

# Rowan



## Appropriate Assessment

Coffey Construction Ltd  
*Client Ref: 6613/COF0001-6*

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# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) requires that all plans and projects be screened for potential impacts upon Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The aim of this screening process is to establish whether a full Appropriate Assessment of the proposed plan or project is necessary.

A comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts of a proposed development at Slade, Saggart, Co. Dublin on designated sites was carried out in March 2021 by Noreen McLoughlin, MSc, MCIEEM of Whitehill Environmental. This screening report will allow the competent authority, in this case South Dublin County Council, to undertake an Appropriate Assessment as required under Articles 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive.

The location of the proposed development is within 15km of sites designated under European Law. As such and in accordance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) regarding Appropriate Assessment, this screening exercise for Appropriate Assessment was carried out in order to identify whether any significant impacts on designated sites are likely. This exercise will also determine the appropriateness of the proposed project, in the context of the conservation status of the designated sites.

## **1.3 Regulatory Context**

### **1.3.1 Relevant Legislation**

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 2009/147/EC) recognises that certain species of birds should be subject to special conservation measures concerning their habitats. The Directive requires that Member States take measures to classify the most suitable areas as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for the conservation of bird species listed in Annex 1 of the Directive. SPAs are selected for bird species (listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive), that are regularly occurring populations of migratory bird species and the SPA areas are of international importance for these migratory birds.

The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires that Member States designate and ensure that particular protection is given to sites (Special Areas of Conservation) which are made up of or support particular habitats and species listed in annexes to this Directive.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of this Directive also call for the undertaking of an Appropriate Assessment for plans and projects not directly connected with or necessary to the management of, but which are likely to have a significant effect on any European designated sites (i.e. SACs and SPAs). This is explained in greater detail in the following section (Section 1.2.2 and Section 1,2.3).

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) (2000/60/EC), which came into force in December 2000, establishes a framework for community action in the field of water policy. The WFD was transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. 722 of 2003). The WFD rationalises and updates existing legislation and provides for water management on the basis of River Basin Districts (RBDs). RBDs are essentially administrative areas for coordinated water management and are comprised of multiple river basins (or catchments), with cross-border basins (i.e. those covering the territory of more than one Member State) assigned to an international RBD. The aim of the WFD is to ensure that waters achieve at least good status by 2021 and that status does not deteriorate in any waters.

#### **Appropriate Assessment and the Habitats Directive**

Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora – the 'Habitats Directive' - provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Article 2 of the Directive requires the maintenance or restoration of habitats and species of European Community interest, at a favourable conservation status. Articles 3 - 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as *Natura 2000*. *Natura 2000* sites are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive sets out the decision-making tests for plans or projects affecting *Natura 2000* sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a 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.”

Article 6(4) deals with the steps that should be taken when it is determined, as a result of appropriate assessment, that a plan/project will adversely affect a European site. Issues dealing with alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest and compensatory measures need to be addressed in this case.

Article 6(4) states:

“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 a social or economic nature, the Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted.

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

#### The Appropriate Assessment Process

The aim of Appropriate Assessment is to assess the implications of a proposal in respect of a designated site's conservation objectives.

The ‘Appropriate Assessment’ itself is an assessment which must be carried out by the competent authority which confirms whether the plan or project in combination with other plans and projects will have an adverse impact on the integrity of a European site.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment shall be carried out by the competent authority as set out in Section 177U(1) and (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) as follows:

‘(1) A screening for appropriate assessment of a draft Land use plan or application for consent for proposed development shall be carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if that Land use plan or proposed

development, individually or in combination with another plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on the European site.

(2) A competent authority shall carry out a screening for appropriate assessment under subsection (1) before—

(a) a Land use plan is made including, where appropriate, before a decision on appeal in relation to a draft strategic development zone is made, or

(b) consent for a proposed development is given.'

The competent authority shall determine that an Appropriate Assessment is not required if it can be excluded, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or project will have a significant effect on a European site.

Where the competent authority cannot exclude the potential for a significant effect on a European site, an Appropriate Assessment shall be deemed required.

Where an Appropriate Assessment is required, the conclusions of the Appropriate Assessment Report (Natura Impact Statement (NIS)) should enable the competent authority to ascertain whether the plan or proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of the European site. If adverse impacts on the integrity of a European site cannot be avoided, then mitigation measures should be applied during the appropriate assessment process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site remain. Under the terms of the Habitats Directive consent can only be granted for a project if, as a result of the appropriate assessment either (a) it is concluded that the integrity of any European sites will not be adversely affected, or (b) after mitigation, where adverse impacts cannot be excluded, there is shown to be an absence of alternative solutions, and there exists imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the project should go ahead.

Section 177(V) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) outlines that the competent authority shall carry out the Appropriate Assessment, taking into account the Natura Impact Statement (amongst any other additional or supplemental information). A determination shall then be made by the competent authority in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive as to whether the plan or proposed development would adversely affect the integrity of a European site, prior to consent being given.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Appropriate Assessment

This Statement of Screening for Appropriate Assessment (Stage 1) has been prepared with reference to the following:

- European Commission (2018). Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2002). Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC.
- European Commission (2006). Nature and Biodiversity Cases: Ruling of the European Court of Justice.
- European Commission (2007). Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solution, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall Coherence, Opinion of the Commission.
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities.

The EC Guidance sets out a number of principles as to how to approach decision making during the process. The primary one is 'the precautionary principle' which requires that the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 should prevail where there is uncertainty.

When considering the precautionary principle, the emphasis for assessment should be on objectively demonstrating with supporting evidence that:

- There will be no significant effects on a Natura 2000 site;
- There will be no adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site;
- There is an absence of alternatives to the project or plan that is likely to have an adverse effect to the integrity of a Natura 2000 site; and
- There are compensation measures that maintain or enhance the overall coherence of Natura 2000.

This translates into a four stage process to assess the impacts, on a designated site or species, of a policy or proposal.

The EC Guidance states that "each stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required". Consequently, the Council may not need to proceed through all four stages in undertaking the Appropriate Assessment.

The four-stage process is:

**Stage 1: Screening** – The process which identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether or not these impacts are likely to be significant;

**Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment** – The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts;

**Stage 3: Assessment of Alternative Solutions** – The process which examines alternative ways of achieving objectives of the project or plan that avoid adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site;

**Stage 4: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain** – An assessment of the compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

In complying with the obligations set out in Articles 6(3) and following the guidelines described above, this screening statement has been structured as a stage by stage approach as follows:

- Description of the proposed project;
- Identification of the Natura 2000 sites close to the proposed development;
- Identification and description of any individual and cumulative impacts on the Natura 2000 sites likely to result from the project;
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on site integrity. Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects;
- Description of proven mitigation measures.



## **2.2 Statement of Competency**

This AA was carried out by Noreen McLoughlin, BA, MSc, MCIEEM. Noreen has an honours degree in Zoology and an MSc in Freshwater Ecology from Trinity College, Dublin and she has been a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management for over thirteen years. Noreen has over 15 years' experience as a professional ecologist in Ireland.

## **2.3 Desk Studies & Consultation**

Information on the site and the area of the proposed development was studied prior to the completion of this statement. The following data sources were accessed in order to complete a thorough examination of potential impacts:

- National Parks and Wildlife Service - Aerial photographs and maps of designated sites, information on habitats and species within these sites and information on protected plant or animal species, conservation objectives, site synopses and standard data forms for relevant designated sites.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)- Information pertaining to water quality, geology and licensed facilities within the area;
- Myplan.ie – Mapped based information;
- National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) – Information pertaining to protected plant and animal species within the study area;
- Bing maps & Google Street View – High quality aerials and street images;
- Coffey Construction Ltd – Plans and Information Pertaining to the Development
- South Dublin County Council – Information on planning history in the area for the assessment of cumulative impacts.

## **2.4 Assessment Methodology**

The proposed development was assessed to identify its potential ecological impacts and from this, the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the proposed development was defined. Based on the potential impacts and their Zoi, the Natura 2000 sites potentially at risk from direct, indirect or in-combination impacts were identified. The assessment considered all potential impact sources and pathways connecting the proposed development to Natura 2000 sites, in view of the conservation objectives supporting the favourable conservation condition of the site's Qualifying Interests (QIs) or Special Conservation Interests (SCIs).

The conservation objectives relating to each Natura 2000 site and its QIs/SCIs are cited generally for SACs as "to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or Annex II species for which the SAC has

been selected”, and for SPAs “to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA”.

As defined in the Habitat’s Directive, the favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range and area it covers within that range is 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;

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- The 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.

Where site-specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) have been prepared for a European site, these include a series of specific attributes and targets against which effects on conservation condition, or integrity, can be measured. Where potential significant effects are identified, then these SSCO should be considered in detail.

### 3. Screening

#### 3.1 Development Description

Coffey Construction Ltd is currently seeking planning permission from South Dublin County Council with regards to proposed works at Slade, Saggart, Co. Dublin. The works will consist of the in-filling of a field with excess soil and stone and the subsequent reseeding of the land for agricultural purposes. The material will be sourced from the adjacent Saggart waterworks site, where Irish Water and Coffey Construction Ltd are undertaking the construction of a new reservoir. The main site has previously been granted planning permission by South Dublin County Council (Planning File Reference: 18A/0180).

The volume of material to be imported onto this site is ~35,094m<sup>3</sup>. The estimated duration of works will be approximately 18 months.

An extract from the planning drawings can be seen in Figure 1. The infill area is shown in brown (outside potential flood zone).

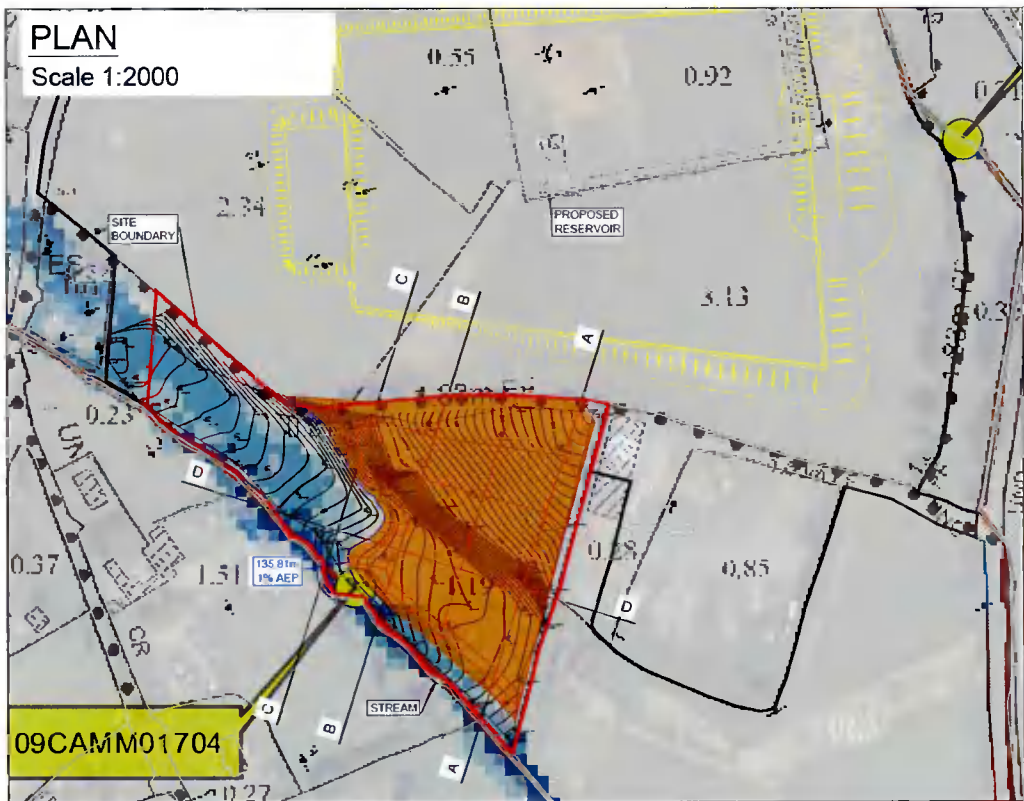


Figure 1 – Extract from Engineering Drawings (as prepared by Coffey Construction Ltd)

## 3.2 Site Location and Surrounding Environment

### 3.2.1 Site Location

The application site is approximately 2.4ha, and it is located in a rural area, in the townland of Slade. The site will be accessed via an entrance along the northern site boundary, which leads to the construction site of the new Saggart Irish Water Reservoir that is under construction. The site is bounded to the north by the Irish Water construction site, to the west by an ESB sub-station, to the south by the Camac River and to the east by a yard.

The land-use surrounding the site is predominantly agricultural and improved agricultural grassland is the dominant habitat in the lands that surround the site. Other habitats represented locally include small areas of woodland and scrub, hedgerows and treelines. There are a number of watercourses close to the application site, including the Camac River which flows along the south-western site boundary.

Site location maps are shown in Figures 2 and 3, whilst an aerial photograph of the site and its surrounding habitats is shown in Figure 4.

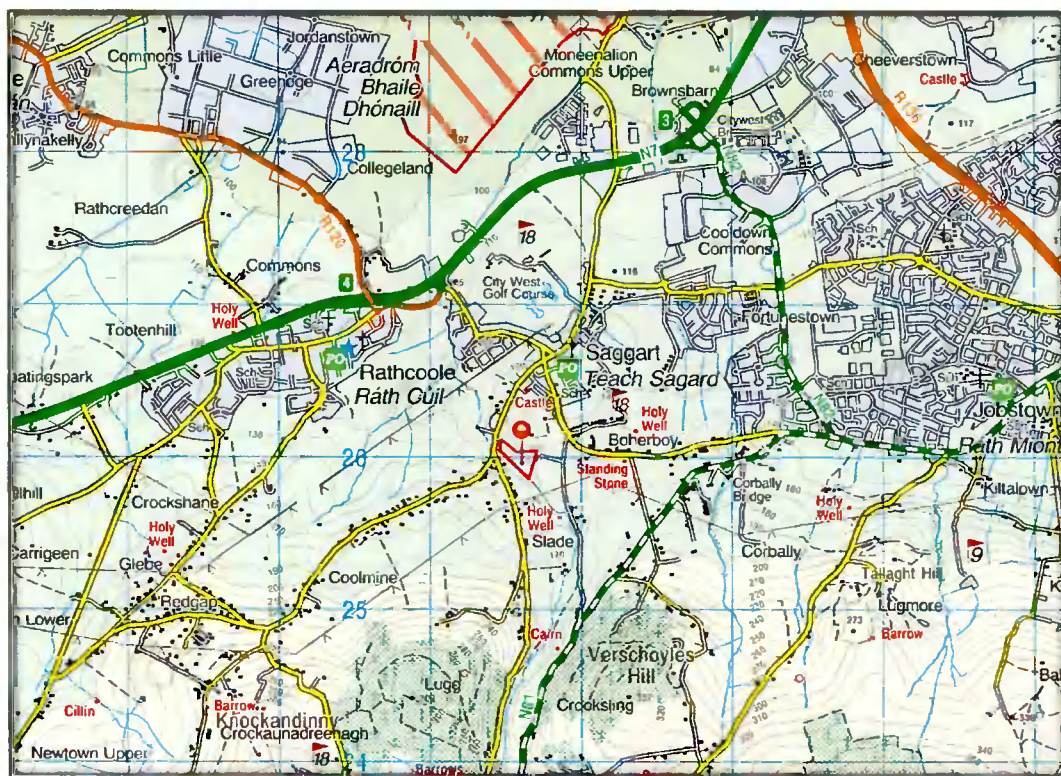


Figure 2 – Site Location Map (Site Pinned)



Figure 3 – Site Location Map.

### 3.2.2 Habitats and Notable Species

The application site does not lie within or adjacent to any area that has been designated for nature conservation purposes. The dominant habitat within the application site is improved agricultural grassland that has previously been used for agricultural purposes. The boundaries of the site consist of hedgerows and treelines.

A mammal report for the site has been prepared by Brian Keely of Wildlife Surveys Ireland. This report concluded that the proposed infill site and the site of the reservoir construction itself is used by badgers, otters and bats. This report outlines a number of measures to ensure the protection of these species. These measures include the maintenance of a riparian buffer zone along all watercourses, including the Camac River, the establishment of badger exclusion zones around known badger setts, the protection of trees and hedgerows that form the existing commuting corridors for bats and the careful use of lighting around the site to minimise night time disturbance to bats.

### 3.2.3 Water Features and Quality

The application site is located within the Liffey and Dublin Bay Hydrometric Area and Catchment, the Liffey Sub Catchment and the Camac Sub-Basin. The Camac River rises in the foothills of the Wicklow Mountains. It flows along the southern boundary of the application site. This river flows through the southern suburbs of Dublin city. It is channelized and culverted for much of its journey through Dublin city and suburbs. It flows into the River Liffey near Heuston Station.

The EPA have defined the ecological status of the Camac River as good along the boundary of the application site. However, this deteriorates to moderate just downstream of the site. Further downstream again, ecological status deteriorates to poor. Under the requirements of the Water Framework Directive, all waterbodies must achieve good status.

As part of the ecological reports that were prepared for the construction of the reservoir, a survey of the ecological status of the Camac River at points in and downstream of the application was undertaken by RPS in 2018. Using biological water indices (the Q value) it was determined that the Q value of the Camac River at points within the application site was Q4 (i.e., good status), whilst 500m downstream a Q3 (poor status) was noted.



Figure 4 – Aerial Photograph of the Proposed Site and its Surrounding Habitats.

### 3.3 European Sites Identified

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, a list of Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development has been identified and described according to their site synopses, qualifying interests and conservation objectives. In addition, any other sites further than this, but potentially within its zone of influence can also be considered. The zone of influence may be determined by an assessment of the connectivity between the application site and the designated areas by virtue of hydrological connectivity, atmospheric emissions, flight paths, ecological corridors etc.

There are six Natura 2000 designated sites within 15km of this application site, plus four other sites that are hydrologically connected to it via the River Camac. These sites are summarised in Table 1 and a map showing their locations relative to the application site is shown in Figure 5. A full description of these sites can be read on the website of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (npws.ie).

Site Name & Code	Distance	Features of Interest	Potential Significant Effects?
<b>Glenasmole Valley SAC 001209</b>	5.1km south-east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)</li> <li>Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)</li> <li>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)</li> </ul>	<i>No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.</i>
<b>Wicklow Mountains SAC 002122</b>	6km south-east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae)</li> <li>Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds</li> <li>Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i></li> <li>European dry heaths</li> <li>Alpine and Boreal heaths</li> <li>Calaminarian grasslands of the <i>Violetalia calaminariae</i></li> </ul>	<i>No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)</li> <li>Blanket bogs (* if active bog)</li> <li>Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani)</li> <li>Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation</li> <li>Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation</li> <li>Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles</li> <li><i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter)</li> </ul>	
<b>Wicklow Mountains SPA 004040</b>	9.5km south-east	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>)</li> <li>Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)</li> </ul>	No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SPA, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.
<b>Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA 004063</b>	10.5km south	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greylag goose <i>Anser anser</i></li> <li>Lesser black-backed gull <i>Larus fuscus</i></li> </ul>	No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SPA, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.
<b>Red Bog Kildare SAC 000397</b>	10.1km south-west	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition mires and quaking bogs</li> </ul>	No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.
<b>Rye Water Valley/Cartron SAC 001398</b>	10km north	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>)</li> <li><i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail)</li> <li><i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> (Desmoulin's Whorl)</li> </ul>	No source-pathway-receptor linkages between the application site and this SAC, therefore, significant effects upon this Natura 2000 site are unlikely.



		Snail)	
<b>South Dublin Bay SAC 000210</b>	24km downstream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>• Annual vegetation of drift lines</li> <li>• Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand</li> <li>• Embryonic shifting dunes</li> </ul>	<i>There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 24km. Although it is unlikely, significant effects upon the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.</i>
<b>South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024</b>	24km downstream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)</li> <li>• Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)</li> <li>• Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>)</li> <li>• Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)</li> <li>• Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)</li> <li>• Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>)</li> <li>• Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)</li> <li>• Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)</li> <li>• Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)</li> <li>• Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>)</li> <li>• Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>)</li> <li>• Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds</li> </ul>	<i>There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 24km. Although it is unlikely, significant effects upon the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.</i>
<b>North Bull Island SPA 004006</b>	24km downstream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>)</li> <li>• Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>)</li> <li>• Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)</li> <li>• Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>)</li> <li>• Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>)</li> <li>• Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>)</li> <li>• Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)</li> <li>• Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>)</li> <li>• Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>)</li> <li>• Sanderling (<i>Calidris</i></li> </ul>	<i>There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 24km. Although it is unlikely, significant effects upon the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>alba</i>)</li> <li>• Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>)</li> <li>• Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>)</li> <li>• Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>)</li> <li>• Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)</li> <li>• Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>)</li> <li>• Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>)</li> <li>• Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>)</li> <li>• Wetland and Waterbirds</li> </ul>	
<p><b>North Dublin Bay SAC 000206</b></p>	<p>24km downstream</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide</li> <li>• Annual vegetation of drift lines</li> <li>• Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand</li> <li>• Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>)</li> <li>• Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>)</li> <li>• Embryonic shifting dunes</li> <li>• Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes)</li> <li>• Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes)</li> <li>• Humid dune slacks</li> <li>• <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort)</li> </ul>	<p><i>There is a source-pathway-receptor linkage, with a hydrological distance of almost 24km. Although it is unlikely, significant effects upon the Qualifying Interests of this site will be considered further.</i></p>

Table 1 – Natura 2000 Sites Within 15km of the Proposed Site

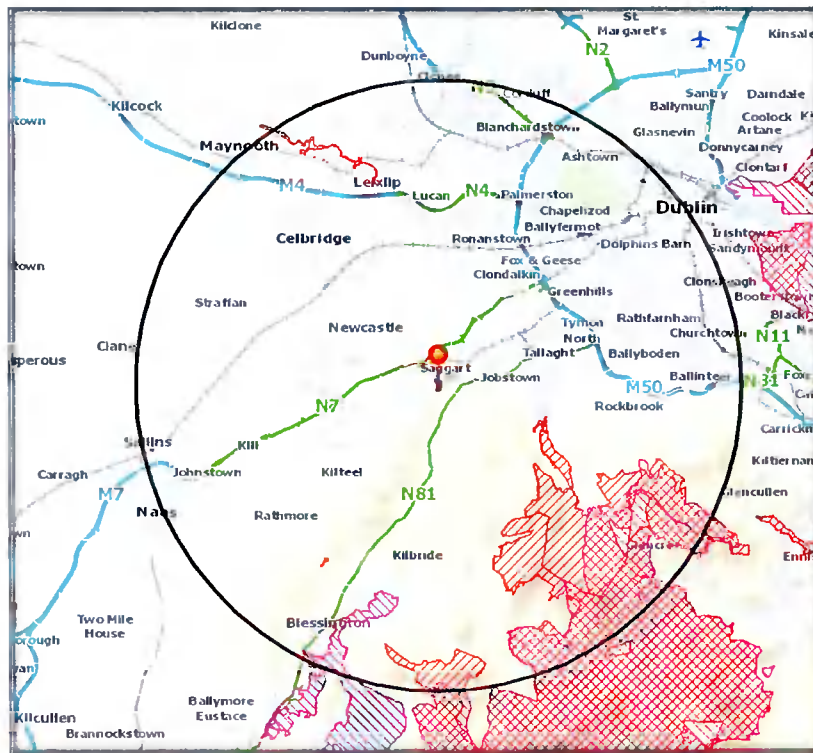


Figure 5 – The Proposed Site (Pinned) in relation to the Designated Sites (Black Circle) within 15km of the Application Site (Pinned). SACs – Red Hatching; SPAs – Pink Hatching.

### 3.3.1 Site Specific Conservation Objectives

There are four Natura 2000 downstream of the application site and potential significant effects upon these sites will be considered in light of their Site Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs). These sites are approximately 24km downstream of the application site and given this distance, significant effects upon these sites arising from the proposed development are unlikely.

These SSCO aim to define the favourable conservation condition for the particular habitats or species at the Natura 2000 site. They outline certain attributes (e.g., distribution, population structure, water quality) for different species and habitats with targets, which define the favourable condition for a habitat or species at a particular site. The maintenance of habitats and species within the Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at national level.

For each Qualifying Interest of the SAC or SPA, the SSCO is either to maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of that interest, by defining a list of attributes and targets which are indicative of the conservation status of that interest. For habitats, the main attributes include habitat area, habitat and community distribution, vegetation structure/composition and physical structure. The main target

is to ensure that the habitats are stable or increasing in area and that the other attributes are maintained or restored. For the Annex II species of the SAC or Annex I species of SPAs, the main attributes are population trend and distribution, whilst the targets aim to ensure that the long term population trends of the species are stable or increasing and that there is no significant decrease in the numbers or range of areas used by the species, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.

**South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024**

SSCOs for this site were produced by NPWS in 2015. They are summarised in Table 2 below:

Qualifying Interest	SSCO
Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	Maintain
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Maintain
Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Maintain
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	No SSCO – Species set for Removal as a QI of this SPA
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	Maintain
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>	Maintain
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	Maintain
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Maintain
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	Maintain
Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Maintain
Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i>	Maintain
Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>	Maintain
Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Maintain
Wetland and Waterbirds	Maintain

Table 2 – SSCOs for the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA

The objectives for all these bird species with the exception of the tern species, are the same and are presented in Tables 3a-3c.

Attribute	Measure	Target
Population trend	Percentage Change	Long term population trend stable or increasing
Distribution	Range, timing and intensity of use of areas	No significant decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of areas by the QI, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation

Table 3a – Attributes, Measures and Targets for the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA

The SSCOS for the three tern species include:

Attribute	Measure	Target
Passage population: individuals	Number	No significant decline
Distribution: roosting areas	Number; location; area (ha)	No significant decline
Prey biomass available	Kg	No significant decline
Disturbance at roosting site	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the number of roseate tern/common tern/artic tern among the post-breeding aggregation of terns.
Breeding population abundance: apparently occupied nests	Number	No significant decline
Productivity rate: fledged young per breeding pair	Mean number	No significant decline
Passage population: Individuals	Number	No significant decline
Distribution: breeding colonies	Number; location; area (ha)	No significant decline
Prey biomass available	Kg	No significant decline
Barriers to connectivity	Number; location; shape; area (ha)	No significant increase
Disturbance at the breeding site	Level of impact	Human activities should occur at levels that do not adversely affect the breeding common tern population

Table 3b – Attributes, Measures and Targets for the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA (Tern Species)

The SSCOS for the wetlands are:

Attribute	Measure	Target
Habitat Area	Hectares	The permanent area occupied by the wetland habitat should be stable and not significantly less than the area of 2,587ha, other than that occurring from natural patterns of variation.

Table 3c – Attributes, Measures and Targets for Wetlands in South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA

### **North Bull Island SPA 004006**

SSCOs for this site were produced by NPWS in 2015. They are summarised below:

<b>Qualifying Interest</b>	<b>SSCO</b>
Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	Maintain
Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	Maintain
Teal <i>Anas crecca</i>	Maintain
Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i>	Maintain
Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i>	Maintain
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Maintain
Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Maintain
Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Maintain
Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i>	Maintain
Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i>	Maintain
Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	Maintain
Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>	Maintain
Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Maintain
Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>	Maintain
Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>	Maintain
Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Maintain
Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Maintain
Wetland and Waterbirds	Maintain

Table 4 – SSCOs for the North Bull Island SPA

The attributes, measures and targets for all these bird species are the same as that listed for the QIs of the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA. The attributes, measures and targets for the wetlands are also the same as the South Dublin Bay / River Tolka Estuary SPA.

#### Potential Impacts upon the QIs of these SPAs

The application site is 24km upstream of the areas designated for these bird species. The proposed development will not occur in an area used by the bird species listed above. The habitats within the application site are not suitable for these wading bird species. The proposed development will not lead to decreases in the population trend of any bird species. The proposed development will not lead to any decrease in the range, timing or intensity of use of any areas within the SPA by the QI bird

species. The proposed development will not lead to the loss of any wetland habitat area within either SPA.

**South Dublin Bay SAC 000201 / North Dublin Bay SAC 000206**

SSCOS for these SACs were produced by the NPWS in 2013. These QIs and the potential impacts arising on their attributes and targets from the proposed development at Slade, Saggart are considered below in Tables 5 - 14.

***Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide (Both Sites)***

The SSCO for this habitat is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	The permanent habitat area is stable or increasing, subject to natural processes.	No
Community Extent	Hectares	Maintain the extent of the <i>Zostera</i> -dominated community and the <i>Mytilus edulis</i> -dominated community complex, subject to natural processes.	No
Community Structure: <i>Zostera</i> Density	Shoots / m <sup>2</sup>	Conserve the high quality of the <i>Zostera</i> -dominated community, subject to natural processes	No
Community Structure: <i>Mytilus edulis</i> density	Individuals / m <sup>2</sup>	Conserve the high quality of the <i>Mytilus edulis</i> dominated community, subject to natural processes	No
Community Distribution	Hectares	Conserve the following community types in a natural condition: Fine sands with <i>Angulus tenuis</i> community complex.	No

Table 5 – SSCOs for Mudflats and Sandflats

**Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines (Both Sites)**

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities with typical species: sea rockey; sea sandwort; prickly saltwort and oraches	No
Vegetation Composition; Negative Indicator Species	Hectares	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover.	No

Table 6 – SSCOs for Annual Vegetation of Drift Lines

**Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand (Both Sites)**

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain, or where necessary restore, natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	No
Physical Structure: Flooding Regime	Hectares Flooded: Frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Structure:	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No



Vegetation Height			
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Cover	% Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities listed in SMP	No
Vegetation Structure: Negative Indicator Species – <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Hectares	No significant expansion of common cordgrass ( <i>Spartina anglica</i> ). No new sites for this species and an annual spread of less than 1% where it is already known to occur	No

Table 7 – SSCOs for Salicornia and Other Annuals

### Embryonic Shifting Dunes (Both Sites)

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without and physical obstructions	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Composition: Plant health of dune grasses	% Cover	95% of marram grass <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> and or lyme grass <i>Leymus arenarius</i> should be healthy (i.e., green plant parts above ground and flowering heads present)	
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities with typical species: sand couch and/or lyme grass.	No
Vegetation Composition: Negative Indicator Species – <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	No

Table 8 – SSCOs for Embryonic Shifting Dunes

**Atlantic Salt Meadows (North Dublin Bay SAC only)**

The SSCO for this habitat is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	No
Physical Structure: Flooding Regime	Hectares Flooded: Frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Cover	% Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in SMP	No
Vegetation Structure: Negative Indicator Species - <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Hectares	No significant expansion of common cordgrass ( <i>Spartina anglica</i> ), with an annual spread of less than 1% where it is known to occur.	No

Table 9 – SSCOs for Atlantic Salt Meadows

**Mediterranean Salt Meadows (North Dublin Bay SAC only)**

The SSCO for this habitat is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. For sub-site mapped: Malahide Estuary- 0.64 ha	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain/restore natural circulation of sediments and organic matter, without any physical obstructions	No
Physical Structure: Creeks and pans	Occurrence	Maintain creek and pan structure, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession	No
Physical Structure: Flooding Regime	Hectares Flooded: Frequency	Maintain natural tidal regime	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of saltmarsh habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Cover	% Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain more than 90% of area outside creeks vegetated	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at a Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in SMP	No
Vegetation Structure: Negative Indicator Species – <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Hectares	No significant expansion of common cordgrass ( <i>Spartina anglica</i> ), with an annual spread of less than 1% where it is known to occur.	No

Table 10 – SSCOs for Mediterranean Salt Meadows

**Shifting Dunes along the Shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) (North Dublin Bay SAC only)**

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession. Total area mapped - 1.8 ha	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without and physical obstructions	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Composition: Plant health of dune grasses	% Cover	95% of marram grass <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> and or lyme grass <i>Leymus arenarius</i> should be healthy (i.e., green plant parts above ground and flowering heads present)	
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain the presence of species-poor communities dominated by marram grass ( <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> ) and/or lyme-grass ( <i>Leymus arenarius</i> )	No
Vegetation Composition: Negative Indicator Species – <i>Spartina anglica</i>	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	No

Table 11 – SSCOs for Shifting Dune lines along the Shorelines

**Fixed Coastal Dunes with Herbaceous Vegetation (Grey Dunes) (North Dublin Bay Only)**

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without and physical obstructions	No
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion	No

		and succession	
Vegetation Structure: Bare Ground	Percentage cover	Bare ground should not exceed 10% of fixed dune habitat, subject to natural processes	No
Vegetation Structure: Sward Height	Centimetres	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in Ryle et al. (2009)	No
Vegetation Composition: Negative Indicator Species-including <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i>	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	No
Vegetation Composition: Scrub and trees	Percentage Cover	No more than 5% cover or under control	No

Table 12 – SSCOs for Fixed Coastal Dunes

#### **Humid Dune Slacks (North Dublin Bay only)**

The SSCO for this habitat is to *restore* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Habitat Area	Hectares	Area stable or increasing, subject to natural processes, including erosion and succession.	No
Habitat Distribution	Occurrence	No decline, or change in habitat distribution, subject to natural processes.	No
Physical Structure: Functionality and Sediment Supply	Presence / Absence of Physical Barriers	Maintain the Natural Circulation of Sediment and Organic Matter, without and physical obstructions	No
Physical structure: hydrological and flooding regime	Water table levels' groundwater fluctuations	Maintain natural hydrological regime	
Vegetation Structure: Zonation	Occurrence	Maintain the range of coastal habitats including transitional zones, subject to natural processes including erosion and succession	No
Vegetation Structure: Bare Ground	Percentage cover	Bare ground should not exceed 5% of dune slack habitat, with the exception of pioneer slacks which can have up to 20% bare ground.	No
Vegetation Structure: Vegetation Height	Centimeters	Maintain structural variation within sward	No
Vegetation Composition: Typical Species and Sub-Species Communities	Percentage Cover at Representative Sample of Monitoring Stops	Maintain range of subcommunities with typical species listed in Delaney et al. (2013)	No
Vegetation composition: Cover of <i>Salix repens</i>	Percentage cover; centimeters	Maintain less than 40% cover of creeping willow ( <i>Salix repens</i> )	

Vegetation Composition: Negative Indicator Species	Percentage Cover	Negative indicator species (including non-natives) to represent less than 5% cover	No
Vegetation Composition: Scrub and trees	Percentage Cover	No more than 5% cover or under control	No

Table 13 – SSCOs for Humid Dune Slacks

***Petalwort (North Dublin Bay SAC only)***

The SSCO for this species is to *maintain* its favourable conservation condition which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets:

Attribute	Measure	Target	Potential Impacts Upon Targets
Distribution of Populations	No and geographical spread of populations	No decline	No
Population size	Number of individuals	No decline	No
Area of suitable habitat	Ha	No decline	No
Hydrological conditions: soil moisture	Occurrence		No
Vegetation Structure: Height and cover	Centimeters and Percentage	Maintain open, low vegetation with a high percentage of bryophytes and bare ground/	No

Table 14 – SSCOs for Petalwort

Potential Impacts upon the QIs of the South Dublin Bay SAC 000201 / North Dublin Bay SAC 000206

Potential impacts upon all the QIs of these SACs arising from the proposed application have been considered. There is a weak hydrological link (24km) between the application site and the habitats and species of the Natura 2000 sites in Dublin Bay via the River Camac. Water quality is not a target for the maintenance of any of the QIs within either SAC of Dublin Bay. The targets relate to habitat distribution and area, as well as vegetation structure and control of negative indicator species and scrub. The proposed development will not lead to any impacts upon these QIs, by virtue of changes to the physical structure of the habitats or to the vegetation structure which defines their favourable conservation status.

### 3.4 Natura 2000 Impact Assessment

The potential impacts of the proposed development on the Natura 2000 sites identified above are described below.

**Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on nearby Natura 2000 site:**

The proposed infilling works at Slage, Saggart will have no negative effects upon the designated sites identified, specifically the ones that are hydrologically connected to it via the Camac River. There are no individual elements of the proposed project that are likely to give rise to negative effects on these aforementioned sites. There is a sufficient downstream distance (~24km) between the application site and the designated habitats of Dublin Bay, therefore potential direct and indirect impacts will be avoided. There will be no significant effects upon the Qualifying Interests of the Natura 2000 sites of Dublin Bay arising from the proposed development.

**Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the nearby Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:**

**Size and scale:** Given the small size and scale of the development in relation to the overall size of the Natura 2000 sites identified, the likelihood of any direct, indirect or cumulative impacts on these designated sites arising from the proposed development are low.

**Land-take:** There will be no land-take from any designated site. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site.

**Distance from Natura 2000 site or key features of the site:** There are six Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development. The closest of these is the Glenasmole Valley SAC and this is 5.1km south east of the application site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the application site and the QIs of this SAC, therefore significant effects will not occur. The hydrological distance (~24km) between the application site and the SACs / SPAs of Dublin Bay is sufficient to ensure that no impacts will arise.

**Resource requirements (water abstraction etc.):** No resources will be taken from any Natura 2000 site and there are no resource requirements that will impact upon any designated site.

**Emissions:** There will be no emissions from the application site into any designated site during the infilling phase. The site is adjacent to the River Camac. During the infilling works, a minimum buffer zone of 10m will be maintained along the rivers edge and this will ensure that run-off from the works into the stream is minimised. The infilling of the site will be done in association with the construction of the reservoir on the site immediately north of the application site. A Construction Management Plan (CMP) was prepared for the reservoir works and this plan contained measures for the protection of valued ecological receptors on the site, including the Camac River and the Mill Race Stream which lies on the eastern boundary of the reservoir site. The proposed infilling works will be completed in accordance with the CMP prepared for the main site. These measures can be considered as necessary for the protection of local biodiversity receptors and they are not measures included for the protection of any European site.

The downstream distance between the application site and the designated areas is a minimum of

24km. Given this distance and the overall volume of water entering Dublin Bay from the Camac system, which is small, then the likelihood of any impact or effects upon the designated habitats and species of Dublin Bay arising from any emissions (likely to be minimal) into the Camac River during the infilling process will be insignificant.

**Excavation requirements:** There will be no excavation requirements in any designated site.

**Transportation requirements:** There will be no additional transportation requirements resulting from the proposed development and associated works that will have any impact upon the Natura 2000 sites identified.

**In-Combination / Cumulative Impacts:** In order to assess potential cumulative impacts arising from the proposed development and other developments in the area, an examination of the planning portal on the website of South Dublin County Council was undertaken for information pertaining to other recent or pending planning applications in the Slade/Saggart area. In the last five years, a large number of developments have been granted planning permission in this area. In 2018, Irish Water were granted permission for the reservoir on the site that is immediately north of this application site. This application was accompanied by an Appropriate Assessment screening report (RPS, 2018).

In the future, any application that has the potential to impact upon any Natura 2000 site will be subjected to Appropriate Assessment as required under Articles 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. This current development will have no cumulative impacts upon the SACs / SPAs identified when considered in combination with any other development that has been screened for no impacts themselves (Stage 1) or where potential impacts have been mitigated against (Stage 2 AA / NIS).

**Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc:** The infilling of the site will take approximately 18 months.

#### **Describe any likely changes to the nearby Natura 2000 sites arising as a result of:**

**Reduction of habitat area:** The proposed development site lies outside the boundaries of the Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 3.3. There will be no reduction of designated habitat area or interference with any protected habitat within any SAC / SPA. There will be no interference with the boundaries of any designated site. There will be no loss of any undesignated habitats of biodiversity value.

**Disturbance to key species:** The bird species identified as using the SPAs downstream of the site are wading species that use the estuarine and coastal habitats of Dublin Bay and the surrounding areas. They will not be impacted upon by the construction or operation of the proposed development. There will be no deterioration in water quality within any SPA that may lead to indirect impacts upon these bird species. There are no suitable feeding sites within the application site for these birds.

Otters have been noted as using the Camac River within the application site, whilst suitable habitat for crayfish also exists in the Camac, although none were recorded during the surveys undertaken by RPS (2018). Both these species are listed in Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. As part of the ecological reports and CMP for the works at the reservoir site, measures have been included for the protection of water quality in the Camac River and its tributaries. These measures will ensure the protection of these species within the application site itself. They are not considered as measures for the protection of any Natura 2000 site.

**Habitat or species fragmentation:** There will be no habitat or species fragmentation within any SAC or SPA. No ecological corridors between the site and any Natura 2000 site will be damaged or



destroyed.

**Reduction in species density:** There will be no reduction in species density within the SAC and SPA.

**Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.):** There will be no negative impacts upon surface or ground water quality within any SAC or SPA. There will be no negative impacts upon the water quality in any designated site or in the Delvin River or its tributaries.

**Describe any likely impacts on the nearby Natura 2000 sites as a whole in terms of:**

**Interference with the key relationships that define the structure or function of the site:** It is not considered likely that there will be any impacts on the key relationships that define the structure or function of the Natura 2000 sites identified.

**Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:**

**Loss - Estimated percentage of lost area of habitat:** None

**Fragmentation:** None

**Disruption & disturbance:** None

**Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.):** None

### 3.5 Finding of No Significant Effects

<b>Finding of No Significant Effects Report Matrix</b>	
<b>Name of project</b>	Planning Permission for the Infilling of a Site at Slade, Saggart, Co. Dublin
<b>Name and location of Natura 2000 site</b>	There are six Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the proposed development. The closest of these is the Glenasmole Valley SAC and this is 5.1km south east of the application site. There is no hydrological connectivity between the application site and the QIs of this SAC, therefore significant effects will not occur. The hydrological distance (~24km) between the application site and the SACs / SPAs of Dublin Bay is sufficient to ensure that no impacts will arise.
<b>Description of project</b>	The Infilling of a portion of a 2.4ha site with material from the construction of the Saggart Reservoir.
<b>Is the project directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site?</b>	No
<b>Are there other projects or plans that together with project being assessed could affect the site?</b>	No
<b>The Assessment of Significance of Effects</b>	
<b>Describe how the project is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site</b>	Having regard to the location, nature and scale of the proposed development, it is considered that there is no potential for significant effects either from the proposed development on its own or in combination with other plans and projects.
<b>Explain why these effects are not considered significant</b>	Not applicable as there is no potential for negative effects
<b>Describe how the project is likely to affect species designated under Annex II of the Habitats Directive.</b>	No impacts likely
<b>Data Collected to Carry out the Assessment</b>	
<b>Who carried out the assessment</b>	Noreen McLoughlin, MSC, MCIEEM. Consultant Ecologist
<b>Sources of data</b>	NPWS, EPA, National Biodiversity Data Centre, South Dublin County Council, RPS (2018)
<b>Level of assessment completed</b>	Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening
<b>Where can the full results of the assessment be accessed and viewed</b>	Full results included

#### **4. Appropriate Assessment Conclusion**

In accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, established best practice and the precautionary principle, this AA Screening Report has examined the details of the project in relation to the relevant Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the application site. This report has analysed the potential impacts and effects of the proposed project on the Qualifying Interests of these designated sites. It has evaluated the significance of these potential impacts and effects in view of these sites' conservation objectives.

In view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective information, it can be concluded that this application, whether individually or in combination with other plans and projects, will have no significant negative effects upon the Natura 2000 sites. It is of the opinion of this author that this application does not need to proceed to Stage II of the Appropriate Assessment process.





## **Appendix 1 - Appropriate Assessment Screening Report**

