

## Appropriate Assessment Screening for the Dunboyne North Masterplan -MP22 (2022), Dunboyne Co. Meath.



25<sup>th</sup> October 2022

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**On behalf of:** Meath County Council

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**Document Control Sheet**

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## Introduction

The following Appropriate Assessment (AA) (Screening Stage) has been prepared by **Altemar Ltd.** at the request of Meath County Council for the Dunboyne North Masterplan (2022), Dunboyne Co. Meath.

An Appropriate Assessment is an assessment of the potential effects of a proposed project or plan, on its own, or in combination with other plans or projects, on one or more European sites. European sites are those sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPA).

The AA (screening stage) examines the likely significant effects of a plan or project, either on its own, or in combination with other plans and projects, upon a European site and considers whether, on the basis of objective scientific evidence, it can be concluded that there are no likely significant effects on any European site, in view of best scientific knowledge and the conservation objectives of the relevant European sites.

### Altemar Ltd.

Since its inception in 2001, Altemar has been delivering ecological and environmental services to a broad range of clients. Operational areas include residential, infrastructural, renewable, oil & gas, private industry, local authorities, EC projects and State/semi-State Departments. Bryan Deegan is the managing director of Altemar. Bryan is an environmental scientist and marine biologist with 27 years' experience working in Irish terrestrial and aquatic environments, providing services to the State, Semi-State and industry. Bryan Deegan (MCIEEM) holds a MSc in Environmental Science, BSc (Hons.) in Applied Marine Biology, NCEA National Diploma in Applied Aquatic Science and a NCEA National Certificate in Science (Aquaculture). Bryan Deegan carried out all elements of this Appropriate Assessment Screening.

## Background to the Appropriate Assessment

The Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (together with the Birds Directive (2009/1477/EC)) forms the cornerstone of Europe's nature conservation policy. The Directive protects over 1000 animals and plant species and over 200 "habitat types" which are of European importance. In the Habitats Directive, Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of European Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of conservation sites (NATURA, 2000). These are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Birds Directive), Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect European sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment:

*"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [EUROPEAN] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implication for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the component 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."*

As outlined in "Managing European sites, The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC" (European Commission, 21 November 2018) *"The purpose of the appropriate assessment is to assess the implications of the plan or project in respect of the site's conservation objectives, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects. The conclusions should enable the competent authorities to ascertain whether the plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned. The focus of the appropriate assessment is therefore specifically on the species and/or the habitats for which the European site is designated."*

As outlined in the EC guidance document on Article 6(4) (January 2007)<sup>1</sup>:

*“Appropriate assessments of the implications of the plan or project for the site concerned must precede its approval and take into account the cumulative effects which result from the combination of that plan or project with other plans or projects in view of the site’s conservation objectives. This implies that all aspects of the plan or project which can, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, affect those objectives must be identified in the light of the best scientific knowledge in the field.*

*Assessment procedures of plans or projects likely to affect European sites should guarantee full consideration of all elements contributing to the site integrity and to the overall coherence of the network, both in the definition of the baseline conditions and in the stages leading to identification of potential impacts, mitigation measures and residual impacts. These determine what has to be compensated, both in quality and quantity. Regardless of whether the provisions of Article 6(3) are delivered following existing environmental impact assessment procedures or other specific methods, it must be ensured that:*

- *Article 6(3) assessment results allow full traceability of the decisions eventually made, including the selection of alternatives and any imperative reasons of overriding public interest.*
- *The assessment should include all elements contributing to the site’s integrity and to the overall coherence of the network as defined in the site’s conservation objectives and Standard Data Form, and be based on best available scientific knowledge in the field. The information required should be updated and could include the following issues:*
  - *Structure and function, and the respective role of the site’s ecological assets;*
  - *Area, representativity and conservation status of the priority and nonpriority habitats in the site;*
  - *Population size, degree of isolation, ecotype, genetic pool, age class structure, and conservation status of species under Annex II of the Habitats Directive or Annex I of the Birds Directive present in the site;*
  - *Role of the site within the biographical region and in the coherence of the European network; and,*
  - *Any other ecological assets and functions identified in the site.*
- *It should include a comprehensive identification of all the potential impacts of the plan or project likely to be significant on the site, taking into account cumulative impacts and other impacts likely to arise as a result of the combined action of the plan or project under assessment and other plans or projects.*
- *The assessment under Article 6(3) applies the best available techniques and methods, to estimate the extent of the effects of the plan or project on the biological integrity of the site(s) likely to be damaged.*
- *The assessment provides for the incorporation of the most effective mitigation measures into the plan or project concerned, in order to avoid, reduce or even cancel the negative impacts on the site.*
- *The characterisation of the biological integrity and the impact assessment should be based on the best possible indicators specific to the European assets which must also be useful to monitor the plan or project implementation.”*

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission. (2007). Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission;

## Stages of the Appropriate Assessment

This Appropriate Assessment screening was undertaken in accordance with the European Commission Methodological Guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC, 2001), Part XAB of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in addition to the December 2009 publication from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government; 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities' and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011. In order to comply with the above Guidelines and legislation, the Appropriate Assessment process must be structured as follows:

### 1) Screening stage:

- Description of plan or project, and local site or plan area characteristics;
- Identification of relevant European sites, and compilation of information on their qualifying interests and conservation objectives
- Identification and description of individual in combination effects likely to result from the proposed project;
- Assessment of the likely significance of the effects identified above. Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no likely significant effects; and,  
Conclusions

### 2) Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement):

- Description of the European sites that will be considered further;
- Identification and description of potential adverse impacts on the conservation objectives of these sites likely to occur from the project or plan; and,
- Mitigation Measures that will be implemented to avoid, reduce or remedy any such potential adverse impacts
- Assessment as to whether, following the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, it can be concluded, beyond all reasonable scientific doubt, that there will be no adverse impact on the integrity of the relevant European Site in light of its conservation objectives"
- Conclusions.

If it can be demonstrated during the AA screening phase (Stage 1), that the proposed project will not have a significant effect, whether alone or in combination with other plans or projects, on the conservation objectives of a European site, then no further AA (Stage 2) will be required. It is important to note that there is a requirement to apply a precautionary approach to AA screening. Therefore, where effects are possible, certain or unknown at the screening stage, AA will be required.

In addition, it should be noted that Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out, subsequently, an AA of the implications, for a site concerned, of a plan or project, it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site.

# Stage 1 Screening Assessment

## Management of the Site

The plan or project is not directly connected with, or necessary to the management of European sites.

## Description of the Proposed Project

### Site Location

The lands to which the Masterplan relates are located to the north of Dunboyne, Co. Meath. Dunboyne is approximately 18km from Dublin city centre and is located within the M3 transportation corridor. Dunboyne is also served by an existing diesel rail line which is planned for electrification by 2027 and by the Dublin Bus service. The town has a population of 7,272 persons in 2016 and is identified in the County Development Plan, 2021- 2027 as a self-sustaining growth town with a moderate level of employment, good transportation links and capacity for continued commensurate growth to become more self-sustaining. The Dunboyne Target population growth to 2027 is 10,572 with a housing allocation of 2,002 units from 2021-2027.

Dunboyne is accessed from the M3 via Junction 5 to the north-east of the town, which is the junction most proximate to the Masterplan lands, and via Junction 4 to the south-east of the town. Dunboyne railway station is located on the eastern edge of Dunboyne and the majority of urban development is located to the west of the north-south orientated rail line. The centre of the town is predominantly office/ commercial/educational land uses surrounded by estate type residential development to the north and south of the L2228 road which runs in an east-west direction. Some industrial development, predominantly in the form of retail warehousing, light industrial or employment categories is located on the northern fringe of Dunboyne.

Dunboyne is the only settlement in Meath situated within the Dublin Metropolitan Area and forms part of the North-West Strategic Development Corridor, identified as having current and future development capacity to accommodate significant residential and employment growth.

The Masterplan lands are located to the north of Dunboyne and are focused on the M3 Parkway Railway Station and adjacent to the 1,200 space commuter car park. The R157 is the main road link between Dunboyne and the subject lands although there is a private road link from Dunboyne to the car park which is unsuitable for vehicular traffic but would support pedestrian or cycle traffic. The Masterplan lands are bisected by the R157 with approximately one third of the subject lands lying to the east of the R157 and the remaining two thirds to the west of this regional road.

The subject lands are currently in agricultural use and the visual context is one of large fields bounded by hedgerows and tree lines. The Tolka River runs along the eastern and northern sections of the Masterplan lands in a slight valley but the remainder of the lands are predominantly flat with no prominent topographical features present. There are no Protected Structures located within the subject lands and neither is there an Architectural Conservation Area or a Zone of Archaeological Interest within the Masterplan area. There are 3 no. recorded monuments within the Masterplan area, 2 no. located on the R157 north of the M3 Park and Ride facility and 1 no. west of the M3 Parkway station. There are no European designated sites within the Masterplan area and the nearest European site is a Special Area of Conservation: Rye Water Valley/Carton [001398] which is located approximately 7km to the south-west of the subject lands.

The proposed masterplan outline and location are demonstrated in Figures 1 & 2.



0 1 2 3 4 5 km

Project: Dunboyne North  
 Location: Dunboyne, Co. Meath  
 Date: 11th October 2022  
 Drawn By: Bryan Deegan (Altemar)

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 Marine & Environmental Consultancy



Figure 1. Site outline and location





0 250 500 750 m

Project: Dunboyne North  
 Location: Dunboyne, Co. Meath  
 Date: 11th October 2022  
 Drawn By: Bryan Deegan (Altamar)

**ALTEMAR**  
 Marine & Environmental Consultancy



Figure 2. Subject site (outline in red)

### **Flood Zones and Zone Risk Assessment**

The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment completed as part of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 (Appendix 4) identifies the area of land affected by Flood Risk Zones A and B. These lands are predominantly zoned open space in the MCDP, excluding a small area of E3 'Warehousing and Distribution' lands in the south western corner of the Masterplan area. Flood risk is therefore not seen as an obstacle to the implementation of this Masterplan. Planning applications on the Masterplan lands will be accompanied, where relevant, by a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment. Flood Zones are demonstrated in Figure 3.

### **Integrated Transport and Land Use Approach**

The priority of the Masterplan is to create an attractive, sustainable and vibrant destination that supports a move away from car dependency towards more sustainable modes of transport. This includes high walking and cycling permeability offering direct routes to local destinations and public transport stops. Connections will be facilitated through the introduction of north/south links between Dunboyne Town Centre and the Dunboyne North lands through the revitalisation of the Old Navan Road, provision of new pedestrian and cycle routes and in the form of a Linear Park along the Tolka River creating a new amenity for the area. This is demonstrated in Figure 4.

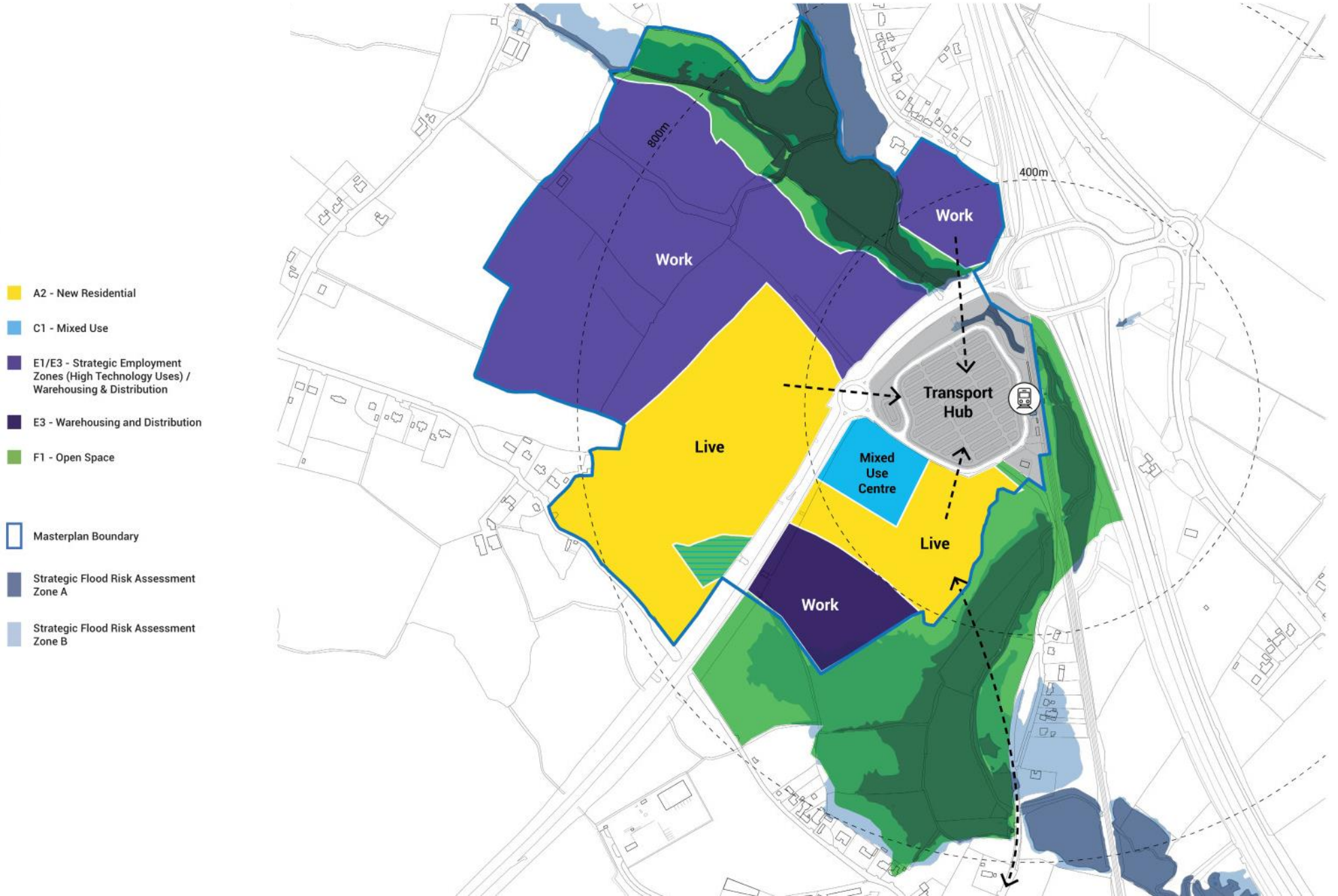


Figure 3. Zoning and Flood Mapping

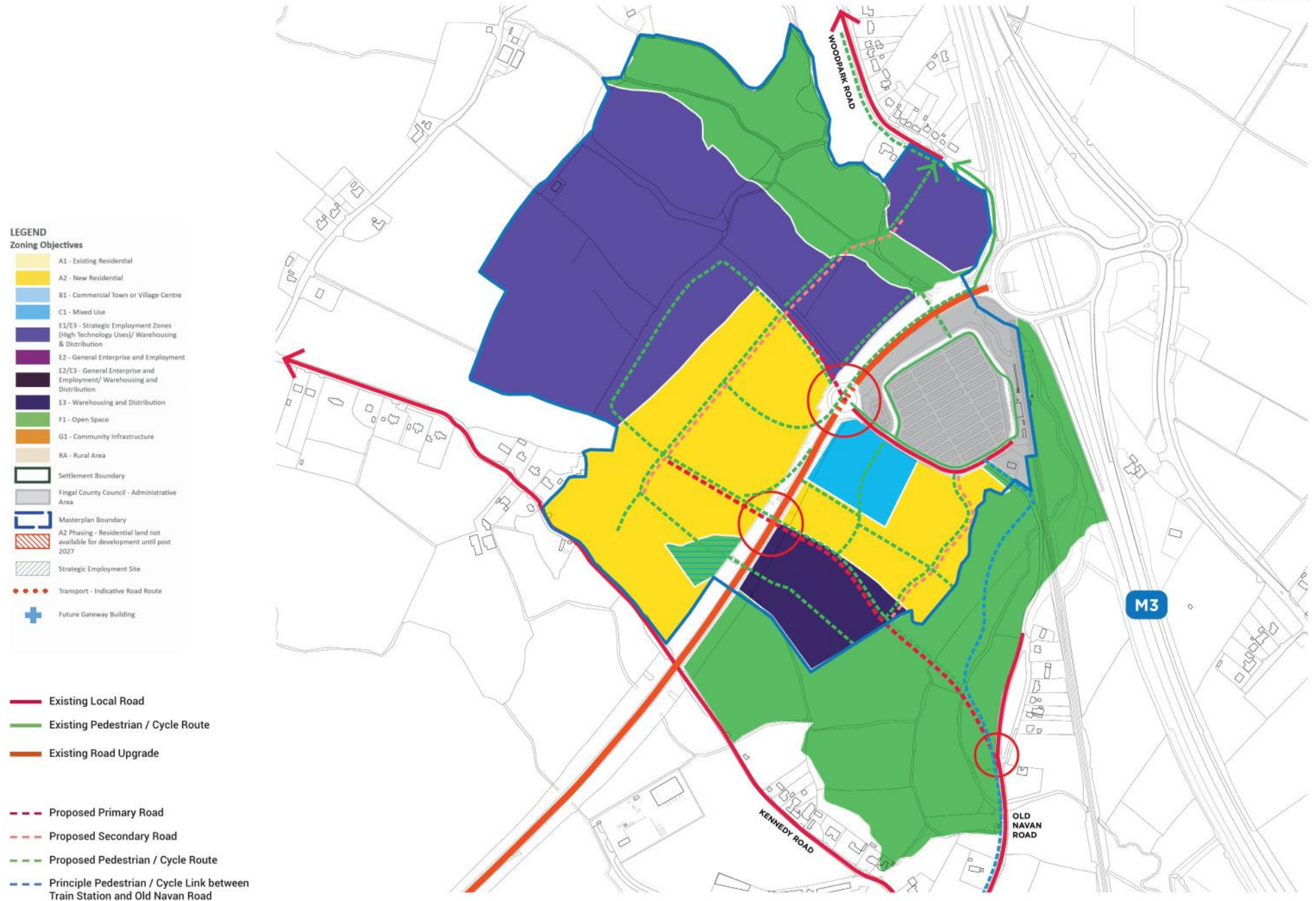


Figure 4. Integrated Transport and Land Use Approach

## Landscape Strategy

This landscape strategy for the Dunboyne North Masterplan (Figure 5) is intended to guide future development proposals for the lands. The vision for the landscape sets out core elements and approaches that will remain consistent, over the various phases, subject to further detailed design as development proposals are brought forward. The landscape measures identified will be implemented in tandem with development as each of the phases are delivered. The core elements of the landscape strategy are:

- Retention of existing landscape framework where possible
- Replacement planting for trees and hedgerows removed to facilitate development
- Integration of SUDS, habitat and public open space
- Continuity, permeability, pedestrian and cycle movement
- Consistent overall landscape character

The landscape strategy maximises the opportunities presented by the Tolka Valley as a movement, visual and recreational amenity asset, and will maintain traditional field boundaries where possible to preserve that character and existing biodiversity linkages across the lands. The more formal open space areas of active and passive amenity will enhance these existing features and create a soft boundary between the urban and rural landscape.

There are a number of landscape typologies included within the Masterplan area. These landscape typologies respond to the context and will contribute to provide a rich and varied sequence of amenity spaces throughout the masterplan. The character of the network of green 'spines' and pocket parks throughout the Masterplan area is dictated by the landscape typology of that area. The typologies can be categorized as follows:

- Neighbourhood / Mixed Use Centre
- Residential
- Commercial Office / Science and Technology Campus
- Public Parks (including the Linear Park)

The principal element of the landscape strategy is utilisation of the River Tolka as a linear park to facilitate movement, recreation, amenity and to protect and maintain the riparian zone. The linear park will be integrated with future development of the entire corridor area and based on the principles of the green infrastructure guidance as contained in the RSES 2019-2031.

The Tolka River corridor is a sanctuary for biodiversity and sustains an ecological network between Natura 2000 sites and other protected areas of national and international importance. This linear park will primarily occupy the eastern boundary of the Masterplan area and will lead towards the active recreational areas at the southern boundary, linking the lands to Dunboyne, Clonee and Dublin City.

Aligning movement routes with existing field boundaries will integrate the development with the landscape. The existing trees, hedgerows and vegetation will be protected where feasible and supplemented as needed to provide cohesive green linkages and biodiversity corridors across the lands.

In the interest of environmental protection native species of plants and vegetation will be provided in the plan area while care will be taken to prevent the spread of invasive plant species.

The landscape strategy for Dunboyne North aims to retain the existing landscape framework, utilise the River Tolka corridor and integrate a movement strategy that will provide enhanced cycle ways and pedestrian routes throughout the Masterplan lands.

The public open spaces within the site will correspond to the location of the existing hedgerows and tree-lines. This will protect and integrate the scheme with its context, contributing to the overall green network.

Pedestrian and cycle access points are located to avoid the removal of any mature trees. The open space is proposed to be largely soft landscaped with a network of paths creating connectivity both within the scheme and with the Linear Park through to the village of Dunboyne.

The following landscaping objectives have informed the landscape design process:

- Maximum retention of mature trees of good quality and ecological value within these hedgerows.
- Creating a green network for the proposed site, which incorporates existing hedgerows as integral elements and links to existing and future development in the vicinity.
- Providing public open space of good quality and variety, in the form of both, active and passive open space.



Figure 5. Landscape Strategy

## Design Strategy

### Employment Lands

The development of these lands will provide for a range of uses consistent with the objective of creating a modern and contemporary employment and business park as part of the Dunboyne North masterplan.

The development of this strategic development area for these uses will promote economic growth, investment and prosperity in the region by creating significant employment opportunities and contributing to the stock of large-scale, high-end office space. Building on synergies with nearby employment nodes, the site's location is likely to attract ICT and pharmaceutical companies, with potential for the establishment of an educational campus.

Located conveniently off the M3, within a few minutes' walk from the Parkway Train Station and 1.7km from Dunboyne Town Centre, the future development of these employment lands will be underpinned by integration of land use and transportation to create a sustainable community proximate to new residential development that counteracts historic patterns of outward commuting.

Carefully considered design will enhance connectivity to the M3 multi-modal transport interchange and promote active travel modes supported by improvements to the surrounding network of pedestrian, cycle and road infrastructure.

Creation of high-quality public open space adjacent to the River Tolka will provide an important amenity for nearby residents and the local workforce.

The location of the Masterplan lands presents an opportunity to provide a landmark at the junction of the M3 and R157, denoting its significance and marking the entry to the site.

#### ***Design Concept***

The design approach is to integrate simple elegant contemporary buildings clustered around central landscaped areas into a natural environment, making a significant contribution to place-making for this new live-work community.

The scale and layout of buildings will be carefully considered to respond to the existing landscape character and complement the newly landscaped environment. The buildings will generally range in height from 2 to 4 storeys, depending on their context. Adjacent to the M3 motorway there is an opportunity to provide a landmark building that may incorporate greater height and an enhanced architectural response to distinguish this prominent location within the Masterplan site.

All development proposals will be subject to detailed design that is underpinned by the County Development Plan standards and principles of Transit Orientated Development to encourage use of sustainable transport options and promote active travel modes. Secure bicycle storage, electric car charging points and spaces for shared car schemes will be provided throughout.

Connectivity and permeability between the residential and employment uses within the Dunboyne North lands will be an integral element of the design, as well as the provision of new cycle and pedestrian paths to the Parkway Train Station and Dunboyne Town Centre.

Integration with the significant amenity areas along the Tolka River and creation of new Linear Parklands, with buildings sited to retain existing hedgerows and trees where feasible, complemented by a comprehensive landscape strategy. The construction of a bridge across the River Tolka will further enhance links and enrich the amenity value of this recreational asset.

The design for the proposed employment lands is demonstrated in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Employment Lands Design



## **Neighbourhood Centre**

The neighbourhood centre will provide for residential and business uses consistent with the mixed-use zoning objective for this site. It is intended that the development will deliver ready access to supporting facilities and social infrastructure at an appropriate scale to serve the new live-work community in Dunboyne North, comprising a range of retail, commercial, residential and complementary uses. The proximity of the site to the surrounding residential areas and employment hub, as well as the M3 Parkway Train Station will complement the surrounding uses and secure the objective of creating a vibrant and sustainable live-work community. The centre will provide a mix of retail and commercial units including anchor retail unit, together with non-residential supporting uses such as smaller shops, cafe, local services, office space or community facilities, creating additional employment generating opportunities within the Dunboyne North lands and providing important services for the local population.

Development will be designed to prioritise pedestrian movement within the site benefitting from the enhanced pedestrian and cycling linkages to this location. This approach is aligned with the principle of sustainability that is integral to the masterplan and will also create a more active streetscape that improves passive surveillance along this key thoroughfare to the Parkway Train Station. Retail services will be of a scale appropriate to serve future need at this location. A Retail Impact Assessment may be required in relation to any future planning application for retail development in this mixed use zone.

## **Housing**

The masterplan for the residential area of Dunboyne North seeks to create a thriving 'live work' community with active and friendly streetscapes and with strong linkages to the adjoining employment lands and transport hub. The aim is to produce an exemplary environment; a place that is desirable to live and one which balances usable private space within an overall structure of high-quality public spaces. The community will be prioritised, with pedestrian priority streets and pocket parks provided throughout. This will be a fledgling neighbourhood with a varied social mix and with significant employment opportunities and sustainable transport options on the doorstep - the ideal location in which to build a real sense of community and facilitate a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport.

This masterplan envisions a community that can adapt and grow with the changing needs of its residents and encourages innovative design solutions to the provision of density in a mixture of typologies and bedroom sizes whilst providing high-quality living environments, a strong sense of place and liveable pedestrian priority streets. New homes shall also seek to make provision for potential home working opportunities, thereby further enhancing the 'live work' concept for the lands. Flexibility in the application of the development management standards will be facilitated in instances where high quality design and layout has been demonstrated and subject to the maintenance of privacy and protection of residential amenities. In particular, building height and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high-quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth.

### ***Key Built Form Objectives***

- Lands in proximity to Dunboyne North Railway Station shall seek to provide strong interconnectivity to adjoining employment, amenity, recreation, and transportation zones. Indicative density appropriate to the site context shall be provided proximate to the railway station of 45-50 units per hectare, including both residential and local centre zoned lands. Density for the remainder of the development will reduce with increased distance from the train station.
- Reduced parking provision and high-quality legible pedestrian and cycle linkages to adjoining transportation and employment lands to foster a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport.
- Ensure that a suitable variety and mix of dwelling types and sizes is provided in the development to meet different needs, having regard to demographic and social changes and to diversify existing housing stock in the area.
- Encourage an urban design-led approach including innovative design solutions and positive urban placemaking as a central component in creating and sustaining vibrant communities.
- Retain good quality trees and hedgerows and arrangement of new housing to overlook open spaces to ensure passive surveillance of amenity areas and to discourage antisocial behaviour.
- Ensure appropriate consideration of the creation of streets with a strong sense of enclosure, that provide opportunities for children to play coupled with a requirement to cater for bikes, bins, and cars.
- Flexibility in the application of development standards with the consideration of overall performance-based criteria and provision of high-quality design outcomes, subject to maintenance of privacy and protection of residential amenities.

The residential concept is demonstrated in Figure 7.

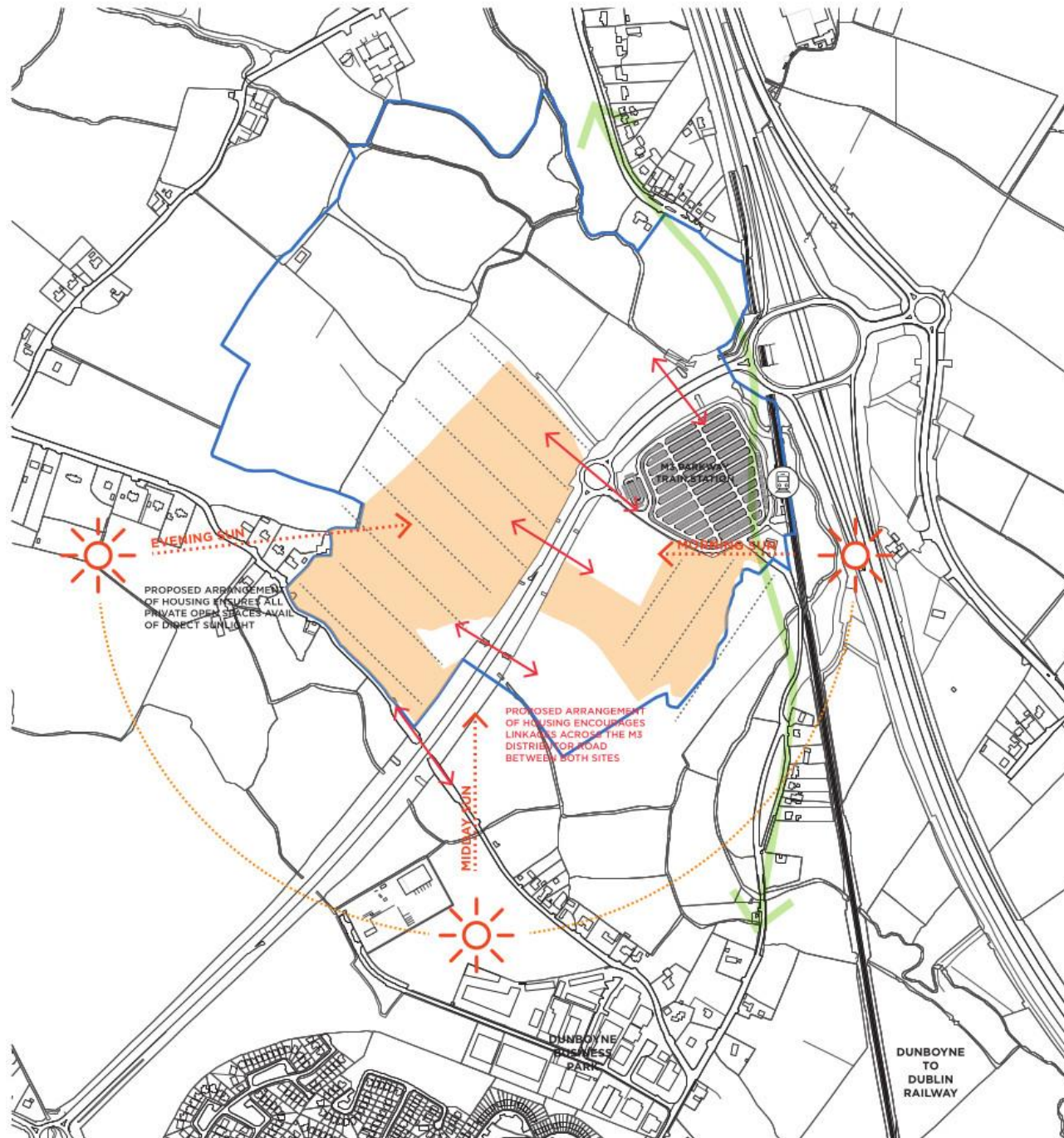


Figure 7. Residential Concept

## Identification of Relevant European Sites

The proposed masterplan is not within a European site. As outlined in Office of the Planning Regulator (2021) *“The zone of influence of a proposed development is the geographical area over which it could affect the receiving environment in a way that could have significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of a European site. This should be established on a case-by-case basis using the Source- Pathway-Receptor framework and not by arbitrary distances (such as 15 km).”*

A key factor in the consideration as to whether a particular European site is likely to be affected by the proposed Masterplan is its distance from the proposed Masterplan area. It is generally, but not necessarily, the case that the greater the distance from the plan or project the lesser the likelihood of impacts. In this case, the nearest European site to the proposed works is 6.2 km away (Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC). The River Tolka flows through the subject site and ultimately outfalls to the marine environment at Dublin Bay. As a result, it is considered that the zone of influence (Zoi) of the proposed Masterplan extends beyond the subject site given the potential for a hydrological pathway to marine-based Natura 2000 sites located within Dublin Bay.

In the interest of carrying out a thorough assessment in line with both the Habitats Directive, and the precautionary principle, the area of assessment was expanded beyond the Zoi to include designated sites within 15km of the proposed development site, and sites beyond 15km with the potential for a hydrological connection. This was done in the interest of ensuring that any pathways, however indirect or remote, were taken into account. All European sites within 15km are listed in Table 1. The qualifying interests, and the potential impact of the proposed development on each European site and qualifying interest, are screened out in Table 2. SACs and SPAs within 15km of the proposed masterplan area are demonstrated in Figures 8 & 9. Waterbodies located within the subject site, and Natura 2000 sites with a potential hydrological connection, are demonstrated in Figures 10-12.

Table 1. Proximity to designated sites of conservation importance (incl. sites with a potential hydrological connection)

Code	European Site	Distance	Direct Hydrological / Biodiversity Connection
Special Areas of Conservation			
IE001398	Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC	6.2 km	No
IE000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	20.1 km	No
IE000206	North Dublin Bay SAC	20.6 km	No
Special Protection Areas			
IE004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	17.9 km	No
IE004006	North Bull Island SPA	20.6 km	No

Table 2. Initial screening of European sites within 15km and European sites within 15km with potential of hydrological connection to the proposed development

European Site Code	Name	Screened IN/OUT	Details/Reason
<b>Special Areas of Conservation</b>			
IE001398	Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC	<b>OUT</b>	<p><b>Conservation Objectives:</b> The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.</p> <p><b>Qualifying Interests</b> Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion) [7220] <i>Vertigo angustior</i> (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]</p> <p><b>Potential Impact</b> The proposed masterplan area is located approximately 6.2 km to the north of the Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC (Figure 8). There is no potential for a direct or indirect hydrological connection from the masterplan area to this SAC. The River Tolka flows through the subject site and ultimately outfalls to the marine environment at Dublin Bay. The River Tolka does not flow through this SAC. In the absence of mitigation, no significant effects on the qualifying interests of this SAC are foreseen as a result of the proposed Dunboyne North (2022) Masterplan.</p> <p>No significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of this SAC are likely as a result of the proposed Masterplan. No impacts on the qualifying interests of this Natura 2000 site are foreseen.</p> <p><b>No significant effects are likely</b></p>
IE000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	<b>OUT</b>	<p><b>Conservation Objectives</b> The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.</p> <p><b>Qualifying Interests</b> Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]</p> <p><b>Potential Impact</b> The proposed masterplan area is located approximately 20.1 km to the north-west of the South Dublin Bay SAC (Figure 8).</p> <p>Given that the River Tolka flows through the proposed masterplan area and ultimately outfalls to the marine environment at Dublin Bay, it is considered that there is the potential for a hydrological connection to this SAC.</p> <p>The Dunboyne North (2022) Masterplan is a framework for future delivery of development within the subject site. Where works are required to fulfil the Masterplan objectives, these works themselves will be subject to the requirement to obtain planning permission and will be required to be screened and assessed under the Habitats Directive (Appropriate Assessment).</p>

European Site Code	Name	Screened IN/OUT	Details/Reason
			<p>No significant effects on this SAC are likely as a result of the proposed Masterplan. In the absence of mitigation measures, no significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of this SAC are likely.</p> <p><b>No significant effects are likely.</b></p>
IE000206	North Dublin Bay SAC	<b>OUT</b>	<p><b>Conservation Objectives</b></p> <p>The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.</p> <p><b>Qualifying Interests</b></p> <p>Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140]  Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210]  Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310]  Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritima</i>) [1330]  Mediterranean salt meadows (<i>Juncetalia maritimi</i>) [1410]  Embryonic shifting dunes [2110]  Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120]  Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]  Humid dune slacks [2190]  Petalwort (<i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i>) [1395]</p> <p><b>Potential Impact</b></p> <p>The proposed masterplan area is located approximately 20.6 km to the north-west of the North Dublin Bay SAC (Figure 8).</p> <p>Given that the River Tolka flows through the proposed masterplan area and ultimately outfalls to the marine environment at Dublin Bay, it is considered that there is the potential for a hydrological connection to this SAC.</p> <p>The Dunboyne North (2022) Masterplan is a framework for future delivery of development within the subject site. Where works are required to fulfil the Masterplan objectives, these works themselves will be subject to the requirement to obtain planning permission and will be required to be screened and assessed under the Habitats Directive (Appropriate Assessment).</p> <p>No significant effects on this SAC are likely as a result of the proposed Masterplan. In the absence of mitigation measures, no significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of this SAC are likely.</p> <p><b>No significant effects are likely.</b></p>

European Site Code	Name	Screened IN/OUT	Details/Reason
<b>Special Protection Areas</b>			
IE004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	<b>Out</b>	<p><b>Conservation Objectives</b></p> <p>The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.</p> <p><b>Qualifying Interests</b></p> <p>Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]  Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]  Ringed Plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) [A137]  Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]  Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]  Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144]  Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]  Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]  Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]  Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]  Roseate Tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>) [A192]  Common Tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>) [A193]  Arctic Tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>) [A194]  Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p> <p><b>Potential Impact</b></p> <p>The proposed masterplan area is located approximately 17.9 km to the north-west of the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (Figure 9).</p> <p>Given that the River Tolka flows through the proposed masterplan area and ultimately outfalls to the marine environment at Dublin Bay, it is considered that there is the potential for a hydrological connection to this SPA.</p> <p>The Dunboyne North (2022) Masterplan is a framework for future delivery of development within the subject site. Where works are required to fulfil the Masterplan objectives, these works themselves will be subject to the requirement to obtain planning permission and will be required to be screened and assessed under the Habitats Directive (Appropriate Assessment).</p> <p>No significant effects on this SPA are likely as a result of the proposed Masterplan. In the absence of mitigation measures, no significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of this SPA are likely.</p> <p><b>No significant effects are likely.</b></p>
IE004006	North Bull Island SPA	<b>OUT</b>	<p><b>Conservation Objectives</b></p> <p>The maintenance of habitats and species within Natura 2000 sites at favourable conservation condition will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.</p> <p><b>Qualifying Interests</b></p> <p>Light-bellied Brent Goose (<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>) [A046]  Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) [A048]  Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) [A052]  Pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) [A054]  Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>) [A056]  Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>) [A130]  Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>) [A140]</p>

European Site Code	Name	Screened IN/OUT	Details/Reason
			<p>Grey Plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) [A141]  Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>) [A143]  Sanderling (<i>Calidris alba</i>) [A144]  Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) [A149]  Black-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa limosa</i>) [A156]  Bar-tailed Godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>) [A157]  Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) [A160]  Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>) [A162]  Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>) [A169]  Black-headed Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>) [A179]  Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]</p> <p><b>Potential Impact</b></p> <p>The proposed masterplan area is located approximately 20.6 km to the north-west of the North Bull Island SPA (Figure 9).</p> <p>Given that the River Tolka flows through the proposed masterplan area and ultimately outfalls to the marine environment at Dublin Bay, it is considered that there is the potential for a hydrological connection to this SPA.</p> <p>The Dunboyne North (2022) Masterplan is a framework for future delivery of development within the subject site. Where works are required to fulfil the Masterplan objectives, these works themselves will be subject to the requirement to obtain planning permission and will be required to be screened and assessed under the Habitats Directive (Appropriate Assessment).</p> <p>No significant effects on this SPA are likely as a result of the proposed Masterplan. In the absence of mitigation measures, no significant effects on the Qualifying Interests of this SPA are likely.</p> <p><b>No significant effects are likely.</b></p>

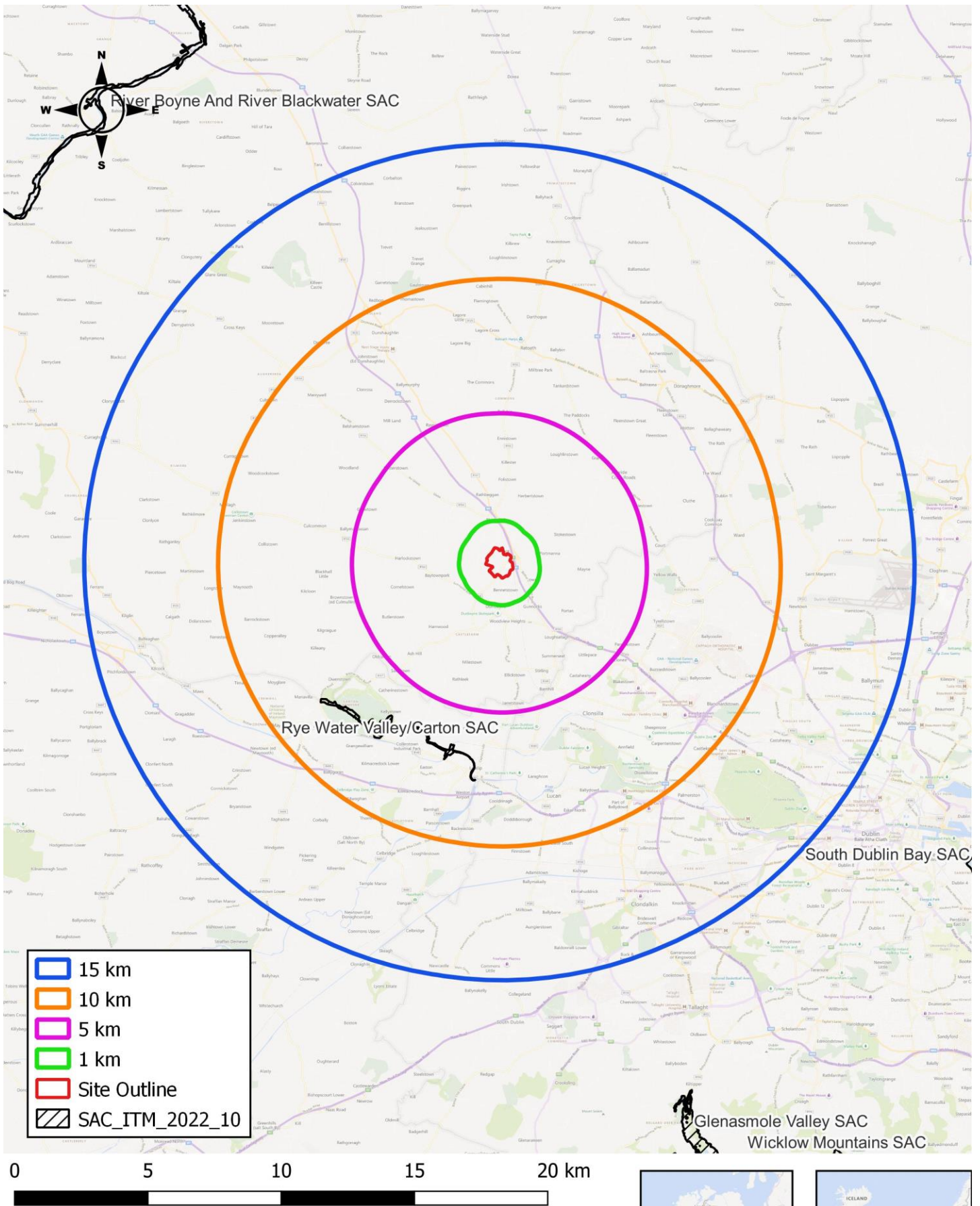
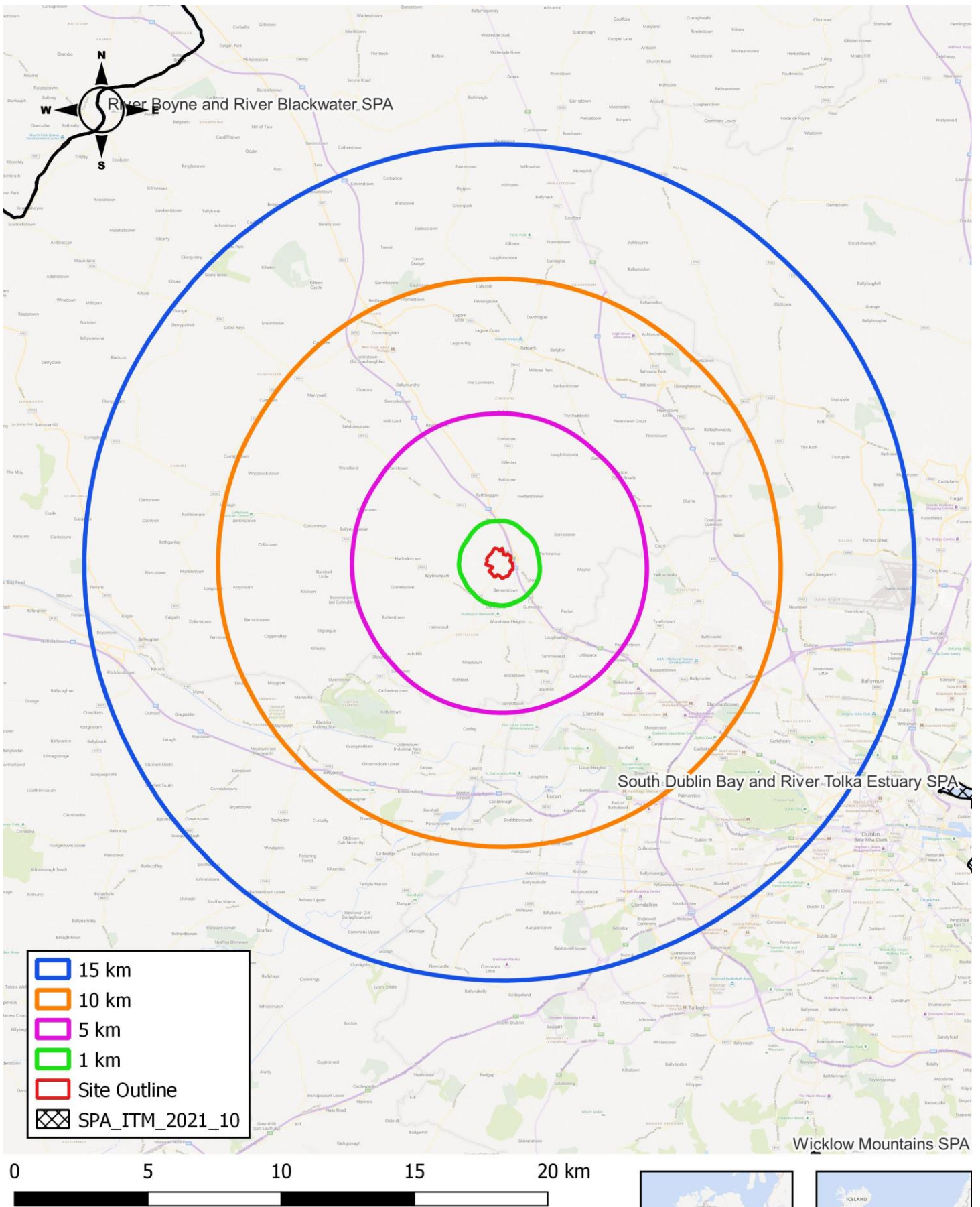


Figure 8. Special Areas of Conservation located within 15km of the proposed development

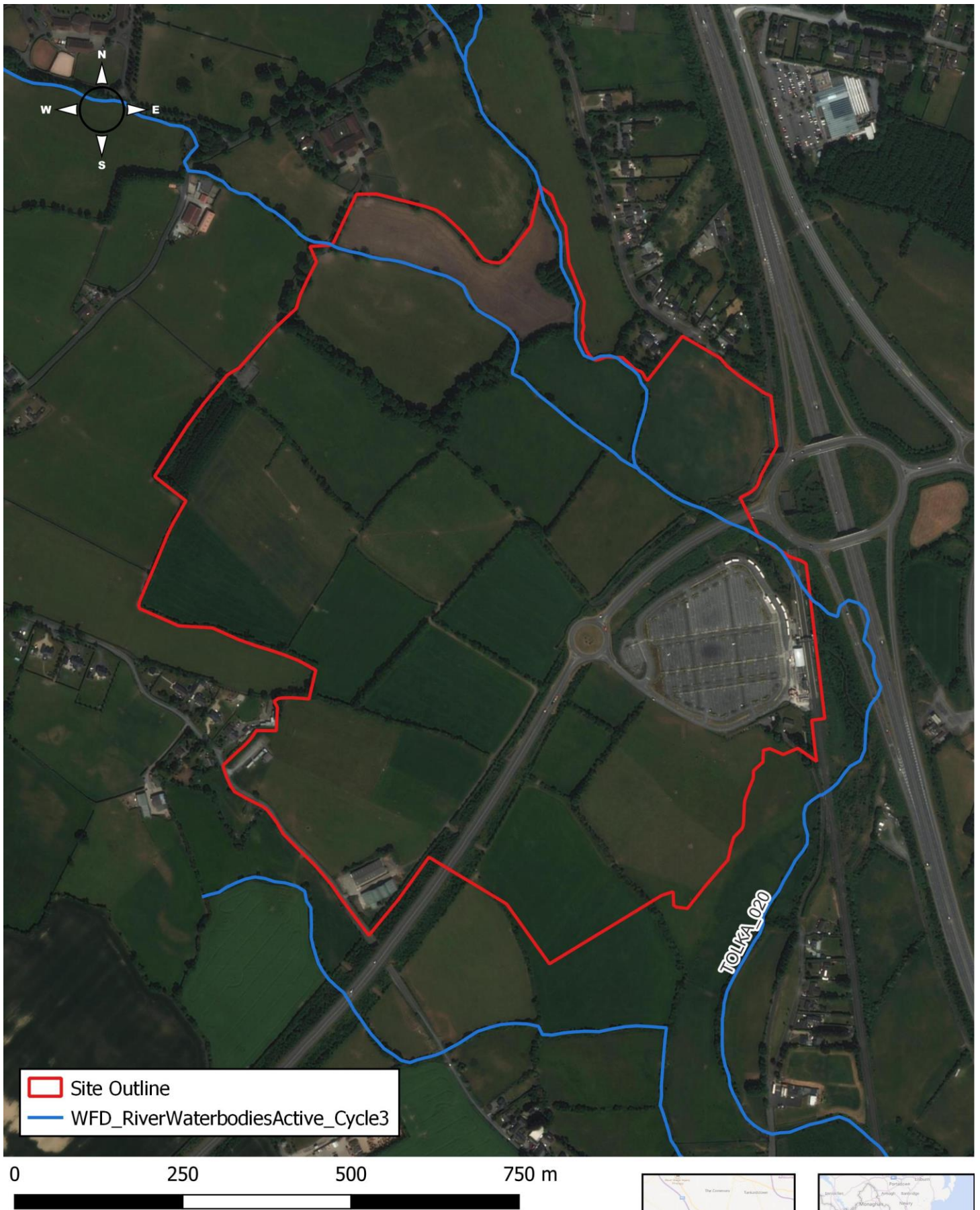




Project: Dunboyne North  
 Location: Dunboyne, Co. Meath  
 Date: 11th October 2022  
 Drawn By: Bryan Deegan (Altemar)



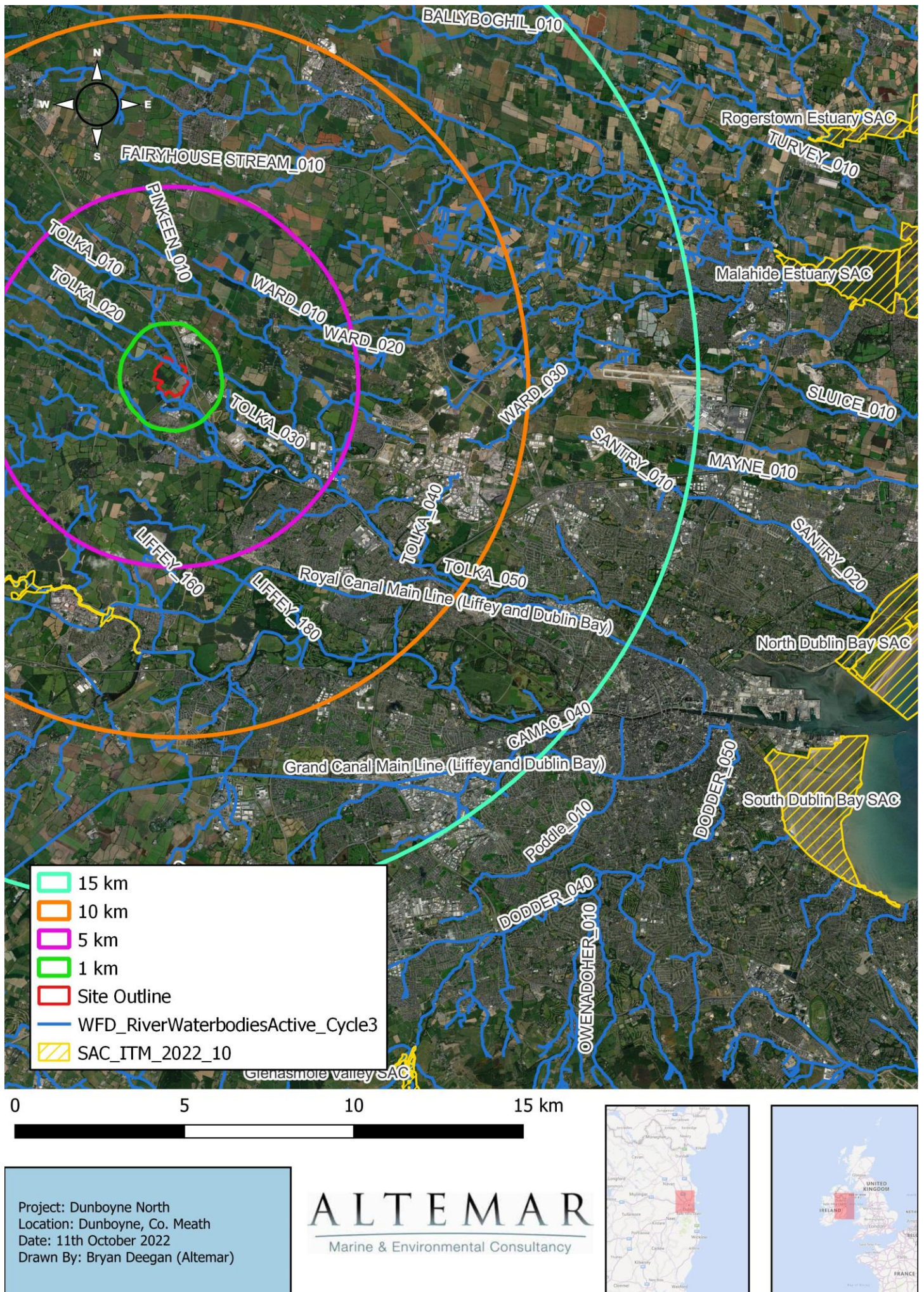
Figure 9. Special Protected Areas located within 15km of the proposed development

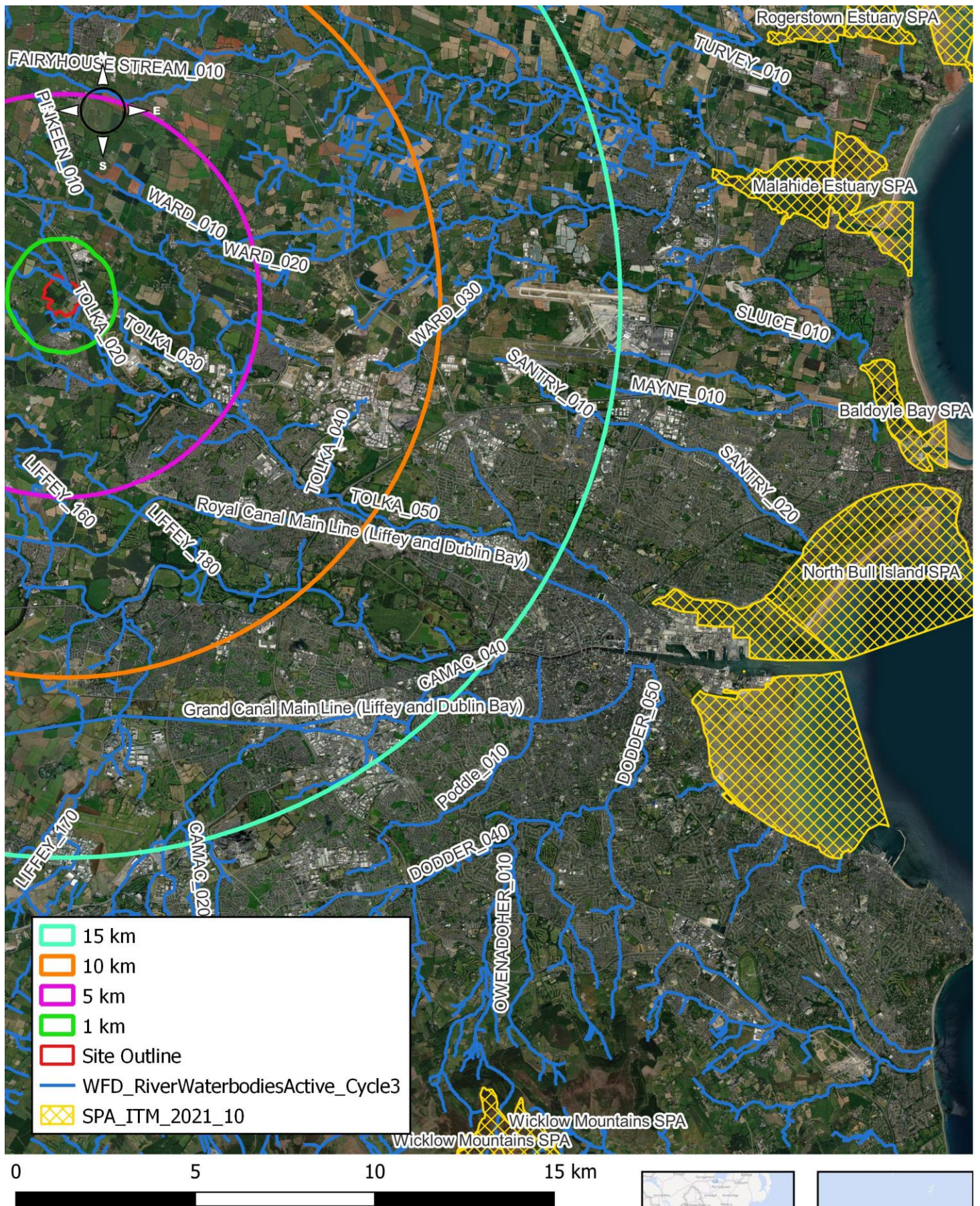


Project: Dunboyne North  
 Location: Dunboyne, Co. Meath  
 Date: 11th October 2022  
 Drawn By: Bryan Deegan (Altemar)



Figure 10. Watercourses within the subject site





Project: Dunboyne North  
 Location: Dunboyne, Co. Meath  
 Date: 11th October 2022  
 Drawn By: Bryan Deegan (Altemar)

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Figure 12. Watercourses proximate to the subject site and SPAs located downstream of the subject site

## In-Combination Effects

There are few development proposals located in the areas surrounding the subject site that have been granted permission. The following is a list of planning application(s) as identified on the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's 'National Planning Application Database' portal:

Table 3. Developments assessed for in combination effects

Ref. No.	Address	Proposal
RA190331	M3 Parkway Railway Station, Bennetstown, Dunboyne, Co Meath	the conversion of the existing station building to use as staff accommodation for Iarnród Éireann. The buildings interior will be subdivided to provide offices, canteen, toilet and shower facility, locker rooms and storage. Construction of a new open-plan workshop and storage facility complete with loading bay, workstations and external company logo. External storage facility. Parking for company vehicles. The total works involved cover an area of approx. 512m <sup>2</sup> of plan area, and approx 75 linear metres of street frontage.

The Masterplan is a framework for future delivery of the lands outlined. Where works are required to fulfil Masterplan objectives, these works themselves will be subject to the requirement to obtain planning permission and will be required to be screened and assessed under the Habitats Directive (Appropriate Assessment) at detailed design stage. Given this, the lack of proximity to designated sites and that fact that limited development is within the masterplan area 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 proposed development alone or combination with other projects.

**No cumulative or in combination effects on Natura 2000 sites are foreseen.**

## Conclusions

Following an analysis of the proposed Masterplan and the potential relationships with European sites within the zone of influence, it was concluded that there is no likelihood of significant effects on any European sites either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This was informed by the collection of best available scientific data on the European sites and identification of the condition, sensitivities, and threats that may cause potential for significant effects on Natura 2000 sites.

The Masterplan provides a framework for the future delivery of the Dunboyne North area. Any future projects taken forward for consent to fulfil the objectives of the masterplan will be supported by environmental appraisals and Appropriate Assessment (AA).

This report presents a Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment Screening for the Proposed Development, outlining the information required for the competent authority to screen for appropriate assessment and to determine whether or not the Proposed Development, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, in view of best scientific knowledge, is likely to have a significant effect on any European or European site.

A Natura Impact Statement is not required for the proposed masterplan.

## Data Used for AA Screening

NPWS site synopses and Conservation objectives of sites within 15km were assessed. The most recent SAC and SPA boundary shapefiles were downloaded and overlaid on ESRI road maps and satellite imagery. A site visit was carried out on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

## Findings of No Significant Effects Report

<b>Details of Project</b>	Appropriate Assessment Screening for Dunboyne North Masterplan (2022) at Dunboyne North, Co. Meath.
<b>Name and Location of European Sites Within 15km (and beyond 15km with a potential hydrological connection)</b>	Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC South Dublin Bay SAC North Dublin Bay SAC South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA North Bull Island SPA
<b>Project Description</b>	Dunboyne North Masterplan (2022),
<b>Is the Project directly connected with the management of the European site?</b>	No
<b>Details of any other projects or plans that together with this project could affect the European site</b>	None
<b>The assessment of significant effects</b>	
<b>Describe how the project is likely to affect the European site</b>	No significant effects are likely on European sites.
<b>Response to consultation</b>	N/A
<b>Data collected to carry out the assessment</b>	Supporting NPWS data.
<b>Who carried out the assessment</b>	Altamar Ltd.
<b>Sources of data</b>	NPWS website, standard data form, conservation objectives data of the site and references outlined in the AA Screening Report.
<b>Explain why the effects are not considered significant</b>	<p>The proposed Masterplan area is located 17.9 km from the nearest European Site with a potential hydrological pathway (South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA).</p> <p>The Masterplan is a framework for future delivery of the lands outlined. Where works are required to fulfil Masterplan objectives, these works themselves will be subject to the requirement to obtain planning permission and will be required to be screened and assessed under the Habitats Directive (Appropriate Assessment) at detailed design stage.</p>
<b>Level of assessment completed</b>	Stage 1 Screening
<b>Overall conclusions</b>	Following an analysis of the proposed Masterplan and the potential relationships with European sites within the zone of influence, it was concluded that there is no likelihood of significant effects on any European sites either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This was informed by the collection of best available scientific data on the European sites and identification of the condition, sensitivities, and threats that may cause potential for significant effects on Natura 2000 sites.

## References

1. Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2009;  
[http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS\\_2009\\_AA\\_Guidance.pdf](http://www.npws.ie/publications/archive/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf)
2. Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting EUROPEAN Sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC;
3. Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government Circular NPW 1/10 and PSSP 2/10 on Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive – Guidance for Planning Authorities March 2010.
4. Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest, compensatory measures, overall coherence, opinion of the commission;
5. Guidance document on the implementation of the birds and habitats directive in estuaries and coastal zones with particular attention to port development and dredging;  
[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/Natura2000/management/docs/guidance\\_doc.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/Natura2000/management/docs/guidance_doc.pdf)
6. Managing EUROPEAN Sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, European Commission 2000;
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8. NPWS (2021) Conservation Objectives: Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC 001398. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
9. 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.
10. NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
11. 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.
12. NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: North Dublin Bay SAC 000206. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
13. NPWS (2015) Conservation Objectives: North Bull Island SPA 004006. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.