

## News Article No. 15 February 2024

Update on project activities from October 2023 to February 2024 below:

### **Engineering Design**

Scheme development has continued, taking account of the results of environmental surveys and comments/submissions from various stakeholders, as well as input from Public Participation Events that have been undertaken so far. A number of stakeholders are being consulted to ensure acceptable designs can be implemented. These include internal stakeholders of both Dublin City Council and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, landowners, local resident groups and local sports groups.

The final scheme design has been broken up into 7 separate design areas. Of these 7 areas, the scheme has been very well advanced in 5 areas. Ongoing discussions are taking place to inform the final designs in Dartry Park and the Dropping Well Parking Lot.

Once preliminary designs are finalised, a final Public Participation Event will be held to get public feedback prior to submission of the planning application.

### **Environmental Surveys**

At the start of the project, a number of environmental surveys were undertaken. These originally occurred in 2020, during the covid-19 pandemic lockdown. A number of these, such as the air quality monitoring and noise surveying have been updated. The additional information will help to ensure accuracy as these original surveys were potentially influenced by the lockdown. The specialists will provide their opinion on this in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report.

The project ecologist undertook a site walkover to re-assess the habitats and species present. Due to potential changes that have occurred since the original surveys were carried out in 2020/2021, a number of surveys are to be repeated in 2023/2024. These include:

- Mammal surveys
- Breeding bird surveys
- Wintering bird surveys
- Bat surveys

To date, mammal surveys and wintering bird surveys have been undertaken. The findings of these surveys further reiterate the importance of the River Dodder as foraging and habitat land for otters. This is considered in the scheme design where works will be kept away from the riverbank where possible. The preliminary results of the wintering bird surveys found the river to be a key habitat for Kingfisher birds and is utilised by a large number of wintering/water birds such as cormorants (see image), dippers and herons.



Tenders have been received for the undertaking of bat surveys in the upcoming summer season. It is anticipated that an appointment of a specialist will take place in early March 2024. These specialists will then undertake a number of bat surveys to confirm the data collected in the 2020 survey.

