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Seaview Park, Arklow

Constraints & Opportunities – Ecology

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Seaview Park, Arklow

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Roughan & O'Donovan (ROD) in partnership with Cunnane Stratton Reynolds (CSR) were engaged by Wicklow County Council to develop a masterplan for the Seaview Avenue area of Arklow town.

The recreational area of Seaview Avenue comprises 21.73 hectares of land which includes two leisure centre buildings and a duck pond. The area is popular for social recreation in Arklow town which has a growing and diverse population. The area provides a secure playground for children, gym equipment for all ages, gardens, a duck pond, a dog park, two basketball courts, a skate park and a running track.

Despite various improvement over the years, there is an absence of facilities such as public toilets and the area requires further enhancement to be universally accessible and provide for all ages and abilities.

The masterplan will complement and enhance the existing facilities in the area. At present, the area provides two main types of facilities. There is an active area with playground, gym equipment and a running track and there is a nature area with the duck pond and walks around it. The Masterplan will include proposals that take advantage of the characteristics of the site and provide a high-quality space that is available to all ages and accessible to everyone.

This report sets out the constraints and opportunities associated with ecology of the site and the immediate surrounds.

2. ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

2.1 Introduction

This section of the report provides an overview of the biodiversity constraints and opportunities within the study area for the Seaview Avenue Masterplan (the "proposed plan").

The purpose of identifying the constraints is to ensure the integration of biodiversity considerations into the selection and development of the study area. The biodiversity desktop assessment of the study area includes the following:

- A scope of the biodiversity receptors to be assessed.
- Description of the receiving environment.
- Identification of the biodiversity constraints and opportunities within the study area.

2.1.1 Methodology

This biodiversity constraints assessment comprised a field study and a desktop study. The desk study included the review and analysis of various documentation, including mapping. A desktop study and appraisal of the ecological receptors within the study area was undertaken using the following sources of information:

- The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) online database, consulted for designated sites of nature conservation interest in the study area, accessed November 2025 (www.npws.ie).
- EC (2013) Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats - EUR28. European Commission, Brussels.
- The National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) database, consulted for records of rare, protected, and invasive species, accessed November 2025 (www.biodiversityireland.ie).

- GeoHive online mapping (http://map.geohive.ie/mapviewer.html).
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – water bodies and water quality (www.epa.ie).
- Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) – geology, soils and hydrogeology (www.gsi.ie).
- Information on the conservation status of birds in Ireland (Gilbert G, Stanbury A, and Lewis L (2021) Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland 2020 –2026).
- A review of Ordnance Survey Ireland mapping and orthophotography.

2.1.1.1 Study Area

The study area for this assessment comprised the area which is being considered for development (i.e. site boundary) plus an additional 500m buffer. The proposed plan boundary and study area are presented in Figure 2.1 below. This area is the main focus of this desktop study when assessing impacts on protected species and habitats as this area may be subject to the highest levels of direct impacts as a result of the proposed plan.

Figure 2.1 Study Area

2.1.1.2 Zone of Influence

The Zone of Influence for this biodiversity constraints assessment considered the European and nationally designated sites that could be connected to, and subsequently impacted by the proposed plan. The Zone of Influence extends 15km outside of the site boundary, as shown in Figure 2.2 below.

2.1.1.3 Field surveys

A field survey was conducted on the 23rd of December 2025. The survey comprised a walkover of the site. The aim of the survey was to provide an overview of the habitats on the site of the proposed plan, and to identify any other ecological features of note (such as mammals signs, invasives alien species (IAS's), etc.). Habitats on the proposed plan site were classified according to Fossitt's *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland* (2000)[1], with guidance from Smith et al.'s *Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping* (2011)[2]. Survey findings are presented in the following sections.

2.1.1.3.1 Survey Constraints and Limitations

The ecological survey was undertaken in December, which is outside the optimum survey season for habitats and invasive species. The optimum survey season for habitats and invasive species is from April to September. The ecological survey was a high-level habitat assessment, and all of the habitats could be classified to Fossitt Level 2, and in many cases Fossitt Level 3, with confidence. Invasive species are often visible in the winter, with bare ground and dead canes illustrating their presence.

[1] Fossitt, J. (2000) *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland*. Heritage Council of Ireland.

[2] Smith, G, F., O'Donoghue, P., O'Hora, K. & Delaney, E. (2011) *Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey and Mapping.* Heritage Council of Ireland.

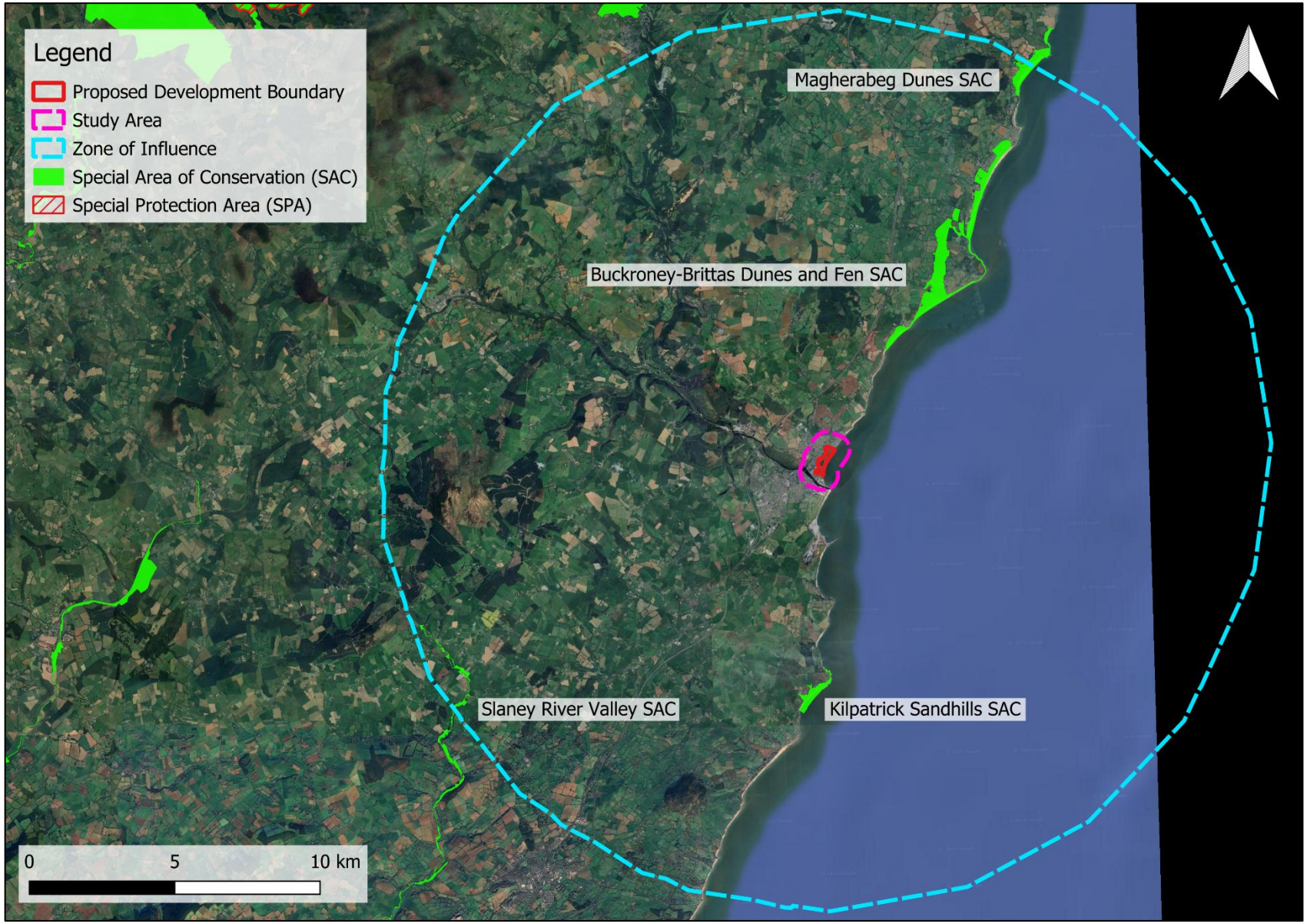

Figure 2.2 Zone of Influence of the Proposed plan.

2.2 Receiving Environment

2.2.1 Designated Sites of Conservation Importance

The Zone of Influence for designated sites included the site boundary and a 15km buffer. Designated sites fall into categories based on the associated level of protection afforded: The main types of nature designation are:

- European sites:
  - Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
  - Special Protection Area (SPA).
- Nationally designated sites:
  - Natural Heritage Area (NHA).
  - Proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA).

2.2.1.1 Designated Sites: European Sites

The Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive"), and Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds ("the Birds Directive") list habitats and species which are, in a European context, important for conservation and in need of protection. This protection is afforded in part through the designation of sites that, in a European context, support significant examples of habitats or populations of species. These sites are generally referred to as "European sites". Specifically, sites designated for wild birds are termed "Special Protection Areas" (SPAs) and sites designated for natural habitat types or other species are termed "Special Areas of Conservation" (SACs). The complete network of European sites is referred to as "Natura 2000".

No European sites are present within the study area. There are four SACs and no SPAs within the Zone of Influence, as presented in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 European Sites in the Zone of Influence.

Site code	Site name	Qualifying Interest habitats and species (*=Priority Habitat)	Distance from proposed plan boundary (km)
000729	Buckroney-Brittas Dunes and Fen SAC	• Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] • Perennial vegetation of stony banks [1220] • Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) [1410] • Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) [2120] • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] • Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (Calluno-Ulicetea) [2150] • Dunes with *Salix repens ssp. argentea* (*Salicion arenariae*) [2170] • Humid dune slacks [2190] • Alkaline fens [7230]	3.8km northeast

Site code	Site name	Qualifying Interest habitats and species (*=Priority Habitat)	Distance from proposed plan boundary (km)
001742	Kilpatrick Sandhills SAC	• Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] • Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) [2120] • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] • Atlantic decalcified fixed dunes (*Calluno-Ulicetea*) [2150]	6.6km south
000781	Slaney River Valley SAC	• Estuaries [1130] • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] • Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*) [1330] • Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*) [1410] • Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation* [3260] • Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles [91A0] • Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) [91E0] • Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) [1029] • Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) [1095] • Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) [1096] • River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) [1099] • Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax fallax*) [1103] • Salmon (*Salmo salar*) [1106] • Otter (*Lutra lutra*) [1355] • Harbour Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) [1365]	13.7km southwest
001766	Magherabeg Dunes SAC	• Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] • Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* (white dunes) [2120] • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130] • Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*) [7220]	13.7km northeast

2.2.1.2 Designated Sites: National Sites

Nationally designated sites comprise Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA). NHAs are protected under the Wildlife Amendment Act 2000 (as amended). Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are published sites identified as of similar conservation interest, but which have not been statutorily proposed or designated – but are nonetheless afforded some protection under planning policies and objectives.

There are ten pNHA's and no NHA's within 15km of the proposed plan, as presented in Table 2.2 below. One pNHA, Arklow Town Marsh, is located within the study area.

Table 2.2 Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) within 15km of the study area.

Site code	Site Name	Distance from proposed plan boundary (km)
001931	Arklow Town Marsh	0.3km west
001746	Arklow Sand Dunes	0.6km northeast
000729	Buckroney-Brittas Dunes and Fen	3.8km northeast
001745	Arklow Rock-Askintinny	2.2km south
001748	Avoca River Valley	3.2km northwest
001834	Kilgorman River Marsh	9.5km south
000745	Ballymoney Strand	12.5km south
001766	Magherabeg Dunes	13.7km northeast
001742	Kilpatrick Sandhills	6.6km south
002093	Avondale	13.2km northwest

Arklow Town Marsh is a large marsh located north of the Avoca estuary and is the principal wetland area in Arklow. This important site is a good example of a relatively large wetland, despite the impacts of atmospheric pollution and its proximity to Arklow town[3]. Bird species which use this wetland may also use the habitats in Seaview Avenue, such as the pond and reed beds.

2.2.1.3 Other protected sites

There are no nature or wildlife reserves located in proximity to the proposed plan.

2.2.2 Habitats

A habitat map of the proposed development is presented in Figure 2.3 below. The following habitats (classified using Fossitt 2000) were identified on the site of the proposed plan during the ecological walkover:

1. Flower beds and borders (BC4)
2. Buildings and artificial surfaces (BL3)
3. Sea walls, piers and jetties (CC1)
4. Fixed dunes (CD3)[4]
5. Exposed sand, gravel or till (ED1)
6. Spoil and bare ground (ED2)
7. Refuse and other waste (ED5)
8. Reed and large sedge swamps (FS1)
9. Other artificial lakes and ponds (FL8)
10. Amenity grassland (GA2)
11. Dry meadows and grassy verges (GS2)
12. Wet grassland (GS4)
13. Dense bracken (HD1)
14. Mixed broadleaved woodland (WD1)
15. Mixed broadleaved/conifer woodland (WD2)

[3] NPWS (2009) Site *Synopsis - Arklow Town Marsh. NPWS pNHA Listings Document.* National Parks & Wildlife Service.

[4] Present as a mosaic with GS2

16. Wet willow-alder-ash woodland (WN6)
17. Hedgerow (WL1)
18. Treeline (WL2)
19. Scrub (WS1)

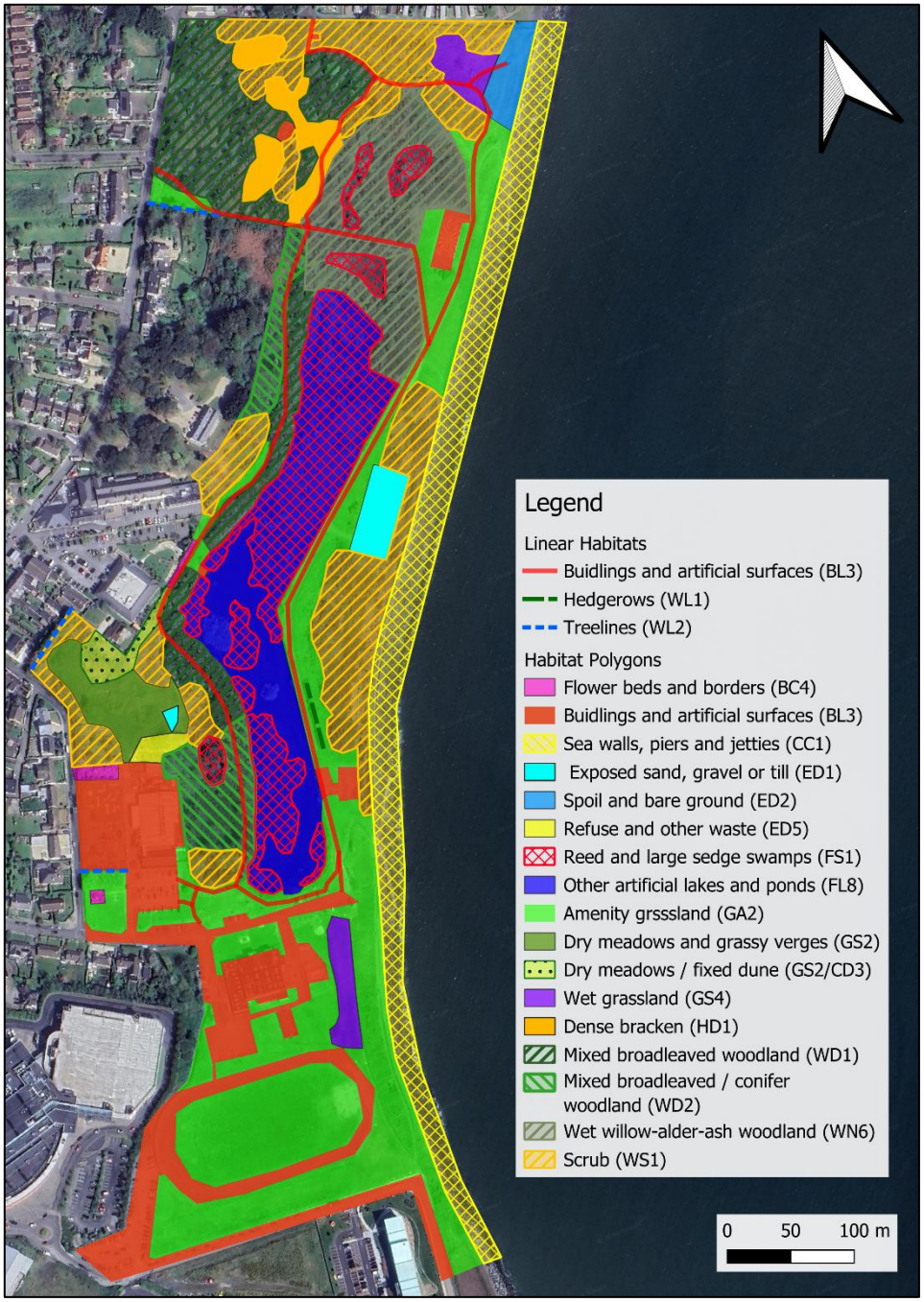

Figure 2.3 Habitats on the Proposed plan site

The most common habitats at Seaview Avenue were reeds (FS1), woodlands (WD1, WD2, and WN6), scrub habitats (HD1 and WS1), and amenity and artificial habitats (BL3, CC1, GA2, etc.).

There are large areas of amenity grassland (GA2) throughout the site. The creation of meadows within these areas would enhance biodiversity on the site, which would benefit a variety of species, including pollinators and birds. The planting of trees would also be

beneficial in areas of amenity grasslands, as they would provide habitat for birds, mammals, and invertebrates, and in the dune area, would enhance to ecological corridors and create better connectivity within the site. The planting of trees along the coastal area may aid with stabilising the bank of the sea wall. Any planting in this area should take into consideration the works to the sea wall, as plants may not successfully establish if coastal erosion is continuous here.

In the west of the site, north of the Coral Leisure Centre, is a meadow (GS2) which grades into a mosaic with fixed dune. This area is essentially a small open field which has been abandoned and appears to be used for walking. The creation of dune/coastal wildflower areas would enhance biodiversity in this area. This could be achieved in tandem with development in this area, such as the creation of pathways and amenity features. The creation of formal pathways may reduce erosion by trampling, as it streamlines human movements.

The creation of meadows and wildflower areas would require that these areas are mown infrequently. The meadows should be allowed to populate naturally with local species or by using locally sourced seed, rather than with the use of seed mixes, which may contain species not naturally present in the local area. The creation of areas of meadows should be undertaken with reference to NBDC's guidance 'Councils: actions to help pollinators'[5]. Scrub habitat is encroaching on the grassland in this area. The management of scrub would enable the natural coastal grassland species to re-establish.

The 'Duck Pond' is a man-made pond with saline water. The reed habitat present here are mostly a monoculture of common reed (*Phragmites australis*), which extends into the woodland habitats surrounding the pond. The reeds provide habitat for invertebrates and birds. Reeds are a natural habitat in Ireland, however given the nature of the pond, the reeds could over time take over more areas of the pond. This would reduce the variety of habitats and therefore the diversity of species in the pond and reed beds. This can also lead to a build-up of organic matter, which can cause algal blooms. Should management of this habitat be considered, a full evaluation of the extent of the reed habitat in the pond should be undertaken. Methods for managing reeds include the deepening of the pond in areas, as well as the trimming or removal of reeds.

The woodlands, and scrub and bracken on the site provide habitat for a variety of species including birds, invertebrates, non-volant mammals, and bats. These habitats, as well as stand-alone mature trees, should be retained where feasible. Informal pathways and desire lines were recorded throughout the woodlands, scrub, and bracken on the site. This can result in habitat loss, fragmentation and deterioration, as well as disturbance. The improvement / formalisation of the existing paths would encourage visitors to remain on designated pathways and reduce the impacts of tramping in the surrounding habitats. The potential use of way markers and signage to keep visitors on track should be considered to reduce the number of informal trails in the dune grassland Teleological signage (signage with instruction and justification for the instruction) should be considered for this. Campfires, and dumping and littering were recorded throughout these habitats at Seaview Avenue. These activities can result in habitat loss and deterioration, pollution, and disturbance. Categorised waste bins throughout the site accompanied by teleological signage may reduce the occurrence of this.

2.2.3 Watercourses and waterbodies

Seaview Avenue is located approximately 350m north the Avoca River and Estuary where it discharges into the Irish Sea. In 2024, the Arklow Wastewater Treatment Plant was constructed. Prior to this, untreated wastewater discharged into the Avoca River and Estuary and the Irish Sea.

[5] NBDC (2016) *Local Communities: actions to help pollinators All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020.* National Biodiversity Data Centre, Co. Waterford.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) requires that each EU Member State protects and improves water quality in all waters so that good ecological status is achieved. Additionally, proposed actions (within discrete River Basin Management Plans) are also required, to secure national natural water resources for the future. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the Competent Authority responsible for monitoring, protecting and improving the water environment in the Republic of Ireland. In accordance with WFD guidelines, water quality 'Status' is assigned using a variety of available data on aquatic flora and fauna (including fish), the availability of nutrients, and aspects like salinity, temperature and pollution by chemical pollutants. Morphological features, such as quantity, water flow, water depths and structures of the riverbeds, are also taken into account. The original EPA water quality classification (Quality Rating System (Q-values)) is also used to assess water quality in Irish rivers, taking into account aquatic macrophytes, phytobenthos and hydromorphology. A review of both the Q-value status and WFD status for the watercourses was undertaken.

The online EPA Unified GIS Application provides access to information at individual waterbody level and at Water Management Unit level for all the River Basin Districts in Ireland. Waterbodies can relate to surface waters (these include rivers, lakes, estuaries [transitional waters], and coastal waters) or to groundwater.

The EPA is responsible for monitoring the quality of all waterbodies in Ireland and these results are available online. The results of WFD and EFA water quality monitoring are presented in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3 WFD Water Monitoring Results

WFD Waterbody	WFD Status 2016-2021	Waterbody Risk	River Q-Value
Rivers			
Avoca_030	Moderate	Not at risk	Bad (1/0)
Transitional Waterbodies			
Avoca Estuary	Moderate	Not at risk	Bad (1/0) (Avoca_030)
Coastal Waterbodies			
Southwestern Irish Sea - Brittas Bay (HA 10)	High	Not at risk	N/A
Groundwater			
Wicklow	Good	At risk	N/A

2.2.4 Birds

The NBDC returned 25 records of amber-listed bird species, and 11 records of red-listed bird species, and 31 records of green-listed birds protected under the Wildlife Act in the study area. These species are listed below in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4 NBDC Records of Birds from 2km Grid Squares T27L and T27M.

Common name	Scientific name	Date of last record	Designation
Black-headed Gull	*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*	01/02/2021	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
Common Gull	*Larus canus*	17/06/2020	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
Coot	*Fulica atra*	31/12/2011	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section I; Annex III, Section II; BoCCI: Amber List
Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*	01/02/2021	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
Curlew	*Numenius arquata*	09/08/2017	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section II; BoCCI: Red List
Goldcrest	*Regulus regulus*	31/12/2011	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
Goldeneye	*Bucephala clangula*	31/12/2001	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section II; BoCCI: Red List
Golden Plover	*Pluvialis apricaria*	31/12/2011	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex I; Annex II, Section II; Annex III, Section III; BoCCI: Red List
Greenfinch	*Chloris chloris*	31/12/2011	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
Great Spotted Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos major*	05/04/2021	Wildlife Acts
Greylag Goose	*Anser anser*	01/02/2021	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section I; Annex III, Section II; BoCCI: Amber List
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*	01/02/2021	BoCCI: Amber List
House Martin	*Delichon urbicum*	12/08/2020	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	13/01/2021	BoCCI: Amber List
Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	28/07/2020	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex I; BoCCI: Amber List
Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	31/12/2011	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section II; BoCCI: Red List
Lesser Black-backed Gull	*Larus fuscus*	17/06/2020	BoCCI: Amber List
Lesser Whitethroat	*Curruca curruca*	31/12/2011	Wildlife Acts
Linnet	*Linaria cannabina*	28/04/2023	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*	17/06/2020	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex I

Common name	Scientific name	Date of last record	Designation
Little Grebe	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*	17/06/2020	Wildlife Acts
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	13/05/2025	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section I; Annex III, Section I; BoCCI: Amber List
Meadow Pipit	*Anthus pratensis*	11/01/2018	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Red List
Mediterranean Gull	*Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*	08/02/2020	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex I; BoCCI: Amber List
Mistle Thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*	01/02/2021	Wildlife Acts
Mute Swan	*Cygnus olor*	09/10/2020	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
Oystercatcher	*Haematopus ostralegus*	31/12/2001	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Red List
Pheasant	*Phasianus colchicus*	31/12/2011	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section I; Annex III, Section I
Pochard	*Aythya ferina*	31/12/2001	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section I; Protected Species: EU Birds Directive: Annex III, Section II; BoCCI: Red List
Red Kite	*Milvus milvus*	29/05/2025	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex I; BoCCI: Red List
Reed Warbler	*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*	07/07/2012	Wildlife Acts
Robin	*Erithacus rubecula*	01/02/2021	Wildlife Acts
Rock Dove	*Columba livia*	12/08/2020	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section I
Sand Martin	*Riparia riparia*	01/04/2018	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*	31/12/2011	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
Snipe	*Gallinago gallinago*	31/12/2011	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section I; Annex III, Section III; BoCCI: Red List
Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*	31/12/2011	Wildlife Acts
Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	13/01/2021	BoCCI: Amber List
Stonechat	*Saxicola rubicola*	16/01/2018	Wildlife Acts
Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*	14/05/2025	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
Swift	*Apus apus*	12/08/2020	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Red List

Common name	Scientific name	Date of last record	Designation
Teal	*Anas crecca*	11/01/2018	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section I; Annex III, Section II; BoCCI: Amber List
Tufted Duck	*Aythya fuligula*	31/12/2001	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section I; Annex III, Section II; BoCCI: Amber List
Wigeon	*Mareca penelope*	31/12/2001	Wildlife Acts; EU Birds Directive: Annex II, Section I; Annex III, Section II; BoCCI: Amber List
Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe*	16/03/2022	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List
Willow Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*	31/12/2011	Wildlife Acts; BoCCI: Amber List

Table 2.5 below presents species which were identified during the ecological survey in December 2025. Most of the birds identified during the ecological site visit were observed foraging and roosting in and around the pond. Birds using the habitats in Seaview Avenue are likely habituated to a level of human presence. Visitors to the park were recorded feeding bread to the birds at the pond. Bread is harmful to birds and can result in malnutrition and health problems. Feeding bread to wildfowl can also result in negative water quality impacts. Teleological signage to discourage visitors from feeding bread to wildfowl, including healthy alternatives, may reduce the occurrence of this behaviour.

Table 2.5 Bird species recorded during the ecological site visit

Scientific name	Common Name
BoCCI Red List	
Chroicocephalus ridibundus	Black-headed Gull
Larus argentatus	Herring Gull
BoCCI Amber List	
Larus canus	Common Gull
Regulus regulus	Goldcrest
Anser anser	Greylag Goose
Tachybaptus ruficollis	Little Grebe
Cygnus olor	Mute Swan
Erithacus rubecula	Robin
BoCCI Green List	
Turdus merula	Blackbird
Corvus cornix	Hooded Crow
Coloeus monedula	Jackdaw
Pica pica	Magpie
Anas platyrhynchos	Mallard
Gallinula chloropus	Moorhen
Emberiza schoeniclus	Reed Bunting
Corvus frugilegus	Rook
Turdus philomelos	Song Thrush
Columba palumbus	Woodpigeon

2.2.5 Mammals

2.2.5.1 Badger

Badgers (*Meles meles*) are common throughout Ireland and are protected under the Wildlife Acts. The NBDC returned records for badger at the proposed plan site which date back to 2012. Two burrows, likely Badger, were recorded in the woodlands in the north of the site of the proposed plan, one which had a very old spoil heap outside of it. Both burrows were filled with vegetation and debris, indicating that they have not been used in some time. No other signs of Badger were identified during the ecological survey.

While no recent signs of Badger were found during the ecological survey, the woodland, scrub, bracken and hedgerows on the site of the proposed plan provide suitable habitat for Badger. Additionally, while Seaview Avenue is located in an urban area, there are ecological corridors located to the north of Seaview Avenue which connect it to woodland and scrub habitats in the wider area. Therefore, Badger are presumed to utilise the habitats at Seaview Avenue.

Prior to any vegetation clearance on the site of the proposed plan, a pre-construction Badger survey should be carried out in accordance with *Guidelines for the Treatment of Badgers prior to the Construction of National Road Schemes* (2005).

2.2.5.2 Bats

All nine species of bat and in Ireland bat roosts are protected under national and EU legislation – it is an offense to interfere with them without a license (npws.ie). The NBDC returned records for Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu stricto*)
Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), and Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*). There are several forested areas in Seaview Avenue. Mature trees were noted in a number of areas on the ecological field survey, including along the walkway to the west of the pond and in the dune grassland. These trees may provide suitable roosting habitat for bat species in the study area. Additionally, the woodland, scrub areas, pond and grasslands found within the study area provide suitable bat foraging habitat. A bat box was noted on one of the trees along the walkway to the west of the pond, however it was not clear whether it was in use. Further surveys may be required to assess use of the study area for roosting and foraging bats. Any felling of trees should be checked for bats, following the guidance set out in *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2023).

2.2.5.3 Other Mammals

The NBDC returned records of Otter (*Lutra lutra*) and Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) in the study area. Otter are protected under Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive, and both Otter and Hedgehog are protected under the Wildlife Acts. These species may utilise the woodland, bracken, scrub, and aquatic habitats on and near the proposed plan site. These species may be impacted by habitat loss and disturbance, should it arise from any development at Seaview Avenue.

2.2.6 Amphibians and Reptiles

The NBDC returned records for Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*), which are protected under the Wildlife Acts, although this record dates back to 1972. Common Frog (*Rana temporia*), which is also protected under the Wildlife Acts, was not recorded during the desk or field studies. This species is common throughout Ireland. A number of habitats in Seaview Avenue have the potential to provide hibernacula habitat for these species, including the woodlands, scrub, and rocks present at the sea wall. As such, this species is presumed to be present on the proposed plan site. Development in the study area has potential to negatively impact amphibians and reptiles through habitat loss and deterioration.

2.2.7 Invertebrates

The NBDC returned a number of threatened invertebrate species: Small Heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*), Bare-saddled *Colletes* (*Colletes similis*), Coast Leafcutter Bee (*Megachile maritima*), Red-tailed Bumblebee (*Bombus lapidarius*), Yellow Shell (*Camptogramma bilineata*); although only the Red-tailed Bumblebee (*Bombus lapidarius*) has been recorded in the last 20 years. Small Blue (*Cupido minimus*), an endangered butterfly, was also identified during the desk study, although this record dates back to 1979. A small 'moth garden' has been created by Arklow Tidy Towns, with species such as Jasmine and Evening Primrose to support nocturnal pollinators. Habitats in Seaview Avenue including woodlands, grasslands, and the pond provide habitat for invertebrates, including pollinators. These habitats, particularly grasslands, should be managed so as to enhance pollinator habitat throughout Seaview Avenue.

2.2.8 Flora

The NBDC returned records for Moore's Horsetail (*Equisetum hyemale x ramosissimum = E. x moorei*) and Yellow Horned-poppy (*Glaucium flavum*). These species are near threatened plant species, and were recorded in 2025 and 2019 respectively. Moore's Horsetail is also

listed on the Flora Protection Order (FPO) 2022. This was recorded in the Arklow Golf Links, which is approximately 700m south of the masterplan, on the other side of the Avoca River. However, there are other records from the 2km grid square, dating back to the early 2000's. The exact location of these records is unknown. According to the Biodiversity Action Plan for Arklow (2021), a population of Moore's Horsetail was recorded at Arklow Ponds and Arklow Caravan Park during the rare plant surveys of County Wicklow in 2007[6]. Further surveys may be required to determine whether these species are present in Seaview Avenue, and to inform future management measures.

2.2.9 Invasive species

The NBDC returned records for Himalayan Knotweed (*Persicaria wallichii*), Japanese Knoteweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), which are listed under Regulation S.I. 477/2011 and Regulation S.I. 374/2024. Himalayan Knotweed and Japanese Knotweed are also listed on the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation No. 1143/2014. These species were not recorded during the ecological survey.

Alien and invasive plant species such as garden escapes and ornamental species are numerous on the site, such as New Zealand Flax (*Phormium tenax*), Hooker's Hebe (*Hebe brachysiphon*), and New Zealand Holly (*Olearia macrodonta*). A number of medium impact invasive species were also recorded on the site, including Butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Himalayan Honeysuckle (*Leycesteria formosa*), Pampas Grass (*Cortaderia selloana*). Sycamore was recorded within the woodlands at the site of the proposed plan. Sycamore is common throughout Ireland, and its presence on the site is not considered to be a significant constraint. Additionally, the mature Sycamore trees on the site provide habitat for a variety of species, including birds and mammals.

Sea-buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) is a medium risk invasive species which is also listed under Regulation S.I. 477/2011, and Regulation S.I. 374/2024. This species was recorded to the east of the duck pond.

Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*), a high risk invasive species, was recorded as a hedgerow within a flower bed to the northwest of the site, where the site borders a leisure club.

Development at Seaview Avenue could result in the spread of alien invasive species both within the park and to other areas. However, there is also the opportunity to eradicate these species, particularly invasive species listed under EU Regulations, such as Sea-buckthorn.

2.2.10 Other records of protected and invasive species

Records of rare, protected, and invasive flora and fauna species within the study area were obtained the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) online database and are presented below in Table 2.6.

[6] Wilson, F. 2021. *Biodiversity Action Plan for Arklow*. Report Prepared for Arklow Tidy Towns.

Table 2.6 Rare, Protected and Invasive Species records from NBDC within approximately 2km of the site boundary.

Common Name	Scientific name	Date of last record	Designation
Terrestrial Mammals			
Badger	*Meles meles*	31/12/2012	WA
Common Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu stricto*	26/08/2014	EU HD: Annex IV; WA
Daubenton's Bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	13/08/2020	EU HD: Annex IV; WA
Hedgehog	*Erinaceus europaeus*	01/05/2023	WA
Leisler's Bat	*Nyctalus leisleri*	26/08/2014	EU HD: Annex IV; WA
Otter	*Lutra lutra*	09/02/2015	EU HD: Annex II, Annex IV; WA
Soprano Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	26/08/2014	EU HD: Annex IV; WA
Whiskered Bat	*Myotis mystacinus*	26/08/2014	EU HD: Annex IV; WA
Marine Mammals			
Common Porpoise	*Phocoena phocoena*	08/12/2018	EU HD: Annex II, Annex IV; WA; OSPAR Convention
Harbour Seal	*Phoca vitulina*	16/07/2016	EU HD: Annex II, Annex V; WA
Risso's Dolphin	*Grampus griseus*	17/09/2021	EU HD: Annex IV; WA
Reptiles			
Common Lizard	*Zootoca vivipara*	07/09/1972	Protected Species: WA
Invertebrates			
Bare-saddled Colletes Bee	*Colletes similis*	16/07/1930	Near threatened
Coast Leafcutter Bee	*Megachile maritima*	30/07/1930	Near threatened
Red-tailed Bumblebee	*Bombus lapidarius*	08/08/2021	Near threatened
Small Blue Butterfly	*Cupido minimus*	08/07/1979	Endangered
Small Heath Butterfly	*Coenonympha pamphilus*	26/08/2013	Near threatened
Yellow Shell Moth	*Camptogramma bilineata*	13/06/2004	Near threatened
Fishes			
Atlantic Cod	*Gadus morhua*	18/10/2014	OSPAR Convention
Flora			
Moore's Horsetail	*Equisetum hyemale x ramosissimum = E. x moorei*	13/05/2025	FPO; Near threatened
Yellow Horned-poppy	*Glaucium flavum*	15/06/2019	Near threatened

Common Name	Scientific name	Date of last record	Designation
Invasive species			
Himalayan Knotweed	*Persicaria wallichii*	15/09/2024	EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation No. 1143/2014; Regulation S.I. 477/2011; Medium Risk Invasive Species; Regulation S.I. 374/2024
Japanese Knotweed	*Fallopia japonica*	17/06/2020	EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation No. 1143/2014; Regulation S.I. 477/2011; High Risk Invasive Species; Regulation S.I. 374/2024
Rhododendron	*Rhododendron ponticum*	17/06/2020	Regulation S.I. 477/2011; Regulation S.I. 374/2024; High Risk Invasive Species

Where WA = Wildlife Acts 1976, HD = Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, FPO = Flora Protection Order

3. SUMMARY OF THE KEY CONSTRAINTS / OPPORTUNITIES

The following are the key **opportunities** for biodiversity identified from a desktop review of the proposed plan, along with field surveys carried out by ROD personnel:

1. The creation of low nutrient diverse grasslands.
2. The protection and enhancement of the woodland, scrub and bracken habitats on the site.
3. Enhancement of the condition of the pond
4. The management and eradication of invasive species on the site, such as invasive species listed under EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation No. 1143/2014, Regulation S.I. 477/2011, and Regulation S.I. 374/2024.
5. The reduction of trampling and disturbance in natural and semi-natural habitats via the improvement of pathways.
6. The provision of more trees on the site, which would create habitat and enhance ecological corridors in the area.

The following are the key **constraints** for biodiversity identified from a desktop review of the proposed plan, along with field surveys carried out by ROD personnel:

1. Scrub, bracken, and woodland habitat and mature trees on the proposed plan site.
2. The potential presence of bats on the site and in the study area.
3. The presence of badger, hedgehog and other species protected under the Wildlife Acts in the study area.
4. The presence of alien and invasive species on the site, including invasive species listed under EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation No. 1143/2014, Regulation S.I. 477/2011, and Regulation S.I. 374/2024.
5. The potential presence of Moore's Horsetails in the area, particularly in the pond.