

## National Transport Authority

# Clongriffin to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme

### Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

The National Transport Authority (the “NTA”) is proposing to carry out the Clongriffin to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme (the “**Proposed Scheme**”).

The Clongriffin to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme is routed along the R107 Malahide Road from Mayne River Avenue – R107 Malahide Road Junction to the junction with Marino Mart - Fairview and also routed for cyclists via the junction with Malahide Road-Brian Road along Carleton Road, St Aidan’s Park, Haverty Road and Marglann Marino, all in the County of Dublin and within the Dublin City Council (DCC) administrative area. From here the Proposed Scheme ties into a separate project, the Clontarf to City Centre Cycle & Bus Priority Project currently, being developed by DCC. The Clontarf to City Centre Cycle & Bus Priority Project will provide segregated cycling facilities and bus priority infrastructure along a 2.7km route that extends from Clontarf Road at the junction with Alfie Byrne Road, to Amiens Street at the junction with Talbot Street in the City Centre. The start of the Proposed Scheme ties into a separate project being developed by DCC namely, The Belmayne Main Street and Belmayne Avenue Scheme, which provides bus and cycle linkages to Clongriffin Dart Station.

The NTA appointed Scott Cawley Ltd. to prepare an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report for the Proposed Scheme to consider, analyse and assess whether in view of best scientific knowledge and objective information and the conservation objectives of the European site(s) (which are discussed further below), if the Proposed Scheme individually or in combination with other plans or projects is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site(s).

The NTA has received and read the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and has considered its content and its conclusions and recommendation set out therein. Having done this, the NTA agrees with the conclusions and recommendation set out in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

### AA Screening Determination

The NTA has determined that an Appropriate Assessment of the Proposed Scheme is required as it cannot exclude, in view of best scientific knowledge and on the basis of objective scientific information, following the screening that the NTA has carried out, that the Proposed Scheme, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in the absence of mitigation, will have a significant effect on the following 18 European Site(s) (12 SPAs and 6 SACs) in view of the conservation objectives of those site(s):-

1. North Dublin Bay SAC,
2. South Dublin Bay SAC,
3. Howth Head SAC,
4. Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC,
5. Lambay Island SAC,
6. Baldoyle Bay SAC,

7. Howth Head Coast SPA,
8. North Bull Island SPA,
9. South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA,
10. Dalkey Islands SPA,
11. Malahide Estuary SPA,
12. Rogerstown Estuary SPA,
13. Skerries Islands SPA,
14. Rockabill SPA,
15. Ireland's Eye SPA,
16. Baldoyle Bay SPA,
17. Lambay Island SPA and
18. The Murrough SPA.

The NTA has made this determination on the basis of having considered the baseline ecological environment; the extent and characteristics of the Proposed Scheme and having identified the following potential impacts:

- Habitat loss and fragmentation;
- Habitat degradation/effects on QI / SCI species as a result of hydrological impacts;
- Habitat degradation as a result of introducing/spreading non-native invasive species;
- Habitat degradation as a result of air quality impacts; and
- Disturbance and displacement impacts.

Further detail is provided below on each of the potential impacts identified.

#### **Habitat loss and fragmentation**

The Proposed Scheme does not overlap with any European sites, however Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species for which SPAs in the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme have been designated are known to utilise ex situ feeding sites in the Dublin area (i.e., Malahide Estuary SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, North Bull Island SPA, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA and Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Skerries Islands SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Lambay Island SPA and The Murrough SPA). A number of potential inland feeding sites within the footprint of the Proposed Scheme were surveyed to inform this assessment, these were located at lands opposite the Hilton Hotel at the junction of Malahide Road/ R135, Buttercup Park, and Maypark. Of these, Buttercup Park and Maypark were found to support SCI species. The Proposed Scheme will result in the temporary loss of GA2 (amenity grassland) habitat suitable to support breeding gull and wintering bird species at the Proposed Buttercup Park construction compound, a permanent loss of suitable GA2 habitat at the proposed Maypark footpath, and a temporary loss of suitable GA2 habitat at Maypark to facilitate boundary works.

Therefore, there is potential for impacts on SCI species associated with SPAs to occur as a result of habitat loss/ fragmentation.

#### **Habitat degradation / effects on QI / SCI species as a result of hydrological impacts**

The Proposed Scheme is hydrologically connected to Dublin Bay and the Mayne Estuary via the Santry\_020, Mayne\_010, Wad River and existing pipes which drain to Dublin Bay. The potential release of contaminated surface water runoff and/or an accidental spillage or pollution event into any surface water features during construction, or operation, has the potential to affect water quality in the receiving aquatic environment. The associated effects of a reduction of surface water quality could potentially extend for a considerable distance downstream of the location of the accidental pollution event or the discharge point and therefore

impact the downstream environment, i.e., in Dublin Bay and the Mayne Estuary, including the following European sites: Baldoyle Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, South Dublin Bay SAC, Baldoyle Bay SAC, Howth Head SAC, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, Baldoyle Bay SPA, North Bull Island SPA, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, and Dalkey Islands SPA. This reduction in water quality (either alone or in combination with other pressures on water quality) could result in the degradation of sensitive habitats present within these European sites, which in turn would negatively affect the SCI bird species that rely upon these habitats as foraging and/or roosting habitat. It could also negatively affect the quantity and quality of prey available to SCI bird species. These impacts could potentially occur to such a degree that the conservation objectives of the Baldoyle Bay SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, South Dublin Bay SAC, Howth Head SAC, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, Baldoyle Bay SPA, North Bull Island SPA, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA and Dalkey Islands SPA could be undermined.

In a worst case scenario, in the absence of mitigation measures, the release of contaminated surface water runoff and/or an accidental spillage or pollution event into any surface water features during construction, or operation, also has the potential to affect mobile SCI bird species and QI mammal species that commute, forage and loaf in Dublin Bay i.e. birds associated with Skerries Islands SPA, Rockabill SPA and Lambay Island SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, North Dublin Bay SPA, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Howth Head Coast SPA, Dalkey Islands SPA, The Murrough SPA and, marine mammals associated with Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC and Lambay Island SAC. This potential reduction in water quality (either alone or in combination with other pressures on water quality) could result in the degradation of sensitive habitats present within downstream European sites, which in turn would negatively affect the SCI bird species that rely upon these habitats as foraging and/or roosting habitat. It could also negatively affect the quantity and quality of prey available to SCI and QI populations.

#### **Habitat degradation as a result of introducing/spreading non-native invasive species**

No non-native invasive plant species listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011, were recorded within, or in close proximity to, the Proposed Scheme. However, there were records of invasive species in the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme returned from the desk study. Therefore, there is potential for invasive species to spread or be introduced, during construction and / or routine maintenance/management works, to terrestrial habitat areas in European sites downstream in Dublin Bay via the Santry\_020 and / or River Wad, or pipes that discharge directly to the bay (i.e., North Dublin Bay SAC, South Dublin Bay SAC, North Bull Island SPA and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA). The introduction and/or spread of these invasive species to downstream European sites could potentially result in the degradation of existing habitats present, in particular coastal habitats not permanently or regularly inundated by seawater. These species may outcompete other native species present, negatively impacting the species composition, diversity and abundance and the physical structural integrity of the habitat. This in turn could undermine the conservation objectives of these European sites.

#### **Habitat degradation as a result of air quality impacts**

A reduction in air quality within the immediate vicinity of the construction works may occur as a consequence of dust deposition associated with these construction activities. This includes reduction in photosynthesis due to smothering from dust on the plants and chemical changes such as acidity to soils. Furthermore, emissions from car exhausts, and the deposition of particulate matter and heavy metals produced by engine, brake and tyre wear, can contribute to increased deposition of pollutants such as oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>, NOs), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), particulate matter (PM), heavy metals

(HM) and ammonia (NH<sub>4</sub>) in the vicinity of a road carriageway. This can affect the ecosystems and vegetation present, influencing plant growth rates and species composition, diversity, and abundance.

A change in AADT (Annual Average Daily Traffic) flows greater than 1,000 is predicted to occur on Clontarf Road where cars will be redirected onto the local road network once the Proposed Scheme is in operation. This lies adjacent to South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA. As such the Proposed Scheme has the potential to result in habitat degradation of the qualifying / special conservation interest species / habitats of South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA during the Operational Phase of the Proposed Scheme. There is also the potential for in combination effects to occur in association with other activities/plans/projects.

### **Disturbance and displacement impacts**

There are a number of SPAs which are designated for SCI species that are known to forage and / or roost at inland sites, such as amenity grassland playing pitches (i.e., Malahide Estuary SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, North Bull Island SPA, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Skerries Islands SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Lambay Island SPA, and The Murrough SPA). These species include, but are not limited to, light-bellied brent goose, curlew, oystercatcher, black-tailed godwit, black-headed gull, herring gull and lesser black-backed gull. Suitable inland foraging/roosting sites, which these bird species utilise, within the potential Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the Proposed Scheme for disturbance/displacement effects.

### **Summary**

The hydrological, invasive species, air quality, and disturbance and displacement impacts associated with the Proposed Scheme have the potential to affect the receiving environment and, consequently, have the potential to affect the conservation objectives supporting the qualifying interest/special conservation interests of a European site(s). Therefore, the potential for the Proposed Scheme to have significant effects on a European site(s) cannot be excluded.

### **In-combination effects**

There is the potential for developments planned or granted, or those implemented under a range of land use and other plans, to lie either within European sites, or be situated in a location where they may be within the ZoI of the European sites which also fall within the ZoI of the Proposed Scheme.

Key development projects with potential for in-combination effects due to their size, nature and/or location include other Core Bus Corridor Schemes, MetroLink, upgrades to or new rail infrastructure, utility infrastructure including proposed or consented water utility improvement.

The potential for in combination effects between these plans and projects and the Proposed Scheme arises via the same pathways for potential effects as identified for the Proposed Scheme (i.e. hydrological, invasive species, air quality, and disturbance and displacement effects) which could act in combination with similar effects and pathways arising from the various plans.

Therefore the potential for the following in combination effects arising from plans cannot be ruled out:

- Habitat fragmentation (for example European sites at risk of ex-situ habitat losses; Malahide Estuary SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, North Bull Island SPA and South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA, Skerries Islands SPA, Lambay Island SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA and The Murrough SPA);

- Habitat degradation/effects on QI/SCI species as a result of hydrological impacts (for example reduction in water quality in catchments draining to Dublin Bay affecting the conservation objectives supporting aquatic habitats and species in North Dublin Bay SAC, South Dublin Bay SAC, Howth Head SAC, Howth Head Coast SPA, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, Lambay Island SAC, North Bull Island SPA, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, Dalkey Islands SPA, Baldoyle Bay SAC, Baldoyle Bay SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Skerries Islands SPA, Rockabill SPA, Lambay Island SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, and The Murrrough SPA);
- Habitat degradation as a result of introducing/spreading non-native invasive species;
- Habitat degradation as a result of air quality impacts (for example South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA will be adjacent to Clontarf Road at risk of increased traffic flows from the Proposed Scheme); and,
- Disturbance and displacement impacts (for example ex-situ inland feeding sites which are utilised by SCI wintering bird species within the potential disturbance ZoI of the Proposed Scheme for Malahide Estuary SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Skerries Islands SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Lambay Island SPA, North Bull Island SPA, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA and The Murrrough SPA).

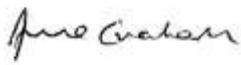
### **Conclusions of Screening Assessment Process**

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of the all relevant information, in view of best scientific knowledge, and applying the precautionary principle, it can be concluded that there is the possibility for significant effects on the following European sites, in the absence of mitigation, either arising from the project alone or in combination with other plans and projects, as a result of hydrological impacts, invasive species, air quality impacts and disturbance and displacement impacts: North Dublin Bay SAC, South Dublin Bay SAC, Baldoyle Bay SAC; Howth Head SAC, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, Lambay Island SAC, Howth Head Coast SPA, North Bull Island SPA, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, Dalkey Islands SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Skerries Islands SPA, Rockabill SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Lambay Island SPA and The Murrrough SPA.

In reaching this conclusion, the nature of the project and its potential relationship with all European sites within the zone of influence, and their conservation objectives, have been fully considered.

The NTA has requested that Scott Cawley Ltd. prepare and finalise a Natura Impact Statement which will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála with an application for approval for the Proposed Scheme.

This determination is available for inspection at the National Transport Authority Offices, Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2, D02 WT20 and on its website at [www.BusConnects.ie](http://www.BusConnects.ie).

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_

For and on behalf of the BusConnects Programme Board of the NTA

Dated:- 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021