



**THORNTON O'CONNOR**  
TOWN PLANNING

# **Planning Report and Statement of Consistency**

**Prepared in Respect of a Proposed Mixed-Use Development that Constitutes a Large-Scale Residential Development at a Site of Approximately 2.22 Ha at Greenfields, Swords, Co. Dublin**

**Prepared on Behalf of Jackie Greene Construction Limited**

**July 2026**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Thornton O'Connor Town Planning<sup>1</sup>, in association with MCORM Architects<sup>2</sup> (MCORM), Roger Mullarkey & Associates<sup>3</sup>, NRB Consulting Engineers<sup>4</sup> (NRB), MandE Consulting Engineers<sup>5</sup> (MandE), Cunnane Stratton Reynolds Land Planning & Design<sup>6</sup> (CSR), CMK Hort + Arb Limited<sup>7</sup> (CMK), DNV<sup>8</sup>, 3D Design Bureau<sup>9</sup> (3DDB), Model Works<sup>10</sup>, Integrated Environmental Solutions Consulting<sup>11</sup> (IES), Wave Dynamics Acoustic Consultants<sup>12</sup> (Wave), AWN Consulting<sup>13</sup> (AWN), Independent Site Management<sup>14</sup> (ISM), MacroWorks<sup>15</sup> and John Cronin & Associates<sup>16</sup>, has been retained by Jackie Greene Construction Limited<sup>17</sup> (the Applicant) to submit this Planning Application for a mixed-use development that constitutes a 'Large-Scale Residential Development' (LRD) to Fingal County Council (FCC).

### 1.1 LRD Definition

The Application relates to a development comprising 289 No. apartment units, a commercial/retail unit and a crèche, proposed in 5 No. blocks.

The proposed development is classified as an LRD as defined by the *Planning and Development (Amendment) (Large-Scale Residential Development) Act 2021*:

*"'large-scale residential development' means a development that includes—*

- (a) the development of 100 or more houses,*
- (b) the development of student accommodation that includes 200 or more bed spaces,*
- (c) both the development of 100 or more houses and of student accommodation, or*
- (d) both the development of student accommodation that includes 200 or more bed spaces and of houses,*

*where the LRD floor space of—*

- (i) in the case of paragraph (a), the buildings comprising the houses,*
- (ii) in the case of paragraph (b), the student accommodation,*

<sup>1</sup> No. 1 Kilmacud Road Upper, Dundrum, Dublin 14

<sup>2</sup> No. 1 Grantham Street, Dublin 8

<sup>3</sup> Duncreevan, Kilcock, Co. Kildare

<sup>4</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, No. 40 Mespil Road, Dublin 4

<sup>5</sup> Unit No. 4, Oak Close, Western Business Park, Dublin 12

<sup>6</sup> Gainsboro House, No. 24 Suffolk Street, Dublin 2

<sup>7</sup> Drumone, Oldcastle, Co. Meath

<sup>8</sup> 3D Core C, Block No. 71, The Plaza, Park West, Dublin 12

<sup>9</sup> Unit No. 1, Adelphi House, George's Street Upper, Dún Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

<sup>10</sup> The Old Courtyard, Newtownpark Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

<sup>11</sup> Capella Building, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, No. 60 York Street, Glasgow

<sup>12</sup> Block No. 5, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Airvista Office Park, Santry, Dublin 9

<sup>13</sup> The Tecpro Building, Clonsaugh Business and Technology Park, Dublin 17

<sup>14</sup> No. 77 Camden Street Lower, Dublin 2

<sup>15</sup> Second Floor, Brookfield House, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

<sup>16</sup> No. 3a Westpoint Trade Centre, Link Road, Ballincollig, Co. Cork

<sup>17</sup> Verdant House, Fortfield Square, College Drive, Terenure, Dublin 6W

(iii) *in the case of paragraphs (c) and (d), the buildings comprising the houses and the student accommodation,*

*is not less than 70 per cent, or such other percentage as may be prescribed, of the LRD floor space of the buildings comprising the development;”*

As the proposed development includes 289 No. residential units and ‘non-residential’ floorspace not exceeding 30% of the total floor area, it is considered to be a LRD and must proceed through the corresponding ‘planning route’.

## 1.2 Preceding Consultation

As required by the relevant LRD legislation, this Planning Application has been preceded by Section 247 Pre-Planning Consultation (PPC) and Section 32C LRD Meeting (LRDM) Consultation with FCC.

### 1.2.1 Section 247 PPC

The PPC meeting was held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2025 via Microsoft Teams and assigned PPC Ref. No. LRD0066/S1. Attendees at the PPC were:

#### Applicant and Design Team Attendees:

- Brian Greene
- Susan Kennedy
- Gareth Nolan
- Stephen Brennan
- Declan Coakley
- Patricia Thornton
- Sharon McCarthy
- Zach Byrne
- Shane Walsh
- Patrick McNabola
- Eoin Reynolds
- Roger Mullarkey
- Nuno Costa

#### FCC Attendees:

- Solomon Aroboto
- Anna Winter
- Rebecca Walsh
- Patrick Conway
- Gemma Carr
- Rian Glynn

### 1.2.2 Section 32C LRDM

The LRDM was held on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025 and the *LRD Opinion* was received on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2026. The meeting was assigned Ref. No. LRD0066/S2. Attendees at the LRDM were:

#### **Applicant and Design Team Attendees:**

- Brian Greene
- Daniel Moody
- Patrick McNabola
- Jan Hendrik
- Shane Walsh
- Roger Mullarkey
- Eoin Reynolds
- Nuno Costa
- Alistair Ferrar
- Lewis Burke
- Eoin Boylan

#### **FCC Attendees:**

- Solomon Aroboto
- Deirdre Fallon
- Philip Mansfield
- Liam Harte
- Gemma Carr
- Ellen Giffney
- Shane Comaskey
- Cian Pigott
- Rebecca Walsh
- Rian Glynn
- Phillip Grobler
- Patrick Conway
- Mark Lenehan

### **1.3 Summary of the Proposed Development**

The proposed development principally comprises the construction of a mixed-use development in 5 No. blocks (A–E) ranging in height from 1 No. storey to 9 No. storeys. The development includes: 289 No. residential units (60 No. 1-bed, 200 No. 2-bed and 29 No. 3-bed); a commercial/retail unit (701 sq m); and a crèche (418 sq m) with external play area (42 sq m).

### **1.4 Submitted Planning Application Documents**

Please refer to the enclosed cover letter which includes a full list of the documents submitted as part of the Planning Application pack.

Note that proof of payment of the planning fee is provided in Appendix A below.

### **1.5 Purpose and Structure of this Report**

The purpose of this *Planning Report and Statement of Consistency* ('Planning Report', hereafter) is to introduce the subject site's location and history, to summarise the details of the proposed development and to demonstrate how it accords with key policies, objectives and principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

The report continues with the following structure:

**Section 2.0** – Site Location, Description, Context and Accessibility

**Section 3.0** – Planning History

**Section 4.0** – Development Description

**Section 5.0** – Strategic Planning Policy Context

**Section 6.0** – Planning Policy Overview and Assessment

**Section 7.0** – Conclusion

**Appendix A** – Planning Application Fee Proof of Payment

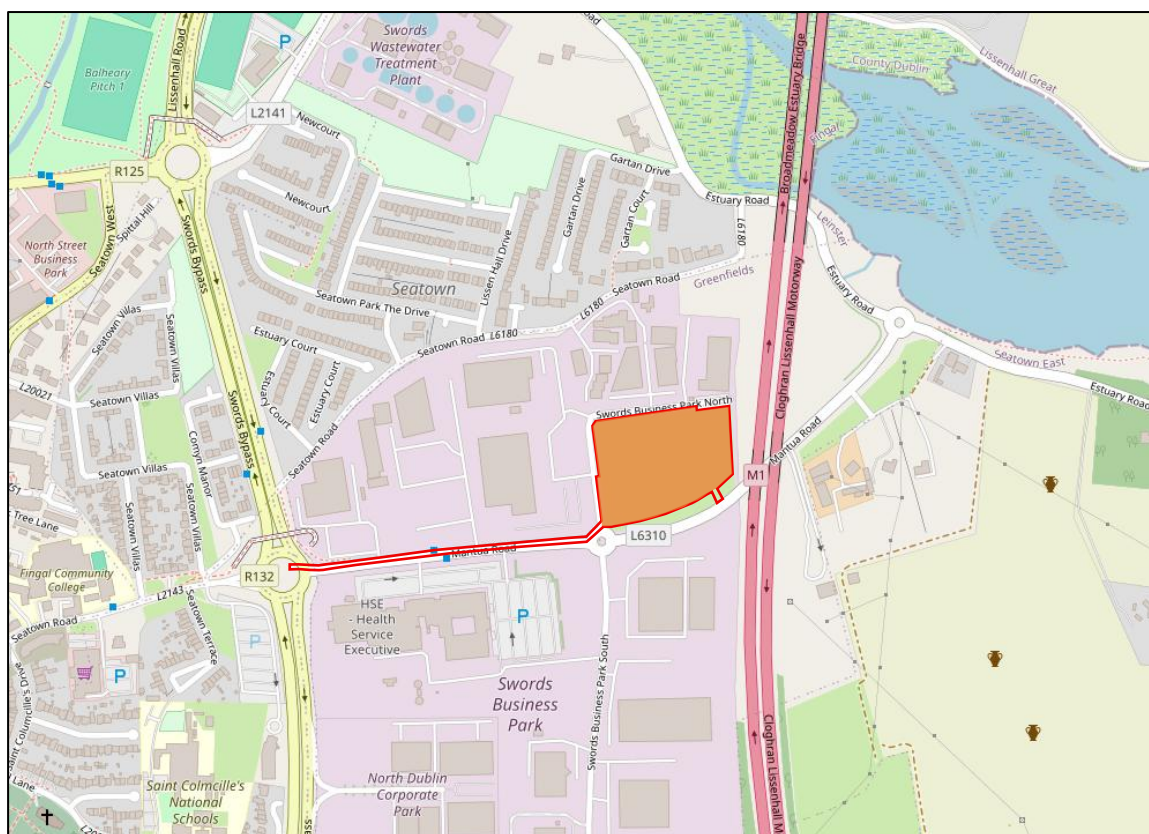
## 2.0 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION, CONTEXT AND ACCESSIBILITY

The following section provides an overview of the subject site's location, description, context and accessibility.

### 2.1 Site Location

The subject site, which extends to approximately 2.22 Ha, is principally located within the Swords Business Park; an established urban area on the eastern side of the Swords settlement (Figure 2.1). The key development area is principally bound as follows: to the north by an access road and ancillary car park to, *inter alia*, Units 2, 3 and 5; to the east by extensive hedgerows and trees, with the M1 Motorway beyond; to the south by Mantua Road (L6310); and to the west by an access road.

The site falls within the townland of Greenfields.



**Figure 2.1: Map Showing the Location of the Subject Site (Site Boundary Indicatively Outlined in Red and the Net Site Area Shown in Orange)**

**Source:** GIS.EPA.ie, Annotated By Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

The subject site, as prescribed by Map No. 8 of the *Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029*, has the zoning designation 'MRE – Metro and Rail Economic Corridor', where the stated objective is to "Facilitate opportunities for high-density mixed-use employment and commercial development and support the provision of an appropriate quantum of residential development within the Metro and Rail Economic Corridor." The MRE zoning of the site will be further discussed in Section 6.1.



## 2.2 Site Context

The subject site is located within the established Swords Business Park, which is accessed from multiple points. In terms of the general layout of the area, the main retail area is located in the centre of Swords and includes the Main Street and the Pavilions and Swords Central combined shopping centres. The built-up area of Swords is mainly to the west of the town where the majority of the town's residential development is located. The east of Swords is mostly made up of commercial and industrial parks with some residential estates also. This is shown in Figure 2.2 below.



**Figure 2.2: Aerial View Context Map with Site Location Indicated By Red Dot**

**Source:** BingMaps.com, Annotated By Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

Whilst the site's location is within, and its immediate context is comprised of, commercial and industrial uses, it is an area that is changing with the benefit of planning applications granted for residential and residential-led mixed-use development. This is furthered by, and will additionally benefit from, the planned and funded MetroLink public transport infrastructure to be delivered in the coming years.

## 2.3 Site Description

As evident in Figure 2.3, the key development site is greenfield in nature. Its eastern boundary abuts a defined edge of dense hedgerow, which acts as a buffer to the M1 Motorway farther east. There is a series of existing trees along its western boundary and scattered throughout the site, including a notable Willow specimen. None of the trees on site are designated for retention in the Development Plan.

The site's topography features some variation; ascending from east to west, with a level difference of approximately 1.5 m.



**Figure 2.3: Aerial View of the Net Site Area (Indicatively Outlined in Orange)**

**Source:** BingMaps.com, Annotated By Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

There are no Protected Structures within the site nor is it located within an Architectural Conservation Area. The subject site is not located within either Flood Zones A or B. From a review of the National Monuments Services' Historic Monument Viewer, there are no identified archaeological features within or adjacent to the subject site.



**Figure 2.4: Bird's Eye View, Facing North with the Key Development Area Indicatively Outlined in Orange**

**Source:** KnightFrank.ie, Annotated By Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

As illustrated in Figure 2.5, there is existing access to the subject site off the internal access road along the site's northern boundary.





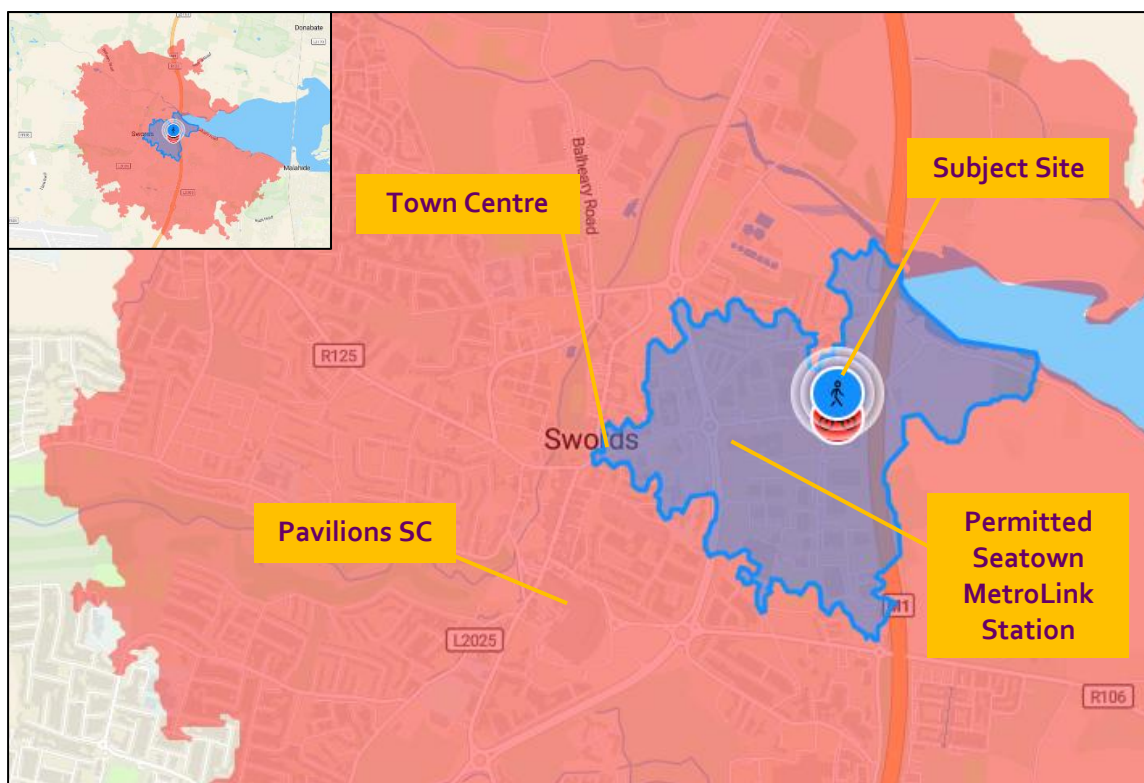
**Figure 2.5: Existing Access to the Subject Site Along the Northern Boundary**

**Source:** Google Maps Street View (November 2022), Annotated By Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

## **2.4 Site Accessibility**

### **2.4.1 Active Modes – Walking and Cycling**

Due to the urban location of the subject site in Swords, future residents will benefit from a wide range of services, facilities and amenities within the immediate and surrounding areas. Figure 2.6 below illustrates the 15-minute walking / cycling ranges from the subject site (noting in this instance the model does not account for inaccessibility directly across the M1).



**Figure 2.6:** 15-minute walking (blue) and cycling (red) ranges from the subject site (indicatively located by walking icon)

**Source:** TravelTime.com, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

Table 2.1 provides examples of nearby services, facilities and amenities in close proximity to the subject site (from the centre of the site to the closest points).

| Service, Facility or Amenity | Category                         | Walk Time  | Cycle Time |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Kids Inc                     | Childcare                        | 8 minutes  | 3 minutes  |
| Aldi                         | Retail (Convenience)             | 11 minutes | 3 minutes  |
| Fingal Community College     | School                           | 11 minutes | 3 minutes  |
| St Colmcille's Boys NS       | School                           | 12 minutes | 3 minutes  |
| Fingal Podiatry & Chiropody  | Healthcare                       | 13 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Swords Community Park        | Public Park                      | 13 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Castle Medical Centre        | Healthcare                       | 14 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| St Colmcille's Girls NS      | School                           | 14 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Metahair                     | Personal Service                 | 14 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Swords Dental Clinic         | Healthcare                       | 14 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Swords Physiotherapy         | Physiotherapist                  | 14 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Pure Pharmacy                | Healthcare                       | 15 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Suprem Barbers               | Personal Service                 | 15 minutes | 5 minutes  |
| Swords Health Centre (HSE)   | Healthcare                       | 15 minutes | 5 minutes  |
| Pavilions Shopping Centre    | Retail, Dining and Entertainment | 19 minutes | 5 minutes  |

**Table 2.1:** Key services, facilities and amenities proximate to the subject site

**Source:** Google Maps (2026), collated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

As a result of the site's location, the subject lands benefit from excellent existing cycle infrastructure, with Primary Radial, Primary Orbital, Secondary, Feeder and Greenway routes all

within the vicinity of the subject lands. It is also proposed under the National Transport Authority's *Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan* to enhance the cycle network in the Greater Dublin Area, with a range of cycle infrastructure proposed which will greatly expand coverage, range and comfort for cyclists.

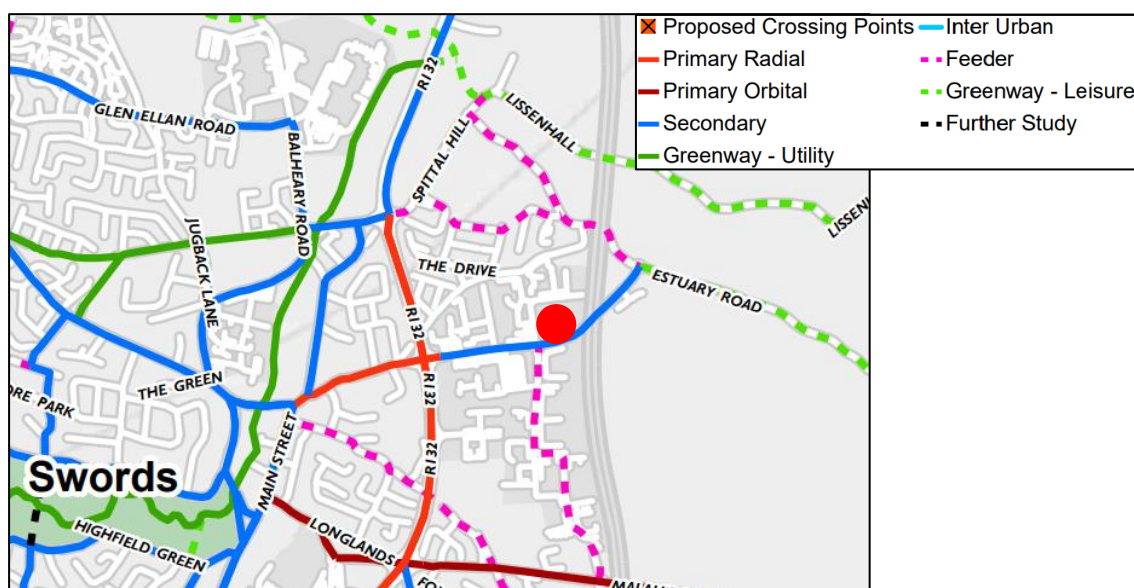


Figure 2.7: Existing and Proposed Cycle Infrastructure Surrounding the Subject Lands (Indicative Location Denoted by Red Dot)

Source: National Transport Authority's 2022 *Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan – Dublin North Central*, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

## 2.4.2 Public Transport

### 2.4.2.1 Existing Bus Services

There are currently several bus routes serving the subject site via the nearby Mantua Road and the Swords Bypass (R132).

| Route No. | Provider       | Route: To and From                         | Frequency (Peak Time) |
|-----------|----------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 43        | Dublin Bus     | Swords Business Park towards Talbot Street | 20-minutes            |
| 101       | Bus Eireann    | Dublin towards Drogheda                    | 30-minutes            |
| 500       | Swords Express | Berwick Wall towards Eden Quay             | 30-minutes            |
| 197       | GoAhead        | Airside towards Ashbourne                  | 60-minutes            |

Table 2.2 Existing Bus Services Serving the Subject Site

Source: [www.transportforireland.ie](http://www.transportforireland.ie) (2026)

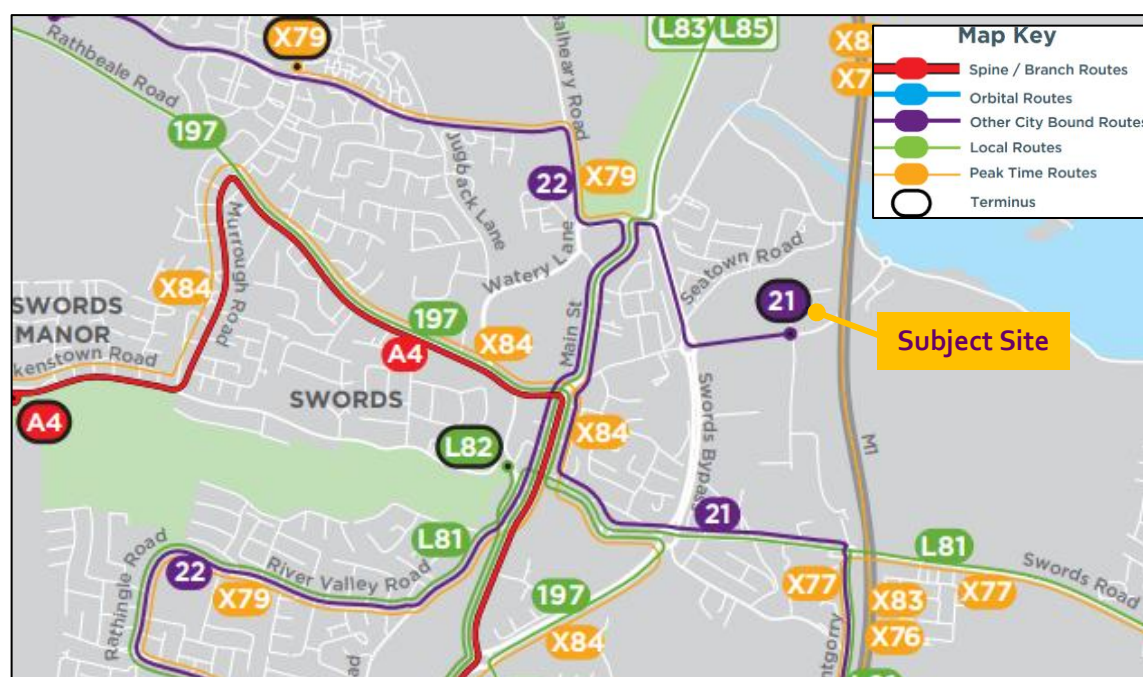
In addition, there are 7 No. similar routes (Nos. 41D, 500N, 500X, 501, 503, 506 and 507) that also serve the site via the wider road network.

### 2.4.2.2 Proposed BusConnects

BusConnects is a national program for investment in the bus network in cities across Ireland. As part of BusConnects Dublin, the bus network will be redesigned, and a more legible and

accessible transport network created. A key principle underpinning this network is the notion of 'Abundant Access' which is the idea that through simple connections and transfers between public transport services, more of the city can be accessible to passengers within a reasonable travel time. One such way in which this will be achieved is through the provision of local routes which will provide important connections within local areas, linking local retail centres and facilitating onward transport connections.

The proposed route network in the vicinity of the subject site is shown at Figure 2.8. The emerging route network in the vicinity of the subject site will notably enhance connectivity with the surrounding area and beyond.



**Figure 2.8: Indicative Location of the Subject Site under the new Bus Connects Scheme**

**Source:** BusConnects Big Picture Map, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

Under BusConnects, additional bus routes are planned that will service the subject site. The No. 21 route will serve Mantua Road and 5 No. additional routes will serve the nearby Main Street (approximately a 14-minute walk from the subject site), these new routes are illustrated below in Table 2.3.



| Spine / Branch Routes    |                                                    |             |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| A4                       | Swords – City Centre – Dundrum                     | 12-minutes  |
| City Bound Routes        |                                                    |             |
| 21                       | Swords Business Park – Kinsealy – City Centre      | 30-minutes  |
| 22                       | Glen Ellan Rd – River Valley – City Centre         | 15-minutes  |
| Peak-Only/Express Routes |                                                    |             |
| X79                      | Glen Ellan Rd – River Valley – City Centre – UCD   | 6 No. daily |
| X84                      | Knocksedan – Swords Manor – City Centre – UCD      | 6 No. daily |
| Local Routes             |                                                    |             |
| L81                      | Sutton – Portmarnock – Malahide – Swords - Airport | 20-minutes  |

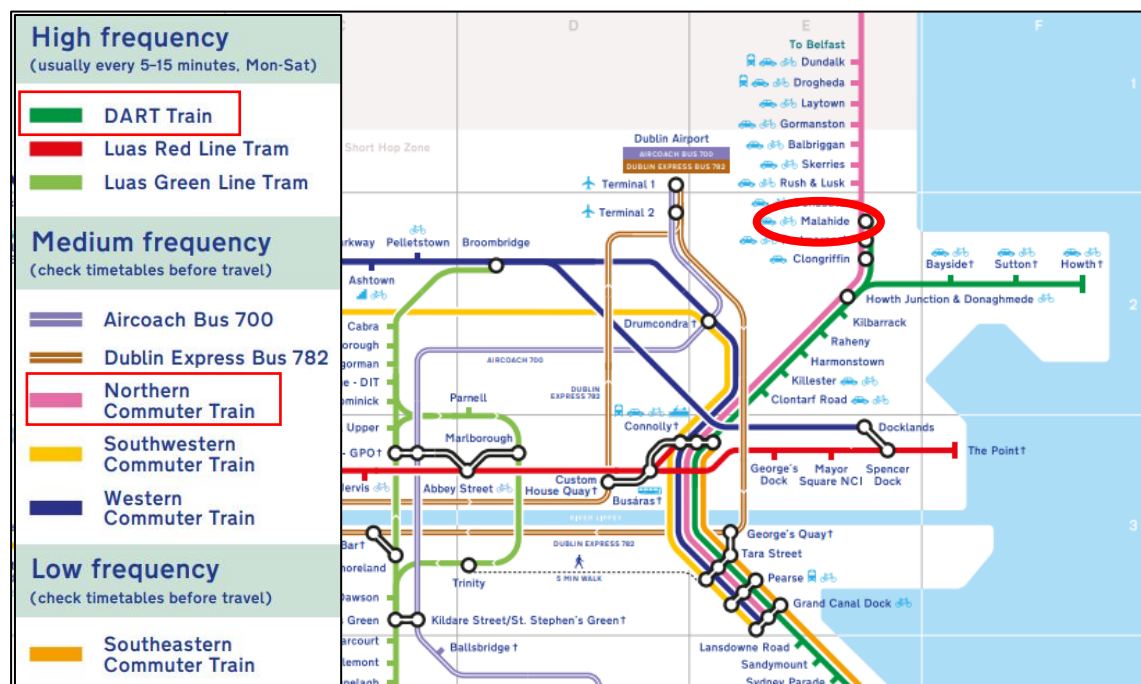
**Table 2.3: Proposed Bus Routes in the Vicinity of the Subject Site**

**Source:** BusConnects.ie (2026)

At the time of submission of this report, we note that the only route identified in Figure 2.8 that has come forward and is in operation is Route No. 197, which serves Main Street and is indicated in Table 2.2 on the previous page.

### 2.4.2.3 Existing Rail Services

The subject site is located approximately 4.2 km from the Malahide Train Station, which is equivalent to approximately an 8-minute drive or 15-minute cycle. Malahide Train Station is served by both the Northern Commuter and the DART services. The Northern Commuter service, as identified in Figure 2.9 has a 'Medium Frequency' which has a peak frequency of approximately 20-30 minutes, while the DART is identified as 'High Frequency' with a peak frequency of approximately 10 minutes, depending on the day of the week. Malahide Train Station has capacity for both car and bicycle parking.



**Figure 2.9: Rail Services Map, Malahide Train Station Circled in Red**

**Source:** IrishRail.ie, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

#### 2.4.2.4 Proposed Rail Services

In *Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022–2042*, improved public transport links across Dublin are presented with a 'New Metro North' line intended to be introduced that will see an improvement in public transport connection to Swords. Section 12.3.2 of the strategy states that:

*"The current Metrolink project has been identified as the most advantageous way to serve the critical levels of transport demand on this corridor... Metrolink will integrate with local, regional and national bus and rail services at several points along its route, including key interchanges at Dublin Airport, Glasnevin, Tara Street and Charlemont."*

The *National Planning Framework* and the *National Development Plan 2021–2030* also highlight this new Metro line in Swords to be an example of how Dublin City expects to respond to rapid growth in areas outside of, but proximate to, the city. The *National Development Plan Review 2025* (July 2025) committed €2 billion for the commencement of Metrolink, which was granted permission by An Coimisiún Pleanála on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025. The new line will decrease journey times for people from Swords to Dublin City, with an approximate journey of 25 minutes. The new Metro line is shown in Figure 2.10 below. The proposed Metrolink will run to the west of the development site and will have a stop approximately 450 m or a 7-minute walk from the subject site (see Figure 2.11).

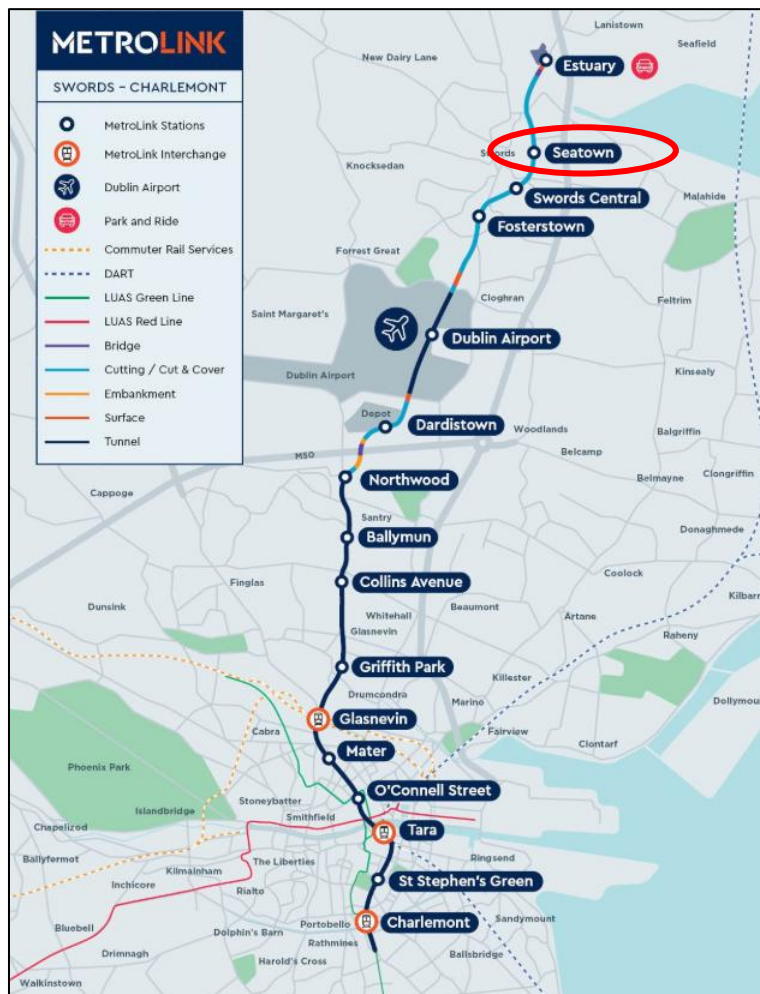


Figure 2.10: New Metro Line for Dublin with Seatown circled in Red

Source: [www.metrolink.ie](http://www.metrolink.ie), annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)





**Figure 2.11:** Site Proximity to Proposed MetroLink Seatown Station

**Source:** *Fingal County Council Interactive Zoning Map*, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

### 3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

The following section provides a summary overview of the planning history pertaining to the subject site and of other useful precedent developments.

#### 3.1 Subject Site

The following section of this report outlines the planning history of relevance to the subject site. Thornton O'Connor Town Planning conducted an online assessment of the site's planning history, identifying 2 No. previous planning applications, details of which are provided below.

##### 3.1.1 FCC Reg. Ref. F94A/0575 – Distributor Roads

|                                       |                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>FCC Reg. Ref.:</b>                 | <b>F94A/0575</b>                                                    |
| <b>Application Date:</b>              | 18 <sup>th</sup> August 1994                                        |
| <b>Location:</b>                      | Mantua/Greenfields, Seatown Road, Swords, Co. Dublin.               |
| <b>Brief Development Description:</b> | Erection of distributor roads and ancillary site development works. |
| <b>FCC Decision Date:</b>             | 11 <sup>th</sup> November 1994                                      |
| <b>FCC Decision:</b>                  | Grant Permission                                                    |
| <b>Final Grant Date:</b>              | 21 <sup>st</sup> December 1994                                      |

There are no documents available to view online regarding this planning application. However, the description notes that permission was sought for distributor roads in Swords Business Park. The site area of this application includes the subject site, however, there was no development proposed thereon.

##### 3.1.2 FCC Reg. Ref. FooA/0054 – Enterprise and Employment Development

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>FCC Reg. Ref.:</b>                 | <b>FooA/0054</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Application Date:</b>              | 26 <sup>th</sup> May 2000                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Location:</b>                      | Swords Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Brief Development Description:</b> | Development comprising approx. 17,636 sq. m. enterprise and employment floor space for office use including the handling and processing of information, research and development of products, and science and technology based processes; all in seven buildings ranging in height from three to four storeys: 678 car parking spaces including 14 spaces for mobility impaired persons; 56 parking spaces for motorcycles and 126 bicycle spaces: bus lay-by; site development and landscape works; all on a site of some 2.1 hectares. |
| <b>FCC Decision Date:</b>             | 25 <sup>th</sup> July 2000                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>FCC Decision:</b>                  | Grant Permission                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Final Grant Date:</b>              | 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2000                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

Permission was granted on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2000 by FCC (Final Grant 31<sup>st</sup> August 2000) for a large office development of nearly 18,000 sq m. However, the development was never constructed and the permission has since expired.

### 3.2 Planning Application for a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) on MRE Zoned Lands

To provide insights and positive, supporting precedent for the Council in respect of permitting residential development on 'MRE – Metro and Rail Economic Corridor', we note 2 No. permitted LRDs thereon below.

#### 3.2.1 FCC Reg. Ref. LRD0025/S3E (ABP Ref. LHo6F.321455)

| FCC Reg. Ref.                        | LRD0025/S3E                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Application Date</b>              | 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Location</b>                      | A site fronting the Swords to Malahide Road (R106), Mountgorry, Swords, Co. Dublin                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Brief Development Description</b> | Bartra Propco No. 23 Limited intend to apply for permission for development for a Large-scale Residential Development (LRD) at this c. 0.8731 Ha site fronting the Swords to Malahide Road (R106), Mountgorry, Swords, Co. Dublin. The site is bounded to the west by open space, with Seamount View Housing Estate further beyond, to the south by the R106, to the east by an access road to the Applegreen Service Station and to the north by Swords Business Park. The development's surface water drainage network shall discharge from the site into the existing manhole located along the access road to the east of the site. The development site area and drainage work areas will provide a total application site area of c. 0.8792 Ha. The proposed development will principally consist of: the construction of 123 No. residential units (55 No. one bed apartments and 68 No. two bed apartments). The development will be provided in a courtyard block arrangement ranging in height from part 4 No. to part 5 No. storeys. The proposed development has a gross floor area of c. 10,291 sq m. The proposed development will also provide: vehicular access from the access road to the east; 24 No. car parking spaces; bicycle parking spaces; motorcycle parking spaces; pedestrian/cycle entrances at the south-west and north of the site, and along the western boundary connecting into the adjoining open space; a footpath and bicycle path around the south, east and north of the site perimeter and a shared cycle/pedestrian path along the western boundary; balconies and terraces facing all directions; hard and soft landscaping; boundary treatments; green roofs; lift overrun; PV panels; |
| <b>FCC Decision Date</b>             | 20 <sup>th</sup> November 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>FCC Decision</b>                  | Refuse Permission                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Appeal Date</b>                   | 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>ABP Decision</b>                  | Grant Permission                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Decision Date</b>                 | 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

Under FCC Reg. Ref. LRD0025/S3E, permission was sought for a wholly residential development, comprising 123 No. units, on an MRE-zoned site. This site is located just south of the Swords Business Park and approximately 750 m south of the subject site. The site is proximate to the M1 to the east, existing residential development to the south and west and commercial development to the north. The location of this site is shown in Figure 3.1.

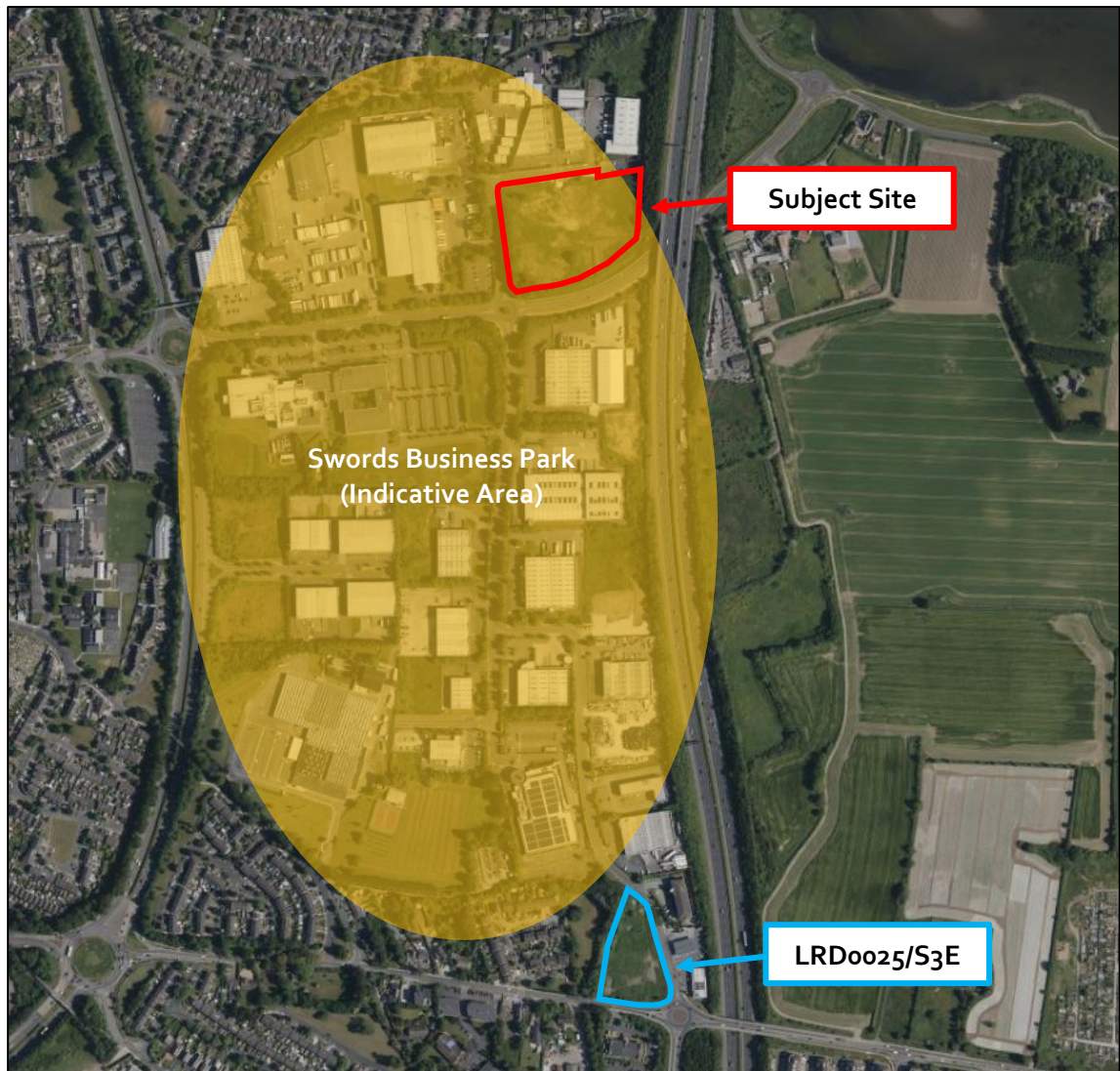


Figure 3.1: Location of the Subject Site Proximate to Reg. Ref.: LRD0025/S3E

Source: BingMaps.ie, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

The Planning Authority, on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024, decided to refuse permission on, *inter alia*, the grounds that the proposed development would "*materially contravene the MRE zoning objective and vision of the site*". The Planning Authority was of the opinion that MRE-zoned lands should comprise a combination of residential and commercial development.

This decision was appealed by the Applicant to An Bord Pleanála. The Planning Inspector, on the principle of solely residential development on MRE-zoned lands stated the following:

*"The zoning objective indicates that residential uses are permitted in principle, in my view, it is not accurate to use the term "materially contravene" in terms of normal planning practice. The Board should not, therefore, consider itself constrained by Section 37(2) of the Planning and Development Act...*

*The planning authority desire a mixed use development at this site, but in hypothetical terms, would that mean that an office block of the same proportions, without any residential uses, would also be refused. However, it is the zoning objective that guides development and inspires certainty in the planning process. In this instance the MRE zoning, upon my reading and that of the applicant, is that residential uses are*



*permitted in principle. There are no exceptions, no clauses to take into account, the zoning objective is clear and unambiguous in its simplicity. Given that residential uses are permitted in principle and there are no qualifiers, I am not satisfied that any contravention of the development plan, material or otherwise, would occur if the development were permitted."* [emphasis added]

The proposed development sought to provide 24 No. car parking spaces for its 123 No. units, which is equivalent to a car parking ratio of 0.2 No. spaces per unit. On this provision, the Planning Inspector stated the following:

*"With reference to parking, the proposed development is within 'Zone 1' of the parking zones set out in the development plan. With a provision of 24 spaces, this is below the maximum level of 61 set out in the Table 14.19: Car Parking Standards of the development plan, this is an acceptable quantum of car parking given the accessible location qualities of the site..."*

*The proposed development is located at a well-served suburban location close to a variety of amenities and facilities. The site of the proposed development is within 800m (950m walking distance) of a proposed Metrolink station and a 1500m (1700m walking distance) of a proposed Busconnects Core Bus corridor. Current public transport options are limited to low and high frequency bus services without defined bus corridors but this may change once a metro comes into play."* [emphasis added]

A density of approximately 141 dph and a unit mix comprising 45% 1-bed units and 55% 2-bed units was considered acceptable by the Planning Inspector, who stated the following:

*"...the proposal will provide a high-quality development, with an appropriate mix of apartment units and an acceptable density of development."* [emphasis added]

The Planning Inspector ultimately recommended that the Planning Authority's decision be overturned, and that permission be granted for the proposed development. On 25<sup>th</sup> February 2025, An Bord Pleanála opted to grant planning permission.

A CGI of the permitted scheme is illustrated below in Figure 3.2.



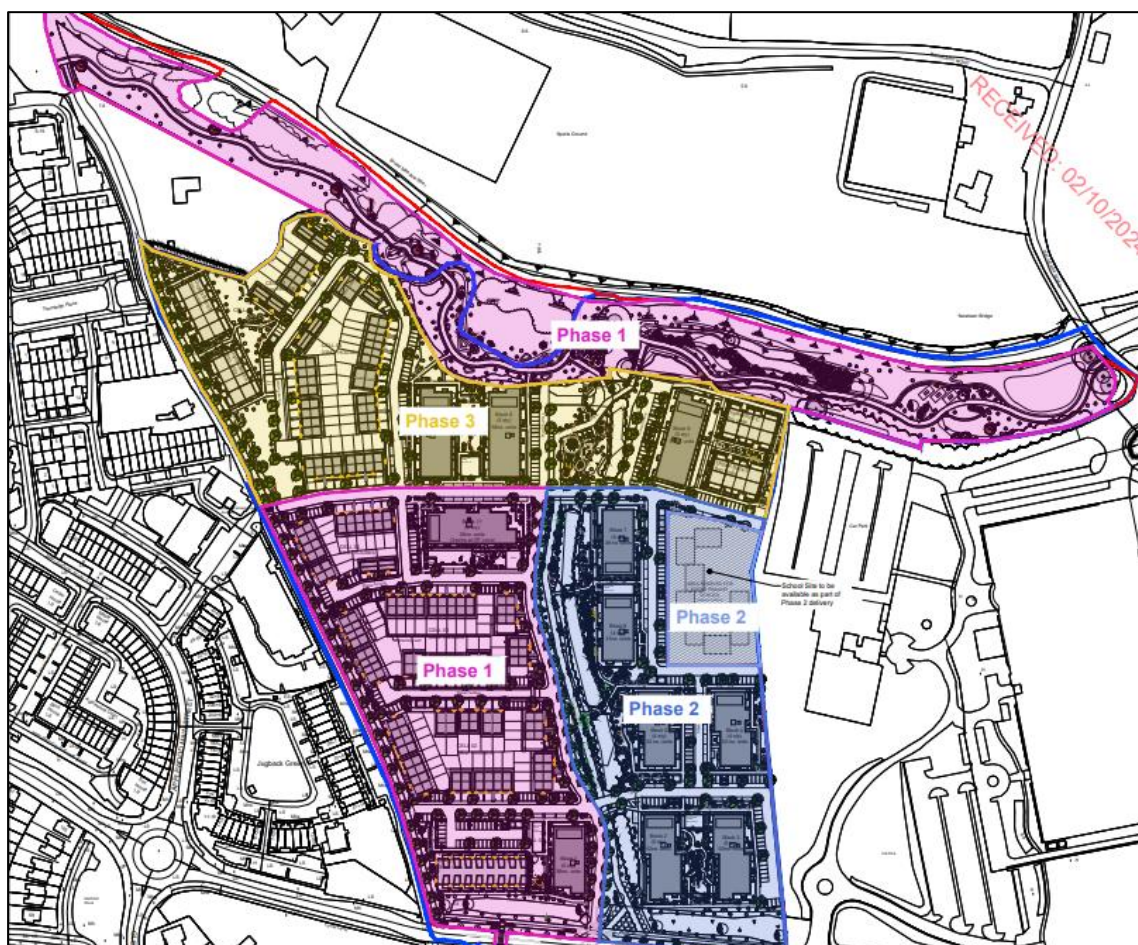
Figure 3.2: CGI of the Permitted Scheme

Source: As submitted under ABP Ref. LHo6F.321455

### 3.2.2 FCC Reg. Ref. LRD0018/S3E (ABP Ref. LHo6F.323029)

| FCC Reg. Ref.                 | LRD0018/S3E                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Application Date              | 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2024                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Location                      | Estuary West Lands at Holybanks, Swords, Co Dublin                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Brief Development Description | Cairn Homes Properties Limited intends to apply to Fingal County Council for a 7-year planning permission for a Large-Scale Residential Development at a 13.57-hectare site in "Holybanks," Swords, Co. Dublin. The site is bounded by Glen Ellan Road, Jugback Lane/Terrace, the former Celestica factory site, and the Broadmeadow River. The proposal includes 640 residential units, consisting of 132 houses, 474 apartments, and 34 duplex units, with varying sizes and heights of up to five storeys. A childcare facility (537 sq.m) is also planned. The development will provide 501 car parking spaces, 1,506 bicycle spaces, and 26 motorbike spaces, along with pedestrian and cycle routes. Approximately 4.27 hectares of open space will be created, including a significant extension of Broadmeadow River Park. The project also includes road and junction improvements at Glen Ellan Road/Balheary Road and the R132/R125 Seatown West Roundabout, with upgraded pedestrian and cycle facilities. Additional works include landscaping, boundary treatments, EV charging points, green roofs, and essential infrastructure. Temporary signage permission is also sought. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared for the proposed development. |
| FCC Decision Date             | 16 <sup>th</sup> June 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| FCC Decision                  | Grant Permission                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Appeal Date                   | 17 <sup>th</sup> June 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Note:                         | Appeal withdrawn 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2025                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

The application site at Estuary West Lands at Holybanks, Swords is located approximately 1.5 km north-west of the subject site. The site is similarly zoned MRE and the application proposed 640 No. residential units and a crèche. The proposed site masterplan including the phasing strategy is illustrated below in Figure 3.3.



**Figure 3.3: Proposed Site Masterplan / Phasing Strategy**

**Source:** As submitted under FCC Reg. Ref. LRD0018/S3E (November 2024)

On 26<sup>th</sup> November 2024, FCC decided to request additional information. Prior to this decision, the Planning Officer assessed the application for development. On the development's proposed density of 74.5 dph, the Planning Officer stated the following:

*"It is considered that the proposed density at this site is acceptable and in accordance with the Estuary West Masterplan and Compact Settlement Guidelines."*

A CGI of the proposed development is provided below in Figure 3.4.





**Figure 3.4: Computer-Generated Image (CGI) of the Proposed development**

**Source:** As submitted under FCC Reg. Ref. LRD0018/S3E

FCC issued a *Notification of Decision to Grant Permission* for the proposed development on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025. A Third-Party Appeal was lodged in respect of this decision. However, this was subsequently withdrawn on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025. A *Final Grant* was issued for the proposed development on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

### 3.3 Planning History Insights

The planning history of the subject site is very limited and ultimately fails to provide substantial insights to inform how a future development thereat should be designed, planned or sited.

However, the 2 No. cited precedents are useful. They illustrate the permissibility of wholly residential and almost entirely residential developments on MRE-zoned lands and at large, dense scales. This accords with local and national policy efforts to increase the intensity of land-use at infill locations within existing settlements, minimising land-take of edge of centre locations and maximising the efficiency of existing infrastructure. As will become evident in the sections below, the proposed development also aligns with these principles.



## 4.0 DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

The following section provides a description of the proposed development. It should be read in conjunction with the plans and particulars of the main design-focused disciplines: architecture, landscape architecture and engineering.

### 4.1 Key Site and Development Statistics

Several of the key site and development statistics are detailed in Table 4.1 below.

|                                   |                                                          |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Gross Site Area</b>            | 2.22 Ha                                                  |
| <b>Net Site Area<sup>18</sup></b> | 1.98 Ha                                                  |
| <b>Height</b>                     | 1–9 No. storeys                                          |
| <b>Residential Units</b>          | 289 No.                                                  |
| <b>Dual Aspect</b>                | 66.8% (193 No. units)                                    |
| <b>Residential GFA</b>            | 29,239.6 sq m                                            |
| <b>Commercial/Retail GFA</b>      | 701 sq m                                                 |
| <b>Creche GFA</b>                 | 418 sq m                                                 |
| <b>Density</b>                    | 151.8 dph                                                |
| <b>Public Open Space</b>          | 3,642 sq m<br>(equivalent to 18.4% of the net site area) |
| <b>Communal Open Space</b>        | 2,745 sq m                                               |
| <b>Car Parking Spaces</b>         | 132 No.                                                  |
| <b>Motorcycle Parking Space</b>   | 13 No.                                                   |
| <b>Cycle Parking Spaces</b>       | 782 No.                                                  |

**Table 4.1: Key Site and Development Statistics**

**Source: MCORM Architects and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)**

### 4.2 Summary Description of the Development

Permission is sought for a mixed-use development with a gross floor area of approximately 30,358 sq m (variances due to roundings) and principally comprised in 5 No. blocks (A–E), with heights ranging from 1 No. to 9 No. storeys. The proposed block heights are as follows:

- Block A is 6 No. to 7 No. storeys;
- Block B is 6 No. to 7 No. storeys;
- Block C is 6 No. to 7 No. storeys;
- Block D is 6 No. to 9 No. storeys; and
- Block E is 1 No. to 9 No. storeys.

<sup>18</sup> Omits works on Mantua Road and the pedestrian/cyclist connection at the south.



**Figure 4.1:** CGI of the proposed development from within the scheme, with Block A (left), Block B (centre) and Block C (right), with the modulation of height and stepping in form adding to the variation of the massing

**Source:** 3D Design Bureau (2026)



**Figure 4.2:** Verified view photomontage of the proposed development from the south-east principally looking towards Block D (centre), demonstrating the use of materials, modulated height, stepped and inset building footprint and fenestration to achieve an attractive and varied built-form

**Source:** 3D Design Bureau (2026)

The development consists of:

- 289 No. residential apartments (60 No. 1-bed, 200 No. 2-bed and 29 No. 3-bed);
- Retail/commercial unit (701 sq m) at ground floor level of Block E; and
- Crèche (418 sq m) at ground floor level of Block A, with outdoor play area (42 sq m) to the block's eastern side.

The development also comprises:

- New multi-modal site entrance to the west, tying in the existing access road serving Swords Business Park;
- Minor relocation of existing northern site entrance to the east, tying in the existing access road serving Swords Business Park;
- Internal road, cycle and footpath network;
- 132 No. car parking spaces, of which 122 No. are for the residential units and 10 No. are for the crèche and commercial/retail unit;
- 13 no. motorcycle parking spaces;
- 782 No. cycle parking spaces, of which 603 No. are long-stay in enclosed stores and 179 No. are short-stay/visitor as Sheffield stands;
- Hard and soft landscaping (Figure 4.3, including –
  - Public open space of 3,642 sq m (Figure 4.4) provided in 3 No. areas, designed to incorporate attractive and functional features (seating, a nature corridor walk, ecology enhancements and natural play elements) and considered planting (for example Pedunculate Oak, Hawthorn, Scots Pine and Silver Birch).
  - Communal amenity space of 2,745 sq m in 2 No. at-grade locations between Blocks A and B and B and C, and as 2 No. roof gardens atop Blocks D E), designed to incorporate children's play spaces in 2 No. areas, seating and socialising spaces, carefully considered planting, including trees and shrubs, lawns, attractive hard-surfaces to create robust and functional amenity and rooftop amenity space providing panoramic views.
  - Incidental open space and landscaping throughout the development, that although not counting towards the public open space and communal amenity space calculations, add to placemaking, urban design, local ecology and green infrastructure delivery.





Figure 4.5: Landscape masterplan (including roof level)

Source: CSR (2026)



Figure 4.5: CGI of the proposed development from the south-west looking across the public open space towards Block E (right) and Block A (left)

Source: 3D Design Bureau (2026)



- Private amenity space as balconies and terraces facing all directions;
- Public lighting;
- Bin stores;
- Plant rooms;
- 2 No. sub-stations;
- Green roofs;
- Rooftop plant, PV panels, telecommunications infrastructure, lift overruns and automatic opening vents; and
- All associated works above and below ground.

## 5.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The following section provides an overview of strategic national and regional planning policy and the proposed development's compliance with same. However, please note that the more detailed planning assessment is contained in Section 6.0 below.

### 5.1 *Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework*

*Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework* is the Government's high-level, overarching strategic plan that aims to shape the future growth and development of the country. It was originally published in February 2018, but was revised under the *National Planning Framework First Revision* (2025) (NPF).

Under the NPF, the Irish Government has set out long term strategic goals for the Republic of Ireland. These goals are geared towards compact growth and the sustainable development of Ireland to accommodate an increased population of one million people by the year 2040.

Section 2.2 of the NPF sets out an overview of the strategy which includes reference to 'Compact Growth' as follows:

- *"Targeting a greater proportion (40%) of future housing development to be **within the existing 'footprint' of built-up areas.**" [emphasis added]*
- *"**Making better use of under-utilised land and buildings, including 'infill', 'brownfield' and publicly owned sites and vacant and under-occupied buildings, with higher housing and jobs densities, better serviced by existing facilities and public transport.**" [emphasis added]*

Section 6.6 of the NPF further calculates that:

*"To meet projected population and economic growth as well as increased household formation, annual **housing output will need to increase to approximately 50,000 homes per annum in the years to 2040** and will be subject to monitoring and review." [emphasis added]*

To assist in the delivery of 50,000 additional homes annually, Section 6.6 of the NPF further states that Ireland's future homes will need to:

- *"**..be located in places that can support sustainable development** - places which support growth, innovation and the efficient provision of infrastructure, are accessible to a range of local services, can encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling, and help tackle climate change;*
- ***be delivered in our cities and larger towns (where large scale housing demand exists), where homes and the appropriate supporting services can be delivered more efficiently and effectively at less cost to the State in the long-run, and***
- *still be located in our smaller towns, villages and rural areas, including the countryside, but at an appropriate scale that does not detract from the capacity of our larger towns and cities to deliver homes more sustainably." [emphasis added]*

The NPF augments the above, remarking:

*“Well designed and located high and medium density housing will assist:*

- *Fast-growing urban areas to achieve much needed scale;*
- *Medium-sized urban areas to find a route to quality in a new competitive framework;*
- *All urban areas to increase vibrancy and vitality;*
- *Increased efficiency and sustainability in the use of energy and public infrastructure.”*

The proposed development is a direct response to the national housing shortage that is readily reported and identified in recent planning policy. The proposed development is consistent with the principles set out throughout this section as it provides a variety of dwelling sizes to meet the need for additional housing at a well-connected, well-served, infill site.

The NPF expressly seeks the densification of infill sites close to existing public transport, services and facilities such as at the subject site. National Policy Objective 45 states that it is an objective to:

*“Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration, increased building height and more compact forms of development.”*

The NPF recognises that building inwards and upwards is important to effectively address the housing crisis in a more environmentally efficient and sustainable way. Therefore, it is contended that there is a significant importance placed in the NPF on developing high-quality accommodation by increasing the density of developments.

Thus, the NPF supports the delivery of the proposed development through increased density and height at the subject site, having regard to the design of the development which considers existing residential amenity, its proximity to public transport and local amenities, retail and commercial services and facilities.

Section 1.3 of the NPF identifies a list of 10 No. National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), which define its vision. They are as follows:

1. Compact Growth;
2. Enhanced Regional Accessibility;
3. Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities;
4. High-Quality International Connectivity;
5. Sustainable Mobility;
6. A Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills;
7. Enhanced Amenity and Heritage;
8. Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society;
9. Sustainable Management of Environmental Resources; and
10. Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services.

A series of key National Policy Objectives (NPOs) are also defined by the NPF and are the more detailed means through which the NSOs will be achieved. NPO 74 states:

*"Secure the alignment of the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan through delivery of the National Strategic Outcomes."*

Table 5.1 below sets out how the proposed development will contribute towards achieving the 10 No. NSOs identified in the NPF.

| No. | National Strategic Outcome                                             | How it is addressed by this development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Criteria met? |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1   | <b>Compact Growth</b>                                                  | Residential-led, mixed-use development at an infill site, increasing local densities and land-use intensities proximal to existing and proposed public transport, services, facilities and amenities.                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Yes           |
| 2   | <b>Enhanced Regional Accessibility</b>                                 | Proximal to bus stops and the future MetroLink stop at Seatown, enabling prompt onward connectivity to inter-city rail.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Yes           |
| 3   | <b>Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities</b>                    | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | N/A           |
| 4   | <b>High-Quality International Connectivity</b>                         | N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | N/A           |
| 5   | <b>Sustainable Mobility</b>                                            | Ties into existing cycle and pedestrian infrastructure by way of DMURS-compliance and allowing for connectivity with the forthcoming cycle upgrades proposed along Mantua Road. A range of services, facilities and amenities are available in the area, thereby promoting active modes.<br><br>Located within a short walking distance to multiple bus routes and the future MetroLink stop at Seatown. | Yes           |
| 6   | <b>A Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills</b> | The mixed-use aspect of the scheme will generate employment through the provision of childcare facilities and the Class 1 / Class 2 commercial unit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Yes           |
| 7   | <b>Enhanced Amenity and Heritage</b>                                   | No Protected Structures, protected archaeological features or Architectural Conservation Areas are present at or in the environs of the site.<br><br>Whilst some tree removals are necessary, large swathes of same are to be protected and retained, with substantial compensatory planting to offset the removals.                                                                                     | Yes           |
| 8   | <b>Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society</b>        | Low car parking and high cycle parking provision will encourage the use of active modes and public transport. Sustainable renewable energy sources are                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Yes           |



| No. | National Strategic Outcome                                        | How it is addressed by this development                                                                                                                                                                                          | Criteria met? |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|     |                                                                   | proposed. A target for an A-rated development (BER) is sought.                                                                                                                                                                   |               |
| 9   | <b>Sustainable Management of Environmental Resources</b>          | Materials will be carefully selected to minimise resource use, and where appropriate (in accordance with the RWMP), demolition waste will be repurposed.                                                                         | Yes           |
| 10  | <b>Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services</b> | A crèche is proposed to cater for the childcare demand generated by the proposed development, with the <i>Social Infrastructure Audit</i> confirming the adequacy of education, healthcare and other services in the wider area. | Yes           |

**Table 5.1: Compliance with the NPF's NSOs**

**Source:** *National Planning Framework First Revision (2025)* and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

The above NSOs are supplemented by NPOs, with some of those of relevance to the proposed development outlined below:

**NPO 4** – “A target of half (50%) of future population and employment growth will be focused in the existing five cities and their suburbs.”

**NPO 7** – “Deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth.”

**NPO 8** – “Deliver at least half (50%) of all new homes that are targeted in the five Cities and suburbs of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, within their existing built-up footprints and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth.”

**NPO 10** – “Deliver Transport Orientated Development (TOD) at scale at suitable locations, served by high capacity public transport and located within or adjacent to the built up footprint of the five cities or a metropolitan town and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth.”

**NPO 12** – “Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.”

**NPO 13** – “Develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity.”

**NPO 14** – “Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity, enhanced levels of amenity and design and placemaking quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area to ensure progress toward national achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.”

**NPO 20** – “In meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing

*cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth."*

**NPO 22** – *"In urban areas, planning and related standards, including in particular building height and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth."*

**NPO 37** – *"Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages."*

**NPO 38** – *"Plan for a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services."*

**NPO 43** – *"Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location."*

**NPO 44** – *"Support the provision of lifetime adaptable homes that can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time."*

**NPO 45** – *"Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration, increased building height and more compact forms of development."*

**The development proposed herein is wholly supported by, and supportive of, the foregoing NPOs. As a higher density development of residential units, a crèche and commercial unit, it seeks to sustainably and efficiently use this infill site within the existing built footprint of Swords. It integrates with established and proposed public transport and the existing range of local services, facilities and amenities.**

## 5.2 **Urban Development and Building Heights – Guidelines for Planning Authorities**

The *Urban Development and Building Heights: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2018) (Height Guidelines) establish a series of national rules in relation to building heights and new developments. The Height Guidelines were prepared to work in concert with the objectives of the NPF and other national Guidelines for the delivery of sustainable development and compact growth.

The Guidelines are intended to set a more proactive policy and regulatory framework for planning the growth and development of cities and towns upwards rather than outwards. The Guidelines note that increasing prevailing building heights has a critical role to play in addressing the delivery of more compact growth in urban areas, particularly cities and large towns by enhancing both the scale and density of development. Accordingly, the planning process must actively address how this objective will be secured.

The Guidelines remark that:

*"...it is Government policy that building heights must be generally increased in appropriate urban locations. There is therefore a presumption in favour of buildings of increased height in our town/city cores and in other urban locations with good public transport accessibility."*

The Height Guidelines are explicit in their consideration of prevailing heights of development, stressing that such heights should not dictate/constrain the scale of new development, but that they should still be respected.

Under Specific Planning Policy Requirement (SPPR) 1, Planning Authorities are required to avoid the application of blanket height restrictions, but through the plan-making process, identify areas where increases in height can be pursued:

*"In accordance with Government policy to support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly town/ city cores, planning authorities shall explicitly identify, through their statutory plans, areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for both redevelopment, regeneration and infill development to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and shall not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height."*

In accordance with SPPR 1, Chapter 3 (Sustainable Placemaking and Quality Homes) and Chapter 14 (Development Management Standards) of the *Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029* ('Development Plan') "set[s] out policies and objectives to support increased building heights and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly urban cores, and specifically encourage renewal, redevelopment, regeneration and infill opportunities". Please refer to Section 6.4 below, where building heights are dealt with in more detail.

We are of the opinion that SPPR 2 of these Guidelines does not apply to the proposed development, as it relates to the role of planning authorities achieving greater heights and mixed-use development and mechanisms to achieve same.

SPPR 3 is in respect of developments that do not comply with the specific objectives of the relevant development plan or local area plan, however, as detailed in Section 6.4 of this report, the height of the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan, and as such this SPPR does not apply.

Under SPPR 4, in respect of "greenfield or edge of city/town locations", Planning Authorities are required to secure:

- " - the minimum densities for such locations set out in the Guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), titled "Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2007) [sic]" or any amending or replacement Guidelines;*
- a greater mix of building heights and typologies in planning for the future development of suburban locations; and*
- avoid mono-type building typologies (e.g. two storey or own-door houses only), particularly, but not exclusively so in any one development of 100 units or more."*

Although technically greenfield (having not previously been developed), the subject site is infill in nature and within an evolving area of urban succession and regeneration, as envisaged by the MRE zoning (Section 6.1 below). In compliance with this SPPR, the development achieves appropriate densities in accordance with *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2024) (Compact Settlements Guidelines), which have replaced the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (see discussion in Sections 5.4 and 6.5).

Building heights, typologies and mix of uses are all varied to avoid monotony of form and land-use. The proposed development includes:

- Housing, a commercial/retail unit and a childcare facility;
- 1-bed, 2-bed and 3-bed apartment typologies, with communal and own door access;
- Heights ranging from 1 No. to 9 No. storeys, with varying forms of massing and delivery;
- Varied materials and detailing.

Therefore, the proposed development complies with SPPR 4, in our opinion.

### 5.3 ***Planning Design Standards for Apartments: Guidelines for Planning Authorities***

The updated *Planning Design Standards for Apartments: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (Apartment Design Guidelines) were published in July 2025. The Apartment Design Guidelines define (1) the preferred locations for apartment developments to encourage higher densities and consolidate residential development, and (2) the development management standards to which they should be designed.

The Apartment Design Guidelines prescribe a series of SPPRs with which apartment developments must comply, although with dispensations in some instances. The SPPRs of relevance to the proposed development are identified and responded to in Table 5.2 below. Note that SPPRs 6, 7 and 8 of the Guidelines do not apply to this specific development type.

| SPPR No. | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Response/ Compliance                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1        | <p>(A) <i>With the exception of social housing developments, social/affordable housing provided for under Part V the Act or schemes to provide housing for older persons where a specific mix of unit sizes may be required, such as in accordance with a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), there shall be no restrictions within statutory plans in relation to the mix of unit sizes or types to be provided within apartment developments. There shall be no minimum or maximum requirements for apartments with a certain number of bedrooms.</i></p> <p>(B) <i>Where any such restriction or requirement is set out within a statutory plan, this Specific Planning Policy Requirement shall apply to any single apartment scheme and there shall be no restriction in relation to the mix of unit sizes or types and there shall be no minimum requirements for apartments with a certain number of bedrooms within the development,</i></p> | With the removal of dwelling mix restrictions, there are no strict requirements against which the proposed development must comply. Thus, the proposal aligns with the SPPR. |



| SPPR No. | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Response/ Compliance                                                                                                                               |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          | <i>except in the circumstances set out above.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 2        | <p><i>The following minimum apartment floor areas shall apply and statutory plans shall not specify minimum floor areas that exceed the minimum floor areas set out below:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• Studio apartment (1 person) 32 sq.m</i></li> <li><i>• 1-bedroom apartment (2 persons) 45 sq.m</i></li> <li><i>• 2-bedroom apartment (3 persons) 63 sq.m</i></li> <li><i>• 2-bedroom apartment (4 persons) 73 sq.m</i></li> <li><i>• 3-bedroom apartment (4 persons) 76 sq. m</i></li> <li><i>• 3-bedroom apartment (5 persons) 90 sq.m</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The floor area parameters set out above shall generally apply to apartment schemes and do not apply to purpose-built and managed student housing.</i></p>                                     | Refer to Section 6.6.1 below for full details. Please also refer to MCORM's enclosed schedules.                                                    |
| 3        | <p><i>In relation to the minimum number of dual aspect apartments that may be provided in any single apartment scheme, the following shall apply:</i></p> <p>(i) <i>A minimum of 25% of units within a development shall be required to be dual aspect. Statutory plans shall not specify minimum requirements that exceed the requirements of this Specific Planning Policy Requirement.</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>For building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, planning authorities may exercise further discretion to consider dual aspect unit provision at a level lower than the 25% minimum outlined above on a case-by-case basis, but subject to the achievement of overall high design quality in other aspects.</i></p> | <p>A total of 193 No. units (66.8%) are dual aspect thereby complying with this SPPR.</p> <p>Refer to Section 6.6.2 below for further details.</p> |
| 4        | <i>Ground level apartment floor to ceiling heights shall be a minimum of 2.7m. For building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | As detailed in the drawings prepared by MCORM, the floor-to-ceiling heights of the apartments at ground                                            |

| SPPR No. | Requirement                                                                                                                                                    | Response/ Compliance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          | <i>urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, planning authorities may exercise discretion on a case-by-case basis, subject to overall design quality.</i> | floor level exceed the minimum of 2.7 m. Therefore, the development complies with this SPPR.                                                                                                                                                                |
| 5        | <i>There shall be no requirement within statutory plans or within an individual scheme in respect of a minimum number of units per floor per core.</i>         | We note that the wording above ultimately places no restriction on how few units can be proposed per core. Therefore, it places no restriction or limitation on the proposed development. Consequently, the proposed development complies with its content. |

**Table 5.2: Evidence of compliance with the relevant SPPRs of the Apartment Design Guidelines**

**Source:** *Planning Design Standards for Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2025) and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

In addition to the above SPPRs, the Apartment Design Guidelines set supplementary guidance and various minimum areas within units (e.g. storage) and requirements (e.g. communal amenity space). The proposed development complies with these requirements, as relevant and applicable, and this is detailed in the sections of this report below and the materials prepared and submitted by the other members of the Design Team.

#### **5.4 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities**

*Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (Compact Settlements Guidelines) were adopted in January 2024, replacing *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (2009). Their purpose is to promote and accommodate more sustainable development (residential in particular), setting density standards and a suite of design requirements, such as those relating to parking and public open space.

As with the Apartment Design Guidelines, the Compact Settlements Guidelines define a suite of SPPRs, but also a series of 'Policies and Objectives'. The rest of this sub-section lists these and provides brief responses to demonstrate the proposed development's compliance with same (Tables 5.3 and 5.4). Note that SPPR 2 does not apply to this scheme as it relates to private amenity space requirements for house unit types, none of which are proposed as part of this development.

## Specific Planning Policy Requirements

| SPPR No. | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Response/ Compliance                                   |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1        | <p><b>Separation Distances</b></p> <p><i>It is a specific planning policy requirement of these Guidelines that statutory development plans* shall not include an objective in respect of minimum separation distances that exceed 16 metres between opposing windows serving habitable rooms at the rear or side of houses, duplex units or apartment units above ground floor level. When considering a planning application for residential development, a separation distance of at least 16 metres between opposing windows serving habitable rooms** at the rear or side of houses, duplex units and apartment units, above ground floor level shall be maintained. Separation distances below 16 metres may be considered acceptable in circumstances where there are no opposing windows serving habitable rooms and where suitable privacy measures have been designed into the scheme to prevent undue overlooking of habitable rooms and private amenity spaces.</i></p> <p><i>There shall be no specified minimum separation distance at ground level or to the front of houses, duplex units and apartment units in statutory development plans and planning applications shall be determined on a case-by-case basis to prevent undue loss of privacy.</i></p> <p><i>In all cases, the obligation will be on the project proposer to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the planning authority or An Bord Pleanála that residents will enjoy a high standard of amenity and that the proposed development will not have a significant negative impact on the amenity of occupiers of existing residential properties.</i></p> <p><i>This SPPR will not apply to applications made in a Strategic Development Zone until the Planning Scheme is amended to integrate changes arising from the SPPR. Refer to Section 2.1.2 for further detail."</i></p> <p><i>* "Any reference to a statutory development plan(s) in these Guidelines refers to all development plans made under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) or under any replacement Planning and Development Act, including local area plans and strategic development zones planning schemes.</i></p> <p><i>** "Refer to definition in Appendix A: Glossary of Terms."</i></p> <p><i>The Appendix defines this as "Primary living spaces such as living rooms, dining rooms, studies and bedrooms.</i></p> | <p>Please see the discussion in Section 6.7 below.</p> |

| SPPR No. | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Response/ Compliance                                                                                                                  |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3        | <p><b>Car Parking</b></p> <p><i>It is a specific planning policy requirement of these Guidelines that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>(i) In city centres and urban neighbourhoods of the five cities, defined in Chapter 3 (Table 3.1 and Table 3.2) car-parking provision should be minimised, substantially reduced or wholly eliminated. The maximum rate of car parking provision for residential development at these locations, where such provision is justified to the satisfaction of the planning authority, shall be 1 no. space per dwelling.</i></li> <li><i>(ii) In accessible locations, defined in Chapter 3 (Table 3.8) car- parking provision should be substantially reduced. The maximum rate of car parking provision for residential development, where such provision is justified to the satisfaction of the planning authority, shall be 1.5 no. spaces per dwelling.</i></li> <li><i>(iii) In intermediate and peripheral locations, defined in Chapter 3 (Table 3.8) the maximum rate of car parking provision for residential development, where such provision is justified to the satisfaction of the planning authority, shall be 2 no. spaces per dwelling.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Applicants should be required to provide a rationale and justification for the number of car parking spaces proposed and to satisfy the planning authority that the parking levels are necessary and appropriate, particularly when they are close to the maximum provision. The maximum car parking standards do not include bays assigned for use by a car club, designated short stay on–street Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations or accessible parking spaces. The maximum car parking standards do include provision for visitor parking.</i></p> <p><i>This SPPR will not apply to applications made in a Strategic Development Zone until the Planning Scheme is amended to integrate changes arising from the SPPR. Refer to Section 2.1.2 for further detail.</i></p> | <p>Please see the detailed discussion in Section 6.9.1 below.</p>                                                                     |
| 4        | <p><b>Cycle Parking and Storage</b></p> <p><i>It is a specific planning policy requirement of these Guidelines that all new housing schemes (including mixed-use schemes that include housing) include safe and</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>Please see Section 6.9.2 below for details of the calculated cycle parking requirement, as well as the quantum and location of</p> |



| SPPR No. | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Response/ Compliance                 |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
|          | <p><i>secure cycle storage facilities to meet the needs of residents and visitors.</i></p> <p><i>The following requirements for cycle parking and storage are recommended:</i></p> <p>(i) <i>Quantity – in the case of residential units that do not have ground level open space or have smaller terraces, a general minimum standard of 1 cycle storage space per bedroom should be applied. Visitor cycle parking should also be provided. Any deviation from these standards shall be at the discretion of the planning authority and shall be justified with respect to factors such as location, quality of facilities proposed, flexibility for future enhancement/ enlargement, etc. It will be important to make provision for a mix of bicycle parking types including larger/heavier cargo and electric bikes and for individual lockers.</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Design – cycle storage facilities should be provided in a dedicated facility of permanent construction, within the building footprint or, where not feasible, within an adjacent or adjoining purpose-built structure of permanent construction. Cycle parking areas shall be designed so that cyclists feel safe. It is best practice that either secure cycle cage/compound or preferably locker facilities are provided.</i></p> | those spaces proposed for provision. |

**Table 5.3: SPPRs and compliance with same**

**Source:** *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)* and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

### Policies and Objectives

| P&O No. | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Response/ Compliance                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.1     | <p><b>Densities</b></p> <p><i>It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that the recommended residential density ranges set out in Section 3.3 are applied within statutory development plans and in the consideration of individual planning applications, and that these density ranges are refined further at a local level using the criteria set out in Section 3.4 where appropriate."</i></p> <p>We contend that the subject site falls within the category of 'Metropolitan Towns (&gt;1,500 population) – Centre and Urban</p> | Based on the guidance and methodology contained in the Guidelines, a density of 151.8 dph is proposed. This falls marginally outside the generally applied range for this location. However, |

| P&O No. | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Response/ Compliance                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         | <p>Neighbourhoods', as detailed in Table 3.3 of the Guidelines, which states:</p> <p><i>"The centre and urban neighbourhoods category includes: (i) the town centre and immediately surrounding neighbourhoods, (ii) <b>strategic and sustainable development locations</b>, and (iii) <b>lands around existing or planned high capacity public transport nodes or interchanges</b> (defined in Table 3.8). It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that <b>residential densities in the range 50 dph to 150 dph (net) shall generally be applied in the centres and in urban neighbourhoods of Metropolitan Towns.</b>" [emphasis added]</i></p> <p>This is based on the position of Swords within the Dublin Metropolitan Area, as defined by the <i>Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019–2031</i> (RSES)<sup>19</sup>.</p> <p>Furthermore, the site's proximity to the planned Seatown Metrolink Station (approximately 450-metre walking distance) and the availability of existing frequent bus services (with additional routes proposed under BusConnects) at nearby bus stops<sup>20</sup> (Nos. 5044 and 4433<sup>21</sup>), all contribute to the site's status as being within a 'High Capacity Transport Node or Interchange'<sup>22</sup>.</p> | <p>we contend there to be a strong case for this (see Section 6.5) below and note no explicit opposition to or concerns in relation to the density in the <i>LRD Opinion</i> issued by the Council.</p> |
| 4.1     | <p><b>DMURS</b></p> <p><i>It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that planning authorities implement the principles, approaches and standards set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, 2013 (including updates) in carrying out their functions under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and as part of an integrated approach to quality urban design and placemaking.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Please refer to the <i>DMURS Statement of Consistency</i> prepared by NRB in respect of this Policy and Objective.</p>                                                                               |
| 4.2     | <p><b>Quality Urban Design and Placemaking</b></p> <p><i>"It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that the key indicators of quality urban design and placemaking set out in Section 4.4 are applied within statutory development plans and in the consideration of individual planning applications."</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>Please refer to the <i>Architecture and Urban Design Statement</i> prepared by MCORM in respect of this Policy and Objective.</p>                                                                    |

<sup>19</sup> See Figure 5.1 in the RSES and Appendix E in the RSES.

<sup>20</sup> Both bus stops are located within approx. 250 m walking distance of the planned Seatown Metrolink Station.

<sup>21</sup> During peak hours (07:00 – 09:00 & 16:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday), both bus stop Nos. 4433 and 5044 provide frequent bus services every 20 minutes.

<sup>22</sup> Appendix A of the Compact Settlements Guidelines defines a 'Transport Node or Interchange' as "places of convergence and interchange between different forms of transportation."

| P&O No. | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Response/ Compliance                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|         | <p>The "key indicators of quality urban design and placemaking" set out in Section 4.4 of the Guidelines fall under the headings of:</p> <p><b>"Sustainable and Efficient Movement"</b></p> <p>"Ensuring places are well connected and accessible by sustainable modes. Also acknowledging that quality of journey is equally important and that places are perceived as safe and are not dominated cars."</p> <p><b>"Mix and Distribution of Uses"</b></p> <p>"Promoting the integration of land uses and transportation and a diverse and innovative mix of housing that can facilitate compact housing and provide greater housing choice."</p> <p><b>"Green and Blue Infrastructure"</b></p> <p>"Placing and [sic] emphasis on the protection of natural assets and biodiversity, whilst also taking a more strategic view as to how open space networks are formed to balance the needs of communities."</p> <p><b>"Responsive Built Form"</b></p> <p>"Placing an emphasis on the creation of a coherent urban structure and design approach that responds to local character and is attractive."</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 5.1     | <p><b>Public Open Space</b></p> <p><i>It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that statutory development plans include an objective(s) relating to the provision of public open space in new residential developments (and in mixed-use developments that include a residential element). The requirement in the development plan shall be for public open space provision of not less than a minimum of 10% of net site area and not more than a minimum of 15% of net site area save in exceptional circumstances. Different minimum requirements (within the 10-15% range) may be set for different areas. The minimum requirement should be justified taking into account existing public open space provision in the area and broader nature conservation and environmental considerations.</i></p> <p><i>In the case of strategic and sustainable development sites, the minimum public open space requirement will be determined on a plan-led basis, having regard to the overall approach to public park provision within the area.</i></p>                                              | <p>Public open space of 3,642 sq m, equivalent to 18.4% of the net site area is proposed, thereby exceeding the standards of the Development Plan and this SPPR.</p> <p>Refer to Section 6.8.1 below for full details.</p> |

| P&O No. | Requirement                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Response/ Compliance |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
|         | <p><i>In the case of sites that contain significant heritage, landscape or recreational features and sites that have specific nature conservation requirements, a higher proportion of public open space may need to be retained. The 10-15% range shall not therefore apply to new development in such areas.</i></p> <p><i>In some circumstances a planning authority might decide to set aside (in part or whole) the public open space requirement arising under the development plan. This can occur in cases where the planning authority considers it unfeasible, due to site constraints or other factors, to locate all of the open space on site. In other cases, the planning authority might consider that the needs of the population would be better served by the provision of a new park in the area or the upgrade or enhancement of an existing public open space or amenity. It is recommended that a provision to this effect is included within the development plan to allow for flexibility. In such circumstances, the planning authority may seek a financial contribution within the terms of Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in lieu of provision within an application site.</i></p> |                      |

**Table 5.4: Policies and objectives and compliance with same**

**Source:** *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)* and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

## 5.5 **The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities**

*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009) provide detailed guidance for Planning Authorities when preparing their statutory plans and competent authorities when assessing Planning Applications. Their objectives are stated as being to:

- "Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding;
- Avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water run-off;
- Ensure effective management of residual risks for development permitted in floodplains;
- Avoid unnecessary restriction of national, regional or local economic and social growth;
- Improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders; and
- Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management."

Accordingly, a *Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment* has been prepared by Roger Mullarkey & Associates and is submitted herewith. Its preparation has been undertaken based on the guidance in the Guidelines and positively concludes that "*this site is suitable for development and has an overall low risk of being affected by flooding.*"



## 5.6 *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*

The proposed development has been designed in accordance with the principles of the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (2019) (DMURS), which prioritises active and public modes of transport over the use of the private car, seeks to create safer and more accessible environments, and supports the integration of transport infrastructure and land-uses.

For details of the proposed development's compliance with DMURS, please refer to the enclosed drawings and reports prepared by NRB. Of note is the *DMURS Statement of Consistency*, which provides key insights.

## 5.7 *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*

National guidance with respect to childcare facilities is principally contained in the *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2001) (Childcare Facilities Guidelines). They were drafted to provide Planning Authorities and Developers with guidance in relation to the provision of childcare facilities in terms of their location, scale and design.

We note that these Guidelines are now dated, and have been supplemented by guidance contained in the Apartment Design Guidelines and the *Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016*.

In relation to the extent of provision, the Childcare Facilities Guidelines state that 1 No. childcare facility should be provided for larger residential developments unless there are genuine reasons to the contrary:

*"Planning authorities should require the provision of at least one childcare facility for new housing areas unless there are significant reasons to the contrary for example, development consisting of single bed apartments or where there are adequate childcare facilities in adjoining developments. For new housing areas, an average of one childcare facility for each 75 dwellings would be appropriate. **The threshold for provision should be established having regard to the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of areas.** Authorities could consider requiring the provision of larger units catering for up to 30/40 children in areas of major residential development on the basis that such a large facility might be able to offer a variety of services – sessional/drop in/after-school, etc."* **[emphasis added]**

The provision of childcare facilities is further elaborated in Section 3.3.1 of the Guidelines, which states that "a standard of one childcare facility providing for a minimum 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings may be appropriate" for residential developments. The Guidelines additionally provide information on, *inter alia*: (i) minimum clear floor areas and (ii) operational/management requirements.

Based on the guidance above and that provided in the more recent Apartment Design Guidelines, it is necessary to determine if, and to what extent, childcare requirements exist on a case-by-case, project-by-project basis. For this project, the childcare requirement of 61 No. places was calculated using the 20:75 rate of provision and based on 229 No. units<sup>23</sup>.

However, in the analysis undertaken in the *Social Infrastructure Audit* prepared by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (enclosed under separate cover), it was determined that estimated demand for childcare places would be limited to approximately 12 No. We note that the

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<sup>23</sup> This excludes/omits all of the 1-bed units, as is permitted by the Apartment Design Guidelines.

proposed crèche, based on its floor area of 418 sq m will have capacity for approximately 60–80 No. children, depending on the services provided and the age of attendees.

For further insights, please refer to the *Social Infrastructure Audit*.

## 5.8 **Part V of the Planning and Development Act: Guidelines Issued by the Minister**

*Part V of the Planning and Development Act: Guidelines issued by the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government* details the application of Part V of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) and provides instruction on how to achieve the delivery of social housing as part of residential schemes.

Per Section 96 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended), planning applications to which Part V applies must contain 3 No. specific pieces of information.

These are summarised in all 3 No. of the:

- *Circular PL 10/2015 and Housing Circular 36/2015* (November 2015);
- *Part V of the Planning and Development Act: Guidelines issued by the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government* (January 2017); and
- *Part V Resource Pack 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Concluding Part V Agreements* (May 2025).

The Part V proposal is summarised by the Guidelines as not needing "to be overly detailed but must contain:

- *how the applicant intends to discharge his/her Part V obligation as regards a selection of a preferred option from the options available under the Act;*
- *details in relation to the units or land to be provided; and*
- *indicative costs."*

Accordingly, we note the following are enclosed, addressing each of the 3 No. requirements stated above:

- The Applicant intends to discharge its Part V obligation through the on-site transfer of completed units to FCC, pursuant to Section 96(3) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended). A total of 58 No. units (12 No. 1-bedroom, 31 No. 2-bedroom and 15 No. 3-bedroom), located in Block A, are proposed for transfer — equivalent to 20% of the 289 No. units proposed, in accordance with the requirements of Part V.
- The specific units are indicated in Section 4.4 of MCORM's *Architectural and Urban Design Statement* and the associated unit type and floor plan drawings.
- Costs have been prepared and are enclosed as a standalone schedule.

## 5.9 **Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities**

The undertaking of Appropriate Assessment is to ensure the protection and integrity of statutorily protected environments/sites. These sites are protected by the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC (as amended)) and the Habitats Directive (1992/43/EEC (as amended)), and by Natura 2000. In Ireland, such areas are identified as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Appropriate Assessment, as set out in the *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities* (2009), is "an impact assessment process that fits within the decision-making framework", albeit "the requirement [to undertake Appropriate Assessment] is not to prove what the impacts and effects will be[, if any],

but rather to establish beyond reasonable scientific doubt that adverse effects on site integrity will not result”.

As shown in Figure 5.1, there are 4 No. principal stages to Appropriate Assessment.

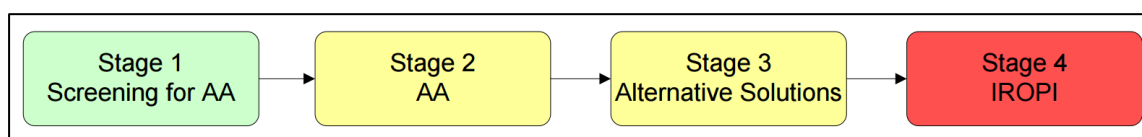


Figure 5.1: The 4 No. Stages of the Appropriate Assessment Process

(Source: *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities* (2009))

As detailed in the accompanying *AA Screening Report*, it was concluded that a degree of uncertainty existed in whether the proposed development would give rise to potentially significant effects on three European sites, namely:

- Malahide Estuary SAC;
- Malahide Estuary SPA; and
- North-West Irish Sea SPA.

Therefore, DNV were required to proceed to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment Screening process and a *Natura Impact Statement* was thus prepared.

*“This NIS has concluded that, once the avoidance and mitigation measures are implemented as proposed, the Proposed Development **will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the above European site(s), individually or in combination with other plans and projects.** Where applicable, a suite of monitoring surveys have been proposed to confirm the efficacy of said measures in relation to ensuring no adverse impacts on the habitats of the relevant European sites have occurred.*

*As a result of the complete, precise and definitive findings in of this NIS, it has been concluded, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that the Proposed Development **will have no significant adverse effects** on the QIs, SCIs and on the integrity and extent of Malahide Estuary SAC (000205), Malahide Estuary SPA (004025), and North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236). Accordingly, the Proposed Development **will not adversely affect the integrity of any relevant European site.**” [emphasis added]*

#### 5.10 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019–2031

The *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019–2031* (RSES) was published on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Contained within this regional planning document are Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) which are intended to contribute to the sustainable planning and development of the Eastern and Midlands Region over the life of the Strategy to 2031, although with a vision to 2040. Many of the RSES’s RPOs complement those of the NPF with respect to the sustainable growth and consolidated development of the region. The Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) – which the RPOs seek to attain – are summarised in Figure 5.2.

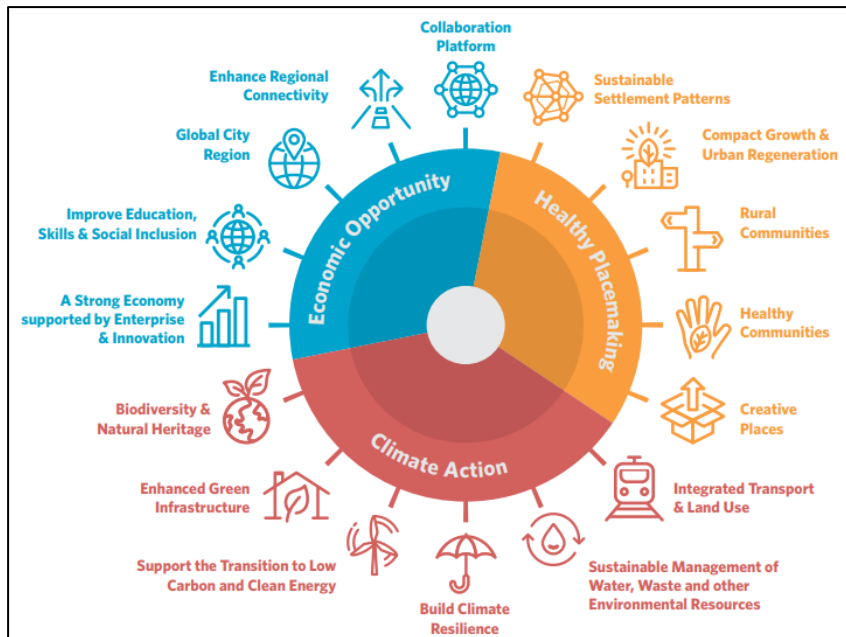


Figure 5.2: Regional Strategic Outcomes of the RSES

Source: *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly (2019)*

There are 16 No. RSOs which facilitate the implementation of NPF policy objectives. Of importance to the proposed development are the following:

**RSO No. 1 (Sustainable Settlement Patterns)** – “Better manage the sustainable and compact growth of Dublin as a city of international scale and develop Athlone, Dundalk, Drogheda and a number of key complementary growth settlements of sufficient scale to be drivers of regional growth. (NSO 1, 7, 10)”

**RSO No. 2 (Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration)** – “Promote the regeneration of our cities, towns and villages by making better use of under-used land and buildings within the existing built-up urban footprint and to drive the delivery of quality housing and employment choice for the Region’s citizens. (NSO 1).”

**RSO No. 4 (Healthy Communities)** – “Protect and enhance the quality of our built and natural environment to support active lifestyles including walking and cycling, ensure clean air and water for all and quality healthcare and services that support human health. (NSO 10)”

**RSO No. 5 (Create Places)** – “Enhance, integrate and protect our arts, culture and heritage assets to promote creative places and heritage led regeneration. (NSO 5, 7)”

**RSO No. 6 (Integrated Transport and Land Use)** – “Promote best use of Transport Infrastructure, existing and planned, and promote sustainable and active modes of travel to ensure the proper integration of transportation and land use planning. (NSO 2, 6, 8,9)”

**RSO No. 7 (Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and Other Environmental Resources)** – “Conserve and enhance our water resources to ensure clean water supply, adequate waste water treatment and greater resource efficiency to realise the benefits of the circular economy. (NSO 8, 9)”

**RSO No. 8 (Build Climate Resilience)** – *"Ensure the long-term management of flood risk and build resilience to increased risks of extreme weather events, changes in sea level and patterns of coastal erosion to protect property, critical infrastructure and food security in the Region. (NSO 8, 9)"*

**RSO No. 9 (Support the Transition to Low Carbon and Clean Energy)** – *"Pursue climate mitigation in line with global and national targets and harness the potential for a more distributed renewables-focussed energy system to support the transition to a low carbon economy by 2050. (NSO 8, 9)"*

**RSO No. 10 (Enhanced Green Infrastructure)** – *"Identify, protect and enhance Green Infrastructure and ecosystem services in the Region and promote the sustainable management of strategic natural assets such as our coastlines, farmlands, peatlands, uplands woodlands and wetlands. (NSO 8, 9)"*

**RSO No. 11 (Biodiversity and Natural Heritage)** – *"Promote co-ordinated spatial planning to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of our protected habitats and species including landscape and heritage protection. (NSO 7, 8)"*

The proposed development aligns with these RSOs by the creation of a more sustainable, dense, compact and connected urban area, tying into both existing and proposed public transport and delivering an appropriate mix of uses. Ultimately, the development complements and supports the spatial strategy of the RSES, which:

*"...combines the growth of Dublin and regional centres with a selected number of large self-sustaining settlements that have the assets and capacity to grow in a sustainable manner while minimising impacts on the receiving environment. This option offers the best opportunity to align services with population and economic growth, promote compact growth in urban settlements and make the best use of infrastructure including public transport thereby reducing transport emissions and improve regional accessibility."*

Urban regeneration and infill sites – such as the subject site – can contribute to sustainable compact growth and revitalisation of existing settlements of all scales. This will help to address the previously referenced NPOs 4, 7 and 8 of the NPF, which target the delivery of new homes within the footprint of existing settlements.

Within the RSES, there are also compact growth targets and growth enablers for the Dublin City and Metropolitan Areas, which comprise **"...at least 50% of all new homes to be built, to be within or contiguous to the existing built-up area of Dublin city and suburbs and a target of at least 30% for other metropolitan settlements, with a focus on healthy placemaking and improved quality of life."** *[emphasis added]*

The development of the underutilised subject site will ensure that an appropriately dense and designed development is delivered in close proximity to high-quality public transport. The provision of a range of 1-, 2- and 3-bed apartments, will provide a broad choice of housing options and cater for the needs of a variety of different individuals and households. These will be complemented by the crèche and commercial unit, aligning with the principles of the '15-minute city' concept.



## 6.0 PLANNING POLICY OVERVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this section is to detail the policies and objectives applicable to the proposed development on the subject site and to undertake an assessment in support of the scheme. The *Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029* (Development Plan) is the statutory plan for the area and guides development relating to the subject site, but with key inputs from Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines.

### 6.1 Land Use Zoning

The subject site is zoned by the Development Plan, as 'MRE – Metro and Rail Economic Corridor' (Figure 6.1). This zoning designation has the following objective:

*"Facilitate opportunities for high-density mixed-use employment and commercial development and support the provision of an appropriate quantum of residential development within the Metro and Rail Economic Corridor."*

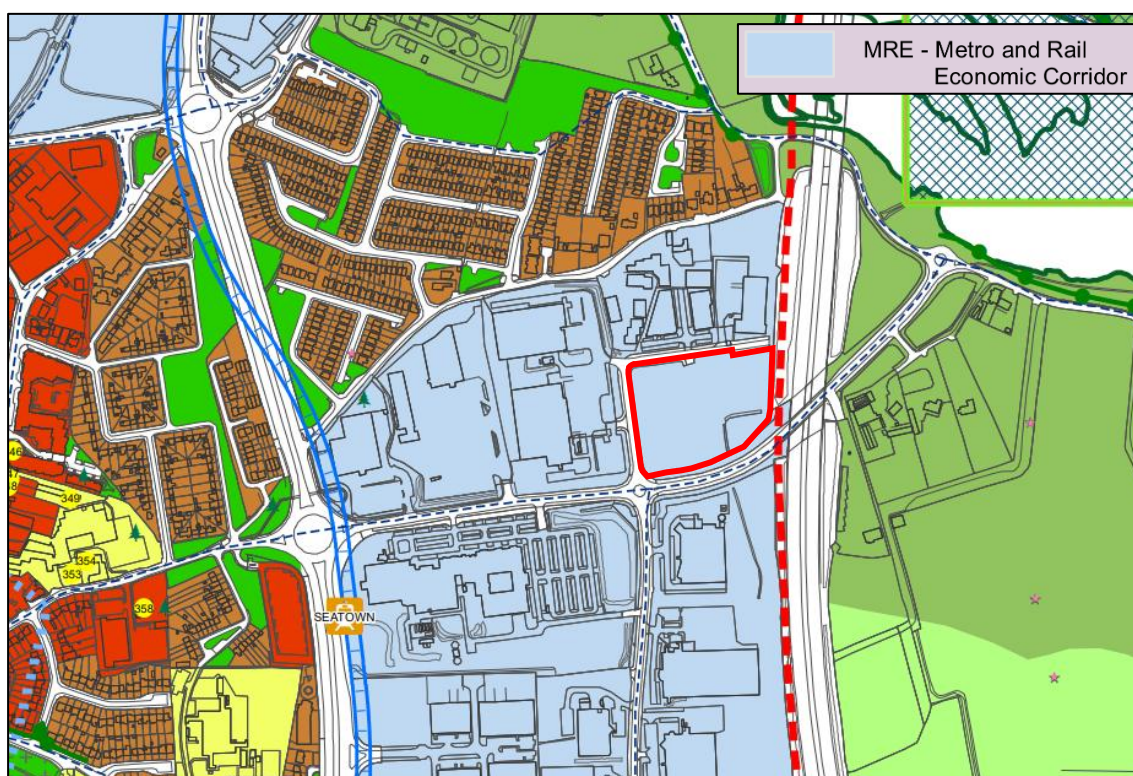


Figure 6.1: Zoning Designation of the Subject Site (Indicatively outlined in red)

Source: Map Sheet 8, *Fingal County Development Plan, 2023 – 2029*, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

Expanding upon the MRE's objective, the Development Plan also includes a 'vision':

*"Provide for an area of **compact, high intensity/density**, employment generating activity with associated commercial and **residential development** which **focuses on the MetroLink**, or rail or light rail stations within settings of **exemplary urban design, public realm streets and places**, which are **permeable, secure** and within a **high-quality green landscape**. Landmark buildings will provide **strong quality architectural features**, which respect and enhance the character of the area into which they sit. The designated areas will form*

*sustainable districts which possess a high degree of connectivity and accessibility and will be developed in a phased manner subject to the necessary provision of social and physical infrastructure.” [emphasis added]*

Section 13.5 of the Development Plan outlines the ‘Permitted in Principle’ and ‘Not Permitted’ uses on the MRE zoning designation. The former are summarised below in Table 6.1.

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Permitted in Principle</b> | Aparthotel, <b>Betting Office</b> , <b>Childcare Facilities</b> , Community Facility, Conference Centre, Cultural Facility, Dancehall/Nightclub, Education, Exhibition Centre, Funeral Home/Mortuary, Guest House, Health Centre, Health Practitioner, Home-Based Economic Activity, Hospital, Hostel, Hotel, Office Ancillary to Permitted Use, Office ≤ 100 sqm, <b>Office &gt; 100 sqm and &lt; 1,000 sqm</b> , Office ≥ 1,000 sqm, Open Space, Place of Worship, Public House, Public Transport Station, Research and Development, <b>Residential</b> , Residential Care Home/Retirement Home, Residential Institution, Restaurant/Café, Retail – Local < 150 sqm nfa, Retail – Convenience ≤ 500 sqm nfa, Retail – Comparison ≤ 500 sqm nfa, <b>Retail – Supermarket ≤ 2,500 sqm nfa</b> , Sheltered Accommodation, Sustainable Energy Installation <sup>35</sup> , Taxi Office, Telecommunications Structures, Training Centre, Traveller Community Accommodation, Utility Installations, Veterinary Clinic. |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Table 6.1: ‘Permitted in Principle’ uses on MRE-zoned lands per the Development Plan**

**Source:** *Fingal County Development Plan 2023–2029*

The subject proposal provides 289 No. residential units, a commercial/retail unit of 701 sq m and a crèche of 418 sq m. The proposed uses are permitted in principle, according with the Development Plan.

With respect to the proposed commercial/retail unit, it is intended for an appropriate degree of flexibility to be provided, thereby allowing for varied potential uses. Thus, it is designated as ‘Class 1 / Class 2’ as defined by legislation:

- **Class 1** – Shop.
- **Class 2** – Financial services, professional services (other than health or medical services) and any other services (including betting office), where the services are provided principally to visiting members of the public.

This could accommodate a convenience retail operator (per Class 1 and the list of ‘permitted in principle uses’), or other uses such as a betting office or an ‘office-based’ service, per Class 2.

**Thus, the scheme and uses comply with the Development Plan, and will progressively support the appropriate densification and intensification of development at the subject site, where the zoning explicitly seeks and warrants this type of proposal.**

## 6.2 Inclusion of the Subject Site in the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT)

The Government’s *Housing For All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland* proposed a new tax, to activate vacant land for residential purposes as a part of the *Pathway to Increasing New Housing Supply*. Thus, the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was introduced in the *Finance Act 2021*.

The tax aims to activate serviced, zoned land for residential or mixed uses. This is to boost housing supply and regenerate vacant, idle urban land. These locations have been identified within statutory land use plans as being appropriate locations for housing and they have benefitted from investment in the key services to support the delivery of housing.

As identified in the *Draft Map* for 2027, which was published in February of 2026 (Figure 6.2), the subject site has been included and is therefore liable for the tax<sup>24</sup>. The inclusion of the subject site in the RZLT mapping indicates that the land is designated for residential use, meaning that not only is residential development permitted, but it is also expected.

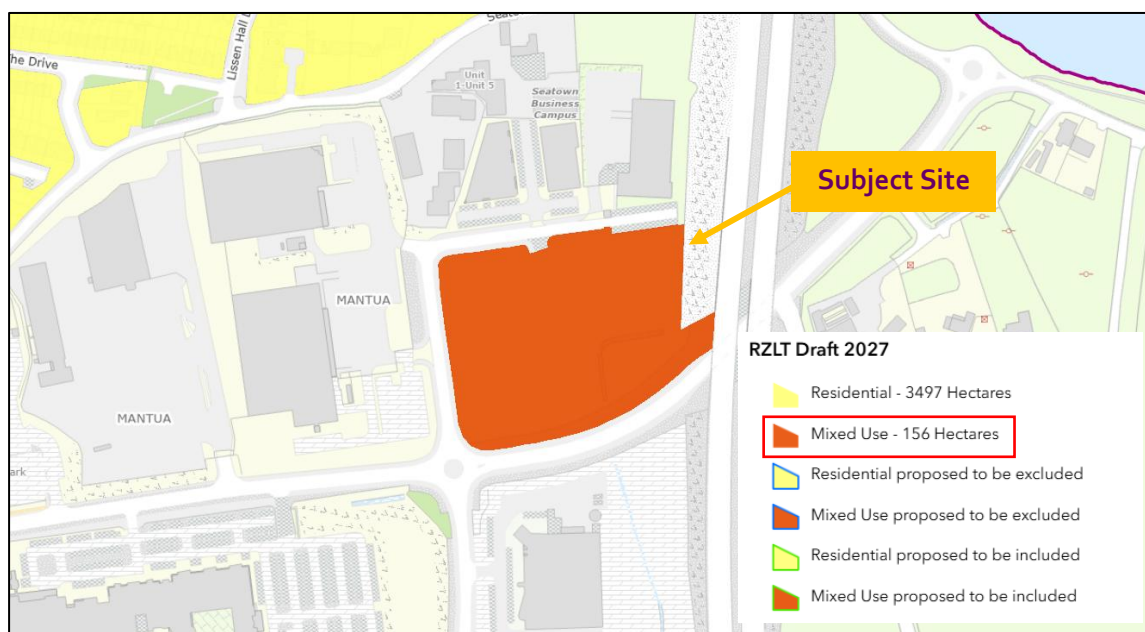


Figure 6.2: The Inclusion of the Subject Lands in the RZLT Map

Source: Fingal County Council Annual Draft Map 2026, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

### 6.3 Relevant Policies and Objectives to the Proposed Development

The Development Plan highlights the need to provide residential development in the County. In this regard, the following Policies and Objectives of the Development Plan are of most relevance:

#### *Policy CSP1 – Core Strategy*

***“Promote and facilitate housing and population growth in accordance with the overarching Core Strategy to meet the needs of current and future citizens of Fingal.”***  
***[emphasis added]***

#### *Policy CSP2 – Compact Growth and Regeneration*

*“Support the implementation of and promote development consistent with the National Strategic Outcome of Compact Growth as outlined in the NPF and the*

<sup>24</sup> We note for the Council that the site has repeatedly featured in previous iterations of the RZLT, and was included in the final RZLT mapping for 2025 and 2026: <https://consult.fingal.ie/en/consultation/residential-zoned-land-tax-final-map-2025> & <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/fdb6d4ca113f43c6bb922d8028c4a072>

Regional Strategic Outcome of Compact Growth and Regeneration as set out in the RSES.”

### **Policy CSP19 – Compact, Sequential and Sustainable Urban Growth**

**“Promote compact, sequential and sustainable urban growth** to realise targets of at least 50% of all new homes to be built, within or contiguous to the existing built-up area of Dublin city and suburbs and a target of at least 30% for other metropolitan settlements, with a focus on healthy placemaking and improved quality of life.” **[emphasis added]**

### **Objective CSO21 – Promotion of Higher Densities**

**“Promote higher densities** (50+ units per hectare) **at appropriate locations in urban built up areas** subject to meeting qualitative standards at appropriate locations with particular reference to urban centres and/or in proximity to high-capacity public transport nodes while demonstrating compliance with all relevant Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines.” **[emphasis added]**

### **Policy CSP30 – Swords as a Vibrant Key Town**

“Support the continued development of Swords as a vibrant Key Town with a thriving economy; an integrated public transport network; an attractive and highly accessible built environment with the highest standards of housing, employment, services, recreational amenities and community facilities.”

### **Objective SPQHO2 – Key Principles**

“Support development which enhances the quality of the built environment, promotes public health, and supports the development of sustainable, resilient communities. In particular development which supports the following key principles will be supported: “ Demonstrates compliance with the Guiding Principles for the creation of healthy and attractive places as set out in Healthy Placemaking, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019–2031.

- Promotes the development of healthy and attractive places to live, work, socialise and recreate through the delivery of high-quality public realms and open spaces which encourage physical activity and support wellbeing.
- Is inclusive of all members of society, all genders, non-binary or none, irrespective of age, or levels of mobility.
- Advocates a universal design approach and is socially inclusive.
- Prioritise sustainable, active transport modes by e.g. providing safe cycle lanes and by facilitating public transport services in conjunction with State agencies to meet the needs of the community and to provide access to local services.
- Encourages the development of car free neighbourhoods and streets, where appropriate.
- Contributes to our climate goals.”

### **Policy SPQHP10 – Support Compact Growth**

“Support the implementation of and promote development consistent with the National Strategic Outcome of Compact Growth as outlined in the NPF and the



Regional Strategic Outcome of Compact Growth and Regeneration as set out in RSES.”

#### **Objective SPQHO9 – Consolidated Residential Development**

*“Consolidate within the existing urban footprint, by ensuring of **50% of all new homes within or contiguous to the built-up area of Dublin City and Suburbs and 30% of all new homes are targeted within the existing built-up areas** to achieve compact growth of urban settlements, as advocated by the RSES.” [emphasis added]*

#### **Objective SPQHO10 – New Residential Development**

*“Focus new residential development on appropriately zoned lands within the County, within appropriate locations proximate to existing settlement centres where infrastructural capacity is readily available, and along existing or proposed high quality public transport corridors and active travel infrastructure in a phased manner, alongside the delivery of appropriate physical and social infrastructure. Active travel options should also be considered while liaising with the National Transport Authority and Transport Infrastructure Ireland to ensure public transport options to and from new developments to local amenities such as shops and libraries.” [emphasis added]*

#### **Objective SPQHO34 – Integration of Residential Development**

*“Encourage higher residential densities where appropriate ensuring proposals provide for high quality design and ensure a balance between the protection of existing residential amenities and the established character of the surrounding area with a target minimum amount of 15% (except in cases where the developer can demonstrate that this is not possible, in which case the 12% to 15% range will apply) amount of green space, tree coverage and public space associated with every residential area.” [emphasis added]*

#### **Objective SPQHO37 – Residential Consolidation and Sustainable Intensification**

*“Promote residential consolidation and sustainable intensification at appropriate locations, through the consolidation and rejuvenation of infill/brown-field development opportunities in line with the principles of compact growth and consolidation to meet the future housing needs of Fingal.” [emphasis added]*

With regard to the foregoing, it is comprehensively considered that the proposed residential-led, mixed-use development, would be in accordance with both the zoning designation of the subject site and the Development Plan policies and objectives outlined above. In our professional planning opinion, the proposed development represents an appropriate intensification and densification of an appropriately zoned, highly underutilised, infill site and will provide much needed housing to the local area.

### **6.4 Building Heights**

In relation to building heights, the Development Plan does not explicitly provide guidance in terms of permissible storeys or heights in metres. It principally relies upon the content of *Urban Development and Building Heights – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2018) and its 4 No. Specific Planning Policy Requirements (Table 6.2).



|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SPPR<sub>1</sub></b> | <b><i>Support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly town/ city cores. Increased building height will be actively pursued for both redevelopment, regeneration and infill development to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and shall not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height.</i></b>                                                                                                 |
| <b>SPPR<sub>2</sub></b> | <b><i>Ensure appropriate mixtures of uses, such as housing and commercial or employment development, are provided for in statutory plan policy. Mechanisms such as block delivery sequencing could be utilised to link the provision of new office, commercial, appropriate retail provision and residential accommodation.</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>SPPR<sub>3</sub></b> | <b><i>Where a development proposal complies with Guidance criteria and the assessment of the planning authority concurs, the planning authority may approve such development, even where specific objectives of the relevant development plan or local area plan may indicate otherwise, taking account of the wider strategic and national policy parameters set out in the National Planning Framework. Undertake a review of the existing planning schemes to ensure that the Building Heights criteria are fully reflected in the scheme.</i></b> |
| <b>SPPR<sub>4</sub></b> | <b><i>Secure minimum densities on greenfield or edge of city/town locations for housing purposes as required under Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2007), ensure a greater mix of building heights and typologies in planning for the future development of suburban locations; and avoid mono-type building typologies (e.g. two storey or own-door houses only), particularly, but not exclusively so in any one development of 100 units or more.</i></b>                                                                      |

**Table 6.2: Height-Related Specific Planning Policy Requirements**

**Source:** ***Urban Development and Building Heights – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)***

However, the site is infill in nature and located within an MRE-zoned area where the objective explicitly seeks "high-density" development (see Section 6.1 above), which can be achieved via limited means, but most notably through height to secure additional floor area. Thus, we contend that Objective SPQHO39 (and the identical Objective DMSO31) of the Development Plan is applicable, and has been used to guide the height, scale and massing of the proposed development. The objective(s) states:

*"New infill development shall respect the height and massing of existing residential units. Infill development shall retain the physical character of the area including features such as boundary walls, pillars, gates/gateways, trees, landscaping, and fencing or railings."*

The proposed development includes the construction of 5 No. separate blocks, ranging in height from 1–9 No. storeys (Figures 6.3 and 6.4):

- Block A – 6 & 7 No. storeys;
- Block B – 6 & 7 No. storeys;
- Block C – 6 & 7 No. storeys;
- Block D – 6 & 9 No. storeys; and
- Block E – 1–9 No. storeys.



Figure 6.3: Proposed Block Massing and Heights (View from South-East)

Source: MCORM (2026), annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)



Figure 6.4: Proposed Block Massing and Heights (View from North-East)

Source: MCORM (2026), annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

The proposed heights and their form have been carefully considered by MCORM. Their modulation and variation ensure monotony does not arise, ensuring interest and articulation. It also sees the blocks respond to each other, the open spaces, the surrounding road network and adjoining patterns of development. Simple stepping, inseting and pop-up elements combine to create an aesthetically attractive development that is further enhanced by way of the use of stone and brick as the principal materials.

In considering the relationship of the development and its heights with surrounding development, we return to Objective SPQHO39's requirement that "...new infill development

*shall respect the height and massing of existing residential units...*" There are no immediately adjacent residential developments; thus, there are no dwellings to be formally respected. Notwithstanding this, we are mindful that the Council queried the appropriateness of the proposed heights during consultations given the surrounding commercial, warehouse and industrial buildings are lower rise (2–3 No. storeys). However, **existing heights in an area should not be used to bluntly dictate permissible heights**. In fact, the Building Heights Guidelines seek the opposite, stating that heights must be increased over those existing:

***"Increasing prevailing building heights therefore has a critical role to play in addressing the delivery of more compact growth in our urban areas, particularly our cities and large towns through enhancing both the scale and density of development and our planning process must actively address how this objective will be secured..."***

*In relation to the assessment of individual planning applications and appeals, it is Government policy that **building heights must be generally increased in appropriate urban locations**. There is therefore a **presumption in favour of buildings of increased height in our town/city cores and in other urban locations with good public transport accessibility**."* **[emphasis added]**

Additionally, we re-emphasise that the MRE zoning objective explicitly seeks "high density" development. As we present in Section 6.5 below, the proposal is indeed at the higher end of the quantitative density range set by the Compact Settlements Guidelines. Therefore, the proposed heights and massing are appropriate as reducing them would result in a lowering of the density as a consequence of there being less gross floorspace. **This would be entirely contrary to the Development Plan's own objective for MRE lands**. Thus, the proposed heights are necessary to achieve the required scale of development without compromising other development management standards (open space) and design considerations (squatter and more monotonous form).

## 6.5 Density

### 6.5.1 Density: Policy Bases

As the overarching planning policy document, the *National Planning Framework First Revision* (2025) (NPF) is the key basis for the State's development. The NPF recognises the benefit of securing greater densities in existing urban areas to achieve scale, critical mass, vibrancy, a positive shift in infrastructural use and ecological protection:

*"Well designed and located high and medium density housing will assist:*

- *Fast-growing urban areas to achieve much needed scale;*
- *Medium-sized urban areas to find a route to quality in a new competitive framework;*
- *All urban areas to increase vibrancy and vitality;*
- *Increased efficiency and sustainability in the use of energy and public infrastructure (including prioritisation of development in areas with existing/planned water and wastewater infrastructure capacity)."*

Asserting this as a policy stance, the NPF includes NPOs which support more efficient and sustainable use of land in existing settlements. Evidently, there is a strong national policy base to support the attainment of higher residential densities and land-use intensities, even in areas where there may be prevailing patterns of low-density development (see box below). Such patterns of development are no longer deemed to be sustainable in many cases, and **it is asserted that their presence must not be used as a means to preclude the realisation of taller**



**and more dense developments.** Ultimately, the referenced NPOs all combine in support of the NPF's overarching NSO of 'Compact Growth'.

**National Policy Objectives of Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework**

**NPO 4** – "A target of half (50%) of future population and employment growth will be focused in the existing five cities and their suburbs."

**NPO 7** – "Deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth."

**NPO 8** – "Deliver at least half (50%) of all new homes that are targeted in the five Cities and suburbs of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, within their existing built-up footprints and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth."

**NPO 9** – "Deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the five Cities and their suburbs, within their existing built-up footprints and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth."

**NPO 10** – "Deliver Transport Orientated Development (TOD) at scale at suitable locations, served by high capacity public transport and located within or adjacent to the built up footprint of the five cities or a metropolitan town and ensure compact and sequential patterns of growth."

**NPO 12** – "Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being."

**NPO 13** – "Develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity."

**NPO 14** – "Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity, enhanced levels of amenity and design and placemaking quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area to ensure progress toward national achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals."

**NPO 20** – "In meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth."

**NPO 43** – "Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location."

**NPO 45** – "Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, reuse of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration, increased building heights and more compact forms of development."

At local policy level, the Development Plan remarks that the:

**"...Council will support higher densities in appropriate locations in accordance with the NPF, RSES and Guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, (as amended). The achievement of higher densities ensures the efficient use of land and**

*promotes compact consolidated development in line with national and regional planning policy. This ensures sustainable travel and settlement patterns, enhanced vibrancy and economic vitality of urban and villages centres while ensuring return on investment in key public transport initiatives.” [emphasis added]*

This manifests as Policy SPQH35 (Quality of Residential Development) in the Development Plan:

*“Promote a high quality of design and layout in **new residential developments at appropriate densities across Fingal**, ensuring high-quality living environments for all residents in terms of the standard of individual dwelling units and the overall layout and appearance of developments. **Residential developments must accord with the standards set out in the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DEHLG 2009** and the accompanying Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide and the Sustainable Urban Housing; Design Standards for New Apartments (DHLGH as updated 2020) and the policies and objectives contained within the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines (December, 2018). Developments should be consistent with standards outlined in Chapter 14 Development Management Standards.” [emphasis added]*

We further note Objective SPQo1 (Sustainable Communities), which states:

*“Ensure that proposed residential development contributes to the creation of sustainable communities and accords with the **Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, DEHLG 2009 (and any superseding document)** and companion Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide, DEHLG 2009 and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) (as revised).” [emphasis added]*

The Development Plan adds the following, specifically in relation to residential density (Section 14.6.3):

*“In general, the **density and number of dwellings to be provided within residential schemes should be determined with reference to Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009**. Development should also be consistent with the policies and objectives set out in Chapter 3 Sustainable Placemaking and Quality Homes and should promote appropriate densities, having regard to factors including the location of the site, accessibility to public transport and the principles of sustainability, compact growth and consolidation.” [emphasis added]*

Notwithstanding – and informed by – the foregoing, we are mindful that since the adoption of the Development Plan, the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (2009) have been revoked and replaced by the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2024) (Compact Settlements Guidelines). **Therefore, we are of the opinion that the guidance contained in the latter is now of relevance.**

Policy 3.1 of these Guidelines states:

*“It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that the recommended residential density ranges set out in Section 3.3 are applied within statutory development plans and in the consideration of individual planning applications, and that these density ranges are refined further at a local level using the criteria set out in Section 3.4 where appropriate.”*



Informed by this, we contend that the subject site falls within the category of 'Metropolitan Towns (>1,500 population) – Centre and Urban Neighbourhoods', as detailed in Table 3.3 of the Guidelines, which states:

*"The centre and urban neighbourhoods category includes: (i) the town centre and immediately surrounding neighbourhoods, (ii) **strategic and sustainable development locations**, and (iii) **lands around existing or planned high capacity public transport nodes or interchanges** (defined in Table 3.8). It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that **residential densities in the range 50 dph to 150 dph (net) shall generally be applied** in the centres and in urban neighbourhoods of Metropolitan Towns." [emphasis added]*

This is based on the position of Swords within the Dublin Metropolitan Area, as defined by the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019–2031* (RSES)<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, the site's proximity to the planned Seatown Metrolink Station (approximately 450-metre walking distance) and the availability of existing frequent bus services (with additional routes proposed under BusConnects) at nearby bus stops<sup>26</sup> (Nos. 5044 and 4433<sup>27</sup>), all contribute to the site's status as being within a 'High Capacity Transport Node or Interchange'<sup>28</sup>.

|                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>High Capacity Public Transport Node or Interchange</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lands within 1,000 metres (1km) walking distance of an existing or planned high capacity urban public transport node or interchange, namely an interchange or node that includes DART, high frequency Commuter Rail, light rail or MetroLink services; or locations within 500 metres walking distance of an existing or planned BusConnects 'Core Bus Corridor' stop.</b></li> <li>• <i>Highest densities should be applied at the node or interchange and decrease with distance.</i></li> <li>• <i>'Planned public transport' in these Guidelines refers to transport infrastructure and services identified in a Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy for the five cities and where a public authority (e.g. National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland or Irish Rail) has published the preferred route option and stop locations for the planned public transport.</i></li> </ul> |
| <b>Accessible Location</b>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Lands within 500 metres (i.e. up to 5-6 minute walk) of existing or planned high frequency (i.e. 10 minute peak hour frequency) urban bus services.</i></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

Therefore, a density within the range of 50–150 dph (net) will "generally" be sought. **However, the Guidelines provide further guidance relating to 'Refining Density' to take account of specific characteristics and constraints of individual sites.** This additional requirement is intended to incorporate the nuances of individual sites, pushing their densities up and down within the ranges set by the Guidelines. 'Refining Density' is principally comprised of 2 No. steps, which require consideration of: (1) 'proximity and accessibility to services and public transport'; and (2) 'character, amenity and natural environment'. These steps are discussed in site-specific detail in Section 6.5.3 below.

<sup>25</sup> See Figure 5.1 in the RSES and Appendix E in the RSES.

<sup>26</sup> Both bus stops are located within approx. 250 m walking distance of the planned Seatown Metrolink Station.

<sup>27</sup> During peak hours (07:00 – 09:00 & 16:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday), both bus stop Nos. 4433 and 5044 provide frequent bus services every 20 minutes.

<sup>28</sup> Appendix A of the Compact Settlements Guidelines defines a 'Transport Node or Interchange' as "places of convergence and interchange between different forms of transportation."

Before going further into the calculation of, and justification for, the proposed residential density, it is vital to make 2 No. crucial observations:

#### FIRSTLY –

The above wording from Table 3.3 states that 50–150 dph (net) shall **generally** be applied.

Crucially, it does **not** state that a density within the “*general range of 50–150 dph shall be applied*”. **These are two very different statements and forms of guidance**, with very different intentions and outcomes. The guidance does **not** state that the densities “*must*” be applied.

Thus, it is clear that there can be instances where the range is exceeded (or conversely, not met) – i.e. exceptions outside the “*generally*” applied range can be made. **It clearly infers that densities beyond the range can be permitted outside the ‘general’ norm.** As we present below, the subject site location and composition of the development are both key to justifying this.

#### SECONDLY –

Furthering the above, it is fundamental to consider the statutory basis of both Policy and Objective 3.1 and Table 3.3. They have their bases as a ‘Policy and Objective’, which the Guidelines provide the following clarity in respect of:

*“In accordance with the provisions of Section 34 of the Act when making a decision in relation to an application that includes a residential element or other elements covered by these guidelines, **the planning authority is required to have regard to the policies and objectives of the Guidelines and to apply the specific planning policy requirements (SPPRs).**” [emphasis added]*

As ‘Policies and Objectives’ and **not** SPPRs, the Planning Authority and An Coimisiún Pleanála need only have **regard** to their detail<sup>29</sup>. Consequently, they are only obliged to give consideration to them, rather than be compelled to rigidly or slavishly apply them. **Therefore, the statutory obligation for both the Planning Authority and An Coimisiún Pleanála reverts to compliance with the Development Plan, where we note that there is no prescribed maximum density.**

#### CONSEQUENTLY –

In establishing and assessing appropriate densities, a broad and holistic approach is required that accounts for all aspects of design, amenity, impact, etc., as established by Policy SPQH35 (amongst others) referenced above. Yet, as the Development Plan states, its purpose is to maximise the efficiency of land-use:

*“The achievement of **higher densities ensures the efficient use of land and promotes compact consolidated development** in line with national and regional planning policy. This ensures **sustainable travel and settlement patterns**, enhanced vibrancy and economic vitality of urban and villages centres while ensuring return on investment in key public transport initiatives” [emphasis added]*

<sup>29</sup> See Sections 28(1) and 28(1C) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended).

In this context, density in isolation is an incomplete measure, with far wider considerations required.

Thus, it is our firm contention that in assessing the subject proposal, the Council has latitude to consider and permit residential densities that are outside of the density range stated in Table 3.3 of the Guidelines.

### 6.5.2 Density: Calculation

The means of calculating the net residential density of the proposed development at the subject site has been informed by the methodology prescribed by Appendix B of the Compact Settlements Guidelines. This is presented in Table 6.3 below. As is evident, the proposed development's net density is 151.8 dph<sup>30</sup>. This is just 1.8 dph or 1.2% greater than the upper density range of 50–150 dph for this location.

| Stage | Metric                                         | Calculation | Figure    |
|-------|------------------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| A     | Net Site Area (Ha)                             |             | 1.98      |
| B     | Total GFA (sq m)                               | C+D         | 30,358.60 |
| C     | Residential GFA (sq m)                         |             | 29,240.00 |
| D     | Non-Residential GFA (sq m)                     |             | 1,119.00  |
| E     | Residential GFA as Proportion of Total GFA (%) | C/B         | 96.31%    |
| F     | <i>Pro Rata</i> Site Area (Ha)                 | AxE         | 1.91      |
| G     | Number of Dwellings                            |             | 289       |
| H     | Net Residential Density (dph)                  | G/F         | 151.8     |

**Table 6.3:** Net residential density of the proposed development – note the density calculation above is based on the detailed area of 19,768 sq m, hence the deviation from 151.3 dph

**Source:** Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026), using information prepared by MCORM (2026)

### 6.5.3 Density: Justification

As articulated above, the Development Plan does not prescribe quantitative density standards; principally deferring to national guidance which is currently primarily defined by the Compact Settlements Guidelines. Whilst the density marginally exceeds the upper extent of the range for the location within which the subject site is located, we have detailed clear and robust evidence to provide the Council with comfort to support and permit same. We expand upon the justification for this using the Guidelines' 'Refining Density' steps below.

#### Proximity and Accessibility to Services and Public Transport

In relation to proximity and accessibility to services and public transport, the Guidelines state that:

*"While densities within the ranges set out will be acceptable, planning authorities should encourage densities at or above the mid-density range at the most central and accessible locations in each area, densities closer to the mid-range at intermediate locations and densities below the mid-density range at peripheral locations."*

<sup>30</sup> For comparison, the development's density, if applying the proposed number of units directly to the net site area would be 150.7 dph.

Thus, the better served, connected and more centrally located a site, the higher the residential density should be. As we discussed above, the subject site falls into the 'central and accessible' location category, warranting a higher density.

**KEY POINT:**

However, Table 3.8 of the Guidelines takes a very narrow view with respect to the broader concept of 'accessibility', focusing only on proximity to (and frequency of) public transport services. Table 3.8 and its location criteria do not consider other modes of sustainable transport, nor do they consider a site's proximity to key services, facilities and amenities which would mean that residents may not even need public transport. Such a narrow focus is contrary to planning policy to achieve the '15-minute city' concept.

On this very point, we note for the Council that Section 3.4.1 of the Guidelines states:

**"The characteristics detailed in Table 3.8 are not exhaustive and a local assessment will be required." [emphasis added]**

**This statement is crucial to understanding the appropriateness of residential densities and the justification for that proposed in the subject development.**

Therefore, we provide a broad, holistic assessment of the site and development in terms of proximity and accessibility to **services and public transport** below.

With respect to active modes and available services, we emphasise that the site is very well served with respect to a range of important services, facilities and amenities. As shown in Table 6.4 and Figure 6.5 below, within a highly reasonable 15-minute walk (5-minute cycle), residents of the proposed development will be able to avail of the following (as brief examples):

- Preschool/childcare;
- Primary school;
- Secondary school;
- Park and playground;
- GP's/doctor's clinic;
- Dental clinic;
- Pharmacy;
- Convenience retail; and
- Personal services.

Marginally beyond 15 minutes' walk is the Pavilions Shopping Centre (SC) (19-minute walk / 5-minute cycle), which provides a broad series of shopping (convenience and comparison), dining and entertainment options.

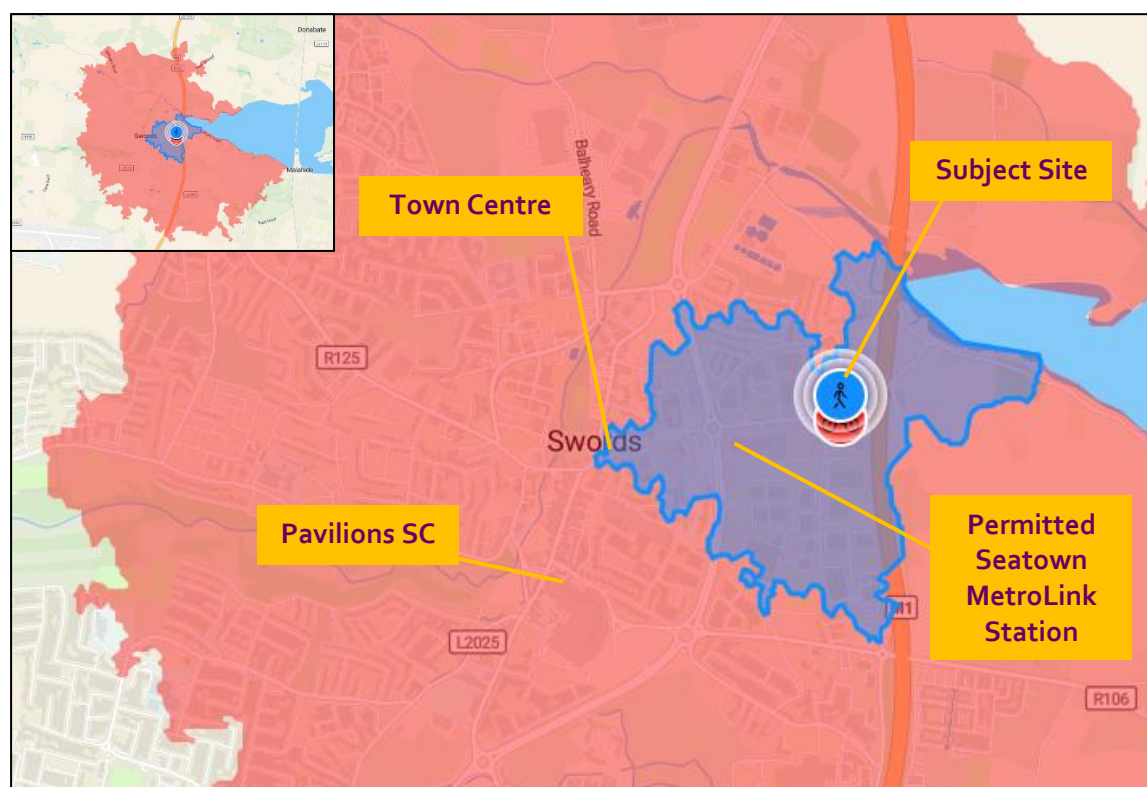
Therefore, residents, workers and patrons of the proposed development will be within short walking and cycling distances of a wide range of services, facilities and amenities, thereby promoting these active modes over private car use. In fact, this mix of uses and their ease of access aligns with the basic principles of the '15-minute city', whereby persons can access their main day-to-day necessities within approximately 15 minutes.



| Service, Facility or Amenity | Category                         | Walk Time  | Cycle Time |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Kids Inc                     | Childcare                        | 8 minutes  | 3 minutes  |
| Aldi                         | Retail (Convenience)             | 11 minutes | 3 minutes  |
| Fingal Community College     | School                           | 11 minutes | 3 minutes  |
| St Colmcille's Boys NS       | School                           | 12 minutes | 3 minutes  |
| Fingal Podiatry & Chiropody  | Healthcare                       | 13 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Swords Community Park        | Public Park                      | 13 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Castle Medical Centre        | Healthcare                       | 14 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| St Colmcille's Girls NS      | School                           | 14 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Metahair                     | Personal Service                 | 14 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Swords Dental Clinic         | Healthcare                       | 14 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Swords Physiotherapy         | Physiotherapist                  | 14 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Pure Pharmacy                | Healthcare                       | 15 minutes | 4 minutes  |
| Suprem Barbers               | Personal Service                 | 15 minutes | 5 minutes  |
| Swords Health Centre (HSE)   | Healthcare                       | 15 minutes | 5 minutes  |
| Pavilions Shopping Centre    | Retail, Dining and Entertainment | 19 minutes | 5 minutes  |

**Table 6.4: Key services, facilities and amenities proximate to the subject site**

**Source:** Google Maps (2026), collated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)



**Figure 6.5: Map Illustrating the Approximate 15-minute Walk (Blue) and Cycle (Red) Times from the Subject Site (Indicatively labelled, with the Site Marked from its South-West Corner)**

**Source:** TravelTime.com (2026), annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

Positively, the availability and quality of cycle infrastructure in the immediate environs of the subject site is set to improve markedly in the coming years. As we present in Figure 6.6 below, which is an extract from the National Transport Authority's *Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network*

(2022), a 'secondary' cycle route is proposed to the site's immediate south and will be elevated to a 'primary' cycle route to the west entering the town centre.

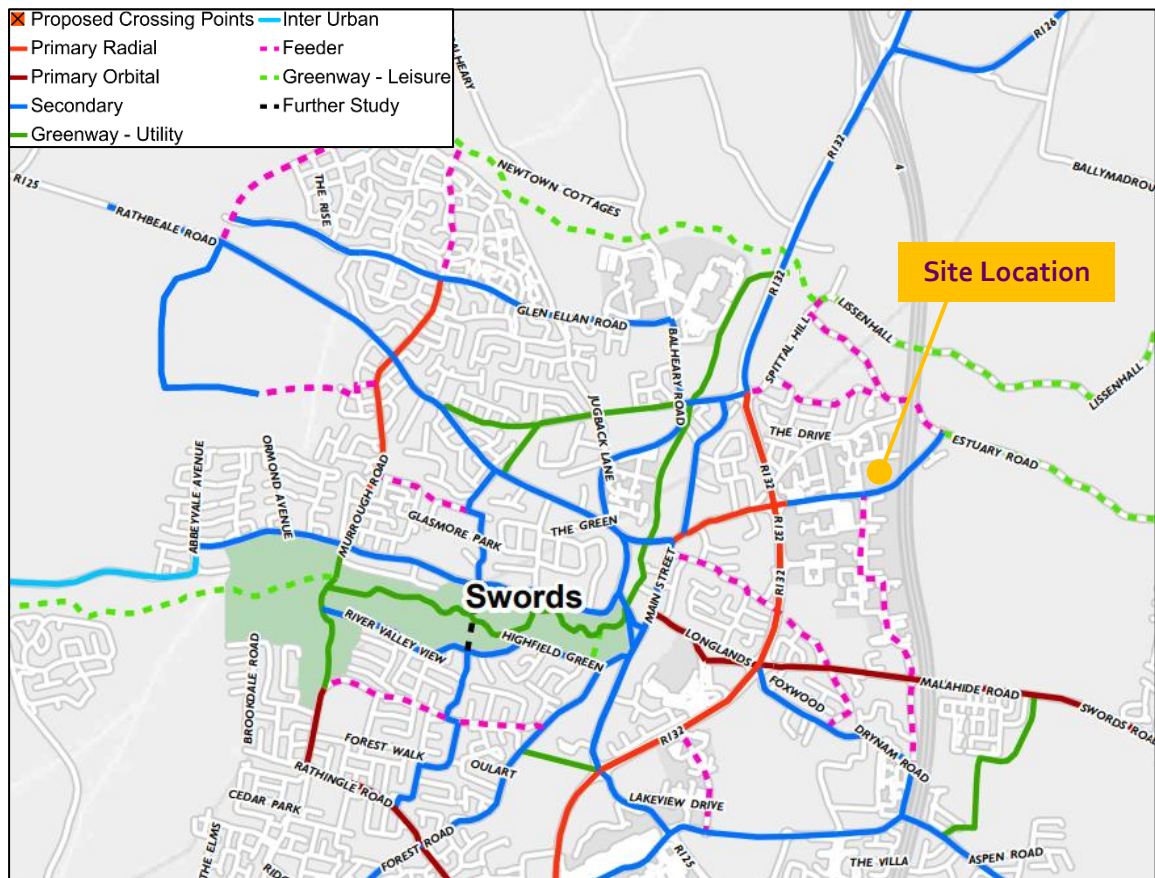


Figure 6.6: Proposed Cycle Network To Serve Swords

Source: *Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network (2022)*, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

Therefore, the site is well-served by many of the services that residents will need on a day-to-day basis, and even those that they require less frequently. **We are of the opinion that this trumps the need to be proximate to public transport as the Guidelines seek, especially as 'working from home' and other flexible work arrangements remain commonplace.** We argue that being able to walk or cycle to the most frequently used amenities is of a greater importance and priority than public transport alone.

Notwithstanding the above, the fundamental requirement for a higher density site to be well served by existing and planned higher capacity and frequency public transport is met. To avoid unnecessary repetition, we refer the Council back to Section 2.4 above and to NRB's enclosed *Traffic & Transport Assessment Report*.

### Character, Amenity and Natural Environment

With respect to 'character, amenity and natural environment', we have considered the attributes of the subject site and its context. We are of the opinion that there are none that are so substantial that they would markedly constrain the attainment of the proposed density. On-site, there are no flood risks, Protected Structures or archaeological features (as examples).

Although the site features mature trees and hedgerows along its western and southern boundaries, these are not protected by way of site-specific objectives or a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Whilst some trees will require removal to facilitate the development, a substantial portion of them will be retained and incorporated into the scheme's landscaping and open space. Positively, the overall development has been designed in a manner that respects the natural vegetation on-site without the latter prejudicing the attainment of a sustainable and appropriate residential density. The potential landscape and visual effects associated with the proposed tree removal, landscape strategy, and the built-development have been assessed in the accompanying *Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* which concludes that *"only positive (or neutral) landscape and visual effects have been identified."*

Additionally, per the *Ecological Impact Assessment Report* prepared by DNV, no protected flora, protected bat roost features, or evidence of mammal or amphibian activity were identified as being physically present on-site during the surveys undertaken. While protected bats and birds were observed foraging and commuting on site, the *Ecological Impact Assessment Report* confirms that the standard mitigation and enhancement measures to be incorporated into the construction and operational stage of the development will result in a positive residual impact on these species (see Table 21 of the *Ecological Impact Assessment Report*).

Accordingly, the presence of bats and birds does not 'sterilise' the development potential of the site, nor does it give rise to any ecological constraint that would materially inhibit the achievement of the proposed sustainable residential density, subject to the implementation of the mitigation and enhancement measures set out in the *Ecological Impact Assessment Report*. Importantly, the *Ecological Impact Assessment Report* concludes the following:

*"It is considered that, provided the mitigation measures proposed within this report together with all best practice development standards as outlined in the OCEMP are carried out in full, **there will be no significant negative impact to any KER habitat, species group or biodiversity as a result of the Proposed Development.**"*

*Additionally, the landscaping plan for the Proposed Development was designed to include green space areas, tree planting, shrub, native hedgerow, and native wildflower meadows. The ecological value of this Site is very likely to be increased considering the current Site has extremely limited vegetation. Therefore, **the Proposed Development will improve the overall ecological value of the Site.**" [emphasis added]*

Further to the assessment of the development's potential ecological impact, DNV have also assessed the development's potential environmental impact under the accompanying *EIA Screening Report* which concludes:

*"On review of the likely potential environmental effects, it is considered that with the inclusion of appropriate design and standard construction management mitigation measures, the Proposed Development **will not likely result in significant effects on the environment.**" [emphasis added]*

Whilst the foregoing points in relation to 'character, amenity and natural environment' have focused on considerations that could limit or restrict densities, **we deem it appropriate to identify and restate those attributes that warrant a higher density**. Setting aside the available public transport, active transport infrastructure and proximity to services and amenities, we note:

- The site is prominently located at a key position with frontage onto the M1 motorway and as a gateway into Swords;

- The site is zoned MRE, where higher density and intensity mixed-use development is explicitly sought by the Development Plan; and
- The site is slightly irregular in shape, but of a clear and accessible layout, which simplifies the design process and is conducive to achieving a coherent, higher density development.

**Overall, we firmly contend that the density of 151.8 dph is appropriate for the subject site and is much needed to ensure the efficient use of this suitably located, accessible, MRE zoned land within the built-up area of Swords.**

## 6.6 Dwelling Design and Amenity

The following sub-sections set out and assess several key dwelling design considerations, including internal floor areas (IFAs), private amenity space provision, aspect, floor-to-ceiling heights and internal storage provision. We note that the standards to be met are now principally informed by the context of the Apartment Design Guidelines adopted in 2025.

### 6.6.1 Internal Floor Areas

The IFA standards for apartments are set by SPPR 2 of the Apartment Design Guidelines, as follows:

*"The following minimum apartment floor areas shall apply and statutory plans shall not specify minimum floor areas that exceed the minimum floor areas set out below:*

- Studio apartment (1 person) 32 sq.m
- 1-bedroom apartment (2 persons) 45 sq.m
- 2-bedroom apartment (3 persons) 63 sq.m
- 2-bedroom apartment (4 persons) 73 sq.m
- 3-bedroom apartment (4 persons) 76 sq. m
- 3-bedroom apartment (5 persons) 90 sq.m

*The floor area parameters set out above shall generally apply to apartment schemes and do not apply to purpose-built and managed student housing."*

With respect to unit design, layout and internal floor area, we direct the Council to the Housing Quality Assessments provided in the *Architectural and Urban Design Statement* and various floor plan drawings prepared by MCORM. These confirm that the relevant minimum IFAs are met or exceeded for all units.

### 6.6.2 Aspect

Of the 289 No. proposed residential units, 193 No. are dual aspect; equivalent to 66.8%.

This significantly exceeds the blanket 25% requirement set by SPPR 3 of the Apartment Design Guidelines:

*"In relation to the minimum number of dual aspect apartments that may be provided in any single apartment scheme, the following shall apply:*

- (i) A minimum of 25% of units within a development shall be required to be dual aspect. Statutory plans shall not specify minimum requirements that exceed the requirements of this Specific Planning Policy Requirement.



- (ii) *For building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, planning authorities may exercise further discretion to consider dual aspect unit provision at a level lower than the 25% minimum outlined above on a case-by-case basis, but subject to the achievement of overall high design quality in other aspects."*

Further identification of the benefitting units is presented in MCORM's *Architectural and Urban Design Statement* and on the suite of submitted drawings.

### 6.6.3 Floor-to-Ceiling Heights

In relation to floor-to-ceiling heights of units, the Apartment Design Guidelines' SPPR 4 sets the standard to be met:

*"Ground level apartment floor to ceiling heights shall be a minimum of 2.7m. For building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, planning authorities may exercise discretion on a case-by-case basis, subject to overall design quality."*

As detailed in the drawings prepared by MCORM, the floor-to-ceiling heights of the apartments at ground floor level exceed the minimum of 2.7 m.

Building Regulations Technical Document F addresses ventilation and provides guidance on ceiling heights in habitable rooms. The suggested minimum floor-to-ceiling height, consistent with good room design, the use of standard materials and good building practices, is generally 2.4 m.

These design outcomes achieve a higher quality living environment for future residents, with greater natural ventilation and light ingress. Aside from these more 'quantitative' aspects, they also create dwellings that 'feel' – from a qualitative perspective – more airy, spacious and hospitable, rather than cramped or confined.

### 6.6.4 Storage

In relation to the provision of internal storage in units, instruction is again taken from the Apartment Design Guidelines. Its minimum requirements for the proposed unit types and sizes are shown in Table 6.5 below, with the following additional guidance provided:

*"Storage should be additional to kitchen presses or cupboards and loose bedroom furniture, but may be partly provided in these rooms. In such cases this must be in addition to aggregate living/dining/kitchen or bedroom floor areas. A store off a hallway or landing will facilitate access, but hot presses or boiler space/heat pump will not count as general storage. As a rule, no individual storage room within an apartment should exceed 3.5 square metres."*

The proposed storage areas for each of the units are presented in the Housing Quality Assessments in the *Architectural and Urban Design Statement* and on the various unit drawings prepared by MCORM. As is evident, the minimum requirements of the Guidelines are matched or exceeded in all cases. As shown on the various floor plans, no single storage room/space exceeds 3.5 sq m and all areas are calculated without heat pumps or other vital infrastructure.



| Apartment Size   | Minimum Storage Require |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Studio           | 3 sq m                  |
| 1-Bed            | 3 sq m                  |
| 2-Bed (3 person) | 5 sq m                  |
| 2-Bed (4-person) | 6 sq m                  |
| 3-Bed (4-person) | 6 sq m                  |
| 3-Bed (5-person) | 9 sq m                  |

Table 6.5: Minimum Storage Space Requirements for Apartments

(Source: *Planning Design Standards for Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2025))

### 6.6.5 Daylight and Sunlight

With respect to daylight and sunlight availability serving the proposed development, we direct the Council to the *Daylight and Sunlight Assessment Report* prepared by 3DDB. As a relatively dense development, the scheme performs well:

- Daylight (Spatial Daylight Autonomy (SDA)) (836 No. rooms assessed in 289 No. units) –
  - 93% of rooms compliant "without trees".
  - 91% of rooms compliant "with trees".
- Sunlight (Sunlight Exposure (SE)) (289 No. units assessed) –
  - 87% of units compliant "without deciduous trees".
  - 87% of units compliant "with all trees".
- Sunlight (Sun on Ground (SOG)) (7 No. amenity areas assessed) –
  - 7 No. areas meeting the guidelines

Although a small proportion of rooms and units do not meet the SDA and SE targets respectively, this is considered to be appropriate given: (1) the MRE zoning objective of the site to provide "high density" development; (2) the requirement to provide winter gardens instead of exposed balconies for certain apartments to ensure appropriate external amenity noise levels; (3) the infill nature of the site; and (4) the overall quality of the proposed development. This position is further **asserted by the BRE209 Guide itself**, which states:

*"The guide is intended for building designers and their clients, consultants, and planning officials. **The advice given here is not mandatory and the guide should not be seen as an instrument of planning policy; its aim is to help rather than constrain the designer. Although it gives numerical guidelines, these should be interpreted flexibly since natural lighting is only one of many factors in site layout design...**" [emphasis added]*

We also note the pragmatic and practical guidance provided by the Compact Settlements Guidelines, which states the following:

*"In drawing conclusions in relation to daylight performance, planning authorities must weigh up the overall quality of the design and layout of the scheme and the measures proposed to maximise daylight provision, against the location of the site and the general presumption in favour of increased scales of urban residential development. Poor performance may arise due to design constraints associated with the site or location and there is a need to balance that assessment against the desirability of achieving wider planning objectives. Such objectives*

*might include securing comprehensive urban regeneration and or an effective urban design and streetscape solution."*

**Therefore, the Guide is just that – a guide – and not a standard against which a development must slavishly and absolutely comply.** The need for flexibility and an evident acceptance of poorer performing units feature in the Compact Settlements Guidelines when broader objectives can be achieved. Overall, it is considered that the proposed development will result in a series of high-quality and attractive living spaces for future residents.

## 6.7 Separation Distances and Protecting Privacy

The Development Plan stipulates a general minimum clearance distance of approximately 22 m between opposing windows. However, we recognise that the Compact Settlement Guidelines, as Section 28 Guidelines, establish SPPR 1 regarding separation distances, which takes precedence over the standard in the Development Plan. Thus it applies in its place.

The Compact Settlement Guidelines consider that the historic application of 22 m separation distances between opposing upper floor rear and side windows of habitable rooms does not account for modern methods of design and construction, the capability of assessing the appropriate level of daylight and sunlight being received by neighbouring dwellings, the level of privacy that can be obtained or policy's wider shift towards more dense and intense forms of development. In this regard, the Compact Settlement Guidelines state:

*"Through the careful massing and position of blocks, positioning of windows and the integration of open space at multiple level it is possible to achieve a high standard of residential amenity and good placemaking with **separation distances of less than 22 metres**. Separation distances should, therefore, be determined based on considerations of privacy and amenity, informed by the layout, design and site characteristics of the specific proposed development."* **[emphasis added]**

Furthermore, SPPR 1 of the Compact Settlement Guidelines states the following in regard to minimum separation distances for residential development:

*"It is a specific planning policy requirement of these Guidelines that statutory development plans shall not include an objective in respect of minimum separation distances that exceed 16 metres between opposing windows serving habitable rooms at the rear or side of houses, duplex units or apartment units above ground floor level. When considering a planning application for residential development, **a separation distance of at least 16 metres between opposing windows serving habitable rooms at the rear or side of houses, duplex units and apartment units, above ground floor level shall be maintained. Separation distances below 16 metres may be considered acceptable in circumstances where there are no opposing windows serving habitable rooms** and where suitable privacy measures have been designed into the scheme to prevent undue overlooking of habitable rooms and private amenity spaces.*

*There shall be no specified minimum separation distance at ground level or to the front of houses, duplex units and apartment units in statutory development plans and planning applications shall be determined on a case-by-case basis to prevent undue loss of privacy.*

*In all cases, the obligation will be on the project proposer to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the planning authority or An Bord Pleanála that residents will enjoy a high standard of amenity and that the proposed development will not have a significant negative impact on the amenity of occupiers of existing residential properties."* **[emphasis added]**

While there are no residential dwellings adjacent to the subject site, the minimum separation of 16 m between opposing windows serving habitable rooms has been exceeded where the proposed buildings interact with one another, and this is evident on the drawings prepared by MCORM.

There are instances where buildings are closer than 16 m from each other; however, there are no **directly** opposing upper floor windows facing each other (see the relationship between Blocks C and D, which have been offset relative to each other).

## 6.8 Open Space

The Development Plan defines the 3 No. categories of open space: Public Open Space, Communal Open (or Amenity) Space and Private Open (or Amenity) Space (Figure 6.7). The proposed development includes each of these categories, ensuring compliance with the relevant standards.

| Category                   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Private Open Space</b>  | Private open space is designed to serve individual residential units and its scale is dependent on the nature and scale of the residential unit in question. Such space will generally take the form of balconies and/or private gardens. Maintenance is the responsibility of the resident.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Communal Open Space</b> | Communal open space is open space which is designated for the use of a designated set of residents within a development and is generally maintained by a Management Company. This type of open space is typical of apartment type residential developments but may also form part of some housing schemes. Access may be restricted to specific residents for their exclusive semi-private use.                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Public Open Space</b>   | Public open space is accessible to the public at large and in general is intended to be 'taken-in charge' by the Local Authority, but in certain circumstances may be privately managed. Appropriate provision must be made for public open space within all new developments. In all instances where public open space is not provided a contribution under Section 48 will be required for the short fall. (Target minimum amount of 15% except in cases where the developer can demonstrate that this is not possible, in which case the 12% to 15% range will apply.) |

**Figure 6.7: Categories of Open Space**

**Source:** Table 14.6 of the *Fingal County Development Plan 2023–2029*

### 6.8.1 Public Open Space

#### 6.8.1.1 Public Open Space Policy

The provision of public open space per the Development Plan is set by several objectives, with the overarching intention being to deliver high-quality spaces that benefit new and existing communities, support ecology and the creation of green infrastructure, and play a role in surface water management.

Amongst the objectives listed in the Plan are the following:

**Objective GI 30** – “Integrate public open space provision and surface water management [SuDS].”

**Objective GI 36** – “Ensure that a minimum 10% of the proposed development site area shall be designated for use as public open space.”

**Policy SPQHP37 (Open Space Hierarchy)** – *"Ensure that all residential development in Fingal is served by a clear hierarchy and network of high quality public open spaces providing for active and passive recreation purposes which is easily accessible and integrated with local communities."*

**Objective CIOSO36 (Variety of Open Space)** – *"Provide a wide variety of resiliently designed, sustainably managed and accessible public open spaces, including allotments, community gardens, parklands and sporting facilities, on a hierarchical basis throughout the County in order to achieve a choice of open space facilities. Best practice Green Infrastructure Guidelines should be used to determine the location and type of open spaces to be provided."*

**Objective CIOSO38 (Public Open Space Provision)** – *"Require a minimum public open space provision of 2.5 hectares per 1000 population. For the purposes of this calculation, public open space requirements are to be based on residential units with an agreed occupancy rate of 3.5 persons in the case of dwellings with three or more bedrooms and 1.5 persons in the case of dwellings with two or fewer bedrooms."*

**Objective CIOSO41 (Accessible and Safe Open Space)** – *"Ensure public open space is accessible and safety is prioritised by incorporating passive surveillance."*

**Objective GINHO3 (Biodiversity in Open Space)** – *"Make provision for biodiversity within public open space and include water sensitive design and management measures (including SuDS) as part of a sustainable approach to open space design and management."*

**Objective DMSO51 (Minimum Public Open Space Provision)** – *"Require a minimum public open space provision of 2.5 hectares per 1000 population. For the purposes of this calculation, public open space requirements are to be based on residential units with an agreed occupancy rate of 3.5 persons in the case of dwellings with three or more bedrooms and 1.5 persons in the case of dwellings with two or fewer bedrooms."*

**Objective DMSO53 (Financial Contribution in Lieu of Public Open Space)** – *"Require minimum open space, as outlined in Table 14.12 for a proposed development site area (Target minimum amount of 15% except in cases where the developer can demonstrate that this is not possible, in which case the 12% to 15% range will apply) to be designated for use as public open space. The Council has the discretion to accept a financial contribution in lieu of the remaining open space requirement to allow provision for the acquisition of additional open space or the upgrade of existing parks and open spaces subject to these additional facilities meeting the standards specified in Table 14.11. Where the Council accepts financial contributions in lieu of open space, the contribution shall be calculated on the basis of 25% Class 2 and 75% Class 1 in addition to the development costs of the open space."*

We also note that the Development Plan (page 185) states (**but neither as a policy nor an objective**) that some areas are not to be counted in the calculation of open space. These areas include:

- *"Environmental Open Space, i.e. incidental or narrow pieces of open space used for the preservation of trees/ hedgerows and or as a visual relief and screen planting e.g. along roads.*
- *Green corridors.*
- *Areas of open space under high voltage electricity lines and wayleave areas.*
- *Areas of open space where the presence of archaeology prohibits the development of the required play provision for a development in accordance with Development Plan standards."*

**We are firmly of the opinion that the above restrictions are fundamentally contrary to planning policy's broader aims** to retain existing hedgerows and trees, to integrate development into existing green infrastructure and to deliver nature-based SuDS solutions instead of more highly engineered drainage strategies.

Furthermore, existing hedgerows and trees are 'usable' open space, augmenting them in significant ways. They are spaces in which children can play, explore and exercise in a truly natural way. If existing hedgerows and trees are not considered as 'usable' open space, then the only 'usable' open spaces would be those stripped of the natural features that give them character, biodiversity and recreational value.

Additionally, planning policy's increasing number of requirements and development management standards place more and more onerous expectations on Applicants. Whilst many of these are positive and progressive, we contend that they should not be forced to be delivered in isolation, but rather in a holistic and integrated manner when it is for the betterment of an overall development proposal and community.

Evidently, the Development Plan seeks high-quality spaces, that are passively surveilled and that appropriately incorporate SuDS. Minimum areas of at least 12%–15% are sought, although the requirement for 2.5 Ha of public open space per 1,000 population markedly increases this to 1.23 Ha (62% of the net site) due to the proposed number and mix of units. This fundamentally conflicts with the provisions of the Compact Settlements Guidelines, the Development Plan's own 12–15% public open space range and the underpinnings of compact growth and densification as sought by national, regional and local policy. We consider this requirement to be excessive and contend that the Council has appropriate flexibility to reduce the required 'per population' public open space standard having regard to Policy and Objective 5.1 (Public Open Space) in the Compact Settlements Guidelines, which states:

*"It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that statutory development plans include an objective(s) relating to the provision of public open space in new residential developments (and in mixed-use developments that include a residential element). **The requirement in the development plan shall be for public open space provision of not less than a minimum of 10% of net site area and not more than a minimum of 15% of net site area save in exceptional circumstances. Different minimum requirements (within the 10-15% range) may be set for different areas.** The minimum requirement should be justified taking into account existing public open space provision in the area and broader nature conservation and environmental considerations.*

*In the case of strategic and sustainable development sites, the minimum public open space requirement will be determined on a plan-led basis, having regard to the overall approach to public park provision within the area.*

*In the case of sites that contain significant heritage, landscape or recreational features and sites that have specific nature conservation requirements, a higher proportion of public open space may need to be retained. The 10-15% range shall not therefore apply to new development in such areas.*

*In some circumstances a planning authority might decide to set aside (in part or whole) the public open space requirement arising under the development plan. This can occur in cases where the planning authority considers it unfeasible, due to site constraints or other factors, to locate all of the open space on site. In other cases, the planning authority might consider that the needs of the population would be better served by the provision of a new park in the*



area or the upgrade or enhancement of an existing public open space or amenity. It is recommended that a provision to this effect is included within the development plan to allow for flexibility. In such circumstances, the planning authority may seek a financial contribution within the terms of Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in lieu of provision within an application site.” **[emphasis added]**

In light of the above, we contend that the quantitative minimum public open space requirement for the subject site is 12–15% of the site area, with the lower end considered to be appropriate at the site as it is infill in nature.

#### 6.8.1.2 Quanta and Locations of Proposed Public Open Space

The proposed public open space extends to a total of 3,642 sq m, equivalent to 18.4% of the net site area. We firmly contend that this is well in excess of the requirement for the site and this development.

The locations and quanta of the public open spaces are presented in Figure 6.8 below. These are principally along the west, south-west and central parts of the site. They incorporate existing trees and vegetation in the south-west and are a core aspect of the development in the central location, where a Willow tree is proposed for retention.

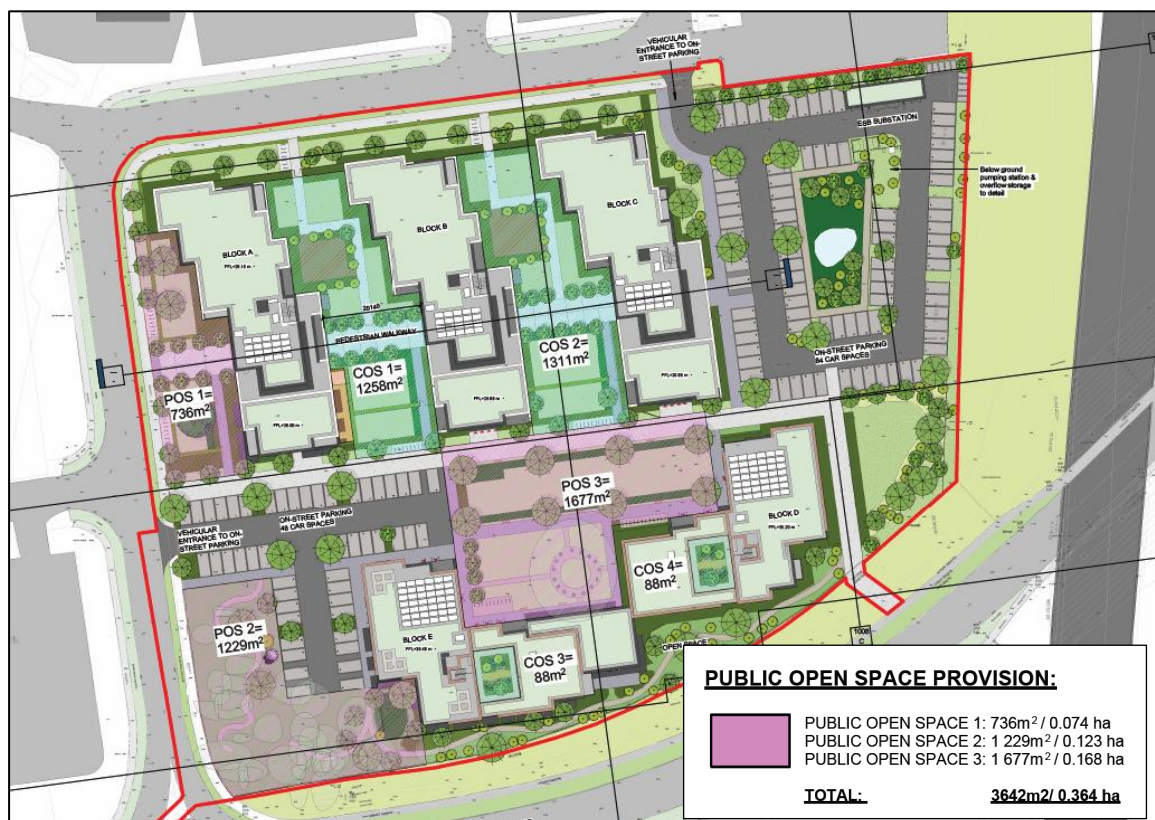


Figure 6.8: Locations and Quanta of Open Space, Including Public Open Space

Source: MCORM (2026)

#### 6.8.1.3 Public Open Space Design

The proposed public open space is principally detailed in the materials prepared and enclosed by CSR. In considering the quality and design of the spaces, the Design Team has been mindful of the guidance in Section 14.13.3.1 of the Development Plan:

***"Open spaces must be designed to a high specification. Great emphasis must be placed on the quality and long-term sustainability of open space and details of the proposed landscaping, hard and soft, of these spaces will be required at the planning application stage. Public open spaces should be overlooked and designed in such a way that anti-social behaviour is reduced through passive surveillance. Potential for antisocial behaviour associated with open spaces and associated screen planting must be designed out."***  
***[emphasis added]***

Informed by the above, the proposed public open spaces and landscaping have been designed to a high-standard. The spaces are passively surveilled and considerably integrated within the proposed development, with vegetation to be retained where practicable (most notably the south-west corner and the Willow tree in the central area). The spaces have been subject to a detailed planting regimen and incorporate robust hard surfaces to prolong the life of materials and minimise maintenance.

Furthermore, the spaces have been given purpose and activation, with example aspects including:

- Seating;
- A nature corridor walk;
- Ecology enhancements – bat boxes, bird boxes and log piles; and
- Natural play elements.

Positively, the public open space design incorporates and protects a considerable swathe of existing trees on-site, whilst appropriately interfacing the development with the public roads to the north, west and south. This is important and it avoids the creation of an isolated or discordant development relative to the existing context.

Soft planting includes a broad range of native, fruiting and pollinator friendly species and trees, including:

- *Quercus robur* (Pedunculate Oak);
- *Crataegus monogyna* (Hawthorn);
- *Pinus sylvestris* (Scots Pine); and
- *Betula pendula* (Silver Birch).

Noise impacts and performance of public open space are detailed in Wave's *Acoustic Design Statement*. Public Open Space No. 3 (1,677 sq m) achieves full compliance with ProPG's recommendations. Public Open Spaces No. 1 and 2 do not achieve compliance. However, as Wave illustrate in their report, ProPG indicates that strict compliance is **not** mandatory; flexibility and pragmatism must be applied. ProPG states:

***"These guideline values may not be achievable in all circumstances where development might be desirable. In such a situation, development should be designed to achieve the lowest practicable noise levels in these external amenity spaces but should not be prohibited."***  
***[emphasis added]***

Due to the technical nature of the content, we respectfully direct the Council to Wave's enclosed report, and stress once again that strict compliance with ProPG's recommendations is not mandatory. It is not a 'black and white' assessment – a case that simply not meeting the recommendation means an open space is altogether unusable or undesirable. In the case of Public Open Space No. 2, this will be a highly attractive space given the intended retention of

existing trees and the proposed landscape plans for that space. Ultimately, we contend that a practical and pragmatic approach to compliance must be taken, as it is in the case of daylight and sunlight performance of residential dwellings; there is more to the quality of a dwelling than its natural lighting. Similarly, there is more to the quality of open spaces than the existing environmental noise.

## 6.8.2 Communal Amenity Space

The minimum quantitative communal amenity space standards are set by the Apartment Design Guidelines. We state these for the proposed dwelling mix in Table 6.6 below and calculate the need for 1,948 sq m of such space across the development.

| Bedrooms         | Standard (sq m) | No. Units | Minimum CAS (sq m) |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1-bed            | 5               | 60        | 300                |
| 2-bed (3-person) | 6               | 13        | 78                 |
| 2-bed (4-person) | 7               | 187       | 1,309              |
| 3-bed            | 9               | 29        | 261                |
| Total            |                 | 289       | 1,948              |

Table 6.6: Minimum Communal Amenity Spaces Area By Unit Size

Source: *Planning Design Standards for Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025)*

To meet this requirement, a total of 2,745 sq m of communal amenity space is proposed in 4 No. discrete locations, per Figure 6.9 below. From a quantitative perspective, this exceeds the minimum requirement by 797 sq m or 40.9%.



Figure 6.9: Locations and Quanta of Open Space, Including Communal Amenity Space

Source: MCORM (2026)

We refer the Council to CSR's enclosed detail in respect of the qualitative design of the proposed communal amenity spaces, but note for awareness that they include:

- Children's play spaces in 2 No. areas;
- Seating and socialising spaces;
- Carefully considered planting, including trees and shrubs;
- Lawns, usable for picnics, kick-about, etc.;
- Attractive hard-surfaces to create robust and functional amenity; and
- Rooftop amenity space, that will provide panoramic views.

Of particular merit is CSR's selection of plant species, which places a priority on utilising native and pollinator friendly species.

Notably, all 4 No. communal amenity spaces are compliant with regard to ProPG's noise recommendations. This is discussed in greater detail in Wave's *Acoustic Design Statement*.

### 6.8.3 Private Amenity Space

The minimum private amenity space standards are set by the Apartment Design Guidelines. These are summarised in Table 6.7 below. Per MCORM's enclosed materials, the proposed development complies with these areas in all instances.

| Apartment Size   | Minimum Private Amenity Space |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Studio           | 4 sq m                        |
| 1-Bed            | 5 sq m                        |
| 2-Bed (3 person) | 6 sq m                        |
| 2-Bed (4-person) | 7 sq m                        |
| 3-Bed (4-person) | 7 sq m                        |
| 3-Bed (5-person) | 9 sq m                        |

Table 6.7: Minimum Private Amenity Spaces Area By Unit Size

Source: *Planning Design Standards for Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025)*

## 6.9 Parking

Parking is an important aspect of all developments as its provision facilitates the mobility of residents, visitors, workers and patrons. The prioritisation of active modes is heavily emphasised in national, regional and local policy, with the proposed development designed accordingly.

### 6.9.1 Car Parking

#### 6.9.1.1 Residential Car Parking

The provision of car parking is increasingly being balanced between (1) supporting mobility needs and preferences, and (2) sustainability, with reduced rates promoted by national policy, such as that featuring in the Apartment Design Guidelines and the Compact Settlements Guidelines.

The Compact Settlements Guidelines include SPPR 3 in relation to car parking, which states:

*"It is a specific planning policy requirement of these Guidelines that:*



- (i) *In city centres and urban neighbourhoods of the five cities, defined in Chapter 3 (Table 3.1 and Table 3.2) car-parking provision should be minimised, substantially reduced or wholly eliminated. The maximum rate of car parking provision for residential development at these locations, where such provision is justified to the satisfaction of the planning authority, shall be 1 no. space per dwelling.*
- (ii) ***In accessible locations, defined in Chapter 3 (Table 3.8) car parking provision should be substantially reduced. The maximum rate of car parking provision for residential development, where such provision is justified to the satisfaction of the planning authority, shall be 1.5 no. spaces per dwelling.***
- (iii) *In intermediate and peripheral locations, defined in Chapter 3 (Table 3.8) the maximum rate of car parking provision for residential development, where such provision is justified to the satisfaction of the planning authority, shall be 2 no. spaces per dwelling.*

*Applicants should be required to provide a rationale and justification for the number of car parking spaces proposed and to satisfy the planning authority that the parking levels are necessary and appropriate, particularly when they are close to the maximum provision. The maximum car parking standards do not include bays assigned for use by a car club, designated short stay on-street Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations or accessible parking spaces. The maximum car parking standards do include provision for visitor parking.*

*This SPPR will not apply to applications made in a Strategic Development Zone until the Planning Scheme is amended to integrate changes arising from the SPPR. Refer to Section 2.1.2 for further detail.” [emphasis added]*

Based on the wording of SPPR 3 and the definitions provided in Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.8 of the Guidelines, we are of the opinion that the site is technically in a “*high capacity urban public transport node or interchange*”. This is due to the existing and proposed public transport networks. However, this category does not feature in SPPR 3; therefore, the site is considered to be in an “*accessible*” location. **On this basis, 1.5 No. spaces per dwelling is the maximum allowable rate of parking in accordance with the Guidelines.** This equates to a total maximum of 434 No. residential car parking spaces based on the number of dwellings proposed.

However, we contend that providing that rate of car parking would be excessive due to public transport provision (existing and proposed), the availability of services proximate to the site and the site’s position within the established Swords settlement. To guide the application of an appropriate car parking rate and comply with the SPPR requirement to prepare a justification for same, we provide key insights and observations below.

Firstly, we consider the Development Plan’s car parking standards. The Plan defines 2 No. car parking zones to ensure adequate residential parking provision and the control of destination car parking. This approach also allows greater flexibility in the application of car parking standards on sites in areas with varying levels of road and public transport provision. The zones are:

|               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Zone 1</b> | Relates to developments <b>within</b> 800m of Bus Connects spine route, or <b>1600m of an existing or planned Luas/Dart/Metro Rail station</b> or within an area covered by a Section 49 scheme, or in lands zoned Major Town Centre. |
| <b>Zone 2</b> | Relates to all other areas within the County.                                                                                                                                                                                         |

As mentioned above, the subject site is located approximately 450 m walking distance from the planned Seatown MetroLink Station and thus is located within car parking Zone 1. Table 14.19 of the Development Plan sets the ‘maximum’ car parking standards for developments within this



zone. The dwelling sizes and their respective standards are listed below in Table 6.8 and applied to the subject scheme, resulting in a maximum of 159 No. spaces. This is useful to understand and it reflects the Council's own interpretation of car parking needs within their jurisdiction.

| Land Use Category | Car Parking Standard (Max.) | No. Units  | Maximum No. Spaces Permitted |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| 1-bed             | 0.5                         | 60         | 30                           |
| 2-bed             | 0.5                         | 200        | 100                          |
| 3-bed             | 1                           | 29         | 29                           |
| <b>Total</b>      |                             | <b>289</b> | <b>159</b>                   |

Table 6.8: 'Maximum' Residential Car Parking Standards for the Subject Scheme

Source: Table 14.19, *Fingal Development Plan 2023–2029* and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

With respect to an appropriate level of car parking, we refer the Council back to Section 2.0 in relation to the site's location and context, and also to Section 6.5 relating to density. Therein, we demonstrate:

- Existing public transport services;
- Proposed/planned public transport services;
- Planned and forthcoming cycle infrastructure upgrades;
- The site's excellent position within Swords; and
- The availability of various services, facilities and amenity proximate to the site.

Furthermore, it is worth being mindful of national, regional and local planning policy's fundamental efforts to reduce unsustainable private car use and to encourage the use of active and public modes of transportation and the development of denser and mixed-use developments. In fact, we note that the Development Plan states that a reduction in car parking may be permitted in cases where:

***"A reduced car parking provision may be acceptable where the Council is satisfied that good public transport links are already available or planned and/or a Management Mobility Plan for the development demonstrates that a high percentage of modal shift in favour of the sustainable modes will be achieved through the development."***  
[emphasis added]

Based on the above insights, parking for the residential uses is proposed as 122 No. spaces. Overall, based on 289 No. units, this equates to a ratio of 0.42 No. spaces per dwelling. Applying the maximum standards of the Development Plan to the proposed dwelling mix yields a maximum ratio of 0.55 No. spaces per dwelling. Thus the proposed rate of provision is 23% less than the Development Plan's maximum, aligning with its principle and broader policy efforts to reduce car use.

#### 6.9.1.2 Non-Residential Car Parking

Car parking standards with respect to non-residential uses are prescribed by the Development Plan. As noted above, the site is in Zone 1. The maximum standards for the uses are detailed in Table 6.9 along with the proposed areas to detail the maximum provisions allowable. The maximum number of car parking spaces permitted are 2.5 No. for the crèche and 35 No. for the commercial unit assuming the application of the 'Food store (incl. [sic] discount food store)' standard for 1 No. spaces per 20 sq m.

| Land Use Category | Car Parking Standard (Max.) | Space Proposed   | Max. Spaces Permitted | Spaces Proposed |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Crèche            | 0.5 per classroom           | 5 No. classrooms | 2.5                   | 2               |
| Commercial Unit   | 1 per 20 sq m <sup>31</sup> | 701 sq m         | 35                    | 8               |
| <b>Total</b>      |                             |                  | <b>34.5</b>           | <b>10</b>       |

Table 6.9: 'Maximum' Non-Residential Car Parking Standards for the Subject Scheme

Source: Table 14.19, *Fingal County Development Plan 2023–2029* and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

The development proposes to provide 2 No. spaces for the crèche use and 8 No. for the commercial use – 10 No. non-residential spaces in total. The former is close to the maximum allowed by the Development Plan, but is considered appropriate due to the very nature of the use and those to which it applies (children) who may require greater care and support.

For the commercial use, 8 No. spaces (22.9% of the maximum allowed) are proposed. This is an appropriate rate of provision given the use will likely serve a local, accessible catchment. Staff and patrons are expected to come from the immediate area, and potentially from within the residential element of the development itself.

Given the mixed-use nature of the proposal, including the incorporation of a residential component, its location within Zone 1, its proximity to Swords Town Centre and various services, and the availability of notable existing and planned public transport infrastructure, the rate of non-residential car parking is considered to be adequate and acceptable to meet the need and comply with planning policy.

### 6.9.1.3 EV Charging and Accessible Parking Spaces

Regarding electric vehicle (EV) charging, the Development Plan states that it shall be provided in all multi-unit residential and non-residential developments. Section 14.17.10 of the Development Plan requires EV charging to 20% of residential car parking and 10% of non-residential car parking.

Of the 122 No. residential car parking spaces, 25 No. will be fitted with EV charging infrastructure, which meets the minimum requirement of the Development Plan. Of the 10 No. non-residential car parking spaces, 3 No. will be fitted with EV charging infrastructure, which exceeds the minimum requirement. The remaining spaces will be ducted to accommodate future upgrades to full EV charging status.

Section 14.17.8 of the Development Plan requires a minimum of 5% of car parking to be designed as accessible parking. Based on the provision of 132 No. car parking spaces, a total of 7 No. spaces are accessible spaces, according with the minimum requirement of the Development Plan.

### 6.9.2 Cycle Parking

Cycle parking for residential uses is prescribed by SPPR 4 (Cycle Parking and Storage) of the Compact Settlement Guidelines. This states:

*"It is a specific planning policy requirement of these Guidelines that all new housing schemes (including mixed-use schemes that include housing) include safe and secure cycle storage"*

<sup>31</sup> The standard of 1 No. space per 20 sq m as applies to 'Food store (incl. [sic] discount food store)' has been used.

facilities to meet the needs of residents and visitors. The following requirements for cycle parking and storage are recommended:

- (i) *Quantity – in the case of residential units that do not have ground level open space or have smaller terraces, a general minimum standard of 1 cycle storage space per bedroom should be applied. Visitor cycle parking should also be provided. Any deviation from these standards shall be at the discretion of the planning authority and shall be justified with respect to factors such as location, quality of facilities proposed, flexibility for future enhancement/ enlargement, etc. It will be important to make provision for a mix of bicycle parking types including larger/heavier cargo and electric bikes and for individual lockers.*
- (ii) *Design – cycle storage facilities should be provided in a dedicated facility of permanent construction, within the building footprint or, where not feasible, within an adjacent or adjoining purpose-built structure of permanent construction. Cycle parking areas shall be designed so that cyclists feel safe. It is best practice that either secure cycle cage/compound or preferably locker facilities are provided.”*

Therefore, for the residents, a rate of 1 No. space per bedroom applies. For visitors, no standard quantitative standard is set. However, the Applicant and Design Team have opted to use a rate of 0.5 No. spaces per dwelling, which accords with the rate applied by the previous iteration of the Apartment Design Guidelines (2023). We detail these standards and minimum requirements based on the dwelling mix in Table 6.10 below. A total of 547 No. spaces are required for residents and 145 No. spaces are required for visitors.

| Bedrooms     | No. Units  | Residents |            | Visitors |            |
|--------------|------------|-----------|------------|----------|------------|
|              |            | Standard  | Minimum    | Standard | Minimum    |
| 1-bed        | 60         | 1         | 60         | 0.5      | 30         |
| 2-bed        | 200        | 2         | 400        | 0.5      | 100        |
| 3-bed        | 29         | 3         | 87         | 0.5      | 15         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>289</b> |           | <b>547</b> |          | <b>145</b> |

**Table 6.10: 'Minimum' Cycle Parking Standards for the Subject Scheme**

**Source:** *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)* and Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

For the non-residential uses, cycle parking standards are prescribed by Table 14.17 of the Development Plan. These applicable standards for the proposed uses and resulting minimum requirements are shown in Table 6.11 below. We calculate a minimum long-stay cycle parking requirement of 12 No. spaces and a minimum short-stay parking requirement of 34 No. spaces.

| Use             | No. Units        | Long-Stay       |         | Short-Stay      |         |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
|                 |                  | Standard        | Minimum | Standard        | Minimum |
| Crèche          | 5 No. classrooms | 1 per classroom | 5       | 5 per classroom | 25      |
| Commercial Unit | 701 sq m         | 1 per 100 sq m  | 7       | 1 per 80 sq m   | 9       |
| Total           |                  |                 | 12      |                 | 34      |

**Table 6.11: 'Minimum' Non-Residential Cycle Parking Standards for the Subject Scheme**

**Source:** Table 14.17, *Fingal County Development Plan 2023–2029*, annotated by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

In Table 6.12 below, we combine the resident and long-stay cycle parking requirements, and the visitor and short-stay cycle parking requirements. These are then set against the corresponding rates of provision for both groups. As is evident, the minimum requirements are met in both instances.

| Land Use Category | Resident/Long-Stay Spaces Required | Resident/Long-Stay Spaces Proposed | Visitor/Short-Stay Spaces Required | Visitor/Short-Stay Spaces Proposed |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Residential       | 547                                | 603                                | 145                                | 179                                |
| Non-Residential   | 12                                 |                                    | 34                                 |                                    |
| Total             | 559                                |                                    | 179                                |                                    |

**Table 6.12: Combined required and proposed cycle parking for the residential and non-residential uses**

**Source:** Compiled by Thornton O'Connor Town Planning (2026)

The resident/long-stay cycle parking is proposed in 5 No. separate stores, aligning with a 'store per block', yielding a broad distribution across the development. These stores are enclosed/internalised, ensuring they are safe and protected spaces. Access will be limited to residents and staff only via a key, fob or code system.

The visitor/short-stay cycle parking is by way of 179 No. Sheffield stands spread across the development; giving users options. These spaces benefit from passive surveillance from the proposed residential units, crèche and commercial unit.

### 6.9.3 Motorcycle Parking

Section 14.17.9 of the Development Plan requires motorcycle parking to be provided within apartment and non-residential developments at a rate of 1 No. space per 10 No. car parking spaces. Based on the proposed combined provision of 132 No. car parking spaces, 13 No. motorcycle spaces are required for the development. As set out in the suite of documents submitted herewith and illustrated in Drawing No. 'SWO-MCORM-AR-00-DR-P4-1006' prepared by MCORM, a total of 13 No. motorcycle parking spaces are provided.

### 6.10 Surface Water Management and SuDS

Safe and sustainable surface water management features are an increasingly vital aspect of development design and operation in response to urban densification, climate change and the need to protect and enhance biodiversity. In light of this, we note the following policies and objectives of relevance in the Development Plan:

### **Policy IUP10 – Water Conservation and SuDS**

*“Promote the inclusion of water conservation and SuDS measures in all developments, to reduce the level of surface water run-off, improve water quality and contribute to adaptation to climate change through natural solutions.”*

### **Objective IUO9 – Surface Water Drainage Systems**

*“Maintain and enhance existing surface water drainage systems in the County and to require SuDS in new developments where appropriate, as set out in the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (Vol 2: New Development) / Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works).”*

### **Objective IUO10 – SuDS – Nature-Based Solutions & Objective DMSO202 – SuDS**

*“SuDS shall incorporate nature-based solutions and have regard to the objectives set out in Fingal’s Guidance Document – Green/ Blue Infrastructure for Development, as amended (Appendix 11) and Nature Based Solutions to the Management of Rainwater and Surface Water Runoff in Urban Areas, Water Sensitive Urban Design Best Practice Interim Guidance Document (November 2021, DHLGH).”*

### **Objective IUO11 – SuDS in New Developments & Objective DMSO203 - FCC SuDS Guidance Document**

*“SuDS shall be incorporated into all parts of a development (open spaces, roads, footpaths, private areas), and have regard to the FCC SuDs Guidance Document – Green/ Blue Infrastructure for Development, as amended (Appendix 11), and shall ensure:*

- *That the design of SuDS enhances the quality of open spaces and when included as part of any open space provision, it must contribute in a significant and positive way to the design and quality of the open space.*
- *Open space areas shall not be dominated by SuDS features.*
- *Underground tanked systems, whether concrete or plastic, are the least favoured means for surface water management and shall only be used when green solutions have proven not feasible.*

*See also Appendix 11 (SuDS Guidance Document), and Chapter 14 Development Management Standards (Section 14.20.3 SuDS).”*

### **Objective IUO12 & DMSO206 – Green Roofs**

*“Require the use of Green Roofs particularly on apartment, commercial, leisure and educational buildings as part of the overall surface water management strategy for each development, where appropriate.”*

### **Objective GINHO14 – Green Roofs**

*“Seek the provision of green roofs and green walls as an integrated part of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and which provide benefits for biodiversity, wherever possible.”*



### **Objective DMSO207 – Green Walls and Roofs for New Developments**

*“Promote and encourage the use of green walls and roofs for new developments that demonstrate benefits in terms of SuDS as part of an integrated approach to green infrastructure provision.”*

### **Objective IUO13 – Surface Water Run-Off**

*“Require that all surface water run-off from new / extended domestic driveways, repaired/ replacement driveways and vehicular entrances (where such development is not exempted from the requirement to obtain planning permission) is managed using SuDS, ensuring no increase in surface water discharges to the public drainage network.”*

### **Objective IUO15 & DMSO205 – Surface Water Management Plan**

*“Require the preparation of a Surface Water Management Plan as part of all new developments which shall include the following:*

- *Identify and assess the existing surface water movements through the development before considering and developing a surface water management system using SuDS, having regard to our Fingal Guidance Document – Green/ Blue Infrastructure for Development, as amended (Appendix 11).*
- *Incorporate SuDS along the route of the water movement to enhance the water quality effects of nature-based systems at the different stages – Treatment Train approach from source to discharge.”*

### **Objective GINHO15 – SuDS**

*“Limit surface water run-off from new developments through the use of appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) using nature-based solutions and ensure that SuDS is integrated into all new development in the County.”*

In light of these provisions and in accordance with best practice and the overall benefit of the proposed development, a series of SuDS measures are incorporated into the development to appropriately manage surface water. As stated in the *Engineering Infrastructure Report & Stormwater Impact Assessment*, the following SuDS measures have been incorporated into the design of the development:

- Intensive green roofs provided;
- Permeable paving to all parking spaces;
- Tree pits;
- Bio-Retention areas;
- Filter swales;
- Silt-trap/catchpit manholes;
- Hydrobrake limiting flow to the drained area Qbar greenfield rate;
- Stone lined voided arch retention storage; and
- Open detention basins.

The various SuDS are discussed in detail in the *Engineering Infrastructure Report & Stormwater Impact Assessment* and suite of drawings submitted herewith, and combine to achieve the

Council's objectives of water quality, water quantity, amenity and biodiversity. The *Engineering Infrastructure Report & Stormwater Impact Assessment* provides the following SuDS summary:

*"Replicating the natural characteristics and providing amenity/biodiversity will be encouraged by creating the roadside tree pits, bio-retention areas, swales, green roofs and open detention basin.*

*The overall site surface water runoff rate has been restricted to the greenfield runoff rate, Qbar (6.24 l/s) and the recommended HR Wallingford UK SuDS calculations for same can be viewed in Appendix 11.1 of this report. Refer also to Section 6 for background on the determination of the soil type used in the Qbar calculation.*

*Refer to the appendix and to Dwg. No's 2412/02 & 06 & 07 for the drainage layout and SuDS features details.*

*In providing the above noted features it is proposed that the SuDS treatment of the run-off has been adequately addressed."*

The SuDS measures are considered to be those most appropriate for the site, and positively and progressively include nature-based elements that align with the Council's efforts to support ecology and biodiversity and the delivery of green infrastructure. Therefore, they are not just engineering 'solutions' to address surface water, but carefully considered multi-functional, multi-purpose aspects of the proposed development.

#### 6.11 Flood Risk

Consideration of flood risk is of a continued and increasing importance in urban locations given the emphasis being placed on densification and the potential hazards associated with climate change.

Having reviewed the Development Plan, we deem Objective IUO16 (replicated as Objective DMSO212) to be of greatest relevance:

*"Have regard to the OPW Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009, as revised by Circular PL 2/2014, when assessing planning applications and in the preparation of statutory and non-statutory plans and to require site specific flood risk assessments to be considered for all new developments within the County. All development must prepare a Stage 1 Flood Risk Analysis and if the flooding risk is not screened out, they must prepare a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment (SSFRA) for the development, where appropriate."*

Accordingly, a *Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment* has been prepared by Roger Mullarkey & Associates and is submitted herewith. As discussed in Section 5.5 above, its preparation has been undertaken based on the guidance in *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009). The objectives of the Guidelines are stated as being to:

- *"Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding;*
- *Avoid new developments increasing flood risk elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water run-off;*
- *Ensure effective management of residual risks for development permitted in floodplains;*

- *Avoid unnecessary restriction of national, regional or local economic and social growth;*
- *Improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders; and*
- *Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management."*

The *Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment* positively concludes that *"this site is suitable for development and has an overall low risk of being affected by flooding."*

## 6.12 Ecology and Environment

The increasing importance of ecological and environmental protection has meant that they have been considered throughout the design process. In light of same, DNV have prepared an *Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EclA)*, an *Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AA Screening Report)*, a *Natura Impact Statement (NIS)*, a *Statement in accordance with Article 103(1A) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended (Article 103(1A) Statement)*, and an *EIA Screening Report*.

Whilst we direct the Council to review these individual reports, we have provided summaries and key concluding extracts below.

### 6.12.1 Ecology

Having reviewed the Development Plan, we deem the following Objectives relating to ecology and biodiversity to be of greatest relevance:

#### **Objective DMSO138 – Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity**

*"Ensure all development and infrastructure proposals include measures to protect and enhance biodiversity leading to an overall net biodiversity gain."*

#### **Objective DMSO139 – Ecological Study**

*"Ensure that an ecological study is carried out of the development site covering habitats and flora, breeding birds, bats and amphibians to identify existing ecological valuable features and the species composition of the site."*

#### **Objective DMSO141 – Incorporation of Habitat Features**

*"Incorporate habitat features (new or existing) and other conservation measures for species of conservation interest (e.g. legally protected species or Amber and Red listed bird species) in the Integrated Green Infrastructure Plan."*

#### **Objective DMSO143 – Habitat Facilities for Wildlife Species**

*"Require all new developments to incorporate habitat facilities for wildlife species as appropriate including Kestrel, Peregrine, Swifts, House Sparrows, Swallow, Starling, Bats and insects in or on buildings facades."*

## Objective DMSO148 – Ecological Impact Assessment

*“Ensure ecological impact assessment is carried out for any proposed development likely to have a significant impact on proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna, Habitat Directive Annex I sites and Annex II species contained therein, or rare and threatened Flora Protection order and Red Data Book species and their habitats. Ensure appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into development proposals as part of any ecological impact assessment.”*

With respect to ecology on-site and within the defined zone of influence, DNV have prepared an EclA. We direct the Council to this separate report, however, a summary of the ecological surveys carried out, the best practice standards and mitigation and enhancement measures for the construction and operational phase, and the conclusion of the EclA are provided below for ease of reference and to demonstrate compliance with the abovementioned Objectives of the Development Plan.

The following ecological surveys have been carried out by DNV, as detailed in the EclA:

- Habitats and floral (incl. invasive species);
- General mammal;
- Bird scoping;
- Winter bird scoping;
- Breeding bird;
- Bat roost and habitat suitability; and
- Bat activity.

To ensure the protection and enhancement of habitats and species during the construction and operational phase of the project, as detailed in the EclA as well as the *Construction Environmental Management Plan* prepared by AWN Consulting, a number of best practice standards are incorporated into the design of the development and mitigation and enhancement measures have been identified. Examples of these measures include:

- Root protection zones for retained vegetation at the site;
- Biosecurity measures to avoid the potential introduction or spread of invasive species;
- Specific construction stage measures to protect water and air quality (maintenance of plant and machinery, storage and use of fuels, oils and chemicals, spill/emergency response plans, waste management and disposal, dust control, etc.);
- Removal of vegetation on site to be carried out within the months of September and October to avoid the main breeding bird season and bat maternity and roosting season as well as mammal hibernation;
- Wildlife friendly lighting;
- Noise reduction measures during construction phase;
- Landscape design incorporates a mix of native and non-native (but not invasive) planting;
- 4 No. bat boxes;
- 4 No. bird boxes;
- Swift bricks/blocks; and
- Log piles.

Having regard to the ecological status of the site and within the defined zone of influence, the design of the development, and best practice standards and mitigation and enhancement measures, the EclA proceeds to conclude the following:

*"It is considered that, provided the mitigation measures proposed within this report together with all best practice development standards as outlined in the OCEMP are carried out in full, **there will be no significant negative impact to any KER habitat, species group or biodiversity as a result of the Proposed Development.**"*

*Additionally, the landscaping plan for the Proposed Development was designed to include green space areas, tree planting, shrub, native hedgerow, and native wildflower meadows. The ecological value of this Site is very likely to be increased considering the current Site has extremely limited vegetation. Therefore, **the Proposed Development will improve the overall ecological value of the Site.**" [emphasis added]*

#### 6.12.2 Natura 2000 Sites

As noted above, an AA Screening Report and NIS have been prepared in respect of the proposed development at the site, ensuring the protection of designated sites and to demonstrate compliance with the following Development Plan Objectives:

##### **Objective DMSO1 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment**

*"Ensure that all plans and projects in the County which could, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a European site or sites are subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment."*

##### **Objective DMSO144 – Appropriate Assessment**

*"Ensure Screening for Appropriate Assessment and, where required, full Appropriate Assessment is carried out for all plans and projects in the County which, individually, or in combination with other plans and projects, are likely to have a significant direct or indirect impact on any European site or sites."*

##### **Objective DMSO145 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment**

*"Ensure that sufficient information is provided as part of development proposals to enable Screening for Appropriate Assessment to be undertaken and to enable a fully informed assessment of impacts on biodiversity to be made."*

As detailed in the accompanying AA Screening Report, it was concluded that a degree of uncertainty existed in whether the proposed development would give rise to potentially significant effects on three European sites, namely:

- Malahide Estuary SAC;
- Malahide Estuary SPA; and
- North-West Irish Sea SPA.

Therefore, DNV were required to proceed to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment Screening process and a *Natura Impact Statement* was thus prepared.

*"This NIS has concluded that, once the avoidance and mitigation measures are implemented as proposed, the Proposed Development **will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the above European site(s), individually or in combination with other plans and projects.** Where applicable, a suite of monitoring surveys have been proposed to confirm the efficacy*



*of said measures in relation to ensuring no adverse impacts on the habitats of the relevant European sites have occurred.*

*As a result of the complete, precise and definitive findings in of this NIS, it has been concluded, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that the Proposed Development **will have no significant adverse effects** on the QIs, SCIs and on the integrity and extent of Malahide Estuary SAC (000205), Malahide Estuary SPA (004025), and North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236). Accordingly, the Proposed Development **will not adversely affect the integrity of any relevant European site.**" [emphasis added]*

### 6.12.3 Environmental Impact

With respect to environmental impacts, DNV have undertaken a detailed screening exercise in the enclosed *EIA Screening Report*, as required under Objective DMSO<sub>2</sub> of the Development Plan. The report concludes:

*"This EIA Screening Report provides a description of the Proposed Development and the likely significant effects on the environment in line with the EIA Directive, legislation and guidance.*

***The site is not considered to be a sensitive location.** The Proposed Development is considered to be sub-threshold development when viewed against project categories in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).*

*On review of the likely potential environmental effects, it is considered that with the inclusion of appropriate design and standard construction management mitigation measures, the Proposed Development **will not likely result in significant effects on the environment.***

*Having regard to the absence of any significant environmental sensitivities in the area and to the consideration of robust mitigation measures referred to above, it is concluded that the Proposed Development **would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is not required** for the Proposed Development." [emphasis added]*

Supplementary and complementary to the *EIA Screening Report*, DNV prepared a *Statement In Accordance With Article 103(1a)A Of The Planning And Development Regulations 2001, As Amended*. The statement concluded that:

*"This Statement in accordance with Article 103(1A)a of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, details how the available results of all relevant assessments of the effects on the environment from the Proposed Development have been carried out pursuant to relevant European Legislation.*

*This Statement, in conjunction with the EIA Screening, has determined that, by reason of the nature, scale and location of the Proposed Development site, and the proposed mitigation measures outlined in the other assessments completed for this planning application, the Proposed Development does not require a mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR)."*

### 6.13 Part V

Per Section 96 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended), planning applications to which Part V applies must contain 3 No. specific pieces of information.

These are summarised in all 3 No. of the:

- *Circular PL 10/2015 and Housing Circular 36/2015* (November 2015);
- *Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 Guidelines issued by the Minister for Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government under section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000* (January 2017); and
- *Part V Resource Pack 4<sup>th</sup> Edition Concluding Part V Agreements* (May 2025).

The Part V proposal is summarised by the Guidelines as not needing "to be overly detailed but must contain:

- *how the applicant intends to discharge his/her Part V obligation as regards a selection of a preferred option from the options available under the Act;*
- *details in relation to the units or land to be provided; and*
- *indicative costs."*

Accordingly, we note the following:

- The Applicant intends to discharge its Part V obligation through the on-site transfer of completed units to FCC, pursuant to Section 96(3) of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended). A total of 58 No. units (12 No. 1-bedroom, 31 No. 2-bedroom and 15 No. 3-bedroom), located in Block A, are proposed for transfer — equivalent to 20% of the 289 No. units proposed, in accordance with the requirements of Part V.
- The specific units are indicated in Section 4.4 of MCORM's *Architectural and Urban Design Statement* and the associated unit type and floor plan drawings.
- Costs have been prepared and are enclosed as a standalone schedule.

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development represents an appropriate and attractive design solution at the subject site which introduces a much-needed substantial residential element into this location along the proposed route of MetroLink. These dwellings will be complemented by a commercial unit and crèche designed to serve both future residents and the broader, existing community.

The proposal is a suitably-scaled scheme that represents an early example of high density regenerative development within the corridor of MetroLink. This is evidenced by the evolution of the development's form, massing and heights since the LRDM, with some additional height added to avoid a monotonous building profile and to allow for subtle accentuations.

It is confidently considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the zoning designation of the subject site, the Development Plan and relevant Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines. Having regard to the foregoing, it is submitted that the proposed development represents the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

We trust the content of this planning application pack is adequate to facilitate a detailed assessment of the proposed development and to allow the Planning Authority to make a decision to grant planning permission. However, should you require any further insights, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully,




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**Daniel Moody**  
Associate  
Thornton O'Connor Town Planning

## APPENDIX A – PLANNING APPLICATION FEE PROOF OF PAYMENT

Payment Reference No: 244431524

Printed On: Friday, July 03, 2026 04:55:10 PM

Payment Type: SEPA Payment

Payment Status: Payment Processed

**Pay From:**

|                |                                |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Account Name   | JACKIE GREENE CONSTRUCTION LTD |
| Location       | SMITHFIELD DUBLIN 7            |
| Account Number | 92260079                       |

**Pay To:**

|                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Account Name   | FENGAL CO COUNCIL |
| Location       | AIB BANK          |
| Account Number | 06987582          |

**Payment Details:**

|                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Payment Currency     | Euro           |
| Payment Type         | Standard       |
| Payment Amount       | €55,626.80     |
| Payment Date         | 03/07/2026     |
| End To End Reference | J GREENE CONST |
| Payment Message      |                |