

Blackrock Local Area Plan (2015-2021)

Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

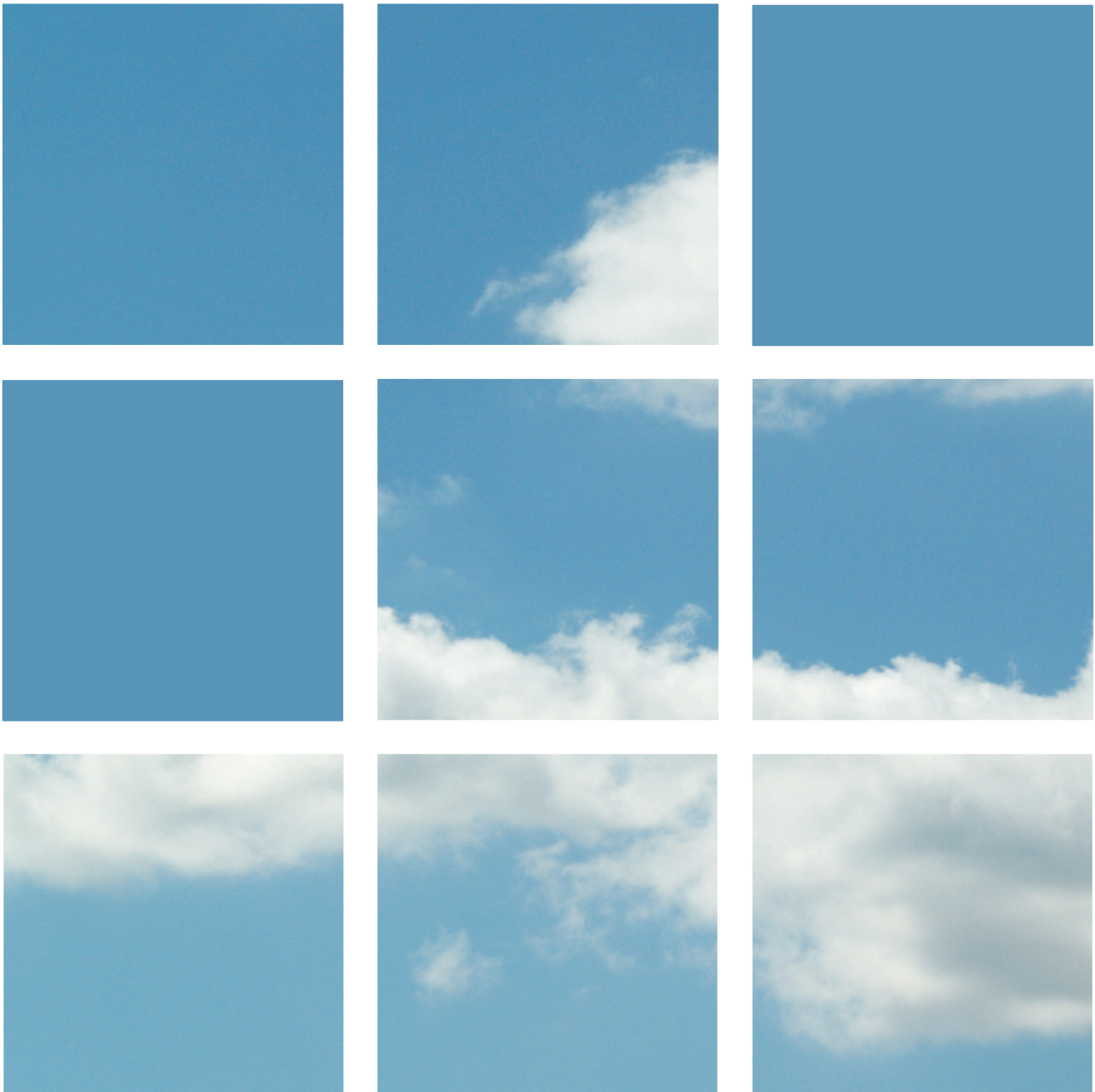


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Strategic Environmental Assessment

Screening Statement for

Blackrock Local Area Plan (2015-2021)

RPS, acting on behalf of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council have examined the potential environmental effects of implementing the Blackrock Local Area Plan (2015-2021), hereby determine that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required in accordance with EU Directive 2001/42/EEC, as transposed into Irish Legislation through the Planning and Development, Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations (S.I. 436 of 2004), as amended by (S.I. 201 of 2011).

RPS has determined that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required as the proposed Local Area Plan is not likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The SEA Screening Report contains detailed explanations along with full reasoning for the determination that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required and provides references to the Blackrock LAP where appropriate. The SEA Directive and the SEA Regulations require that the identified consultation bodies, including statutory environmental authorities be notified of this determination. Notice will be made to the necessary bodies and a copy of the Strategic Environmental Assessment – Screening Statement will be provided. The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and Blackrock Local Area Plan will accompany the SEA Screening Statement Report.

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	-	Appropriate Assessment
ACA	-	Architectural Conservation Area
CDP	-	County Development Plan
CFRAM	-	Catchment Flood Risk Assessment Management
DAFM	-	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
DAHG	-	Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
DCENR	-	Department of Communications Energy, and Natural Resources
DECLG	-	Department of Environment, Community and Local Government
DLRCC	-	Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council
EIA	-	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPA	-	Environmental Protection Agency
FRA	-	Flood Risk Assessment
LAP	-	Local Area Plan
NHA/pNHA	-	Natural Heritage Area / proposed Natural Heritage Area
NPWS	-	National Parks and Wildlife Service
OPW	-	Office of Public Works
RBD	-	River Basin District
SAC	-	Special Area of Conservation
cSAC	-	Candidate Special Area of Conservation
SEA	-	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEO	-	Strategic Environmental Objective
SPA	-	Special Protection Area
SuDS	-	Sustainable Drainage System

1 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - SCREENING

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County is preparing the Draft Blackrock Local Area Plan (LAP) 2015-2021 in accordance with Part II, Sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2011, which set out the provisions for the preparation of Local Area Plans.

The Draft Blackrock LAP is being prepared as a result of an objective contained within the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan (DLRCDP) 2010-2016 and in accordance to the policies and objectives contained within the DLRCDP. The DLRCDP is the overarching statutory framework for the development of the County and the Draft Blackrock LAP must be consistent with the objectives of the DLRCDP 2010-2016 under the Planning and Development Acts.

The DLRCDP identifies Blackrock as an area for 'Development and Regeneration' where the vision is *'to encourage the renewal of existing built-up areas through sensitive regeneration and consolidation, and to establish new urban villages in well located greenfield areas that will have their own quality sense of place and community and that will be well served by existing or planned public transport networks'*.

The planning process is iterative and therefore this document includes the Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening of the Draft LAP (chapters 1 to 4) and the Final LAP, including the amendments stage (chapter 5).

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL AREA PLAN

As outlined, the Draft Blackrock LAP 2015-2021 has been prepared in accordance with the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2000 as amended. Section 20 states that *"...a local area plan may be prepared in respect of any area or an existing suburb of an urban area, which the planning authority considers suitable and, in particular, for those areas which require economic, physical and social renewal"*. The Draft LAP will be in effect for a six year period following its adoption but may be extended up to 10 years under the mechanisms of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2000 (as amended).

LAPs take a detailed look at a specific area, identifying and analysing the various issues of relevance, before establishing and setting out principles for the future development in the defined area. These issues include among others:

- Infrastructure and Services;
- Economic Development and Employment;
- Natural Heritage;
- Built Heritage;
- Social and Community Facilities;
- Recreation, Leisure and Tourism; and

- Urban Development.

The main aim of the Draft Blackrock LAP is to set out a framework for the physical development of the area to generate growth in a co-ordinated, sensitive and orderly manner while conserving the area's natural and cultural heritage. The Draft LAP strives to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework, objectives and land-use proposals for the Blackrock area.

The Draft Blackrock LAP is being prepared with careful consideration of existing services, land-uses, infrastructure, planning proposals and outstanding planning permissions. Environmental considerations and the concept of sustainable development underpin all the aims, policies and objectives of the plan, based on an analysis of social, economic, infrastructural, environmental and heritage data.

The vision is to strengthen and develop Blackrock as a distinctive, coherent and vibrant urban village that is well connected with the surrounding areas and makes for an attractive place to live, visit and socialise. Key objectives of this Draft LAP include:

- To direct and co-ordinate future development in a manner that protects and builds on the village's existing character and qualities, and embraces development opportunities.
- To further develop Blackrock as a thriving and attractive urban village with a mix of uses and appropriate retail provision to animate and support daytime and evening activity.
- To improve access to and encourage uses which embrace the amenity of the Seafront at Blackrock.
- To consolidate the existing built environment in a manner that enhances the architectural fabric of the area.
- To implement a range of public realm improvement works to in particular, improve the environment for the pedestrian.
- To improve movement, connectivity and legibility within the area for users of all forms of transport particularly pedestrians and cyclists.
- To enhance the existing parks and open space and connections between them.

The development of the Draft Blackrock LAP has been iterative, in tandem with the mandatory Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening processes.

1.3 PURPOSE OF SEA SCREENING

The purpose of this Screening Report is to consider whether the Draft Blackrock LAP requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). SEA is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan/ programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan/ programme; the procedures for which are set out in the Planning and Development (SEA) Regulations 2004 (as amended by S.I. 201 of 2011). The preparation of a full SEA is not mandatory for LAPs with a population, or target population, of less than 5,000 persons, such as the Draft Blackrock LAP. However, in accordance with the above SEA Regulations, the planning authority of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council must determine whether or not the implementation of

such a Plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment and therefore require an SEA.

Screening is the process for deciding whether a particular plan, in this case the Draft Blackrock LAP, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA.

2 SCREENING METHODOLOGY

2.1 SEA DIRECTIVE

Articles 2 and 3 of *Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and the Council on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (SEA Directive), set out the criteria to be used to determine the need for SEA. In making this decision the primary concern in the SEA process (as set out in Article 3 of the Directive) is to determine whether the Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects. This determination should be made having regard to the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive and through consultation with the statutory government authorities according to Article 6.

In regard to the Draft Blackrock LAP it directly falls within the criteria stated in Article 2 of the SEA Directive, which states that plans and programmes requiring SEA are those:

- *which are subject to preparation and / or adoption by an authority at national, regional or local level or which are prepared by an authority for adoption, through a legislative procedure by parliament or government; and*
- *are required by legislative, regulative or administrative provisions.*

Article 3 of the SEA Directive details the type of 'plans and programmes' to which the provisions of the Directive shall apply, by way of their purpose and likely effects. According to Article 3, environmental assessment is required for plans and programmes which:

- *are likely to have significant environmental effects;*
- *are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications, tourism, 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 Directive 85/337/EC (EIA Directive); and*
- *in view of the likely effects on sites, have been determined to require an assessment pursuant to Article 6 or 7 of Directive 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive).*

2.2 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (SEA) REGULATIONS

As previously stated, the SEA Directive, as transposed into Irish Law under the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2011, (S.I. No. 201 of 2011), amending the Planning and Development Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004) provides the legal basis for the undertaking of strategic environmental assessments in Ireland. In addition, the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government Circular (PSSP 6/2011) 'Further Transposition of the EU Directive 2001//42/EC on SEA outlines the updated requirements as a result of the 2011 Regulations.

Article 14A of the 2004 Regulations, as amended, states:

"Where a planning authority proposes to prepare or amend a local area plan referred to in sub-article (1), the planning authority shall, prior to giving notice under section 20(3) of the Act, consider whether or not implementation of the local area plan or amended plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking account of relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A.

The proposed Draft Blackrock LAP has been considered in the context of the County Development Plan and in whether or not its implementation would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, taking into account the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the SEA Regulations. In making an overall assessment on whether SEA was required, each of the criteria in Schedule 2A was considered.

The 2011 SEA Regulations included a number of key amendments for land use plans and outline that SEA is required for LAPs whose population or target population are over 5,000 persons or whose plan area is greater than 50km². A determination, known as a Screening Process, is also required for a local area plan that falls below these thresholds.

Draft Blackrock LAP has an estimated existing population of 2,170 in accordance with the 2011 Census Small Area Statistics, and a target population of a further 1,134 persons. Therefore the total projected population is 3,304 for Draft Blackrock LAP. The area of Draft Blackrock LAP is approximately 76.12ha (0.76km²), therefore, in accordance with the regulations there is not a statutory requirement for SEA for this particular plan, however SEA Screening is required.

2.3 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as “The Habitats Directive”, provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. These are Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/ECC) as codified by Directive 2009/147/EC and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477/2011).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

Article 6(4) states:

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

These Articles mean that where the implementation of the plan, in this case the Draft Blackrock LAP, has potential to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, the relevant Local Authority (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council) must ensure that an appropriate assessment is carried out in view of that site's conservation objectives. The Draft Blackrock LAP can be approved by DLRCC only if it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 site(s)

concerned, or in the case of a negative assessment and where there are no alternative solutions, the scheme can only be approved for reasons of overriding public interest.

Appropriate Assessment Screening has been undertaken on the Draft Blackrock LAP to ensure that the policies and objectives contained within said plan are not likely to result in significant adverse effects on the Natura 2000 network. The likely impacts that will arise from the Draft Blackrock LAP have been examined in the context of a number of factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. No Natura 2000 site(s) within 15km of the Draft LAP area will be adversely affected. On the basis of the findings of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment of Natura 2000 sites, it was concluded that the Draft Blackrock LAP will not have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 network and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

2.4 CONSULTATIONS

This SEA Screening Statement will be issued to the statutory consultees to provide them with an opportunity to comment on whether or not they consider that there would be significant effects on the environment arising from the Draft Blackrock LAP. The amended regulations identifies the bodies to be consulted, which are outlined in Article 13A (4) (a) of S.I. 201 of 2011, as follows;

- (i) *the Environmental Protection Agency;*
- (ii) *the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government;*
- (iii) *where it appears to the planning authority that the plan or programme or modification of the plan or programme, might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment, the Minister for Agriculture, Marine and Food, and the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources;*
- (iv) *where it appears to the competent authority that the plan or programme or amendment to a plan or programme, might have significant effects in relation to the architectural or archaeological heritage or to nature conservation, the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs; and*
- (v) *any adjoining planning authority whose area is contiguous to the area of a planning authority which prepared a draft plan, proposed variation or local area plan.*

The Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources provided responses to the SEA Screening Report. These submissions outlined a number of comments in relation to the draft Plan. Their comments have been taken on board in this SEA Screening Report.

3 DRAFT BLACKROCK LAP

The Draft Blackrock Local Area Plan (LAP) is located in the northern section of the County of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, approximately 8km south of Dublin city centre, and is situated on the coastline. **Figure 1** provides an outline of the location of the Draft Blackrock LAP.

3.1 LOCAL CONTEXT

Blackrock developed from a seaside resort due to its coastal location and obtained its name from an offshore outcrop of limestone that turned black when wet. A key feature of Blackrock has been the Baths, which were built by the railway company to serve as a bathing area for the residents. They operated until the late 1980s but have since fallen into disrepair, which resulted in certain structures requiring demolition.

A Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was prepared as part of the 2004-2010 CDP and was then incorporated into the DLRCDP (2010-2016). The LCA focused primarily on the rural areas of the county and therefore focused on the south western region of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. The Draft Blackrock LAP was not located within this LCA.

There are no Landscape High Amenity Zone designations within the Draft LAP, or in close proximity to the Draft LAP. No Historic Landscape Character Assessments have been conducted for the Draft LAP or are proposed to be conducted within the Draft LAP. The DLRCDP (2010-2016) outlines on the Development Plan maps that the views over Blackrock Park are to be preserved, together with the views together with views to the east of Blackrock Baths.

The Draft LAP contains 94 Protected Structures and two Candidate Architectural Conservation Areas (cACAs), Idrone Terrace and the Quaker Burial Ground and Meeting House located At Temple Hill. It also contains one ACA at Newtown Villas. Few of the buildings dating from the 18th century have survived with the exception of the former Garda Station and an old house next to it, which now accommodates some of the Blackrock Market. There is one Record of Monument and Places (RMP) within the bounds of the Draft LAP, it is a Cross (DU023-005) which is located in the centre of the village.

Blackrock has good public transport links which includes the DART, together with a good bus route network. The Draft LAP comprises part of three District Electoral Divisions; Blackrock Central, Blackrock Williamstown and Blackrock Templehill.

Population

The 2011 Census Small Area Statistics show an approximate population of 2,170 persons within the Draft LAP boundary. There are 994 residential units within the Draft LAP boundary and taking into account a house vacancy rate of 7.7% this would then suggest that approximately 76 residential units currently lie vacant. Taking the national average household size of 2.73 persons per residential unit, the estimated population of the Draft LAP area would be 3,304. This is significantly higher than that identified by the Small Area Statistics. It is therefore surmised that the average household size in Blackrock is lower than the national average.

The Draft LAP area contains a number of key opportunity areas for redevelopment such as lands at St. Teresas and Dunardagh, part of the Frascati Shopping Centre Site, Cluain Mhuire and the Former Europa Garage. Taking into account the national average household size of 2.7 and the potential for approximately 420 residential units within these key opportunity areas, a future additional population target of 1,134 is reached.

Surface Water

The Draft LAP is located within the Eastern River Basin District (ERBD). The Carysfort Maretimo Stream is the main watercourse which flows within the Draft LAP boundary as shown in **Figure 2**. This stream, which is extensively culverted, originates in the Tree Rock Mountains and flows under the M50 and across the heavily urbanised areas of Sandyford, Leopardstown and Stillorgan before discharging into Dublin Bay at Blackrock. A second stream, the Priory Stream, crosses through a culvert from the Frascati Shopping Centre, flowing under Blackrock Park and then discharges to the bay through a culvert in the seawall.

The Environmental Report carried out as part of the Carysfort Maretimo Stream Improvement Scheme found that there was no evidence of fish or invertebrate species of conservation importance within the stream; all species found within the stream were identified as common. The river is not known for populations of salmon, trout or lamprey as significant culverting has not made it suitable for many fish species.

Water Services

Blackrock is served by the Sandyford High Level Water Supply Scheme (SHLWSS) and wastewater is via the West Pier Pumping Station which pumps the waste across Dublin Bay to the Ringsend Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Blackrock is located within the Dún Laoghaire West Pier Drainage catchment which encompasses some 2,300 hectares of urban and suburban areas including Blackrock. The drainage system is a combined foul and surface water system. The current system varies greatly which can result in occasional storm water overflows at various locations during severe rain events. The Greater Dublin Strategic Study (2005) states that the existing system is capable of meeting the current and future projected populations in the catchment up to the 2031 design horizon.

Flooding

Blackrock lies within the Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (ECFRAM). CFRAM is a national programme for the medium to long-term strategy for the reduction and management of flood risk in Ireland. It will deliver on core components of the National Flood Policy and on the requirements of the EU Flood Directive. The Office of Public Works is the lead agency for flood risk management in Ireland and is working in partnership with all the local authorities to deliver the objectives of this programme. These CFRAM studies will produce Flood Risk Management Plans along with a strategy for implementation.

One of the main issues in the Blackrock area in the past has been the flooding incidences caused by the Carysfort Maretimo Stream. However, the Carysfort Maretimo Stream Improvement Scheme, designated to deliver solutions to flooding by enhancing channel capacity and dealing with other deficiencies in the stream is now complete.

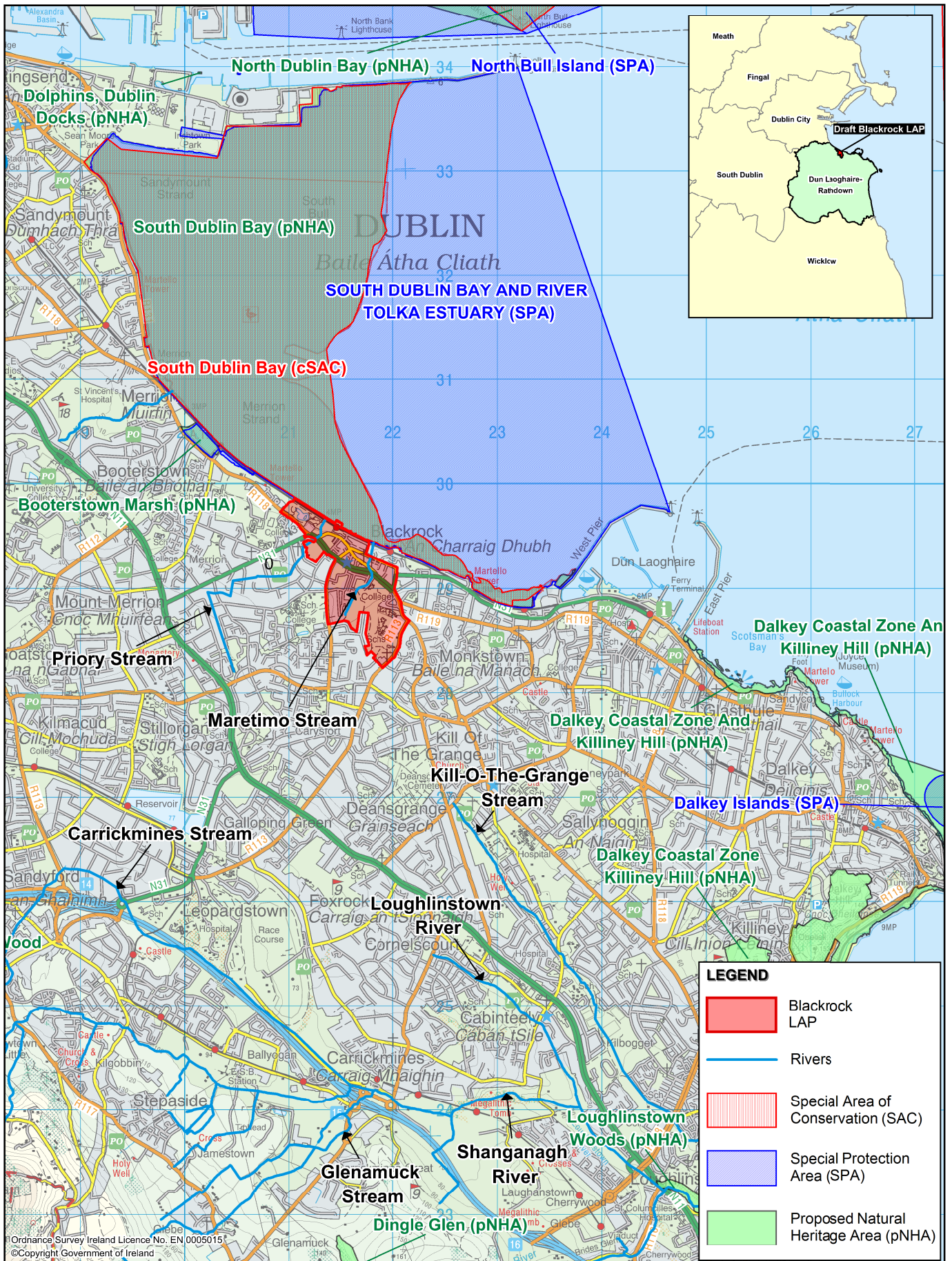


FIGURE 1 - STUDY AREA

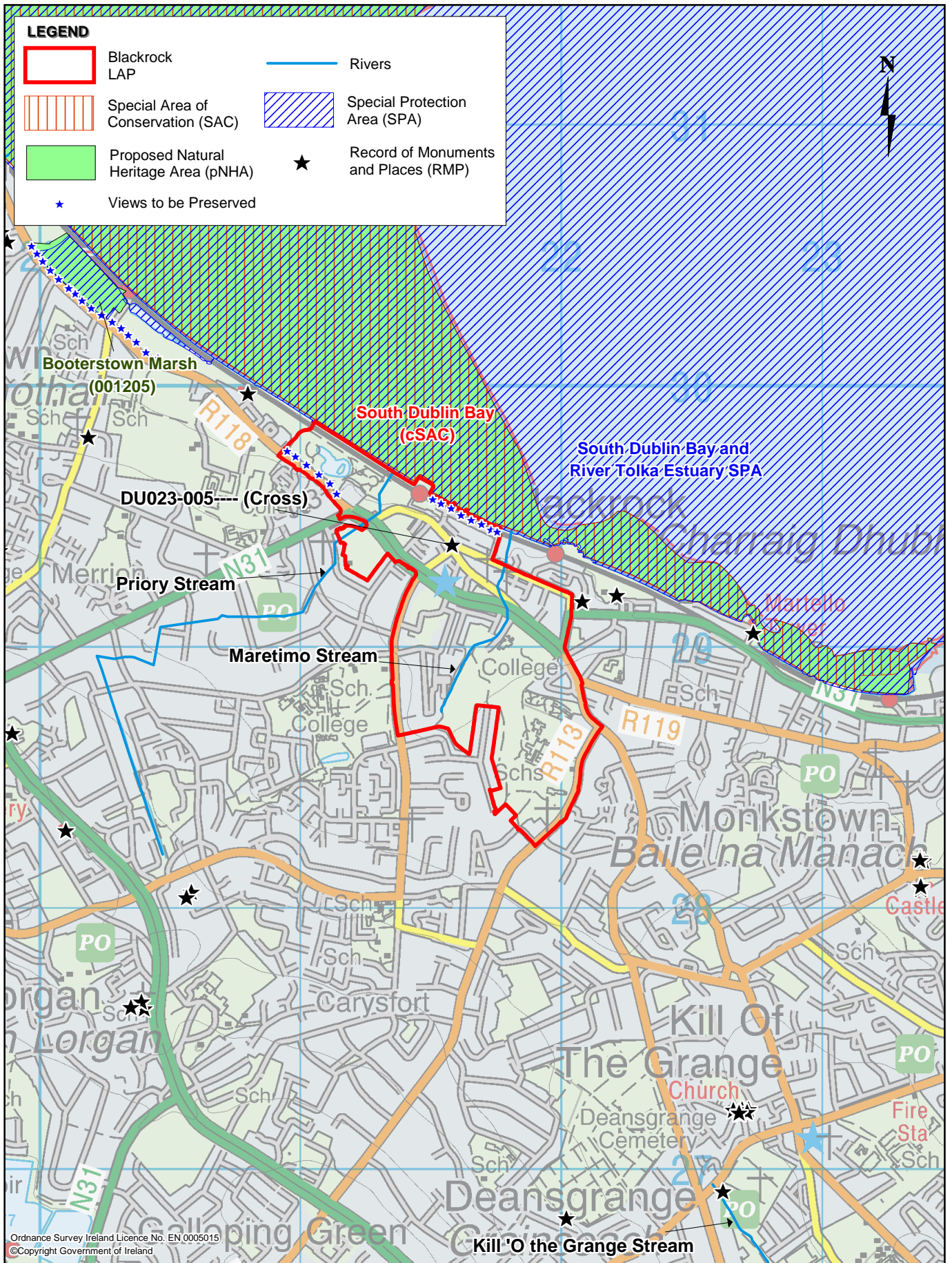


FIGURE 2 - BLACKROCK LAP

Natural Heritage

There are no Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) or proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) within Draft Blackrock LAP. However the following about the Draft Blackrock LAP:

- Sandymount Strand and River Tolka Estuary Special Protection Area (Site Code 004024);
- South Dublin Bay candidate Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 000210); and
- South Dublin Bay Proposed Natural Heritage Area (Site Code 000210).

In addition, Booterstown Marsh pNHA (Site Code 001205) is located north of the Draft LAP, the Dalkey Coastal Zone and Killiney Hill pNHA is located to the south east of the Draft LAP and the Rockabill to Dalkey Island SAC (Site Code 003000) is located to the east. The Appropriate Assessment Screening report undertaken on the Draft Blackrock LAP outlines other SPAs and SACs within 15km of the Draft LAP.

3.2 DLR COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2010-2016)

There are a number of overarching policies from the DLRCDP (2010-2016) that directly relate to the Draft Blackrock LAP (2014-2020). They include;

Goal 1: *To promote and provide for the sustainable development of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown to enable it to fulfil its role as an important player in the wider Greater Dublin Area;*

Goal 2: *To promote social inclusion and to facilitate equality of access to employment, education, transport, suitable housing and social and cultural activities, whether by direct provision (e.g. social housing) or by facilitating other agencies and stakeholders to provide the service (e.g. education and health services); and*

Goal 3: *To provide for a high quality natural and built environment and improved quality of life for those living and working in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.*

These policies have been taken into account in the drafting of the Draft Blackrock LAP.

4 SEA SCREENING CONCLUSION OF DRAFT LAP

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The following assessment has been conducted in accordance with the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004, as amended. The Screening of the proposed Draft Blackrock LAP is undertaken using specified criteria for determining the likely significant environmental impacts of a Plan as set out in Schedule 2a of the SEA Regulations (S.I. 436 of 2004).

4.2 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.

The Draft Blackrock LAP has provided a framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of Blackrock and its environs for a duration of six years, spanning from 2014-2020, unless amended. It contains objectives, policies, site framework strategies and land use zonings within the defined Draft LAP area based on the principles of sustainable development. The Draft LAP provides for the conservation and enhancement of the natural and physical environment within and surrounding Blackrock.

Variation Number 4 of the DLRCDP (2010-2016) contains the core strategy for the county, which was introduced under the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010. The development of the Draft Blackrock LAP has been in line with this core strategy to ensure that the Draft LAP is consistent with national and regional guidelines and adopts an evidence based approach to the zoning of land. Therefore, the framework for development in the Draft Blackrock LAP shall be of a nature and scale appropriate to the village.

The Draft Blackrock LAP provides a framework for development of projects within the plan area having regard to location, type, size and operation. It is probable that specific areas such as St Teresas and Dunardagh, Cluain Mhuire and the former Europa Garage will eventually fall under the title of a project and be subject to an environmental impact assessment under the EIA Directive and affiliated legislation. The Draft LAP has a number of general objectives one of which is PP3 which states that *“it is an objectives of the Council that the EU Directives for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), the Planning and Development Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations (SI. 436 of 2004) as amended by (SI. 201 of 2011) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) are the fundamental policy framework of environmental protection measures and legislation for the delivery of the policies within this document and full compliance with the EIA and SEA Directives shall be provided”*. Therefore, these specific areas will be developed in compliance with the relevant environmental assessment processes.

The current County Development Plan identified a Specific Local Objective SL093, *‘To promote the development of the Sutton to Sandycove (S2S) Promenade and Cycleway’*. The Sutton to Sandycove initiative involves the development of a continuous 22 km cycleway and promenade around the coastal edge of Dublin Bay and linking into existing and proposed cycle and walking routes. The indicative route shown on Map 2 of the LAP, ‘Extract from the County Development Plan’ runs along the seafront at Blackrock.

The biodiversity and habitat of Dublin Bay is of national and international importance and large sections are designated as SAC’s, SPA’s and pNHA’s. The indicative S2S route, as shown in the County Development Plan 2010-2016, traverses sections of these designated areas, and therefore feasibility studies of this coastal route shall be carried out, including an assessment of route options.

It is an objective of the Council to promote the development of the S2S promenade and cycleway in accordance with the objectives of the County Development Plan 2010-2016. It should be noted that this coastal route will be subject to a feasibility study, including an assessment of the route options. Any development proposals shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive to ensure the protection and preservation of all designated SAC's, SPA's and pNHA's in Dublin Bay and the surrounding area.

(ii) The degree to which the Plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy.

The Draft Blackrock LAP 2015-2021, provides a land-use planning framework at a local village level. It is located at the bottom of the statutory land-use planning hierarchy, and therefore, is not likely to influence other statutory plans so as to have any significant environmental impact.

(iii) The relevance of the Plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The Draft Blackrock LAP has been prepared under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), and therefore, must confine itself to the proper planning and development of the Draft LAP area. All strategies, objectives and policies of the Draft LAP have been informed by the principles of sustainable development. The Draft LAP is subject to higher level international, national, regional and county environmental protection policies, and therefore must be consistent with these policies and implement them at a local level. For example the preparation of the Draft Blackrock LAP was guided by the overall strategies, objectives and policies of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan (2010-2016).

During the development of the Draft Blackrock LAP both the SEA and the AA Environmental Teams provided input into the Draft LAP in the form of suggested policies for the protection of the environment. These policies were included within the Draft LAP in Chapters 1, 2 and 8 to ensure that the Draft Blackrock LAP is in compliance with the required Environmental Directives.

The Draft LAP will provide for sustainable growth and will regulate pressures from urban development, especially through the promotion of infill development in close proximity of frequent public transport services. Sustainable mobility has been addressed within the Draft Blackrock LAP through the promotion of walking and cycling, including the provision of associated infrastructure. Some existing roads already include bus lanes, cycle lanes and footpaths, which promote sustainable travel. The Draft LAP has taken onboard the measures outlined in the Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy (NTA).

(iv) Environmental problems relevant to the Plan.

It is considered that the Draft Blackrock LAP will not result in any strategic environmental problems due to the implementation of the Draft LAP and associated proposed development, including site framework strategies. Should local environmental issues develop they will be dealt with through the comprehensive environmental policies and objectives contained within the Draft LAP.

The DLRCDP (2010-2016) identified a number of improvement works required within the County, one of which is the Carysfort Maretimo Stream Improvement Scheme, located within the boundary of the Draft Blackrock LAP. This stream has caused a number of severe flooding incidents over the past decade. The improvement scheme was designed to alleviate flooding and works have now been completed for this stream.

A flood risk assessment was not undertaken for the Draft Blackrock LAP; however flooding issues have been identified in the Draft LAP. The *'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities'*, outline that "flood risk issues and its impact on deliverability of zoned land should be addressed in the development plan primarily". The DLRCDP identified flood risk issues for

the Carysfort Maretime Stream and alleviation measures have been implemented through the aforementioned improvement works. Therefore, the main flood risks to Draft Blackrock LAP have been remediated through the completion of the improvement scheme.

The Draft Blackrock LAP identifies that flood risk assessments are required for individual planning applications should the application be in an area where flooding may be present. Chapter 8 of the Draft LAP states that there is a need for *“planning applications for development in areas where flood risk may be present will be assessed in accordance with the provision of the Guidelines. Where flood risk is potentially considered to be an issue, a flood risk assessment should be carried out”*.

As outlined in the Draft Blackrock LAP, Chapter 2 ‘Heritage and Conservation’, the Draft LAP adjoins the South Dublin Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA). This coastal area is protected by the EU Birds and Habitats Directives and due cognisance of these designations will be adhered to in any consideration of development, within or adjacent to the Draft Blackrock LAP. Within Chapter 3 of the Draft LAP a Public Realm Strategy has been outlined to enhance the character of the village centre. The main purpose of such strategy is to engage the village with the waterfront, improve connections with Blackrock Park and upgrade the environmental quality of Temple Hill and Frascati Road, which are by-pass roads to the village. Policies are included in Chapter 1 and 2 of the Draft LAP to ensure protection of this sensitive coastal stretch.

Blackrock is located within the Dún Laoghaire West Pier Drainage catchment. The drainage system is a combined foul and surface water system. As outlined in the Draft Blackrock LAP the current system varies greatly which can result in occasional storm water overflows at various locations during severe rain events. The Greater Dublin Strategic Study (GDSS, 2005) states that the existing system is capable of meeting the current and future projected populations in the catchment up to the 2031 design horizon. The Draft Blackrock LAP has outlined that there is generally adequate *“capacity of the foul and surface water drainage network to satisfy current demand and small infill growth”*. However the Draft LAP does state *“that more detailed investigations would have to be carried out on the capacity of the network for any proposal which would have a significant impact on the drainage network”*. To ensure that adequate services are provided for future development within Blackrock the Draft LAP contains Objective E11 which states that *“it is an objective of the Council to support Irish Water in the provision of adequate water and waste water treatment infrastructure by Irish Water to serve the needs of the existing and future population of the plan area and ensuring that such infrastructure is provided prior to, or in tandem with, new development”*.

The Draft LAP clearly states that all new developments will be in compliance with the GDSS in relation to sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS). There is a policy in Chapter 8 to ensure that new development is in line with SuDS as it states *“it is an objective of the Council to ensure that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is applied to any development in Blackrock and that site specific solutions to surface water drainage systems are developed which meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and associated River Basin Management Plans, SuDS measures may include Green Roofs, permeable paving, detention basins, water butts, infiltration etc”*.

(v) The relevance of the plan for the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection).

The Draft Blackrock LAP does not have the direct purpose of implementing EU legislation; however, it is influenced by and must comply with relevant EU environmental policies and regulations, and will contribute towards the national implementation of these EU environmental policies and regulations. Environmental policies and objectives have been incorporated into the Draft LAP to ensure that full account is taken of European legislation. The Draft Blackrock LAP provides a comprehensive list of environmental policies and Chapter 1 of the Draft LAP clearly states that *“any development within the Local Area Plan boundary shall be in accordance with the requirements of the EU Directives and associated legislation, (National and Regional Guidelines) and County Development Plan policy provisions”*.

In addition the Draft Blackrock LAP outlines in Objective PP1, that *“It is an objective of the Council that any development within the Plan boundary shall be done so in accordance with the requirements of EU Directives and associated legislation, County Development Plan policy and shall have regard to national and regional guidelines”*. Further, it is a policy of the Council to facilitate compliance with the EU Water Framework Directive.

4.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EFFECTS AND OF THE AREA LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED, HAVING REGARD, IN PARTICULAR, TO:

(i) The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects.

In the case of the Draft Blackrock LAP the effects may be considered to include various land uses, including residential development, employment and infrastructural improvements. Uncontrolled development in the Draft LAP could result in significant impacts on the environment such as development near or adjacent to the Natura 2000 sites, which could potentially affect the qualifying interests of the sites. In addition, there is the potential to affect the architectural heritage due to the richness of cultural heritage within the Draft LAP boundary. However, the Draft Blackrock LAP in tandem with the DLRCDP (2010-2016) provides significant measures to avoid adverse impacts arising from proposed development through stringent policies and objectives. These residentially zoned areas may, depending on their extent, require design statements, which will be informed by site analysis and shall provide a clear rationale for the design concept.

The target population for the Draft Blackrock LAP will increase the demand on provisions for drinking water supply. Both existing and future populations within the Draft LAP area should continue to have access to adequate high quality clean drinking water. Water for Blackrock comes from the Sandyford High Level Water Supply Scheme (SHLWSS) and this is capable of catering for future developments in the area. There are no particular constraints in terms of supplying water to future development within the Draft LAP lands. Any medium to large scale development in the area may be required to upgrade sections of the existing network to ensure adequate security of supply as deemed necessary. The existing water network is generally adequate for current demand and small infill growth; however more detailed investigations would have to be carried out on the capacity of the network for any proposal which would generate significant water usage.

Blackrock is served by the Ringsend Waste Water Treatment Plant which has over recent years been upgraded with increased capacity. Compliance with the Waste Water Discharge Licence issued under Regulation 28(1) of the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007 is required for the Draft LAP area. Development within Draft Blackrock LAP shall be preceded by sufficient capacity in the public waste water treatment plants and appropriate extensions in the existing public waste water treatment catchments. The relevant recommendations set out in *‘Focus on Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland (Report for the years 2008-2011)* (EPA, Office of Environment Enforcement, 2012) will be complied with.

Improvements to the transport network within the Draft Blackrock LAP along with the promotion of sustainable travel will have a positive impact on the environment. A number of positive measures have been outlined in the Draft LAP such as improvements to public transport provision, improvements to the pedestrians and cyclists experience within Blackrock and provision of solutions to manage the movement of motor vehicles within the centre of the urban village.

(ii) The cumulative nature of the effects.

The Draft Blackrock LAP is a land-use plan that is based on a strategic framework and adheres to the Core Strategy contained within the DLRCDP (2010-2016), to ensure proper phased development of the village and its surroundings.

The Dun Laoghaire Harbour Company developed a Masterplan (2011) for the harbour but this document has no legal standing in relation to land use planning. The Masterplan outlined that its objectives would have to accord with the County Development Plan Objectives.

It is not considered that the cumulative effect of development will have a significant environmental impact as appropriate environmental protection policies have been integrated into the Draft LAP.

(iii) The transboundary nature of the effects.

The effects from the Draft Blackrock LAP are likely to be confined to Blackrock village and its immediate environs. Therefore, there is likely to be no significant national or regional transboundary effects as the Draft Blackrock LAP will have orderly and planned growth. Strategies in the form of objectives and policies have been implemented within the Draft LAP to preserve the environment, and therefore, ensure no significant transboundary effects.

It is important to note that transport infrastructure has a transboundary character. The Draft LAP area is bisected by the important regional road and public transport links, namely the N31 and the DART line. The proposals of the Draft LAP do not have a significant impact on the operations of these links as regional and national infrastructure.

(iv) The risk to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents).

There are no designated SEVESO sites or significant industrial operations within Draft Blackrock LAP. The Draft LAP contains site framework strategies for residential development along with strategies for retail development and transport improvements. Blackrock is a long established coastal urban village and provides a centre of employment for surrounding residential communities. The centre of Blackrock is zoned District Centre and the main sources of employment are retail and office based services. Therefore, it is not considered that there will be any significant risk to human health or the environment in implementing the Draft Blackrock LAP.

(v) The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).

According to the Census Small Area Statistics Draft Blackrock Local Area Plan contains a population of 2,170 persons. An alternative calculation for the estimated population within the Draft LAP yields 2,500 persons based on 918 residential units and taking a national average household size of 2.73 persons per residential unit. It has been concluded in the Draft LAP that the average household size in Blackrock is lower than the national average.

The Draft LAP contains certain key opportunity areas for redevelopment such as lands at St. Teresa's and Dunardagh, Part of the Frascati Shopping Centre Site, Cluain Mhuire and the Former Europa Garage. Draft Blackrock LAP is targeted for 1,134 additional persons, corresponding to 420 housing units.

Draft Blackrock LAP covers an area of approximately 76.12ha and the Draft LAP outlines that approximately 11.5ha of land are outlined for residential development, which is broken down as follows; St Teresa's and Dunardagh (8.75ha), Frascati (0.5ha), Cluain Mhuire (1.65ha) and Former Europa Garage (0.5ha).

The DLRCDP (2010-2016) sets out an overall strategy for the county which contains an objective for evidence base for zoning decisions. In line with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2010 a Core Strategy was drafted and was adopted as a Variation to the DLRCDP in June 2011. The Core Strategy was informed by SEA and AA Screenings undertaken as parallel processes. The Core Strategy encompasses the entire County of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, an area of approximately

12,000 hectares and 195,000 persons. It focused on the 640 hectares of undeveloped zoned land available for residential development in the County. Approximately 35,400 residential units were outlined in the overall quantum of zoned residential land which aligned within the 2010-2022 housing allocation target figure set out for county of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown by the Greater Dublin Area Regional Planning Guidelines. The Core Strategy simply introduced a phasing structure for the zoned lands.

The Core Strategy did not recommend the rezoning of any lands and did not amend the established policies and objectives contained within the DLRCDP 2010-2016. Therefore, the zoning of residential lands contained within the Draft Blackrock LAP is in line with the Core Strategy.

It is not considered that the development of the zoned lands including the site framework strategies and the achievement of the population targets will result in significant environmental impacts.

(vi) The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due:

(a) Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage

Draft Blackrock LAP lies in an area that has a rich archaeological heritage. There are 94 protected structures within the Draft LAP and one record of monument and place as shown in **Figure 2**. A list of architectural heritage is contained within Appendix D of the Draft Blackrock LAP. Two candidate Architectural Conservation Areas (cACA) and one Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) are contained within the Draft LAP and in accordance with the DLRCDP where works are proposed to a protected structure they will be subject to the Architectural Heritage Development Management Guidelines, which are listed in the Draft LAP. There are a number of potential development sites within the Draft LAP that have protected structures, including St. Teresa's and Dunardagh, Cluain Mhuire, Deepwell, Lios an Uisce and Idrone Terrace and they will be subject to the aforementioned guidelines.

All of these potential development sites are outlined on the Maps contained within the Draft Blackrock LAP. Chapter 3 of the Draft LAP has focused on the characteristics of these sites and provided a series of objectives to guide development in a manner that ensures the protection of the historical character, heritage and setting. For the two larger sites, Teresa's and Dunardagh and Cluain Mhuire, character areas have been defined to guide development and ensure protection of the cultural heritage.

There are no nationally or internationally designated sites for nature conservation within the boundary of the Draft Blackrock LAP; however, the following designated sites abut the Draft LAP, and include:

- Sandymount Strand and River Tolka Estuary Special Protection Area (Site Code 004024);
- South Dublin Bay candidate Special Area of Conservation (Site Code 000210); and
- South Dublin Bay Proposed Natural Heritage Area (Site Code 000210).

Appropriate Assessment Screening has been undertaken on the Draft Blackrock LAP and it is not considered that the Draft LAP will have any significant negative effect on the Natura 2000 network. As identified in the Draft LAP, the Sutton to Sandymount (S2S), pedestrian walkway/ cycleway will be subject to a feasibility study which will include an assessment of route options, carried out in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

A number of objectives are contained within the Draft LAP to ensure the protection and conservation of the natural heritage within and adjacent to the Draft LAP boundary. It is not considered that the

development of the Draft LAP lands will result in significant environmental impacts on the natural heritage of this area.

(b) Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values

It is not expected that environmental quality standards will be exceeded or that the value of vulnerable areas will be limited as a result of the Draft Blackrock LAP. Environmental policies and objectives contained within the Draft Blackrock LAP ensure that the impact of any proposed developments on existing habitats, species and the value of the existing landscape are kept to a minimum. Development proposal within the Draft LAP boundary will be subject to assessment as part of a planning application and will also be required to demonstrate compliance with the relevant legislation and environmental quality standards and limits.

(c) Intensive land-use

The focus of the Draft LAP, in line with the DLRCDP objectives, is the potential for development of sites that are presently unoccupied or less intensively used. The development of these sites will intensify the land-use, however not to a degree that would adversely impact upon the existing natural and built environment.

(vi) The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised European Union or international protection status.

As previously identified there are no nationally or internationally designated sites for nature conservation within the boundary of the Draft Blackrock LAP. However, as the Draft LAP adjoins Natura 2000 sites, Appropriate Assessment Screening has been undertaken in accordance with the European Union Habitats Directive. It concluded that Draft Blackrock LAP will not have a significant effect on the Natura 2000 network and a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

There are no Landscape High Amenity Zones within the Draft Blackrock LAP or in close proximity to it, however; the DLRCDP (2010-2016) states that the views over Blackrock Park are to be preserved. The Draft Blackrock LAP outlines in Chapter 2 that objective NHC4 *“it is an objective of the Council to protect and enhance the views out to sea at Idrone Terrace and Blackrock Park”*. The Draft LAP also contains an objective (NHC6) to *“conserve, enhance and manage the natural heritage within the Plan boundary, including its biodiversity, landscape and geological heritage and to promote an understanding of and sustainable access to it”*.

The policies contained within the Draft Blackrock LAP will ensure that it does not have a significant effect on landscapes which have a European or International protection status.

4.4 SCREENING CONCLUSION

Taking into account the aforementioned criteria it is concluded that the Draft Blackrock LAP (2014-2020) is not likely to have significant effects on the environment. The key strategies, objectives and policies of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan (2010-2016) have been embraced during the preparation of the Draft Blackrock LAP (2015-2021). Its implementation with regard to residential, economic, transport and community development is perceived not to have any direct adverse effects on international or national designated sites of environmental protection.

It is therefore considered that a full Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required in respect of the Draft Blackrock LAP. Any localised environmental effects as a result of any proposed development carried out on the land within the Draft LAP area can be dealt with through the assessment of individual planning applications.

5 SEA SCREENING CONCLUSION OF FINAL LAP

5.1 BACKGROUND

The Draft Blackrock Local Area Plan was put on public display on the 3rd September 2014 accompanied by the SEA Screening Report and the Appropriate Assessment Screening Statement. Written submissions and/or observations were invited for a 6 week period ending the 15th October 2014.

During the 6-week consultation period a total of 25 no. submissions were received by the Planning Authority. A Chief Executive's Report was compiled which outlined the response and recommendations based on the submissions received. All of the changes recommended to the draft LAP were screened under the SEA process.

Prior to the meeting with the Elected Members on the 8th December the proposed motions and amendments were screened by the SEA process. One material alteration was proposed at the Council meeting along with a few minor amendments which were then screened by the SEA process. The material alteration was put out on public display from the 22nd December 2014 to the 29th January 2015.

A second Chief Executive's Report was prepared on the 7 submissions received, 3 of which related to the material alteration. This alteration related to Map 12 within Section 3.4, Building Height of the LAP. The proposal was to amend the height restrictions on the site shaded pink (per map key 4 storeys) at St Teresa's/Dunardagh, to a graduated height restriction starting at three stories on the section adjacent to St Vincent's Park, rising to four stories elsewhere. Submissions on the material alteration were both for the alteration and against the alteration, however it was recommended in the Chief Executives response that there would be no change to this proposed material alteration. All recommendations, including the material alteration presented in the Chief Executives report were screened by the SEA process.

5.2 SEA SCREENING CONCLUSION

The Blackrock LAP and proposed material alteration was made by the elected members of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council on 9 March 2015 following consideration of the Draft Blackrock LAP and the Chief Executive's Report on submissions received during the public consultation process. The material alteration has been screened for Strategic Environmental Assessment under the Planning and Development SEA Regulations 2004, as amended. The proposed material alteration will not result in additional impacts to those already identified in the SEA Screening Document.