



**Clifton Scannell Emerson**  
Associates

## **Grange Castle Business Park Access Road**

### **Appropriate Assessment Screening Report**



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**Client: South Dublin County Council**

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**Date: 06<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

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CONSULTING ENGINEERS

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 General

Clifton Scannell Emerson Associates (CSEA) have been appointed by South Dublin County Council (SDCC) as Consulting Engineers for the preparation of documentation for public display for the Grange Castle Business Park Access Road Scheme in accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

Under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive, an “appropriate assessment” is required where any plan or project, either alone or ‘in combination’ with other plans or projects, could have an adverse effect on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, i.e. a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA), or on the conservation objectives of such a site. This requirement is implemented in Ireland through Regulation 15 of the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI 94/1997, as amended and Circular letters SEA 1/08 and NPWS 1/083.

A zone of influence of 15km is currently recommended in the case of plans or projects, and derives from UK guidance (Scott Wilson et al., 2006). Situated within 15km of the proposed scheme are several Natura 2000 sites designated under the EU Habitats Directive. Other Natura 2000 sites are located in Dublin Bay, which are outside the limit of the recommended 15km zone of influence. However, as the Grand Canal ultimately discharge into Dublin Bay, these Dublin Bay Natura 2000 sites are included in this Screening Report. The locations of the Natura 2000 sites are shown on Figure 1.

Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive states:

*Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.*

Article 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive states:

*'if, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of economic or social nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform*

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

This report comprises information in support of screening for Habitats Directive Assessment in line with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) of the Grange Castle Business Park Access Road.

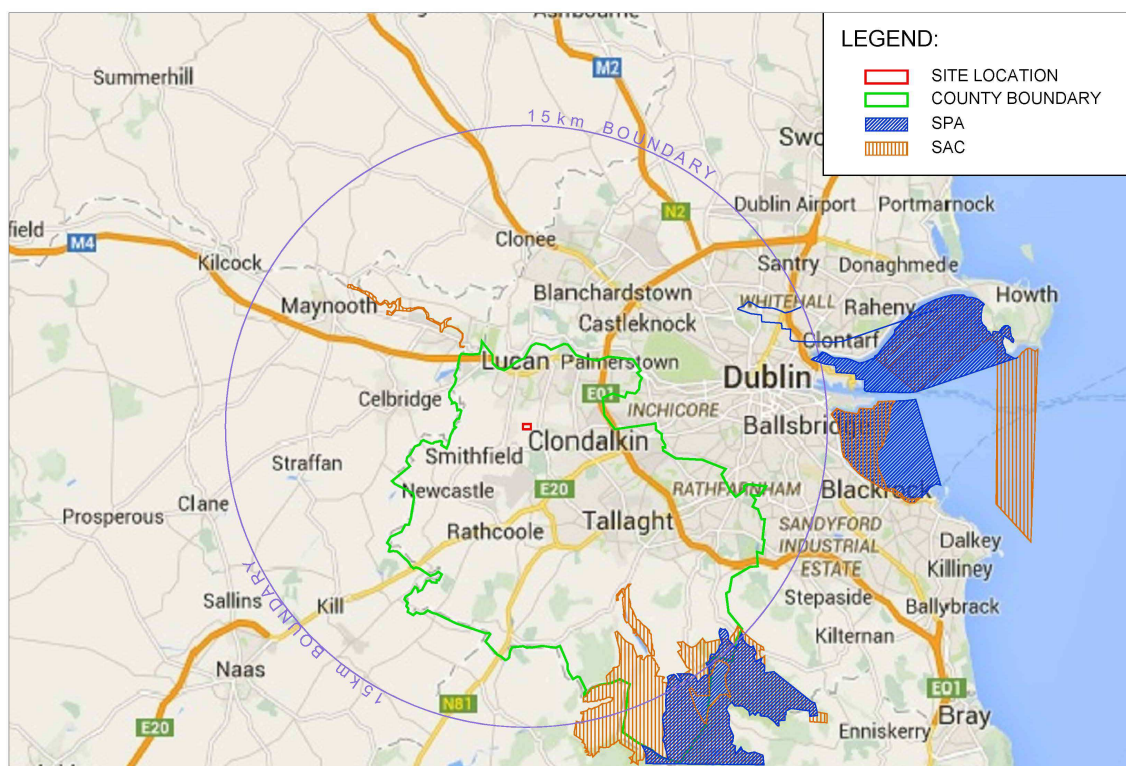


Figure 1 – SPA's & SAC's / Site Locations

## 1.2 The SDCC County Development Plan 2010 – 2016

The proposed scheme will involve the delivery of an Access Road to an undeveloped site within the confines of Grange Castle Business Park. The Access Road will be accompanied by a footpath, cycle track and associated landscaping and services.

The purpose of land use zoning within the South Dublin County Development Plan (2010 – 2016) is to indicate the planning control objectives of the Council for all lands in its administrative area. The

proposed scheme is located within Zone EP2 (Enterprise Zoning Objective Two) which has an objective as follows:

*To facilitate opportunities for manufacturing, Research and Development facilities, light industry, and employment and enterprise related uses in industrial areas and business parks.”*

The SDCC County Development Plan contains a number of policies and objectives that relate to the protection of the environment, landscape, water quality, and Natura 2000 sites. The protection of SACs and pNHAs is specifically referred to in Policy LHA 8 of the CDP:

**Policy LHA 8:**

*It is the policy of the Council to protect and preserve areas designated or proposed as Special Areas of Conservation (E.U. Habitats Directive) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas.*

In addition, the requirements for appropriate assessment of potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites are detailed in Policy LHA 9:

**Policy LHA 9:**

*It is the policy of the Council that projects giving rise to significant direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:*

- (a) No alternative solution available;*
- (b) Imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed and;*
- (c) Adequate compensatory measures in place*

*All subsequent plan making and adoption of plans arising from this Plan will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive. Where relevant, projects will be screened for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.*

A range of other policies in the County Development Plan 2010-2016 relate to water quality and waste water treatment, all of which aim to eliminate or reduce the potential for deterioration of water quality, both ground water and surface water. A list of relevant policies is included as Appendix 1.

Adherence to the above policies in the design and implementation of the proposed Scheme, in combination with the over-arching protective policies and objectives in the SDCC County Development Plan will therefore act to avoid significant downstream impacts on Natura 2000 sites.



## 2 Stages of the Appropriate Assessment

This screening assessment has been prepared in accordance with the European Commission Environment DG document, Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, referred to as the “EC Article 6 Guidance Document”. The guidance within this document provides a non-mandatory methodology for carrying out assessments required under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive, and are viewed as an interpretation of the EU Commission document Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, referred to as “MN2000”.

There are four main stages in the process associated with the Habitats Directive, which are:

- 1) **Stage One: Screening**  
The process which identifies what the likely impacts arising from a plan or project on a Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, and considers whether these impacts are likely to be significant.
- 2) **Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment**  
Where the possibility of significant impacts has not been discounted by the screening process, a more detailed assessment is required. This is called an appropriate assessment and involves the consideration of the impact of the project or plan on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, having regard to the site’s structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, it involves an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts.
- 3) **Stage Three: Assessment of alternative solutions**  
Should the conclusion of the appropriate assessment be that there are likely to be impacts which will affect the overall integrity of the Natura 2000 site, then it is required to examine alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoids adverse such adverse impacts. Stage three of a Habitats Directive Assessment involves the assessment of alternative solutions.
- 4) **Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain.**  
Should it be found there are no viable alternative solutions to avoid adverse impacts on the Natura 2000 site, and should it be agreed that the project/plan can proceed despite such impacts (which can only be for overriding reasons of public interest), then compensatory



measures must be put in place in advance of the implementation of the plan/project. The fourth stage of the Habitats Directive assessment process involves the assessment of the proposed compensatory measures.

This document presents the result of the Stage One Screening Process. In complying with the obligations under Article 6(3) and following the EC2000 and MN2000 Guidelines, this screening document has been structured as a stage by stage approach as follows:

Description of the project;

- Identification of Natura 2000 sites potentially affected;
- Identification and description of individual and cumulative impacts likely to result;
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified on site integrity; and
- Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.

### 3 Description of the Project

The Project comprises civil engineering works associated with the construction of 150m of a 6m wide Access Road leading into an undeveloped site within Grange Castle Business Park. A general location of the proposed scheme is shown on Figure 2.

The Scheme incorporates the construction of a new access road with turning area, footpath, cycle track and all associated landscaping, utilities and services.

The Access Road Scheme works include:

- (a) Site Clearance.
- (b) Construction of carriageway, footpaths and cycle tracks,
- (c) Public Lighting
- (d) Road Drainage
- (e) Road and cycle track Lining.
- (f) General Road Signage.
- (g) Landscaping

Figure 2 – Location Map of Proposed Scheme

## 4 Identification of Nature 2000 Sites Potentially Affected

The proposed scheme is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of Natura 2000 sites in South Dublin County or elsewhere. As mentioned in Chapter 1 best practice recommends assessing Natura 2000 sites located within 15km of a proposed plan or project (see Figure 1).

Five SAC's and two SPA's are located within 15km of the proposed scheme. These sites are:

- 1) Rye Water Valley cSAC, Code IE0001398.
- 2) Red Bog cSAC, Code IE0000397.
- 3) Glenasmole Valley cSAC, Code IE0001209.
- 4) Wicklow Mountains cSAC, Code IE0002122.
- 5) Wicklow National Park (Wicklow Mountains) SPA, Code IE0004040.
- 6) South Dublin Bay cSAC, Code IE 0000210.
- 7) South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA, Code IE004024.

The proposed scheme lies within the Griffeen River catchment. Surface water disposal from the scheme will be discharged to the Kilmahuddrick Stream and subsequently into the Griffeen River, which joins the River Liffey 5km north of the site. The water from the Griffeen River enters the River Liffey and thereafter the Liffey channel into Dublin Bay.

There is also one proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) in the vicinity of the proposed scheme, namely the Grand Canal proposed Natural Heritage Area (Site Code: 0002104). The proposed scheme bounds this site along its northern boundary.

For completeness all seven sites are therefore included in this Screening Report. It is noted that there are other Natura 2000 sites within the greater Dublin Bay area e.g. Howth Head Coast SPA (IE0004113) and Dalkey Islands SPA (IE0004172). It is considered that these sites do not require being included in this screening process due to their distance from the proposed road scheme and to the dilution effect of the sea within the greater Dublin Bay area.

A summary of the main elements of interest for each of these sites is as follows:

### 1) Rye Valley Water cSAC

This site is located between Leixlip and Maynooth in Co. Kildare. It extends along the Rye Water, a tributary of the River Liffey. The woodlands at Carton Demesne are the site of a rare fungus, *Diderma deplanatum* and also support birds such as Blackcap, Woodcock, and Long-

eared Owls. On or about the lake, birds such as Little Grebe, Coot, Moorhen, Tufted Duck, Teal, and Kingfisher have been recorded. Kingfishers are listed in Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive. The mineral spring occurring on the site is also listed as an Annex 1 habitat of the EU Habitats Directive. The Rye Water is a spawning ground for Trout and Salmon while White-clawed crayfish *Austropotomobius pallipes* has been recorded at Leixlip. Rare snail species and dragonflies also occur in the marsh vegetation near to Louisa Bridge. The main importance of the site lies in the presence of several rare and threatened plant and animal species and of a rare habitat – thermal, mineral, petrifying spring.

2) Red Bog cSAC

Red Bog, Co. Kildare, is located 3km north of the village of Blessington in east Co. Kildare. It comprises a wetland complex of Lake, fen and bog, situated in a hollow between ridges of glacially-deposited material and it is underlain by rocks of Ordovician age. The site is of particular conservation significance as it supports transition mire, a habitat listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive.

Draft Conservation Objectives:

- (a) To maintain the Annex 1 habitats for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status – Transition mires and quaking bogs.
- (b) To maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the entire site.
- (c) To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

3) Glenasmole Valley cSAC

Glenasmole Valley SAC contains a high diversity of habitats and plant communities and lists three habitats listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive: petrifying springs with tufa formation, semi-natural dry grassland and scrubland facies on calcareous substrate (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (important orchid sites), and *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty, or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*). Both petrifying springs and orchid-rich calcareous grasslands also qualify as Priority Habitats under the Habitats Directive. The presence of four Red Data Book plant species further enhances the value of the site as does the presence of populations of several mammal and bird species of conservation interest. The River Dodder flows through the valley and has been impounded here to form two reservoirs which supply water to south Dublin.

Draft Conservation Objectives:

- (a) To maintain the Annex 1 habitats for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status – \*Petrifying springs with tufa formation, Semi-natural dry grassland and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-*

Brometalia) (\*important orchid sites), Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (Molinion caeruleae)

- (b) To maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the entire site.
- (c) To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

4) Wicklow Mountains cSAC

Wicklow Mountains SAC is an important complex, extensive, upland site covering much of the Wicklow Mountains and a portion of the Dublin Mountain range. Within the boundaries of South Dublin County, the SAC encompasses the mountains of Ballymorefinn, Corrig, Kilakee, and Cruagh, stretching south to the summit of Kippure Mountain at the border with County Wicklow. While the entire SAC lists ten habitats listed in Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive, the vegetation within the South Dublin County portion of the site mainly provides good examples of the typical upland habitats of heath, blanket bog and upland grassland. Several rare, protected plant and animal species also occur in this SAC.

Draft Conservation Objectives:

To maintain the Annex 1 habitats for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status:– Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or of the Isoëto-Nanojuncetea; Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds; Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix; European dry heaths; Alpine and Boreal heaths; Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe); Blanket bog; Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels; (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani); Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation; Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in British Isles.

- (a) To maintain the Annex 2 species for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation
- (b) status: - Lutra lutra
- (c) To maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the entire site.
- (d) To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

5) Wicklow National Park (Wicklow Mountains) SPA

Wicklow Mountains SPA is an extensive upland site, comprising a substantial part of the Wicklow Mountains. The site, which is within the Wicklow Mountains National Park, is fragmented into about twenty separate parcels of land. Much of the site is State-owned and managed for nature conservation based on traditional landuses for the uplands. The site is of

high ornithological importance as it supports very good examples of upland and woodland bird communities, several of which are very rare at a national level. Two species, Ring Ouzel and Red Grouse, are Red-listed and their status is of high conservation concern.

Main Conservation Objective:

To maintain the special conservation interests for the SPA at favourable conservation status – Merlin, Peregrine.

6) South Dublin Bay cSAC

South Dublin Bay SAC lies south of the River Liffey and extends from the South Wall to the west pier at Dun Laoghaire. It is a fine example of a coastal system with extensive sand and mudflats. South Dublin Bay is also an internationally important bird site.

Draft Conservation Objectives:

- (a) To maintain the Annex 1 habitats for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status: - Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide.
- (b) To maintain the extent, species richness and biodiversity of the entire site.
- (c) To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

7) South Dublin Bay & River Tolka Estuary SPA

South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA comprises a substantial part of Dublin Bay. It includes the intertidal area between the River Liffey and Dun Laoghaire, and the estuary of the River Tolka to the north of the River Liffey, as well as Booterstown Marsh. A portion of the shallow marine waters of the bay is also included.

The site is an important site for wintering waterfowl, being an integral part of the internationally important Dublin Bay complex. It is of international importance for Light-bellied Brent Goose and of national importance for nine other waterfowl species. As an autumn tern roost, it is also of international importance. Furthermore, the site supports a nationally important colony of Common Tern. All of the tern species using the site are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, as are Bartailed Godwit and Mediterranean Gull.

Main Conservation Objective:

To maintain the special conservation interests for the SPA at favourable conservation status – Light-bellied Brent Goose, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Knot, Sanderling, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Roseate Tern, Common Tern, Arctic Tern, and Wetland and Waterbirds.

## **5 Identification and Description of Individual and Cumulative Impacts Likely to Result**

### **5.1 Individual Impacts**

A potential hydrological link is identified as being the primary source-pathway-receptor between the site of the proposed scheme and the seven Natura 2000 sites. In addition to a direct ecological link, a potential hydrological link is identified with the proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) site.

Sites 1 to 5 inclusive have no direct ecological or hydrological link to the site of the proposed scheme. Negative impacts on these sites are therefore highly unlikely by virtue of distance of the scheme from each site and the absence of source-pathway-receptors. In summary the primary source-pathway is surface water runoff from the proposed scheme, which cannot impact with any of these sites.

Sites 6 and 7 have direct hydrological links to the site of the proposed scheme via the linkage of the Kilmahuddrick Stream to the Griffeen River and the Griffeen River to the River Liffey. Sites 6 and 7 are located downstream of the proposed Scheme so there may be potential for sediment or pollutants to be carried downstream which may affect these sites.

During the construction of the proposed scheme and during its operational phase it is possible that impacts may occur that are detrimental to the ecology of Sites 6 and 7 via the River Liffey. However a number of factors make this extremely unlikely, namely:

- a) Mitigation measures identified for the construction period will be implemented to ensure the protection and enhancement of the various water courses.
- b) Measures to protection of identified species (e.g. via light control etc.); bat, badger, otter etc, will be implemented.
- c) Measures to encourage and enhance the environment for other species, e.g. enhancement of landscaping.

Sites 6 to 7 inclusive have no direct ecological link to the site of the proposed scheme. These sites however do have a hydrological link to the site of the proposed scheme via the River Liffey as they potentially provide a vehicle for the transfer of negative impacts to these sites downstream, which rely on water quality for the maintenance of their conservation objectives. During the construction of the proposed scheme and during its operational phase it is possible that sediment or pollutants could be carried to Dublin Bay via the River Liffey. However a number of factors make this extremely unlikely, namely:

- (a) An environmental management system will be implemented during the construction stage, which will require strict procedures to be implemented and which will ensure



that no construction material (cementitious material, concrete additives, petrochemicals etc) from the site can be introduced to the water courses.

- (b) No substances from the scheme have sufficient toxicity to impact on the mud-dwelling organisms in Dublin Bay or that can be bio-accumulated by them.
- (c) Even in the very unlikely event of an accident occurring, the dilution of the River Liffey waters when they mix with the flows in Dublin Bay is almost infinite and there is no likely synergy with other compounds in the waters of the Bay which could be detrimental.
- (d) Silt traps and oil interceptors will be installed on the new road drainage network, which will discharge to the local water course.
- (e) A Maintenance Procedures Manual for the completed road drainage system, including procedures for routine maintenance of gulleys, surface water pipes, silt traps and oil interceptors, will be prepared and issued to South Dublin County Council for adoption and incorporation into their annual road maintenance programme.

In summary negative impacts on these sites are therefore highly unlikely by virtue of distance of the scheme from each site and the factors mentioned above.

## **5.2 Cumulative Impacts**

This screening assessment for the proposed scheme indicates there will be no significant impacts arising from the proposed scheme. In relation to potential cumulative impacts from the proposed road scheme with other plans and projects, it is a requirement that each of these will be subject to screening for appropriate assessment to ensure there will be no significant negative impact on Natura 2000 sites. Taken together, adherence to this required approach will ensure that no cumulative impacts will arise from the proposed road improvement scheme.

## **6 Assessment of the Significance of the Impacts Identified on Site Integrity**

No impacts on Natura 2000 sites have been identified in relation to the proposed Grange Castle Business Park Site Access Road.

## **7 Exclusion of Sites where it can be Objectively Concluded that there will be no Significant Effects**

No impacts on Natura 2000 sites have been identified in relation to the proposed Grange Castle Business Park Site Access Road Scheme and therefore all identified sites can be excluded from further stages of the Appropriate Assessment process.

## **7 Conclusion**

This screening report has evaluated the proposed Grange Castle Business Park Site Access Road Scheme to determine whether or not significant negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites are likely to arise by virtue of the schemes implementation. The report finds that the proposed scheme, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall not give rise to significant effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 site.

## **Appendix 1 – List of County Development Plan Objectives and Policies that are Relevant to Water Protection in South Dublin County**

### **Policy LHA 21 River and Stream Management**

It is the policy of the Council to implement a strategy (prepared on a regional basis) for the management of rivers and streams throughout the County.

### **Policy LHA 22 Watercourses**

It is the policy of the Council to protect, maintain, improve and enhance the natural and organic character of the watercourses in the County and to promote access, walkways and other recreational uses of their associated public open space, subject to a defined strategy of nature conservation and flood protection.

### **2.3.4 Strategy: The strategy of the Council for the development of Water Supply and Drainage in the County is as follows:**

- Continue the sustainable development and improvement of the water supply and foul drainage systems throughout the County to meet the anticipated water and drainage requirements of the area.
- Protect surface water catchments and manage catchment areas where appropriate to protect the surface water drainage infrastructure of the County.
- Implement the provisions of national policy and legislation in the control of water pollution.
- Ensure that existing and proposed developments are not subject to undue risk of flooding.
- Conserve treated water by active leakage detection, non-domestic metering and development of infrastructure.
- Actively pursue and resolve water leakage.

### **Policy WD 1 Water Supply and Drainage**

It is the policy of the Council to co-operate with adjoining authorities to continue the sustainable development and improvement of the water supply and drainage systems throughout the County to meet the anticipated water and drainage requirements of the area, in accordance with the recommendations set out in the 'Greater Dublin Strategic Water Supply Study' and the 'Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study', and the proposed 'Dublin Region Water Services Strategic Plan' when adopted.

### **Policy WD 3 Quality of Surface Water and Groundwater**

It is the policy of the Council that the ongoing development of the County shall be undertaken in such a way as not to compromise the quality of surface water (and associated habitats and species) and groundwater.

**Policy WD 4 Soil and Groundwater Contamination**

It is the policy of the Council to require adequate and appropriate investigations to be carried out into the nature and extent of any soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development work, where brownfield development is proposed.

**Policy WD 5 Water Quality Management Plans**

It is the policy of the Council to promote the implementation of water quality management plans for ground and surface waters in the county as part of the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, and in accordance with the policies and objectives and programme of measures of the Eastern River Basin Management Plan and any further amendments.

**Policy WD 6 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

It is the policy of the Council to ensure that all development proposals incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

**Policy WD 8 Water Pollution Abatement Measures**

It is the policy of the Council to implement the provisions of water pollution abatement measures in accordance with National and EU Directives and legislative requirements in conjunction with other agencies as appropriate.

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