

Report

Wicklow Noise Action Plan 2024 -2028

## **Appropriate Assessment Screening**

For Wicklow County Council (WCC).

20 January 2025

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## Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Appropriate Assessment (AA)	6
3	AA Screening Methodology	7
4	Stage 1: Screening	9

## Tables

Table 4-1: Natura 2000 sites	13
Table 4-2: Screening Matrix	18

## Figures

Figure 4-1: Wicklow Area outside of the Dublin Agglomeration Boundary and Major Roads	11
Figure 4-2: SPA Sites within the Study Area	12
Figure 4-3: SAC Sites within the Study Area	13

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Report has been prepared by Logika Consultants Ltd. on behalf of Noise Consultants Ltd for the Action Planning Authority (APA), Wicklow County Council (WCC), and provides Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the Wicklow Noise Action Plan (NAP) 2024-2028.

This document provides information relating to the NAP with respect to its potential for Likely Significant Effect (LSE) upon Natura 2000 sites.

The requirement to prepare a NAP is set for members of the European Union under the Environmental Noise Directive (END) (2002/49/EC), a legal instrument for addressing adverse effects of environmental noise which have been transposed into Irish law<sup>1</sup> and require preparation of strategic noise mapping and implementation of NAPs. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the national competent authority responsible for implementing the END and will ultimately report noise mapping and action planning to the European Commission. Under the Regulations, WCC are responsible for preparing a NAP for the County of Wicklow. The part of the County of Wicklow included in the Dublin Agglomeration has not been considered in the Wicklow NAP.

The purpose of the NAP is to provide a strategic overview of the management of noise issues and effects within the WCC. The NAP aims to develop clear priorities based on detailed noise mapping results, with a view to preventing environmental noise where necessary; particularly where exposure to noise levels can induce harmful effects on human health. The NAP also identifies areas to preserve environmental acoustic quality where the baseline is favourable. The temporal framework for the NAP is 4 years<sup>2</sup>, at which time the noise mapping and NAP will be reviewed, and where necessary revised. Further details are set out within **Section 4** of this report.

The AA process includes provisions for screening, scoping, and assessment, where relevant. The process of AA screening is required as part of the proposed NAP, to ultimately determine whether further assessment is required. Therefore, the overall purpose of this report is to establish whether AA should be carried out within WCC. The outcome of this screening is to determine whether significant negative environmental effects will arise from implementation of the NAP.

This report provides:

- The methodology used to define the scope of the assessment and identify potential effects on Natura 2000 sites associated with the NAP (Stage 1: screening);
- A list of the Natura 2000 sites and their designated features that may be subject to LSE due to the NAP, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects; and
- An assessment (to inform the competent authority's AA) of which LSE may result in an Adverse Effect On the Integrity (AEOI) of one or more Natura 2000 sites, taking in to account the type, timing and securing mechanisms for proposed mitigation.

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<sup>1</sup> The END was transposed into Irish Law by the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006<sup>1</sup> (S.I. 140/2006) (the "Regulations"). The Regulations were revised by the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018<sup>2</sup> (S.I. 549/2018) and amended through the European Communities (Environmental Noise) (Amendment) Regulations 2021<sup>3</sup> (S.I. 663/2021).

<sup>2</sup> The European Commission allowed for one additional year for the Round 4 NAPs, reducing the five-year implementation period to four-years (2024-2028).

This AA Screening Report has been undertaken in accordance with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) guidance (2009)<sup>3</sup>.

## 1.2 Legislative Context

The requirement for AA for plans and projects is outlined in European Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC (the 'Habitats directive' and the 'Birds directive', respectively), which are transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011 (S. I. No. 477 of 2011)), the 'Habitat Regulations'.

The overarching goal of the Habitat Regulations are to uphold or restore the "favourable conservation status" of habitats and species recognised as of European Community Interest. These specific habitats and species are outlined in the Habitats and Birds Directives, with the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) aimed at safeguarding the most vulnerable among them. Together, these designations are commonly referred to as European Sites, also known as Natura 2000 sites.

In Ireland, the habitats and/or species which are the reason(s) for designation of a SAC are referred to as the 'Qualifying Interest(s)' (QI) of that site. In relation to SPAs, the bird species for which a particular site is designated are referred to as the 'Special Conservation Interests' (SCI).

The Natura 2000 network in Ireland is made up of European sites which include:

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC);
- Special Protection Areas (SPA);
- Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC); and
- Proposed Special Protection Areas (pSPA).

Under article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site but that would be likely to have a LSE on such a site, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to an AA. Plans or projects can only be authorised if it can be concluded that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site in view of the site's conservation objectives. The exception to this is where there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) and there are no other feasible alternatives, which would not affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site. In this case the Competent Authority must assess all compensatory measures required to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network.

In fulfilling its role as Competent Authority, WCC is required to apply the precautionary principle to Natura 2000 sites and can only grant adoption once it has been ascertained that the proposed NAP will not adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 site. The word 'likely' is regarded as a description of a risk (or possibility) rather than in a sense an expression of probability.

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<sup>3</sup> Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) guidance (2009) Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities.

## 2 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

AA is a systematic process designed to assess potential Likely Significant Effects (LSE) of implementing plans or projects before they are formally adopted or consented.

The AA process can involve up to four stages:

- **Stage One: Screening:** The process that identifies the likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 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 Natura 2000 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 the integrity of Natura 2000 sites, then the process may end at this stage. 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 Natura 2000 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.

Regulation 42 of the Habitats Regulations requires the competent authority to undertake Stage 1 Screening for AA and where necessary Stage 2 AA of any plan or project. Stage 3 and 4 are included under Regulations 43 and 45 respectively.

A LSE is, in this context, any appreciable effect that may reasonably be predicted as a consequence of a plan or project that may affect the conservation objectives of the features for which the site was designated but excluding trivial or inconsequential effects.

### 2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening assessment is being undertaken concurrently with the AA process to determine whether the European Union (EU) Directive 2001/42/EC<sup>4</sup> (the 'SEA Directive') and European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations S.I.435/2004<sup>4</sup> as amended in 2011, apply to the NAP, and if further SEA beyond formal screening is required.

This AA Screening report has informed the SEA Screening process as this AA Screening does not indicate that there are likely impacts upon a Natura 2000 site of the NAP, either alone or in combination with other projects or plans. On this basis there is no automatic trigger for the requirement of SEA for the plan.

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<sup>4</sup> [S.I. No. 435/2004 - European Communities \(Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes\) Regulations 2004 \(irishstatutebook.ie\)](#)

## 3 AA Screening Methodology

### 3.1 Overview

Guidance on the screening stage has been provided by the Government<sup>5</sup>, who describe it as a simple assessment to check if a proposal:

- is directly connected with or necessary for the conservation management of a Natura 2000 site;
- risks having a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site on its own or in combination with other proposals.

The screening process has two potential conclusions, namely that a project or plan, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, could result in:

- No LSE on any of the QI/SCI of the Natura 2000 site; or
- LSE identified, or cannot be ruled out, on one or more of the QI/SCI of the Natura 2000 site.

Only the second of these outcomes will trigger an AA. If one or more LSE are identified, or cannot be ruled out, it is then necessary to proceed to Stage 2 and undertake an AA.

Only the second of these outcomes will trigger an AA. If one or more Likely Significant Effects are identified, or cannot be ruled out, it is then necessary to proceed to Stage 2 and undertake an AA.

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

#### Legislation

- Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora;
- Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds, codified version;
- European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended;
- Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended; and,
- Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

#### Guidance

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010, including Appendix 5; AA Checklist);
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPW 1/10 & PSSP 2/10;
- 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;

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<sup>5</sup> [Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland \(npws.ie\)](https://www.npws.ie)

- Commission Notice: Managing Natura 2000 sites - The provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC", European Commission 2018;
- Draft Guidance Note for Noise Action Planning for the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018. Draft Version 2, January 2024;
- Guidelines for Good Practice Appropriate Assessment of Plans under Article 6(3) Habitats Directive. Findings of an international workshop on Appropriate Assessment in Oxford, December 2009; and,
- Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC", European Commission, 2000.

### Other Sources

- Format for a Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) for Natura 2000 (DAHG, 2014) [www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/PAF-IE-2014.pdf](http://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/general/PAF-IE-2014.pdf);
- Ireland's Article 1.2 submission to the EU Commission on the Status and Trends of Bird Species (2008-2012);
- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 (DAHG, 2017);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service — Article 17 Status of EU protected habitats in Ireland reporting (NPWS 2013a & 2013b);
- National Parks and Wildlife Service online European Site information — [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie); and,
- The state of nature in the European Union Report on the status and trends in 2013 - 2018 of species and habitat types protected by the Birds and Habitats Directives.

The AA has been undertaken in consideration of European Union (CJEU) judgment on Case C323/17 (People over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta); "it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects [mitigation] of the plan or project on that site."

Other caselaw relevant to Screening are Waddenzee (C127/02), Holohan and Others v An Bord Pleanála (C461/17) and Court of Appeal case C1/2009/0041/QBACF Citation No [2009] EWCA Civ. 1061.



## 4 Stage 1: Screening

Screening is presented in the following Section and includes the following Stages:

- 1) Description of the Plan;
- 2) Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites;
- 3) Assessment of LSE; and
- 4) Screening Statement.

### 4.1 Description of the Plan: Wicklow Noise Action Plan 2024-2028

#### 4.1.1 Background of the Plan/Overview

The Wicklow NAP will replace the current NAP 2018-2023. As required by the END, the NAP seeks to provide a framework for long-term management of environmental noise from transport systems referring to the results of the strategic noise maps to inform assessments of population exposure and harmful effects of noise.

As there is no provision in legislation upon which the actions outlined in the NAP can be enforced, reliance will be made on various other plans and policies such as the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, the National Planning Framework 2040, and the Planning Acts, for their implementation. The NAP also provides the basis for feedback and input from statutory authorities and the public to help inform the NAP in relation to the assessment and management of environmental noise.

#### 4.1.2 Scope of the NAP

The scope of the NAP includes the identification of existing noise emissions, PIAs based on an assessment of harmful effects and details of noise management measures for consideration and evaluation at implementation stage.

The preservation, prevention and mitigation measures included in the NAP, which are applied to areas subject to noise management activities, is also relevant to this assessment. The management of noise within the County of Wicklow focusses on the following approaches:

- **Preservation** – relates to the avoidance of increased exposure to environmental noise where practical, and the preservation of quiet areas in open country.
- **Prevention** – measures which seek to avoid additional measures of the community being exposed to undesirable noise conditions.
- **Mitigation Measures** – relates to the identification and prioritisation of appropriate mitigation measures to reduce and/or mitigate noise levels in areas where they are potentially harmful to human health.

Preservation measures as set out in the NAP includes:

- Consideration of noise impacts at future developments outside of Important Areas and delimited quiet areas in open country, to which measures may be required to manage activities in the context of existing ambient noise levels.

Prevention measures, as set out in the NAP, consist of the following measures:

- Planning guidance - In assessing proposed new residential developments against policies and goals outlined in the relevant Local and County Development Plans, planning applications should be supplemented by an Acoustic Design Statement, if there is the likelihood of an adverse noise impact; and
- Noise and the public realm - Public spaces should be designed to maximise and maintain good air quality, reduce environmental noise and improve the quality of sound, through measures such as:
  - Use of novel environmentally friendly design methods;
  - Pedestrianisation of streets and the use of green infrastructure;
  - Provision of options for active travel along routes other than beside busy roads;
  - Provision of and protecting tranquil outdoor environmental and positive acoustic environments;
  - Encouragement of exercise and other outdoor recreation to improve health and well-being; and
  - Provision of alternative acoustic interventions to create new positive types of sounds that mask environmental noise.

Mitigation measures, as set out in the NAP, include the identification and implementation of priority important areas. Noise mitigation measures within these areas should be evaluated for their effectiveness through the following steps as set out in the NAP:

- Noise measurements at Priority Important Areas (PIAs) - Surveys will be conducted by/on behalf of WCC at an initial stage to guide the assessment of PIAs, to verify that measured noise exposures accurately correspond to the results obtained from the strategic noise maps;
- Reviewing of the assumptions used to identify the PIAs - If there are any disparities between the noise measurements and the strategic noise maps, investigations will take place into noise factors to then compare within the noise models;
- Re-evaluation of PIAs - This is to ensure that the analysis conducted is representative of the 2021 assessment year, and relevant amendments to the model parameters have been incorporated;
- Identification of practical noise mitigation measures - Practical measures will take into consideration potential impact in terms of noise exposure and harmful effects reduction, planning, land-use cost, and available technology. These noise mitigation measures are collectively described as a noise management framework;
- Appraisal of noise mitigation options monetised benefits to health - An assessment of the identified practical noise mitigation measures, the outcomes of which provide the new present value of the noise level change resulting from the assessed mitigation scheme in Euros;
- Financial assessment of noise mitigation measures - The cost of mitigation implementation will be determined over the lifetime of the intervention, encompassing construction and maintenance expenses;
- Cost-benefit analysis - A cost-benefit ratio will be determined based on a comparison of benefits to health versus the cost of the noise mitigation measure. Ratios of less than 1.0 indicate the benefits to health outweigh the costs; and

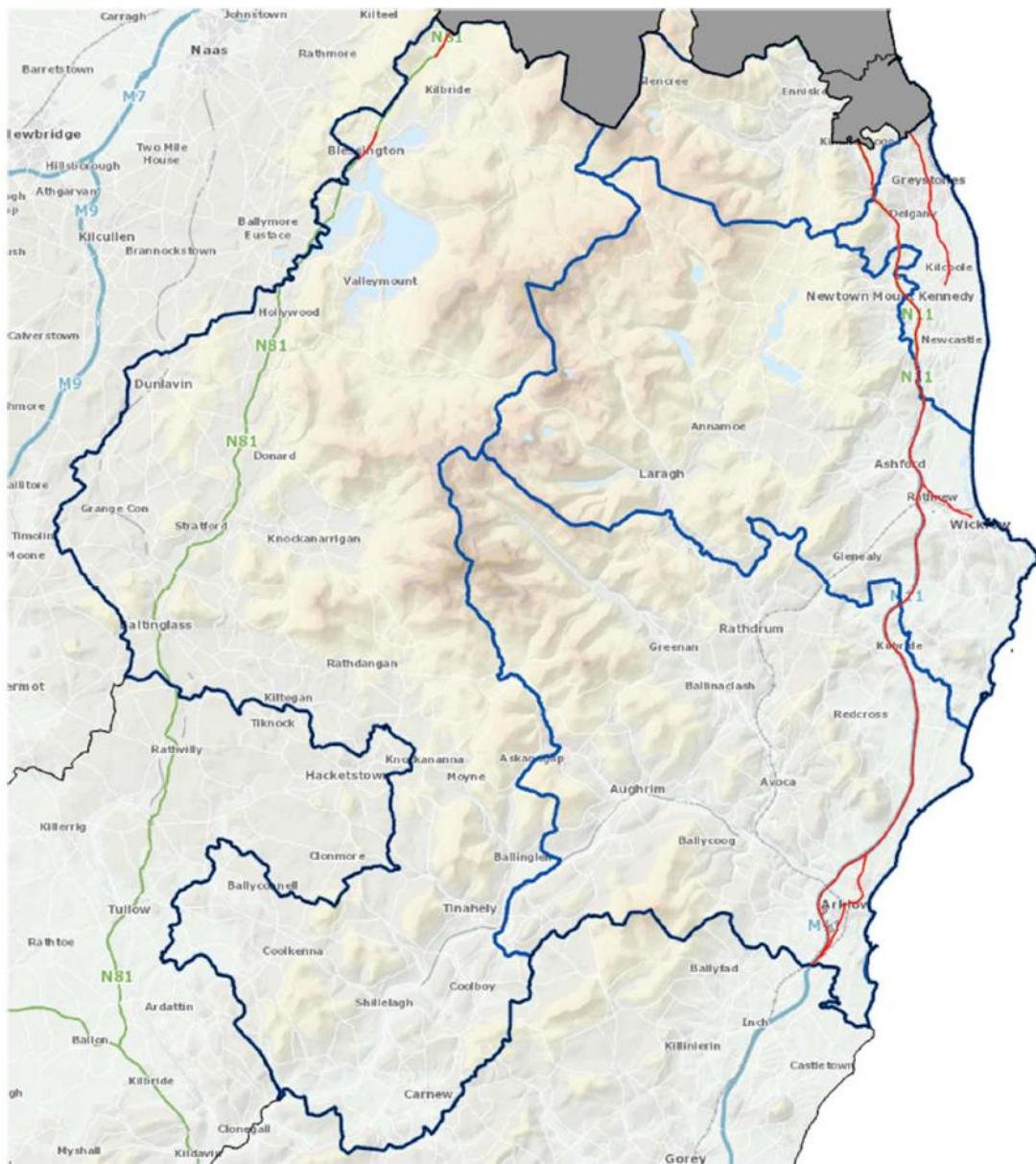
- Recommendation of noise mitigation measure(s) - The most cost-effective noise mitigation measures will be proposed in collaboration with Noise Mapping Bodies and appropriate authorities subject to resources and funding.

How the NAP identifies areas to be preserved for environmental noise quality, is also relevant to this assessment.

### 4.1.3 Description of the Wicklow study area

For the purposes of this study, Wicklow, excluding the Dublin Agglomeration covers an area of 2,009km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 73,789. The total length of major roads included in the strategic noise maps is 72,244m, as shown in **Figure 4-1**. There are no major railways.

**Figure 4-1: Wicklow Area outside of the Dublin Agglomeration Boundary and Major Roads**



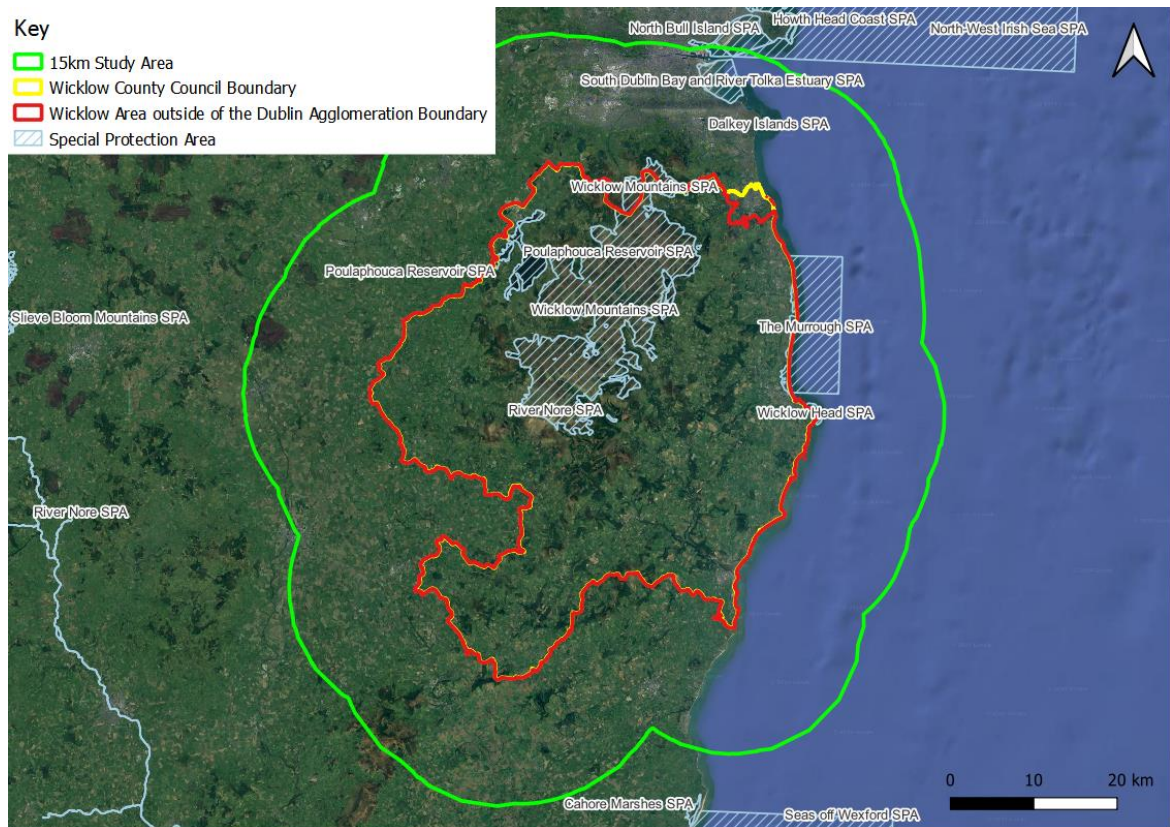
## 4.2 Identification of Relevant Natura 2000 sites

### 4.2.1 Natura 2000 sites

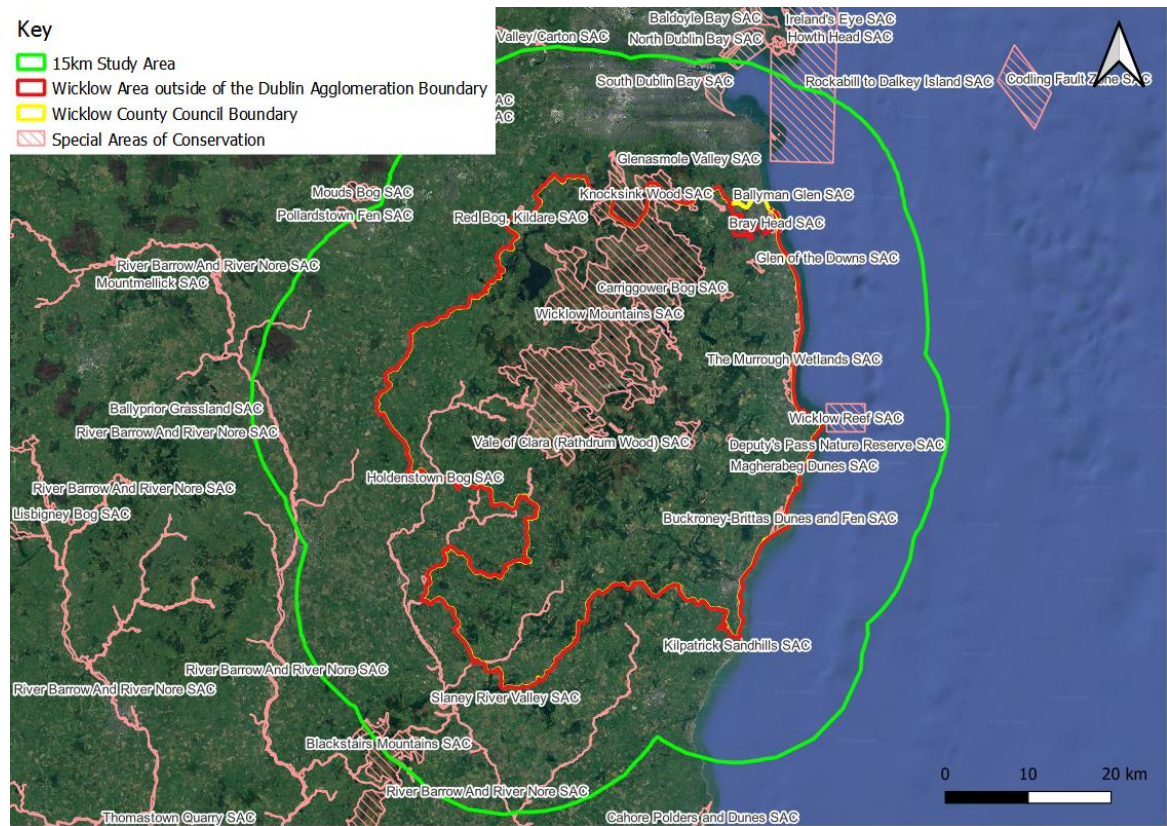
A total of 8 SPAs and 24 SACs have been identified, as shown on **Figure 4.2** and **Figure 4.3** within WCC (excluding the part of Wicklow included in the Dublin Agglomeration) or the likely Zone of Influence (Zoi) which have been considered within this AA. In this instance the likely Zoi is 15km from the Wicklow Area outside of the Dublin Agglomeration Boundary, in accordance with Government guidance.

Further details on Natura 2000 sites identified are provided in **Table 4.1**, including the Site Code and QI/SCI.

**Figure 4-2: SPA Sites within the Study Area**



**Figure 4-3: SAC Sites within the Study Area**



**Table 4-1: Natura 2000 sites**

Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Qualifying Interests / Species of Conservation Importance
North Bull Island SPA	IE0004006	A046 Light-bellied Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> A048 Shelduck <i>Tadorna tadorna</i> A052 Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> A054 Pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> A056 Shoveler <i>Anas clypeata</i> A130 Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> A140 Golden Plover <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i> A141 Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> A143 Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> A144 Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> A149 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> A156 Black-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> A157 Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> A160 Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i> A162 Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> A169 Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i> A179 Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> A999 Wetlands

Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Qualifying Interests / Species of Conservation Importance
South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	IE0004024	A046 Light-bellied Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> A130 Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> A137 Ringed Plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> A141 Grey Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> A143 Knot <i>Calidris canutus</i> A144 Sanderling <i>Calidris alba</i> A149 Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina alpina</i> A157 Bar-tailed Godwit <i>Limosa lapponica</i> A162 Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> A179 Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> A192 Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i> A193 Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> A194 Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> A999 Wetlands
Wicklow Mountains SPA	IE0004040	A098 Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i> A103 Peregrine <i>Falco peregrinus</i>
Poulaphouca Reservoir SPA	IE0004063	A043 Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i> A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>
Wicklow Head SPA	IE0004127	A188 Kittiwake <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>
Dalkey Islands SPA	IE0004172	A192 Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i> A193 Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> A194 Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>
The Murrough SPA	IE0004186	A001 Red-throated Diver <i>Gavia stellata</i> A043 Greylag Goose <i>Anser anser</i> A046 Light-bellied Brent Goose <i>Branta bernicla hrota</i> A050 Wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i> A052 Teal <i>Anas crecca</i> A179 Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> A184 Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i> A195 Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i>
North-West Irish Sea SPA	IE0004236	A001 Red-throated Diver <i>Gavia stellata</i> A003 Great Northern Diver <i>Gavia immer</i> A009 Fulmar <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> A013 Manx Shearwater <i>Puffinus puffinus</i> A017 Cormorant <i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> A018 Shag <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> A065 Common Scoter <i>Melanitta nigra</i> A179 Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i> A182 Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i> A183 Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i> A184 Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i> A187 Great Black-backed Gull <i>Larus marinus</i> A188 Kittiwake <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> A192 Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i> A193 Common Tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> A194 Arctic Tern <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> A195 Little Tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> A199 Guillemot <i>Uria aalge</i> A200 Razorbill <i>Alca torda</i> A204 Puffin <i>Fratercula arctica</i> A862 Little Gull <i>Hydrocoloeus minutu</i>

Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Qualifying Interests / Species of Conservation Importance
River Barrow and River Nore SAC	IE0002162	1016 Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> 1029 Freshwater pearl mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> 1092 White-clawed crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> 1095 Sea lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> 1096 Brook lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> 1099 River lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> 1103 Twaite shad <i>Alosa fallax</i> 1106 Atlantic salmon ( <i>Salmo salar</i> ) (only in fresh water) 1130 Estuaries 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonizing mud and sand 1330 Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) 1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) 1421 Killarney fern <i>Trichomanes speciosum</i> 1990 Nore freshwater pearl mussel <i>Margaritifera durrovensis</i> 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation 4030 European dry heaths 6430 Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels 7220 * Petrifying springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> ) 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles 91E0 * Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> )
Wicklow Reef SAC	IE0002274	1170 Reefs
Deputy's Pass Nature Reserve SAC	IE0000717	91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles
Holdenstown Bog SAC	IE0001757	7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs
Bray Head SAC	IE0000714	1230 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic coasts 4030 European dry heaths
The Murrough Wetlands SAC	IE0002249	1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks 1330 Atlantic salt meadows ( <i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i> ) 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) 7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the <i>Caricion davallianae</i> * 7230 Alkaline fens
Carriggower Bog SAC	IE0000716	7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs
Rye Water Valley/Carton SAC	IE0001398	1014 Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail <i>Vertigo angustior</i> 1016 Desmoulin's Whorl Snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation ( <i>Cratoneurion</i> )*

Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Qualifying Interests / Species of Conservation Importance
Pollardstown Fen SAC	IE0000396	1013 Geyer's Whorl Snail <i>Vertigo geyeri</i> 1014 Narrow-mouthed Whorl Snail <i>Vertigo angustior</i> 1016 Desmoulin's Whorl Snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> 7210 Calcareous fens with <i>Cladium mariscus</i> and species of the Caricion <i>davallianae</i> * 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* 7230 Alkaline fens
Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC	IE0001742	1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) * 2150 Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea)*
Knocksink Wood SAC	IE0000725	7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles 91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) *
Ballyman Glen SAC	IE0000713	7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)* 7230 Alkaline fens
Vale of Clara (Rathdrum Wood) SAC	IE0000733	91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles
Blackstairs Mountains SAC	IE0000770	4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> 4030 European dry heaths
Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC	IE0003000	1170 Reefs 1351 Harbour porpoise <i>Phocoena phocoena</i>
North Dublin Bay SAC	IE0000206	1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines 1310 <i>Salicornia</i> and other annuals colonising mud and sand 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) 1395 Petalwort <i>Petalophyllum ralfsii</i> 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi) 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) * 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) 2190 Humid dune slacks
South Dublin Bay SAC	IE0000210	1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide
Glen of the Downs SAC	IE0000719	91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles



Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Qualifying Interests / Species of Conservation Importance
Glenasmole Valley SAC	IE0001209	6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (* important orchid sites) 6410 <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils ( <i>Molinion caeruleae</i> ) 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*
Magherabeg Dunes SAC	IE0001766	1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) * 2150 Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea) * 7220 Petrifying springs with tufa formation (Cratoneurion)*
Buckronev-Brittis Dunes and Fen SAC	IE0000729	1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines 1220 Perennial vegetation of stony banks 1410 Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> ) 2110 Embryonic shifting dunes 2120 Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) 2130 Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) * 2150 Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea) * 2170 Dunes with <i>Salix repens</i> ssp. <i>argentea</i> (Salicion arenariae) 2190 Humid dune slacks 7230 Alkaline fens
Red Bog, Kildare SAC	IE0000397	7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs
Wicklow Mountains SAC	IE0002122	1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> 3110 Oligotrophic waters containing very few minerals of sandy plains (Littorelletalia uniflorae) 3130 Oligotrophic to mesotrophic standing waters with vegetation of the Littorelletea uniflorae and/or Isoeto-Nanojuncetea 3160 Natural dystrophic lakes and ponds 4010 Northern Atlantic wet heaths with <i>Erica tetralix</i> 4030 European dry heaths 4060 Alpine and Boreal heaths 6130 Calaminarian grasslands of the Violetalia calaminariae 6230 Species-rich <i>Nardus</i> grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe) * 7130 Blanket bogs (* if active bog) 8110 Siliceous scree of the montane to snow levels (Androsacetalia alpinae and Galeopsietalia ladani) 8210 Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation 8220 Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation

Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Qualifying Interests / Species of Conservation Importance
		91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles
Slaney River Valley SAC	IE0000781	1029 Freshwater Pearl Mussel <i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i> 1095 Sea Lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> 1096 Brook Lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> 1099 River Lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> 1103 Twaite Shad <i>Alosa fallax</i> 1106 Atlantic Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> (only in fresh water) 1130 Estuaries 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> 1365 Harbour Seal <i>Phoca vitulina</i> 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation 91A0 Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles 91E0 * Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> ( <i>Alno-Padion</i> , <i>Alnion incanae</i> , <i>Salicion albae</i> )

\* Indicates a priority habitat under the Habitats Directive

### 4.3 Assessment of LSE

A Screening Matrix is presented in **Table 4-2** based on the guidance provided in “Assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites - Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC”.

**Table 4-2: Screening Matrix**

Description of the Plan	An overview of the NAP, including background and context are provided in Section 4.1 of this document.
Identification of Natura 2000 sites	Natura 2000 sites identified within the Zol of the NAP are provided in Section 4.2 of this document.
Is the plan directly connected with, or necessary to the management of the Natura 2000 site(s)?	The Plan is not directly connected with, or necessary to, the conservation management objectives of the above listed Natura 2000 sites in Section 4.2 and therefore further consideration of likely significant effects (LSEs) is required.
What are the individual elements of the plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site?	Noise is a principal source of disturbance for QI and SCI features of Natura 2000 sites. The aim of the NAP is to manage environmental noise from transport systems and is based on the results of the strategic noise maps which informed assessments of population exposure and harmful effects of noise. The results have been used to identify areas within the County to be subject to noise management activities during the implementation of the Noise Action Plan. These are referred to as Priority Important Areas (PIAs). The PIAs will be assessed by APAs to confirm the relevant noise management

	<p>measures for each Priority Important Area, including processing of cost-benefit analysis and health benefits.</p> <p>There are no policies or requirements that would directly offset noise elsewhere that could give rise to LSE to Natura 2000 sites, or the QI/SCI of that site. Therefore, there is no pathway for potential LSE as the plan does not propose any measures which could increase or negatively affect existing noise levels. The reduction in noise in areas near to, or within Natura 2000 sites will ultimately contribute to a beneficial effect of Natura 2000 sites and their QI/SCI features.</p> <p>The potential noise impacts that arise from future development works will be assessed in their own right through Planning and Licensing processes, including through Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments, Appropriate Assessments and application of relevant Guidance relating to noise.</p>
<p>What are the likely effects on the Natura 2000 sites in view of the specific conservation objectives set out for the designating features?</p>	<p>None – the NAP does not provide a specific framework for development; rather it provides a strategy to develop an evidence base that will help to develop measures for noise emissions reduction. As a result, there is no pathway for potential LSE on Natura 2000 sites in view of their conservation objectives.</p>
<p>Describe how the project or plan (alone or in-combination) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site(s).</p>	<p>No LSE effects envisaged. The effects of the NAP are considered to be beneficial, however no pathway for LSE is identified.</p>
<p>Explain why these effects are not considered to be significant.</p>	<p>The proposals in the NAP will seek to support the production of an evidence base that may help the development of measures to reduce noise emissions levels associated with levels of road traffic, rail traffic and at industrial activity sites, including ports in identified PIAs. The reduction in noise at these locations will ultimately result in the reduction or retention of baseline noise emissions within and adjacent to Natura 2000 sites. Therefore, there is no pathway for adverse effect and so it cannot be significant. The reduction in noise emissions will be indirectly beneficial for species associated with Natura 2000 sites (albeit not significantly), as it is well documented that noise can have detrimental effects on a species ability to reproduce (timing, frequency and hatching success) and communicate<sup>6</sup>. It is acknowledged that some species may be habituated to current noise levels and it is considered that their function within the Natura 2000 sites could be improved by reduced noise levels or at least there would be no effect.</p>
<p>Are there other projects or plans that together with the project or</p>	<p>The following other Plans have been considered:</p>

<sup>6</sup> Masayuki., S *et al* (2020) Sensory pollutants alter bird phenology and fitness across a continent. Nature.

<p>plan being assessed could affect the site?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework;</li> <li>• National Development Plan 2021-2030;</li> <li>• Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies;</li> <li>• EU Zero Pollution Action Plan;</li> <li>• TII National Roads 2040 Strategy;</li> <li>• Transport strategy for the greater Dublin area, 2022-2042;</li> <li>• Noise abatement objective for Dublin airport;</li> <li>• Local development plans, including noise policy, planning policy and open areas policy;</li> <li>• Sustainable transport and sustainable urban mobility strategies;</li> <li>• National climate action plan;</li> <li>• Local authority climate action plans;</li> <li>• National Energy Security Framework; and</li> <li>• National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030.</li> </ul> <p>The NAPs present a framework for the identification of PIAs. There are no additional sources for effects to Natura 2000 sites in combination with other projects or plans.</p>
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#### 4.4 Screening Statement

The NAP is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site.

The NAP establishes a framework for identifying and mitigating noise pollution sources within the WCC. Any project resulting from the NAPs must adhere to relevant levels within the National Planning Framework, such as the Wicklow County Development Plan 2022-2028, along with other applicable legislation and policy requirements.

The potential noise impact of development is overseen through the Planning and Licensing processes, encompassing Environmental Impact Assessments, Strategic Environmental Assessments, Appropriate Assessments and adherence to pertinent guidance on noise.

The primary trigger for AA would be if the NAP was likely to significantly affect a Natura 2000 site. However, the NAP elements are not identified as having any direct or indirect impacts on Natura 2000 sites. On the basis of this assessment, there is also no automatic trigger for the requirement of SEA for the NAP.

Stage 1: Screening has concluded that the NAP is not predicted, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, to have LSE upon the 32 Natura 2000 sites identified in Section 4.2.

Therefore, in alignment with the Methodological guidance on Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, it is determined that the NAP will generate no potential for LSE. Consequently, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

The statement as above is still valid following consultation responses to the NAP and associated SEA and AA screenings. Should there be further changes to the NAP, which may affect the conclusions presented herein, then a further screening of the potential for LSE upon Natura 2000 sites will be required.



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