MfAFM); and
- The Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications (MfECC).

The consultation notified the environmental authorities of the intention to prepare the Biodiversity Action Plan; indicated that the Plan was unlikely to have significant effects on the environment, and sought submissions / observations from the environmental authorities in relation to same.

Submissions / observations received from the environmental authorities are summarised in **Table 2.1**, below. Due consideration has been given to the input received in the submissions / observations from the environmental authorities in the preparation of this report.

⁵ <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/assessment/strategic-environmental-assessment/sea-contacts/>

Table 2.1: Submissions / observations from SEA environmental authorities (EA)

EA	Outline of nature of submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
EPA	<p>Correspondence received dated 6 May 2022. Key points raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FCC should complete the determination as to whether the implementation of the proposed Plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004. • The Plan should reference relevant commitments in higher level plans and programmes. • FCC should consult with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) regarding any existing or proposed conservation management plans. • Regard should be had to the following guidance documents in the preparation of the Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ EPA (2013). Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment – Streamlining AA, SEA and EIA Processes: Practitioner’s Manual • The following resources may be useful in finalising the Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ EPA Environmental Sensitivity Mapping (ESM) Webtool □ EPA (2020). Ireland’s Environment – An Integrated Assessment 2020 □ EPA SEA WebGIS Tool □ EPA Maps – Water Framework Directive (WFD) data □ EPA AA GeoTool • The requirement for consultation with the SEA environmental authorities and the list of environmental authorities (as above) are set out. • As soon as practicable after making its determination as to whether SEA is required, FCC should make a copy of its decision (including, as appropriate, its reasons for not requiring an environmental assessment) available for public inspection at its offices and on its website. A copy of the determination should also be issued to the environmental authorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft Plan references relevant higher level policy commitments, including from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ <i>United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (1992)</i> □ <i>EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030</i> □ <i>National Biodiversity Action Plan (2017 – 2021)</i> □ <i>Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019)</i> □ <i>Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (2019 – 2031)</i> □ <i>Fingal Climate Change Action Plan (2019 – 2024)</i> • Regard has been had to the guidance documents and resources set out in the submission in the preparation of the draft Plan and SEA Screening Report. • In its preparation of the draft Plan, FCC contacted the NPWS for consultation, but no response was received. • FCC will complete its determination as to whether the implementation of the proposed Plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004. • FCC will make copies of its determination, the draft Plan, the SEA Screening Report and AA Screening Report available for public inspection at its offices and on its website. • FCC will also issue copies of the above-listed documents to the SEA environmental authorities consulted, as set out above.
MfHLGH	<p>No observation / submission received.</p>	
MfAFM	<p>Correspondence received dated 18 May 2022. Key points raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department has raised concerns with regards to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The inclusion of a voluntary Marine Protected Area (MPA) or no-take zone between Lambay and Howth; □ Fisheries management measures in all MPAs; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regard has been had to the concerns raised in the DAFM submission in the preparation of the draft Plan. • Text in relation to the engagement of fishers in the protection of no-take zones has been removed from the draft Plan in response to the concerns raised.

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EA	Outline of nature of submission	Response to consideration of nature of submission
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The engagement of fishers in the protection of no-take zones; and □ <i>“The general understanding of fisheries”</i>. • It is stated that the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is the mechanism / framework for the management of fisheries and long-term conservation of fish stocks in Irish coastal and marine environment, through Total Allowable Catches and Maximum Sustainable Yield. • It is suggested that content of draft Plan related to fisheries management be examined (i) with regard to the responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), the latter of which is responsible for designating MPAs; and (ii) in consultation with these Departments. • It is stated that the proposal for a no-take zone between Lambay and Howth goes beyond the remit of FCC. • The submission discusses the matter of offshore Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), protected Annex I reef habitat [code 1170] and the impacts of trawling with and without bottom contacting gears. It is stated that bottom contacting gears can be prohibited to prevent damage to reef habitat, while pelagic trawling can continue to operate while allowing the habitat to recover. • It is noted that <i>“it would not ordinarily be the role of the fishers to patrol inshore water to police a no-take zone, as suggested in the section titled vision on page 43 of the FBAP”</i>. 	
MfECC	<p>Correspondence received from Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) on behalf of Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DoECC), dated 17 May 2022. Key points raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention is drawn to a number of GSI datasets that may be of use in the preparation of the SEA Screening Report (available through the GSI’s dedicated Map Viewer): • GSI would welcome the inclusion of the 22 no. County Geological Sites (CGS) in the draft Plan, as per the report The Geological Heritage of County Fingal (Clarke <i>et al.</i>, 2007). • It is recommended that regard should be had to the Bog of the Ring Groundwater Source Protection Zones report (Hunter Williams, 2005). 	<p>Regard has been had to the information sources cited in the submission from GSI / DoECC in the preparation of the draft Plan and SEA Screening Report.</p>

3 Planning Context

3.1 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992)

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the 'Rio Earth Summit', was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992. At this summit, world leaders recognized that human activities are changing and destroying the natural environment at an ever increasing rate and action was needed to halt the loss of biodiversity. The outcome of this summit was the UN Convention on Biological Diversity ('the Biodiversity Convention'), which has been signed by over 170 countries, including Ireland.

3.2 United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021 – 2030)

On 1 March 2019, under Resolution 73/284, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2021–2030 to be the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (hereafter referred to as the 'UN Decade'), with the primary aim being to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide by 2030 – the same timeline as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

According to the strategy document for the UN Decade:

“...ecosystem restoration encompasses a wide continuum of activities that contribute to protecting intact ecosystems and repairing degraded ecosystems. Such activities include, for example, enhancing organic carbon in agricultural soils, increasing fish stocks in overfished zones, remediating polluted sites, restoring ecological processes, restoring biodiversity and conserving fauna and flora that can assist in the restoration process. The scale of these activities can range from a few hundred metres to thousands of kilometres, depending on the societal actors and ecosystems involved. Crucially, restoring ecosystems increases the supply and quality of ecosystem services over time towards desired outcomes supporting national sustainable development priorities.”

According to the strategy, ecosystem restoration efforts can contribute to the achievement of all 17 UN SDGs, and particularly SDGs 14 (Life Below Water) and 15 (Life on Land).

3.3 EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030

The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 was launched in May 2020 to provide targets for all member states within the European Union to address the biodiversity crisis. It links the recovery of biodiversity to recovery from economic recession, health threats and climate disasters. *“We need nature in our lives”* is a central message. The commitments proposed in this strategy pave the way for ambitious and necessary changes – changes that will ensure the wellbeing and economic prosperity of present and future generations in a healthy environment.

The strategy provides for the establishment of protected areas on at least 30% of the land and 30% of the seas of Europe and aspires to the restoration of degraded ecosystems both on land and at sea. In addition, in order to have a truly coherent and resilient Nature Network, it will be important to set up ecological corridors to prevent genetic isolation, allow for species migration, and maintain and enhance healthy ecosystems. In this context, investments in green and blue infrastructure and cooperation across borders among Member States should be promoted and supported.

The strategy requires greater efforts to restore freshwater ecosystems and the natural functions of rivers in order to achieve the objectives of the Water Framework Directive. To help make this a reality, at least 25,000 km of rivers are to be restored into free-flowing rivers by 2030 through the removal of barriers and the restoration of floodplains and wetlands. Nutrient losses to rivers and wetlands from farmland are to be reduced by at least 50%, by reducing fertilizer use by at least 20% while also ensuring that there is no deterioration in soil fertility. This is to be achieved by implementing and enforcing the existing water

pollution legislation and developing nutrient management plans. The EU's Farm to Fork strategy will also address the reduction in the use of pesticides and support wider implementation of Integrated Pest Management. At least 25% of agricultural land shall be under organic farming management by 2030, while at least 10% of the agricultural area shall comprise of high-diversity landscape features such as hedgerows, ponds, wetlands and wildflower meadows.

Achieving good environmental status of marine ecosystems, including through strictly protected areas, must involve the restoration of carbon-rich ecosystems as well as important fish spawning and nursery areas. In addition, fisheries-management measures must be established in all marine protected areas according to clearly defined conservation objectives and on the basis of the best available scientific advice.

To bring nature back to cities and reward community action, the Commission calls on European cities of at least 20,000 inhabitants to develop ambitious Urban Greening Plans. These should include measures to create biodiverse and accessible urban forests, parks and gardens; urban farms; green roofs and walls; tree-lined streets; urban meadows; and urban hedges. They should also help improve connections between green spaces, eliminate the use of pesticides, limit excessive mowing of urban green spaces and other biodiversity harmful practices. The promotion of healthy ecosystems, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions should be systematically integrated into urban planning, including in public spaces, infrastructure, and the design of buildings and their surroundings

Protecting and restoring nature will need more than compliance with regulations alone. It will require action by citizens, businesses, social partners and the research and knowledge community, as well as strong partnerships in Fingal between local, regional, national and European levels.

The Biodiversity Strategy sets out a list of key commitments to contribute to the restoration of nature in the EU, as follows:

- Propose legally binding EU restoration targets by 2021, and restore significant areas of degraded and carbon rich ecosystems by 2030.
- Ensure habitats and species show no deterioration in conservation trends and status; and at least 30% reach favourable conservation status or at least show a positive trend.
- Reverse the decline of pollinators.
- Reduce the use of chemical pesticides by 50% and reduce the use of more hazardous pesticides by 50%.
- Ensure that at least 10% of agricultural area is under high-biodiversity landscape features.
- Place at least 25% of agricultural land under organic farming management, and significantly increase the uptake of agro-ecological practices.
- Reduce the loss of nutrients from fertilisers by 50%, resulting in the reduction of fertilizer use by at least 20%.
- Plant three billion new trees in the EU, in full respect of ecological principles.
- Make significant progress in remediating contaminated soil sites.
- Restore at least 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers.
- Substantially reduce the negative impacts of fisheries and extraction activities on sensitive marine habitats and species, including on the seabed in support of achieving good environmental status.
- Eliminate or reduce the by-catch of species to a level that allows their recovery and conservation.
- Adopt ambitious Urban Greening Plans for cities with at least 20,000 inhabitants.
- Minimise or eliminate the use of pesticides in sensitive areas such as urban green areas.
- Halve the number of Red List species threatened by invasive alien species.

3.4 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (2018)

Project Ireland 2040 is the Government’s overarching planning and development policy for the country to 2040. It constitutes a “*strategy to make Ireland a better country for all of its people*” by setting public investment policy at a high level. It comprises two documents: the *National Planning Framework* (NPF), which details the strategy for development to 2040; and the *National Development Plan* (NDP), which outlines the public expenditure required to implement this strategy and identifies priority future projects.

The NPF is the Government’s high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of Ireland to 2040. It is a framework to guide public and private investment to create and promote opportunities, and to protect and enhance the environment. At its core are ten National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), “*a shared set of goals for every community across the country*” (p. 10), which the plan aims to deliver. These NSOs include ‘Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities’, ‘Enhanced Amenity and Heritage’, ‘Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society’ and ‘Sustainable Management of Water and other Environmental Resources’.

With a view to achieving these NSOs, the NPF identifies a suite of National Policy Objectives (NPOs). The most relevant NPOs are set out in **Table 3.1**, below.

Table 3.1: Relevant NPOs of the National Planning Framework

No.	NPO
41a	Ensure that Ireland’s coastal resource is managed to sustain its physical character and environmental quality.
41b	In line with the collective aims of national policy regarding climate adaptation, to address the effects of sea level changes and coastal flooding and erosion and to support the implementation of adaptation responses in vulnerable areas.
58	Integrated planning for Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services will be incorporated into the preparation of statutory land use plans.
59	Enhance the conservation status and improve the management of protected areas and protected species by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing relevant EU Directives to protect Ireland’s environment and wildlife; • Integrating policies and objectives for the protection and restoration of biodiversity in statutory development plans; • Developing and utilising licensing and consent systems to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites; • Continued research, survey programmes and monitoring of habitats and species.
60	Conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.
62	Identify and strengthen the value of greenbelts and green spaces at a regional and city scale, to enable enhanced connectivity to wider strategic networks, prevent coalescence of settlements and to allow for the long-term strategic expansion of urban areas.
63	Ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment.

3.5 National Biodiversity Action Plan (2017 – 2021)

The Biodiversity Convention requires Ireland to create national strategies and action plans to protect biological diversity. The Irish Government has prepared three National Biodiversity Action Plans (NBAPs) and is currently preparing a new plan for the next five years. The objective of the NBAP is to halt, and if possible, reverse the decline of habitats and species in Ireland. It sets out the objectives, targets and actions for biodiversity to be undertaken by government, civil and private sectors to achieve Ireland’s ‘Vision for Biodiversity’:

“That biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland are conserved and restored, delivering benefits essential for all sectors of society and that Ireland contributes to efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU and globally.”.

The current NBAP details seven strategic objectives to achieve this vision:

1. Mainstream biodiversity into decision-making across all sectors
2. Strengthen the knowledge base for conservation, management, and sustainable use of biodiversity
3. Increase awareness and appreciation of biodiversity and ecosystem services
4. Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside
5. Conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment
6. Expand and improve management of protected areas and species
7. Strengthen international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services

The NBAP includes 119 actions. Those that apply to Local Authorities (and are, therefore, of pertinence to the *Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan (2022 – 2030)*) are listed in **Table 3.2**, below.

Table 3.2: Relevant actions of the NBAP

No.	NPO
1.1.2	Public and Private Sector relevant policies will use best practice in SEA, AA and other assessment tools to ensure proper consideration of biodiversity in policies and plans
1.1.3	All Public Authorities and private sector bodies move towards no net loss of biodiversity through strategies, planning, mitigation measures, appropriate offsetting and/or investment in Blue-Green infrastructure
1.1.4	Strengthen ecological expertise in local authorities and relevant Government Departments and agencies
1.1.5	Local Authorities will review and update their Biodiversity and Heritage Action Plans
1.1.6	Local Authorities will review and update their Development Plans and policies to include policies and objectives for the protection and restoration of biodiversity
1.1.7	Develop a Green Infrastructure at local, regional and national levels and promote the use of nature based solutions for the delivery of a coherent and integrated network
2.1.12	Hedgerow surveys will be continued by Local Authorities
3.1.7	Develop and implement a communications campaign in support of public and sectoral understanding of the value of biodiversity and full implementation of this NBAP
4.2.1	Continue to protect, enhance and monitor the ecological status of water during the second cycle of the Water Framework Directive (2015-2021) including reducing risks to water quality and utilising ecological expertise in decision-making, and in analysis of cumulative effects
4.2.3	Implement recommendations of EPA STRIVE Report Series No. 99 (Management Strategies for the Protection of High Status Waterbodies) ⁸³ including, amongst other measures: prioritisation for protection measures; planning/licensing control; assessment of cumulative impacts; and integrated monitoring and protection
4.4.2	Develop national and whole island plans to implement the EU Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regulation and relevant sections of Ireland’s EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 including: development and adoption of biosecurity plans in relevant state bodies; a Rapid Response Protocol for the island of Ireland; coordination and collation of invasive species surveillance and monitoring data; and work with Northern Ireland and UK authorities on invasive species of mutual concern
4.4.3	Continue and enhance measures for eradication, where feasible, control and containment of invasive species
4.4.4	Encourage horticultural nurseries to produce native species, varieties and landraces from appropriate native sources for public and private sector plantings. Public bodies will endeavour to plant native species in order to reduce importation of non-native species, varieties and landraces
5.1.2	Implement measures to achieve good ecological and environmental status of marine and coastal habitats as required by the Habitats, Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Strategy

No.	NPO
	Framework Directive (MSFD) and in line with the OSPAR Convention (Convention for the protection of the marine environment in the NorthEast Atlantic)
5.1.4	Promote the incorporation of ecological engineering features in new and existing structures such as coastal defences
6.1.2	Develop and utilise licensing and consent systems to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites
6.1.7	Implement the conservation measures necessary to achieve the published conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites. Develop and implement additional measures as necessary to achieve favourable conservation status both nationally and at site level
6.2.1	Increase connectivity of the protected areas network using appropriate buffer zones, corridors, stepping stones and/or flyways

3.6 Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019)

Ireland's Biodiversity Sectoral Climate Change Adaptation Plan aims to protect biodiversity from the impacts of climate change and to conserve and manage ecosystems so that they deliver services that increase the adaptive capacity of people and biodiversity while also contributing to climate change mitigation. The Plan identifies 6 objectives (underpinned by corresponding actions):

1. Protect, restore and enhance biodiversity to increase the resilience of natural and human systems to climate change;
2. Improve understanding of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity;
3. Improve landscape connectivity to facilitate mobility in a changing climate;
4. Engage society and all sectors to protect biodiversity to enhance resilience;
5. Ensure sufficient financing is available to implement the Biodiversity Climate Change Adaptation Plan; and
6. Put adequate monitoring and evaluation measures in place to review the implementation of the Biodiversity Climate Change Adaptation Plan

Priority actions have been identified in the Plan, including the following:

- Restore and enhance natural systems through management to increase resilience
- Establish and implement an all-island invasive species programme
- Develop an integrated coastal management strategy which includes ecosystem based adaptation actions
- Promote ecosystem restoration and conservation through Payment for Ecosystem Services and investment in actions that increase carbon sinks while promoting biodiversity
- Carry out a comprehensive climate change vulnerability assessment of biodiversity in Ireland
- Design corridors and buffer zones to enhance the resilience of protected areas and designated sites by increasing opportunities for dispersal across the landscape
- Implement measures to reduce the barrier effects of roads, railways and technical objects in rivers and streams to facilitate species spatial responses to climate change
- Undertake natural capital accounting in all sectors to ensure natural capital is being valued and Ecosystem Based Adaptation and green infrastructure options are being employed

Local Authorities have been identified as the project lead on Action 4.4 *“Co-design green spaces and wildlife refuges in cities and peri-urban areas with local communities to provide habitats for species under threat from climate change and to connect people to biodiversity”*.

3.7 Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (2019 – 2031)

There are three administrative Regions in Ireland: the Northern and Western Region, the Southern Region, and the Eastern and Midland Region. Under national policy, Regional Assemblies are tasked with drafting Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSESs), which effectively set the agenda for implementing the national level development policy – the NPF – at the Regional level. The proposed development is situated in the Eastern and Midland Region, which takes in Counties Longford, Westmeath, Offaly, Laois, Louth, Meath, Kildare, Wicklow and Dublin. The Region is the smallest in terms of land area but the largest in population size.

The current RSES for the Region was published in 2019. It constitutes a strategic plan and investment framework to shape the future development of the Region to 2031 in accordance with the NPF. The RSES' overarching vision for the Region is as follows:

“To create a sustainable and competitive Region that supports the health and wellbeing of our people and places, from urban to rural, with access to quality housing, travel and employment opportunities for all.” (p. 6)

The RSES is based on three key principles:

1. **Healthy Placemaking:** To promote people's quality of life through the creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, visit and study in.
2. **Climate Action:** The need to enhance climate resilience and to accelerate a transition to a low carbon economy recognising the role of natural capital and ecosystem services in achieving this.
3. **Economic Opportunity:** To create the right conditions and opportunities for the region to realise sustained economic growth and employment that ensures good living standards for all.

Under the headings of these three principles, the RSES sets out 16 Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs), which are closely aligned with the NPF's NSOs and the United Nations' SDGs. These RSOs include 'Climate Action', 'Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources', 'Enhanced Green Infrastructure' and 'Biodiversity & Natural Heritage'.

With a view to realising the RSOs, the RSES sets out a suite of Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) to guide the development of the Region. The most relevant RPOs are set out in **Table 3.3**, below.

Table 3.3: Relevant RPOs of the Eastern & Midland RSES

No.	RPO
7.16	Support the implementation of the Habitats Directives in achieving an improvement in the conservation status of protected species and habitats in the Region and to ensure alignment between the core objectives of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and local authority development plans
7.17	Facilitate cross boundary co-ordination between local authorities and the relevant agencies in the Region to provide clear governance arrangements and coordination mechanisms to support the development of ecological networks and enhanced connectivity between protected sites whilst also addressing the need for management of alien invasive species and the conservation of native species
7.20	Promote the development of improved visitor experiences, nature conservation and sustainable development activities within the Dublin Bay Biosphere in cooperation with the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Partnership.
7.21	Local authorities shall promote an Ecosystem Services Approach in the preparation of statutory land use plans.
7.22	Local authority development plan and local area plans, shall identify, protect, enhance, provide and manage Green Infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner and should also have regard to the required targets in relation to the conservation of European sites, other nature conservation sites, ecological networks, and protected species.

No.	RPO
7.23	Support the further development of Green Infrastructure policies and coordinate the mapping of strategic Green Infrastructure in the Region.
7.26	Support the development of guidance for assessment of proposed land zonings in order to achieve appropriate riparian setback distances that support the attainment of high ecological status for waterbodies, the conservation of biodiversity and good ecosystem health, and buffer zones from flood plains.

A number of ‘strategic natural, cultural and green infrastructure assets’ in Fingal have been identified in the RSES as follows:

- Rockabill, Skerries Islands, Rogerstown Estuary, Malahide Estuary, Baldoyle Estuary, Ireland’s Eye, Lambay Island, Howth Head and Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Reserve;
- Beaches at Balbriggan, Loughshinny, Rush, Skerries, Portrane, Donabate, Malahide, Portmarnock and Claremont;
- Rivers Liffey, Tolka and Santry; and
- Ardgillan House and Gardens, Newbridge Demesne and Ward Valley Park.

3.8 Fingal Development Plan (2017 – 2023)

Fingal Development Plan (2017 – 2023) sets out the Council’s policies and objectives for the development of its administrative area to 2023. It seeks to develop and improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural assets of the area, in a manner that is sustainable and consistent with the national level policies. The Council is currently in the process of preparing its subsequent Development Plan, which is at draft / consultation stage and yet to be adopted.

The ‘strategic vision’ for the County set out in the Development Plan includes the aim to *“Protect Green Infrastructure and enhance Fingal’s natural resources of clean water, biodiversity, nature conservation areas, landscape, coastline, greenbelts, parks and open spaces, and agricultural land”* (p. 8). The ‘strategic policy’ of the Development Plan is centred around 25 main aims, including to *“Minimise the County’s contribution to climate change, and adapt to the effects of climate change, with particular reference to the areas of land use, energy, transport, water resources, flooding, waste management and biodiversity, and maximising the provision of green infrastructure including the provision of trees and soft landscaping solutions”* (no. 22) and *“Promote and maximise the benefits of quality of life, public health and biodiversity arising from implementation of policies promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation”* (no. 23) (p. 11).

Chapters 8 and 9 of the Development Plan deal with ‘green infrastructure’ and ‘natural heritage’, respectively. Chapter 9 sets out the Council’s statement of policy in relation to natural heritage as follows (p. 315):

- Conserve and enhance the County’s biodiversity.
- Conserve and enhance the County’s geological heritage.
- Promote a unified approach to landscape planning and management, provide an understanding of Fingal’s landscape in terms of its inherent and unique character and ensure that Fingal’s landscape is appropriately protected, managed and planned.
- Protect, enhance and sustainably manage the coastline and its natural resources.

In relation to floodplains, the Development Plan states that:

“A major function performed by floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding is to hold excess water until it can be released slowly back into a river system or the sea, or seep into the ground as a storm or tidal surge subsides. Floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding should, therefore, be recognised and preserved to the maximum extent possible, in both

urban and rural areas, as Green Infrastructure which provides a natural defence against flood risk.”
(p. 273)

The most pertinent objectives of the Development Plan are listed in **Table 3.4**, below.

Table 3.4: Relevant objectives of the Development Plan

No.	Objective
SS11	Promote opportunities for the enhancement and protection of biodiversity and natural heritage within the Greenbelt.
PORTMARNOCK 6	Protect and preserve the character and amenity of Portmarnock Beach, in view of its importance to the identity of the town and as an amenity for the domestic and foreign visitors, by protecting the beach from any development likely to adversely impact on water quality, integrity of the dunes ecosystem, biodiversity, visual amenity or excessive noise pollution while supporting activities or developments which would add to the amenity.
PORTRANE 6	Prepare a study to decide on the optimal future development of lands in The Burrow area, having regard to the local issues of coastal erosion, flooding, drainage and the significant landscape and biodiversity sensitivities in the area including a Flora Protection Order, Special Protection Area (SPA), Natural Heritage Area (NHA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and designated Ecological Buffer Zone.
BALBRIGGAN 7	Preserve and improve access to the harbour, beaches, seashore, and other coastal areas while protecting environmental resources including water, biodiversity and landscape sensitivities.
SW01	Protect and enhance the County’s floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding as vital green infrastructure which provides space for storage and conveyance of floodwater, enabling flood risk to be more effectively managed and reducing the need to provide flood defences in the future and ensure that development does not impact on important wetland sites within river / stream catchments.
WM19	Protect floodplains and biodiversity where construction and demolition waste is to be recovered by land reclamation.
GI02	Create an integrated and coherent green infrastructure for the County by requiring the retention of substantial networks of green space in urban, urban fringe and adjacent countryside areas to serve the needs of communities now and in the future including the need to adapt to climate change.
GI03	Develop the green infrastructure network to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, including the protection of European Sites, the provision of accessible parks, open spaces and recreational facilities (including allotments and community gardens), the sustainable management of water, the maintenance of landscape character including historic landscape character and the protection and enhancement of the architectural and archaeological heritage.
GI04	Seek a net gain in green infrastructure through the protection and enhancement of existing assets, through the provision of new green infrastructure as an integral part of the planning process, and by taking forward priority projects including those indicated on the Development Plan green infrastructure maps during the lifetime of the Development Plan.
GI08	Integrate the provision of green infrastructure with infrastructure provision and replacement, including walking and cycling routes, as appropriate, while protecting biodiversity and other landscape resources.
GI09	Increase public awareness in relation to green infrastructure in Fingal and its importance for communities and the local economy by publishing information and holding seminars and events.
GI25	Integrate provision for biodiversity with public open space provision and sustainable water management measures (including SuDS) where possible and appropriate.
GI31	Ensure the provision of new green infrastructure addresses the requirements of functional flood storage, the sustainable management of coastal erosion, and links with provision for biodiversity,

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No.	Objective
	Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and provision for parks and open space wherever possible and appropriate.
NH02	Integrate provision for biodiversity with public open space provision and sustainable water management measures (including SuDS) where possible and appropriate.
NH03	Implement the Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2015 and any revisions thereof in partnership with all relevant stakeholders.
NH04	Undertake necessary ecological surveys and complete habitat mapping for the County during the lifetime of the Plan, prioritising sensitive coastal areas.
NH05	Raise awareness in relation to biodiversity across the community
NH07	Actively support the aims and objectives of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 by encouraging bee keeping and other measures to protect and increase the population of bees and other pollinating insects in Fingal.
NH08	Ensure that the management of the Council's open spaces and parks is pollinator-friendly, provides more opportunities for biodiversity, and does not introduce or lead to the spread of invasive species.
NH09	Support the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, in the maintenance and, as appropriate, the achievement of favourable conservation status for the habitats and species in Fingal to which the Habitats Directive applies.
NH10	Ensure that the Council takes full account of the requirements of the Habitats and Birds Directives, as they apply both within and without European Sites in the performance of its functions.
NH11	Ensure that the Council, in the performance of its functions, takes full account of the objectives and management practices proposed in any management or related plans for European Sites in and adjacent to Fingal published by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.
NH12	Undertake field studies and map invasive species throughout the County and initiate control programs with all relevant stakeholders and landowners to control the key invasive species.
NH15	Strictly protect areas designated or proposed to be designated as Natura 2000 sites (i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs); also known as European sites) including any areas that may be proposed for designation or designated during the period of this Plan.
NH16	Protect the ecological integrity of proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna, and Habitat Directive Annex I sites.
NH18	Protect the functions of the ecological buffer zones and ensure proposals for development have no significant adverse impact on the habitats and species of interest located therein.
NH19	Develop Ecological Masterplans for the Rogerstown, Malahide and Baldoyle Estuaries focusing on their ecological protection and that of their surrounding buffer zones.
NH20	Maintain and/or enhance the biodiversity of the Nature Development Areas indicated on the Green Infrastructure maps.
NH21	Develop a demonstration site for each Nature Development Area.
NH22	Explore the development of a small grants scheme to assist landowners with the management of their lands within the ecological network for nature conservation purposes.
NH23	Protect the ecological functions and integrity of the corridors indicated on the Development Plan Green Infrastructure Maps.
NH24	Protect rivers, streams and other watercourses and maintain them in an open state capable of providing suitable habitat for fauna and flora, including fish.
NH25	Provide for public understanding of and public access to rivers, waterway corridors and wetlands, where feasible and appropriate, in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Waterways Ireland and other relevant stakeholders, while maintaining them free from inappropriate development and subject to Ecological Impact Assessment and screening for Appropriate Assessment as appropriate.

No.	Objective
NH27	Protect existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows which are of amenity or biodiversity value and/or contribute to landscape character and ensure that proper provision is made for their protection and management.
NH29	Promote, encourage and support NeighbourWood Schemes by identifying suitable areas and support other initiatives that aim to establish and enhance woodlands for recreational purposes in partnership with local communities.
NH48	Participate in and actively support the work of the Dublin Bay Biosphere Partnership.
NH53	Ensure the County's natural coastal defences, such as beaches, sand dunes, salt marshes and estuary lands, are protected and are not compromised by inappropriate works or development.
NH69	Protect the quality of designated shellfish waters off the Fingal coast.
NH70	Ensure that the Council, in the performance of its functions, complies with the requirements of the Shellfish Directive (2006/113/EC), statutory regulations pursuant to the Shellfish Directive and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's Pollution Reduction Programmes for the Balbriggan/Skerries Shellfish Area and the Malahide Shellfish Area.
DMS169	Implement planning guidelines for Nature Development Areas and corridors as outlined in the Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan.

3.9 Fingal Climate Change Action Plan (2019 – 2024)

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021 requires Local Authorities to prepare five-year Climate Action Plans setting out climate mitigation and adaptation measures. The *Fingal Climate Change Action Plan (2019 – 2024)* identifies impacts to biodiversity in Fingal from climate change risks including extreme weather events, sea level rise and flooding. It includes 113 actions across several themes, including nature-based solutions and flood resilience. Of these, the actions of greatest relevance are set out in **Table 3.5**, below.

Table 3.5: Relevant actions of the Fingal Climate Change Action Plan (2019 – 2024)

No.	Action
F5	Protect and conserve floodplains, wetlands and coastal areas subject to flooding through available policy instruments
F19 ⁶	Identify sites where flood defence features can be removed or relocated to increase flood capacity of rivers and estuaries
F20	Restore St Ita's wetlands to maximise water attenuation capacity and nature conservation benefits
N5	Engage with the agrifood sector to gain an understanding of how Fingal might better support more sustainable farming practices
N8	Identify sites for woodland planting that promotes an appropriate native species mix
N9	Map and protect strategic agricultural land for national food security purposes
N11	Develop a map of habitats and species at risk of climate change
N12	Develop a monitoring programme of the habitats and species considered at risk of climate change
N13	Prepare a climate proof biodiversity plan
N14	Support and promote National Biodiversity Data Centre All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Actions for Councils
N15	Increase pollinator areas in public parks and open spaces
N17	Prepare a heathland management plan for Howth with ecological input
N18	Prepare a fire management plan for heathland on Howth that includes environmental considerations
N19	Create multi-functional master plans for Rogerstown and Baldoyle Estuaries and their surroundings

⁶ Action awaiting budget at time of publication of Climate Change Action Plan

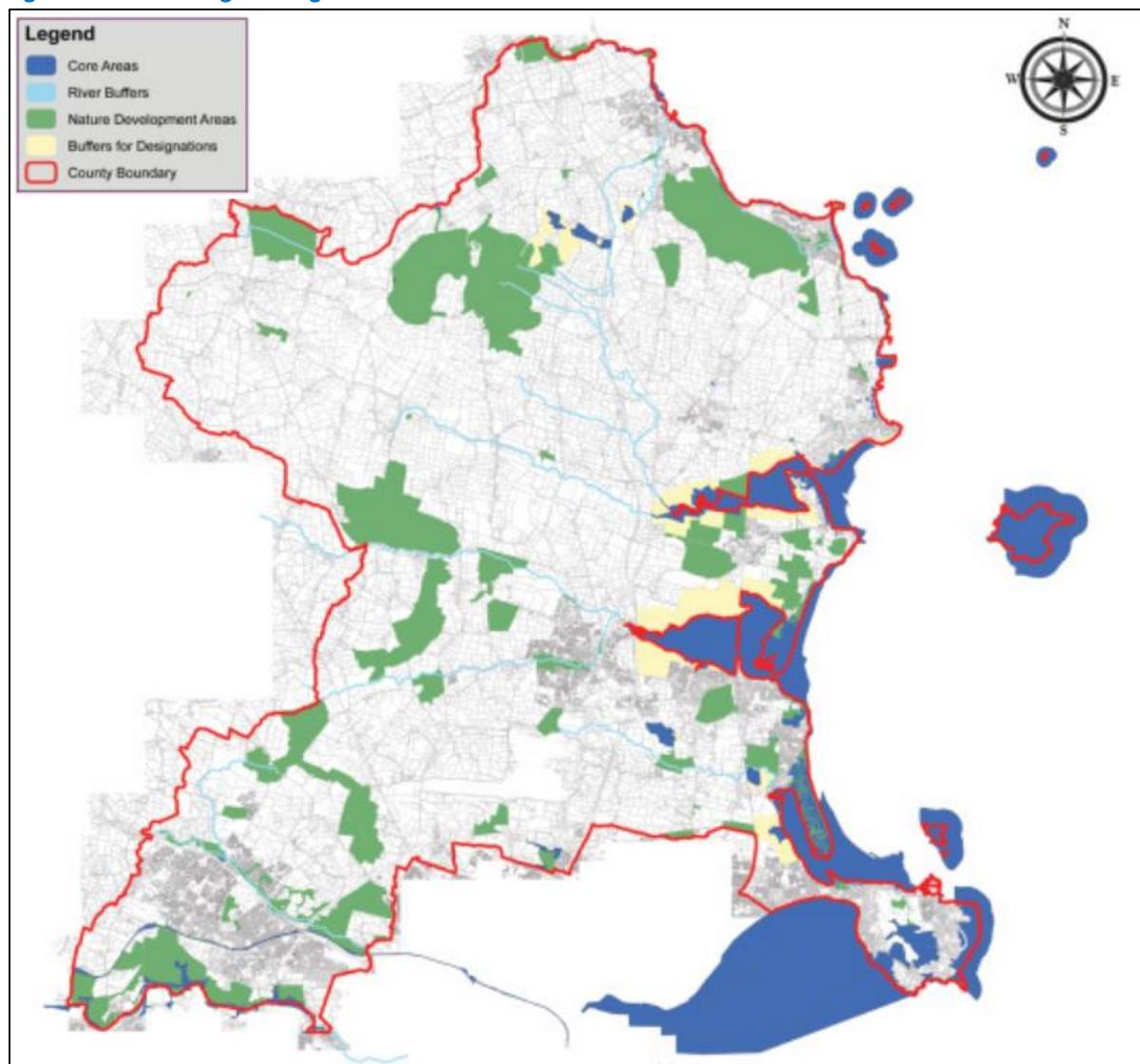
4 Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan (2022 – 2030)

The objectives of the *Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan (2022 – 2030)* are set out as follows:

- To develop and maintain the Fingal Ecological Network and increase the resilience of the network by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation
- Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
- To ensure that (inter)national targets for species and habitats are translated into effective conservation action at local level in Fingal
- To raise public awareness and encourage involvement in biodiversity action by the wider community
- To increase our knowledge and understanding of biodiversity and monitor impacts of biodiversity actions through ecological research

Under the scope of the Draft Plan, Fingal County Council has developed a c.13,120ha. Ecological Network (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Fingal Ecological Network



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The Ecological Network provides a spatial framework for biodiversity conservation and management in the administrative area. It comprises:

- Core nature conservation sites;
- Buffer zones around the core sites;
- Nature development areas; and
- Ecological corridors and stepping stones.

The Draft Plan sets out strategies in relation to the various elements of the Ecological Network as set out in **Table A1.1** in **Appendix 1**.

With a view to achieving the above-listed objectives, the Draft Plan sets out a list of 100 actions to promote the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the Local Authority area. These actions – and their corresponding key performance indicators (KPIs) – are listed in **Table A1.2** in **Appendix 1**. Of these actions, 32 have been identified as priority actions for implementation over the 2022 – 2030 period, as indicated in **Table A1.2** in **Appendix 1**. These actions have been prioritised with regard to existing project commitments, and are focussed on the following:

- The management of the Howth Head SAC and Rogerstown Estuary SAC and SPA;
- Making open space more biodiversity friendly;
- The implementation of the Tidy Towns Biodiversity Plans;
- The completion of ecological studies to inform the planning process and the County Development Plan; and
- Updating the Fingal Biodiversity website to disseminate the study reports and project information.

The remainder of the actions set out in the Draft Plan are proposed to be carried out as more staff and financial resources are made available for these purposes.

A discussion of the screening of the strategies and actions for SEA is also provided in **Table A1.1** and **Table A1.2** in **Appendix 1**.

5 Description of the Receiving Environment

At the time of the 2016 census, Fingal was the third most populous local authority in Ireland (after Dublin City and Cork County), with a total of 296,020 people. Between 2011 and 2016 the population in Fingal increased by 7.4% (22,029 persons). This was considerably higher than the national average growth rate of 3.8% for the same period. The population of Fingal is projected to increase to between 327,000 and 333,000 up to 2026.

Fingal has a rich archaeological and architectural heritage ranging from historic farmhouses and buildings, cottages and Martello towers to demesne houses and their designated landscapes. There are approx. 1,070 known archaeological sites and monuments in Fingal. The wealth of archaeological sites ranges from cairns and passage graves to medieval churches and castles. The towns of Swords, Balrothery and Lusk are of particular archaeological significance with very important medieval structures surviving intact above ground and the potential of archaeological finds below ground. These towns have zones of archaeological potential delineated by the National Monuments Section of the DEHLG around their cores to protect their significant archaeological heritage. There are six national monuments in Fingal: Baldongan Church and Tower, Balrothery Church Tower, Dunsoghly Castle, St Mary's Church / Abbey in Howth, Lusk Round Tower and Swords Castle.

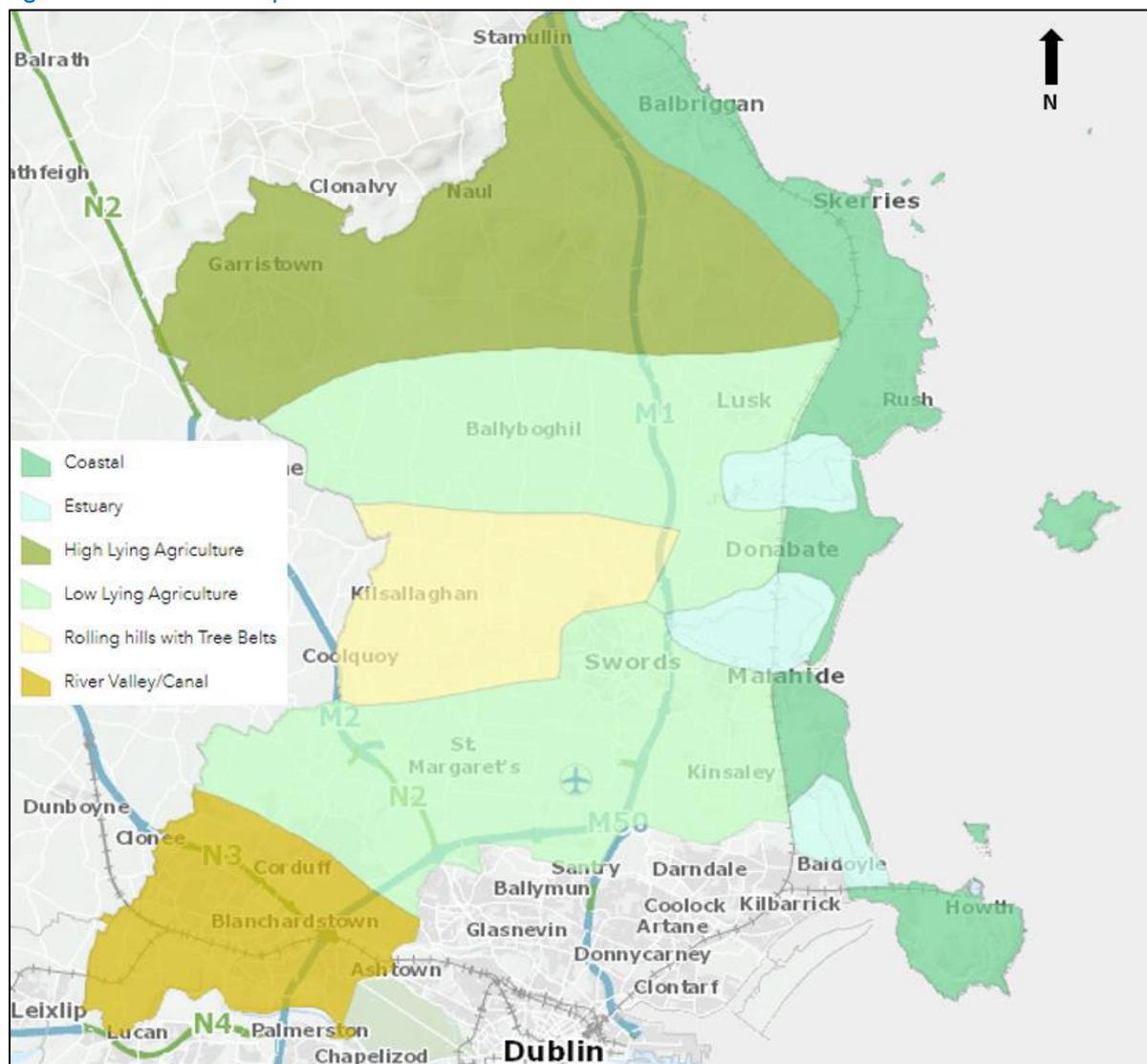
Fingal also has a diverse building stock, including protected structures and other buildings and structures of architectural heritage merit. This includes lighthouses; the 19th century railway stations; the Martello towers; holy wells; milestones; water-pumps and individual thatched buildings. There are 470 no. structures listed on the Record of Protected Structures and 32 no. Architectural Conservation Areas.

Agricultural land cover makes up the majority of the administrative area, with urban areas along the coast and along the northern fringe of Dublin City to the south. Rural Fingal's rich agricultural land is home to well-developed agriculture industries and centres of local food production. Agricultural activity in Fingal includes tillage of cereals and other crops, pasture and dairy. Quarrying and landfill activities are also present.

The landscape of Fingal is rich and varied, ranging from tranquil villages in rolling country landscape, picturesque seaside villages and rugged coastline to vibrant urban developments and historic towns. Fingal has been changing quite rapidly as a result of high levels of development to meet a growing population. The Landscape Character Assessment for the administrative area has classified seven landscape character areas: coastal area, estuary area, river valleys / canals area, airport and Swords area, high lying agricultural area, low lying agricultural area, and rolling hills with tree belts area. There are also a number of protected views and prospects in the administrative area, many of which take in views of high nature value / protected conservation areas.

FCC manages approximately 2,000ha of public open space and many public parks in the county have significant stands of woodland framing important and often iconic landscapes. Tree canopy cover across Fingal, which has predominantly rural land cover (74%) is estimated at 6.5%. There are 70,000 Council owned / managed trees in Fingal. Approximately 20% of the publicly owned open space within the county i.e. 400ha of land is occupied by woodland.

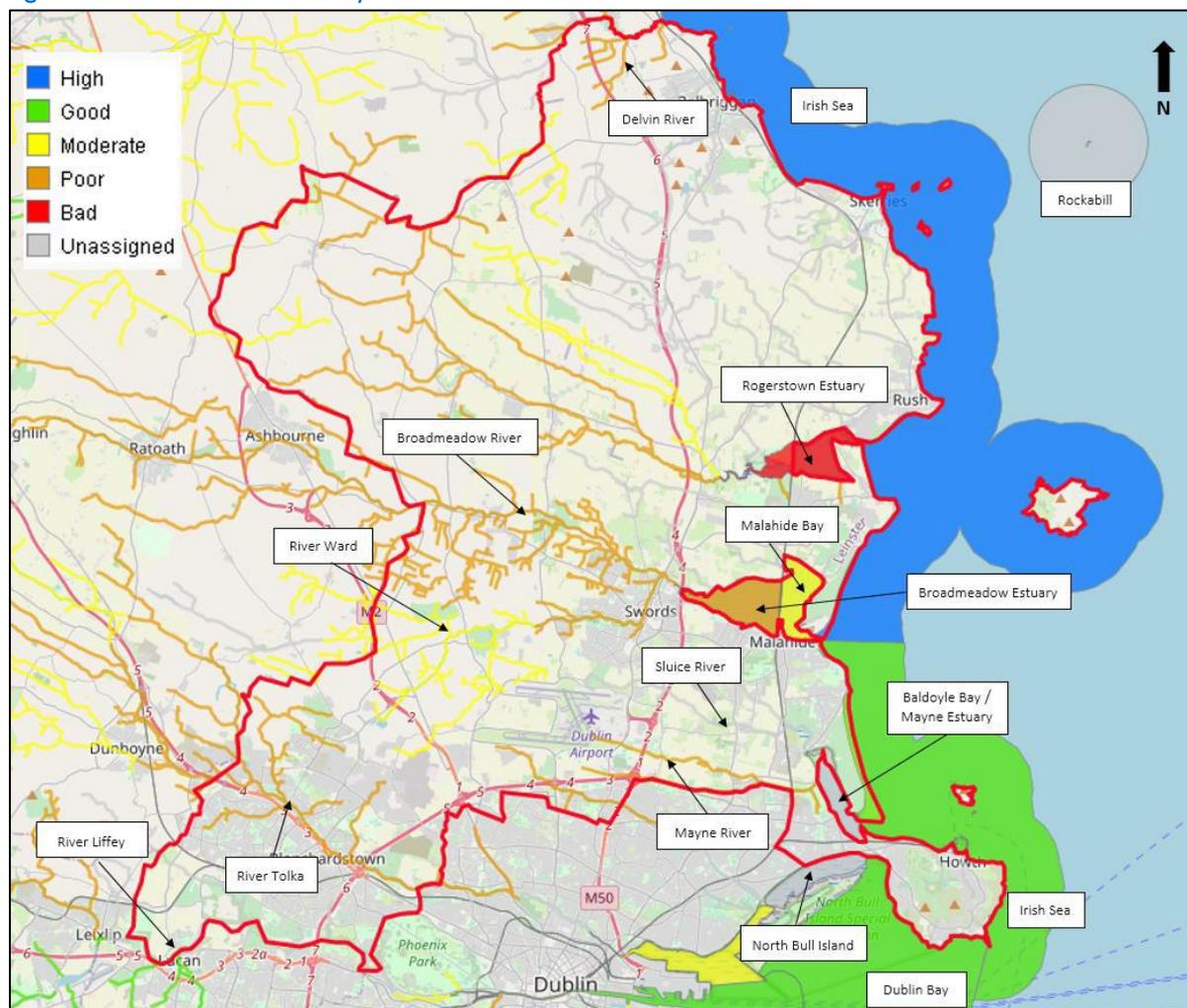
Figure 5.1: Landscape character areas in the Draft Plan area



The soil cover within Fingal is characterised by fine loamy drifts with limestones and siliceous stones. Clayey soils occur towards the north of Fingal. Urban / made ground is interspersed throughout the county, particularly along the coast and in the south of the county, reflecting settlement patterns. The coastal areas are by their nature characterised by the presence of rock outcroppings, beaches, sand dunes and tidal / marshy areas. Soils in the river valleys are comprised of riverine alluviums with marine alluviums deposited near the coast.

Fingal is traversed by a number of rivers and their tributaries including the River Liffey, River Tolka, River Ward, Broadmeadow River, Delvin River, Mayne River and Sluice River which are important fisheries and wildlife resources as well as being important for the ongoing provision of water services and for the management of flood risk. Other important river corridors include the River Matt, River Corduff, River Ballyboghil and River Santry. Fingal has no natural lakes. The status of the river waterbodies in the Plan area ranges from 'good' to 'poor' during the 2013-2018 monitoring period.

Figure 5.2: WFD waterbody status in the Draft Plan area



The Water Framework Directive (WFD) status of the transitional waterbodies in Fingal ranges from ‘bad’ to ‘poor’ during the 2013-2018 monitoring period, with Baldoyle Bay / Malahide Estuary transitional waterbody and North Bull Island transitional waterbody both unassigned during the same period. The transitional waterbodies in Fingal are:

- Rogerstown Estuary (Bad and ‘at risk of not achieving good status’)
- Broadmeadow Estuary (Poor and ‘at risk of not achieving good status’)
- Baldoyle Bay / Malahide Estuary (Unassigned and under review)
- North Bull Island (Unassigned and under review)

The WFD status of the coastal waterbodies in Fingal ranges from ‘high’ to ‘moderate’ during the 2013-2018 monitoring period, and therefore are listed as ‘Not at Risk’ by the EPA. The coastal waterbodies in Fingal are:

- North-western Irish Sea (High)
- Rockabill (Unassigned and under review)
- Malahide Bay (Moderate and ‘at risk of not achieving good status’)
- Irish Sea (Good)
- Dublin Bay (Good)

There are ten designated bathing waters along the Fingal coastline. The most recent report on bathing water quality ‘Bathing Water Quality in Ireland - A Report for the Year 2020’ sets out the status of Irish Seawater and Freshwater Bathing areas. The 2020 Annual Water Quality monitoring period results are:

- Balbriggan, Front Strand Beach (Poor)

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- Skerries, South Beach (Good)
- Loughshinny Beach (Sufficient)
- Rush, North Beach (Good)
- Rush, South Beach (Excellent)
- Portrane, the Brook Beach (Good)
- Donabate, Balcarrick Beach (Excellent)
- Portmarnock, Velvet Strand Beach (Excellent)
- Sutton, Burrow Beach (Excellent)
- Claremont Beach, Howth (Sufficient)

Fingal is susceptible to fluvial, pluvial, tidal / coastal and groundwater flooding.

Figure 5.3: Designated sites within and adjacent to the Draft Plan area

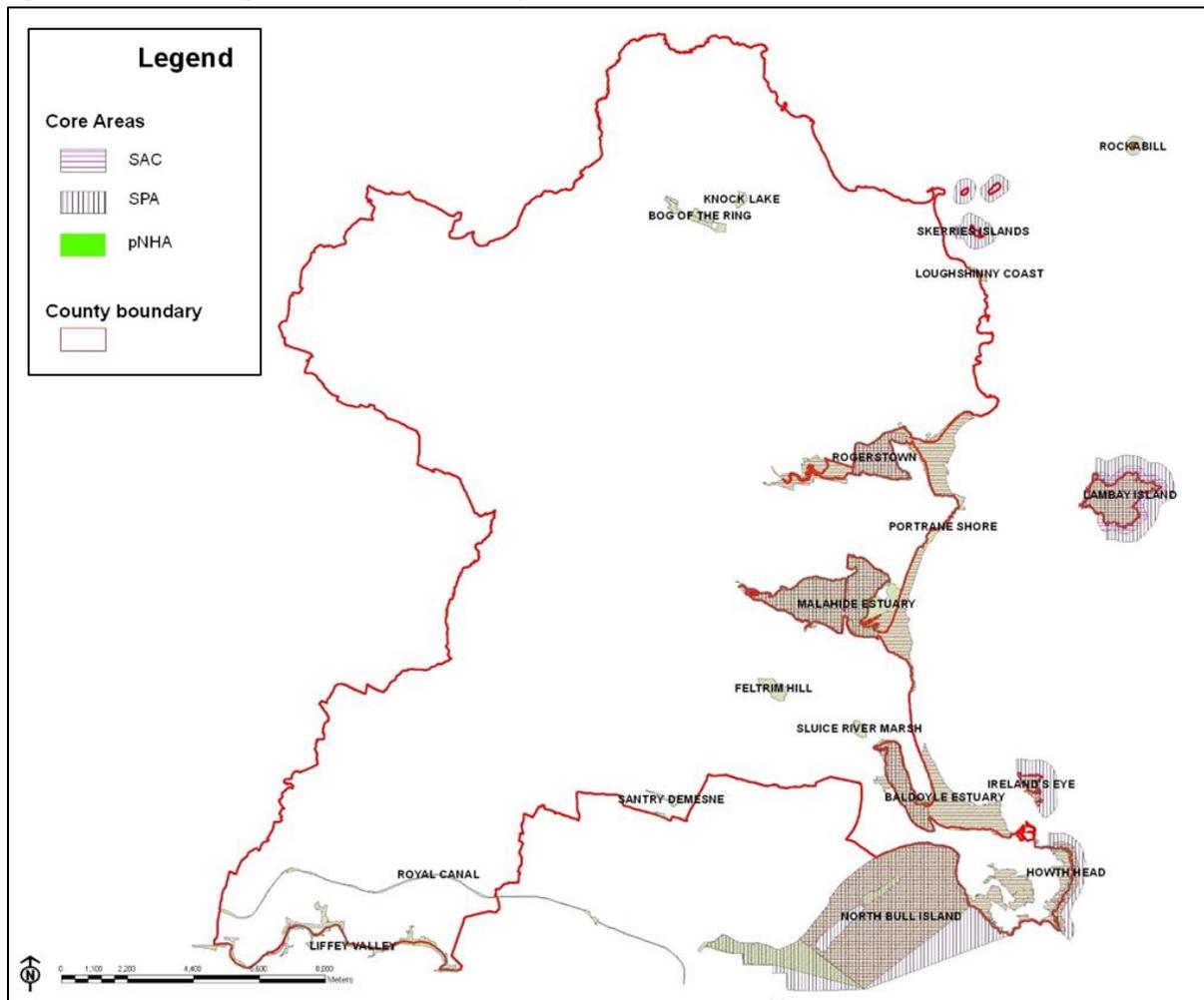


Table 5.1, below, provides an overview of nature conservation areas designated for protection under national and / or European provisions in the Local Authority area.

Table 5.1: Nationally and internationally designated nature conservation areas in Fingal

Location	SAC	SPA	pNHA	NHA	WFDRPA ⁷	Ramsar	SNR ⁸	RFF ⁹
Baldoyle Bay	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
North Bull Island	✓ ¹⁰	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Bog of the Ring			✓		✓			
Coding Fault Zone	✓ ¹¹							
Feltrim Hill			✓		✓			
Howth Head	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Ireland's Eye	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Lambay Island	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Knock Lake			✓		✓			
Liffey Valley			✓		✓			
Loughshinny Coast			✓		✓			
Malahide Estuary	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
North Dublin Bay	✓		✓		✓			
Portrairie / Portrane Shore			✓		✓			
Rockabill Island		✓	✓		✓			✓
Rockabill to Dalkey	✓							
Rogerstown Estuary	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Royal Canal			✓		✓			
Santry Demesne			✓		✓			
Skerries Islands		✓		✓	✓			
Sluice River Marsh			✓		✓			

There are 14 European sites within the administrative boundary of Fingal County Council:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
 - Rogerstown Estuary SAC
 - Malahide Estuary SAC
 - Baldoyle Bay SAC
 - Howth Head SAC
 - Lambay Island SAC
 - Ireland's Eye SAC
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
 - Rogerstown Estuary SPA
 - Malahide Estuary SPA
 - Baldoyle Bay SPA
 - Howth Head Coast SPA
 - Lambay Island SPA
 - Ireland's Eye SPA
 - Skerries Islands SPA
 - Rockabill SPA

There are further European sites outside of the administrative area of Fingal County Council, including the Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC and North Bull Island SPA.

According to the *National Biodiversity Action Plan (2017 – 2021)*, just over 15% of taxa (species, subspecies, varieties and forms) are under threat of extinction in Ireland. The most recent assessment of the habitats and species protected under the Habitats and Birds Directive (NPWS, 2019a; 2019b & 2019c) produced the following findings:

- 85% of protected habitats are in unfavourable (i.e. inadequate or bad) status, with just 15% in favourable status;

⁷ Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas site

⁸ Statutory Nature Reserve

⁹ Refuge for Fauna

¹⁰ Under North Dublin Bay SAC

¹¹ Marine SAC

- The overall status of protected habitats has remained largely unchanged from the previous assessments (in 2007 and 2013), with 46% of protected habitats in ongoing decline and just 2% improving;
- 30% of protected species (other than vagrants) are in unfavourable status; and
- 15% of protected species are exhibiting declining population trends in Ireland.

Key pressures and threats to protected habitats and species in Ireland include (but are not limited to) agriculture (particularly overgrazing, undergrazing, land abandonment and water pollution), invasive alien species, built development, resource extraction, forestry and direct extraction / cultivation of biological living resources (ibid.). In relation to biodiversity in Ireland more generally, the main threats and pressures are from agriculture, forestry, fisheries, natural system modifications (including drainage), resource extraction (including mining, quarrying and peat harvesting), climate change, pollution and invasive alien species.

In addition to the aforementioned, human disturbance is key threat in Fingal specifically, where a large human population interacts with a number of internationally and nationally important sites for wildlife, including wintering birds. The estuaries and islands, where thousands of birds winter and breed, are popular recreational amenities. The presence of humans and dogs can result in vigilance behaviour and / or flushing of birds, resulting in increased energetic costs, reduced time foraging and / or physiological effects related to chronic stress.

6 Screening for Requirement for SEA

The screening for the requirement for SEA has been conducted in accordance with the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011.

The criteria are set out under two principal headings:

- Characteristics of a Plan / Programme; and
- Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

The corresponding sub-criteria are addressed in **Tables 6.1** and **6.2**, below, respectively.

A discussion of the screening for SEA of the strategies and actions in the Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 - 2030 is also provided in **Table A1.1** and **Table A1.2** in **Appendix 1**.

Table 6.1: Characteristics of the Plan / Programme, having regard, in particular, to:

<p>6.1.1 The degree to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions, or by allocating resources</p>
<p>The Draft Plan is not a statutory land use plan. As a Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan, the need for which arises under the <i>National Biodiversity Action Plan (2017 – 2021)</i>. Through the Fingal Ecological Network, the Draft Plan establishes a spatial framework for the targeted conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the administrative area. The Draft Plan also establishes a framework of actions and corresponding KPIs for the achievement of its objectives. The actions propose a range of projects and other activities including but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of management plans / Masterplans for the Rogerstown inner and outer estuaries (No. 1), Howth Head SAC and SPA (No. 2), Malahide Estuary SAC and SPA (No. 13), Baldoyle Bay SAC and SPA (No. 14), Tolka Valley Park (No. 15), Ward River Valley Park (No. 16), Mayne River Park (No. 17). • Preparation of biodiversity plans for golf courses (No. 6) and quarries (No. 30). • Conservation, restoration and / or wilding projects, including Little Tern and Ringed Plover conservation at Portrane (No. 7); wetland and river restoration at the Bog of Ring and Matt River corridor (No. 44); restoration of St. Ita’s wetland (No. 45), wilding of FCC owned lands at Corballis Golf Club (No. 54); restoration of oysterbeds, shellfish beds, seagrass beds and kelp stands (No. 58); and various agri-environmental actions (No. 60 – 65) • Preparation of guidance and policy documents, including for nesting facilities in building façades (No. 31), hedgerow management (No. 32), biodiversity net gain (No. 35) and pesticide use (No. 39). • Organisation of conferences and other events, including a national wilding conference (No. 56) and monthly walks, talking and outings (No. 94). • Commissioning and support of various surveys and studies, including satellite tracking of winter birds (No. 66) and harbour porpoise (No. 76); surveys of rare and protected coastal flora (No. 68); otter survey (No. 69); urban bird and bat survey (No. 70); an assessment of the status of Annex I habitats outside of Designated Sites (No. 74); fungi surveys in Turvey, Luttrellstown, Knockmaroon, Santry and Malahide Demesne (No. 84) and ecotoxicological surveys on farmland (No. 90). • Development of a Nature Education Centre in Turvey Nature Park (No. 95). <p>No developments are proposed under the scope of the Draft Plan that would entail major construction or civil works. Action No. 95 proposes the development of a Nature Education Centre in Turvey Nature Park. It is understood that it is planned to accommodate this centre in existing buildings in the park. This planned development, if progressed, would be the subject of an application for development consent to the Competent Authority, with EIA and AA completed, where required. In order to restore the functionality of natural floodplains, it is also proposed (under the scope of Actions No. 1 and 49) to remove flood embankments in certain areas (e.g. at the Rogerstown Estuary). Any such works carried out will be subject to the relevant assessments, including Flood Risk Assessment, ensuring no buildings or infrastructure are negatively affected. It is also proposed to remove two existing roads from St. Ita’s wetland under the scope of restoration efforts (Action No. 45). Any such works will be carried out a manner that avoids / minimises adverse environmental effects, with environmental assessments carried out, where appropriate.</p> <p>The Draft Plan allocates resources insofar as it identifies priority actions for delivery within the timeframe of the Draft Plan, and others proposed to be carried out as more staff and financial resources are made available. It also sets out a number of actions related to the investigation of funding models for different projects and activities, e.g. in relation to wetland and woodland carbon offsetting (No. 72). The Plan, once adopted, will be a non-statutory Plan to be implemented by Fingal County Council.</p>

6.1.2 The degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy

In the context of global, European, national, regional and local plans; the Draft Plan is at a low level in the hierarchy of plans. The key related plans and policy documents are highlighted in **Section 3**, above. The Draft Plan will result in the drafting of a number of lower level plans. The actions set out in the Draft Plan call for the implementation of / preparation of / input to various plans, as follows:

- Masterplan for Rogerstown Estuary (Inner)
- Masterplan for Rogerstown Estuary (Outer)
- Management Plan for Howth Head SAC and SPA
- SAAO Operational Plan for Howth Head SAAO
- Dublin Bay Biosphere Nature Conservation Strategy
- Dublin Bay Biosphere Education & Awareness Strategy
- Management plans for key wintering bird sites identified in satellite tagging programme
- Biodiversity plans for golf courses
- Masterplan for Malahide Estuary SAC and SPA
- Masterplan for Baldoyle Bay SAC and SPA
- Masterplan for Tolka Valley Park
- Masterplan for Ward River Valley Park
- Masterplan for linear park on Mayne River
- Management plans for regional parks in Fingal
- Biodiversity plans for quarries
- Tidy Towns Biodiversity Action Plans
- Urban greening plans for Dublin 15, Swords and Balbriggan
- Woodland management plans in Fingal demesnes and parks
- Masterplans for woodlands at St. Catherine’s Park and Ardgillan Demesne

The adoption and implementation of the final version of the Plan will support the implementation / objectives of various plans and policies at higher levels in the planning hierarchy, including but not limited to:

- EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
- National Biodiversity Action Plan (2017 – 2021)
- Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019)
- All Ireland Pollinator Plan (2021 – 2025)

6.1.3 The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development

The *Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan (2022 – 2030)* is of direct relevance to the integration of environmental considerations – specifically in relation to biodiversity conservation and enhancement – in the Fingal administrative area. Its objectives are as follows:

- To develop and maintain the Fingal Ecological Network and increase the resilience of the network by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation
- Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
- To ensure that (inter)national targets for species and habitats are translated into effective conservation action at local level in Fingal
- To raise public awareness and encourage involvement in biodiversity action by the wider community
- To increase our knowledge and understanding of biodiversity and monitor impacts of biodiversity actions through ecological research

The Draft Plan contains a range of actions that will promote environmentally sustainable development in the Fingal administrative area, including but not limited to the following:

- No. 31: Prepare planning & design guidance for incorporating nesting facilities in building facades
- No. 32: Prepare guidance document and training on quality rating and management prescription of hedgerows in open space for FCC Operations and developers
- No. 33: Prepare promotional guidance on how to incorporate biodiversity in development and infrastructure projects
- No. 34: Prepare planning and design guidance for ecological corridors
- No. 35: Prepare planning and design guidance on net biodiversity gain
- No. 36: Organise a conference on Building for Biodiversity/Nature inclusive design
- No. 37: Pilot a biodiversity inclusive design for a social housing estate with green roofs, green walls, wetland & pond SUDS, green carparking, nest boxes in facades, wildflower meadows and wildlife friendly shrubs and trees in open space
- No. 38: All Council housing, parks and infrastructure projects to include biodiversity enhancement proposals

Many of the actions relate to information gathering / research that can help to inform evidence-based decision making and geographically targeted conservation efforts in Fingal and elsewhere – and not solely under the scope of the adopted Biodiversity Action Plan but also on the part of Fingal County Council and decision makers more generally.

6.1.4 Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme

Environmental problems of greatest relevance to the Draft Plan are as follows:

- Biodiversity and habitat loss / deterioration, including in relation to species and sites protected under national and European provisions; and associated loss of ecosystem services and functions (e.g. outdoor amenity, public health benefits, natural heritage)
- Water quality problems
- Flooding
- Climate change (mitigation and adaptation)
- Deterioration of soil quality

The Draft Plans includes a range of actions to address drivers of the above-listed environmental problems, including but not limited to:

- Loss of floodplain / river basin functionality
- Disturbance of wildlife by humans / dogs and other recreational pressures
- Land use / land management changes
- Development and / or failure to integrate environmental considerations into development
- Introduction and spread of invasive alien species
- Deforestation
- Agrochemical and rodenticide use

6.1.5 The relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection)

The Draft Plan is of relevance to the implementation of European Union legislation, particularly the following:

- Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds ('the Birds Directive')
- Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ('the Habitats Directive')

- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011), as amended
- Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy ('the Water Framework Directive')
- European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722/2003), as amended
- Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy ('the Marine Strategy Framework Directive')
- European Communities (Marine Strategy Framework) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 249/2011), as amended
- Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks ('the Floods Directive')
- European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 122/2010), as amended
- Directive 2006/113/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on the quality required of shellfish waters ('the Shellfish Waters Directive')
- European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations 2006 (S.I. No. 268/2006), as amended

Table 6.2: Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:

6.2.1 The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects
<p>All of the actions (and corresponding KPIs) set out in the Draft Plan have been conceived with a view to conserving and / or enhancing biodiversity in the Local Authority area. As such, the environmental effects of the adoption and implementation of the Plan are likely to be overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>This fact notwithstanding, there remains the possibility that measures implemented for the conservation or enhancement of one habitat or species can have unintended neutral or negative impacts on non-target habitats or species and / or other aspects of the receiving environment. The actions of the Draft Plan have been reviewed with regard to the potential for unintended negative environment effects and it is considered that there is no real likelihood of significant negative environmental effects occurring as result of the implementation of the Draft Plan.</p> <p>The significance, duration, frequency and reversibility of effects will vary between the different actions proposed and the aspects of the receiving environment affected. For instance, actions such as No. 11 – “Organise clean up of mudflats in Malahide Estuary once a year [To remove rubbish from the mudflats]” – may be expected to result in <i>not significant to slight, temporary to short-term, reversible, positive</i> effects (in this case, occurring on an annual basis)¹². Other actions call for more involved ecological restoration projects (e.g. river restoration, floodplain restoration and / or wildling efforts) that may be expected to result in more significant and long-lasting (positive) effects in relation to biodiversity, water quality, flood risk, climate and / or soils.</p>
6.2.2 The cumulative nature of the effects
<p>The implementation of the adopted Plan will result in the implementation of 32 priority actions (refer to Appendix 1) and potentially additional actions of the 100 no. set out in the Draft Plan (subject to the future allocation of funding and human resources), all of which are likely to result in positive or neutral environmental</p>

¹² As per the criteria set out in the EPA *Draft Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports* (2017)

<p>effects. The likely net (cumulative) effect of the implementation of these actions on biodiversity in the Fingal administrative area is significant and positive.</p>
<p>6.2.3 The trans-boundary nature of the effects</p>
<p>The Fingal County Council administrative area is not located on or near the border with Northern Ireland and, as such, no transboundary effects (other than positive climate effects that are, by nature, transboundary) are predicted to occur.</p>
<p>6.2.4 The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)</p>
<p>There are no actions set out in the Draft Plan whose implementation would significantly increase the risk to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents) relative to the baseline. On the contrary, certain actions of the Draft Plan – particularly those promoting ecosystem restoration – may be expected to enhance to a certain degree the regenerative / buffering capacity and climate resilience of the receiving environment in the Local Authority area, thereby reducing vulnerability to accidents and extreme events such as flooding, drought, storms and accidental pollution events.</p>
<p>6.2.5 The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)</p>
<p>The adoption and implementation of the Draft Plan is expected to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity across the Fingal administrative area, with a spatial focus on the Ecological Network illustrated in Figure 4.1. Because many of the target species of the Draft Plan’s actions are mobile – particularly the migratory bird species – positive effects may also be expected to accrue to populations of target species whose ranges extend outside of the administrative area.</p>
<p>6.2.6 The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:</p>
<p>(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage</p>
<p>As outlined in Section 5, there are numerous natural and cultural heritage assets in the Fingal County Council administrative area. These include 14 European / Natura 2000 sites within the administrative area; including the Baldoyle Bay SAC / SPA, Howth Head SAC / SPA, Malahide Estuary SAC / SPA and Rogerstown Estuary SAC / SPA, among others (and with further such sites connected to the area and in the surrounding areas). The <i>Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan (2022 – 2030)</i>, and its objectives and actions, have been conceived to support the conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity in the administrative area. The implementation of the adopted Plan is expected to give rise to positive or neutral effects only in this regard. Therefore, it is considered that the Draft Plan will support the conservation of the ‘special natural characteristics’ of the study area.</p> <p>There is not expected to be major interaction between the implementation of the Draft Plan and the cultural heritage resource (i.e. archaeology and built heritage). As discussed in Table 6.1, above (under Item 6.1.1), no developments are proposed under the scope of the Draft Plan that would entail major construction or civil works. There may be limited groundworks, e.g. the localised removal of flood embankments. There is very limited potential for the occurrence of effects on recorded or unrecorded cultural heritage.</p> <p>It is understood that the planned Nature Education Centre in Turvey Nature Park is to be incorporated into existing building(s) on the site – an old dairy and barns, none of which are of architectural heritage merit or protected structures. Any works arising from the implementation of the Draft Plan shall be carried out in accordance with relevant legislative provisions (including,</p>

where relevant, the Planning and Development Acts, 2000, as amended; the Heritage Act, 1995; the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997; the National Monuments Act, 1930, as amended; and the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1999).

(b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values

As outlined in **Section 5**, there are a number of water bodies in the Fingal administrative area that are failing or at risk of failing to achieve good ecological status under the scope of WFD monitoring, including the following:

- Numerous watercourses with ‘poor’ ecological status during the 2013 – 2018 WFD cycle and / or at risk of not achieving good status, including the Broadmeadow, Tolka, Ballyboghil and Ward Rivers;
- ‘Bad’ ecological status in the Rogerstown Estuary during the 2013 – 2018 WFD cycle; and
- ‘Poor’ ecological status in the Broadmeadow Estuary during the 2013 – 2018 WFD cycle.

Additionally, Balbriggan has been assigned ‘poor’ bathing water quality under the scope of the 2020 annual water quality monitoring.

The Draft Plan contains a number of actions that include improved water quality status as specific KPIs, including:

- No. 15: Prepare and implement masterplan for Tolka Valley Park
- No. 16: Prepare and implement masterplan for Ward River Valley Park
- No. 17: Prepare and implement masterplan for the linear park along the Mayne River together with Dublin City Council
- No. 44: Prepare wetland and river restoration project for the Bog of the Ring and the Matt river corridor
- No. 46: Develop SUDS demonstration sites in the Tolka Valley, Ward River Valley, Balbriggan town Park and Rogerstown estuary
- No. 50: Prepare river restoration project for the Ballyboughal river and implement on FCC lands and acquire lands where necessary

The above-listed actions are also likely to contribute to water quality improvements in the downstream receiving waterbodies, including the Rogerstown and Broadmeadow Estuaries.

Additionally, Actions No. 85 and 91 are to “Carry out an ecological study and habitat assessment of the Ballyboughal, Mayne, Sluice and Matt rivers” and “Carry out ecological study of the large open water bodies and reservoirs in Fingal”, respectively.

Therefore, the implementation of the adopted Plan is likely to result in positive water quality impacts. No likely significant negative effects are predicted to occur in relation to the aforementioned waterbodies or any other aspects of the environment where standards or limit values are exceeded.

(c) intensive land-use

As discussed in **Section 5**, Fingal has a high population, which creates high demand for recreation, agriculture and development (and relatively intensive land use overall) in the context of an area containing numerous high nature value sites, including sites that support species sensitive to disturbance from humans and dogs.

The strategy of the Draft Plan in relation to disturbance from humans and dogs is to:

- Map and protect key roosting and feeding sites for migratory birds and for breeding seabirds on the islands (e.g. Action No. 66)
- Acquire lands near the estuaries and manage these for migratory birds to provide undisturbed roosting and feeding sites (e.g. Action Nos. 1, 13 and 14)
- Continue to support Little Tern conservation scheme on beach and identify other nesting sites for Terns (e.g. Action No. 7)

The Draft Plan contains a range of actions (Nos. 59 – 65) to promote more environmentally sustainable farming practices in Fingal, including to “Develop a 400ha demonstration Agri-Environment EIP Scheme with local farmers in Fingal targeting farmland birds and habitats and water quality improvement measures” (No. 61).

It also contains actions to promote more biodiversity friendly development in the administrative area, including but not limited to:

- No. 31: Prepare planning & design guidance for incorporating nesting facilities in building facades
- No. 32: Prepare guidance document and training on quality rating and management prescription of hedgerows in open space for FCC Operations and developers
- No. 33: Prepare promotional guidance on how to incorporate biodiversity in development and infrastructure projects
- No. 34: Prepare planning and design guidance for ecological corridors
- No. 35: Prepare planning and design guidance on net biodiversity gain
- No. 36: Organise a conference on Building for Biodiversity/Nature inclusive design
- No. 37: Pilot a biodiversity inclusive design for a social housing estate with green roofs, green walls, wetland & pond SUDS, green carparking, nest boxes in facades, wildflower meadows and wildlife friendly shrubs and trees in open space
- No. 38: All Council housing, parks and infrastructure projects to include biodiversity enhancement proposals

Therefore, the implementation of the adopted Plan is likely to result in positive and / or neutral biodiversity impacts in terms of the management of land use in the administrative area. The Draft Plan is not likely to give rise to any significant negative impacts in this regard, but rather will serve to address these existing pressures negatively affecting biodiversity in the area.

6.2.7 The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status

As outlined in **Section 5**, above, there are a number of high nature value sites that have been recognised and / or protected at multilateral, European Union or national levels (refer to **Table 5.1**). Of these, specific actions are set out in the Draft Plan in relation to:

- Baldoyle Bay (SAC, SPA, pNHA, WFDRPA, Ramsar, SNR) – Nos. 14, 52
- Bog of the Ring (pNHA, WFDRPA) – No. 44
- Howth Head (SAC, SPA, pNHA, WFDRPA) – Nos. 2, 3, 12
- Liffey Valley (pNHA, WFDRPA) – Nos. 19 – 21, 24
- Malahide Estuary (SAC, SPA, pNHA, WFDRPA, Ramsar) – Nos. 11, 13, 28, 29
- Portraine / Portrane Shore (pNHA, WFDRPA) – Nos. 7, 8, 25, 26
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC – No. 76
- Rogerstown Estuary (SAC, SPA, pNHA, WFDRPA, Ramsar, SNR) – Nos. 1, 9, 46, 52
- Royal Canal (pNHA, WFDRPA) – Nos. 19, 20
- Santry Demesne (pNHA, WFDRPA) – No. 84
- Skerries Islands (SPA, NHA, WFDRPA) – No. 86

- Sluice River Marsh (pNHA, WFDRPA) – Nos. 27, 85

Additionally, the entirety of Dublin Bay has been recognised for its nature value by way of its designation as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Action No. 4 is to *“Support implementation of Dublin Bay Biosphere Nature Conservation Strategy, Education & Awareness strategy”*.

The above-listed actions have been conceived to support the conservation and / or enhancement of the sites in question, including in relation to the Conservation Objectives of the various European / Natura 2000 sites. It is considered that the adoption and implementation of the Draft Plan is likely to result in positive effects on the above-listed sites. No significant negative effects are likely to occur as a result of the Draft Plan.

An AA Screening Report is being prepared in respect of the Draft Plan, and shall be submitted to the competent authority.

7 Recommendation on Requirement for SEA

The *Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan (2022 – 2030)* is not a statutory land use plan. It is a Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan, as required under the *National Biodiversity Action Plan (2017 – 2021)*, which establishes a framework for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the Fingal County Council administrative area. The Draft Plan sets out 100 actions (32 of which are priority actions for implementation over the stated policy period) to this effect.

As a non-statutory plan, the Draft Plan has being screened for the requirement for SEA under the requirements of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011. The Draft Plan has been considered in respect of the SEA screening criteria set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, and the results of this exercise are set out in **Section 6** of this report. It is considered, on the basis of this exercise, that the implementation of the Draft Plan has no real likelihood of having likely significant negative effects on the environment.

On the contrary, the implementation of the Draft Plan is considered likely to have positive effects in relation to at least the following aspects of the environment in the Fingal administrative area:

- Biodiversity, including habitats, species and sites protected under national and European provisions;
- Water quality;
- Flood risk;
- Climate change (mitigation and adaptation);
- Population and human health (e.g. in relation to amenity and public health); and
- Soil quality.

It is, therefore, recommended that the competent authority reach a determination that **the Draft Plan is not likely to have significant negative effects on the environment and, therefore, that SEA is not required.**

Consultation on this conclusion has been undertaken with the SEA environmental authorities and comments / points raised in submissions / observations received have been considered and informed the preparation of this report.

In accordance with Article 9(7) of S.I. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. 200 of 2011, Fingal County Council will notify the SEA environmental authorities of its Determination that SEA is not required, and place a copy of its Determination on public display together with this SEA Screening Report and associated documentation relating to the *Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan (2022 – 2030)*.

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Appendix 1: Strategy & List of Draft Actions

Table A1.1 Strategy of the Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan in relation to the Fingal Ecological Network

Element	Component	Strategy
Core sites	Designated Sites	<p>The emphasis for the next 8 years will be to restore internationally and nationally designated sites to favourable condition by improving the habitat and water quality and enlarging the designated sites where possible. Management plans for Howth Head and the estuaries (including their surrounding buffer zones) shall be prepared by Fingal County Council in conjunction with landowners and other stakeholders. The most appropriate land use, nature conservation goals and development of recreational infrastructure within each of the sites shall be worked out in greater detail in these plans. Particular focus shall be on the Rogerstown Estuary, Malahide Estuary, Howth Head and the Bog of the Ring as they are most in need of restoration measures. Fingal County Council will also seek to acquire privately owned lands in and around the designated sites, particularly where the lands have potential for wetland restoration. The Council may also lease lands to facilitate sympathetic land management for designated species.</p> <p>Where development is proposed in or near designated sites strict procedures are to be followed as set out in article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive to ensure that the conservation objectives established for each Special Area of Conservation and Special Protection Area are not compromised.</p>
	Annex I habitats outside Designated Sites	<p>The protection of the dune habitats, cliffs and associated petrifying springs will be the focus of the works related to Annex I species outside the designated areas. The County Council shall encourage golf course managers to protect and expand the Annex I habitats within their courses by developing Biodiversity Plans for golf courses together with the golf clubs. A hydrological study is to be undertaken of all petrifying springs in the county and the surrounding landscape to gain a better understanding of the current flow of water to the spring and to identify potential threats in the future. The County Council shall develop targeted awareness campaigns and invasive species removal projects to protect the vegetation at the top of the cliffs from herbicide spraying and dumping.</p> <p>Where development is proposed in or near Annex I Habitats, the development will have to demonstrate that it will have no significant adverse impact on the habitats of interest in these areas and their ecological integrity.</p>
	Marine inshore waters	<p>A feasibility study is to be undertaken to identify how a voluntary Marine Protection Area or no-take zone between Lambay and Howth could be established, which stakeholders are to be involved and what key issues should be addressed in a management plan for this inshore area. The study would also determine to what extent Oysterbeds, shellfish beds, seagrass beds and kelp forests can be restored and what practical steps are required to deliver these projects. A cost benefit analysis shall also be part of the study to compare the value of the fisheries with the potential</p>

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Element	Component	Strategy
		<p>value of nature based solutions to improve the water quality and to create a healthier and more resilient marine ecosystem. Funding models for such a project are also to be explored in more detail such as an aqua-environment scheme and funding streams associated with Blue carbon capture.</p>
Buffer zones	Sites with nationally protected and rare plant species	<p>The County Council will continue its search for rare and protected flora and monitor the populations at known sites. The survey effort shall focus on the FPO listed species and the Red data book species. Further studies shall be carried out on sites that are suspected to be of historic or current ecological interest, to establish the occurrence and distribution of other plants that are locally and nationally rare and threatened.</p> <p>Comprehensive management plans will be drawn up together with landowners for sites with rare and protected species. These plans will take account of the current conservation status of the plant species and its habitat, and if practicable a list of conservation actions will be drawn-up. The preparation of biodiversity plans for the links courses is particularly relevant given the prevalence of rare and protected species in the dunes at Portmarnock, Donabate, Portrane and Rush.</p> <p>Where development is proposed on sites with legally protected or nationally rare plant species, the development will have to demonstrate that it will have no significant adverse impact on the plant species or its habitat.</p>
Nature development areas	Farmland	<p>The Council wants to work with local farmers to develop demonstration plots or groups of farms to promote wildlife and environmental enhancement works. The purpose behind the demonstration farms is to explore the range of habitat improvement measures and agri-environment possibilities on a farm, explore the costs associated with these measures, study the wildlife effects and provide a cost-benefit analysis. These measures could provide the basis for</p>

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Element	Component	Strategy
		<p>an EIP agri-environment scheme bid or Council run agri-environment scheme if this is of interest to local farmers. The key topics for agri-environment measures would focus on soil health, natural pest control, minimum tillage, winter cover crops, water (quality) management, habitat strips along field margins, hedgerow management, reducing rodenticide & pesticide use and species specific conservation measures for Grey Partridge, Yellow Hammer, Tree Sparrow, Stock Dove, Red Kite, Kestrel and Barn owl.</p> <p>It should be noted that the results of any agri-environment schemes can't have any negative consequences for the farmers involved. In other words, participation in these schemes and managing habitats for rare or protected species shall not lead to tighter regulations or restrictions on farming activity. Such guarantees will be provided in writing to participating farmers.</p> <p>The Nature Development Areas are the focus and search areas for demonstration farms and possible agri-environment schemes. Where development is proposed within the farmland nature development area, the local authority will request the applicants to retain existing natural features as much as possible, but no specific additional measures are requested from the applicant.</p>
	Demesnes	<p>Fingal County Council will develop ecological management plans and woodland management plans for the demesnes that it manages. Woodland management plans shall be prepared to address the ecological, historical, and recreational issues and opportunities present on the site and provide detailed management recommendations to guide the woodland management efforts over the next 20 years. The woodland management works shall be carried out in small-scale operations, to allow for natural processes and succession to take place. This will result in diverse woodlands that are attractive to wildlife and to the visitor. The County Council will also explore the possibilities of grazing in the public demesnes and facilitate farmers to take hay from these parks.</p> <p>On private estates Fingal County Council will make grant funding available for estate owners to develop woodland management plans and ecological management plans. The landowner shall decide what is possible and what is not. Where development is proposed within the private demesnes, the County Council shall require the applicant to prepare an ecological management plan as outlined in Appendix XV [of the Draft Plan].</p>
	Golf courses	<p>The County Council will work with golf course managers and their members to develop and implement ecological management plans for most golf courses by 2030. The initial focus will be on the links courses along the coast and the golf courses in the Liffey Valley as they hold most of the legally protected plant species in the County.</p>

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Element	Component	Strategy
		<p>Where development is proposed in existing golf courses, the County Council will request the applicants to prepare an ecological management plan if not already in existence and retain existing natural features, particularly Annex I habitats or legally protected as outlined in Appendix XV [of the Draft Plan].</p>
	Parkland and open space	<p>Fingal County Council will undertake ecological studies of each regional park and large open space and will determine the opportunities for habitat enhancement and habitat creation. The focus in the management strategies will be on the preservation and management of hedgerows and creating wildflower meadows, copses of trees & shrubs, and low maintenance herbaceous planting schemes. Pond and other wetland features can be added to the wettest parts of the open spaces and/or where SUDS are required.</p> <p>Public consultation will play an important role in the change of management of the parks and open spaces. This will ensure that local people can express their ideas and concerns for the parks in their locality and will keep them informed of upcoming developments.</p> <p>Where park development or other infrastructural works are planned to take place in the parkland by the County Council or third parties, the habitats of good ecological quality and habitats of legally protected or locally rare species shall be avoided. All projects shall ensure no nett loss of biodiversity, and where possible will achieve a nett gain of biodiversity.</p> <p>The other smaller open spaces in the county are not included in the Ecological Network, but they are part of the overall Green Infrastructure of Fingal and the vision and strategy for parkland can therefore also apply to other open spaces.</p>
	Reservoirs and open waterbodies	<p>The Council shall undertake ecological studies of Knock Lake and the reservoirs to assess their ecological significance and identify the measures required to improve these sites for wildlife. The Council shall undertake the required habitat improvement works where the reservoir and the surrounding lands are in public ownership. Where the waterbody is located on private lands the County Council shall liaise with the landowner to see what habitat improvement works can be carried out.</p>
	Quarries (incl. sand and gravel pits)	<p>To protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the quarries in Fingal, the County Council will request quarry operators to compile and implement a site specific Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) for their quarry as part of the licensing process. The principal objective of a BMP is to provide the site manager with a clear understanding of how contributions to national and local biodiversity can be achieved through the management of the site and environmental awareness within the company.</p>

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Element	Component	Strategy
		<p>The BMP audits the habitat and species present in and around the quarry, identifies local and national priority habitats and species, and provides a framework to maximise site biodiversity. The plan covers the entire lifespan of the quarry and manages habitats and species during the extraction phase and plan for restoration afterwards. The plan shall be subject to 3-5 year reviews to give it the flexibility to reflect changes in work practices and/or the appearance of new wildlife species on the site.</p>
	Woodland opportunity areas	<p>Detailed masterplans are to be developed for the two woodland opportunity sites at near Ardgillan and in the Liffey Valley. These plans will explore in more detail how these woodlands can be developed and will address issues such as recreational use, funding sources, species composition, community involvement, landowner consultation etc.</p> <p>During the course of the plan, the County Council shall seek out more potential woodland sites to increase the woodland coverage in Fingal. This search shall particularly focus on finding sites along our rivers that are suitable for alluvial woodland development as part of river restoration projects, particularly along the Mayne, Sluice, Ballyboughal, Corduff, Matt/Bracken rivers.</p> <p>Where development is proposed in the new woodland opportunity areas, the County Council will request the applicants to retain existing hedgerows and woodland planting as much as possible but no specific additional measures will be requested from the applicant.</p>
Ecological corridors / stepping stones		<p>Ecological studies are to be undertaken of the Corduff, Ballyboughal, Bracken/Matt, Sluice and Mayne rivers. These studies shall identify the current habitat quality, potential stepping stone sites and the range of measures required to improve the river habitat, the corridor function and water quality of these rivers. Lands within or adjacent to the corridors in ownership of the County Council shall be maintained and developed to provide a mosaic of typical river valley habitats for all target species associated with the ecological corridors. Fingal County Council will seek to lease or acquire the most strategic nature conservation lands within the corridors. It will also work with farmers to develop and manage the lands within the ecological corridors through farming demonstration projects and potentially an EIP project.</p> <p>Planning and design guidance is to be prepared for both river and terrestrial ecological corridors to inform developers, planners, engineers and landscape architects how these ecological corridors are to be designed and managed.</p> <p>The Tolka River Valley, Royal Canal and the Liffey Valley shall be developed as a multi-functional amenity corridors, forming a “GREEN Z” in the Dublin 15 area. Similarly, the Ward River Valley and the lower reaches of the Broadmeadow river will be developed for nature conservation and amenity purposes for the community in Swords. Detailed masterplans are to be prepared within the plan period for each of these linear parks. The development of</p>

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Element	Component	Strategy
	/	<p>the ecological corridors in the countryside shall focus on flood protection, water quality improvement, habitat enhancement and sustainable farming practices</p> <p>Some of the ecological corridors are shown as indicative on the green infrastructure network. These indicative corridors are located where a connection is to be created between two nature conservation areas but where the exact location of the corridor is not determined yet. Further ecological survey work and consultation with landowners will ultimately determine where these corridors are to be created.</p>
<p><i>Comment on SEA Screening of Above Strategies for Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 – 2030</i></p>		
<p>SEA consideration: Having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of S.I. 435 of 2004 as amended, the strategies apply to the whole of area of Fingal and establish a framework for the protection, conservation, management, study and enhancement of the existing biodiversity resource. The strategies also seek to integrate environmental considerations, and to address environmental challenges in relation to pressures on biodiversity. The strategies will provide for positive effects on biodiversity and on other environmental aspects, including human health, soils, water, climate and the landscape. No likely significant negative environmental effects will arise. See also Tables 6.1 and 6.2 of the SEA Screening Assessment.</p>		

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Table A1.2: Actions of the Draft Fingal Biodiversity Action Plan (* = Priority action)

No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
<i>Developing the Ecological Network</i>				
1*	Implement Masterplan for Rogerstown Inner Estuary and prepare & implement masterplan for Rogerstown Outer Estuary	To develop and implement a masterplan for the Rogerstown Estuary and surrounding lands with the aim of protecting and enhancing the qualifying habitats and species .	<p>Acreage of land acquired or leased at the inner and outer estuary</p> <p>Length of flood embankment removed, and acreage of new saltmarsh and brackish meadows created.</p> <p>Populations of qualifying interest species are stable or increasing</p> <p>No loss of feeding and roosting sites on lands surrounding the estuary as a result of human disturbance</p> <p>Populations of Green winged Orchid, Hairy Violet, Rough Poppy are stable or increasing</p>	Landowners, local community groups, Birdwatch, NPWS & DNFC
2*	Develop and implement detailed management plan for the Howth Head SAC & SPA	To develop and implement a management plan for Howth Head to restore this SAC to good ecological status	<p>Management Plan for Howth Head SAC prepared</p> <p>Vegetated sea cliffs and European dry heaths habitats restored to good ecological status</p>	Howth SAAO committee, NPWS
3*	Implement SAAO Operational Plan for Howth Head SAAO	To carry out studies and practical conservation work on heathland and wetland restoration and wildfire management	Number of prioritized actions implemented	Howth SAAO committee, NPWS
4*	Support implementation of Dublin Bay Biosphere Nature Conservation Strategy, Education & Awareness strategy	To carry out studies and practical conservation work outlined in the Biosphere strategy documents	Number of FCC and joint actions implemented	DCC, DLR, NPWS, DP, FI
5*	Develop management plans for key winter bird sites identified in satellite tagging programs	To ensure the protection of the most important feeding and roosting sites of qualifying interest species outside designated sites	<p>Management plans prepared for key winter bird sites</p> <p>Percentage of key sites actively managed for qualifying interest species</p>	NPWS, Birdwatch Ireland, Brent Research Group
6*	Prepare biodiversity plans for golf courses in conjunction with golf course owners to enhance their grounds for Biodiversity	To protect and enhance the nature conservation value of the golf courses,	<p>Number of Biodiversity Plans prepared and number of actions implemented for golf courses in Fingal</p> <p>Populations stable or increasing of Hairy violet, Lesser Centaury, Greenwinged orchid, Bee orchid, Green flowered helleborine, Spring vetch, Sea</p>	Golf course owners

* Priority action

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
			bindweed, Skylark, Shelduck, Small Blue, Dark Green Fritillary and Grayling, <i>Colletes floralis</i> , <i>Colletes similis</i> , <i>Osmia aurulenta</i> , <i>Andrena barbilabris</i> , <i>Bombus lapidarius</i> , <i>B. muscorum</i>	
7**	Continue to support Little Tern and Ringed Plover conservation project at tip of Portrane	To protect Little Tern Colony at the Burrow, Portrane	Population of Little tern and Ringed Plover increasing	Birdwatch
8*	Continue managing lands at the Burrow Portrane for Green winged orchid and Hairy Violet	To protect the existing populations of Green-winged orchid and Hairy violet	Lease on lands renewed Population of Greenwinged Orchid and Hairy Violet stable or increasing	Landowner
9*	Restore and enhance the Meadow Barley sites at the Rogerstown Estuary	Restore population of Meadow Barley at Rogerstown Inner Estuary	Number of Meadow Barley sites subject to active restoration measures and enhanced measures Meadow Barley numbers	-
10*	Maintain the verge along the coast Road between Portmarnock & Malahide as a wildflower meadow	To continue the wildflower management project along the coast road	Number of Pyramidal and bee orchids in verge	TT
11*	Organise clean up of mudflats in Malahide Estuary once a year	To remove rubbish from the mudflats	Clean up of mudflat organised	Local volunteers
12*	Control invasive species in Fingal	To eradicate and control invasive flora and fauna species	Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed & Himalayan Balsam eradicated throughout Fingal Rhododendron Ponticum eradicated from Howth Head SAC on Howth Cherry laurel, Snowberry ad Bamboo eradicated from private pNHA woodlands and Council woodlands Acreage of seabuckthorn in dunes reduced by 75% Hottentot fig and garden invasives eradicated from sea cliffs at Howth and Balbriggan Control program undertaken every two years for Mink on all rivers in Fingal	Landowners
13	Prepare and implement masterplan for Malahide Estuary SAC & SPA, including Cave's Marsh	To develop and implement a masterplan for the Malahide Estuary and surrounding lands with the aim of protecting and enhancing the nature conservation and recreational values of this area.	Acreage of land acquired or leased at the Malahide estuary for nature restoration projects Populations of migratory birds such as Brent Goose Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Lapwing, Redshank are stable or increasing	Landowners, local community groups, Birdwatch, NPWS & DNFC

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
			No loss of feeding and roosting sites on lands surrounding the estuary as a result of human disturbance	
14	Prepare and implement masterplan for Baldoyle bay SAC & SPA	To develop and implement the masterplan for the Baldoyle Bay and surrounding lands with the aim of protecting and enhancing the nature conservation and recreational values of this area.	Acreage of land acquired or leased at the Baldoyle estuary for nature restoration projects Populations of migratory birds such as Brent Goose Black-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Lapwing, Redshank are stable or increasing No loss of feeding and roosting sites on lands surrounding the estuary as a result of human disturbance Racecourse Park Plan implemented	Landowners, local community groups, Birdwatch, NPWS & DNFC
15	Prepare and implement masterplan for Tolka Valley Park	To develop a masterplan that will combine recreational and nature conservation requirements in such a way, that allows both functions to be developed to their full potential	Masterplan for Tolka Valley Park prepared Water quality status restored to good quality Acreage of Orchid rich dry calcareous grassland protected and restored Acreage of alluvial woodland created Length of river habitat restored Populations of Otter, Kingfisher, Dipper, Bats, Brown Trout and Badger are stable or increasing	Local Community groups
16	Prepare and implement masterplan for Ward River Valley Park	To prepare a masterplan that will combine recreational and nature conservation requirements in such a way, that allows both functions to be developed to their full potential	Masterplan for Tolka Valley Park prepared Water quality status restored to good quality Salmon spawning beds protected Acreage of Orchid rich dry calcareous grassland protected and restored Acreage of alluvial woodland created Length of river habitat restored and number of artificial structures such as weir removed Populations of Otter, Kingfisher, Dipper, Bats, Brown Trout and Badger are stable or increasing	Local Community groups
17	Prepare and implement masterplan for the linear park along the Mayne River together with Dublin City Council	To prepare a masterplan that will combine recreational and nature conservation requirements in such a way, that allows both functions to be developed to their full potential	Masterplan prepared for Mayne River Green Corridor Length of river habitat restored Water quality status restored to good quality Acreage of Alluvial woodland created	DCC & Local Community groups

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
			Populations of typical river species such as Otter, Kingfisher, Dipper, Bats, Lamprey, Brown Trout are stable or increasing	
18	Incorporate measures for biodiversity conservation in the management plans for a Regional Parks in Fingal	To enhance the biodiversity potential of regional parks	Number of management plans developed for Fingal parks with specific recommendations for biodiversity conservation	-
19	Seek to establish an ecological corridor to link the Royal Canal, the Tolka River and the Liffey Valley	To develop a network of wetland habitats linking the Liffey Valley with the Royal Canal and the Tolka Valley for Otter, Common frog, Kingfisher, Green Figwort, Bats	Ecological corridor established Number of target species using the corridor	Waterways Ireland, OPW
20	Seek to establish two wetland corridors between the river Liffey and the Royal Canal at Westmanstown	To develop a corridor of wetland habitats linking the Liffey Valley with the Royal Canal for Otter, Common Frog, Kingfisher, Dipper, all Bats	Wetland corridors established Number of target species using the corridor	Landowners
21	Establish a woodland corridor between St. Catherines park and Luttrellstown Demesne	To expand and link the old woodlands in the Liffey Valley by planting new woodland for Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Leislars Bat, Natterer's bat, Wiskered bat, Brown Long-eared bat, Red Squirrel, Badger, Pinemarten, Spotted flycatcher	Woodland corridor established Number of target species using the corridor	-
22	Seek to establish an ecological corridor between the Tolka and Ward rivers via the Pinkeen stream	To develop an ecological corridor of wetland and terrestrial habitats linking the Tolka River Valley and the Ward River Valley for Otter, Common Frog, Kingfisher, Dipper, Bats and Badger	Acreage of ecological corridor acquired Acreage of ecological developed and managed Number of target species using the corridor	-
23	Manage linear calcareous grassland strip along the Canal at Clonsilla	To restore calcareous grassland at this site	Acreage of Calcareous grassland with orchid species that is restored Numbers of Pyramidal and Common spotted orchid on site	Landowner
24	Liaise with landowners to explore possibilities of introducing grazing management in Liffey floodplain at Strawberry beds	To establish low-intensity grazing regime on Liffey Valley floodplain	Number of floodplain sites along the Liffey in Fingal subject to a lease or conservation grazing agreement with a local farmer Acreage of new Alluvial woodland, Wet grassland, Freshwater marsh and Ponds	Landowners

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
			Numbers of Otter, Common Frog, Common Newt, Kingfisher, Green Figwort, various bat species found on newly managed sites	
25	Manage lands at the tip of the Burrow, Portrane for Skylark, wildfowl & waders	Develop and enhance roosting site for Brent Goose and other wildfowl and waders and breeding habitat for Skylark	Acreage of Land purchased or leased Number of days site is used by Pale-bellied Brent Goose. Breeding Skylark numbers stable or increasing	Birdwatch & Landowner
26	Acquire lands at Portrane with landowner for <i>Papaver hybridum</i>	Re-establish a population of <i>Papaver hybridum</i> at the Burrow, Portrane	Acreage of land purchased Population of Rough Poppy and other rare arable weeds stable or increasing	Landowner
27	Lease or acquire the Sluice River Marsh for wildlife	To protect and enhance the Sluice River Marsh NHA and its surrounding lands for protected plant species and migratory birds	Lands acquired or leased Number of recommendations implemented from latest ecological study report Breeding Stock Dove, Skylark, Grasshopper warbler, water rail numbers stable or increasing Migratory birds number using the sites stable or increasing	Landowner
28	Develop artificial nesting platforms Malahide estuary	To develop small floating platforms in the estuaries that will serve as secure nesting sites for seabirds	Number of floating devices installed Number of Little Tern, Common Tern or Arctic tern using the platforms	Birdwatch, NPWS
29	Restore Wintering bird roosting site at Cave's Marsh in Malahide	To restore the conservation status of the Malahide Estuary SPA	Number of measures installed to prevent access by people and dogs to key roosting site Duration of stay and number of Brent Goose, Oystercatcher, Redshank, Bar Tailed godwit increasing	NPWS, Birdwatch
30	Work together with quarry owners to develop biodiversity plans for quarries to enhance these sites for Biodiversity	To protect and enhance the nature conservation value of the quarries with a focus on orchid rich calcareous grassland, Peregrine Falcon, Sandmartin and amphibians	Number of Biodiversity Plans prepared for Quarry Number of actions implemented	Quarry owners

Developing the Ecological Network (Action Nos. 1 – 30):

SEA consideration: The actions associated with developing the ecological network provide for the study, management and enhancement of the biodiversity resource both for specific purposes. The actions also seek to liaise and work with landowners to provide additional lands, and / or measures for further enhancement of the ecological biodiversity network. The actions will provide for positive effects on biodiversity and on other environmental aspects, including water and the landscape. No likely significant negative environmental effects will arise. See also **Tables 6.1** and **6.2** of the SEA Screening Assessment.

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
Building for Biodiversity				
31*	Prepare planning & design guidance for incorporating nesting facilities in building facades	To maximise nesting opportunities arising from new developments for Swift, House Sparrow, House Martin, Swallow, Bats & insects	Guidance document produced Number of sites where nesting facilities have been incorporated	DCC, DLR, Birdwatch, BCI, NPWS
32*	Prepare guidance document and training on quality rating and management prescription of hedgerows in open space for FCC Operations and developers	To provide guidance on the protection and management hedgerows during planning process and in open space management	Guidance document produced Number of training events organized and numbers of attendees at training events Length of hedgerow managed appropriately on FCC owned open space	DCC, DLR, HA, TTs
33	Prepare promotional guidance on how to incorporate biodiversity in development and infrastructure projects	To promote biodiversity conservation in residential, industrial, commercial and infrastructure developments	Guidance document produced	DCC, DLR, Birdwatch, BCI
34	Prepare planning and design guidance for ecological corridors	To provide technical specification for ecological corridors along rivers and terrestrial sites	Guidance document produced	DCC, DLR, BCI, Birdwatch, IFI, NPWS
35	Prepare planning and design guidance on net biodiversity gain	To inform the Council on how to incorporate net biodiversity gain in the planning process	Guidance document produced Number of sites where net biodiversity gain has been applied and achieved	DCC, DLR
36	Organise a conference on Building for Biodiversity/Nature inclusive design	To organize at least 1 conference promoting best practice examples of nature inclusive design	Conference organised	-
37	Pilot a biodiversity inclusive design for a social housing estate with green roofs, green walls, wetland & pond SUDS, green carparking, nest boxes in facades, wildflower meadows and wildlife friendly shrubs and trees in open space	To gain practical experience within the County Council with Building for Biodiversity and to allow for the monitoring of the impact of these measures on the flora and fauna in the new development	Demonstration site developed of a social housing site where biodiversity inclusive design has been applied	-
38	All Council housing, parks and infrastructure projects to include biodiversity enhancement proposals	To ensure that Council projects achieve at least no net loss and ideally a net biodiversity gain	Number of Council projects where no biodiversity net loss has been achieved	-

Building for Biodiversity (Action Nos. 31 – 38):

SEA consideration: The actions associated with building for biodiversity provide for planning and guidance on incorporation and enhancement of biodiversity including piloting biodiversity inclusive design. The actions will provide for positive effects on biodiversity and on other environmental aspects, including water and the landscape. No likely significant negative environmental effects will arise. See also Table 6.1 and 6.2 of the SEA Screening Assessment.

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
Managing Open Space for Biodiversity				
39*	Develop pesticide use policy for Fingal County Council	Eliminate pesticide use in the Council where possible	Policy document prepared	-
40*	Support and promote All Ireland Pollinator Plan Actions for Councils and monitor resulting changes	Increase by 20% the area of Council owned land that is managed with the objective of improving biodiversity	Acreage of FCC owned open space subject to wildflower management	TTs
			Annual monitoring program for invertebrates established for key sites	
41*	Implement Tidy Towns Biodiversity Action Plans	To guide 23 TT group efforts for nature conservation	Annual number of actions implemented from Tidy towns Biodiversity plans	TTs
42	Organise and monitor the effects of a biodiversity make-over of 3 housing estates in Fingal in conjunction with local residents and FCC Operations Department	To gain practical experience with managing open space and gardens for Biodiversity and to monitor of the impact of particular measures on flora and fauna	3 demonstration estates established	-
			Annual monitoring program implemented	
43	Develop Urban greening Plans for Dublin 15, Swords and Balbriggan	To prepare 3 Urban greening plans that outline biodiversity & green infrastructure enhancement opportunities in these towns	3 Urban Greening Plans prepared	-
			Number of actions implemented from Urban Greening Plans	
Managing Open Space for Biodiversity (Action Nos. 39 – 43):				
<p>SEA consideration: The actions associated with managing open space for biodiversity provide for the management and promotion of the existing biodiversity resource. The actions also seek to pilot and monitor biodiversity enhancement projects. The actions will provide for positive effects on biodiversity and on other environmental aspects, including human health, soils, water and the landscape. No likely significant negative environmental effects will arise. See also Table 6.1 and 6.2 of the SEA Screening Assessment.</p>				
Woodland and Wetland Projects – Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation				
44*	Prepare wetland and river restoration project for the Bog of the Ring and the Matt river corridor	To restore wetland river habitat and improve water quality to good status and capture carbon	Restoration plan prepared	Local community
			% of actions from restoration plan implemented	
			Acreage of land acquired for wetland and river restoration	
			Water Quality status of Matt river improved	
			Length of river corridor restored	
			Populations of target species stable or increasing: Otter, Kingfisher, Dipper, Bats, Amphibians, Snipe, Grasshopper warbler & Waterrail	
45*	Restore St. Ita's wetlands local nature reserve	Maximise water attenuation capacity and nature conservation benefits	Two roads removed from wetland	-
			Number of new open water features added	
			Install interpretative signage	
			Populations of target species stable or increasing	

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
46*	Develop SUDS demonstration sites in the Tolka Valley, Ward River Valley, Balbriggan town Park and Rogerstown estuary	To gain experience with using wetlands to treat surface water effluent to improve water quality	The number of demonstration sites developed The water quality status of the adjoining river and the outflow of the SUDS features.	-
47	Prepare and implement woodland management plans in Fingal Demesnes and parks	To enhance the nature conservation value of the woodlands in Fingal	Number of woodland management plans prepared Number of actions implemented at each site Populations are stable or increasing of target species: Hairy St. John's Wort, Yellow archangel, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Leislars Bat, Natterer's bat, Wiskered bat, Brown Long-eared bat, Spotted flycatcher at woodland management sites	-
48	Acquire sites for woodland planting at St Catherine's park and Ardgillan Demesne and prepare masterplans for the design of these woodlands.	To expand existing woodland cover and regional parks	Acreage of land acquired for new woodland planting Two masterplans prepared for new woodland sites Acreage of new woodland planted	-
49	Identify and acquire where possible, Climate buffer sites where flood defence features can be removed or relocated to increase flood capacity of rivers and estuaries	To increase flood capacity of rivers and estuaries, restore natural dynamics, restore floodplain habitat & capture carbon	High potential climate buffer sites identified Acreage of land acquired for increasing the floodplain capacity of rivers and estuaries Number of projects implemented to develop the climate buffer sites	-
50	Prepare river restoration project for the Ballyboughal river and implement on FCC lands and acquire lands where necessary	To restore river habitat and improve water quality to good status and capture carbon	River Restoration plan prepared % of actions from restoration plan implemented Acreage of land acquired for river restoration Water Quality status of river improved Length of river corridor restored Populations of target species stable or increasing: Otter, Kingfisher, Dipper, Bats & Salmon	Local community
51	Carry out feasibility study to restore Garristown Bog and acquire lands where opportunities arise	To establish if the former 300ha wetland can be restored	Feasibility study undertaken Acreage of lands acquired for wetland restoration purposes	Local community

Woodland and Wetland Projects – Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation (Action Nos. 44 – 51):

SEA consideration: The actions associated with woodlands and wetlands projects – climate change adaptation & mitigation provide for the restoration, protection and management of the woodland and wetland biodiversity resource, including for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The actions also seek to implement demonstration projects and feasibility studies to educate and promote the actions. The actions will provide for positive effects on biodiversity and on other environmental aspects, including soils, water, climate and the landscape. No likely significant negative environmental effects will arise. See also Table 6.1 and 6.2 of the SEA Screening Assessment.

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
Wilding				
52	Acquire and/or lease lands at Rogerstown, Broadmeadow and Baldoyle estuaries	To create more robust core sites, restore natural processes and allow for wilding opportunities	Acreage of land acquired or leased for wilding purposes at estuaries Number of wilding projects implemented on newly acquired lands	Landowners
53	Support reintroduction of Osprey in Fingal and install artificial nest platforms near estuaries	To establish a sustainable breeding population of Osprey along the Fingal coast	Osprey reintroduced in Fingal Number of artificial nesting platforms installed Numbers of breeding pairs of Osprey in Fingal	Golden Eagle Trust & Birdwatch
54	Wild FCC owned Corballis golf club lands to create natural Grey dunes (bad status in Ireland)	To restore at least 75% of the dune habitat at Corballis	Wilding project implemented Acreage of good quality Grey dunes at Corballis	-
55	Acquire large area of farmland or work with farmer(s) for wilding project to create alternative natural habitat for declining typical farmland species	To organize a demonstration project to showcase and assess the effectiveness of wilding farmland in enhancing the populations of declining farmland species	Acreage of farmland acquired or under cooperative agreement with local farmer for wilding demonstration project Annual monitoring program implemented to establish effects on Yellowhammer, Tree Sparrow, Stockdove, Birds of Prey, Invertebrates and Bats	Local farmer(s)
56	Organise and/or support a national conference on wilding	To organize at least 1 conference promoting the use of wilding as a nature conservation tool	Conference organised	-
57	Carry out feasibility studies of developing a Marine Protection Area along the Fingal Coast and on the restoration of Oysterbeds, Shellfish beds, Seagrass beds and Kelp stands	The feasibility studies will determine to what extent these marine habitats can be restored and what practical actions and steps are required to make such projects a success	Feasibility study undertaken for Marine Protected Area between Howth and Rush Feasibility studies undertaken of restoration potential for Oysterbeds, Shellfish beds, Seagrass beds and Kelp stands	Marine Institute, UCD and fishing industry
58	Restore marine ecosystem along Fingal coast by supporting restoration projects of Oysterbeds, Shellfish beds, Seagrass beds and Kelp stands	To support or organize at least 2 projects to restore the marine ecosystem	Number of sites and acreage of restored Oyster beds, Shellfish beds, Seagrass beds and Kelp stands	Marine Institute, UCD and fishing industry
<p>Wilding (Action Nos. 52 – 58):</p> <p>SEA consideration: The actions associated with wilding provide for the enhancement, protection and management of the biodiversity resource, including marine areas. The actions also seek acquire additional lands for supporting biodiversity and / or wilding projects. The actions will provide for positive effects on biodiversity and on other environmental aspects, including soils, water, climate and the landscape. No likely significant negative environmental effects will arise. See also Table 6.1 and 6.2 of the SEA Screening Assessment.</p>				

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
Agri-environmental Schemes and Irish Rare Farm Breed Conservation				
59*	Develop Newbridge Farm as a national hub for the promotion of Irish rare farm breeds	To support and promote the conservation of Irish rare farm breed	% of actions from Newbridge Rare Breed Study implemented Number of breeding females of cattle, horses and goats at Newbridge	DAFM, rare breed societies
60*	Use native Irish farm breeds for conservation grazing schemes	To support and promote the conservation of Irish rare farm breed	Number of sites where native livestock breeds are used for conservation grazing	-
61	Develop a 400ha demonstration Agri-Environment EIP Scheme with local farmers in Fingal targeting farmland birds and habitats and water quality improvement measures	To implement conservation measures for farmland species & habitats and water quality improvement at landscape level	EIP project proposal submitted and approved Number of farmers participating in scheme Populations of target species stable or increasing: Grey Partridge, Yellowhammer, Tree Sparrow, Stock Dove, Bird of Prey, pollinators	Local farmers
62	Develop Bird of Prey Conservation project with local farmers including raising awareness of the impacts of Rodenticide use and its proper application	To increase the Bird of Prey population of 4 species	Number of farmers participating in Bird of Prey project. Populations of target species stable or increasing: Red Kite, Buzzard, Barn owl, Kestrel and Long eared owl	Birdwatch & Local farmers
63	Develop demonstration farm(s) for biodiversity conservation e.g. hedgerow management, field margins, river management, soil improvement, Integrated pest management, nest boxes etc	To set up a demonstration farm with a local farmer showcasing best practice for biodiversity conservation and monitoring effectiveness of measures	Demonstration farm set up Number of visits by interested farmers Populations of target species stable or increasing: Yellowhammer, Linnet, Tree Sparrow, Grey Partridge, Bats, Badger, Birds of Prey, <i>Andrina</i> and <i>Nomada</i> ground nesting bee species	Local Farmer, Birdwatch, DNFC, BCI & Hedge-laying Association
64	Carry out feasibility study on local marketing of the produce from lands included in the ecological network	To develop a regional market between farmers and consumers for local wood, fruit, veg and meat etc	Feasibility study undertaken Number of participating landowners	-
65	Support the development of a national conservation strategy for rare farmland breeds	To support and promote the conservation of Irish rare farm breed	Level of funding support provided towards national conservation strategy	DAFM, rare breed societies
Agri-environmental Schemes and Irish Rare Farm Breed Conservation (Action Nos. 59 – 65)				
<p>SEA consideration: The actions associated with agri-environmental schemes and Irish rare farm breed conservation provide support for conservation of native rare breeds and the use of such breeds for the management of grazing for wider biodiversity value. The actions also seek to liaise agricultural landowners and to develop a demonstration farms / farm projects to promote and understand the value of the actions. The actions will provide for positive effects on biodiversity and on other environmental aspects, including soils, water and the landscape. No likely significant negative environmental effects will arise. See also Table 6.1 and 6.2 of the SEA Screening Assessment.</p>				

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
Research & Monitoring				
66*	Fund satellite tracking studies of winter birds listed as qualifying features in SPA's	To identify key roosting and feeding sites of qualifying species outside the estuaries	Key feeding and roosting sites identified outside designated sites for Brent Goose, Golden Plover, Oystercatcher, Redshank, Black-tailed Godwit and Curlew	Exeter University
67*	Carry out population assessments of wintering birds in estuaries	To determine population trends of qualifying species	All qualifying bird species associated with estuarine SPAs	Birdwatch
68*	Repeat rare and protected flora study along the Fingal coast	To provide new flora data for state of environment report	Coastal rare and protected flora study repeated and report(s) produced	-
69*	Carry out Otter survey all of rivers in Fingal	To determine if Otters are still present along all Fingal rivers	Otter survey of all Fingal rivers undertaken and report produced	LAWPRO
70*	Carry out urban bird and bat survey	To determine the presence of breeding birds in urban areas	Number of towns that are included in the urban bird and bat studies Number of records submitted by the public	Birdwatch, BCI, TT's
71	Undertake study to identify the habitats and species at risk of climate change	To determine which species and habitats are most at risk from climate change and where they are located	Study undertaken and report with map of habitats at risk produced	Universities
72	Explore funding models for carbon offsetting to fund wetland and woodland development	To find alternative funding sources to fund wetland and woodland creation	Funding models identified Number of projects implemented using new funding models	CARO
73	Map petrifying springs on the green infrastructure maps	To help protect petrifying springs from adverse developments	Petrifying springs mapped and incorporated on green infrastructure maps	-
74	Re assess Annex I habitats outside designated sites	To determine the conservation status of the Annex I habitats	All sites revisited and assessed Green Infrastructure maps updated in County Development Plan	-
75	Map townland boundary hedgerows on green infrastructure maps	To help protect the most important hedgerows from adverse developments	All townland boundaries mapped and incorporated on Green Infrastructure maps	-
76	Carry out or support Harbour Porpoise satellite tagging program along Fingal Coast	To identify the key feeding and breeding areas within the Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC	Tagging program carried out and report published	NPWS, UCC
77	Review beach management practices of FCC in context of management of SAC's and SPA's	To assess the impact of beach cleaning operations on the ecology of the beach and dunes habitats and associated flora & fauna species	Beach cleaning operations reviewed and amended where necessary	-
78	Prepare a <i>State of the natural environment in Fingal</i> report	To provide an overview of the state of the natural environment in Fingal based on a	<i>State of the natural environment in Fingal</i> report prepared	-

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
		comparison of historical and new survey work		
79	Repeat coastal breeding bird study	To provide new bird data for state of environment report	Breeding bird study repeated and report(s) produced	Birdwatch
80	Repeat Intertidal study of the Fingal Coast	To provide new intertidal data for state of environment report	Intertidal study repeated and report(s) produced	-
81	Repeat woodland bird, mammal and rare plant survey	To provide new woodland data for state of environment report	Woodland studies repeated and report(s) produced	-
82	Carry out Countryside Breeding bird survey	To provide new countryside bird data for state of environment report	Countryside Breeding Bird survey completed and report produced	Birdwatch
83	Carry out Countryside Mammal Survey	To provide new mammal data for state of environment report	Countryside Mammal survey completed and report produced	BCI
84	Carry out Fungi Surveys in Turvey, Luttrellstown, Knockmaroon, Santry and Malahide Demesne	To locate the most important locations for fungi in these woodland and provide new data for state of environment report	Fungi surveys completed and report(s) produced	DNFC
85	Carry out an ecological study and habitat assessment of the Ballyboughal, Mayne, Sluice and Matt rivers	To find out what flora & fauna species can be found along our rivers, what the conservation status is of our rivers and what works are required to restore the rivers to their full health.	Number of rivers surveyed Report produced	LAWPRO
86	Carry out flora study and breeding bird study of the Skerries Islands	To find out what flora species can be found on the islands and how the breeding seabirds are faring	Flora and breeding bird survey undertaken and report produced	Birdwatch Ireland
87	Carry out breeding bird, flora and invertebrates studies in Turvey Nature Reserve, Donabate	To determine the effects of land management changes in the park	Breeding bird, flora and invertebrate studies undertaken and reports produced	-
88	Carry out feasibility study for bird conservation projects at the tips of the Donabate & Portmarnock peninsulas	To assess the potential for the reinstatement of a Little Tern and Ringed Plover colony at Donabate and Portmarnock	Feasibility study undertaken Number of proposed actions in study implemented	Birdwatch
89	Assess lands adjacent to estuaries for breeding potential for Redshank, Snipe and Lapwing	Identify and protect potential breeding sites for Redshank, Snipe and Lapwing	Field studies undertaken and report produced	Birdwatch
90	Support Eco-toxicology studies on farmland	To research the impacts of the use of pesticides on farmland species	Number of research projects funded by the Council	Universities

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
91	Carry out ecological study of the large open water bodies and reservoirs in Fingal	To find out what flora & fauna species can be found in the large standing water bodies	Field studies undertaken and report produced	-
92	Establish a monitoring programme on coastal dynamics along the Fingal Coast	To gain a better understanding of the natural sedimentation and erosion processes that occur along the Fingal coastline	Coastal monitoring program established	Local community groups and specialists
			Results published every two years	
Research & Monitoring (Action Nos. 66 – 92)				
<p>SEA consideration: The actions associated with research and monitoring provide support for education, study, understanding and monitoring of the wider biodiversity resource. The actions will allow the Council develop appropriate conservation and enhancement interventions and to monitor the effectiveness of actions. The actions will provide for positive effects on biodiversity and on other environmental aspects, including soils, water, climate and the landscape. No likely significant negative environmental effects will arise. See also Table 6.1 and 6.2 of the SEA Screening Assessment.</p>				
Raising Awareness				
93*	Redevelop Fingal Biodiversity website and social media channels	Re-develop website to promote latest research, projects volunteering work and events	Fingal Biodiversity Website re-developed	-
94*	Organise a monthly program of events e.g. walks, talks and practical conservation outings	Organise at least 20 outings per year	Number of outings organized per year	-
			Number of attendees to events	
95*	Develop a Nature Education Centre for Dublin in Turvey Nature Park	To provide a dedicated nature education centre for Dublin	Nature Education Centre developed at Turvey	-
			Number of annual visitors	
96	Develop a promotional program on what people can do for wildlife in their garden.	To encourage the public to make their gardens more biodiversity friendly	Promotional program developed	Local garden centres
			Online tutorials included in Fingal Biodiversity website	
97	Run a nature education program for primary and secondary schools	Provide multi-annual nature education program to at least 20 schools	Number of schools participating in program	-
			Number of students participating in program	
98	Include biodiversity corner at Flavours of Fingal festival	To promote conservation work by FCC and other groups	Biodiversity corner included in event	NGO's, Tidy towns
99	Organise training days for County Council staff and politicians regarding biodiversity	To educate staff and politicians about biodiversity e.g. building for biodiversity, rewilding, & appropriate assessment	Number of training days organized	-
			Number of attendees at training events	
100	Develop operational procedures with respect to Council work that may impact on SAC's and SPA's and protected species	To avoid damaging SAC's and SPAs and protected species as a result of Council activities	Operational procedures developed for Operations and Water Services Departments	-

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No.	Action	Objective	KPI	Partner Organisations
<i>Raising Awareness</i> (Action Nos. 93 – 100)				
SEA consideration: The actions associated with raising awareness provide support for promotion, education, and better understanding of the nature, significance and sensitivity of the biodiversity resource. The actions will provide for positive effects on biodiversity and on other environmental aspects, including human beings, soils, water, climate and the landscape. No likely significant negative environmental effects will arise. See also Table 6.1 and 6.2 of the SEA Screening Assessment.				

* Priority action

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