

National Transport Authority

# Rathfarnham/ Templeogue to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme

## Appropriate Assessment Screening Determination

The National Transport Authority (the "NTA") is proposing to carry out the Rathfarnham/ Templeogue to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme (the "Proposed Scheme").

The Proposed Scheme has an overall length of approximately 10km from end to end online with additional offline upgrades and quiet street treatment of approximately 2km and 1.5km respectively. The Proposed Scheme will be comprised of two main alignments, namely from Templeogue to Terenure (3.7km), and from Rathfarnham to the City Centre (6.3km). The Templeogue to Terenure section will commence on the R137 Tallaght Road, east of the M50 junction 11 interchange. From here, the Proposed Scheme is routed via the R137 along Tallaght Road and Templeogue Road, through Templeogue Village, to Terenure Cross, where it joins the Rathfarnham to City Centre section.

The Rathfarnham to City Centre section will commence on the R821 Grange Road at the junction with Nutgrove Avenue, and is routed along the R821 Grange Road, the R115 Rathfarnham Road, the R114 Rathfarnham Road, Terenure Road East, Rathgar Road, Rathmines Road Lower, Richmond Street South, Camden Street Upper and Lower and Wexford Street as far as the junction with the R110 at Kevin Street Lower and Cuffe Street where priority bus lanes end. From Cuffe Street to Dame Street along Redmond's Hill, Aungier Street, and South Great George's Street the route will involve a traffic lane and a cycle track in both directions where it will join the prevailing traffic management regime in the city centre. In addition to the above, an alternative cycle facility will be provided along Harold's Cross Road / Terenure Road North between Terenure Cross and Parkview Avenue, as well as along Bushy Park Road, Wasdale Park, Wasdale Grove, Zion Road and Orwell Road.

The Proposed Scheme includes an upgrade of the existing bus priority and cycle facilities. The scheme includes a substantial increase in the level of bus priority provided along the corridor, including the provision of additional lengths of bus lane resulting in improved journey time reliability. Throughout the Proposed Scheme bus stops will be enhanced to improve the overall journey experience for bus passengers and cycle facilities will be substantially improved with segregated cycle tracks provided along the links and protected junctions with enhanced signalling for cyclists provided at junctions.

The Proposed Scheme, which will provide segregated cycling facilities, bus priority infrastructure and improvement pedestrian facilities, is within the Dublin City Council (DCC) and South Dublin County Council (SDCC) administrative areas.

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 recommendations as 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 17 European Site(s) (Five Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and 12 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in view of the conservation objectives of those site(s):-

1. North Dublin Bay SAC
2. South Dublin Bay SAC
3. Wicklow Mountains SAC
4. Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC
5. Lambay Island SAC
6. Howth Head Coast SPA
7. North Bull Island SPA
8. South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA
9. Dalkey Islands SPA
10. Malahide Estuary SPA
11. Baldoyle Bay SPA
12. Rogerstown Estuary SPA
13. Skerries Islands SPA
14. Ireland's Eye SPA
15. Lambay Island SPA
16. Rockabill SPA and
17. The Murrrough 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 which could result in likely significant effects (LSE) to European Sites:

- Habitat loss and fragmentation
- Habitat degradation / effects on Qualifying Interests (QI) / Special Conservation Interest (SCI) species as a result of hydrological impacts;
- Habitat degradation as a result of hydrogeological 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

- 1 The Proposed Scheme does not overlap with any European sites. The nearest European site to the Proposed Scheme is South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, which is located approximately 900m away with a hydrological connection downstream of the Proposed Scheme. Therefore there is no potential for direct habitat loss and fragmentation to occur. Habitat loss may occur indirectly as a consequence of severe habitat degradation arising from a reduction in water quality and / or a change to the hydrological regime, as described in the section below.
- 2 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. North Bull Island SPA, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Skerries Islands SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Lambay Island SPA and The Murrough SPA). The Proposed Scheme will not result in temporary and / or permanent loss of inland sites within the Proposed Scheme footprint suitable to support breeding gull and wintering bird species. As only small numbers of birds were recorded during the two seasons of survey (2020/2021 and 2021/2022) at potential inland feeding sites immediately adjacent to the Proposed Scheme, and the lack of records of light-bellied Brent goose at these sites, they are not deemed to be a significant inland foraging resource. Therefore, there is no 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 via the Dodder\_50, Brewery Stream\_010, Kill of the Grange Stream\_010, Carrickmines Stream\_010, Shanganagh\_010, Dargle\_040, South-western Irish Sea - Killiney Bay, and the Ringsend WWTP.

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. Such a pollution event may include: the release of sediment into receiving waters and the subsequent increase in mobilised suspended solids; and, the accidental spillage and / or leaks of contaminants into receiving waters. It should be noted that a highly substantial event or events would be required to generate such quantities, which is considered unlikely.

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 waterbodies, i.e., in Dublin Bay and beyond, including the following European sites: South Dublin Bay SAC, Rathfarnham/ Templeogue Head SAC, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, Wicklow Mountains SAC, Howth Head SAC, Lambay Island SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, Dalkey Island SPA, North Bull Island SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, The Murrough SPA, Howth Head Coast SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Lambay Island SPA, Skerries Islands SPA and Rockabill 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 QI species, as well as 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 and QI species. These impacts could potentially occur to such a degree that the conservation objectives of the South Dublin Bay SAC, Rathfarnham/ Templeogue Head SAC, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, Wicklow Mountains SAC, Howth Head SAC, Lambay Island SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, Dalkey Island SPA, North Bull Island SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, The Murrrough SPA, Howth Head Coast SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Lambay Island SPA, Skerries Islands SPA and Rockabill SPA may 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 South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, Dalkey Island SPA, North Bull Island SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, The Murrrough SPA, Howth Head Coast SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Lambay Island SPA, Skerries Islands SPA and Rockabill SPA, marine mammals associated with Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC and Lambay Island SAC, and otter associated with Wicklow Mountains 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.

The QI habitats for which Rathfarnham/ Templeogue Head and Howth Head SAC are designated (i.e. vegetated sea cliffs [1230] and European dry heaths [4030]) lie above the high-water mark. Pollution is not regarded to be a threat or pressure which could potentially impact these SAC sites (NPWS 2013k; NPWS 2013l) and is not regarded to be a significant threat / pressure to this habitat at a national level (Barron et al., 2011). Therefore, the QI habitats of Howth Head SAC and Rathfarnham/ Templeogue Head SAC will be unaffected by a degradation in the surface water quality of the coastal waters of Dublin Bay and significant effects in that regard can be excluded.

#### **Habitat Degradation as a Result of Hydrogeological Impacts**

Groundwater levels in groundwater dependant habitats may be impacted by the removal of a proportion of an aquifer or dewatering activities associated with excavations which can lead to a temporary change in groundwater levels and flow within the aquifer. Likewise, the mobilisation of contaminants into the aquifer either through accidental spillage or disturbance of contaminated ground during excavation may reduce the quality of the groundwater within the aquifer, also resulting in the degradation of groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystem and any species that they may support.

The underlying aquifers are either 'locally important bedrock aquifer, moderately productive only in local zones', 'poor aquifer - bedrock which is generally unproductive except for local zones' or 'locally important aquifer - moderately productive only in local zones'. These types of aquifers are associated with low permeability which decreases with depth. An upper shallow zone of higher permeability may exist in the top few meters and is associated with relatively short flow paths. Therefore, any influence on the groundwater as a result of the proposed works will be localised and will not extend to any groundwater dependant habitats which are all located over 1.5km from any proposed work. The unmitigated hydrogeological ZoI of the Proposed Scheme is not considered to extend to any groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems linked to European sites. This ZoI is determined by the professional judgement of the hydrogeology specialists.

In summary, the Proposed Scheme does not have the potential to result in habitat degradation of the Qualifying / Special Conservation Interest species of any European site as the result of hydrogeological impacts.

### **Habitat Degradation as a Result of Introducing / Spreading Non-Native Invasive Species**

There are 18 areas of non-native invasive plant species (Giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, and Japanese knotweed) listed on the Third Schedule of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 present within, or in close proximity to, the Proposed Scheme. In the absence of mitigation, there is potential for this to spread or be introduced, during construction and / or routine maintenance / management works, to terrestrial habitat areas in European sites downstream in Dublin Bay and beyond (i.e., South Dublin Bay SAC, Rathfarnham / Templeogue Head SAC, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, Wicklow Mountains SAC, Howth Head SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, Dalkey Island SPA, North Bull Island SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, The Murrrough SPA, Howth Head Coast SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Lambay Island SPA, Skerries Islands SPA and Rockabill 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.

It is considered unlikely that invasive species could spread to European sites which are located a significant distance from the outfall locations of the Dodder\_50, Brewery Stream\_010, Kill of the Grange Stream\_010, Carrickmines Stream\_010, Shanganagh\_010, Dargle\_040, South-western Irish Sea - Killiney Bay or Ringsend WWTP, and separated by a large marine waterbody (i.e. Howth Head SAC, Lambay Island SAC, Baldoyle Bay SPA, The Murrrough SPA, Howth Head Coast SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Lambay Island SPA, Skerries Islands SPA and Rockabill SPA).

### **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>, NO<sub>s</sub>), 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.

The unmitigated ZoI for construction related air quality effects arising from the Proposed Scheme has the potential to extend 50m from the Proposed Scheme boundary, and 500m from construction compounds during the construction phase. Vehicle emission related air quality effects arising from the Proposed Scheme has potential to extend up to 200m from the Proposed Scheme boundary or associated diversion roads during the construction year and the operational phase. There are no European sites present within these distances. The nearest European site, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, is located approximately 900m from the Proposed Scheme (as the crow flies) and therefore not located within the ZoI of this potential impact.

As the Proposed Scheme does not have the potential to result in habitat degradation of the Qualifying / Special Conservation Interest species of any European site as the result of air quality impacts, either during

the construction phase or the operational phase, there is no potential for in combination effects to occur in that regard.

### **Disturbance and Displacement Impacts**

A temporary and / or permanent increase in noise, vibration and / or human activity levels during the construction of the Proposed Scheme could result in the disturbance to and / or displacement of fauna species present within the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme. For mammal species such as otter, disturbance effects would not be expected to extend beyond 150m<sup>1</sup>. For wintering birds, disturbance effects would not be expected to extend beyond a distance of approximately 300m<sup>2</sup>, as noise levels associated with general construction activities would attenuate to close to background levels at that distance. There are no European sites within the disturbance ZoI of the Proposed Scheme.

Although no signs of otter were recorded during field surveys of the Proposed Scheme, the River Liffey (and its tributaries), the Grand Canal, River Dodder, Brewery Stream, Shanganagh River, Rathmichael Stream and River Dargle and South Dublin Bay (i.e. watercourses within 1km of the Proposed Scheme) are known to support otter, an Annex II and IV mammal species. The nearest SAC to the proposed development site for which otter has been designated is Wicklow Mountains SAC which is located approximately 6.7km south-west, as the crow flies. Research carried out by Ó'Néill et al. (2009) on ranging behaviours of otter on river systems in Ireland found that female otter ranges averaged 7.5km while male otter home ranges varied between 7-19km. Wicklow Mountains SAC is located within the same sub-catchments (Dodder\_SC\_010 and Dargle\_SC\_010) to the Proposed Scheme. The River Liffey and tributaries are known to support otter, and the current guidance in respect of the hydrological distance that territorial otters roam suggest a maximum territorial range of 21km for otter along suitable watercourses. Thus, watercourses in proximity to the Proposed Scheme are considered to hold QI otter populations associated of the Wicklow Mountains SAC, as the SAC falls within the territorial ranges of otter and is located within the same sub-catchment.

Although marine mammals associated with European sites may commute and forage within the Liffey and lower Dargle Estuaries, it is considered unlikely that there will be any impacts on these species as a result of the Proposed Scheme as the northern end of of the Proposed Scheme is located approximately 167m south of the Liffey Estuary Upper, whilst the southern end is located approximately XXm east of the Dargle Estuary, in a highly urbanised environment and where water levels can drop diurnally reducing the likelihood of marine mammals venturing this far up-river. In addition to this, the scale of works proposed in the vicinity of the Liffey and Dargle Estuaries are considered to be minor.

Although no signs of kingfisher were recorded during field surveys of the Proposed Scheme, kingfisher, an Annex I bird species, are known to be present in the wider study area, in particular, along the River Liffey, River Camac, River Dodder and the Grand Canal. Any kingfisher populations which are present in the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme are not considered to be associated with the SCI populations of any

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<sup>1</sup> This is consistent with Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) guidance (Guidelines for the Treatment of Otters prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes (NRA, 2006)). This is a precautionary distance, and likely to be moderated by the screening effect provided by surrounding vegetation and buildings, with the actual ZoI of construction related disturbance likely to be much less in reality.

<sup>2</sup> Current understanding of construction related noise disturbance to wintering waterbirds is based on the research presented in Cutts *et al.* (2009) and Wright *et al.* (2010). In terms of construction noise, levels below 50dB would not be expected to result in any response from foraging or roosting birds. Noise levels between 50dB and 70dB would provoke a moderate effect/level of response from birds, i.e. birds becoming alert and some behavioural changes (e.g. reduced feeding activity), but birds would be expected to habituate to noise levels within this range. Noise levels above 70dB would likely result in birds moving out of the affected zone, or leaving the site altogether. At approximately 300m, typical noise levels associated with construction activity (BS 5228) are generally below 60dB or, in most cases, are approaching the 50dB threshold.

European site. Kingfisher territories can extend over approximately 3-5km of a river catchment<sup>3</sup>. The nearest SPA for which kingfisher has been designated is the River Boyne and Blackwater SPA which is located in a separate catchment approximately 39.7km away, therefore kingfisher present in the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme are not associated with an SPA population.

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., North Bull Island SPA, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Skerries Islands SPA, Lambay Island SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA and The Murrough SPA.). Five of these species were returned from the desk study and include light-bellied Brent goose, lapwing, black-headed gull, herring gull and lesser black-backed gull. Suitable inland foraging / roosting sites, which these bird species utilise, are located within the potential ZoI of the Proposed Scheme (See Section **Error! Reference source not found.** above). Therefore, there is potential for the Proposed Scheme to result in the disturbance / displacement of SCI bird species associated with SPA populations.

Wicklow Mountains SPA, located approximately 7.2km east of the Proposed Scheme, has been designated for SCI species, peregrine Falco peregrinus and merlin Falco columbarius. Both species are known to occur in the wider study area. Most peregrine prey is taken within 2km of the eyrie and few birds are taken beyond 6km (Hardey et al., 2013). The home range of breeding merlin is unknown but it could be expected to be similar to peregrine considering they will defend their immediate nesting territory (Lusby et al., 2017; Hardey et al., 2013). Considering the distance between the Wicklow Mountains SPA and the Proposed Scheme, any peregrine and / or merlin recorded in its immediate vicinity, do not form part of the Wicklow Mountains SPA SCI populations. Therefore, there is no potential for the Proposed Scheme to result in the disturbance / displacement of SCI peregrine and / or merlin associated with SPA populations.

### **Summary**

The hydrological, non-native invasive species 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 Interests / 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.

As the Proposed Scheme itself is likely to affect the QIs / SCIs or conservation objectives of a European site(s), there is also the potential for other plans or projects to act in combination with it to result in likely significant effects on European sites.

The potential impacts of the Proposed Scheme on the receiving environment, their ZoI, and the European sites for which likely significant effects cannot be excluded are summarised in **Error! Reference source not found.** below. In assessing the potential for the Proposed Scheme to result in a significant effect on any European sites, any measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the project on European sites are not taken into account.

### **In Combination Effects**

There is 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, upgrades to or new rail infrastructure, utility infrastructure including proposed or consented water utility improvement.

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<sup>3</sup> RSPB. Kingfisher breeding, feeding and territory webpage. Available at: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/bird-a-z/kingfisher/breeding-feeding-territory/>



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 above for the Proposed Scheme (i.e. hydrological, non-native invasive species, 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: South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, North Bull Island SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, The Murrrough SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Lambay Island SPA and Skerries Islands 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 South Dublin Bay SAC, Rathfarnham/ Templeogue Head SAC, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, Wicklow Mountains SAC, Howth Head SAC, Lambay Island SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, Dalkey Island SPA, North Bull Island SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, The Murrrough SPA, Howth Head Coast SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Lambay Island SPA, Skerries Islands SPA and Rockabill SPA;
- Habitat degradation as a result of introducing / spreading non-native invasive species for South Dublin Bay SAC, Rathfarnham/ Templeogue Head SAC, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, Wicklow Mountains SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, Dalkey Island SPA and North Bull Island SPA; 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 South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, North Bull Island SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, The Murrrough SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Lambay Island SPA and Skerries Islands SPA

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

Following an examination, analysis and evaluation of all relevant information and 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 habitat loss, hydrological impacts, non-native invasive species, and disturbance and displacement impacts: South Dublin Bay SAC, Rathfarnham/ Templeogue Head SAC, Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, Wicklow Mountains SAC, Howth Head SAC, Lambay Island SAC, South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA, Dalkey Island SPA, North Bull Island SPA, Baldoyle Bay SPA, The Murrrough SPA, Howth Head Coast SPA, Ireland's Eye SPA, Malahide Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Lambay Island SPA, Skerries Islands SPA and Rockabill 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: *Paul Graham*

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

Dated:- [1st November 2022]

