

## **Appropriate Assessment Report**

### **Assessment of the likely effects of works on the foreshore as part of refurbishment works at the Dun Laoghaire baths site in Co. Dublin on adjacent Natura 2000 sites.**

#### **Project Description:**

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council submitted an application for a Foreshore Lease to carry out refurbishment works at the Dun Laoghaire baths site in Co. Dublin (FS005832)

The aim of the overall refurbishment works is to provide for continuing public use of the area.

This scheme proposes interim works at the Dun Laoghaire Baths site to provide for the retention and securing of the existing Baths Pavilion for use as artist workspaces, a gallery café and for the provision of public toilet facilities. It also proposes the removal of dilapidated structures to the rear of the Pavilion to permit the creation of a new route and landscaping that will connect the walkway at Newtownsmith to both the East Pier and the People's Park. It also proposes the infilling of the existing saltwater pools and the development of enhanced facilities for swimming and greater access to the water's edge by including an extension to an existing jetty and an area for changing. This extended jetty will be linked by new steps to the 'cafe terrace' at the Baths Pavilion and to the pedestrian crossing point leading to the People's Park. The jetty will also be linked to the upgraded paths which will provide access to the East Pier. The proposed extended jetty (approx. 15m) allows greater access for swimmers to deep water which is clear of rocks at all stages of the tide.

It was intended to extend an existing storm water outlet pipe, constructed as part of the Glashule Area Interim Flood Relief Scheme, by 50m out to sea and buried along its route on the foreshore. However, since 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2014 all Local Authority applications relating to foul water were deemed to have been made by Irish Water. As a result, this element of the application no longer forms part of this local authority application and is not considered for the purposes of this report.

The proposed works on the foreshore involve:

- Extension to the line of the existing promontory to create a new jetty to provide enhanced access to water's edge for swimming.
- Infilling of existing saltwater pools

Details and location of the proposed works are shown in Drawing No. 1719/FA/100/01 dated 4/12/2012 entitled "Proposed Site Plan" submitted in support of the application.

#### **Natura 200 sites**

The site of the proposed works on the foreshore is not located with a designated Natura 2000 site.

The site is located within 5Km of the following Natura 2000 sites:

### **South Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code 000210)**

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. This site is a fine example of a coastal system with extensive sand and mudflats, a habitat listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. South Dublin Bay is also an internationally important bird site

As set out in the NPWS (2013)<sup>1</sup> the Conservation Objectives for this site are :

*“To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide”.*

### **South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (Site Code 004024)**

This site 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 a Special Protection Area (SPA) of special conservation interest for the following species: Light-bellied Brent Goose, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Knot, Sanderling, Dunlin, Bar-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Black-headed Gull, Roseate Tern, Common Tern and Arctic Tern. The E.U. Birds Directive pays particular attention to wetlands, and as these form part of the SPA, the site and its associated waterbirds are of special conservation interest for Wetland & Waterbirds.

As set out in the NPWS (2011)<sup>2</sup> Conservation Objectives for this site are:

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

- Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*) - Wintering
- Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) - Wintering
- Ringed Plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*) - Wintering
- Grey Plover (*Pluvialis squatarola*) - Wintering
- Knot (*Calidris canutus*) - Wintering
- Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) - Wintering
- Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*) - Wintering
- Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) - Wintering
- Redshank (*Tringa totanus*) - Wintering
- Black-headed Gull (*Croicocephalus ridibundus*) - Wintering

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<sup>1</sup> NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: South Dublin Bay SAC 000210. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

<sup>2</sup> NPWS (2011) Conservation objectives for South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA [004024]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

- Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*) - Wintering
- Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) - Wintering
- Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) - Wintering
- Wetlands & Waterbirds

### **Dalkey Islands SPA (Site Code 004172)**

The site comprises Dalkey Island, Lamb Island and Maiden Rock, the intervening rocks and reefs, and the surrounding sea to a distance of 200 m. Dalkey Island, which is the largest in the group, lies c. 400 m off Sorrento Point on the Co. Dublin mainland from which it is separated by a deep channel. This site is a Special Protection Area (SPA) of special conservation interest for the following species: Roseate Tern, Common Tern and Arctic Tern. Dalkey Islands SPA is both a breeding and a staging site for *Sterna* terns.

As set out in the NPWS (2011)<sup>3</sup> the Objectives for this site are:

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

- Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*)
- Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*)
- Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*)

### **Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (Site Code 003000)**

This site includes a range of dynamic inshore and coastal waters in the western Irish Sea. These include sandy and muddy seabed, reefs, sandbanks and islands. This site extends southwards, in a strip approximately 7 km wide and 40 km in length, from Rockabill, running adjacent to Howth Head, and crosses Dublin Bay to Frazer Bank in south county Dublin. The site encompasses Dalkey, Muglins and Rockabill islands. The area selected for designation represents a key habitat for the Annex II species harbour porpoise, within the Irish Sea.

As set out in the NPWS (2103)<sup>4</sup> the Objectives for this site are:

- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Reefs
- To maintain the favourable conservation condition of Harbour porpoise

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<sup>3</sup> NPWS (2011) Conservation objectives for Dalkey Islands SPA [004172]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

<sup>4</sup> NPWS (2013) Conservation Objectives: Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC 003000. Version 1. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

### **Assessment of effects on Natura Sites within 5Km of works site**

As the site of the proposed works on the foreshore is not located within the boundaries of any Natura 2000 there will be no direct impact due to habitat loss or habitat fragmentation.

Indirect effects on the adjacent Natura 2000 sites could result from:

- Noise disturbance to bird species listed as Conservation Interests of the adjacent SPAs
- Noise disturbance to Harbour porpoise during construction works
- Impacts on water / sediment quality within the sites as a result of an accidental spill of fuel, cement or other substance on to the foreshore
- Increase in water column turbidity as a result of resuspension and subsequent advection of sediments during construction works

Given the scale and extent of the works any spillages are likely to be minor and localised. Additionally the use of appropriate mitigation measure during the construction works e.g. storage of all materials away from the foreshore, storage of chemicals in bunded areas, no refuelling of plant / machinery on the foreshore, will minimise the risk of accidental spillage on to the foreshore and significant effects on water quality are not considered likely.

Increase in water column turbidity as a result of the works on the foreshore are likely to be temporary, localised and within the natural range of variability caused by current induced sediment resuspension. Significant effects on water quality in the adjacent Natura 2000 sites are not considered likely.

Given the scale and extent of the proposed works on the foreshore and the separation distance between the works site and the adjacent Natura 2000 significant disturbance to birds species or Harbour porpoise is not considered likely. Noise producing works will not be continuous.

### **Natura Sites located between 5Km and 15Km from the proposed works site**

There are a number of other Natura 2000 sites located between 5Km and 15Km from the location of the proposed works on the foreshore. These sites include:

- Baldoyle Bay SAC (Site Code 000199)
- Howth Head SAC (Site Code 000202)
- Ireland's Eye SAC (Site Code 002193)
- North Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code 000206)
- Bray Head SAC (Site Code 000714)
- Wicklow Mountains SAC (Site Code 002122)
- Knocksink Wood SAC (Site Code 000725)
- Ballyman Glen SAC (Site Code 000713)
- Baldoyle Bay SPA (Site Code 004016)
- Howth Head Coast SPA (Site Code 004113)

- Ireland's Eye SPA (Site Code 004117)
- North Bull Island SPA (Site Code 004006)
- Wicklow Mountains SPA (Site Code 004040)

### **Assessment of effects on Natura Sites between 5Km and 15Km of the proposed works site**

Given the terrestrial nature and location of the Bray Head SAC, Wicklow Mountains SAC, Knocksink Wood SAC, Ballyman Glen SAC and the Wicklow Mountains SPA there is no clear "source –pathway – receptor" to link the activities on the foreshore at the proposed works site to these Natura 2000. Impacts, either direct or indirect, are not anticipated or considered likely.

Given the separation distance and the localised nature of any impacts on water / sediment quality arising from the works significant effects on the marine Natura 2000 sites listed above are not considered likely. There will be no direct effect on these sites and no loss of habitat or habitat fragmentation.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the above it is concluded that the proposed works on the foreshore as part of refurbishment works at the Dun Laoghaire baths site in Co. Dublin are not likely to have a significant adverse impact on the Conservation Objectives of any designated Natura 2000 site.

Prepared by Marine Institute, on behalf of the MLVC  
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