APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

for

Corkagh Park Changing Rooms Pavilion

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ARTICLE 6(3) OF THE EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE

for: **South Dublin County Council**

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

CAAS has been appointed by South Dublin County Council to prepare this Screening Report in support of the Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the proposed changing rooms pavilion at Corkagh Park in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the "Habitats Directive").

1.2 Legislative context

The Habitats Directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. The overall aim of the Habitats Directive is to maintain or restore the "favourable conservation status" of habitats and species of European Community Interest. These habitats and species are listed in the Habitats and Birds Directives (Habitats Directive as above and Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds) with Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated to afford protection to the most vulnerable of them. These two designations are collectively known as European sites. Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect such sites. Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for AA. These requirements are implemented in the Republic of Ireland by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Article 6(3) of the 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'.*

The AA process relates to the protection of species listed in Annex I and Annex II of the Habitats Directive which form the Natura 2000 network (Article 3(1)). Species breeding and resting places of species listed in Annex IV of the Habitats Directive are nationally protected in Ireland as per Articles 15 and 16 of the Habitats Directive. The species listed in Annex IV do not form part of the Natura 2000 network as they are not mentioned in Article 3(1) of the Directive which defines the Natura 2000 network.

Article 3(1) of the Habitats Directive States:

> *'A coherent European ecological network of special areas of conservation shall be set up under the title Natura 2000. This network, composed of sites hosting the natural habitat types listed in Annex I and habitats of the species listed in Annex II, shall enable the natural habitat types and the species' habitats concerned to be maintained or, where appropriate, restored at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'.*

AA is an assessment of the potential for adverse or negative effects of a plan or project, in combination with other plans or projects, on the conservation objectives of a European site. These sites consist of SACs and SPAs and provide for the protection and long-term survival of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

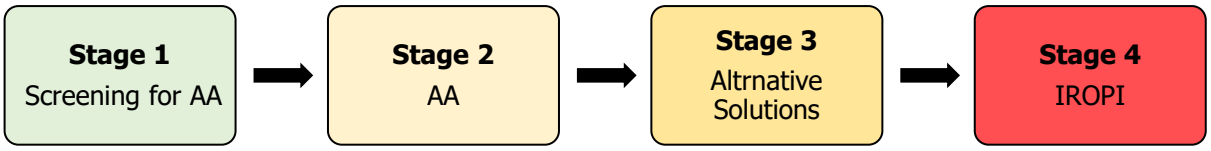
1.3 Approach

This AA screening is based on best scientific knowledge and has utilised ecological and hydrological expertise. In addition, a detailed online review of published scientific literature and 'grey' literature was conducted. This included a detailed review of the National Parks and Wildlife Website including mapping and available reports for relevant sites and in particular sensitive qualifying interests/special conservation interests described and their conservation objectives. The EPA Envision map viewer (www.epa.ie) and available reports were also reviewed, as was the NPWS (2013) publication *"The Status of Protected EU Habitats and Species in Ireland"*.

The ecological desktop study completed for the AA screening of the proposed changing rooms comprised the following elements:

- Identification of European sites within 15km of the site with identification of potential pathways to specific sites (if relevant) greater than 15km from the proposed project boundary;
- Review of the NPWS site synopses and conservation objectives for European sites within 15km and for which potential pathways from the proposed site have been identified; and
- Examination of available information on protected species.

There are four main stages in the AA process as follow:



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

Stage Two: Appropriate Assessment
The consideration of the impact on the integrity of the European site of the project or plan, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans, with respect to the site's structure and function and its conservation objectives. Additionally, where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of the potential mitigation of those impacts. If adequate mitigation is proposed to ensure no significant adverse impacts on European sites, then the process may end at this stage. The details of stage two assessments are formalised in Natura Impact Statements (NIS) reports which support the overall AA process. However, if the likelihood of significant impacts remains, then the process must proceed to Stage Three.

Stage Three: Assessment of alternative solutions
The process that examines alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project or plan that avoids adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site.

Stage Four: Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain
An assessment of compensatory measures where, in the light of an assessment of imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), it is deemed that the project or plan should proceed.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. This approach aims to avoid any impacts on European sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan or project making process and avoiding such impacts. Second, the approach involves the application of mitigation measures, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If potential impacts on European sites remain, and no further practicable mitigation is possible, the approach requires the consideration of alternative solutions. If

no alternative solutions are identified and the plan or project is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effects.

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

- Source(s) – e.g. pollutant run-off from proposed works;
- Pathway(s) – e.g. groundwater connecting to nearby qualifying wetland habitats and
- Receptor(s) – qualifying aquatic habitats and species of European sites.

In the interest of this report, receptors are the ecological features that are known to be utilised by the qualifying interests or special conservation interests of a European site. A source is any identifiable element of the proposed sports facility provision that is known to interact with ecological processes. The pathways are any connections or links between the source and the receptor. This report provides information on whether direct, indirect and cumulative adverse effects could arise from the proposed sports facility.

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

- *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment*, Heritage and Local Government, 2009.
- *Commission Notice: Managing Natura 2000 sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC*, European Commission 2018.
- *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, European Commission Environment DG, 2002.
- *Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, European Commission, 2000.

1.4 Author details

Andrew Torsney is a Senior Ecologist with 6 years' experience working on major national and local scale projects. Andrew graduated from University College Dublin in 2011 with a B.Sc. degree in Zoology and obtained Master's degree in Biodiversity and Conservation from the University of Leeds in 2012. He has a range of ecological skills which include habitat mapping, ecological surveying, data interpretation and report writing. Andrew is a vegetative plant specialist, who has a wealth of experience classifying riparian habitats and identifying rare floral species. Andrew has a vast knowledge of riparian and freshwater ecosystems and undertakes freshwater surveys regularly. Andrew holds 4 national protected species licences and has a lot of experience optioning surveying licences for aquatic species such as the white clawed crayfish which is a qualifying feature of both the Lower River Suir and the River Barrow and River Nore SAC's. He is also a Bat specialist with a wealth of experience, in acoustic surveying and monitoring of bats. Throughout Andrews's career he has worked on a number of large-scale multifaceted projects such as the Killaloe to Dublin water supply project NIS. For this work, Andrew designed and oversaw all ecological field work relating to the Environmental Impact Assessment and AA.

2 Description of the proposed Corkagh Park Changing Rooms Pavilion

2.1 Site context

The proposed site is located in Corkagh Park in the outskirts of Clondalkin, lying North of the N7 and East of the R136 Outer Ring Road. Formerly part of Corkagh Demesne, Corkagh Park, comprising approximately 120 acres, stretches West of Clondalkin town. The Park provides many amenities and activities to the area such as playparks, fairy woods, a rose garden, a petting farm, sports facilities, areas for walking and jogging, a cycle track, fishing and a picnic area. The proposed development is for a single-storey changing rooms pavilion, on site of an existing driveway and carpark. The site is located on western most point of the park, adjacent to the Grange Castle Golf Club.

2.2 Details of proposed development

The proposed development consists of one single-storey changing rooms pavilion.

The key elements include:

- One single-storey changing pavilion consisting of six team changing rooms each with one toilet/shower area, two club storage areas, one official's changing area with toilet and wash facilities, and one plant room, all with individual access;
- Ancillary landscaping works; and
- Additional necessary ancillary works in adjacent areas including foul and surface drainage connections to existing sewers at Leisure Centre.

The nature and extent of the proposed development is described in the accompanying drawings and other Part VIII documents. This AA Screening Report should be read in conjunction with the drawings and other documents.

3 Screening for Appropriate Assessment

3.1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

> "The integrity of a site involves its ecological functions. The decision as to whether it is adversely affected should focus on and be limited to the site's conservation objectives."

Favourable conservation status of a habitat is achieved when:

- its natural range, and area it covers within that range, are stable or increasing;
- the specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future; and
- the conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The favourable conservation status of a species is achieved when:

- population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats;
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future; and
- there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

3.2 Identification of relevant European sites

This section of the screening process describes the European sites which exist within the Zone of Influence (ZOI) of the site. The Department of the Environment (2009) Guidance on AA recommends a 15km buffer zone to be considered. A review of all sites within the ZOI has allowed a determination to be made that in the absence of significant hydrological links the characteristics of the proposed changing rooms pavilion will not impose effects beyond the 15km ZOI.

European sites that occur within 15km of the proposed sports facility are listed in Table 3.1 and illustrated in Figure 3.1 below. Details on the specific QIs and SCIs of each European site are also identified in Table 3.1 as well as site-specific threats and vulnerabilities of each of the sites.

In order to determine the potential for effects from the proposal, information on the qualifying features, known vulnerabilities and threats to site integrity pertaining to any potentially affected European sites was reviewed. Background information on threats to individual sites and vulnerability of habitats and species that was used during this assessment included the following:

- Ireland's Article 17 Report to the European Commission "Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland" (NPWS, 2013);
- Site Synopses[1]; and
- NATURA 2000 Standard Data Forms[1].

The assessment takes consideration of the SSCOs of each of the sites within the ZOI. Since the conservation objectives for the European sites focus on maintaining the favourable conservation condition of the QIs/SCIs of each site, the screening process concentrated on assessing the potential effects of the proposed sports facility against the QIs/SCIs of each site. The conservation objectives for each site were consulted throughout the assessment process.

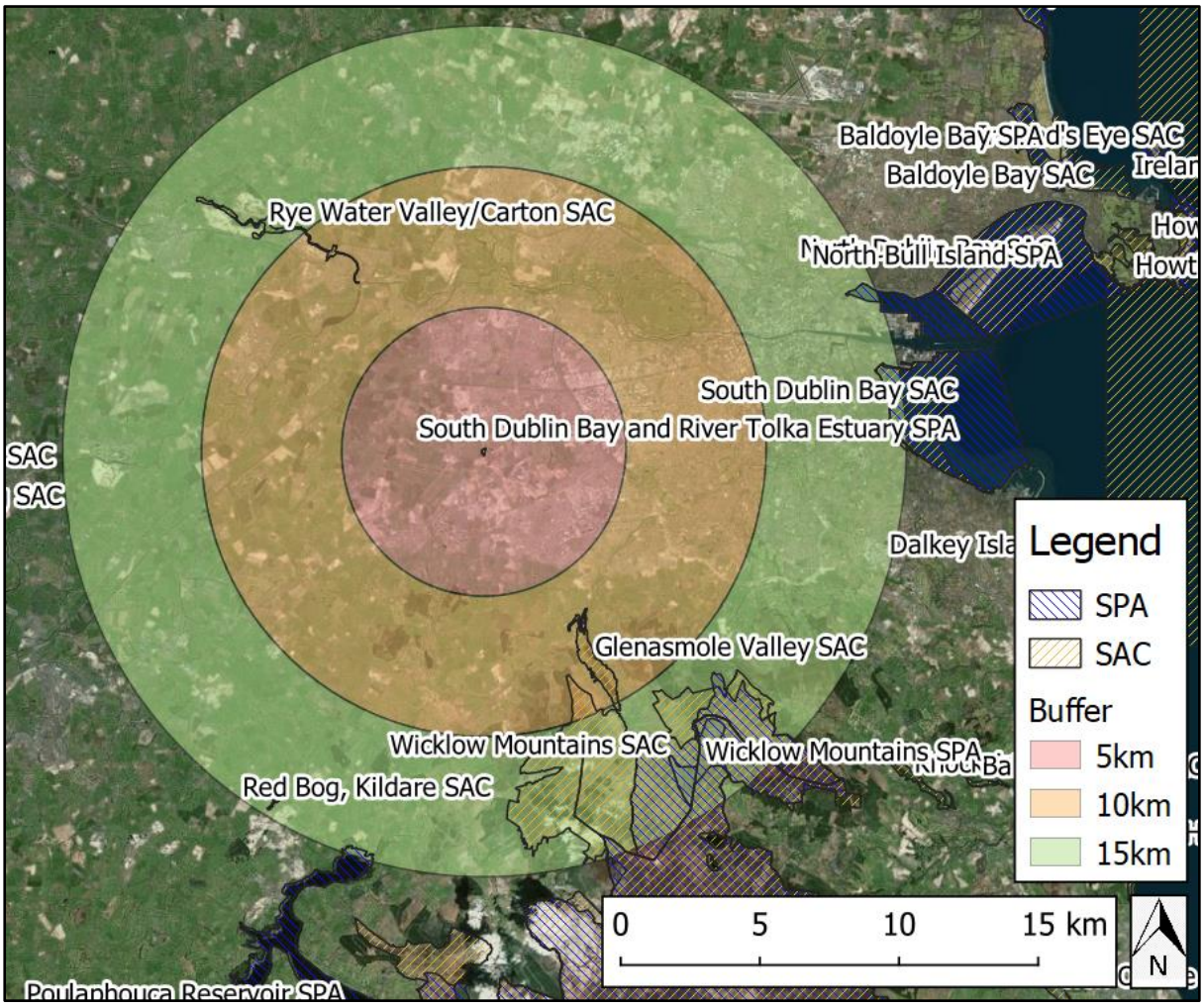


Figure 3.1 European sites within 15km of the site

[1] NPWS (2019); NPWS Database of protected site data and associated documents for each European site; available at https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites

Table 3.1 European sites within 15km of the site (listed according to distance)

Site Code	Site Name	Distance [km]	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interests & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Site Synopsis and Existing Threats or Sensitivities
001209	Glenasmole Valley SAC[2]	6.48	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) [6410] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*) [7220]	Glenasmole Valley in south Co. Dublin lies on the edge of the Wicklow uplands, approximately 5km from Tallaght. The River Dodder flows through the valley and has been impounded here to form two reservoirs which supply water to south Dublin. The non-calcareous bedrock of the Glenasmole Valley has been overlain by deep drift deposits which now line the valley sides. Tufa depositing springs are long-known from the site, along the valley sides, and some have substantial tufa mounds and banks. Wet semi-natural broadleaved woodland is also found around the reservoirs. The lake shore vegetation is not well developed, which is typical of a reservoir. Forestry, agriculture, invasive species, and urbanisation have been identified in the standard data form as threats and pressures for the site. No other site-specific threats have been identified by the NPWS. To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.
001398	Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC[3]	7.19	Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*) [7220] *Vertigo angustior* (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] *Vertigo moulinsiana* (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]	Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC is located between Leixlip and Maynooth, in Counties Meath and Kildare, and extends along the Rye Water, a tributary of the River Liffey. The conservation importance of the site lies in the presence of several rare and threatened plant and animal species, and the presence of petrifying springs, a habitat type listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The woods found on Carton Estate and their birdlife are of additional interest. The standard data form for the site identifies urbanization, grazing, fertilization, agriculture and roads to be the known threats and pressures that are external to the site. The conservation objectives for the sites presented are a generic form.
002122	Wicklow Mountains SAC	7.86	Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (*Littorelletalia uniflorae*) [3110] Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds [3160] Northern Atlantic wet heaths with Erica tetralix [4010] European dry heaths [4030] Alpine and Boreal heaths [4060] Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae [6130] Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) [6230]	Wicklow Mountains SAC is a complex of upland areas in Counties Wicklow and Dublin, flanked by the Blessington reservoir to the west and Vartry reservoir in the east, Cruagh Mountain in the north and Lybagh Mountain in the south. Most of the site is over 300 m, with much ground over 600 m. The highest peak is 925m at Lugnaquilla. The Wicklow uplands comprise a core of granites flanked by Ordovician schists, mudstones and volcanics. The vegetation over most of Wicklow Mountains SAC is a mosaic of heath, blanket bog and upland grassland (mostly on peaty soil, though some on mineral soil), stands of dense Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), and small woodlands mainly along the rivers. Mountain loughs and corrie lakes are scattered throughout the site. Alpine vegetation occurs on some of the mountain tops, notably in the Lugnaquilla area, and also

[2] NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Glenasmole Valley SAC [001209]. Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
[3] NPWS (2018) Conservation objectives for Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC [001398]. Generic Version 6.0. Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Site Code	Site Name	Distance [km]	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interests & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Site Synopsis and Existing Threats or Sensitivities
			Blanket bogs (* if active bog) [7130] Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (*Androsacetalia alpinae* and *Galeopsietalia ladani*) [8110] Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8210] Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation [8220] Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles [91A0] *Lutra lutra* (Otter) [1355]	on exposed cliffs and scree slopes elsewhere in the site. The most common land use is traditional sheep grazing, but others include turf cutting, mostly hand-cutting but some machine-cutting also occurs. Peat erosion is frequent on the peaks. This may be a natural process, but is likely to be accelerated by activities such as grazing. Recreational pressure, human disturbance effects, hydrological interactions, agriculture, invasive species and landslides are known threats/pressures identified in the standard data form for the site. To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) and Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds in Wicklow Mountains SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets: Area, Distribution, 'typical' species, Vegetation Composition/Structure, Hydrological Characteristics, Water Quality, Water Nutrient/Chemical Composition, Lake Substratum, Community Dynamics/Abundance of Algae Macrophytes, Acid Status, Turbidity, Fringe Habitat Area & Condition.To restore the favourable conservation condition of European dry heaths, Species-rich Nardus grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and sub-mountain areas, in Continental Europe) and Alpine and Boreal heaths in Wicklow Mountains SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets: Area, Distribution, Ecosystem Functionality, Community Dynamics, Composition/Structure, Distinctiveness.To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae in Wicklow Mountains SAC, which is defined by the following list of attributes and targets: Area. Distribution, Structure, Soil Toxicity, Vegetation Composition/Structure.
004040	Wicklow Mountains SPA	10.47	Merlin (*Falco columbarius*) [A098] Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*) [A103]	This is an extensive upland site, comprising a substantial part of the Wicklow Mountains. Most of the site is in Co. Wicklow, but a small area lies in Co. Dublin. Exposed rock and scree are features of the site. The predominant habitats present are blanket bog, heaths and upland grassland. Traditionally a ground-nesting species, Merlin in the Wicklow Mountains are usually found nesting in old crows' nests in conifer plantations. The open peatlands provide excellent foraging habitat for Merlin with small birds such as Meadow Pipit being their main prey. The cliffs and crags within the site also provide ideal breeding locations for Peregrine. Agriculture, recreation, roads and peat extraction are known threats/pressures identified in the standard data form for the site. No other site-specific threats have been identified by the NPWS. To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species

Site Code	Site Name	Distance [km]	Sensitive Receptors (Qualifying Interests & Special Conservation Interests) [including the relevant code for the qualifying feature]	Site Synopsis and Existing Threats or Sensitivities
				listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.
0000397	Red Bog, Kildare SAC[4]	13.86	Transition mires and quaking bogs [7140]	Red Bog, Kildare is located 3 km north of the village of Blessington in east Co. Kildare, close to the boundary with Co. Wicklow. It comprises a wetland complex of lake, fen and bog situated in a hollow between ridges of glacially-deposited material and underlain by rocks of Ordovician age. Agriculture, fishing, urbanisation and sand/gravel extraction are the known threats and pressures identified in the standard data form for the site.
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA[5]	14.23	Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) [A046] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A130] Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [A137] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141] Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [A143] Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [A144] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162] Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) [A192] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) [A194] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	The 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 standard data form for the site identifies fishing, eutrophication, nautical sports and discharges to be the known threats and pressures that are external to the site. The conservation objectives for the site relate to population dynamics and distribution (seasonal and spatial) for all species. For some of the species the prey availability, connectivity, breeding sites and trophic structure are key attributes of the conservation objectives.
000210	South Dublin Bay SAC[6]	14.23	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]	This site lies south of the River Liffey in Co. Dublin, and extends from the South Wall to the west pier at Dun Laoghaire. It is an intertidal site with extensive areas of sand and mudflats. The sediments are predominantly sands but grade to sandy muds near the shore at Merrion Gates. The main channel which drains the area is Cockle Lake. The standard data form for the site identifies human disturbances, roads, fishing and accumulation of organic material to be the known threats and pressures that are external to the site. The conservation objectives focus on the community composition and distribution of the available habitats.

[4] NPWS (2019) Conservation Objectives: Red Bog, Kildare SAC 000397. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.
[5] 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.
[6] NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

3.3 Assessment criteria

3.3.1 Is the project necessary to the management of European sites?

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

The primary purpose of the proposed sports facility is not the nature conservation management of the sites, but to provide a changing rooms facility in Corkagh Park. Therefore, the proposed sports facility is not considered by the Habitats Directive to be directly connected with or necessary to the management of European designated sites.

3.3.2 Elements of the proposed development with potential to give rise to effects

The proposed sports facility provides for development of infrastructure for indoor changing facilities and associated paving. Therefore, construction phase elements of the proposed sports facility have potential to introduce effects such as alteration to hydrological characteristics, air quality and/or indirect disturbance effects due to noise/vibrations. These effects are examined below in relation to the sensitive receptors of each of the European sites identified with regard to their conservation objectives and the potential pathways for effects. The operational phase elements of the proposed project will introduce low levels of disturbance effects such as noise, however light pollution introduces a potential long-term source for effects to the local area.

3.3.3 Identification of potential effects and screening of sites

This section documents the final stage of the screening process. It has used the information collected on the sensitivity of each European site and describes any potential effects to the integrity of European sites resulting from the proposed sports facility. This assumes the absence of any controls, conditions, or mitigation measures. In determining the potential for effects, a number of factors have been taken into account. Firstly, the sensitivity and reported threats to the European site. Secondly, the individual elements of the proposed sports facility and the potential effect they may cause to the site were considered. The elements of the proposed sports facility with potential to cause effect to the integrity of European sites are presented in Table 3.2 below.

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

- Where it can be shown that there are significant pathways such as hydrological links between activities of the proposed sports facility, and the site to be screened;
- Where the site is located at such a distance from proposed sports facility that effects are not foreseen; and
- Where it is that known threats or vulnerabilities at a site cannot be linked to potential impacts that may arise from the proposed sports facility.

3.4 Characterising potential significant effects

The following parameters are described when characterising impacts (following guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Environmental Protection Agency and National Roads Authority):

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

Magnitude - Magnitude measures the size of an impact, which is described as high, medium, low, very low or negligible.

Extent - The area over which the impact occurs – this should be predicted in a quantified manner.

Duration - The time for which the effect is expected to last prior to recovery or replacement of the resource or feature.

- Temporary: Up to 1 Year;
- Short Term: The effects would take 1-7 years to be mitigated;
- Medium Term: The effects would take 7-15 years to be mitigated;
- Long Term: The effects would take 15-60 years to be mitigated; and
- Permanent: The effects would take 60+ years to be mitigated.

Likelihood – The probability of the effect occurring taking into account all available information.

- Certain/Near Certain: >95% chance of occurring as predicted;
- Probable: 50-95% chance as occurring as predicted;
- Unlikely: 5-50% chance as occurring as predicted; and
- Extremely Unlikely: <5% chance as occurring as predicted.

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management guidelines for ecological impact assessment (2016) define: an ecologically significant impact as an impact (negative or positive) on the integrity of a defined site or ecosystem and/or the conservation status of habitats or species within a given geographic area; and the integrity of a site as the coherence of its ecological structure and function, across its whole area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it was classified.

The Habitats Directive requires the focus of the assessment at this stage to be on the integrity of the site as indicated by its Conservation Objectives. It is an aim of NPWS to draw up conservation management plans for all areas designated for nature conservation. These plans will, among other things, set clear objectives for the conservation of the features of interest within a site.

SSCOs have been prepared for a number of European sites. These detailed SSCOs aim to define favourable conservation condition for the qualifying habitats and species at that site by setting targets for appropriate attributes which define the character habitat. The maintenance of the favourable condition for these habitats and species at the site level will contribute to the overall maintenance of favourable conservation status of those habitats and species at a national level.

> ***Favourable conservation status*** *of a* ***species*** *can be described as being achieved when: 'population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.'*
>
> ***Favourable conservation status*** *of a* ***habitat*** *can be described as being achieved when: 'its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable'.*

Generic Conservation Objectives for cSACs have been provided as follows:

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected.

One generic Conservation Objective has been provided for SPAs as follows:

- To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA.

EC guidance[7] outlines the types of effects that may affect European sites. These include effects from the following activities:

- Land take
- Resource Requirements (Drinking Water Abstraction Etc.)
- Emissions (Disposal to Land, Water or Air)
- Excavation Requirements
- Transportation Requirements
- Duration of Construction, Operation, Decommissioning

In addition, the guidance outlines the following likely changes that may occur at a designated site, which may result in effects on the integrity and function of that site:

- Reduction of Habitat Area
- Disturbance to Key Species
- Habitat or Species Fragmentation
- Reduction in Species Density
- Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality Etc.)
- Climate Change

The elements detailed above were considered with specific reference to each of the European sites identified in Section 3.3.2.

3.4.1 Land take

The nearest European site is 6.48km from the site of the proposed development (Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1). No Annex I habitats or Annex II species were identified on site; therefore, there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect.

3.4.2 Resource requirements (drinking water abstraction etc.)

The pavilion will have very low resource requirements beyond the materials for construction and therefore effects in this regard will be negligible. Therefore, there will be no interactions with resources necessary for the maintenance of the ecological integrity of any European sites.

3.4.3 Emissions (to Land, Water or Air)

Foul and surface drainage will be accommodated via connection to existing sewers. Which is serviced by Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant which operates under and EPA granted wastewater discharge license which is subject to its own AA procedures. For other emissions such as air and surface water discharge the closest ecological receptor with pathways to indirect pathways to European sites is the Camac Stream, directly adjacent to the proposed development. Construction phase elements of the plan may give rise to increased temporary site effects such as noise or contamination due to dust. Given the distance between the closest European site and the development, combined with the relatively small scale of the development, these effects are determined to be negligible.

3.4.4 Excavation requirements

There are no major excavation works proposed by the project. There will be small scale temporary excavations in relation to artificial surfaces and the infrastructure elements such as the sports facility building. The closest stream to the proposed development is Camac Stream, directly adjacent to the proposed development. This is a tributary to the River Liffey which enters Dublin Bay more than 15km downstream. There is substantial dilution potential introduced by this pathway for the

[7] *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*, European Commission Environment DG, 2001

ecological processes of Dublin Bay. The distance from the stream, indirect pathway to Dublin Bay and the small-scale temporary nature of the development ensure that there are no significant risks to the water quality of Dublin Bay. The projects identified in the surrounding area are also small scale and were subject to their own AA processes (see below for details). In addition to this the surface water drainage will be managed in accordance with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Strategy (GDSDS) with attenuation in soft areas where possible (as per the South Dublin County Development Plan). Therefore, these effects are determined to be negligible.

3.4.5 Transportation requirements

There will be a minor temporary increase in traffic during the construction phase and increased operational traffic. However, these effects are considered to be negligible with regard to European sites due to the distances observed and indirect hydrological connectivity identified (detailed above).. In addition to this the surface water drainage will be managed in accordance with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Strategy (GDSDS) with attenuation in soft areas where possible (as per the South Dublin County Development Plan. Therefore, these effects are determined to be negligible.

3.4.6 Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning

The construction of the proposed project is estimated to take 12 months, with all works to be completed within this time. The development will be a permanent feature with no decommissioning phase. The duration of the construction and operational phases will have no effects on European sites given the distances observed and indirect hydrological connectivity identified (detailed above). In addition to this the surface water drainage will be managed in accordance with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Strategy (GDSDS) with attenuation in soft areas where possible (as per the South Dublin County Development Plan). Therefore, these effects are determined to be negligible.

3.4.7 Reduction of habitat area

The nearest European sites is 6.48km from the site and no Annex I habitats or Annex II species were identified on site; therefore, there will be no effects posed to European sites in this respect.

3.4.8 Disturbance to key species

None of the species and/or habitats identified in Table 3.1 were recorded on site. Disturbance effects due to noise or lighting etc. are localised to the receiving environment/surrounding area. There are no pathways for disturbance effects identified due to the distances between the proposed development and the nearest European site.

3.4.9 Habitat or species fragmentation or reduction in species density

The existing site is an operational sports facility, with amenity grasslands, built structures and boundary treelines in an urban context. No existing habitat corridors from any European sites were identified. Therefore, the proposal is considered to have no potential effects on any European site in this regard.

3.4.10 Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)

The project is small scale and temporary with indirect hydrological connectivity. The closest stream to the proposed development is Camac Stream, directly adjacent to the proposed development. This is a tributary to the River Liffey which enters Dublin Bay more than 15km downstream. There is substantial dilution potential introduced by this pathway for the ecological processes of Dublin Bay. The distance from the stream, indirect pathway to Dublin Bay and the small-scale temporary nature of the development ensure that there are no significant risks to the water quality of Dublin Bay. The projects identified in the surrounding area are also small scale and were subject to their own AA processes (see below for details). In addition to this the surface water drainage will be managed in accordance with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Strategy (GDSDS) with attenuation in soft areas where possible (as per the South Dublin County Development Plan. Therefore, these effects are determined to be negligible.

3.4.11 Climate change

The proposed development is a changing room facility for an existing sports compound. Therefore, there are no climate change drivers identified. Due to the nature and scale of the proposed development, its effects of the proposed development on climate and Ireland's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol are not anticipated to be significant.

Table 3.2 Screening assessment of the potential effects arising from the proposed facility

Site Code	Site Name	Distance [km]	Qualifying features [QIs/SCIs]	Characterisation of Potential Effects[8]	Potential Significant Effects	Potential In-Combination Effects
001398	Rye Water Valley/ Carton SAC	3.98	Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*) [7220] *Vertigo angustior* (Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail) [1014] *Vertigo moulinsiana* (Desmoulin's Whorl Snail) [1016]	Construction phase effects such as dust are known to persist over a short distance (less than 1km), all other effects from the site are identified to be localised. The closest stream to the proposed development is Camac Stream, directly adjacent to the proposed development. This is a tributary to the River Liffey which enters Dublin Bay more than 15km downstream. There is substantial dilution potential introduced by this pathway for the ecological processes of Dublin Bay. The distance from the tributary stream, indirect pathway to Dublin Bay and the small-scale temporary nature of the development ensure that there are no significant risks to the water quality of Dublin Bay. The projects identified in the surrounding area are also small scale and were subject to their own AA processes (see below for details). In addition to this the surface water drainage will be managed in accordance with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Strategy (GDSDS) with attenuation in soft areas where possible (as per the South Dublin County Development Plan. Therefore, these effects are determined to be negligible. The operational phase elements of this project are consistent with existing land use and will not impose effects beyond the site boundary. The small-scale of the development combined with the indirect hydrological pathway and significant dilution potential of the system ensure that there will be no significant effect qualifying interests of the SAC. All of the developments within the receiving environment are also small in scale with negligible effects to water quality. Therefore, no significant in-combination effects are predicted.	No	No
001209	Glenasmole Valley SAC	10.83	Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (* important orchid sites) [6210] Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) [6410] Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*) [7220]		No	No
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka SPA	13.89	Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) [A046] Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) [A130] Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) [A137] Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) [A141] Knot (*Calidris canutus*) [A143] Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) [A144] Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) [A149] Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) [A157] Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) [A162]	Construction phase effects such as dust are known to persist over a short distance (less than 1km), all other effects from the site are identified to be localised. The closest stream to the proposed development is Camac Stream, directly adjacent to the proposed development. This is a tributary to the River Liffey which enters Dublin Bay more than 15km downstream. There is substantial dilution potential introduced by this pathway for the ecological processes of Dublin Bay. The distance from the tributary stream, indirect pathway to Dublin Bay and the small-scale temporary nature of the development ensure that there are no significant risks to the water quality of Dublin Bay. The projects identified in the surrounding area are also small scale and were subject to their own AA processes (see below for details). In addition to this the surface water drainage will be managed in accordance with the	No	No

[8] NPWS (2013). The Status of Protected EU Habitats and Species in Ireland. Overview Volume 1. Unpublished Report, National Parks & Wildlife Services. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Dublin, Ireland.

Site Code	Site Name	Distance [km]	Qualifying features [QIs/SCIs]	Characterisation of Potential Effects[8]	Potential Significant Effects	Potential In-Combination Effects
			Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) [A179] Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) [A192] Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) [A193] Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) [A194] Wetland and Waterbirds [A999]	Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Strategy (GDSDS) with attenuation in soft areas where possible (as per the South Dublin County Development Plan. Therefore, these effects are determined to be negligible. The operational phase elements of this project are consistent with existing land use and will not impose effects beyond the site boundary. The small-scale of the development combined with the indirect hydrological pathway and significant dilution potential of the system ensure that there will be no significant effect to the trophic structure or water quality of the SPA. All of the developments within the receiving environment are also small in scale with negligible effects to water quality. Therefore, no significant in-combination effects are predicted.		
000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	14.88	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]	Construction phase effects such as dust are known to persist over a short distance (less than 1km), all other effects from the site are identified to be localised. The closest stream to the proposed development is Camac Stream, directly adjacent to the proposed development. This is a tributary to the River Liffey which enters Dublin Bay more than 15km downstream. There is substantial dilution potential introduced by this pathway for the ecological processes of Dublin Bay. The distance from the tributary stream, indirect pathway to Dublin Bay and the small-scale temporary nature of the development ensure that there are no significant risks to the water quality of Dublin Bay. The projects identified in the surrounding area are also small scale and were subject to their own AA processes (see below for details). In addition to this the surface water drainage will be managed in accordance with the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Strategy (GDSDS) with attenuation in soft areas where possible (as per the South Dublin County Development Plan. Therefore, these effects are determined to be negligible. The operational phase elements of this project are consistent with existing land use and will not impose effects beyond the site boundary. The small-scale of the development combined with the indirect hydrological pathway and significant dilution potential of the system ensure that there will be no significant effect qualifying interests of the SAC. All of the developments within the receiving environment are also small in scale with negligible effects to water quality. Therefore, no significant in-combination effects are predicted.	No	No

3.5 Other plans and programmes

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive requires an assessment of a plan or project to consider other projects, plans or programmes that might, in combinations with the subject plan or project, have the potential to adversely impact upon European sites. The characteristics of the proposed project are foreseen to have very low effects to any European sites. Therefore, the in-combination effects do not need to be considered, as per the CIEEM 2016 guidelines. However, following a precautionary approach relevant projects within the receiving environment have been assessed. All plans and projects are subject to their own AA processes and therefore the assessment of in combination effects at a local level is undertaken to ensure the small-scale nature of the effects to local environs are not contributing to higher levels of effects; considering the indirect hydrological pathways identified. Table 3.3 outlines projects within the surrounding area from the last 5 years of the proposed site that were considered to have potential to interact with the proposed project to cause in-combination effects to European sites.

Table 3.3 Plans or projects within the ZOI of the proposed sports facility with potential to have in-combination effects

Plan or project	Status	Overview	Possible significant effects from plan or project	Is there a risk of in-combination effects	Possible significant in-combination effects
SHD3ABP-305267-19	Approved	1034 residential units comprising of (578 houses: 449 3-bed & 129 4-bed), 456 apartments: 142 1-bed, 224 2-bed, 90 3-bed), 2 childcare facilities (1 temporary, 1 permanent), 1 retail unit, 1 community facility and all associated site works.	This is a large-scale development which was subject to a full EIA and had its own AA Screening Process undertaken. This AA Screening did not find any significant effects due to the absence of direct pathways and the distances between the sites. This site is connected to the Grand Canal which is a different hydrological pathway than the one identified for this project. Therefore, there are no in combination effects identified.	No	No
SD05A/1047	Approved	Retention of two no. glasshouse structures and one no. packing shed at positions located further south than indicated on proposals previously granted permission Reg. Ref. S95A/0409 together with retention of one free standing sign.	This is a small-scale project with a temporary construction phase and the operational phase will have localised effects that have negligible interactions with the environment.	No	No

4 Conclusion

This stage 1 screening for AA of the proposed changing rooms pavilion shows that implementation of the project is not foreseen as likely to have any significant effects on any European site.

The project is 6.48 km from the nearest European site. The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases as a result of the implementation of the project. There are no direct hydrological pathways to any European sites. Therefore, given the scale of the development and its distance from European sites, the effects arising from these works will be negligible. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the project characteristics, taking account of the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that significant adverse effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interest or the conservation objectives of any designated European site are unlikely. The ecological integrity of the European sites is not foreseen to be significantly affected by the project.

Given the nature of the development, its scale, distance from European sites and absence of direct hydrological pathway to European sites and the localised and the temporary nature of the construction effects, the proposed development does not have potential to cause significant effects in-combination with effects arising from any other plans or projects.

It is concluded that the project is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on any designated European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects. This evaluation is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. Consequently, a Stage Two AA (Natura Impact Statement) is not required for the project.