



OCSC

O'CONNOR · SUTTON · CRONIN
MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONSULTING ENGINEERS

D866: NATIONAL WATERSPORTS CAMPUS DÚN LAOGHAIRE

AA SCREENING REPORT

For
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council

8 June 2026

NOTICE

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT CONTRACTUAL BASIS & PARTIES INVOLVED

This report has been prepared by O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates Ltd. (OCSC) at the request of their Client, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. The proposed site investigation (SI) works are being carried out in relation to the proposed National Watersports Campus in Dún Laoghaire. This report supports the Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) application to Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) to complete the works. The location of the proposed works is shown in Figure 1.1.

In accordance with the requirements of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, an Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared to support the MUL application. The purpose of this AA is to assess, in view of the conservation objectives of relevant European sites, whether the proposed site investigations and associated works, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, are likely to have a significant effect on any Natura 2000 sites.

Dún Laoghaire Harbour has long been a focal point for marine activity on Ireland's east coast. Over time it has developed from a traditional ferry port into a vibrant centre for yachting and watersports, hosting high-profile international sailing championships and supporting a diverse range of marine organisations including state bodies, clubs, commercial operators, and volunteers. The harbour's role as a watersports hub has grown in response to increasing demand from a population of approximately 1.5 million people within a 10-mile radius.

Despite significant investment by private and club stakeholders, there is currently a notable lack of publicly accessible watersports facilities. At present, there are no slipways or public access points that offer tidal-independent access to the water. This project seeks to address this gap by establishing a National Watersports Campus that builds on the harbour's existing infrastructure and activity base.

The report was completed by Rebecca Duane, BSc, MCIEEM, Ecologist; reviewed by Eadaoin Butler, BSc, Ecologist; and authorised by Eleanor Burke, BSc, MSc, DAS, MEnvSc, CSci, and OCSC Director (Environmental).

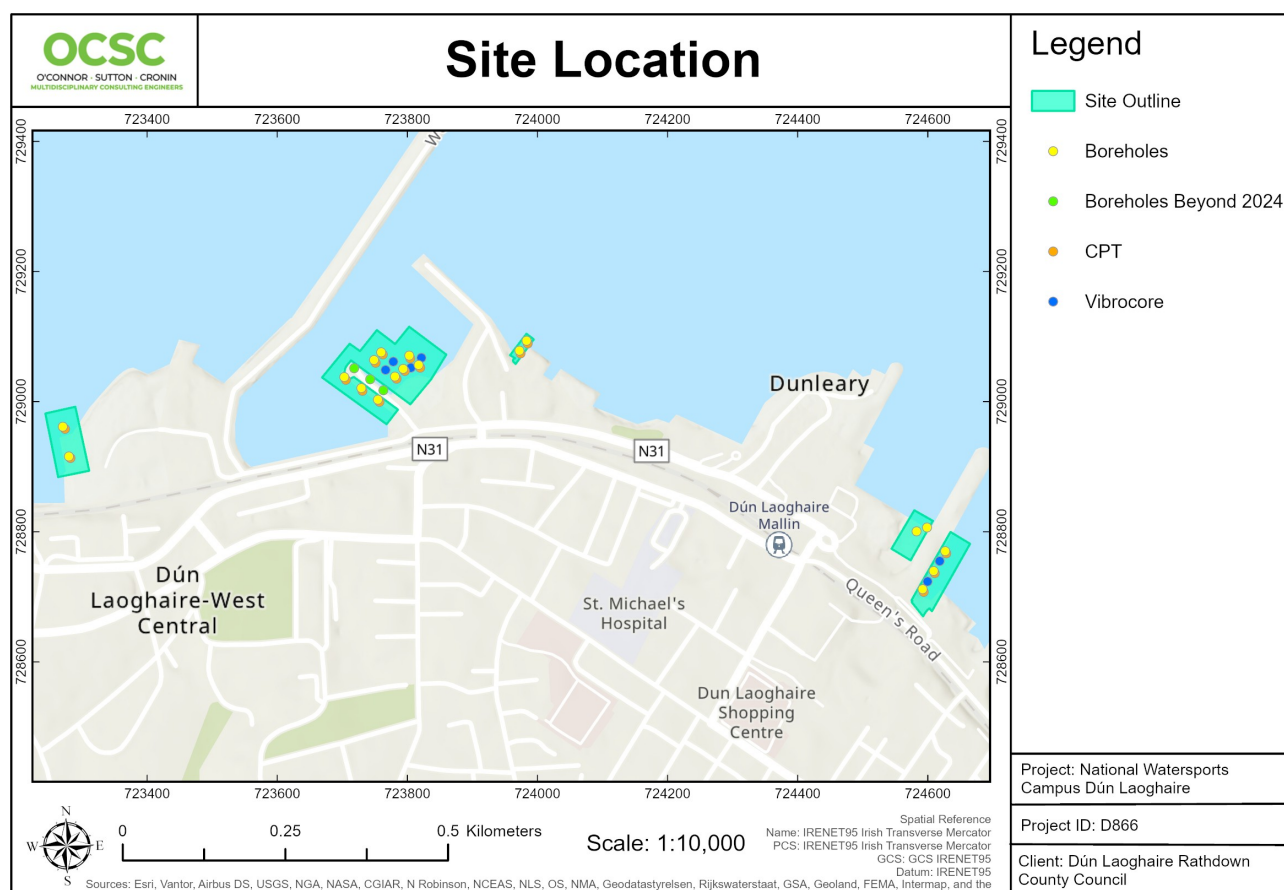


Figure 1.1: Location of Site Investigation Works

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document, which will accompany a MUL Application, is to provide supporting information for Stage 1 of the Appropriate Assessment (Screening for Appropriate Assessment) to be conducted by MARA as required under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

This report aims to support the Licence application process and provide the necessary information to the competent authorities to assist them in making an informed decision on the likely impact of the Proposed Activities on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and their designated Annex I habitats and Annex II species Qualifying Interests (QIs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and their designated Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species.

1.3 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Natura 2000 network is a European network of important ecological sites, as defined under Article 3 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, which comprises both special areas of conservation and special protection areas.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are natural habitat types listed in Annex I, and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, of the Habitats Directive, and are established under the Habitats Directive itself. Special Protection Areas (SPA) are established under Article 4 of the Birds Directive 2009/147/EC for the protection of endangered species of wild birds. The aim of the network is to aid the long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect such sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA. These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning Development Act 2000 (as amended). The process of appropriate assessment involves several stages, as discussed below.

Stage One: Screening

The process identifies the likely impacts upon a European site of a project, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.

Screening is the process that addresses and records the reasoning and conclusions in relation to the first two tests of Article 6(3):

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

If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant, or uncertain, or if the screening process becomes overly complicated, then the process must proceed to Stage 2 (AA). Screening should be undertaken without the inclusion of mitigation, unless potential impacts clearly can be avoided through the modification or redesign of the plan or project, in which case the screening process is repeated on the altered plan. The greatest level of evidence and justification will be needed in circumstances when the process ends at screening stage on grounds of no impact.

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment

This stage considers whether the plan or project, alone or in combination with other projects or plans, will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, and includes any mitigation measures necessary to avoid, reduce or offset negative effects. The proponent of the plan or project will be required to submit a Natura Impact Statement, i.e. the report of a targeted professional scientific examination of the plan or project and the relevant Natura 2000 sites, to identify and characterise any possible implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. This should provide information to enable the competent authority to carry out the appropriate assessment. If the assessment is negative, i.e. adverse effects on the integrity of a site cannot be excluded, then the process must proceed to Stage 4, or the plan or project should be abandoned. The AA is carried out by the competent authority and is supported by the NIS.

Stage Three: Assessment of Alternative Solutions

This stage examines any alternative solutions or options that could enable the plan or project to proceed without adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. The process must return to Stage 2 as alternatives will require appropriate assessment in order to proceed. Demonstrating that all reasonable alternatives have been considered and assessed, and that the least damaging option has been selected, is necessary to progress to Stage 4.

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.

Stage 4 is the main derogation process of Article 6(4) which examines whether there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) for allowing a plan or project that will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site to proceed in cases where it has been established that no less damaging alternative solution exists. The extra protection measures for Annex I priority habitats come into effect when making the IROPI case. Compensatory measures must be proposed and assessed. The Commission must be informed of the compensatory measures. Compensatory measures must be practical, implementable, likely to succeed, proportionate and enforceable, and they must be approved by the Minister.

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The AA Screening has been prepared taking into account the aforementioned and following legislation and guidance:

- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. OPR Practice Notes (PN), March 2021.
- Maritime Area Regulatory Authority Licence Application Technical Guidance: Obtaining a Licence to Carry Out Specified Maritime Usages in the Maritime Area under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 (MARA, 2023)
- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009; 11 February 2010 revision.
- Commission Notice: Managing Natura 2000 sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2018.
- Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission Environment DG, 2002.
- Managing Natura 2000 sites: the Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, 2000.
- Appropriate Assessment Screening for Development Management. Office of the Planning Regulator, March 2021.
- Marine Natura Impact Statements in Irish Special Areas of Conservation: A working document. Prepared by National Parks and Wildlife Service, DAHG (2012);

- Guidance to Manage the Risk to Marine Mammals from Manmade Sound Sources in Irish Waters. Prepared by National Parks Wildlife Service, DAHG (2014)

The above documents have been used to carry out a desktop AA Screening based on the best available guidance and operating within the applicable legislation.

1.5 SCOPE OF WORKS

To meet the project objectives, the following scope of works was completed:

- Present a discussion of the proposed development and its potential effects on its receiving environment;
- Present a discussion of the current site status and key environmental influences around the site;
- Undertake and present a review of European sites in the region of the proposed development;
- Conduct and present a discussion on the screening of the identified European sites in relation to the potential effects arising from the project; and
- Provide a conclusion as to whether or not the proposed development is likely to, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, have a significant effect on any European site.

1.6 MUL APPLICATION AREA

The MUL Area for the proposed site investigation works encompasses a defined portion of the marine environment within Dún Laoghaire Harbour, located in the southern part of Dublin Bay. The MUL Application Area can be seen in Figure 1.2.

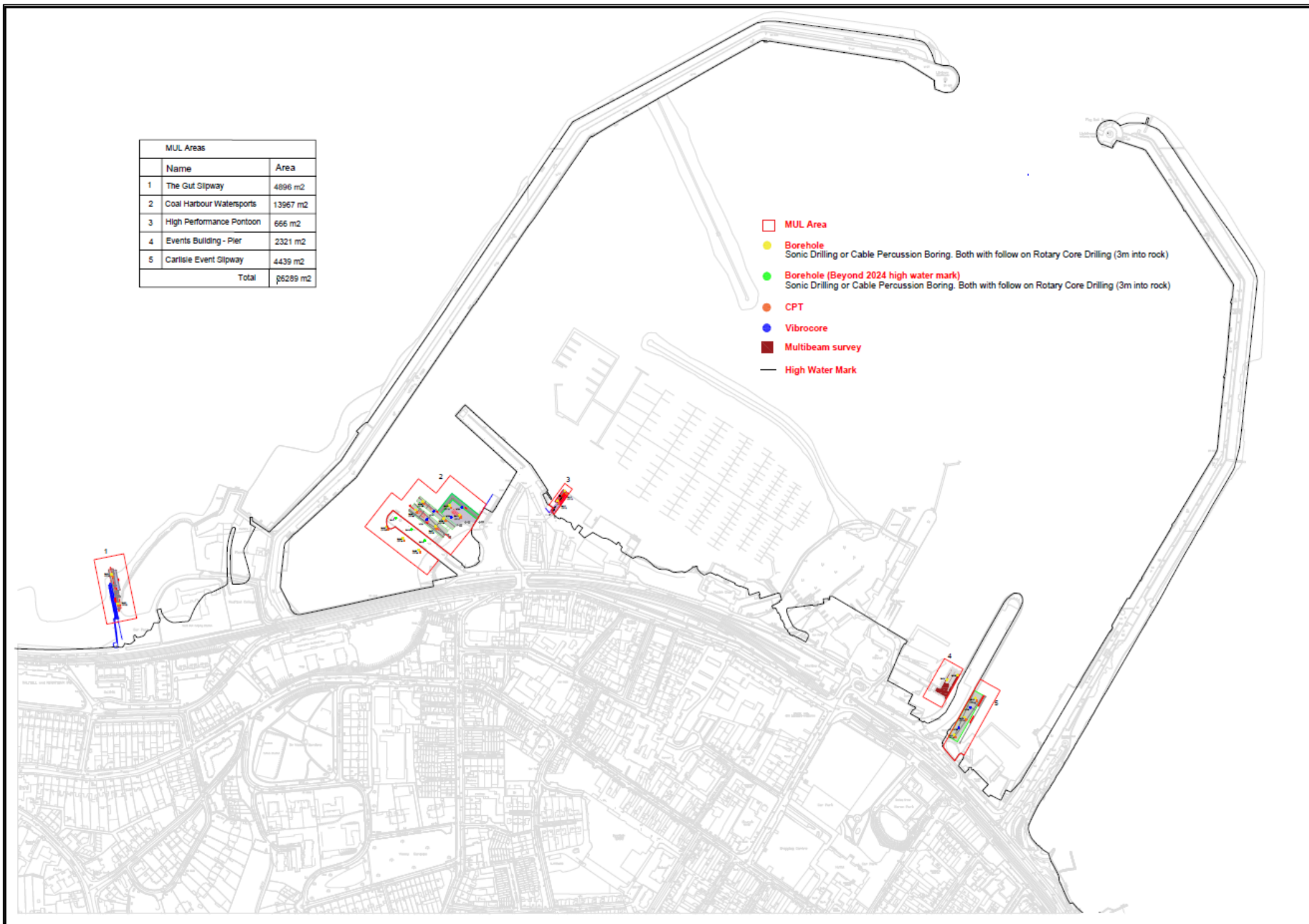


Figure 1.2: MUL area with measurements

1.7 LIMITATIONS

This Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared for the sole use of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council ("the Client"). No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report or any other services provided by OCSC.

This assessment is based on a review of available historical information, environmental records, consultations, relevant guidance information, and reports from third parties. All information received has been taken in good faith as being true and representative.

This report has been prepared in line with the best industry standards. The methodology adopted and the sources of information used by OCSC in providing its services are outlined in this Report. The assessment undertaken by OCSC and described was undertaken in January 2026 and is based on the information available during that period. The scope of this report and the services are accordingly factually limited by these circumstances.

OCSC disclaim any undertaking or obligation to advise any person of any change in any matter affecting the Report which may come or be brought to OCSC's attention after the date of the Report. The conclusions presented in this report represent OCSC's best professional judgement based on a review of the relevant information available at the time of writing. The opinions and conclusions presented are valid only to the extent that the information provided was accurate and complete.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

2.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening report has been prepared for the National Watersports Campus at Dún Laoghaire Harbour. It is envisaged as a multi-location, multi-activity centre that will deliver a coordinated, inclusive and world-class platform for watersports in Ireland. Drawing on the experience of the National Sports Campus (NSC), the project recognises the benefits of co-locating multiple sporting activities in a single national venue, including economies of scale, increased participation, enhanced performance pathways and a strong national profile. However, as a predominantly land-based facility, the NSC cannot cater for the specific requirements of water-based sports.

The proposed project comprises a programme of marine and coastal site investigation works within Dún Laoghaire Harbour (Figure 2.1). These works are required to inform the design, feasibility and environmental assessment of proposed future watersports infrastructure and are necessary to support an application for a Maritime Usage Licence (MUL). The investigations will provide essential information on seabed conditions, subsurface geology, sediment characteristics and bathymetry within the defined MUL application area. The site investigation works are temporary in nature and will be undertaken at discrete locations within and just outside the harbour, including both intertidal and subtidal areas. All works will be carried out using established industry methods and best practice, with appropriate environmental controls in place.

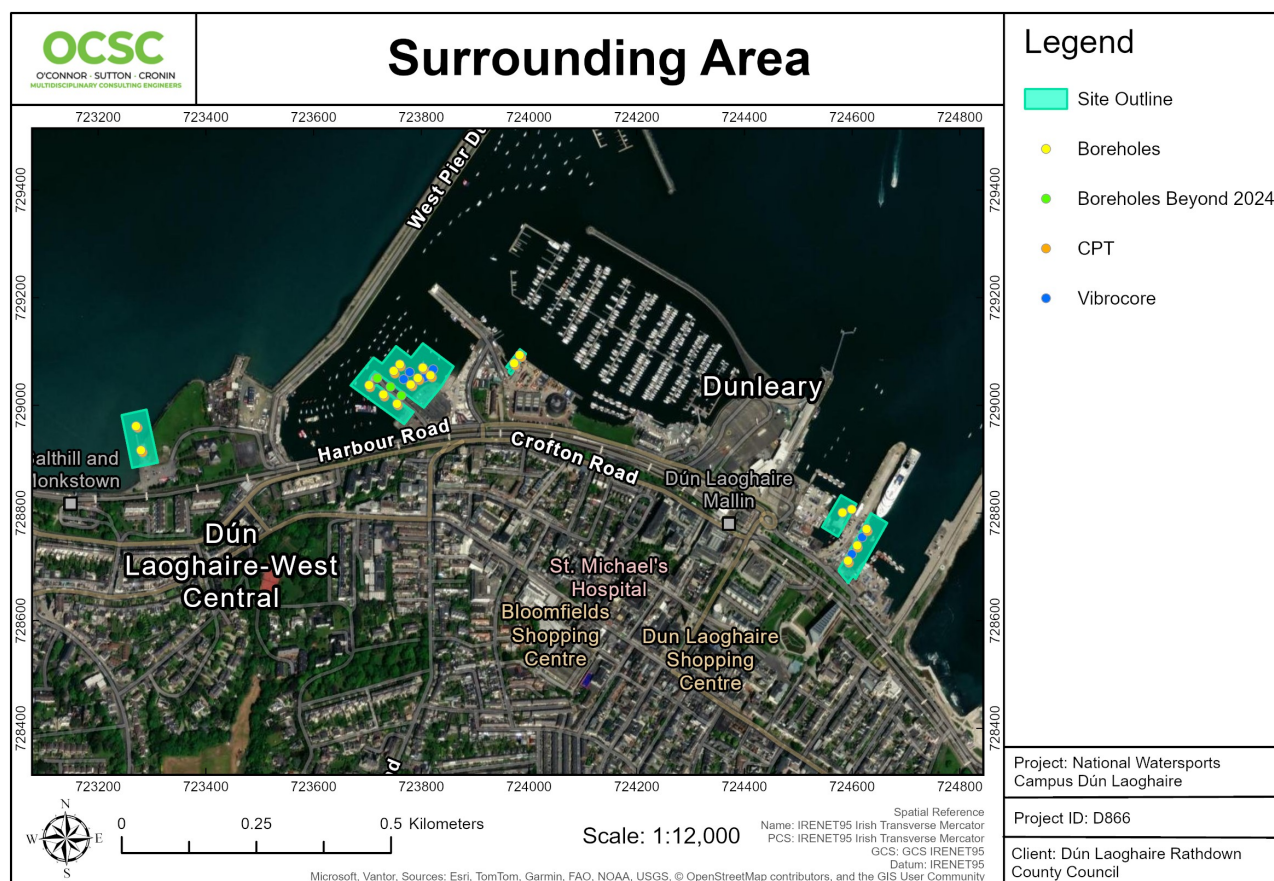


Figure 2.1: Regional Site Location, (Source: OCSC 2026)

The scope of the proposed site investigation works includes the following elements:

Boreholes (within the MUL Area)

Marine boreholes will be undertaken using either sonic drilling or cable percussion boring, with both methods followed by rotary core drilling extending approximately 3 metres into bedrock, where encountered. These boreholes are required to confirm subsurface stratigraphy, rock levels and geotechnical parameters to support future design development.

Boreholes (beyond the 2024 High Water Mark)

Additional boreholes are proposed in areas landward of the 2024 high water mark. These will be undertaken using the same methodologies sonic drilling or cable percussion boring, followed by rotary core drilling into bedrock to provide continuity of ground data between marine and terrestrial environments.

Cone Penetration Testing (CPT)

CPT investigations will be carried out to obtain detailed in-situ information on soil strength and deformation properties. These tests will assist in characterising subsurface conditions and will inform foundation design assumptions for potential future marine structures.

Vibrocore Sampling

Vibrocore sampling will be undertaken to recover disturbed sediment samples for laboratory-based environmental and geotechnical testing. These samples will be used to assess sediment composition and potential contamination, where relevant, to inform future construction methodologies and environmental management.

Multibeam Bathymetric Survey

A multibeam echosounder survey will be carried out within the MUL area to provide high-resolution bathymetric data of the harbour seabed. The survey will support an improved understanding of seabed morphology, existing features and water depths and will inform both engineering design and environmental assessment.

Improved Wind and Water Sports Launching Facilities

To improve access for windsurfing, wing foiling and kitesurfing, a new slipway and mini-pier are proposed in the area known as “The Gut”, located to the west of the West Pier.

Wind and Water Sports Providers Facilities – “The Gut”

A new two-storey building is proposed in “The Gut” to accommodate up to four individual watersports providers. The facility will include equipment storage, communal training rooms, reception areas, fully-accessible changing facilities with toilets and showers, and a small café/kiosk. The building will have an approximate floor area of 250 m².

High Performance Coaching Centre – Direct Water Access

To support elite athlete development, a 25-metre pontoon with associated gangway and access route is proposed adjacent to the former Coastguard Station building. This pontoon will enable the Irish Sailing High Performance Unit to berth directly alongside their headquarters, providing efficient and safe access to the water for training and coaching activities.

2.2 SITE SETTING AND LOCATION

The Dún Laoghaire Harbour is located within Dún Laoghaire, County Dublin, adjacent to the N31 road. The harbour's structure comprises multiple inner basins formed by piers and breakwaters, including the Old Harbour (with tidal slipway), the Coal Harbour (with non-tidal slipway), and the modern Marina Harbour created in the early 2000s to support leisure craft. The entrance channel is broadly aligned to the north-northeast and measures over 230 m across. Historically, the harbour was used as a major passenger ferry port including the long-established Holyhead service. The harbour's commercial ferry operations ceased in the 2010s, and the facility has since evolved into a marine and recreational hub. It now accommodates a broad range of marine uses including the largest leisure marina in Ireland, multiple sailing and yacht clubs, rowing and watersports activities, commercial small-boat services, and emergency maritime services such as RNLI lifeboats and Irish

Coast Guard operations. The site and its surroundings are set in urban and marine land-use as shown in Figure 2.1.

2.3 HYDROLOGY

The site investigation works are within the coastal waterbody, Dublin Bay (IE_EA_090_0000). This is listed as a coastal waterbody by the EPA and flows into the Irish Sea. The Dublin Bay has been designated under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) as having a 'Good' status based on the most recent water quality information from 2019-2024 as shown in Figure 2.2. The EPA spatial dataset indicates that the Dublin Bay is 'Not at Risk' of not meeting its 2027 WFD objectives (EPA, 2025) as shown in Figure 2.3. WFD summary information for this coastal waterbody is summarised in Table 2.1.

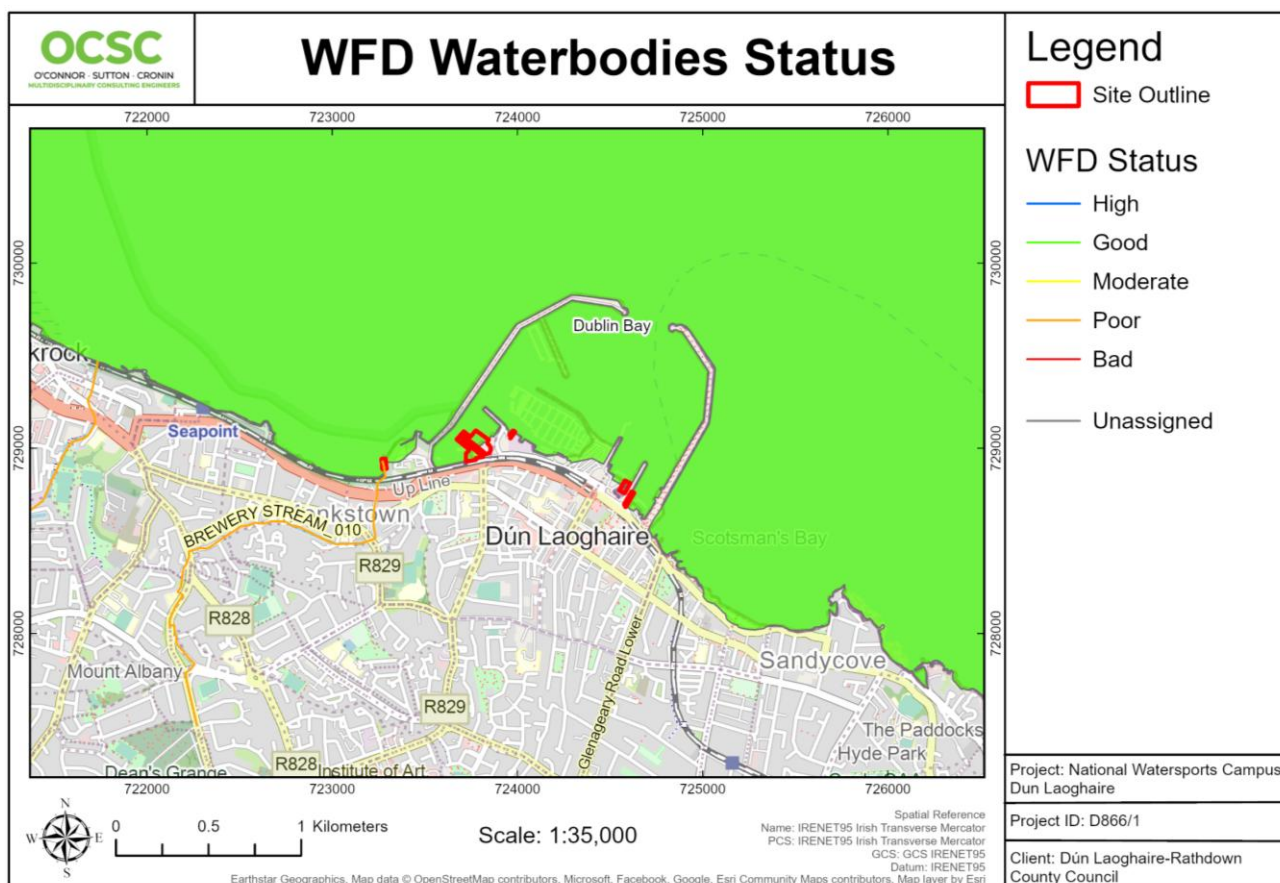


Figure 2.2: Coastal Waterbodies Status (Source: OCSC, 2026)

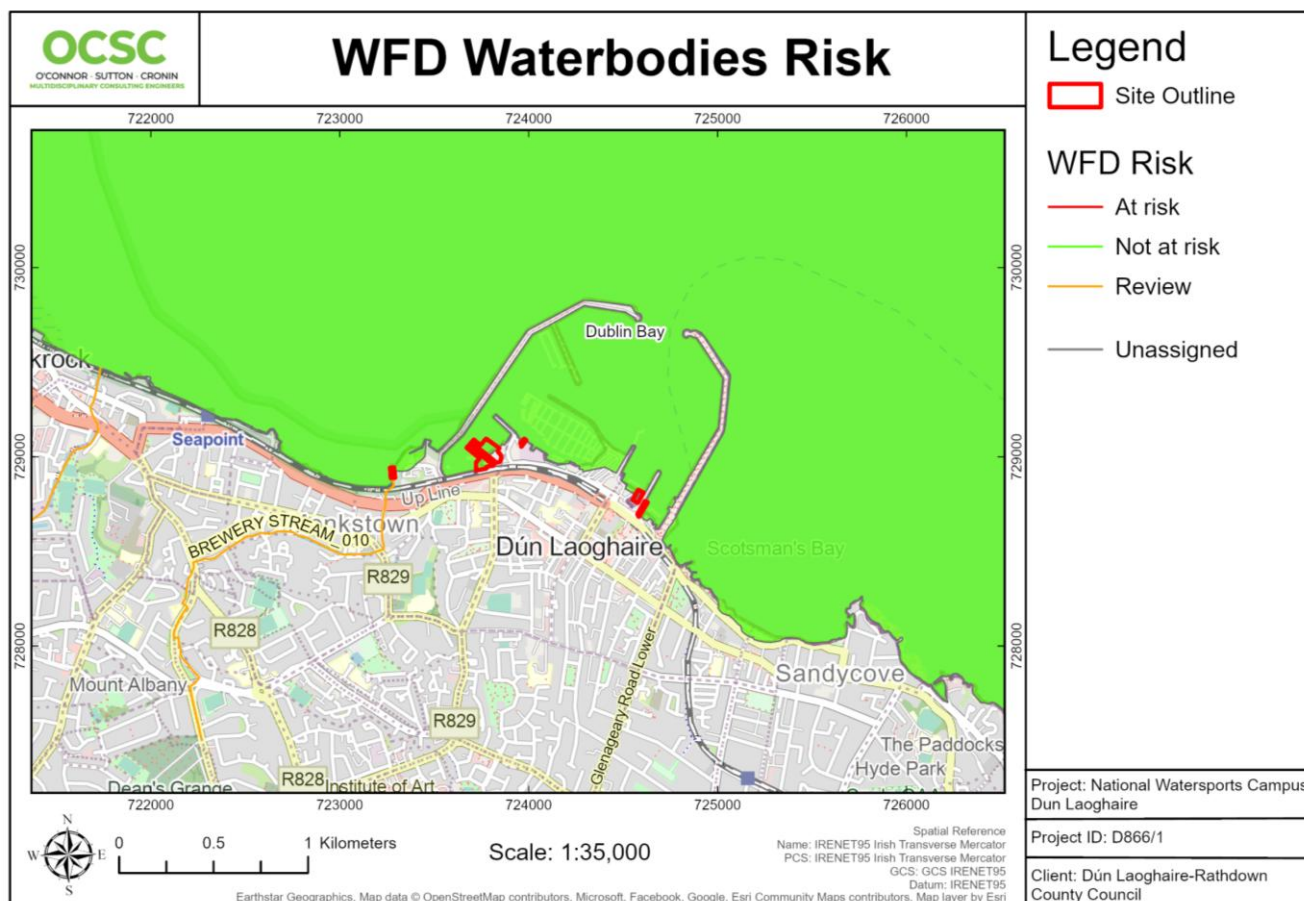


Figure 2.3: Coastal Waterbodies Risk (Source: OCSC, 2026)

Table 2.1: WFD Summary Information

Name	Dublin Bay
Waterbody Code	IE_EA_090_0000
Waterbody Type	Coastal
Iteration	SW 2019-2024
Status	Good
Risk	Not at Risk

3 SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

3.1 SCREENING PROCESS

This stage of the process identifies any likely significant effects to European sites from a project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. The screening phase was progressed in stages during which a series of questions were asked to determine:

- Whether a plan or project can be excluded from AA requirements because it is directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site.
- Whether the project will have a potentially significant effect on a European Site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, in view of the site's conservation objectives or if residual uncertainty exists regarding potential impacts.

An important element of the AA process is the identification of the “conservation objectives”, “Qualifying Interests” (QIs), and/ or “Special Conservation Interests” (SCIs) of European sites requiring assessment. QIs are the habitat features and species listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive for which each European Site has been designated and afforded protection. SCIs are wetland habitats and bird species listed within Annexes I and II of the Birds Directive. It is also vital that the threats to the ecological/environmental conditions that are required to support QIs and SCIs are considered as part of the assessment.

Site-Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) have been designed to define favourable conservation status for a particular habitat or species at that site. Paragraph 4.6(3) of the European Commission interpretation document ‘Managing Natura 2000 sites: The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC’ states:

“The significant effects on any European Site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, involves its ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the site's conservation objectives.”

Favourable conservation status of habitat is achieved when:

- Its natural range, and 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; and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved 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; and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

3.2 IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT EUROPEAN SITES

Appropriate Assessment screening of potential effects on European sites is conducted following a standard source-pathway-receptor model where all three elements of this mechanism must be in place for an effect to be established. The absence or removal of one of the elements of the mechanism is sufficient to conclude that a potential effect is not of any relevance or significance. The elements of this model consist of the following:

Table 3.1: SPR model

Source(s)

Identify the characteristics of the proposed development such as the nature, size and location and the type of impacts

Examples:

Direct Impacts:

- Direct emissions (water, air, noise or light).
- Loss of habitat (including breeding or foraging habitat).

Indirect Impacts:

- Loss of breeding or foraging habitat outside the European site.
- Impact on a non-QI habitat or species within the European site that is ecologically linked to the conservation objectives/QI.
- Barriers to movement e.g. aquatic species, otter, bats, bird species.
- Collision risk.
- Loss of breeding or foraging for a prey species.

Pathway(s)

Identify the existence and characteristics of the pathways that could link European sites and their Qualifying Interests to the proposed development.

Examples:

Direct Pathways:

- Proximity (i.e. location within the European site).
- Water bodies (rivers/streams, marine, lakes, groundwater).
- Air (for both air emissions and noise impacts).

Indirect Pathways:

- Disruption to migratory paths, e.g. bird species, aquatic species, bats.
- 'Sightlines' where noisy or intrusive activities may result in disturbance to shy species.

Receptor(s)

Qualifying species and habitats which may be linked to sources of impact via identified pathways. The location, nature, and sensitivities of these potential receptors must be established along with the ecological conditions underpinning their survival and the conservation objectives specified to maintain or restore favourable conservation status.

Examples:

- Freshwater Pearl Mussels' extreme sensitivity to siltation in water.
- Lesser Horseshoe Bats' sensitivity to noise and light.
- Turloughs' sensitivity to changes in groundwater levels.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment is comprised of the following steps:

- (a) Describe the details of the proposed development and the characteristics of the receiving environment
- (b) Identify all the potential impacts of the proposed development
- (c) Define the zone of influence using the Source-Pathway-Receptor model.
- (d) Identify the European site(s) within the zone of influence of the proposed development along with their Qualifying Interests and conservation objectives
- (e) Determine whether the proposed development is directly connected with, or necessary to the conservation management of, any European site(s)
- (f) Assess the potential effects on European sites
- (g) Assess the likely significant direct and indirect effects on the conservation objectives of the site(s) in relation to: project alone, and in-combination with other plans and projects.
- (h) Conclusions of screening assessment process. Determine if the project, in the absence of mitigation measures will undermine the conservation objectives of the site(s) and give rise to likely significant effects.

Conservation objectives that have been considered by this assessment are included in the following NPWS documents:

- NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA 004024. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Dalkey Islands SPA 004172. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- NPWS (2023) Conservation Objectives: North-west Irish Sea SPA 004236. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: North Bull Island SPA 004006. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: North Dublin Bay SAC 000206. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (2016) Conservation Objectives: Howth Head SAC 000202. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.
- NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Howth Head Coast SPA 004113. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Baldoye Bay SPA 004016. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (2012) Conservation Objectives: Baldoye Bay SAC 000199. Version 1.0. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Wicklow Mountains SAC 002122. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

- NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Wicklow Mountains SPA 004040. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Glenasmole Valley SAC 001209. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Knocksink Wood SAC 000725. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- NPWS (2019) Conservation Objectives: Ballyman Glen SAC 000713. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
- NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Bray Head SAC 000714. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.
- NPWS (2024) Conservation Objectives: Ireland's Eye SPA 004117. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- NPWS (2017) Conservation Objectives: Ireland's Eye SAC 002193. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

3.3 ZONE OF INFLUENCE

The Zone of Influence (ZOI) for the proposed project has been defined as 15 km, reflecting the marine setting of the site investigation works and the potential for effects to be transmitted through hydrological pathways within the coastal and marine environment. While the proposed works are small-scale and temporary in nature, the extended ZOI has been adopted as a precautionary measure to ensure that all European sites with potential ecological connectivity via water are appropriately considered.

The proposed project comprises temporary marine and coastal site investigation works, including borehole drilling, CPT, vibrocore sampling and multibeam bathymetric surveying. These works do not involve vegetation clearance, land take or the construction of permanent infrastructure.

Potential impact pathways relevant to the marine environment include disturbance to mobile species, short-term sediment mobilisation, and water quality effects. However, any such effects would be highly localised, of short duration and confined to the immediate vicinity of the works, with rapid attenuation in the open marine environment.

Beyond the immediate works area, there is no credible mechanism by which the proposed site investigation activities could result in significant effects on European sites at greater distances. Any temporary changes in water quality or sediment suspension would dissipate quickly and would not persist or propagate over large spatial scales.

3.4 DESIGNATED SITES

Figure 3.1 and Figure 3.2 show the locations of designated sites located within 15km of the site and nearby surface water features and flow networks, respectively. Table 3.2 presents details of the key ecological features at Special Area of Conservation (SACs) and Special Area of Protection (SPAs) within 15km of the site.

NPWS Designated Sites

Legend

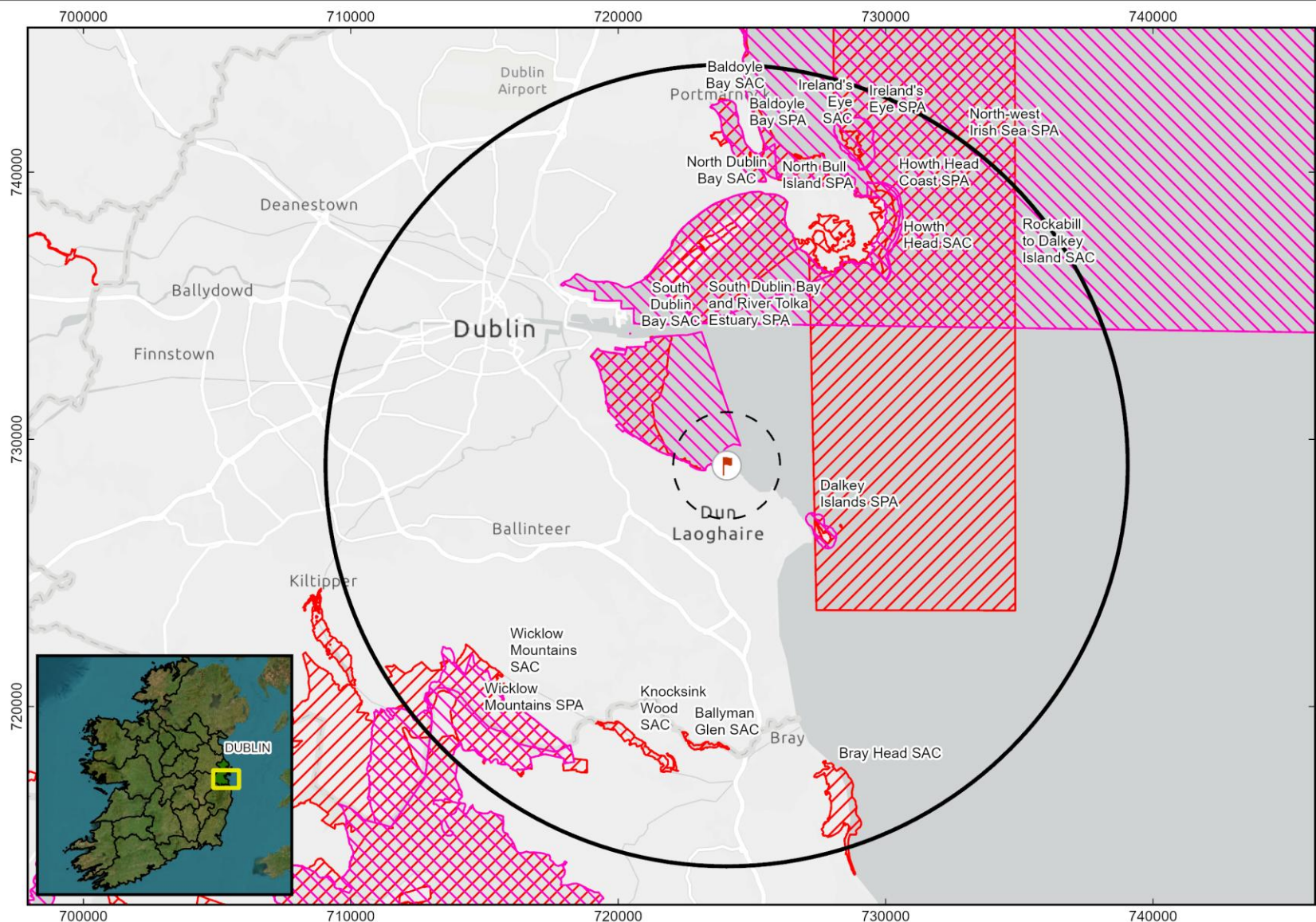
 Site Location

 2km Buffer

 15km Buffer

 Special Protection Areas

 Special Area of Conservation



0 7.5 15 Kilometers

Scale: 1:220,000

Spatial Reference
Name: IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
PCS: IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
GCS: GCS IRENET95
Datum: IRENET95
Projection: Transverse Mercator

Earthstar Geographics, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Project: National Watersports Campus Dún Laoghaire

Project ID: D866/1

Client: Dún Laoghaire - Rathdown County Council

Figure 3.1: NPWS Designated Sites

Flow Network and NPWS Designated Sites

Legend

Site Outline

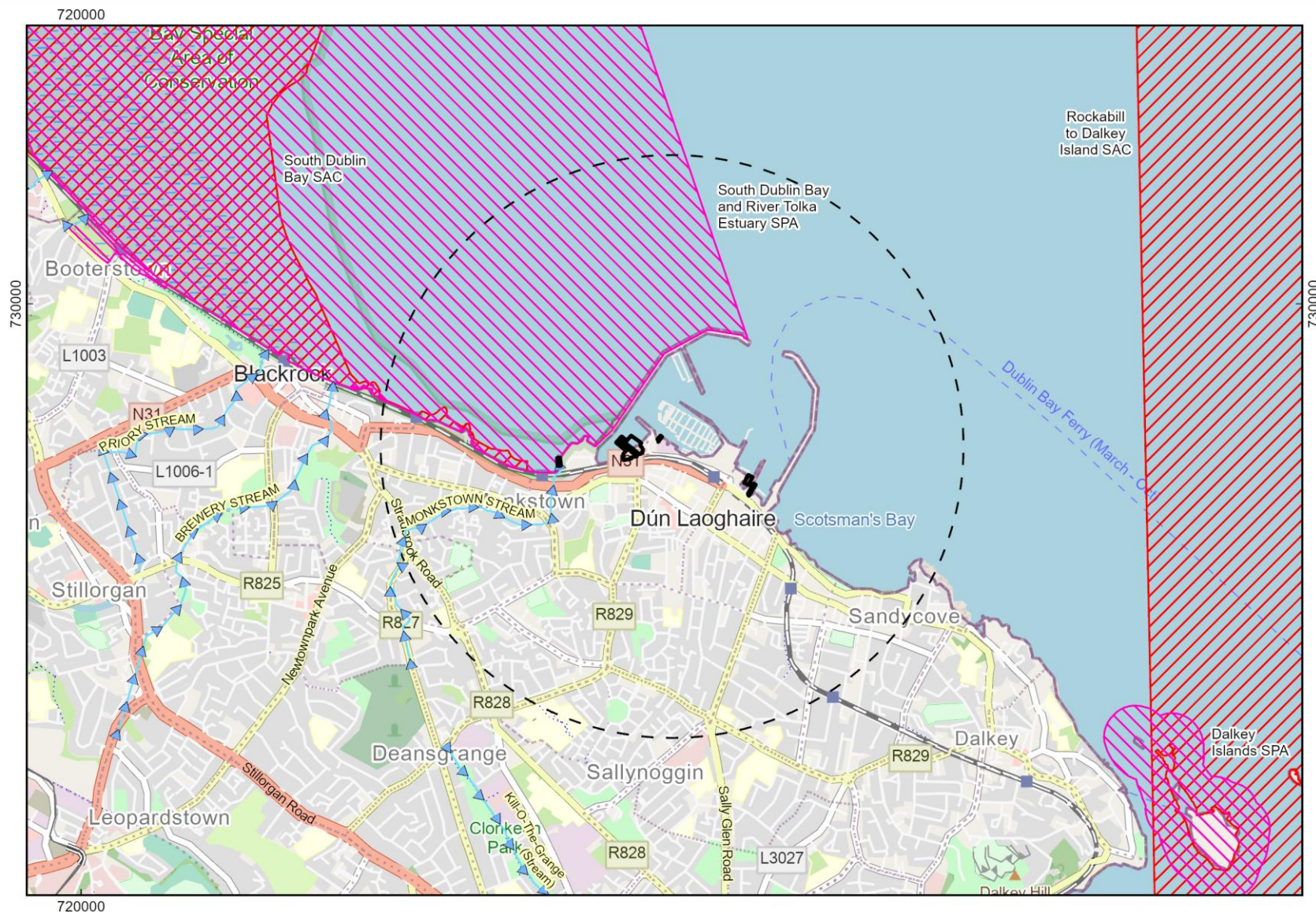
2km Buffer

Special Protection Areas

Special Area of Conservation

River Network

Flow Direction



0 1.5 3 Kilometers

Scale: 1:40,000

Spatial Reference
Name: IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
PCS: IRENET95 Irish Transverse Mercator
GCS: GCS IRENET95
Datum: IRENET95
Projection: Transverse Mercator

Project: National Watersports Campus Dún Laoghaire

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Figure 3.2: Flow Network and NPWS Designated Sites

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors	Conservation Objectives (NPWS 2025)
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	0	[A046] Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A130] Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A137] Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A141] Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A143] Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A144] Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A149] Dúnlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A157] Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A162] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A179] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A192] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A193] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A194] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds	To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Grey Plover is proposed for removal from the list of Special Conservation Interests To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004024.pdf
000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	0.2 NE	[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. [2110] Embryonic shifting dunes	To maintain the favourable conservation condition No conservation objective identified No conservation objective identified No conservation objective identified Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000210.pdf
003000	Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC	2.7 NE	[1170] Reefs [1351] Phocoena phocoena (<i>Harbour Porpoise</i>)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO003000.pdf
004172	Dalkey Islands SPA	2.9 SE	[A192] Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A193] Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A194] Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>)	To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition Available at:



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National Watersports Campus Dún Laoghaire

AA Screening Report

08 June 2021

Rev P01

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors	Conservation Objectives (NPWS 2025)
			[A162] Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A169] Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A179] Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A999] Wetland and Waterbirds	To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004006.pdf
000206	North Dublin Bay SAC	5.3 N	[1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1210] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1310] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1330] Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [2110] Embryonic shifting dunes [2120] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2130] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2190] Humid dune slacks [1395] <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> (Petalwort)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000206.pdf
000202	Howth Head SAC	8 NE	[1230] Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [4030] European dry heaths	To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000202.pdf
004113	Howth Head Coast SPA	8.9 NE	Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A188]	To restore the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004113.pdf
000713	Ballyman Glen SAC	9.9 S	[7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [7230] Alkaline fens	To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000713.pdf
000725	Knocksink Wood SAC	10 S	[7220] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (<i>Cratoneurion</i>) [91A0] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91E0] Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (<i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i>)	To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Available at:

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors	Conservation Objectives (NPWS 2025)
				https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000725.pdf
004016	Baldoye Bay SPA	10.6 N	[A046] Light-bellied 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] Wetland and Waterbirds	To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004016.pdf
000199	Baldoye Bay SAC	10.6 N	[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>)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000199.pdf
002122	Wicklow Mountains SAC	10.8 SW	[3110] Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (<i>Littorelletalia uniflorae</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 Nardus 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 Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [1355] <i>Lutra lutra</i> (Otter)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002122.pdf

Site Code	Site Name	Distance (km)	Sensitive Receptors	Conservation Objectives (NPWS 2025)
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	11.1 SW	[A098] Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) [A103] Peregrine (<i>Falco peregrinus</i>)	To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004040.pdf
000714	Bray Head SAC	11.1 SE	[1230] Vegetated Sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts [4030] European dry heaths	To maintain the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO000714.pdf
004117	Ireland's Eye SPA	12 NE	[A017] Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>) [A184] Herring Gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>) [A188] Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>) [A199] Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>) [A200] Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>)	To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To restore the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO004117.pdf
002193	Ireland's Eye SAC	12.5 NE	[1220] Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1230] Vegetated Sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts	To maintain the favourable conservation condition To maintain the favourable conservation condition Available at: https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/protected-sites/conservation_objectives/CO002193.pdf

3.5 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

3.5.1 EXCLUSION FROM APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

As set out in the provisions of the Habitats Directive, plans or projects that are directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European Site do not require AA. For this exception to apply, management is required to be interpreted narrowly as nature conservation management in the sense of Article 6(1) of the Habitats Directive. This refers to specific measures to address the ecological requirements of annexed habitats and species (and their habitats) present on a site(s). The relationship should be shown to be direct and not a by-product of the plan, even if this might result in positive or beneficial effects for a site(s).

In this case, the proposed marine and coastal site investigation works, including borehole drilling, CPT testing, Vibrocore sampling and multibeam surveying, are not necessary for, nor directly connected with, the management of any European site. Accordingly, the proposed works cannot be excluded from Appropriate Assessment and must be assessed to determine whether they have the potential to result in likely significant effects on European sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

3.5.2 ELEMENTS OF WORK WITH POTENTIAL TO GIVE RISE TO EFFECTS

The construction phase of the proposed works has the potential to introduce effects such as disturbance due to noise and vibrations, short-term sediment mobilisation and water quality effects. These effects are examined in detail in relation to the sensitive receptors of each of the European sites identified with regard to the conservation objectives and the potential pathways for effects.

3.5.3 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS AND SCREENING OF SITES

This section documents the final stage of the screening process. It uses the information collected on the sensitivity of each European Site and describes any impact to have likely significant effects on any European Site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, resulting from the proposed works. This assessment assumes the absence of any controls, conditions, or mitigation measures. In determining the potential for effects, a number of factors have been considered including the sensitivity and reported threats to the European Site and the individual elements of the proposed works and the potential effects they may cause to the site.

Sites are screened out based on one or a combination of the following criteria:

- Where it can be shown that there are no significant pathways such as hydrological links between activities of the proposed works and the site to be screened;
- Where the site is located at such a distance from proposed works that effects are not foreseen; and/or

- Where it is that known threats or vulnerabilities at a site cannot be linked to potential impacts that may arise from the proposed works.

3.6 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Assessment is the process of evaluating the importance or significance of project/plan effects (whether negative or positive). The following parameters are described when characterising impacts (following guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland/ National Roads Authority):

Direct and Indirect Impacts – An impact can be caused either as a direct or as an indirect consequence of proposed development.

Magnitude - Magnitude refers to size, amount, intensity, and volume. It should be quantified if possible and expressed in absolute or relative terms (e.g., the amount of habitat lost, percentage change to habitat area, percentage decline in a species population). Magnitude measures the size of an impact which is described as high, medium, low, very low, or negligible.

Extent - The extent is the spatial or geographical area over which the impact/effect may occur under a suitably representative range of conditions (e.g. noise transmission underwater).

The document 'Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Commission Environment DG, 2001' outlines the types of effects that may impact European sites. These include effects from the following activities:

- Land take
- Resource requirements (drinking water abstraction, etc.)
- Emissions (disposal to land, water, or air)
- Excavation requirements
- Transportation requirements
- Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

In addition, the guidance outlines the following likely changes that may occur at a designated site which may result in significant effects on any European Site and its function, in view of its conservation objectives:

- Reduction of habitat area
- Disturbance to key species
- Habitat or species fragmentation
- Reduction in species density
- Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality, etc.)
- Climate change

The elements detailed above were considered with reference to each of the European sites identified by using the SPR model (Table 3.1).

3.6.1 LAND TAKE/HABITAT LOSS

The proposed project comprises temporary and localised site investigation works, including borehole drilling, CPT, vibrocore sampling and multibeam bathymetric surveying. These activities will not require permanent land take, dredging, reclamation or the installation of permanent structures within or adjacent to any European site.

All investigation works will be undertaken at discrete points with a very small physical footprint. No habitats will be permanently removed, modified or lost as a result of the project in particular due to the temporary nature of the disturbance. The integrity, extent and ecological function of intertidal and subtidal habitats will therefore be maintained.

3.6.2 RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

Taking account of the limited scale, temporary duration and controlled nature of the activities, the proposed site investigation works will not place pressure on natural resources or affect the integrity of any European site. Accordingly, resource requirements associated with the project will not give rise to likely significant effects, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

3.6.3 DURATION OF WORKS

The proposed site investigation works within Dún Laoghaire Harbour is anticipated to be short term (<12weeks). As such, the duration of works is unlikely to contribute to significant impacts on nearby European sites.

3.6.4 EMISSIONS (DISPOSAL TO LAND, WATER OR AIR)

Construction Phase:

The proposed project comprises temporary marine and coastal site investigation works, including borehole drilling, CPT, vibrocore sampling and multibeam bathymetric surveying. These activities have the potential to generate limited emissions to land, water and air. Given the proximity of European sites with the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA located within the site and the South Dublin Bay SAC located approximately 0.2 km away, particular consideration has been given to potential emission pathways.

Emissions to Water

Marine-based investigation activities may result in minor, short-term disturbance of seabed sediments, particularly during vibrocore sampling and borehole drilling. This may give rise to small, localised increases in suspended sediment concentrations within the immediate vicinity of the works. Any such sediment mobilisation

will be temporary, highly localised and of limited duration, with sediments expected to settle rapidly under prevailing tidal conditions.

No dredging, bulk excavation or large-scale sediment removal will occur. No drilling fluids, chemicals or hazardous substances will be discharged to the marine environment. Accordingly, there will be no change to water quality parameters of relevance to the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the SPA or the nearby SAC.

Emissions to Land

Onshore components of the site investigation works may generate small quantities of drill arisings and disturbed material. All materials will be appropriately contained, managed and removed from site for disposal at licensed facilities. No disposal of material will occur within or adjacent to the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA or the South Dublin Bay SAC.

Emissions to Air

Air emissions will be limited to short-term exhaust emissions from vessels and plant, together with negligible dust generation during any onshore works. These emissions will be temporary, minor in scale and will dissipate rapidly. Given the nature of the emissions and the coastal setting, no effects on sensitive habitats or species within the adjacent SPA or nearby SAC are anticipated.

Pollution Risk

The risk of accidental pollution events, such as fuel or oil spills, is considered low due to the limited scale and duration of the works. All vessels and plant will be appropriately maintained, and standard pollution prevention and spill response measures will be in place throughout the investigation period.

Taking account of the temporary and localised nature of the site investigation works, the absence of chemical discharges, and the controlled management of all materials and waste, it is concluded that emissions to land, water or air will not result in significant effects on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA or the South Dublin Bay SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Operational Phase:

There will be no operational phase associated with this element of the project.

3.6.5 EXCAVATION REQUIREMENTS/EROSION/SEDIMENTATION

The proposed site investigation works comprise borehole drilling, CPT, vibrocore sampling and multibeam bathymetric surveying. These activities will involve limited, highly localised disturbance of seabed and ground materials but will not constitute excavation in the conventional sense associated with construction works.

Excavation Requirements

Boreholes and vibrocore samples will be undertaken at discrete locations and will be of a small diameter. These works will not require bulk excavation, dredging or removal of material beyond that necessary to obtain samples.

Erosion

The nature and scale of the proposed works will not alter coastal processes or hydrodynamic conditions within the harbour. No structures will be installed that could change wave action, tidal flows or sediment transport pathways. As such, the works will not give rise to erosion of intertidal or subtidal habitats within or adjacent to European sites.

Sedimentation

Localised and temporary increases in suspended sediment may occur during vibrocore sampling and drilling activities. Any sediment release will be minimal in volume, short-lived and restricted to the immediate vicinity of the investigation locations. Sediments will be expected to settle naturally without spreading to sensitive habitats. No fine sediment plumes of sufficient scale or duration to affect SPA SCI species or supporting habitats are anticipated.

Given the small scale, temporary and localised nature of the site investigation works, and the absence of dredging, large-scale excavation or permanent infrastructure, the proposed activities will not result in significant excavation, erosion or sedimentation effects. Accordingly, these pathways will not give rise to likely significant effects on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

3.6.6 TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

There will be a small, short-term increase in construction traffic during the construction phase. However, these effects are considered to be negligible.

3.6.7 DURATION OF CONSTRUCTION, OPERATION, DECOMMISSIONING

The construction phase is limited to the mobilisation, execution and demobilisation of site investigation activities, including borehole drilling, CPT, vibrocore sampling and multibeam bathymetric surveying. These activities will be undertaken over a short, defined period, with works occurring intermittently at discrete locations. The duration of individual investigation activities will be brief, and no continuous or long-term disturbance will occur. Decommissioning will consist solely of the removal of temporary plant, vessels and equipment from the site, together with the sealing or reinstatement of all investigation points in accordance with best practice. No permanent infrastructure will remain, and no further disturbance will occur following completion of the works.

Given the short-term and temporary nature of the construction activities, the absence of an operational phase, and the complete reinstatement of the site following decommissioning, the proposed works will not give rise to long-term effects on the qualifying interests or conservation objectives of any European site.

3.6.8 HABITAT REDUCTION

The South Dublin Bay SAC is designated for the following Annex I habitats:

- Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
- Annual vegetation of drift lines
- Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand
- Embryonic shifting dunes

The South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA is designated for internationally important populations of wintering waterbirds, including SCI species such as Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*), Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*), Knot (*Calidris canutus*), Sanderling (*Calidris alba*), Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), Redshank (*Tringa totanus*), Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*), Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), and Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*).

The proposed project comprises temporary and highly localised site investigation works, including borehole drilling, CPT testing, vibrocore sampling and multibeam bathymetric surveying. These works will not involve dredging, land reclamation, excavation of intertidal habitats, or the construction of permanent infrastructure.

No part of the intertidal mudflats or sandflats that constitute the primary supporting habitat for SPA SCI species will be permanently removed, infilled or altered. Any seabed disturbance associated with vibrocore sampling or drilling will be limited to very small, discrete points and will be fully reinstated or allowed to naturally recover following completion of the works.

Similarly, the terrestrial and transitional habitats qualifying under the SAC designation, including saltmarsh-related vegetation, drift line vegetation and dune habitats, will not be affected by the proposed works. No direct or indirect reduction in the extent, structure or function of these habitats will occur.

Given the absence of permanent habitat loss, SCI bird species will retain full access to their supporting habitats for foraging, roosting and movement. The availability, distribution and ecological function of habitats within the SPA and SAC will remain unchanged.

Taking account of the nature, scale and duration of the proposed site investigation works, it is concluded that the project will not result in habitat reduction affecting the Qualifying Interests of the South Dublin Bay SAC or the SCI species of the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA. No loss, degradation or long-term reduction in the extent or quality of supporting habitats will occur. Accordingly, the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites will not be undermined, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

3.6.9 SPECIES DISTURBANCE

The proposed site investigation works have the potential to result in temporary disturbance to SCI species through increased human presence, use of marine plant and vessels, and associated noise and visual activity. Disturbance effects may include short-term behavioural responses such as alertness, flight initiation or temporary displacement from preferred foraging or resting areas. Guidance published by NatureScot (2023) indicates that disturbance distances for coastal and marine bird species vary by species and season, with some SCI species exhibiting disturbance responses at distances in excess of 200 m, particularly during sensitive periods. However, disturbance distances are precautionary and must be considered in the context of the nature, duration and intensity of the activity, as well as existing baseline disturbance levels and habitat availability.

The site investigation works will be temporary, localised and intermittent, occurring over a limited timeframe and at discrete locations. No permanent structures will be installed, and no loss or degradation of habitat will occur. Any disturbance experienced by SCI species is expected to be short-term and reversible, with birds able to relocate to adjacent suitable habitats within the SPA and wider coastal environment. The works are located within areas used by SCI species and within an environment that is already subject to regular marine traffic and recreational activity. SCI species present in the area are therefore considered to be habituated to a degree of background disturbance.

Taking account of the temporary nature of the works, the absence of habitat loss, the availability of alternative foraging and roosting areas, and the existing disturbance regime within the harbour, it is concluded that the proposed site investigation works will not adversely affect SCI species at a population level, nor undermine the conservation objectives of the relevant SPAs.

3.6.10 HABITAT OR SPECIES FRAGMENTATION

The proposed site investigation works comprise temporary and localised activities, including borehole drilling, CPT, vibrocore sampling and multibeam bathymetric surveying. These works will not involve the construction of permanent infrastructure, installation of physical barriers, or alteration of habitat corridors within or adjacent to any European site. No habitats will be removed, subdivided or isolated as a result of the works. The small, discrete investigation points will be reinstated following completion, and there will be no long-term change to the continuity or connectivity of intertidal or subtidal habitats. Mobile species, including SPA SCI bird species, will continue to have unrestricted access to foraging, roosting and movement areas within the harbour and wider coastal environment.

Given the temporary nature of the works, their limited spatial footprint, and the absence of any permanent obstructions or habitat loss, the proposed site investigation works will not result in habitat or species fragmentation.

3.6.11 CLIMATE CHANGE

Due to the nature and scale of the works, impacts resulting from the development on climate and Ireland's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol are anticipated to be extremely unlikely and negligible.

3.6.12 COMBINATION EFFECTS WITH OTHER PROJECTS

Grants of planning in the vicinity of the site were reviewed to identify works of a significant scale which may produce in-combination effects with the works. The following planning grants of larger than single domestic scale were identified in Table 3.3:

Table 3.3: Other projects near the area that may have in-combination effects with the works.

Application Reference	Details	Construction Stage Overlap	Ecological Effects	Location & Proximity	Rationale
D24A/0140	Installation of a 1,200 sq.m (235kWp) Ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array and all associated ancillary works.	Permission granted on 6/6/2024. Valid until 5/6/2029. Potential overlap of construction stages.	Dust and noise during construction phase.	Approximately 57m east of the site, West Pier Pumping Station, West Pier, Dún Laoghaire, Dublin, A96K167	Sufficient distances between the sites and the nearest Natura site. The Appropriate Assessment Screening report completed for the proposed development concluded that the Proposed Development, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not result in significant adverse effects to the integrity and conservation status of European sites subject to the implementation of mitigation measures.
D22A/0758	Planning permission is sought for development comprising of alteration & extension of existing rear modern balcony terrace & staircase and associated site development works at the National Yacht Club which is a protected structure.	Permission granted on 9/3/2023. Valid until 8/3/2028. Potential overlap of construction stages.	Dust and noise during construction phase.	Adjacent to the site, The National Yacht Club, Dún Laoghaire Harbour, Dún Laoghaire, Co Dublin, A96AX98	Sufficient distances between the sites and the nearest Natura site.
D24A/0484/WEB	The development will consist of the construction of a new 5-8 storey development in 2 no. Blocks (Block 1 and Block 2) and the change of use and refurbishment of existing 3 storey (over adjacent basement level) 'Dun Leary House' (a Protected Structure) to provide for 88 no. residential units (26 no. 1 bed units; 37 no. 2 bed units; 24 no. 3 bed units; and 1 no. 4 bed detached house), residential amenity space at ground and first floor level (approx. 132 sq m) addressing the internal courtyard and upper terrace; 1 no. retail unit (approx. 108.5 sq m) with associated outdoor seating area at ground floor level addressing Old Dun Leary Road and Cumberland Street; and a public art display area (approx. 12 sq m) at ground floor level addressing Old Dun Leary Road.	Permission granted on 16/7/2025. Valid until 15/7/2030. Potential overlap of construction stages.	Dust and noise during construction phase.	Approximately 197m southeast of the site, Site of approx 0.74 HA at the former Ted Castles Site and Dun Leary House (a protected structure), Old	Sufficient distances between the sites and the nearest Natura site. The Appropriate Assessment Screening report completed for the proposed development concluded that the Proposed Development, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not result in significant adverse effects to the integrity and conservation status of

Application Reference	Details	Construction Stage Overlap	Ecological Effects	Location & Proximity	Rationale
	Block 1 comprises 79 no. residential units (26 no. 1 bed units, 35 no. 2 bed units and 18 no. 3 bed units) with an overall height ranging from 6 - 8 storeys (with setbacks at sixth and seventh floor levels) addressing Old Dun Leary Road and 5-8 storeys (with set back at seventh floor level) addressing Cumberland Street. Block 2 comprises 8 no. residential units (2 no. 2 bed units and 6 no. 3 bed units) with an overall height ranging from 4 - 5 storeys (with set back at fourth floor level) addressing Dun Leary Hill. The proposal provides for 2 no. communal open spaces in the form a ground floor level courtyard area which includes a lawn space, bee hives, pétanque court, kitchen, social area and seating and a first floor level terrace which provides for seating areas. Private open space is delivered in the form of balconies / terraces throughout the residential element of the development. Significant Public Realm improvements are also delivered and include the provision of footpath upgrades, a signalised junction on Old Dun Leary Road and Cumberland Street (including pedestrian crossings on all arms), landscaping, bicycle and car parking spaces on Cumberland Street and new public lighting. Proposed works to 'Dun Leary House' (a Protected Structure) will include the change of use and refurbishment of an existing 3 storey building (over adjacent basement level) from office/residential use to 1 no. 4 bed residential detached house (approx. 432.9 sq m) at lower ground floor level (level 01), ground floor level (level 02) and first floor level (level 03). Works will include (a) the demolition of the late-twentieth century extension to the north of the house including the lean-to glazed staircase annex, demolition of the adjacent basement structure and part of the internal structure to the north east of the house (approx. 284.8 sq m); (b) the refurbishment and internal / external alteration to the late-twentieth century north-east extension; (c) the blocking up of an existing window opening and the creation of a new window opening on the east façade at lower ground floor level; (d) the reinstatement of previously blocked door opening to the south porch (onto Dun Leary Hill); (e) the creation of a new opening on the north side of a vaulted area under the west entrance steps; (f) the demolition of some existing internal partitions and the construction of new partition walls at lower ground floor, ground floor and first floor levels; (g) the creation of a new door opening through a masonry wall between the nineteenth century house and late-twentieth century north-east extension; (h) the replacement of modern aluminium frame casement			Dun Leary Road, Cumberland Street, Longford Place and Dun Leary Hill, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, A96N208	European sites subject to the implementation of mitigation measures.

Application Reference	Details	Construction Stage Overlap	Ecological Effects	Location & Proximity	Rationale
	windows with replica timber sash windows; (i) the reinstatement of a timber staircase within the interior of the nineteenth century house; and (j) the conservation-led repairs to the roof, rainwater goods, external facades, boundary walls and railings of 'Dun Leary House'. The development shall also provide for: The demolition of the existing open fronted shed (approx. 367 sq m) located at the north eastern corner of the site together with all associated internal site walls and ancillary structures on site; A main entrance reception including residential amenities area (approx. 105 sq m) and maintenance room (approx. 8.2 sq m) at first floor level and a secondary entrance at ground floor level (approx. 27 sq m); 2 no. bin stores (retail and residential stores), 3 no. bulk storage areas, maintenance zone and plant room, ESB substation, switch room and all ancillary areas at ground floor level; 25 no. car parking spaces in total as follows - 17 no. car parking spaces provided at ground floor level (in curtilage) including 3 no. electric vehicle spaces and 1 no. disabled space; the removal of 11 no. existing on street car parking spaces at Cumberland Street with provision made for 8 no. new on street car parking spaces; 242 no. bicycle parking spaces (28 no. visitor bicycle spaces, 208 no. resident bicycle spaces, 4 no. cargo bicycle spaces and 2 no. bicycle spaces for Dun Leary House); 1 no. motorcycle parking space; 1 no. new vehicular entrance and pedestrian / cycle entrance via Old Dun Leary Road at ground floor level, 1 no. pedestrian / cycle entrance via Cumberland Street at an existing entrance at first floor level and 3 no. new residential entrances (2 no. for Dun Leary House and 1 no. for Block 2) via Cumberland Street and Old Dun Leary Hill at second floor level; All other site development and infrastructure works including water, foul and surface water drainage and all associated connections (including the diversion of an existing sewer at Cumberland Street); underground attenuation and associated underground pump station; all landscaping and boundary treatment works; green roofs; 10 no. solar panels at roof level; and all associated site clearance, excavation and development works.				
D25A/0081/WEB	Permission for the development : (i) change of use of existing commercial unit (452sq.m) at ground floor level of Block 3 from office space to gym facility; (ii) construction of an open-air padel court (200sq.m) at first floor level to the rear of Blocks 1 and 2; and, (iii) all associated ancillary works necessary to facilitate the proposed development.	Permission granted on 11/6/2025. Valid until 10/6/2030. Potential	Dust and noise during construction phase.	Approximately 30m south of the site, West Pier Business Campus, Old Dun Leary	Sufficient distances between the sites and the nearest Natura site. The Appropriate Assessment Screening report completed for the proposed development concluded that

Application Reference	Details	Construction Stage Overlap	Ecological Effects	Location & Proximity	Rationale
		overlap of construction stages.		Road, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, A96A621	the Proposed Development, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not result in significant adverse effects to the integrity and conservation status of European sites subject to the implementation of mitigation measures.
D24A/0513/WEB	The application seeks permission to vary the previously approved permission Ref. D23A/0646. The proposed variation will consist of the addition of 4 No. apartments on a new set-back 5th floor, increasing the overall development from 5 to 6 storeys, and from 36 no. to 40 no. apartments (consisting of 29 no. one-beds plus 11 no. two-beds). The variation will require minor modification to elevations, associated roof gardens, communal open spaces, bike store and ancillary site works.	Permission granted on 10/10/2024. Valid until 19/10/2029. Potential overlap of construction stages.	Dust and noise during construction phase.	Approximately 83m southeast of the site, 7-9 Clarence Street and George's Place, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin	Sufficient distances between the sites and the nearest Natura site. The Appropriate Assessment Screening report completed for the proposed development concluded that the Proposed Development, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not result in significant adverse effects to the integrity and conservation status of European sites subject to the implementation of mitigation measures.
D21A/0248	Permission for development. The development which will comprise of the change of use, conversion, renovation and internal reordering (including a new part 3 no. storey 2,649 sq m extension) of the Former Enterprise Centre to provide a part 3 no. storey, 18 no. classroom Primary School, with a total gross area of 3,515 sq m. The development will also include the provision of all ancillary staff and student facilities; hard and soft play areas and a general purpose hall. Vehicular and cycle access to the site will be provided via George's Place and George's Lane, as existing, new, additional pedestrian access from Stable Lane to the site will be provided to via an existing gate at George's Lane. The development will also include the provision of bicycle and scooter parking; vehicle drop off/set down areas to the immediate south of the site on George's Place; piped infrastructure and ducting; plant; and soft landscaping and boundary treatments; PV panels; service connections and 1 no. ESB substation;	Permission granted on 9/1/2023. Valid until 8/1/2028. Potential overlap of construction stages.	Dust and noise during construction phase.	Approximately 138m southeast of the site, Site of c.020 ha located at the former Dun Laoghaire Enterprise Centre, Georges Place, Dún Laoghaire, Co Dublin. within the	Sufficient distances between the sites and the nearest Natura site. The Appropriate Assessment Screening report completed for the proposed development concluded that the Proposed Development, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not result in significant adverse effects to the integrity and conservation status of European sites subject to the

Application Reference	Details	Construction Stage Overlap	Ecological Effects	Location & Proximity	Rationale
	ancillary ramps and stairs; signage; SUDs including green roof provision; changes in level and all associated site development and excavation works above and below ground			setting of a protected structure, (RPS No. 528 Fire Station-Facade Only)	implementation of mitigation measures.
D21A/1041	Full permission. The development will consist of the demolition of existing dwelling on site (c.79 sqm) and the construction mixed use development of 88 no. Build to Rent residential apartments, commercial unit and café across 2 buildings. Building 01 (part 5, 6 and 8 storeys) fronting Crofton Road provides 43 apartments with associated internal residential amenity at ground floor, first floor level and seventh floor level with associated internal residential amenity at ground floor, first floor level and seventh floor level with external roof terraces at fifth and seventh floor levels (with flagpole at seventh floor level) and commercial unit (use falling within Class 1 (shop), Class 2 (financial/professional services), Class 8 (medical services)) and café located at the eastern part of the building at ground floor level. Building 02 (part 8, part 9 storeys) to the rear provides 45 apartments with external roof terrace at eighth storey level with refuse, bicycle storage and storage at ground floor level. A central courtyard provides 378 sqm of communal amenity space, with a total of 681 sqm public open space provided within a landscaped area adjacent to the northern elevation of Building 01 and pedestrian route at the eastern perimeter. Access is taken from Crofton Road with a shared vehicular and cycle entrance at the western perimeter of the site providing access to 3 no. car parking spaces within the central courtyard and to St. Michael's Hospital to the south. All associated infrastructure, access, works to footpath and road markings at Crofton Road, landscaping, cycle parking refuse storage, plant and ancillary works to enable the develop.	Permission granted on 8/5/2024. Valid until 7/5/2029. Potential overlap of construction stages.	Dust and noise during construction phase.	Approximately 318m southeast of the site, lands at St. Michael's Hospital Car Park, Crofton Road, Dún Laoghaire, County Dublin, A96 TN26.	Sufficient distances between the sites and the nearest Natura site. The Appropriate Assessment Screening report completed for the proposed development concluded that the Proposed Development, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not result in significant adverse effects to the integrity and conservation status of European sites subject to the implementation of mitigation measures.
D21A/1142	Permission for development. The proposed development will consist of the demolition of the existing single storey structure (not a Protected Structure) on the site and the construction of a new part 2 storey and part 4 storey residential apartment building comprising 10 no. units (5 one bed and 5 two bed) and ancillary site works, including onsite parking for 5 cars, introduction of amenity open space, removal of existing entrance gates, bin storage, bicycle parking, PV panels on roof, ESB pillar and external landscaping works.	Permission granted on 4/8/2022. Valid until 3/8/2027. Potential overlap of construction stages.	Dust and noise during construction phase.	Approximately 323m west of the site, 0.115 Ha site located at Rear of 5 6 & 7, Eblana Avenue, (Protected	Sufficient distances between the sites and the nearest Natura site. The Appropriate Assessment Screening report completed for the proposed development concluded that the Proposed Development, alone or in-combination with

Application Reference	Details	Construction Stage Overlap	Ecological Effects	Location & Proximity	Rationale
				Structures), Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin	other plans or projects, will not result in significant adverse effects to the integrity and conservation status of European sites subject to the implementation of mitigation measures.
D24A/0003	(i) Partial demolition of existing non original modern office extension to the rear of no. 95 George's street Upper (A Protected Structure) and the corner of Haigh Terrace. (ii) Minor works to the rear exterior wall of No. 95 Georges Street upper to provide for the reopening of 1 no. window, creation of ope for 1 no. door and provision of balcony to serve upper ground floor unit. (iii) Construction of a 3 storey mixed use development with 4th storey stepped back to the rear of No. 95, comprising 1 no. commercial unit (48sqm) and bicycle and bin storage (38sqm) at ground floor level and 5no. residential units (2no.studios, and 3 no. one-bedroom units) accross first, second and third floors. Each apartment will be provided with private amenity space in the form of a balcony/terrace space which include provision of trellis privacy screens. A total of 11 internal bicycle parking spaces are proposed to serve the development. (iv) All associated site and infrastructural works, including foul and surface water drainage, landscaping, plant areas, lighting, foul/surface drainage and signage necessary to facilitate the development.	Permission granted on 17/4/2025. Valid until 16/4/2030. Potential overlap of construction stages.	Dust and noise during construction phase.	Approximately 293m south of the site, 95, George's Street Upper, Dún Laoghaire, Dublin, A96XY17	Sufficient distances between the sites and the nearest Natura site. The Appropriate Assessment Screening report completed for the proposed development concluded that the Proposed Development, alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, will not result in significant adverse effects to the integrity and conservation status of European sites subject to the implementation of mitigation measures.

A large number of planning permissions in the vicinity of the site pertain primarily to small-scale extensions, alterations or retention of works. The majority of planning permission applications submitted in the area are for extensions or modifications of existing residential dwellings and would be considered to have an imperceptible impact and not contribute to any cumulative impacts.

The above planning applications are the developments which are being considered on an in-combination basis. No significant projects are proposed or currently under construction that could potentially cause in combination effects on European sites. Given this, it is considered that in combination effects with other existing and proposed developments in proximity to the application area would be unlikely, neutral, not significant and localised. It is concluded that no significant effects on European sites will be seen as a result of the project, either alone or combination with other projects.

4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

4.1 SUMMARY

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance and establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA) where a plan or project has the potential to affect a European site. This AA Screening has been prepared in accordance with the Directive and is based on best scientific knowledge, informed by ecological and hydrological expertise. A review of relevant published scientific literature and available grey literature has also been undertaken.

This Stage 1 AA Screening considers the proposed temporary marine and coastal site investigation works associated with the Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) application. The screening assessment has focused on identifying whether the works, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, could give rise to likely significant effects on European sites.

The proposed works are small-scale, temporary and localised in nature and do not involve dredging, land take, permanent structures or changes to coastal processes. On the basis of the nature, scale and duration of the proposed works, and taking account of existing baseline conditions within Dún Laoghaire Harbour, it is concluded that the site investigation works represent a low-risk activity in ecological terms.

The screening process has identified that the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, which is within to the project area, and the South Dublin Bay SAC, located approximately 0.2 km from the site, have ecological and hydrological connectivity with the proposed works. These sites support qualifying interests that could be sensitive to disturbance or short-term changes in water quality. Accordingly, these two sites have been carried forward for detailed assessment.

All other Natura 2000 sites within the 15 km ZOI have been screened out of further Appropriate Assessment for the reasons outlined below:

- Lack of direct hydrological connectivity: many sites (e.g. Wicklow Mountains SPA/SAC, Ballyman Glen SAC, Knocksink Wood SAC) are inland, upland or freshwater-dependent sites with no hydrological pathway linking them to the marine environment of the proposed works.
- Distance and attenuation of effects: Coastal and marine sites located several kilometres from the project area (e.g. Dalkey Islands SPA, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, Ireland's Eye SPA/SAC, Baldoyle Bay SPA/SAC) are sufficiently distant such that any potential effects from the temporary, localised site investigation works would dissipate well before reaching these sites.
- Absence of relevant impact pathways: The proposed works are temporary, small-scale and do not involve dredging, land take, permanent structures or changes to coastal processes. As such, there is no plausible mechanism by which they could affect the habitats or qualifying interests of more distant SPAs or SACs, including large marine SPAs such as the North-west Irish Sea SPA.
- No risk to mobile qualifying species at a population level: while some SPAs support highly mobile bird species, the short duration, limited spatial extent and localised nature of the works mean that any

disturbance would be minor and confined to the immediate vicinity of the project, with no potential to affect bird populations at sites several kilometres away.

4.2 CONCLUSION

This Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening has considered the proposed temporary marine and coastal site investigation works associated with the Maritime Usage Licence (MUL) application. The works include borehole drilling, Cone Penetration Testing (CPT), vibrocore sampling and multibeam bathymetric surveying within Dún Laoghaire Harbour.

The AA screening process has examined potential effects that could arise during the execution of the works, with particular regard to disturbance to qualifying species and short-term changes in water quality. An assessment of potential impact pathways has been undertaken, taking account of the nature, scale and duration of the works, the proximity of European sites, and the potential for ecological and hydrological connectivity.

The project area is located within the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and approximately 0.2 km from the South Dublin Bay SAC. However, Dún Laoghaire Harbour is a highly active marine environment, characterised by regular and frequent vessel movements, recreational watersports, commercial activity and public use throughout the year. The qualifying species associated with the adjacent European sites are therefore subject to, and considered habituated to, an existing high baseline level of anthropogenic activity and disturbance.

The proposed site investigation works will be temporary, localised and intermittent, will not involve dredging, land take, permanent structures or changes to coastal processes and will not result in habitat loss or long-term degradation. Any potential disturbance or water quality effects will be minor, short-term, and confined to the immediate vicinity of the works.

Taking account of the existing baseline conditions within the harbour, the limited scale and duration of the works, and the absence of credible pathways for significant effects, it is concluded that the proposed site investigation works will not give rise to likely significant effects on the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA or the South Dublin Bay SAC, in view of their conservation objectives either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

Taking account of the existing baseline conditions, the limited scale and duration of the works, and the absence of credible pathways for significant effects on the conservation objectives of the adjacent European sites, it is concluded that the proposed site investigation works will not give rise to likely significant effects on the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA or the South Dublin Bay SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Therefore, on the basis of objective information, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement) is not required.

5 VERIFICATION

This report was compiled by and Rebecca Duane BSc, MCIEEM, Ecologist; reviewed by Eadaoin Butler BSc, Ecologist; and authorised by Eleanor Burke, BSc, MSc, DAS, MEnvSc, CSci, OCSC Director (Environmental).



Rebecca Duane, BSc, MCIEEM

Ecologist

O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates



OCSC

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