

Proposed Local Authority Own Housing
Development at Mayeston, Poppintree, Dublin 11
Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Environmental
Assessment
**Built
Environment**

Client:

Fingal County Council

Date:

17 November 2023

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

7080_RPMP01_Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Project No. 7080
Client: Fingal County Council
Project Name: Proposed Local Authority Own Housing Development at Mayeston, Poppintree, Dublin 11
Report Name: Appropriate Assessment Screening Report
Document No. RPMP01
Issue No. 03
Date: 17/11/2023

This document has been issued and amended as follows:

Issue	Status	Date	Prepared	Checked
01	Preliminary draft	24 Oct 2023	NK	MH
02	Draft	06 Nov 2023	NK	MH
03	Final	17 Nov 2023	NK	MH



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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Fingal County Council (FCC) proposes to develop new housing at Mayeston, Poppintree, Finglas, Dublin 11. It is proposed to carry out the said Local Authority Own Housing Development pursuant to s.179A of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (*“the 2000 Act”*), and, *inter alia*, Art.81A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended by the Planning and Development (Section 179A) Regulations 2023 (SI No.101/2023) (*“the 2001 Regulations”*) – the foregoing provides the statutory criteria and processes which apply to such housing developments.

It is noted that the Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029 contains policies and objectives relevant to Screening for Appropriate Assessment / Appropriate Assessment, including DMSO3, Local Authority Development, which states *“[e]nsure Local Authority development proposals are subject to environmental assessment, as appropriate, including Screening for Appropriate Assessment...”*.

Brady Shipman Martin was appointed to prepare a report to assist Fingal County Council 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 development, 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 (*“AA Screening Report”*) prepared for this purpose.

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

1.2 Expertise and Qualifications

This AA Screening Report has been prepared by Namrata Kaile, Ecologist and Environmental Consultant with Brady Shipman Martin. She holds a Bachelor’s Degree (BSc) in Life Sciences from University of Delhi and a Master’s Degree (MSc) with distinction in Environmental Sciences from Trinity College Dublin. She is an associate member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and has been working professionally in the field of environmental consultancy for the last four years. Namrata is experienced in drafting and reviewing AA Screening Reports, EIA Screening Reports as well as in coordination of EIARs. She is also experienced in undertaking baseline ecological surveys and preparing Ecological Impact Assessments Reports (EclA).

A technical review of this document has been completed by Senior Ecologist and Associate, 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 20 years of experience in ecological and environmental consultancy, across a wide range of sectors. 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 make up 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 Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended)¹ (the “Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations”) and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) (the “Planning Acts”).

More relevantly, for present purposes and the proposed Local Authority Own Housing Development, s.179A(1) of the 2000 Act provides that the section (179A) applies to land “*that is not subject to a requirement, in accordance with the Habitats Directive, for an Appropriate Assessment*” (per s.179A(1)(e)). Art.81A(6) of the 2001 Regulations also provides:

“(6)(a) Where a local authority proposes to undertake a housing development under Section 179A of the Act, it shall carry out in respect of the housing development a screening for appropriate assessment, to determine, using the best scientific knowledge, if the housing development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site or sites in view of the site’s conservation objectives.

(b) If on the basis of a screening under sub-article (6)(a) it can be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed housing development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site or sites, the local authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of the housing development is not required and that the housing development complies with the requirements of section 179A(1) of the Act.

(c) If on the basis of a screening under sub-article (6)(a) it cannot be excluded, on the basis of objective information, that the proposed housing development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on a European site or sites, the local authority shall determine that an appropriate assessment of the housing development is required and that the housing development does not comply with the requirements of section 179A(1) of the Act.”

European sites are also known as Natura 2000 Sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA)). As defined in section 177R of the Planning Acts “European site” means:

- (a) a candidate site of Community importance,
- (b) a site of Community importance,
- (ba) a candidate special area of conservation,
- (c) a special area of conservation,
- (d) a candidate special protection area and
- (e) a special protection area.

Article 6(3) 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 light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site

¹ SI No. 477 of 2011

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. Section 177U of the Planning Acts requires that screening for appropriate assessment must be carried out:

- 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 project is not required for the management of any European Site and 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 Guidelines

This report takes the following guidance documents into account:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*, September 2018, updated in September 2019 (V1.1), further updated in April 2022 (V1.2);
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) (2010a). *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities*;
- DoEHLG (2010b). *Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10: Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities*;
- European Commission (2021). *Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites- Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*;
- European Commission (2018). *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*;
- Directorate – General for Environment (European Commission), (2021). *Guidance document on the strict protection of animal species of Community Interest under the Habitats Directive*;
- National Roads Authority (NRA)² (2009). *Guidelines for Assessment of Ecological Impacts of National Road Schemes*;
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) (2021). *Practice Note PN01 Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*;
- National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) (2021). *Guidance for Public authorities on the Application of Articles 12 and 16 of the EU Habitats Directive to development/works undertaken by or on behalf of a Public authority*.

² Now Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

2.2 Baseline Data Collection and Field Visits

A desk-based assessment was undertaken in October 2023 of the Mayeston site. 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.

In order to provide comprehensive baseline on the local ecological environment, biodiversity surveys were undertaken at the proposed development site by BSM on 26 August 2022 and 23 June 2023. The surveys undertaken comprised habitat, invasive species, rare and/or protected species, mammals, birds and day-time bat survey.

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.

An examination of available information from Bat Conservation Ireland (BCI), previous data from neighbouring sites was also undertaken to compile a list of most likely species in the overall area in addition to the evaluation of the habitat for bats. There are no bat species listed as Qualifying Interests in any European sites within the Zone of Influence. However, Article 12 of the Habitats Directive requires Member States to take requisite measures to establish a system of strict protection of animal species listed in Annex IV(a) in their natural range.

Information was collated from the organisations and websites listed below:

- 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 Housing, Local Government and Heritage (www.NPWS.ie);
 - The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NDBC) (www.biodiversityireland.ie);
 - BirdWatch Ireland (www.birdwatchireland.ie);
 - Bat Conservation Ireland (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;
- Photographs taken at the site;
- Information on local watercourses from www.catchments.ie;
- Information on water quality in the area (www.epa.ie);
- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area (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 2023 – 2029, including the accompanying Appropriate Assessment documentation (Natura Impact Report).

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

3 Description of the Proposed Development

3.1 Site Location

The proposed development site (c. 1.35Ha) is located at Mayeston, Poppintree, Finglas, Dublin 11 (refer to **Figure 3.1** below). It is located between St. Margaret's Road to the south and the M50 motorway to the north. The residential development of Mayeston Green is to the immediate east of the site. Mayeston Downs is to the immediate south and there is public open space to the west. The site is accessed via the existing road network off Mayeston Downs and Mayeston Green.

Under the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 the majority of the site is zoned as *Residential (RS)* – 'Provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity.' There is a small section of the site to the north-west zoned as *Open Space* – 'Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities', no works are proposed in this section.

3.2 Development Description

The proposed development relates to a site of c.1.35ha located within existing residential development referred to as Mayeston, Poppintree, Dublin 11. The site is located north of St Margaret's Road and is bound by the M50 motorway to the north, Mayeston Green and Silloge Green to the east, Mayeston Downs to the south, and to the west by public open space.

The proposed development will include for the provision of 119 no. apartment units consisting of 39 one-bedroom apartments, 68 no. two-bedroom apartments and 12 no. 3-bedroom apartments ranging from 3-6 no. storeys and will also include for car parking, cycle parking, pedestrian and cycle links, storage, services and plant areas. Landscaping will include for high quality private open space, communal amenity areas and public open space provision.

The site layout is shown in **Figures 3.2**.

Figure 3.1 The location of the proposed development site at Mayeston, Poppintree, Finglas, Dublin 11



Figure 3.2 Proposed site layout (O'Brain Beary Architects, 2023)



3.2.1 Water infrastructure

3.2.1.1 Water Supply

As noted in the Infrastructure Design Report, prepared by Downes Associates (2023) and submitted separately, a pre-connection enquiry was submitted to Uisce Éireann regarding the proposed development (connection enquiry reference CDS23001423). There are existing water services within and adjacent to the site which were constructed as part of the overall Mayeston Estate. Uisce Éireann has confirmed that the proposed development can be accommodated by the Irish Water network subject to an upgrade of an existing 100mm watermain adjacent to the site to 200mm over a distance of c. 25m on Mayeston Downs. The letter is included as Appendix A of the Infrastructure Design Report.

The new watermain network will comply with "*Irish Water - Code of Practice of Water Infrastructure: July 2020 IW-CDS-5020-03*". The average daily domestic demand (ADDD) is taken as 150 l/day and an average of occupancy of 2.7 persons per dwelling and 90/day for the crèche.

3.2.1.2 Surface Water Drainage

As noted in the Infrastructure Design Report (Downes Associates, 2023), there is an existing surface water drainage network serving the Mayeston estate consisting of an existing surface water sewer on Mayeston Downs and on Mayeston Green. There is attenuation storage within underground storage tanks located in the public open space area immediately to the west of the proposed development site. The existing attenuation tank system includes a storage allowance for runoff from 4,200m² of contributing (impermeable) area for the site under appraisal in this report as part of the previously proposed development. Although normal policy in Fingal County Council is to avoid such solutions, given the fact that the attenuation tanks are already in place and are appropriately sized it is considered appropriate to utilise the attenuation storage capacity provided by the already constructed tank. Runoff from the roof areas will therefore be directed to the existing attenuation system.

Surface water runoff from the remainder of the new development will be managed using appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) techniques as required in the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029. As set out in the Infrastructure Design Report permeable paving, grass areas and reinforced grass will be used within the site, and an extensive green roof will be provided at the proposed building where feasible. Swales (dry conveyance swales) will also be provided within the central courtyard area as part of the landscaping proposals. These will provide conveyance for exceedance runoff from the permeable pavements. Other SuDS measures will be incorporated into the surface water drainage systems at the site.

3.2.1.3 Foul Water Drainage

As noted in the Infrastructure Design Report (Downes Associates, 2023), the foul water drainage network will be separate to the surface water drainage system and will comply with "*Irish Water - Code of Practise of Wastewater Infrastructure: July 2020 IW-CDS- 5030-03*". The foul water will discharge to the existing foul sewer on Mayeston Green.

According to the confirmation of feasibility letter included at Appendix A of Infrastructure Design Report a connection to the Uisce Éireann's foul network can be facilitated subject to site specific comments. As the existing Mayeston foul sewer network has not been taken in charge, Uisce Éireann shall require the following as part of any connection application:

- Identify and procure transfer to Uisce Éireann of the arterial infrastructure within the 3rd party infrastructure;

- Demonstrate that the arterial infrastructure is in compliance with requirements of Irish Water Code of Practice and Standard Details and in adequate condition and capacity to cater for additional loads from the development;
- Confirm the connection of the 3rd party infrastructure to the Uisce Éireann in 225mm crossing St Margaret's Road, with a survey before the connection application stage.

Municipal wastewater generated in this area is conveyed via the existing municipal drainage network to the Irish Water Wastewater Treatment Plan (WWTP) at Ringsend (EPA licence no. D0034-01).

The predicted total daily wastewater discharge volume for the residential development is 48,150 litres per day and the predicted design peak flow is 3.7 litres per second.

The predicted total daily wastewater discharge volume for the crèche development is 6,300 litres per day and the predicted peak discharge rate is 0.48 litres per second.

3.2.2 Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment

A Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) Report has been prepared by Downes Associates (2023) in accordance with the OPW 2009 publication "*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*" and is presented within the Infrastructure Design Report, prepared by Downes Associates and submitted separately. As noted in the Flood Risk Assessment, the site is elevated relative to and outside of the predicted flood extents of any existing watercourses based on current available information. Based on the available information, the subject site is considered not at risk of fluvial or tidal flooding. The site can therefore be considered to be in Flood Zone C – where the probability of flooding from rivers and seas is low.

The proposed residential development is classified as a combination of less vulnerable and highly vulnerable development. Vulnerable developments located within areas classified as Zone A or Zone B flooding require a justification test. Therefore, a justification test is not required for the proposed development as, based on the evidence outlined above, the development is considered to be located in Zone C, i.e. an area subject to a low probability of flooding.

4 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

4.1 Background

The first part of the Appropriate Assessment process is the Screening phase. Screening identifies the likely effects of the proposed development 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.

In accordance with sections 177U of the Planning Acts, screening for appropriate assessment must be carried out:

- 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.

Screening must be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation and it is in this context that this AA Screening Report is prepared.

In addition to the foregoing, OPR's Practice Note "Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management", dated March 2021 – also details a number of key concepts relevant to AA Screening, including "Best Scientific Knowledge/Information in the Field" (pg.5), stating:

"The screening determination must be based on scientific information relevant to the likely effects on the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites. The information should be up-to-date and based on the best available techniques and methods to estimate the presence and extent of effects. This is because if there is any scientific uncertainty as to the absence of significant effects, the project must be screened in for appropriate assessment.

In the vast majority of cases the information provided by the applicant (including the project description) and publicly available information in relation to the European sites in question and information published by the NPWS, the EPA and others in relation to such sites, should provide a sufficient level of objective scientific information to allow the planning authority to make an informed decision on screening."

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 under section 177V of the Planning Acts for the purposes of compliance with 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 development, 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.

4.2 Potential Zone of Influence

This assessment is based on the source-pathway-receptor model, which dictates that, for an 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 two (such as a watercourse). A construction site or completed development may also create a barrier to movement, for example, by preventing the migration of fauna along a river corridor, or by obstructing the migration of birds.

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. Although there may be a risk of an impact, it may not necessarily occur, and if it does occur, it may not be significant.

There are no set recommended distances for projects to consider European sites as being relevant for assessment. DoEHLG (2010a, pp. 31 – 32) states that:

"The approach to screening is likely to differ somewhat for plans and projects, depending on scale and on the likely effects, but the following should be included:

- 1. Any Natura 2000 sites within or adjacent to the plan or project area*
- 2. Any Natura 2000 sites within the likely zone of impact of the plan or project. A distance of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans, and derives from UK guidance (Scott Wilson et al., 2006). For projects, the distance could be much less than 15km, and in some cases less than 100m, but this must 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*
- 3. Natura 2000 sites that are more than 15km from the plan or project area depending on the likely impacts of the plan or project, and the sensitivities of the ecological receptors, bearing in mind the*

precautionary principle. In the cases of sites with water dependent habitats or species, and a plan or project that could affect water quality or quantity, for example, it may be necessary to consider the full extent of the upstream and/or downstream catchment."

The 2021 OPR guidelines, *Practice Note PN01: Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management*, state that the Zone of Influence "should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source-Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km)" (p. 8).

Therefore, considering the nature, scale and location of the proposed development, and in accordance with the source-pathway-receptor model, the potential Zone of Influence for the proposed development is:

- Any site to which there is a pathway from the proposed development site during either the construction or operational phase of the development as defined in the following sections.

4.2.1 European Sites

The site of the proposed development is not under any designation for nature conservation. There are no European sites within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site at Mayeston, Poppintree, Finglas, Co. Dublin.

The nearest sites are as follows (see also **Figure 4.2**):

- **Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)**

- Malahide Estuary SAC (site code 000205), c. 8.4km to the north-east;
- North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c. 8.9km to the south-east;
- South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), c. 9.2km to the south-east;
- Baldoyle Bay SAC (site code 000199), c. 9.3km to the east;
- Rogerstown Estuary SAC (site codes 000208), c. 11.6 to the north-east;
- Howth Head SAC (site code 000202), c. 13.0km to the east;
- Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000), c. 14km to the east;
- Ireland's Eye SAC (site code 002193), c. 14.2km to the east;
- Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (site code 001398), c. 14.4km to the south-west;
- Glenasmole Valley SAC (site code 001209), c. 17.4km to the south;
- Wicklow Mountains SAC (site code 002122), c. 18.7km to the south;
- Lambay Island SAC (site code 000204), c. 18.7km to the north-east;

- **Special Protection Areas (SPA)**

- South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024), c. 6.5km to the south-east;
- Malahide Estuary SPA (site code 004025), c. 8.4km to the north-east;
- North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c. 8.5km to the south-east;
- Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016), c. 9.5km to the east;
- North-West Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236), c. 11.2km to the east;
- Rogerstown Estuary SPA (site code 004015), c. 12.2km to the north-east;
- Ireland's Eye SPA (site code 004117), c. 14.0km to the east;
- Howth Head Coast SPA (site code 004113), c. 15.3km to the east;
- Wicklow Mountains SPA (site code 004040), c. 18.9km to the south;
- Lambay Island SPA (site code 004069), c. 19km to the north-east;
- Dalkey Islands SPA (site code 004172), c. 19km to the south-east;
- Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (site code 004063), c. 28.5km south-west.

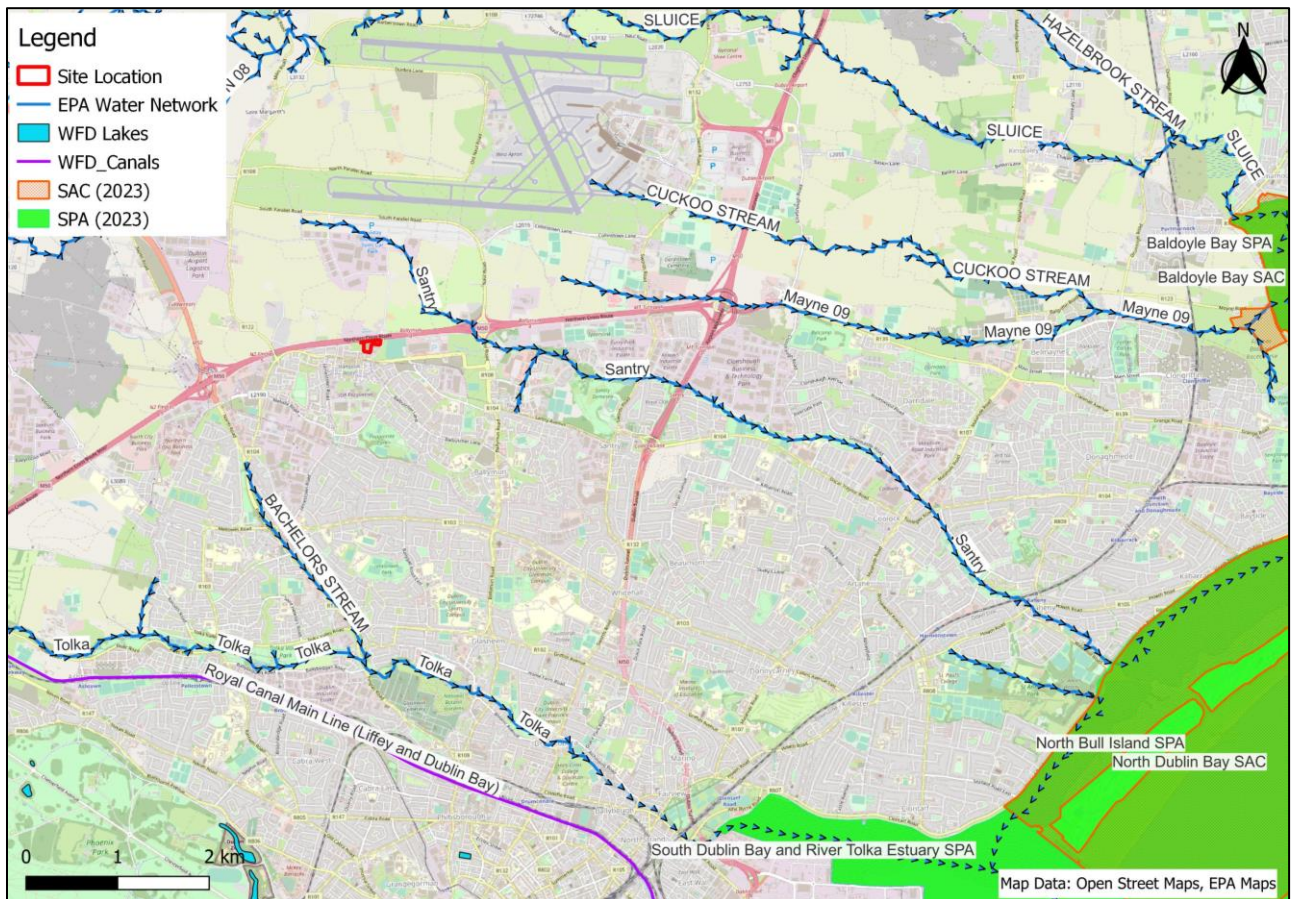
Note that the above-listed distances are linear (i.e. 'as the crow flies').

A review of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) web-tool indicates that there are no watercourses within the proposed site. The nearest mapped watercourse is the Santry River (EPA Code: IE_EA_09S011100) which is c. 650m to the east, flows to the south-east into the transitional waters of the North Bull Island Estuary / Dublin Bay. The Santry River flows into Dublin Bay via a culvert just north of the junction of Causeway Road and James Larkin Road near St Anne’s Park, near to North Bull Island. There is therefore a potential (albeit unlikely) surface water link between the proposed development site and the Natura 2000 Sites in the Dublin Bay (i.e. North Bull Island SPA, North Dublin Bay SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, North West Irish Sea cSPA). Refer to **Figure 4.1**.

A second potential link to coastal European sites is via the emission point of the Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant (WwTP) which will receive foul water flows from the proposed development during its operation.

The Conservation Objectives of these sites are to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the QIs / SCIs in question. Where specific conservation objectives have been set out by the NPWS, ‘favourable conservation condition’ is defined in respect of specific attributes and targets for the habitat or species in question. For further information, refer to **Appendix II**.

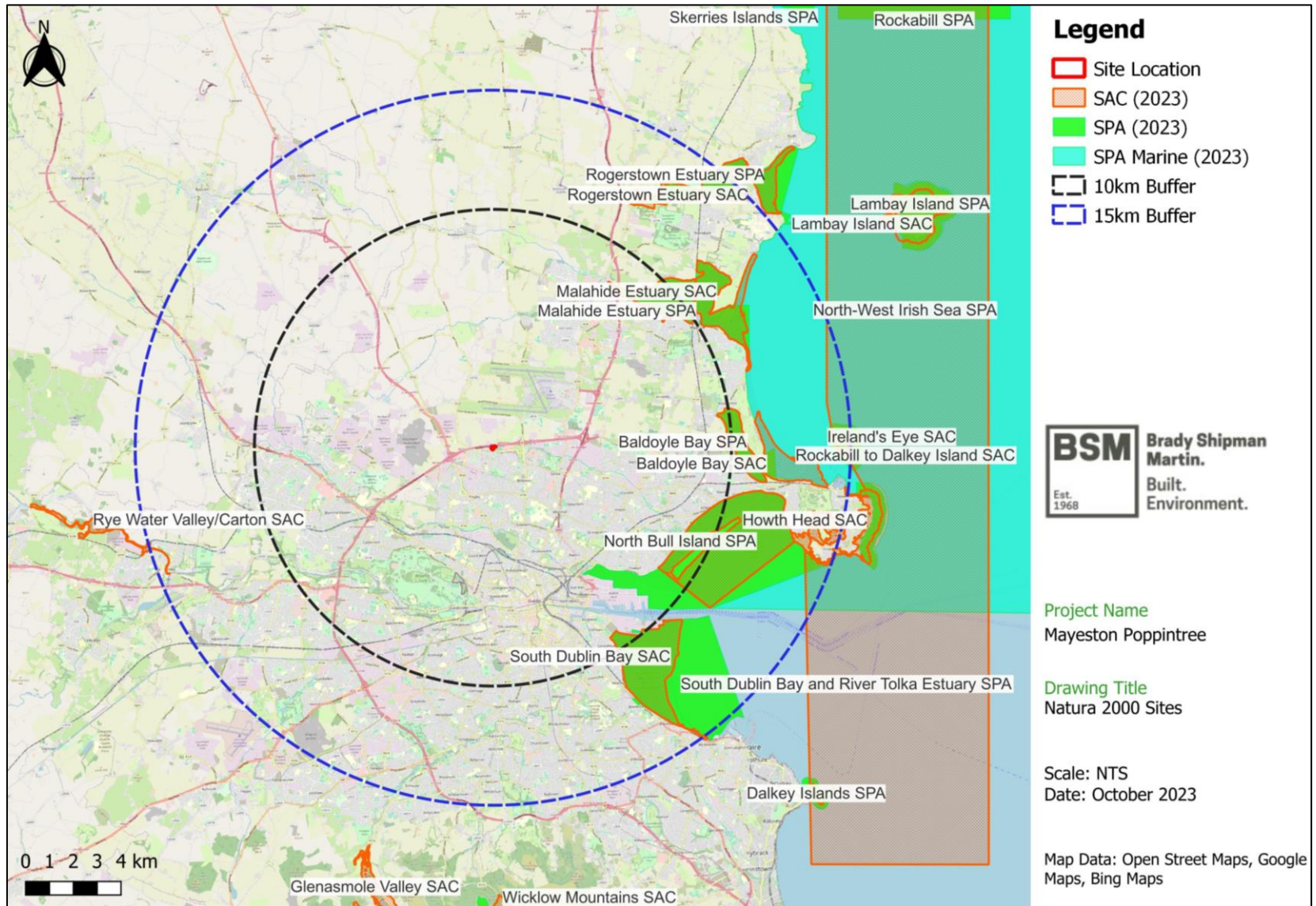
Figure 4.1 EPA waterbodies in the proximity of the proposed development at Mayeston



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Figure 4.2 European sites within zone of influence of the proposed development at Mayeston. A 10km and 15km radius is shown for scale.



4.2.2 Other designated areas (other than European sites)

Designated Sites other than European sites (i.e. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) and designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHA)) are included in this assessment in order to address their potential to act as supporting sites for the European sites (see **Figure 4.3**). There are no fully designated NHAs within the zone of influence. The pNHAs within the immediate vicinity include:

- Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA):
 - Santry Demesne pNHA (site code 000178), c.1.7km to the east;
 - Royal Canal pNHA (site code 002103), c. 3.8km to the south;
 - Feltrim Hill pNHA (site code 001208) c. 6.6km to the north-east;
 - North Dublin Bay pNHA (site code 000206), c. 6.6km to the south-east;
 - Liffey Valley pNHA (site code 000128), c. 7.2km to the south-west;
 - Grand Canal pNHA (site code 002104), c. 7.9km to the south;
 - Malahide Estuary (site code 000205), c. 8.8 km to the north-east;
 - Sluice River Marsh pNHA (site code 001763) c. 8.8km to the east;
 - Baldoyle Bay pNHA (site code 000199), c. 9.3km to the east;
 - South Dublin Bay pNHA (site code 000210), c. 9.3km to the south-east.

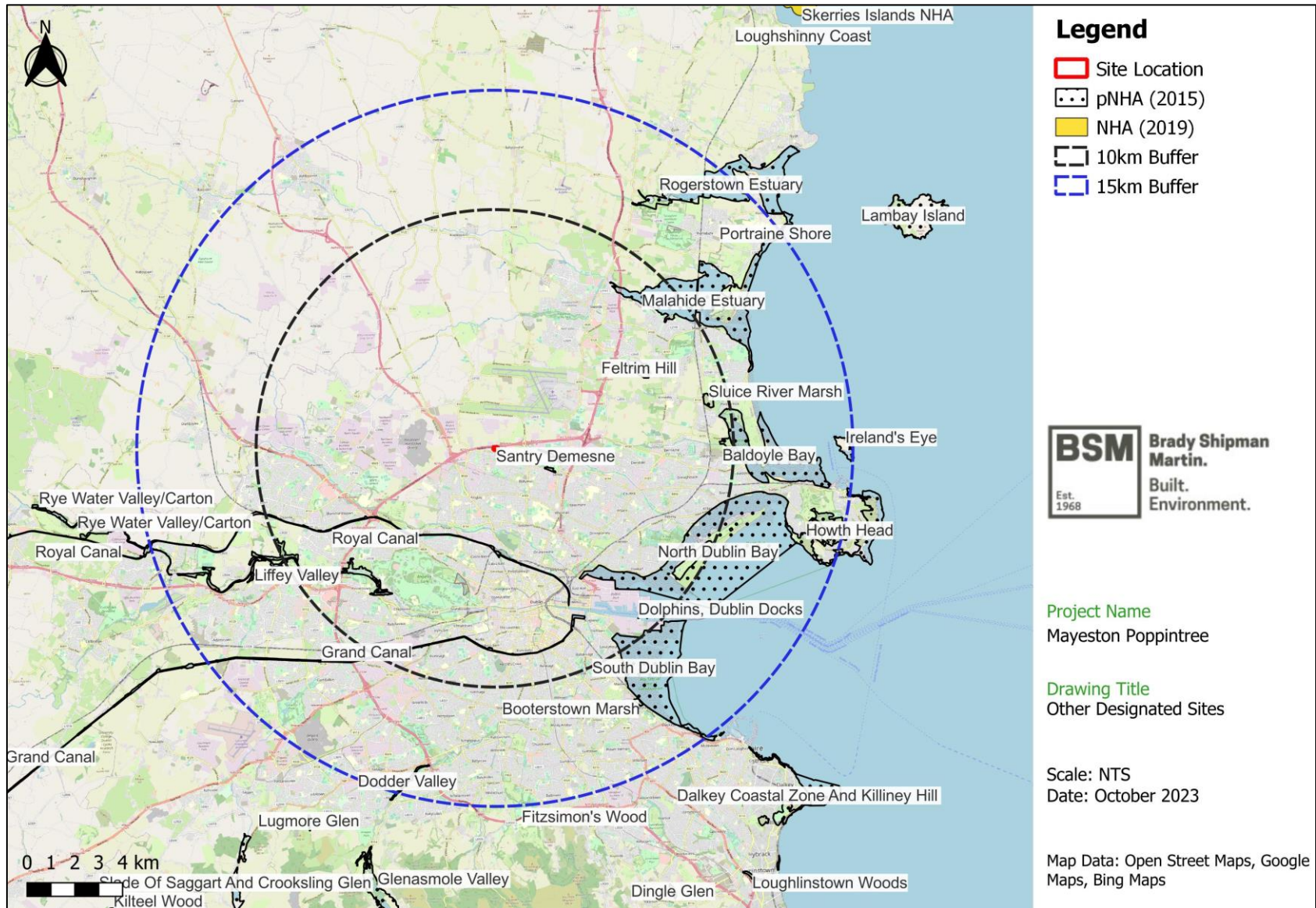
Note that above distances are as crow flies (i.e. linear distances). No impacts are expected on any pNHA in the zone of influence.

Figure 4.3 illustrates all of the pNHA within the potential Zone of Influence (including those which overlap with European sites).

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Figure 4.3 pNHA sites within zone of influence of the proposed development at Mayeston. A 10km and 15km radius is shown for scale.



4.3 Study area and surrounding environment

No ecologically significant habitats are present on the proposed development site. The site is a partly developed brownfield site and forms part of the Mayeston estate which has been developed in recent years. The southern/western two thirds of the site is mainly dominated by a mix of hard standing (concrete pads and an asphalt road) and spoil mounds and recolonising bare ground (gravel and soil). This area is heavily dominated by buddleia. Occasional young birch (*Betula* sp.) saplings are also present. There are patches of winter heliotrope (*Petasites fragrans*)³ present here.

The remaining northern/eastern part of the site comprises of an area of rank grassland, with encroaching scrub (mainly bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and hedge bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*) now dominating much of the site area. Other scrub species include dogwood (*Cornus* sp.), Japanese rose (*Rosa rugosa*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) as well as willowherb (*Epilobium* spp.) and occasional privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), buddleia (*Buddleja davidii*) and cherry (*Prunus*).

There are no features suitable for use by roosting bats (species protected under Article 12 of the Habitats Directive) within the site, even on an occasional basis and overall the site is of only very low suitability for foraging and commuting bats. No evidence of otter (also protected under Article 12 of the Habitats Directive) was recorded and the site is entirely unsuitable for the species.

Evidence of fox activity was noted, however no other evidence of protected large mammals, such as badger, was recorded during the surveys carried out.

No species listed on the Third Schedule of the Habitats Regulations, such as giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) or three-cornered leek (*Allium triquetrum*) were recorded at the proposed development site.

The proposed development site is not under any wildlife or conservation designation. The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) database was consulted with regard to rare species (Curtis & McGough, 1988) and species protected under the *Flora Protection Order* (2022). There are no records of any protected plant species within the 2km grid square (O14K) that covers the proposed development area.

As noted in Section 4.2, the nearest watercourse is the Santry River (EPA Code: IE_EA_09S011100) which is c. 650m to the east, flows to the south-east into the transitional waters of the North Bull Island Estuary / Dublin Bay. The Santry River flows into Dublin Bay via a culvert just north of the junction of Causeway Road and James Larkin Road near St Anne's Park, near to North Bull Island. The proposed development site is located within the Liffey and Dublin Bay catchment (09), Maybe SC_010 (09_17) and Tolka_SC_020 (09_4) sub-catchments and Santry_010 and Tolka_060 river sub-basins.

As per the WFD 2016-2021 status, the Santry River (IE_EA_09S010300) is of 'Poor' status and are 'At risk' for river waterbodies risk. As per the WFD 2016-2021 status, the North Bull Island transitional water (IE_EA_090_0100) is 'moderate' and the risk status is under 'review'.

³ In addition to winter heliotrope, the native coltsfoot (*Tussilago farfara*) is also present on this site. Although similar the plants can be distinguished by their leaves (see Plate 6), and their flowers.

5 Potential impacts from the proposed development including in-combination effects

5.1 European sites and habitats with links to European sites

The proposed development 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, 2022* or the *EU Habitats Directive*, are known to occur within the site and none were recorded during the site visits carried out.

No rare habitats or habitats of significant ecological value (i.e. International or National) are present at the site and no rare plants were recorded during the surveys undertaken. The scrub does have some limited value (at the site level only) for breeding birds, and small numbers of four common species were recorded on the site (starling, blackbird, robin and feral pigeon). There is no habitat on the site suitable for use, even on a very occasional basis, by any overwintering birds, such as pale-bellied Brent goose, or any other protected bird species listed as a Special Conservation Interest (SCI) in any European site within the Zone of Influence.

None of the habitats or features present on the site are Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests in any European site within the Zone of Influence and none of these Qualifying Interests/Special Conservation Interests are present on the site. No evidence of any habitats or species with links to European sites was recorded during either the field surveys or desk study undertaken and no 'reservoir' type habitats (habitats which have the potential to support Qualifying Interest/Special Conservation Interest species in any European site) are present.

Overall the site of the proposed development is of no more than **Local (lower Value) importance**, 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)).

5.1.1 Potential impacts during construction

The proposed development comprises a local authority residential development project. The proposed development site comprises heavily disturbed and transitional habitats and is of no more than local (lower) ecological value, as noted in Section 5.1 above. There is no possibility of any of the QIs or SCIs of the European Sites in the potential Zone of Influence ever occurring at the proposed development site.

All site clearance and construction activities pose a potential risk to water as surface / ground water arising at the site may contain contaminants. The main contaminants arising from construction 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.

Considering the significant distance to the nearest mapped watercourse (c.650m to the Santry River), polluted surface water will not be emitted directly to any surface water body. There is a possibility that contaminated surface water from the site could enter the municipal surface water drainage network and be indirectly discharged to surface waters (e.g. during extreme rainfall events and / or high tides), thereby creating an indirect hydrological pathway linking the proposed development site with European Sites downstream. Even in the event of such an emission, considering the high dilution factor and in potential receiving watercourses, and the distances to the nearest European Sites, it is not likely that perceptible ecological effects could arise in this way.

Despite the presence of these 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 locally, it is reasonable to assume that **this would not be perceptible in the offshore European sites**, for the following reasons:

- There is a significant distance between the site of the proposed development and the nearest European sites and there is no direct pathway between the proposed development site and the European site, other than potentially via the surface water drainage network;
- Any pollution from the site clearance and construction works would be minimal in quantity and if it entered any watercourse it would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea. A significant level of dilution and mixing of surface and sea water would occur in any event. Upon reaching the estuary any pollutants would be even further diluted and dissipated by the receiving waters;
- In addition, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period. There is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development, given the nature and scale of the proposed development and its location in the centre of a busy town away from the European sites.

The proposed site clearance and construction works may be expected to involve noisy activities, dust-generating activities, construction traffic and machinery, and the generation of waste material for off-site disposal. Typical environmental effects are predicted, including elevated levels of noise, emissions of dust, and direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions. Generally speaking, these effects will be short-term in duration, reversible and localised. Existing vegetation of limited ecological value will also be cleared under the scope of the proposed works.

There are no designated sites – national or European – at the site of the proposed development or in the immediate vicinity. The nearest European Site within the potential Zone of Influence is the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024), a c.6.5km linear distance from the site – and at a much greater remove via any potential impact pathway. Considering the distance of the proposed development from the nearest European Sites in the potential Zone of Influence, and the absence of any associated QIs or SCIs, there is no likelihood of direct effects on any European Site arising as a result of the proposed development.

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 development, and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

Significant effects arising as a result of the construction of the proposed development, on European sites (or on proposed Natural Heritage Areas), can therefore be excluded.

5.1.2 Potential impacts during operation

During the operational phase, typical environmental aspects and effects associated with the presence and operation of residential development are also predicted, including potable water consumption, foul water loading to the municipal network, and direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions. Operational phase effects are expected to be permanent in duration. However, it is noted that the site is located within existing Mayeston estate and is appropriate to the site.

As set out in the Infrastructure Design Report prepared by Downes Associates (2023) and discussed in Section 3.2, surface water runoff from the development will be managed using the existing attenuation infrastructure as well as appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) techniques as set out in the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029.

Even in the total absence of any attenuation or SuDS measures there would be no impacts on any European sites. The significant distances to European sites and the natural characteristics of the receiving waters ensure rapid mixing of water such that there is no possibility of any appreciable effect on water quality in European sites in any event.

As set out in the SSFRA, the Office of Public Works (OPW) CFRAM flood studies maps show the site is within Flood Zone C i.e. outside of the 1 in 1000 year flood event from either fluvial or tidal flooding.

Significant effects related to surface water management or flooding, arising as a result of the operation of the proposed development, on European sites or otherwise, can therefore be excluded.

The proposed foul water drainage system will connect with existing municipal infrastructure (refer to Section 3.2.1) From here, the foul water will be conveyed to the Irish Water WwTP at Ringsend, where the effluent will be subject to treatment prior to discharge to Dublin Bay at Poolbeg. This creates an indirect hydrological pathway linking the proposed development site with European Sites in Dublin Bay.

As set out in Infrastructure Design Report prepared by Downes Associates (2023), the peak wastewater discharge is calculated at 3.7l/s for the residential units and 0.48l/s for the crèche. The Ringsend WwTP operates under licence from the EPA (Licence no. D0034-01) and received planning permission (ABP reg. ref.: 301798) in 2019 for upgrade works, which commenced in 2018 and are expected to be fully completed by 2025. The upgrade works will result in treatment of sewage to a higher quality than current, thereby ensuring effluent discharge to Dublin Bay will comply with the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive by Q4 2023.

Significant effects related to foul water management, arising as a result of the operation of the proposed development, on European sites or otherwise, can therefore be excluded.

It is possible that there will be a marginal increase in demand for potable water during the operational phase. Drinking water in Dublin City is largely derived from the Poulaphouca Reservoir in Co. Wicklow. There is, therefore, a potential impact pathway (via water abstraction) from the proposed development site to the Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (site code 004063), designated for the protection of Greylag Goose and Lesser Black-backed Gull. However, any increase in potable water demand would not be significant in the context of the total volume abstracted from the reservoir. Furthermore, there is no evidence that current levels of water abstraction are conservation threats to these SCIs.

For the reasons set out above, no pNHAs have the potential to be affected by the proposed development in a manner that could directly or indirectly affect any European Sites or their QIs / SCIs, taking into account their Conservation Objectives.

There is no possibility of any other potential direct, indirect or secondary impacts on any European site once the proposed development 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 development, and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

Operation-related impacts as a result of the proposed development, on European sites or otherwise, can therefore be excluded.

A detailed discussion of the potential impacts of the proposed development on individual European sites within the potential Zone of Influence is presented in **Table 5.1**, below.

Table 5.1 Potential impacts on European sites in the potential Zone of Influence

Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2023) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link	Likely Significant Effect?
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (site code 004024), c. 6.5km to the south-east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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>) ■ 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>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to this SPA’s site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9 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 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 residential 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 transitional waters of Dublin Bay. There would be no significant effects on the SPA should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, 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 development site, any pollution from the construction site would be minimal in quantity and if it entered any watercourse it would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea and would not be perceptible in South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, due to the very small volumes.</p> <p>This is due to the separation between the proposed development site and the European site – the proposed development site is c. 6.5km (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. Furthermore, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development given the nature and scale of the proposed development, on</p>	No

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Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2023) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link	Likely Significant Effect?
		<p>an already developed site and its location at a remove from the European sites.</p> <p>There is a potential indirect hydrological pathway between the proposed development and European Sites in Irish Sea via the municipal wastewater drainage network (which contains overflow arrangements) and the Ringsend WWTP. However, as detailed above, considering the capacity available at Ringsend WWTP, and the substantial dilution factor in the sea, there is no possibility of significant impacts on this or any other European site arising as a result of the proposed development via this pathway. 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 development.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development.</p>	
<p>Malahide Estuary SAC (site code 000205), c. 8.4km to the north-east</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand ■ 1320 Spartina swards (<i>Spartinion maritimae</i>) ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) ■ 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) ■ 2120 Shifting dunnes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) ■ 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)* <p><i>*indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive</i></p>	<p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SAC. It is approximately 8.4km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p> <p>Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QI's of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>	<p>No</p>

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	<p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27 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>Malahide Estuary SPA (site code 004025), c. 8.4km to the north-east</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A005 Great Crested Grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>) ■ A046 Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) ■ A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) ■ A067 Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>) ■ A069 Red-breasted (<i>Merganser Mergus serrator</i>) ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 16 August 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>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SPA. It is approximately 8.4km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p> <p>Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCI's of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>North Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000206), c.8.9km south-east</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide ■ 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines ■ 1310 Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand 	<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 residential development could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such</p>	<p>No</p>

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Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2023) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link	Likely Significant Effect?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) ■ 1395 Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</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 <p><i>*indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive</i></p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 06 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) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, eventually, to transitional waters of Dublin Bay. There would be no significant effects on the SAC should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, 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 development site, any pollution from the construction site would be minimal in quantity and if it entered any watercourse it would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea and would not be perceptible in North Dublin Bay SAC, due to the very small volumes.</p> <p>This is due to the separation between the proposed development site and the European site – the proposed development site is c. 8.9km (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. Furthermore, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development given the nature and scale of the proposed development, on an already developed site and its location at a remove from the European sites.</p> <p>There is a potential indirect hydrological pathway between the proposed development and European Sites in Irish Sea via the municipal wastewater drainage network (which contains overflow arrangements) and the Ringsend WWTP. However, as detailed above, considering the capacity available at Ringsend WWTP, and the substantial dilution factor in the sea, there is no possibility of significant impacts on this or any other European site arising as a result of the proposed development via this pathway.</p>	

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Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2023) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link	Likely Significant Effect?
		<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 development.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development.</p>	
<p>North Bull Island SPA (site code 004006), c. 8.5km to the south-east</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) ■ A052 Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) ■ A054 Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) ■ A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) ■ A144 Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A160 Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) ■ A169 Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) ■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) ■ A999] Wetland <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 9 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 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 residential 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 transitional waters of Dublin Bay. There would be no significant effects on the SPA should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, 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 development site, any pollution from the construction site would be minimal in quantity and if it entered any watercourse it would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea and would not be perceptible in North Bull Island SPA, due to the very small volumes.</p> <p>This is due to the separation between the proposed development site and the European site – the proposed development site is c. 8.5km (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. Furthermore, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts</p>	<p>No</p>

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Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2023) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link	Likely Significant Effect?
		<p>arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development given the nature and scale of the proposed development, on an already developed site and its location at a remove from the European sites.</p> <p>There is a potential indirect hydrological pathway between the proposed development and European Sites in Irish Sea via the municipal wastewater drainage network (which contains overflow arrangements) and the Ringsend WWTP. However, as detailed above, considering the capacity available at Ringsend WWTP, and the substantial dilution factor in the sea, there is no possibility of significant impacts on this or any other European site arising as a result of the proposed development via this pathway. 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 development.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development.</p>	
<p>South Dublin Bay SAC (site code 000210), c. 9.2km to the south-east</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide <p>The following habitats are listed as Qualifying Interests on the NPWS website, but are not included in the Conservation Objectives document: (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 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>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 residential 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 transitional waters of Dublin Bay. There would be no significant effects on the SAC should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, 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 development site, any pollution from the construction site would be minimal in quantity and if it entered any watercourse it would be so diluted as to be</p>	<p>No</p>

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Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2023) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link	Likely Significant Effect?
		<p>undetectable by the time the water enters the sea and would not be perceptible in South Dublin Bay SAC, due to the very small volumes.</p> <p>This is due to the separation between the proposed development site and the European site – the proposed development site is c. 9.2km (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. Furthermore, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development given the nature and scale of the proposed development, on an already developed site and its location at a remove from the European sites.</p> <p>There is a potential indirect hydrological pathway between the proposed development and European Sites in Irish Sea via the municipal wastewater drainage network (which contains overflow arrangements) and the Ringsend WWTP. However, as detailed above, considering the capacity available at Ringsend WWTP, and the substantial dilution factor in the sea, there is no possibility of significant impacts on this or any other European site arising as a result of the proposed development via this pathway. 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 development.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development.</p>	
Baldoyle Bay SAC (site code 000199), c.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 	There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SAC. It is approximately 9.3km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.	No

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Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2023) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link	Likely Significant Effect?
9.3km to the east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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>) <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 19 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>	Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QI's of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.	
Baldoyle Bay SPA (site code 004016), c. 9.5km to the east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A046 Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) ■ A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) ■ A140 Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A157 Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1 - dated 27 February 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>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SPA. It is approximately 9.5km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p> <p>Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCI's of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.</p>	No
North-West Irish Sea SPA (site code 004236), c. 11.2km to the east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A065 Common Scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>) ■ A001 Red-throated Diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>) ■ A003 Great Northern Diver (<i>Gavia immer</i>) ■ A009 Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>) ■ A013 Manx Shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>) 	<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 residential development could contain pollutants (foul water, silt, hydrocarbons and other chemicals). Such</p>	No

Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2023) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link	Likely Significant Effect?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A018 Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>) ■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) ■ A177 Little Gull (<i>Larus minutus</i>) ■ A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) ■ A179 Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) ■ A182 Common Gull (<i>Larus canus</i>) ■ A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) ■ A184 Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) ■ A187 Great Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus marinus</i>) ■ A195 Little Tern (<i>Sterna albifrons</i>) ■ A192 Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) ■ A193 Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) ■ A194 Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) ■ A204 Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>) ■ A200 Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) ■ A199 Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1 - dated 19 September 2023), for each of the listed SCIs, the Conservation Objective maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the species for which the SPA has been selected.</p>	<p>contaminated water could potentially discharge to the ground or the local surface water drainage network and from there, eventually, to transitional waters of Dublin Bay. There would be no significant effects on the SPA should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, 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 development site, any pollution from the construction site would be minimal in quantity and if it entered any watercourse it would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea and would not be perceptible in North-West Irish Sea cSPA, due to the very small volumes.</p> <p>This is due to the separation between the proposed development site and the European site – the proposed development site is c. 11.2km (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. Furthermore, the construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development given the nature and scale of the proposed development, on an already developed site and its location at a remove from the European sites.</p> <p>There is a potential indirect hydrological pathway between the proposed development and European Sites in Irish Sea via the municipal wastewater drainage network (which contains overflow arrangements) and the Ringsend WWTP. However, as detailed above, considering the capacity available at Ringsend WWTP, and the substantial dilution factor in the sea, there is no possibility of significant impacts on this or any other European site arising as a result of the proposed development via this pathway.</p>	

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Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2023) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link	Likely Significant Effect?
		<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 development.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development.</p>	
<p>Rogerstown Estuary SAC (site codes 000208), c. 11.6 to the north-east</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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)* <p>*indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive</p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 14 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>	<p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SAC. It is approximately 11.6km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p> <p>Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QI's of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Rogerstown Estuary SPA (site code 004015), c. 12.2km to the north-east</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A043 Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) ■ A046 Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) ■ A048 Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) ■ A056 Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) ■ A130 Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) 	<p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SPA. It is approximately 12.2km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p>	<p>No</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A137 Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) ■ A141 Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) ■ A143 Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) ■ A149 Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>) ■ A156 Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) ■ A162 Redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>) ■ A999 Wetlands <p>According to this SPA's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1 - dated 20 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>Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCI's of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.</p>	
<p>Howth Head SAC (site code 000202), c. 13.0km to the east</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts ■ 4030 European dry heaths <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 06 December 2016), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitats for which the SAC has been selected.</p>	<p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SAC. It is approximately 13km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p> <p>There is a potential indirect hydrological pathway between the proposed development and European Sites in Irish Sea via the municipal wastewater drainage network (which contains overflow arrangements) and the Ringsend WWTP. However, as detailed above, considering the capacity available at Ringsend WWTP, and the substantial dilution factor in the sea, there is no possibility of significant impacts on this or any other European site arising as a result of the proposed development via this pathway. Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QI's of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Howth Head Coast SPA (site code 004113), c. 15.3km to the east</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A188 Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) <p>According to this SPA's First Order Site Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0, dated 12 October 2022), for the listed SCI, the Conservation Objective is to maintain</p>	<p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SPA. It is approximately 15.3km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p> <p>There is a potential indirect hydrological pathway between the proposed development and European Sites in Irish Sea via the municipal wastewater</p>	<p>No</p>

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Site	Reasons for designation (information correct as of October 2023) (*denotes a priority habitat)	Discussion of Source-Pathway-Receptor Link	Likely Significant Effect?
	<p>or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.</p>	<p>drainage network (which contains overflow arrangements) and the Ringsend WWTP. However, as detailed above, considering the capacity available at Ringsend WWTP, and the substantial dilution factor in the sea, there is no possibility of significant impacts on this or any other European site arising as a result of the proposed development via this pathway. Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCI's of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.</p>	
<p>Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (site code 003000), c. 14km to the east</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1170 Reefs ■ 1351 Harbour Porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>) <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 07 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>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 residential 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 transitional waters of Dublin Bay. There would be no significant effects on the SAC should this occur, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, 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 development site, any pollution from the construction site would be minimal in quantity and if it entered any watercourse it would be so diluted as to be undetectable by the time the water enters the sea and would not be perceptible in Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, due to the very small volumes.</p> <p>This is due to the separation between the proposed development site and the European site – the proposed development site is c. 14km (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. Furthermore, the</p>	<p>No</p>

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		<p>construction of the proposed development will take place over a comparatively short period and there is no possibility of long-term impacts arising as a result of the construction elements of the proposed development given the nature and scale of the proposed development, on an already developed site and its location at a remove from the European sites.</p> <p>There is a potential indirect hydrological pathway between the proposed development and European Sites in Irish Sea via the municipal wastewater drainage network (which contains overflow arrangements) and the Ringsend WWTP. However, as detailed above, considering the capacity available at Ringsend WWTP, and the substantial dilution factor in the sea, there is no possibility of significant impacts on this or any other European site arising as a result of the proposed development via this pathway. 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 development.</p> <p>No operational impacts on this European site will occur as a result of the proposed development.</p>	
<p>Ireland's Eye SAC (site code 002193), c. 14.2km to the east</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks ■ 1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 27 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 direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SAC. It is approximately 14.2km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p> <p>Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QI's of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Ireland's Eye SPA (site code 004117), c.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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>) 	<p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SPA. It is approximately 14.0km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p>	<p>No</p>

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14.0km to the east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A200 Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>) <p>According to this SPA's First Order Site Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0, dated 12 October 2022), 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>	Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCI's of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.	
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC (site code 001398), c. 14.4km to the south-west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) ■ 1016 Desmoulin's whorl snail (<i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>) ■ 1014 Narrow-mouthed whorl snail (<i>Vertigo angustior</i>) <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22 December 2021), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objectives are 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 direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SAC. It is approximately 14.4km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p> <p>Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QI's of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>	No
Glenasmole Valley SAC (site code 001209), c. 17.4km to the south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ [6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (* important orchid sites) ■ [6410] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) ■ [7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* <p><i>*Indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive</i></p> <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 10 December 2021), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to restore the</p>	<p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SAC. It is approximately 17.4km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p> <p>Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QI's of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>	No

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	favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.		
Wicklow Mountains SAC (site code 002122), c. 18.7km to the south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ [1355] Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) ■ [3110] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</i>) ■ [3130] Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the <i>Littorelletea uniflorae</i> and/or <i>Isoeto-Nanojuncetea</i> ■ [3160] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [4010] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> ■ [4030] European dry heaths ■ [4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths ■ [6130] Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i> ■ [6230] Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) ■ [7130] Blanket bogs (* if active bog) ■ [8110] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (<i>Androsacetalia alpinae</i> and <i>Galeopsietalia ladani</i>) ■ [8210] Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation ■ [8220] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation ■ [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blenchnum</i> in the British Isles <p>According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 31 July May 2017), for each of the listed QIs, the Conservation Objective is to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I</p>	<p>There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SAC. It is approximately 18.7km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p> <p>Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QI's of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.</p>	No

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	habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.		
Wicklow Mountains SPA (site code 004040), c. 18.9km to the south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ [A098] Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) ■ [A103] Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>) According to this SPA's First Order Site Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0, dated 12 October 2022), 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.	There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SPA. It is approximately 18.9km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway. Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCI's of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.	No
Lambay Island SAC (site code 000204), c. 18.7km to the north-east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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>) According to this SAC's site Conservation Objectives document (Version 1, dated 22 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.	There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SAC. It is approximately 18.7km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway. Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the QI's of this SAC as a result of the proposed development.	No
Lambay Island SPA (site code 004069), c. 19km to the north-east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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>) 	There is no direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SPA. It is approximately 19km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway. Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCI's of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.	No

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A017 Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) <p>According to this SPA's First Order Site Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0, dated 12 October 2022), 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>		
Dalkey Islands SPA (site code 004172), c. 19km to the south-east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ [A192] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) ■ [A193] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) ■ [A194] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) <p>According to this SPA's First Order Site Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0, dated 12 October 2022), 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 direct hydrological link or any other pathway between the proposed residential development and this SPA. It is approximately 19km distant and is unconnected via surface water pathway.</p> <p>There is a potential indirect hydrological pathway between the proposed development and European Sites in Irish Sea via the municipal wastewater drainage network (which contains overflow arrangements) and the Ringsend WWTP. However, as detailed above, considering the capacity available at Ringsend WWTP, and the substantial dilution factor in the sea, there is no possibility of significant impacts on this or any other European site arising as a result of the proposed development via this pathway. Furthermore there will be no loss of species, fragmentation or disturbance to the SCI's of this SPA as a result of the proposed development.</p>	No
Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA (site code 004063), c. 28.5km south-west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ [A043] Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>) ■ [A183] Lesser Black-backed Gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) <p>According to this SPA's First Order Site Specific Conservation Objectives document (Version 1.0, dated 12 October 2022), 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>Drinking water in Dublin City is largely derived from the Poulaphouca Reservoir in Co. Wicklow. It is possible that there will be a marginal increase in demand for potable water during the operational phase. There is, therefore, a potential impact pathway (via water abstraction) from the proposed development site to the SPA. However, any increase in potable water demand would not be significant in the context of the total volume abstracted from the reservoir. Furthermore, there is no evidence that current levels of water abstraction are conservation threats to these SCIs.</p>	No

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		The site of the proposed development is very remote from the SPA, at a c.28.5km linear distance. The site bears no relation to the SCIs of the SPA, neither of which is likely to be present at the proposed development site.	

5.2 Summary of potential impacts of the proposed development

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 or operation of the proposed development, no predicted impact on *ex-situ* species and no interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of any European site.

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

- Habitat loss and/or fragmentation;
- Land-take;
- Resource requirements such as water abstraction;
- Impacts to habitat structure;
- Mortality to species (such as roadkill);
- Noise pollution / vibration impacts;
- Light pollution;
- Emissions to air (including dust);
- Emissions to water.

No invasive alien plant species (*i.e.* those species listed on Schedule 3 of the *Birds and Habitats Regulations, 2011* (as amended), 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.

6 Mitigation specific to European sites

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.

It is also consistent with the judgment in *Eco Advocacy CLG v An Bord Pleanála* [2021] IEHC 265. In that case, Humphreys J confirmed the core legal principle, being that regard should not be had to mitigation measures at AA screening stage. Humphreys J decided in that case that clarification was required from the CJEU on the matter (as it related to the consideration of SUDs and whether these represented mitigation measures).

The CJEU, in its ruling on this case dated 15 June 2023 clarified issues defining mitigation in the context of European sites⁴. It confirmed that Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43 *must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out an appropriate assessment of the implications of a plan or project for a site, account may be taken of the features of that plan or project which involve the removal of contaminants and which therefore may have the effect of reducing the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site, where those features have been incorporated into that plan or project as standard features, inherent in such a plan or project, irrespective of any effect on the site.*

⁴<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:62021CC0721>

In relation to European sites, there will be no impacts capable of giving rise to any likely significant effects as a result of the proposed development. SuDS measures will be incorporated into the design of the proposed development as standard features. SuDS features are highly effective and are required to be included in developments where appropriate (as noted in Section 3.2.1 SuDS are a requirement of Fingal County Council under the GSDS and the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works). These standard measures are considered best practice in construction and, therefore reasonable scientific doubt concerning their effectiveness can be ruled out.

As set out in this report, it is certain that likely significant effects on European sites as a result of both the construction and operation of the proposed development can be excluded. Even if no SuDS measures were to be incorporated into the design there could be no impacts on European sites.

No mitigation is necessary or proposed for the protection of European sites.

7 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).⁵ 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.

The following sources were consulted to identify relevant other plans or projects:

- Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029 (FCC, 2023);
- The National Planning Application database (www.myplan.ie - accessed October 2023);
- An Board Pleanála database (www.pleanala.ie – accessed October 2023); and
- EIA Portal (www.housinggovie.maps.arcgis.com – accessed October 2023).

Permitted and proposed projects in the immediate vicinity of the site were considered in terms of the potential for in-combination effects. There are no developments planned, permitted or under construction that will give rise to any significant effects on European sites in combination with the proposed development.

Considering the nature and scale of the proposed development, the localised and insignificant nature of the environmental effects predicted to occur as a result of the proposed development, and the nature of existing, permitted and proposed development in its environs, it is considered that significant in combination effects on European sites are not likely to occur.

The Fingal County Development Plan 2023-2029 has a series of objectives intended to protect and enhance the natural environment. For example the plan 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 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 development 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.

⁵ *Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, September 2021)*

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:

- The National Planning Framework (Project Ireland 2040);
- The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019 – 2031 (The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly);
- The Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study;
- Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022-2042;
- Climate Action Plan 2023 (CAP 23 – Changing Ireland for the Better);
- Fingal County Council Draft Fingal Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 (public consultation documentation);
- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017 – 2021.

It is considered that significant in-combination effects on European sites are not likely to occur as a result of the proposed development in combination with other plans or projects.

8 Screening conclusion

In view of best scientific knowledge this report concludes that the proposed development at the Mayeston site, individually or in combination with another plan or project, will not have a significant effect on any European sites. This conclusion 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 development will not have any likely significant effects on European sites in light of their conservation objectives.

9 References

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Appendix I: Background

The European⁶ 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 *European Union (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011-2021* (hereafter referred to as the *Birds and Habitats Regulations*)⁷ and by the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended.

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

Stages in the assessment

European Commission guidance (2021)⁸ 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:

⁶ 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”

⁷ SI No. 477 of 2011 and subsequent amendments

⁸ *Assessment of Plans and Projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC* (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, September 2021)

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 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.

Appendix II 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 Commission⁹ 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.

⁹ Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. (European Commission November 2018)

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