

Proposed All-Weather Facilities and  
Associated Works at Ballymastone  
Recreational Hub, Donabate, Co. Dublin  
Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Fingal County Council (FCC) is seeking permission under Part 8<sup>1</sup> of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2020 (hereafter PDR 2001) for the development of new all-weather recreational facilities and associated works at the proposed Ballymastone Recreational Hub, to be located on existing recreational lands Ballymastone, County Dublin.

Brady Shipman Martin was appointed by FCC to assist it in undertaking a screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment (AA). The purpose of the screening exercise is to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the proposed Recreational Hub development at Ballymastone (hereafter the Proposed Project), individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on European sites taking into account their conservation objectives.

This document constitutes the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report prepared for this purpose.

A comprehensive desk study review and a site visit were undertaken and the potential impacts on European sites, both as a result of the Proposed Project and in-combination with other plans and projects, are appraised in this report.

## 1.2 Expertise and Qualifications

The potential impacts on European sites, both as a result of the Proposed Project and in-combination with other plans and projects, are appraised in this report.

The work was carried out by Senior Ecologist Matthew Hague BSc MSc Adv. Dip. Plan. & Env. Law CEnv MCIEEM. Matthew is a highly experienced and qualified ecologist, with a master's degree in Ecosystem Conservation and Landscape Management. He has over 18 years of experience in ecological and environmental consultancy, across a wide range of sectors. He has prepared numerous reports for AA Screening as well as Natura Impact Statements, for projects of all scales, from small residential developments to nationally important infrastructure projects.

Matthew is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). Matthew has also completed an Advanced Diploma in Planning and Environmental Law, at King's Inns and is a member of the Irish Environmental Law Association (IELA).

## 1.3 Legal requirement for Appropriate Assessment

European sites are also known as Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)). These are a network of sites designated for nature conservation under Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the "Habitats Directive") and 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"). The requirements for Appropriate Assessment are set out under *Article 6 of the Habitats Directive*, transposed into Irish law by the *European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015*<sup>2</sup> (the "Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations") and the *Planning and Development Act, 2000 - 2018* (the "Planning Acts").

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states that:

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<sup>1</sup> Provisions with respect to specified development by, or on behalf of, or in partnership with local authorities

<sup>2</sup> SI No. 477 of 2011

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(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

The first test is to establish whether, in relation to a particular plan or project, appropriate assessment is required. Sections 177U of the Planning Acts and Regulation 42 of the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations require that the AA screening test must be applied to the Proposed Project, as follows:

- To assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site;

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

This AA Screening Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Birds Directive, the Habitats Directive, the Planning Acts and the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Baseline data collection and field visits

A desk-based assessment was undertaken in February 2021 of the Ballymastone site and the wider area. This focused on habitats and species that are listed as Qualifying Interests (QI) (in the case of SACs) and Special Conservation Interests (SCI) (in the case of SPAs) in the designations for European sites. An ecological survey was undertaken at the site, including habitat, invasive species, mammal and day-time bat surveys as well for evidence of overwintering birds, by the author on 22 December 2020. A final site visit took place on 25 February 2021.

Birds present on the site were recorded during the surveys and an assessment of habitat suitability for species with links to European sites was undertaken, in order to appraise the potential for *ex-situ* effects on European sites.

This report takes the following guidance documents into account:

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities* (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 revision);
- *Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting European sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001);
- *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Guidance issued by the European Commission (21<sup>st</sup> November 2018);
- *Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management Office of the Planning Regulator*, March 2021).

Information was collated from the organisations and websites listed below:

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- Data on European sites and rare and protected plant and animal species contained in the following databases:
  - The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht ([www.NPWS.ie](http://www.NPWS.ie));
  - The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NDBC) ([www.biodiversityireland.ie](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie));
  - BirdWatch Ireland ([www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie));
  - Bat Conservation Ireland ([www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org)).
- Information on land-use zoning from the online mapping of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (<http://www.myplan.ie/en/index.html>);
- Recent and historical OSi mapping and aerial photography, including [www.geohive.ie](http://www.geohive.ie);
- Photographs taken at the site;
- Information on local watercourses from [www.catchments.ie](http://www.catchments.ie);
- Information on water quality in the area ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie));
- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area ([www.gsi.ie](http://www.gsi.ie));
- Information on the Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland (Article 17 report) (NPWS, August 2019);
- Third National Biodiversity Plan 2017 – 2021 (Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2017);
- Fingal Development Plan 2017 – 2023, including the accompanying Appropriate Assessment documentation (Natura Impact Report).

The report has regard to the following legislative instruments:

- Planning and Development, Act 2000, as amended;
- European Commission (EC) Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
- European Commission (EC) Birds Directive 2009/147/EC;
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2015.

The report takes full account of the design of the Proposed Project and a detailed examination of all relevant elements of the Proposed Project was undertaken.

Given the amount of information available, including from FCC, NPWS and other sources, it has been possible to gather adequate information on the site and the adjacent area (in particular, the European sites), in order to make an informed, sound judgement as to the potential impacts of the Proposed Project on the qualifying interests of the European sites.

## 3 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

### 3.1 Background

The first part of the Appropriate Assessment process is the Screening phase. Screening identifies the likely effects of the Proposed Project on European sites that could arise, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and considers whether these impacts are likely to have a significant effect on the European site in view of the site's conservation objectives.

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In accordance with sections 177U and 177V of the Planning Acts, as amended, the AA screening test must be applied to the Proposed Project, as follows:

- To assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site;
- An appropriate assessment is required if it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, will have a significant effect on a European site.

The test is a 'possibility' of effects rather than a 'certainty' of effects. The test of significance is whether a plan or project could undermine the site's conservation objectives. Furthermore, screening must be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation and it is in this context that this AA Screening Report is prepared.

Following Screening therefore, if there is a possibility of there being a significant effect on a European site, this will generate the need for an appropriate assessment for the purposes of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This means that if the conclusions at the end of the screening exercise are that significant effects on any European sites, as a result of the Proposed Project, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely, uncertain or unknown, then an Appropriate Assessment must be carried out. This is in accordance with established precedent and case law.

### 3.2 Potential zone of influence

For the risk of a significant effect to occur there must be a 'source', such as a construction site; a 'receptor', such as a designated site for nature conservation; and a pathway between the source and the receptor, such as a watercourse that links the construction site to the designated site. Although there may be a risk of an impact it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant.

Identification of a potential effect means that there is a possibility of ecological or environmental damage occurring, with the level and significance of the impact depending upon the nature and exposure to the potential effect and the characteristics of the receptor.

There are no set recommended distances for projects to consider European sites as being relevant for assessment. Rather, NPWS (2010) recommends that *'the distance should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with reference to the nature, size and location of the project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, and the potential for in combination effects'*. It is often considered appropriate to include all European sites within 15km.

However, in some instances where there are hydrological connections a whole river catchment or a groundwater aquifer may need to be included. Similarly where bird flight paths are involved the impact may be on an SPA more than 15 km away. Taking this into account, as a starting point a search was carried out for all European sites within 15km of the Proposed Project site. This search was then extended in order to ensure that all European sites with any potential links to the Proposed Project were accounted for in the study.

### 3.3 Study area and surrounding environment

#### 3.3.1 Site location and European sites

The existing site recreational site (see Figure 1) extends to c.13.75ha. and includes a range of sports pitches and training grounds associated with sports grounds associated with St. Patrick's GAA Club and St. Ita's Football Club.

The area of the proposed development is c.7.39ha. comprising c.3.43ha. as an extension to the existing facility, and c.3.96ha. for enhancement / redevelopment of part of the existing sport facility.

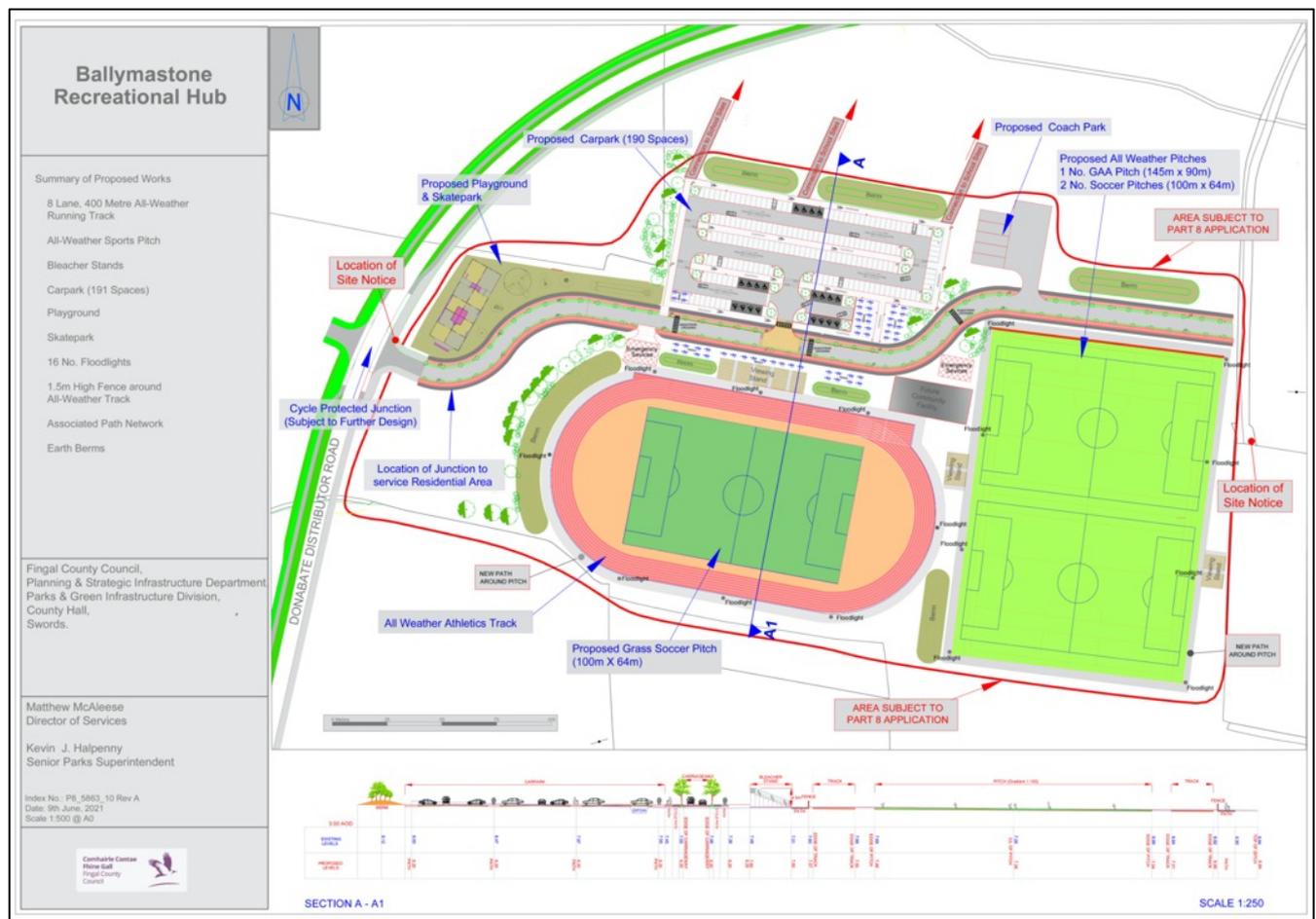
The Proposed Project site is located to the east of Donabate in north County Dublin, on the eastern side of the recently-constructed Donabate Distributor Road (R126). It occupies the northern/western part of an existing

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sports facility at St. Patrick's Donabate GAA Club/St. Ita's AFC. The site comprises a mix of amenity grassland (an existing sports field) and parts of abandoned arable fields, with hedgerows and tree lines along the field boundaries. Donabate Golf Club is located to the south.

The site is located within the Ballough (Stream) (SC-010) sub-catchment of the Nanny-Delvin catchment. There are drainage ditches on the site, however there is no direct surface water link from the site to any streams that discharge to any European site<sup>3</sup>. There is nevertheless a potential indirect surface water link between the Proposed Project site and the coastal European sites, via the local surface water drainage network.



**Figure 1:** Layout of the Proposed Project site (refer to accompanying documentation for full details)

There are 18 European sites located within a 15km radius of the Proposed Project (see **Figure 2**). These are:

- **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**
  - Rogerstown Estuary SAC (site code 000208), c.1.2km to the north;
  - Malahide Estuary SAC (site code 000205), c.1.4km to the south;
  - Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000), c.4.1km to the east;
  - Lambay Island SAC (site code 000204), c.6.3km to the east;
  - Baldoyle Bay SAC (site code 000199), c.7.4km to the south;
  - Ireland's Eye SAC (site code 002193), c.9.6km to the south east;

<sup>3</sup> <https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

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- North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c.10.9km to the south;
- Howth Head SAC (site code 000202), c.11.8km to the south east;
- **Special Protection Areas (SPA)**
  - Rogerstown Estuary SPA (site codes 004015), c.1.2km to the north;
  - Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary (Malahide Estuary) SPA (site code 004025), c.1.5km to the south;
  - Lambay Island SPA (site code 004069), c.6.3km to the east;
  - Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016 ), c.7.4km to the south;
  - Ireland's Eye SPA (site code 004117), c.9.1km to the south east;
  - Skerries Islands SPA (site code 004122), c.9.5km to the north east;
  - Rockabill SPA (site code 004014), c.10.0km to the north east;
  - North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c.10.9km to the south;
  - Howth Head Coast SPA (site code 004113), c.11.8km to the south east.
  - South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024), c.14.4km to the south;

Beyond the 15km zone, there are a number of additional European sites:

- South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), c.16.4km to the south;
- River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (site code 004158), c.19.1km to the north.

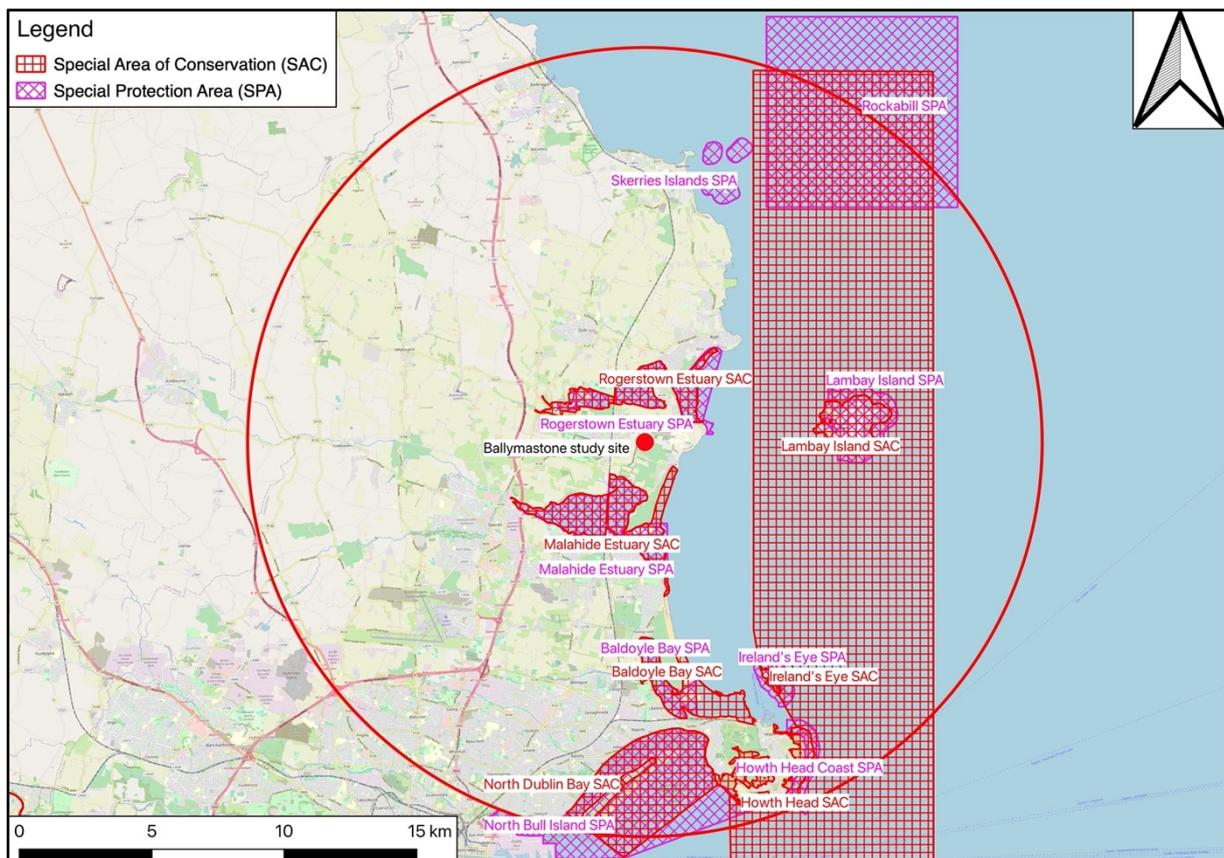


Figure 2: Ballymastone study site showing European sites (Source: OpenStreetMap)

### 3.3.2 Other designated areas (other than European sites)

The nearest site designated for nature conservation, not otherwise designated as a European site, is the Portraine Shore proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA site code 001215), approximately 1.3km to the east. No other pNHA sites are located within the Zone of Influence of the Proposed Project.

These sites are included in this report in order to address their potential to act as supporting sites for the European sites.

## 4 Description of the Proposed Project

Fingal County Council is proposing to develop a major active recreational hub incorporating a GAA sized /2 Soccer sized all-weather pitches, a 3rd Generation surface all-weather running track constructed around a full sized grass soccer pitch, play/skatepark facilities located in Ballymastone, Donabate, Co. Dublin (See Fig No. 1 below). The facilities will be serviced by new and upgraded carparking (including special needs car parking) and a new access road linking the facilities to the recently constructed Donabate Distributor Road. Soil excavated during the construction of these facilities will be used to form earthen berms adjacent to and overlooking the track and sports pitches. A perimeter fence will be provided around the facilities. All drainage for these facilities will be attenuated locally within the parkland setting of the facilities.

The area of the proposed development is c.7.39ha. comprising c.3.43ha. as an extension to the existing facility, and c.3.96ha. for enhancement / redevelopment of part of the existing c.13.75ha. sport facility.

The proposed development comprises the following elements:

- 1 No. 8 Lane 400m Athletics Track (All weather surface);
- 1 No. Grass Sports Pitch (100m x 64m);
- 1 No. All-weather Pitch (1GAA/2Soccer) (150m x 106m);
- Combined Public Skatepark and Playground Facility;
- Car Park (191 No. Spaces incl 20 No. Universally Accessible Spaces);
- Coach Park (6 Spaces);
- Bicycle Parking: 300 No. Bicycle Parking Spaces;
- 3 No. Bleacher seating structures;
- Sports Hub enclosure fencing (1.8 M high Security Fencing);
- 6 m wide Vehicular Access Road through site from cycle protected junction on Donabate Distributor Road;
- Extensive dedicated Walking and Cycling infrastructure linking to adjoining networks;
- Associated Foul/Fresh Water & ESB Connections and Fibre Optic Communications Connections;
- Recreational Hub Lighting Including:
  - Public lighting of primary Circulation/Road Network;
  - Public lighting of Car Park;
  - 8 No. Floodlights around All-weather Sports Pitches;
  - 8 No. Floodlights around Athletics Track & Grass Sports Pitch;
- Extensive Landscape Planting using predominately native Tree and Shrub Species;

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- Extensive Earthen Berms to incorporate excavated soil and to enclose and screen the facility from surrounding areas;
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Infrastructure (SuDS) to ensure surface water is attenuated within the site;
- All ancillary Site Works.

## 5 Potential impacts from the Proposed Project, including in-combination effects

### 5.1 European sites and habitats with links to European sites

The Proposed Project site is not under any wildlife or conservation designation. Furthermore, no rare, threatened or legally protected plant species, as listed in the *Irish Red Data Book 1 – Vascular Plants* (Curtis & McGough, 1988), the *Flora Protection Order*, 2015 or the *EU Habitats Directive*, are known to occur within the site.

Overall the site, which includes tree lines and hedgerows as well as amenity grassland and abandoned arable fields, is of Local Importance (Higher Value) as defined by the ecological resource valuations presented in the National Roads Authority/Transport Infrastructure Ireland *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes* (NRA/TII, 2009 (Rev. 2)). According to the Ecological Study of the site, prepared by BEC and NM Ecology, ecological consultants to Fingal County Council, the site contains no rare or protected plant species. Herring gull and yellowhammer, both red-listed species on the list of Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland were recorded on the site. No evidence of badger setts or roosting bats was recorded.

No evidence of any habitats or species with links to European sites was recorded during either the field survey or desk study undertaken in the preparation of this AA Screening report, and no ‘reservoir’ type habitats (habitats which have the potential to support Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest species in any European site) are present. Although amenity grassland has the potential to be used by SCI birds such as light-bellied Brent goose, and the species is known to use such habitats in other parts of Dublin, there are no records of the birds using the Ballymastone site and no evidence of bird usage (such as sighting of birds or the presence of droppings or feeding signs) was recorded during the site visits undertaken in the preparation of this report.

#### 5.1.1 Potential impacts during construction

At any development site, site clearance and construction activities pose a potential risk to water, as **surface/ground water** arising at a site may contain contaminants. The main contaminants arising from such activities may include suspended solids, hydrocarbons and concrete/cement products. If not properly managed, such pollutants could pose a temporary risk to surface water quality in the local surface water network during construction.

Other than minor ditches there are no watercourses present on the site. Nevertheless a potential surface water pathway via the wider surface water drainage network exists between the Proposed Project site and the coastal European sites, to the east. There is also a potential groundwater pathway between the Proposed Project site and the European sites should indirect discharges (i.e. spillages to ground) occur, or should any contamination on the site enter the ground water.

Despite the presence of these theoretical indirect pathways, the risk of contamination of any watercourses or groundwater is extremely low, and even in the event of a pollution incident significant enough to impact upon surface water quality on the site, it is reasonable to assume that **this would not be perceptible in the offshore European sites**, for the following reasons:

- The distance to the European sites –the nearest designated sites (associated with Rogerstown Estuary and Malahide Estuary) are over 1km distant and there is no direct pathway between the Proposed Project

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site and these European sites. Any pollution entering local watercourses/drainage ditches from the construction site would be so diluted as to be entirely undetectable by the time the water enters the sea;

- The fact that a significant level of dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur in any event. Upon reaching the sea any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters;
- In addition, the construction of the Proposed Project will take place over a comparatively short period (approximately 26 weeks, subject to weather conditions) and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the Proposed Project;

There is no possibility of any other potential direct, indirect or secondary impacts on any European site during the construction phase. For example there will be no land-take from any European site and there will be no resource requirements such as water abstraction. Similarly there will be no emissions to air from construction vehicles that could remotely impact any European site. Dust, noise and vibration arising during construction will similarly be entirely remote from any European site.

There will be no loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance or other change to any element of any European site as a result of the construction of the Proposed Project, and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

Construction-related impacts as a result of the Proposed Project, on European sites or otherwise, can therefore be excluded.

#### 5.1.2 Potential impacts during operation

There will be no direct or indirect operational impacts on any European sites, for example via flooding, or via operational surface or foul water management.

As noted in Section 5.1, a single herring gull, a species listed as a Special Conservation Interest in Lambay Island SPA, was recorded on the site during the ecological studies undertaken by BEC Consultants. However, beyond being of use by occasional birds, Ballymastone Recreational Hub is not a key site for any SCI birds. In order to be of international importance it would need to regularly support 1% of the international population of the species. This is not the case when an occasional bird forages on a site.

Similarly, no evidence that the site is used by overwintering birds such as light-bellied Brent goose was recorded. There is no possibility of any potential direct, indirect or secondary impacts on any European site once the Proposed Project is operational. There will be no loss, fragmentation, disruption, disturbance or other change to any element of any European site as a result of the operation of the Proposed Project, and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

Direct or indirect operational impacts on any European sites are therefore excluded.

Full details of the potential impacts of the Proposed Project on European sites are presented in **Table 1**.

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**Table 1** lists relevant European sites and outlines their Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests and Conservation Objectives

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 2 July 2021) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
Rogerstown Estuary SAC (site code 000208), c.1.2km to the north	1130 Estuaries 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand 1330 Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*  According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 14 <sup>th</sup> August 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.	<p>No significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's QIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the site clearance, construction and operation of the proposed Recreational Hub development could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, eventually, to the sea.</p> <p>There would be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the Proposed Project, as described in Section 5.1.1 and 5.1.2. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality in the Proposed Project site, any pollution from the construction site would be minimal in quantity and if it entered any ditch or watercourse it would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea and would not be perceptible in Rogerstown Estuary SAC, due to the very small volumes.</p> <p>This is due to the significant separation between the Proposed Project site and the European site – the Proposed Project site is over 1km (straight line distance) from the SAC and any pollution arising during construction would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur. Upon reaching the sea any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters.</p> <p>Furthermore, the construction of the Proposed Project will take place over a comparatively short period (estimated to be 26 weeks) and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the Proposed Project given the nature and scale of the Proposed Project and its location at a remove from the European sites.</p> <p>There will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
Malahide Estuary SAC (site code 000205), c.1.4km to the south	1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand 1330 Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)*	<p>No significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's QIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the site clearance, construction and operation of the proposed Recreational Hub development could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, eventually, to the sea.</p> <p>There would be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the Proposed Project, as described in Section 5.1.1 and 5.1.2. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant</p>

## Proposed All-Weather Facilities and Associated Works at Ballymastone Recreational Hub, Donabate, Co. Dublin

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European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 2 July 2021) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
	<p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27<sup>th</sup> May 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality in the Proposed Project site, any pollution from the construction site would be minimal in quantity and if it entered any ditch or watercourse it would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea and would not be perceptible in Malahide Estuary SAC, due to the very small volumes.</p> <p>This is due to the significant separation between the Proposed Project site and the European site – the Proposed Project site is over 1km (straight line distance) from the SAC and any pollution arising during construction would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur. Upon reaching the sea any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters.</p> <p>Furthermore, the construction of the Proposed Project will take place over a comparatively short period (estimated to be 26 weeks) and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the Proposed Project given the nature and scale of the Proposed Project and its location at a remove from the European sites.</p> <p>There will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
<p>Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000), c.4.1km to the east</p>	<p>1170 Reefs 1351 Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>)</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 07<sup>th</sup> May 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is over 4km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
<p>Lambay Island SAC (site code 000204), c.6.3km to the east</p>	<p>1170 Reefs 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts 1364 Grey seal (<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>) 1365 Harbour seal (<i>Phoca vitulina</i>)</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is over 6km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>

## Proposed All-Weather Facilities and Associated Works at Ballymastone Recreational Hub, Donabate, Co. Dublin

### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 2 July 2021) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
Baldoyle Bay SAC (site code 000199), c.7.4km to the south	<p>1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 19<sup>th</sup> November 2012), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is over 7km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
Ireland's Eye SAC (site code 002193), c.9.6km to the south east	<p>1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is almost 10km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c.10.9km to the south	<p>1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* 2190 Humid dune slacks 1395 Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>)</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 06<sup>th</sup> November 2013), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s)</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is almost 11km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>



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### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 2 July 2021) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
	and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.	
Howth Head SAC (site code 004113), c.11.8km to the south east	<p>1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts 4030 European dry heaths</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 06<sup>th</sup> December 2016), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is almost 12km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), c.16.4km to the south east	<p>1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</p> <p>The following habitats are listed as Qualifying Interests on the NPWS website, but are not included in the Conservation Objectives document:</p> <p>(1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes)</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2013), for the listed QI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is over 16km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
Rogerstown Estuary SPA (site code 004015), c.1.2km to the north	<p>A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) A043 Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>)</p>	<p>No significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's SCIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the site clearance, construction and operation of the proposed Recreational Hub development could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, eventually, to the sea.</p> <p>There would be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the Proposed Project, as described in Section 5.1.1</p>

## Proposed All-Weather Facilities and Associated Works at Ballymastone Recreational Hub, Donabate, Co. Dublin

### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 2 July 2021) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
	<p>A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)                      A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)                      A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)                      Wetlands</p> <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (dated 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>and 5.1.2. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality in the Proposed Project site, any pollution from the construction site would be minimal in quantity and if it entered any ditch or watercourse it would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea and would not be perceptible in Rogerstown Estuary SPA, due to the very small volumes.</p> <p>This is due to the significant separation between the Proposed Project site and the European site – the Proposed Project site is over 1km (straight line distance) from the SPA and any pollution arising during construction would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur. Upon reaching the sea any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters.</p> <p>Furthermore, the construction of the Proposed Project will take place over a comparatively short period (estimated to be 26 weeks) and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the Proposed Project given the nature and scale of the Proposed Project and its location at a remove from the European sites.</p> <p>There will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
<p>Broadmeadow/Swords Estuary (Malahide Estuary) SPA (site code 004025), c.1.5km to the south</p>	<p>A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>)                      A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)                      A067 Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>)                      A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)                      A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)                      A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)                      A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)                      A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)                      A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)                      A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)                      A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)                      A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)                      A069 Red-breasted Merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>)                      A005 Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>)                      A999 Wetlands</p> <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 16<sup>th</sup> August 2013), for each of the listed SCIs,</p>	<p>No significant effects on water quality, and therefore on the site's SCIs, are predicted.</p> <p>Surface/ground water arising during the site clearance, construction and operation of the proposed Recreational Hub development could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, eventually, to the sea.</p> <p>There would be no significant effects on the conservation objectives of the European site should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the Proposed Project, as described in Section 5.1.1 and 5.1.2. Even in the event of a pollution incident (such as a fuel or cement spill) significant enough to impact upon surface/ground water quality in the Proposed Project site, any pollution from the construction site would be minimal in quantity and if it entered any ditch or watercourse it would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea and would not be perceptible in Malahide Estuary SPA, due to the very small volumes.</p> <p>This is due to the significant separation between the Proposed Project site and the European site – the Proposed Project site is over 1km (straight line distance) from the SPA and any pollution arising during construction would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea. In addition, significant dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur. Upon reaching the sea any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters.</p>

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European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 2 July 2021) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
	<p>the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>Furthermore, the construction of the Proposed Project will take place over a comparatively short period (estimated to be 26 weeks) and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the Proposed Project given the nature and scale of the Proposed Project and its location at a remove from the European sites.</p> <p>There will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the special conservation interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
Lambay Island SPA (site code 004069), c.6.3km to the east	<p>A043 Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>)                      A200 Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>)                      A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)                      A009 Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>)                      A204 Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>)                      A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>)                      A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>)                      A199 Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>)                      A018 Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>)                      A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)</p> <p>According to this SPA's Generic Conservation Objectives document (Version 8, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SPA. It is over 6km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016 ), c.7.4km to the south	<p>A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>)                      A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>)                      A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)                      A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)                      A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)                      A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)                      A999 Wetlands</p> <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27<sup>th</sup> February 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is over 7km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>



## Proposed All-Weather Facilities and Associated Works at Ballymastone Recreational Hub, Donabate, Co. Dublin

### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 2 July 2021) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
	conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.	
Ireland's Eye SPA (site code 004117), c.9.1km to the south east	<p>A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)                      A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)                      A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>)                      A199 Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>)                      A200 Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>)</p> <p>According to this SPA's Generic Conservation Objectives document (Version 8, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is over 9km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
Skerries Islands SPA (site code 004122), c.9.5km to the north east	<p>A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>)                      A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)                      A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>)                      A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>)                      A148 Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>)                      A018 Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>)</p> <p>According to this SPA's Generic Conservation Objectives document (Version 8, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is over 9km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
Rockabill SPA (site code 004014), c.10km to the north east	<p>A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>)                      A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)                      A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)                      A148 Purple Sandpiper (<i>Calidris maritima</i>)</p> <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 8<sup>th</sup> May 2013), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is approximately 10km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>

## Proposed All-Weather Facilities and Associated Works at Ballymastone Recreational Hub, Donabate, Co. Dublin

### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 2 July 2021) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
<p>North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c.10.9km to the south</p>	<p>A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)                      A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)                      A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)                      A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)                      A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)                      A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)                      A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)                      A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)                      A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>)                      A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)                      A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)                      A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>)                      A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)                      A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)                      A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>)                      A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)                      A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)                      Wetlands</p> <p>According to this SPA’s site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is almost 11km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
<p>Howth Head Coast SPA (site code 004113), c.11.8km to the south east</p>	<p>A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>)</p> <p>According to this SPA’s Generic Conservation Objectives document (Version 8, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021), for the listed SCI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is almost 12km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>
<p>South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024), c.14.4km to the south</p>	<p>A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)                      A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)                      A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)                      A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)                      A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)</p>	<p>There is no hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed Recreational Hub development site and this SAC. It is over 14km distant and is completely unconnected. Furthermore there will be no loss of habitat or species, fragmentation or disturbance to the qualifying interests of this site as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>

## Proposed All-Weather Facilities and Associated Works at Ballymastone Recreational Hub, Donabate, Co. Dublin

### Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

European Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of 2 July 2021) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Source – Pathway – Receptor link
	<p>A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)                      A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>)                      A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)                      A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)                      A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)                      A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)                      A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)                      A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>)                      Wetlands</p> <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the species and wetland habitat for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the Proposed Project.</p>

\*For completeness, this table includes all sites within c.15km of the site as well as South Dublin Bay SAC, however, as confirmed in Section 5.1, only the offshore sites are linked in any way to the Proposed Project site. None of the other listed sites, and no sites further afield, are remotely linked to the Proposed Project site, by virtue of distance, lack of a pathway and the reasons for their designation.



## 5.2 Summary of potential impacts of the Proposed Project

There will be no loss of any habitat or species listed as a QI or SCI of any designated site as a consequence of the Proposed Project. There is, therefore, no potential for the effects of habitat loss or fragmentation to occur.

There will also be no significant effects on any European sites as a result of:

- Land-take;
- Resource requirements such as water abstraction;
- Impacts to habitat structure;
- Mortality to species (such as roadkill);
- Noise pollution/vibration impacts;
- Light pollution;
- Air pollution.

## 6 Other issues

No invasive plant species (*i.e.* those species listed on Schedule 3 of the *Birds and Habitats Regulations, 2011-2015*, such as Japanese knotweed or giant hogweed) were identified on site.

Additionally, for the reasons outlined in this report for the European sites, no impacts on any other designated sites including proposed Natural Heritage Areas, will occur.

## 7 Mitigation specific to European sites

In relation to European sites, there will be no impacts as a result of the Proposed Project. Therefore no mitigation is necessary or proposed for the protection of European sites or which was intended to avoid or reduce impacts on any European sites. Accordingly, this screening assessment is consistent with the judgment of the European Court in Case C-323/17, *People Over Wind & Sweetman v Coillte* (Judgment of the Court (Seventh Chamber) of 12 April 2018) and the recent case-law of the High Court, including *Heather Hill Management Company CLG v An Bord Pleanála* [2019] IEHC 450 and *Sweetman v An Bord Pleanála* [2020] IEHC 39.

## 8 In-combination effects

It is a requirement of Section 177U of the Planning Acts that when considering whether a plan or project will have a significant effect on a European site the assessment must take into account in-combination effects with other plans and projects. The assessment should consider plans and projects that are completed, approved but uncompleted, or proposed (but not yet approved).<sup>4</sup> If there are identified effects arising from the plan or project even if they are perceived as minor and not likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of a European site alone, then these effects must be considered 'in-combination' with the effects arising from other plans and projects.

No developments are proposed within the immediate vicinity of the site that would, in combination with the development under appraisal in this report, give rise to significant effects.

The Fingal County Development Plan 2017-2023 has a series of objectives intended to protect and enhance the natural environment. For example the CDP includes policies for the protection of the county's flood plains, to prevent development in flood plains without satisfying the appropriate justification test and to require the use of

<sup>4</sup> *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting European sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001)*

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sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to minimise and limit the extent of hard surfacing and paving in order to reduce the potential impact of existing and predicted flooding risks.

The Proposed Project will not impact on the flow of water through the area, nor increase potential flood impacts. It is in compliance with all of the relevant Plan objectives.

A number of other plans were considered when assessing in-combination effects, but it was determined that there would be no in-combination effects with these:

- National Planning Framework;
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy;
- Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study;
- Greater Dublin Transport Strategy;
- Climate Action and Mitigation Plan;
- National Biodiversity Plan; and,
- River Basin Management Plan.

## 9 Screening conclusion

In view of best scientific knowledge this report concludes that the proposed recreational hub development at the Ballymastone site, 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.

It is considered that this report provides sufficient relevant information to allow the Competent Authority (Fingal County Council) to carry out an AA Screening, and reach a determination that the Proposed Project will not have any likely significant effects on European sites under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in light of their conservation objectives.

## Appendix I: Background

The European<sup>5</sup> network is a Europe-wide network of ecologically important sites (SPAs and cSACs – also known as ‘European Sites’ or ‘Natura 2000 sites’) that have been designated for protection under either the EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds) or the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna).

The main aim of the Habitats Directive is “to contribute towards ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States to which the treaty applies”. Any actions taken must be designed to “maintain or restore, at a favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest”. Under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive, an assessment is required where a plan or project may give rise to significant effects upon a European site.

In addition, it is a matter of law that candidate SACs (cSACs) and Sites of Community Importance (SCI) are considered in this process;

Article 6 (paragraphs (3) and (4)) of the Habitats Directive states that:

(3) Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

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

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

The requirements of the Habitats Directive are transposed into Irish law by means of the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations and by the Planning Acts.

In Ireland, the statutory agency responsible for the designated areas is NPWS.

### Stages in the assessment

European Commission guidance (2001)<sup>6</sup> sets out the principles on how to undertake decision making in applying the Habitats Directive. The requirements of the Habitats Directive comprise four distinct stages:

**Stage 1: Screening** is the process which initially identifies the likely significant effects upon a European site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts may be significant. It is important to note that the burden of evidence is to show, on the basis of objective information, that there will be no significant effect; if the effect may be significant, or is not known, that would trigger the need for an Appropriate Assessment. There is European Court of Justice case law to the

<sup>5</sup> The EU Habitats Directive, Article 3.1, states “A Coherent European ecological network of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas pursuant to Directive 79/409/EEC shall be set up under the title European”

<sup>6</sup> European Commission (2001) *Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting European Sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6 (3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*

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effect that unless the likelihood of a significant effect can be ruled out on the basis of objective information, then an Appropriate Assessment must be made.

**Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment** is the detailed consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's conservation objectives and its structure and function. This is to determine with scientific certainty whether or not there will be adverse effects on the integrity of the site in light of its conservation objectives. This stage also includes the development of mitigation measures to avoid or reduce any possible impacts.

**Stage 3: Assessment of alternative solutions** is the process which examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that would avoid impacts on the integrity of the European site, should avoidance or mitigation measures be unable to cancel out adverse effects.

**Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.** At Stage 4 an assessment is made with regard to whether or not the development is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) and, if so, of the compensatory measures needed to maintain the overall coherence of the European network.

## Conservation Objectives of European sites

The conservation objectives for a European Site are intended to represent the aims of the Habitats and Birds Directives in relation to that site. To this end, habitats and species of European Community importance should be maintained or restored to 'favourable conservation status' (FCS), as defined in Article 1 of the Habitats Directive below:

The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- Its natural range and the area it covers within that range are stable or increasing;
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future;
- Conservation status of typical species is favourable as defined in Article 1(i).

The conservation status of a species will be taken as favourable when:

- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future;
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Guidance from the European Commission<sup>7</sup> indicates that the Habitats Directive intends FCS to be applied at the level of an individual site, as well as to habitats and species across their European range. Therefore, in order to properly express the aims of the Habitats Directive for an individual site, the conservation objectives for a site are essentially to maintain (or restore) the habitats and species of the site at (or to) FCS.

The European Commission guidance recommends that screening should fulfil the following steps:

1. Determine whether the plan (or policy) is directly connected with or necessary for the management of European sites;
2. Describe the plan and describe and characterise any other plans or projects which, in combination, have the potential for having significant effects on European sites;
3. Identify the potential effects on European sites;

Assess the likely significance of any effects on European sites.

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<sup>7</sup> Managing European sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission 2000)

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