

Grange Castle

A creative ecosystem
where business, people
and ideas can flourish



Strategic Environmental
Assessment Screening

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Document Control Sheet

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1 Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

1.1 Introduction

MEC Ltd have been commissioned South Dublin County Council to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report in support, in respect of the Grange Castle West Masterplan, Grange Castle West, Co. Dublin (see Figure 1.1 for location). The European Union Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) requires an environmental assessment be carried out for all plans that are prepared for certain specified sectors, including land use of which the proposed Grange Castle West Masterplan (the Masterplan) relates. The following Regulations transpose this Directive into Irish law:

- The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004),
- The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436 of 2004) and further amended by
- S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) and S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004 (as amended) state that SEA is mandatory for certain plans while screening for SEA is required for other plans that fall below the specified thresholds. The purpose of this screening report is to determine whether the making and implementation of the Grange Castle West Masterplan) for South Dublin County Council will or will not, lead to significant environmental effects for the plan area and if it will require a full Strategic Environment Assessment.

In deciding whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, regard must be had to the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive, which is reproduced in the Schedule 2A to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as inserted by Article 12 of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004.

The approach to this SEA screening assessment is to assess the Grange Castle West Masterplan against the criteria contained in Schedule 2a of the SEA Regulations. This assessment is presented in Section Three of this Screening Report.

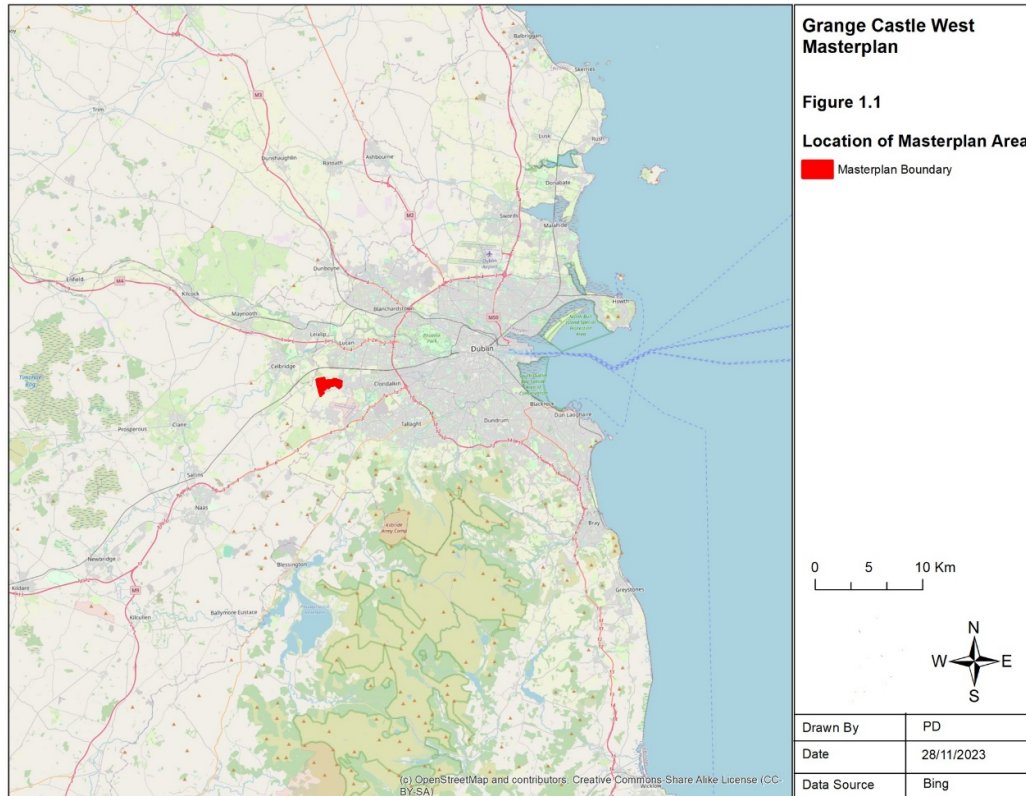
An assessment under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive has also been undertaken in conjunction with this SEA Screening report and should be read in tandem with this Screening Report and the Draft Masterplan.

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1.2 Scale, Nature and Location of the Grange Castle West Masterplan

Figure 1.1. below presents the location of the masterplan lands, which cover an area of approximately 190 hectares. The Grange Castle West site represents an opportunity to expand on the capacity of the existing business park to provide employment for a growing population and drive regional and national growth and investment. Both the physical infrastructure and the management of the park are vital in creating an environment that fosters a sense of community and collaboration among businesses, workers, and visitors.

FIGURE 1-1 LOCATION OF THE MASTERPLAN LANDS



1.2.1 Design Concept

The goal of the Masterplan is to build upon the existing access, services and landscaping strategies to create a sustainable and vibrant extension to the business park at Grange Castle. This development will attract new economic development opportunities to the area, while enhancing the climate resilience of the existing environment and providing a healthy and attractive place to work for a growing local population. The strategy for this will be based on the 'anchor plus' model where development is stimulated by large 'anchor' tenants and smaller businesses and start-ups are supported to encourage collaboration and growth. The framework to achieve this will make efficient and sustainable use of available land, provide versatile and flexible development plots, promote active & sustainable modes of transport, and create a pleasant and recognisable place for the people that work and visit here.

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1.2.2 Overall Concept

Business parks are traditionally characterised as pleasantly landscaped yet isolated places on the periphery of urban centres. They often consist of large single-use compounds on buffered land parcels with limited interaction between businesses. Their workforces are heavily reliant on single occupancy vehicles for transportation and large areas are given over to parking as a result.

Recent times have seen the emergence of a new business park typology that seeks to create a more integrated and well-connected business ecosystem. This type of park encourages collaboration between companies by providing spaces and opportunities for them to interact and trade with one another. Development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-up companies is supported. Interaction with existing local businesses and communities is encouraged. The vision for Grange Castle West is to draw on this concept to create a collaborative business community that is well integrated with the surrounding local area.

1.2.3 MASTERPLAN PROPOSAL

1.2.4 Access and Movement

The existing road and associated paths, service way-leaves, and landscaping will be extended through the site. The road follows a route that maximizes the size of development plots to one side to optimize the flexibility to sub-divide sites. It terminates at the Peamount Road creating a second vehicular entrance to the park. This efficient road network maximises land utilization for business and amenity functions. Paths and trails for walking, running and biking provide important avenues to get out of the office and recharge.

1.2.5 Landscaping

The landscape strategy retains or re-orientates the key hedgerows and introduces new areas of planting and tree coverage around the perimeter and in the more awkward corners of the site. Wildlife underpasses are provided where hedgerows are broken by the main site road. Tree and planting coverage will be increased by filling in awkward corners of the site with dense and diverse pocket forests. Landscaped areas will buffer paths and buildings from vehicular traffic creating safe and pleasant routes for people. This will encourage active movement and exposure to vegetation and water features, boosting health and well-being.

1.2.6 Built Environment

The Masterplan envisions an urban edge created by building frontage along the main spine road and amenity areas to promote interaction between individual sites and the public realm. Buildings address the public realm to provide activation and supervision. Building entrances are accessible from public paths and cars are kept out of the spaces between path and building. Vehicular access is provided by secondary roads located between sites and parking is located within sites, behind the urban edge created by the public-facing buildings. Where it has not been possible to provide frontage, this edge is broken by landscaped spaces and retained hedgerows that aid the strategies to increase biodiversity and exposure to blue and green infrastructure. The intention is to create a more vibrant and people-friendly park.

1.2.7 Masterplan Feature

The landscaping strategy will enhance the climate resilience of the site by integrating and enhancing the natural ecology of the lands. Natural habitats and routes for wildlife will be preserved by the creation of eco-

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corridors through the site. Pedestrian and cyclist routes will feed through the park and connect with the surrounding infrastructure. This strategy will create an attractive, permeable and universally accessible network of routes. Walking, cycling and the use of public transport will be encouraged through this increased permeability.

1.2.8 Masterplan Feature

A 'Mobility Hub' is envisioned close to the main entrance of the park. This will encourage sustainable transport strategies by incorporating facilities such as EV charging facilities and share bike / share scooter stations. The aim of the hub is to reduce reliance on single occupancy vehicle travel to the park by facilitating alternatives.

1.2.9 Masterplan Feature

Developable land will be maximised and plot sizes will be flexible to accommodate a variety of clients. Regular shaped plots will provide the versatility to adapt to evolving needs. The park will target high employment-generating uses and provide opportunities for links between foreign direct investment and small and medium sized enterprises. Large plots aim to attract large-scale multinational corporations that will function as 'anchor tenants' for the park. They will kick-start job creation and offer long term stability for the business ecosystem. They will act as catalysts for the creation of a business community within the park.

1.2.10 Masterplan Feature

The establishment of an Innovation Centre by the lake would provide spaces and resources to attract start-ups and SMEs, adding diversity and creativity to the ecosystem. A landmark building with co-working spaces, meeting places, and accelerator and mentorship programs can offer opportunities for networking, knowledge-sharing and collaboration between the large tenants and emerging SMEs. Central café and restaurant facilities at this location can serve the whole park with the outdoor space around the lake providing a focal point for park events and activities.

1.2.11 Masterplan Feature

A new substation is proposed in the southwest corner which can form an 'Energy Hub'. In addition to the substation, feasibility for the provision of a deep geothermal energy station is being explored at this location. If successful, this would provide a local renewable energy source and act as a model for geothermal energy elsewhere in Ireland. The addition of a visitor centre at a successful energy station would provide opportunities for local residents and visitors to learn about sustainable energy, enhancing awareness, education and community engagement.

2 Overview of environmental baseline

The following Section summarises the current environmental baseline as outlined in the Grange West Masterplan and updated for South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 -2028, and associated SEA Environmental Report. Additional ecological surveys were undertaken by Doherty Environmental in support of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment and these are summarised as relevant below.

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2.1.1 Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna

The lands within the Masterplan area have no formal designations for conservation. The nearest designated site is the Grand Canal pNHA (Site Code: 002104) which abuts the northern boundary of the plan area.

Figure 2.1 provides a Habitat Map of the lands surrounding the proposed road. This habitat map and the description of habitats provided below is based on a review of aerial and satellite imagery and a field survey completed in late September 2017, November 2017, May 2018; June 2018; November 2022 and September 2023.

Four Level 1 broad habitat groups were identified within and adjacent to the project. These include Freshwater, Grassland, Woodland and Cultivated & Built Land habitats. The level 3 habitat types occurring within each of this habitat groups are described under the following sub-sections.

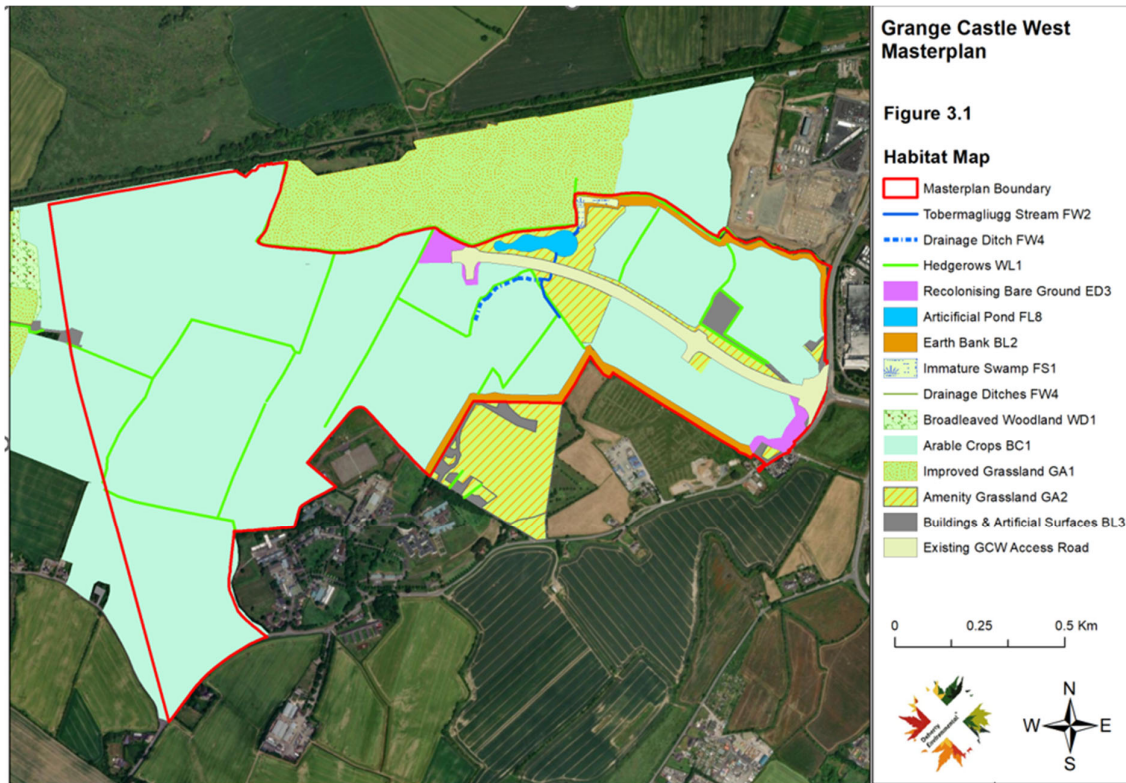
The freshwater habitats occurring within the Masterplan Area is comprised of the Tobermaclugg Stream (also known as the Coldblow Stream), an attenuation pond associated with the Grange Castle West Access Road and an integrated conservation wetland associated with the Grange Castle West Access Road. The Griffeen River occurs to the east of the Masterplan Area while the Grand Canal is located to the north. Drainage ditches, which are ephemeral in nature also occur along field boundaries crossed by the proposed road.

The Tobermaclugg Stream flowing north through the site is representative of a minor lowland depositing stream. The upper stretch of this stream in the vicinity of the proposed road is choked with abundant macrophytes, dominated by *Apium nodiflorum*. This watercourse flows into the River Liffey approximately 4km to the north of the Masterplan Area.

Drainage ditches occur along the majority of the hedgerow field boundaries crossed by the proposed road. However, the majority of these are ephemeral/transient freshwater features and are only likely to convey surface water during times of flood. During all field surveys these ditches were dry and did not support wetland vegetation.

Arable crops (BC1), tilled land (BC3) and buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3) make up the cultivated and built land habitats occurring within and adjacent to the proposed road corridor. The arable crop and tilled land habitats support little native flora and are of low ecological value. The buildings and artificial surfaces habitats comprise existing road surfaces at the eastern end of the alignment and hard standing and access road associated with the halting site to the north of the proposed road corridor.

Figure 2-1 Habitat Map (Doherty Environmental Ltd)



2.1.1.1 Fauna

A range of commonly occurring passerine species were noted within the lands during the site surveys in September 2017, May and June 2018. Herring gulls were also recorded frequently overflying the area. Other species recorded in the vicinity of the site during Grand Canal surveys (ROD, 2015; Tobins, 2015) include whitethroat, chiffchaff, willow warbler, blackcap, tree sparrow, blue tit, great tit, long-tailed tit, bullfinch, chaffinch, goldfinch, greenfinch, swallow, meadow pipit, robin, skylark, song thrush and starling. In addition, three yellowhammers were recorded to the north of the Grand Canal and the proposed road corridor in the vicinity of Adamstown (Tobins, 2015).

Bird surveys completed during the breeding season of 2021, early breeding season of 2022 and during September 2023 recorded the presence of breeding yellowhammer within the Masterplan lands. Yellowhammer is a species of high conservation concern (red-listed).

The EIAR of the EdgeConneX Ireland Ltd. (2019) project, which is located to the north of and adjacent to the Masterplan Area, details of previous ecological surveys completed in the Grange Castle area between 2016 – 2018 were set out with buzzard being the only species noted with respect to this baseline survey data. During the baseline surveys completed for the EdgeConneX Ireland Ltd. project on the 22nd November and 12th December 2018 three species of high conservation concern, namely lapwing, snipe

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and meadow pipit were recorded. Other species recorded of medium conservation concern include skylark and linnet.

Of these species only lapwing represents a species that can be listed as a special conservation interest bird species of SPAs in Ireland. There are no SPAs in the wider area surrounding the Masterplan Area) that include lapwing as a special conservation interest bird species.

Summary baseline data collected between February and April 2022 for a proposed future planning application within the Masterplan Area identified the presence of golden plover within and adjacent to the Masterplan Area. Flocks of up to circa 500 golden plover were observed in flight over the site and on the ground in arable land, outside of and to the north of the Masterplan Area. The summary data provided to South Dublin County Council also included observations of smaller numbers of golden plover, up to 30 individuals on the ground roosting or foraging, within the Masterplan Area.

Similar to lapwing, golden plover is representative of a species that can be listed as a special conservation interest bird species of SPAs in Ireland. Of the SPAs occurring in the wider area surrounding the Masterplan Area the North Bull Island SPA is the only one that lists golden plover as a special conservation interest. The North Bull Island SPA is located c. 19km to the east of the Masterplan Area.

A dedicated otter survey of the Grand Canal, to the north of the Masterplan Area, between the 12th Lock and Hazelhatch was completed between June and September 2016 (FERS, 2016), between June and November 2018 (DEC Ltd.); between September 2021 and January 2022 (DEC Ltd.). The surveys found that the entire stretch survey area, with the exception of a c. 300m buffer zone west from the 12th Lock was used by otters. Spraints were regularly recorded along the canal with tracks/trails and slides also ubiquitous along the length of the survey area. Otters were observed foraging within the Grand Canal on a number of occasions during surveys in 2018 by DEC Ltd.

No field signs indicating the presence of otters along the Tobermaclugg Stream or within the Masterplan Area have been recorded during all baseline surveys completed within the Masterplan Area. The Tobermaclugg Stream is of low fisheries habitat potential and offers sub-optimal foraging habitat for otters.

During non-volant mammal surveys within the Masterplan Area all field boundaries were walked and a search of field sign indicating the presence of badgers (as well as otters) was undertaken along these boundaries. No evidence of otters or badgers or their holts/setts were identified along these field boundaries.

2.1.2 Population and Human Health

The wider Grange Castle west lands are located in South Dublin County alongside the border of Kildare County and are characterised primarily by agricultural landscape. The landuse zoning was varied through the statutory process as a Variation to the South Dublin County Development Plan in 2018 and this has carried through to the South Dublin CDP 2022 -2028.

The landuse zoning is Enterprise and Employment: *'To Provide for Employment and Enterprise related uses.'*

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There are very few residences located in this wider area. The Electoral District (ED) in which the lands are located is the Newcastle ED. The larger of the surrounding South Dublin County EDs which border the Newcastle ED are Rathcoole, Lucan St. Helen's, Clondalkin Dunawley and Clondalkin Village. Two EDs in Kildare County also adjoin the Newcastle ED; Leixlip and Donaghcumper EDs.

2.1.3 Soil and Geology

The geology underlying the lands and surrounding area is dominated by rocks of Carboniferous Age. The site and local area is underlain by Dinantian (Upper Impure) Limestones or 'Calp' limestone that is dark grey to black limestone and shale. The depth to bedrock throughout the lands is generally shallow ranging from 0 to 5 metres below ground level (source: GSI groundwater vulnerability map). The GSI database presently lists no karst features in the immediate vicinity of the lands and significant karstification would not be expected in this type of limestone.

The soil type at this locality is predominantly comprises BminPD - Surface water Gleys / Ground water Gleys Basic and BMinDW soils-Grey Brown Podzolics/Brown earths basics.

The Geological Heritage of South Dublin County Audit¹ identifies Belgard Quarry as the closest geological heritage site east of the lands, a distance of some 4km south east; whilst the geological site of Newcastle Buried Channel is located some 7km southwest of the subject lands.

2.1.4 Water resources including flooding

The plan area is located within the Liffey catchment and the Liffey 090 sub catchment. The draft 3rd Cycle Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment report states:

"To provide context, the Liffey and Dublin Bay includes the area drained by the River Liffey and by all streams entering tidal water between Sea Mount and Sorrento Point, Co. Dublin, draining a total area of 1,616km².. The largest urban centre in the catchment is Dublin City. The other main urban centres are Dun Laoghaire, Lucan, Clonee, Dunboyne, Leixlip, Maynooth, Kilcock, Celbridge, Newcastle, Rathcoole, Clane, Kill, Sallins, Johnstown, Naas, Newbridge, Athgarvan, Kilcullen and Blessington. The total population of the catchment is approximately 1,255,000. The Liffey catchment contains the largest population of any catchment in Ireland and is characterised by a sparsely populated, upland south eastern area underlain by granites and a densely populated, flat, low lying limestone area over the remainder of the catchment basin. This assessment to inform the 3rd Cycle River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) is largely based on WFD monitoring data for the period 2013-2018, which is the latest WFD monitoring assessment period for which all data are available. For this assessment to inform Cycle 3, there are 2 waterbodies achieving High Status, 56 achieving Good Status, 23 achieving Moderate Status and 24 achieving Poor Status. There are 22 waterbodies that do not have status assigned for Cycle 3. All waterbodies must achieve at least Good Ecological status.

There are 2 river waterbodies that must achieve High Ecological Status (HES) in this catchment and there are 2 coastal waterbodies that must achieve High Ecological Status (HES). These waterbodies are listed in Appendix 1. Of the 4 HES Environmental Objective waterbodies, 2 waterbodies are achieving High Status (coastal) while 2 waterbodies are at Good Status (rivers).

There has been an increase of 1 waterbody (Northwestern Irish Sea (HA 08)) achieving High Status and 4 waterbodies achieving Good Status between Cycle 2 and Cycle 3. There are no waterbodies achieving Bad Status. Tolka_030 was Bad in Cycle 2 but improved to Poor in Cycle 3. There is a decrease in 4

¹ Geological Survey of Ireland, 2014

waterbodies (lake and transitional) achieving Moderate Status and an increase of 1 waterbody achieving Poor Status.”²

The Water Framework Sub Catchment Assessment (2018)³ states:

“A predominantly urban sub-catchment as it flows through Dublin City from Lexlip, it displays some of the major issues associated with inefficient drainage systems and problems with misconnections. This is a known major issue for the respective Local Authorities and work is underway to further identify sources of these pressures. Combined sewer overflows have also been identified as a significant pressure in Dublin City Council. This data needs to be reviewed before further work can be prioritised”

The nearest water quality station is the first bridge east of Milltown on the Griffeen River (SO9G010200) and water quality is of poor quality.

2.1.5 Air Quality, Climate change and noise

The Draft Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 for South Dublin is centred around actions that collectively address the four key targets of this plan, which are framed by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and the National Climate Action Plan 2023:

- *50% improvement in the Council's energy efficiency by 2030;*
- *51% reduction in the Council's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030;*
- *To make Dublin a climate resilient region, by reducing the impacts of future climate change-related events; and*
- *To actively engage and inform our communities on climate action.*

The specific climate actions in the Draft Plan have been generated in response to these targets and informed by the baseline emissions profile and climate change risk assessment. The actions are set out in six Action Areas - Energy & Buildings; Transport; Flood Resilience; Nature-Based Solutions; Circular Economy & Resource Management; and Community Engagement.

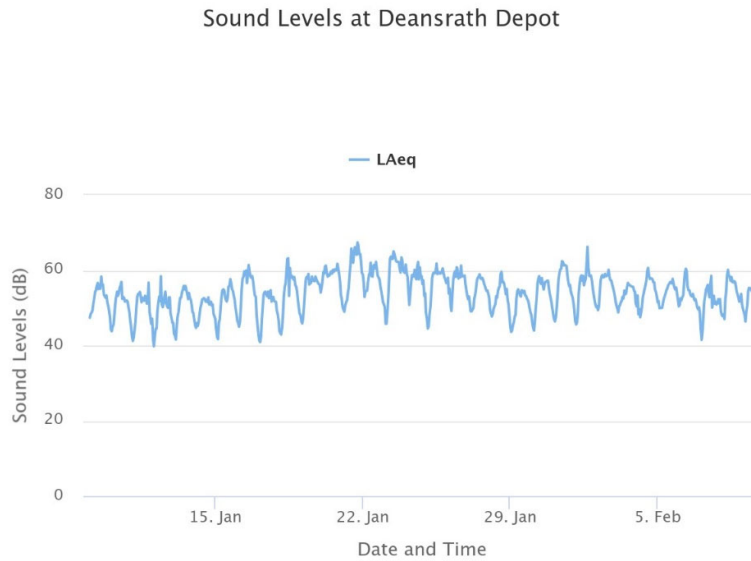
The lands are located with the Air Quality Zone Dublin Region, and the air quality as of 9th February was 'good'.

Noise mapping prepared for road traffic and railway has been prepared for the relevant roads and railway line surrounding the project area. Deansrath Depot records noise levels and the following shows noise levels from 9th Jan to 9th February 2024.

² [Liffey and Dublin Bay \(catchments.ie\)](#)

³ [Subcatchment Assessment \(catchments.ie\)](#)

Figure 2-2 Deansrath Depot, noise monitoring



2.1.6 Cultural Heritage including archaeology and built heritage.

National Monuments & RMP / SMR Sites

There are no National Monuments within or in the vicinity of the Grange Castle Western masterplan.

There is one recorded archaeological site located within the Grange Castle Western Masterplan. The enclosure site was identified in 2015 from aerial photography and added to the Sites and Monuments Record as SMR No. DU017-095 (the site is scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the Record of Monuments and Places, RMP). It comprises a sub-circular enclosure visible as a crop mark on an aerial photograph (Dimensions: c. 56m WNW/ESE by c. 49m NNE/SSW). The site is located in Loughtown Upper Townland (ITM centre-point 700903, 731247). There is also a considerable number of recorded archaeological sites within approximately 1.5km of the Grange Castle Western Masterplan.

There are no architectural heritage constraints within the Grange Castle Western Masterplan, with all of the protected structures and NIAH sites located on the periphery or in the vicinity. Protected structures in the vicinity of the Grange Castle Western Lands include several 18th and 19th century farmhouses, as well as a cluster of structures within the former Peamount demesne, now Peamount Hospital. In addition, there is a number of protected structures located along the Grand Canal, many of them associated with the canal infrastructure, representing the industrial and built heritage of this area. These are primarily clustered at the 12th Lock and Leck Bridge, including two former mill buildings and a Lock-Keeper's Cottage. They also include Gollierstown Bridge just north of the Grange Castle Western Lands and Grange Cottage to the east of the 12th Lock. With the exception of the bridges and the lock itself, all of the structures are set back from the canal, at the side of the tow path.

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2.1.7 Landscape

The formal designation of the character of the landscape is contained within the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022-2028, and in the County Landscape Character Assessment. The assessment locates the lands in Urban character area.

The following measures were identified in the SEA for the landuse Variation at Grange Castle (CDP 2016-2022) relating to landscape and are included in the updated LCA Report for the County Development Plan 2022 -2028 (Section 5.1.1. of Appendix 9 County LCA of South Dublin CDP 2022-2028).

MM12	<p>A landscape management framework (Green Infrastructure Guidelines) for the rezoning will be prepared that will address the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil sealing • Incorporation of SUDs into overall design that offers biodiversity enhancement where possible • Boundary treatments and retention of hedgerows where possible • Management regime for retained hedgerows and treelines • Buffer area between lands and the Grand Canal. • Open space • Lighting proposals particularly in areas close the Grand Canal.
MM15	<p>All development proposals along the Grand Canal shall be accompanied by a detailed landscaping plan, prepared by a suitably qualified landscape architect. The landscape plan shall address the varying topography of the site and shall have regard to the proposed Natural Heritage Area and the Protected Species using this corridor. The plan shall also include details of hard and soft landscaping, proposed species and sensitive lighting. Where new canal crossings (i.e footbridges/cycle bridges) are proposed, they shall be designed so as to avoid fragmentation of linear habitats associated with the Grand Canal Corridor</p>

3 Schedule 2a screening assessment

3.1 Introduction

The following section and table below present the SEA Screening assessment of the Masterplan against the criteria provided in Schedule 2a of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2001-2011 which details the criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The Screening assessment should be read in conjunction with the **Masterplan**, and the accompanying Habitats Directive Screening report.

Table 1 SEA Screening

Criteria for determining whether the proposed Masterplan is likely to have significant effects on the environment
1. The characteristics of the Plan having regard, in particular, to:
<i>the degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,</i>
The Masterplan is not statutory and does not set the framework for projects. The Masterplan will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework.
<i>the degree to which the Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,</i>
In terms of the planning hierarchy applicable to the Masterplan Area the Masterplan sits under the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 - 2028. The South Dublin County Council County Development Plan sets out a suite of environmental protection measures that are required to be implemented as part of new developments so that negative effects to the environment are avoided. These include, inter alia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy NCBH1: Overarching Protect, conserve and enhance the County’s natural, cultural and built heritage, supporting its sensitive integration into the development of the County for the benefit of present and future generations. • Policy NCBH2: Biodiversity Protect, conserve, and enhance the County’s biodiversity and ecological connectivity having regard to national and EU legislation and Strategies. • NCBH2 Objective 3: To protect and conserve the natural heritage of the County, and to conserve and manage EU and nationally designated sites and non-designated locally important areas which act as ‘stepping stones’ for the purposes of green infrastructure and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive • NCBH4 Objective 1: To ensure that any proposal for development within or adjacent to a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) is designed and sited to minimise its impact on the biodiversity, ecological, geological and landscape value of the pNHA particularly plant and animal species listed under the Wildlife Acts and the Habitats and Birds Directive including their habitats. • Policy NCBH5: Protection of Habitats and Species Outside of Designated Areas Protect and promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas and ensure that species and habitats

that are protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2018, the Birds Directive 1979 and the Habitats Directive 1992, the Flora (Protection) Order 2015, and wildlife corridors are adequately protected

- CBH9 Objective 7: To ensure that all development proposals along the Grand Canal are accompanied by an EclA (ecological impact assessment) prepared by a qualified ecologist and that the recommendations of the EclA are incorporated into any development proposals including a landscape plan prepared by a qualified landscape architect. Where new canal crossings (that is, footbridges / cycle bridges) are proposed, they should be designed so as to avoid fragmentation of linear habitat associated with the Grand Canal.
- GI5 Objective 1: To protect and enhance the rich biodiversity and ecosystems in accordance with the ecosystem services approach to development enabling mitigation of climate change impacts, by absorbing excess flood water, providing a buffer against extreme weather events, absorbing carbon emissions and filtering pollution.
- Strategic Corridor 3: Grand Canal Corridor
- Policy IE8: Environmental Quality Seek to take appropriate steps to reduce the effects of air, noise and light pollution on environmental quality and residential amenity in line with European, National and Regional policy and legislation.
- IE8 Objective 1: To implement the provisions of national and EU Directives on air and noise pollution and other relevant legislative requirements in conjunction with other agencies as appropriate, consistent with RPO 10.10 of the RSES.
- IE8 Objective 6: To ensure external lighting schemes minimise light spillage or pollution in the immediate surrounding environment and do not adversely impact on residential or visual amenity and biodiversity in the surrounding areas having regard to the Institute of Lighting Engineers' Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Light Pollution (UK). (see section 12.11.4 (iii))

Schedule 2a screening assessment

Introduction

The following section and table below present the SEA Screening assessment of the Masterplan against the criteria provided in Schedule 2a of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2001-2011 which details the criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The Screening assessment should be read in conjunction with the **Masterplan**, and the accompanying Habitats Directive Screening report.

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The Masterplan is not statutory and does not set the framework for projects. The Masterplan will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework.

the degree to which the Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,

In terms of the planning hierarchy applicable to the Masterplan Area the Masterplan sits under the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 - 2028. The South Dublin County Council County Development Plan sets out a suite of environmental protection measures that are required to be implemented as part of new developments so that negative effects to the environment are avoided. These include, inter alia:

- Policy NCBH1: Overarching Protect, conserve and enhance the County’s natural, cultural and built heritage, supporting its sensitive integration into the development of the County for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Policy NCBH2: Biodiversity Protect, conserve, and enhance the County’s biodiversity and ecological connectivity having regard to national and EU legislation and Strategies.
- NCBH2 Objective 3: To protect and conserve the natural heritage of the County, and to conserve and manage EU and nationally designated sites and non-designated locally important areas which act as ‘stepping stones’ for the purposes of green infrastructure and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive
- NCBH4 Objective 1: To ensure that any proposal for development within or adjacent to a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) is designed and sited to minimise its impact on the biodiversity, ecological, geological and landscape value of the pNHA particularly plant and animal species listed under the Wildlife Acts and the Habitats and Birds Directive including their habitats.
- Policy NCBH5: Protection of Habitats and Species Outside of Designated Areas Protect and promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas and ensure that species and habitats that are protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2018, the Birds Directive 1979 and the Habitats Directive 1992, the Flora (Protection) Order 2015, and wildlife corridors are adequately protected
- CBH9 Objective 7: To ensure that all development proposals along the Grand Canal are accompanied by an EclA (ecological impact assessment) prepared by a qualified ecologist and that the recommendations of the EclA are incorporated into any development proposals including a landscape plan prepared by a qualified landscape architect. Where new canal crossings (that is, footbridges / cycle bridges) are proposed, they should be designed so as to avoid fragmentation of linear habitat associated with the Grand Canal.

- GI5 Objective 1: To protect and enhance the rich biodiversity and ecosystems in accordance with the ecosystem services approach to development enabling mitigation of climate change impacts, by absorbing excess flood water, providing a buffer against extreme weather events, absorbing carbon emissions and filtering pollution.
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Schedule 2a screening assessment

Introduction

The following section and table below present the SEA Screening assessment of the Masterplan against the criteria provided in Schedule 2a of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2001-2011 which details the criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment. The Screening assessment should be read in conjunction with the **Masterplan**, and the accompanying Habitats Directive Screening report.

Table 1 SEA Screening

Criteria for determining whether the proposed Masterplan is likely to have significant effects on the environment

1. The characteristics of the Plan having regard, in particular, to:

the degree to which the Plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,

The Masterplan is not statutory and does not set the framework for projects. The Masterplan will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact

Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework.

the degree to which the Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,

In terms of the planning hierarchy applicable to the Masterplan Area the Masterplan sits under the South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 - 2028. The South Dublin County Council County Development Plan sets out a suite of environmental protection measures that are required to be implemented as part of new developments so that negative effects to the environment are avoided. These include, inter alia:

- Policy NCBH1: Overarching Protect, conserve and enhance the County's natural, cultural and built heritage, supporting its sensitive integration into the development of the County for the benefit of present and future generations.
- Policy NCBH2: Biodiversity Protect, conserve, and enhance the County's biodiversity and ecological connectivity having regard to national and EU legislation and Strategies.
- NCBH2 Objective 3: To protect and conserve the natural heritage of the County, and to conserve and manage EU and nationally designated sites and non-designated locally important areas which act as 'stepping stones' for the purposes of green infrastructure and Article 10 of the Habitats Directive
- NCBH4 Objective 1: To ensure that any proposal for development within or adjacent to a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA) is designed and sited to minimise its impact on the biodiversity, ecological, geological and landscape value of the pNHA particularly plant and animal species listed under the Wildlife Acts and the Habitats and Birds Directive including their habitats.
- Policy NCBH5: Protection of Habitats and Species Outside of Designated Areas Protect and promote the conservation of biodiversity outside of designated areas and ensure that species and habitats that are protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 to 2018, the Birds Directive 1979 and the Habitats Directive 1992, the Flora (Protection) Order 2015, and wildlife corridors are adequately protected
- CBH9 Objective 7: To ensure that all development proposals along the Grand Canal are accompanied by an EclA (ecological impact assessment) prepared by a qualified ecologist and that the recommendations of the EclA are incorporated into any development proposals including a landscape plan prepared by a qualified landscape architect. Where new canal crossings (that is, footbridges / cycle bridges) are proposed, they should be designed so as to avoid fragmentation of linear habitat associated with the Grand Canal.
- GI5 Objective 1: To protect and enhance the rich biodiversity and ecosystems in accordance with the ecosystem services approach to development enabling mitigation of climate change impacts, by absorbing excess flood water, providing a buffer against extreme weather events, absorbing carbon emissions and filtering pollution.
- Strategic Corridor 3: Grand Canal Corridor
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Schedule 2a screening assessment

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Introduction

3.1.1 Draft SEA Screening Determination

The plan is a non-statutory land use plan and is being screened for the requirement for SEA in accordance with the requirements of:

- Directive 2001/42/EC (SEA Directive) and particularly Articles 3(3), 3(4) & 3(5) relate to ‘Screening’ for the requirement for SEA.
- S.I. No. 435 of 2004 European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011 - European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011.
- Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, which sets out the “Criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment”

Section 9 (1) of the (2004) Regulations (S.I. No. 435) (as amended) states “*subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes*

*(a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism and **town and country planning or land use**, and which set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or ”*

(b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site.”.

The **Masterplan** does not provide consent, establish a framework for granting consent or contribute towards a framework for granting consent. In order to be realised, potential projects or proposals arising from the Masterplan will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent granting framework.

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The AA Screening of the Masterplan as set out in the accompanying Screening Statement in support of Appropriate Assessment shows that the plan will not result in land use activities that have the potential to result in negative impacts to the qualifying features of interest of European Sites and will not have the potential to compromise the achievement of the conservation objective of European Sites. In light of the above findings, it is determined that the **Masterplan** does not require full SEA.

In accordance with Article 9(5) of S.I. No. 435 of 2004, as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, South Dublin County Council will provide notice to the specified environmental authorities that the implementation of the plan would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Upon receipt of submissions from the specified environmental authorities the SEA Screening determination will be finalised. A final SEA Determination will be made by South Dublin County Council and made publicly available in their offices and website. A copy of South Dublin County Council's determination to the relevant environmental authorities consulted will be issued.

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