



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report ABP-322565-25

Development	The construction of a high-tech manufacturing facility and all other site works.
Location	Ashbourne Business Park, Ashbourne, County Meath
Planning Authority	Meath County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2560235
Applicant(s)	Brendan Meehan Controls (Manufacturing) t/a MMC Manufacturing
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant Permission
Type of Appeal	Third Party
Appellant(s)	John Conroy
Observer(s)	None.
Date of Site Inspection	19/8/25
Inspector	Ronan Murphy

1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1 The appeal site is located within the townland of Rath which is c. 1.4km to the north of the centre of Ashbourne, Co. Meath. The site, which is undeveloped is located on the west of the Ashbourne Business Park. The area surrounding the site to the east is light industrial in character with a number of businesses operating from the Ashbourne Business Park. There is residential development to the south of the site.
- 1.2 The appeal site is generally flat and has a stated area of c. 1.840ha. The site enclosed by mature hedgerow and tree growth on the northern, western, and eastern boundaries.
- 1.3 The appeal site is bound by internal roads of the Ashbourne Business Park to the east, the R-135 and an undeveloped parcel of land zoned E1 (Strategic Employment Zones) to the west, hedgerows / trees to the south (and residential development just beyond this) and an undeveloped parcel of land with the Ashbourne Business Park to the north.

2.0 Proposed Development

- 2.1. The proposed development consists of the following:
- The construction of 1 no. high-tech manufacturing facility (approx. 7,851 sqm total Gross Internal Area and 13.2m in height) including ancillary office space, reception area, lobby, circulation areas, canteen, plant, communication room, stores, WCs, and showers.
 - The provision of 4 no. dock levellers and 4 no. doors on grade for loading and unloading of Heavy Goods Vehicles.
 - The provision of 147 no. car parking spaces and 36 no. secure bicycle parking spaces.
 - 2 no. new vehicular access / egress points are proposed in the form of 1 no. HGV access point and 1 no. vehicular access points to the serve staff car parking areas separately via Ashbourne Business Park.

- 2 no. pedestrian / cycle access points are proposed via the R135.
- 1 no. bin store and 1 no. recycling store.
- 11 no. Condensers and 1 no. Generator associated with the proposed facility.
- An underground attenuation tank at the northern end of the site (407m³); and an attenuation basin (approx. 35m³) located at the southern boundary of the site.
- 4 no. signage areas on the northern, southern, western, and eastern elevations of the proposed facility.
- 785 sqm PV solar panels on the southern-western facing roof surfaces.
- All associated site development works including lighting, external plant, landscaping, and engineering works.

- 2.2 The proposed building is set out in two main units which are joined by a link building with a length of 148.7m and a width of c.69m. The plans further show that the proposed building would have a maximum height of 13.05m and be finished in a mixture of finishes including insulated wall cladding system, curtain walling systems (to the office facades) and daylight glazing system (at upper floor levels)
- 2.3 A total of 147 no. car parking spaces (including 15 no. EV parking spaces and 8 no. accessible parking spaces) are proposed at locations to the north, west and south of the proposed building. In addition to this, a total of 36 no. secure bicycle parking spaces are proposed to be provided.
- 2.4 Vehicular access to the building is proposed via 2 no. new vehicular access / egress points (1 no. HGV access point and 1 no. vehicular access points to the serve staff car parking areas), these access points would connect to the internal road network of the Ashbourne Business Park. Pedestrian access is proposed via 2 no. pedestrian / cycle access points are proposed via the R135 (to the west of the site).
- 2.5 Ancillary developments include bin stores, condensers, generators, underground attenuation tank (to the north of the site), attenuation basin (to the south of the site), 4 no. signs on each elevation of the building, PV solar panels (on the south-western facing roof) and landscaping / engineering works.

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1 By order dated 1/5/25 Meath County Council decided to grant planning permission subject to 19 conditions. The conditions are standard apart from Condition 5 which requires the building to be restricted to a 'light industrial building' (class 4) as defined in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2025.

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Planning Reports

3.2.1.1 There is one planning report on file, dated 1/5/25. The area planner considered that the proposed development is acceptable in principle in the E1 Strategic Employment Zone (High Technology Uses). It was further considered that an element of car parking within the F1 (Open Space Zone) these were ancillary to the overall use of the land.

3.2.1.2 In terms of the design of the proposed development, the area planner was satisfied that the proposed unit would be like the existing units within the business campus and would be acceptable. The area planner also considered that there would be negligible impacts on the streetscape and residential amenity in the vicinity of the site.

3.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- **Transportation:** Report dated 11/4/25 outlining no objection, subject to conditions.
- **Public lighting:** Undated email outlining that the public lighting submission is satisfactory.
- **Environment:** Report dated 30/4/25 outlining no objection, subject to conditions.
- **Broadband Officer:** Report dated 28/3/25 outlining no objection, subject to conditions.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

- **TII:** Response dated 28/3/25 stating that the Authority relies on the planning authority to abide by official policy in relation to development on / affecting national roads. TII recommends that the Council has regard to the provisions of Chapter 3 of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines and that the proposed development is adjacent to the study area for a future national road scheme (N2 Rath Roundabout to Kilmoon Cross Scheme) and that the planning authority consult with the project office advancing the scheme.
- **HSE:** Response dated 11/4/25 outlining observations with respect to the storm water network, staff canteens, food preparation facilities, volume of car parking spaces, waste storage areas, and the need for fuel and energy conservation measures.

4.0 Planning History

4.1 There is no planning history associated with the appeal site.

Overall lands

4.2 **Reg. Ref. 97/181.** Application for development of lands for use as industrial park. The development of which will include service roads connection to foul sewer, storm drains, street lighting and revised site entrance from public road. Permission granted, subject to conditions.

Site to the north

4.3 **Reg. Ref. 23/60334.** Application for a) construction of new warehouse building with 2 storey ancillary office accommodation at ground and first floor levels (overall height 10.115m) and a total gross floor area of 2,009m² (1,785m² at Ground floor & 224m² at 1st floor) on a site of circa 0.412 hectares; b) boundary wall to R135 and boundary fencing to other elevations. The development will also incorporate 26 standard car parking spaces, 2 no. wheelchair accessible parking spaces, 16 bicycle spaces, ESB substation, goods yard and all associated site development works. Permission refused for the following reasons:

1. It is considered that the proposed development by virtue of its nature located in Ashbourne Business Park which is zoned E1 Strategic Employment Zone would

materially contravene the zoning objective to facilitate opportunities for high technology and major campus style office-based employment within high quality accessible locations as the proposal would compromise the objective to provide an employment zone for high technology uses. Therefore, the proposed development would materially contravene an objective indicated in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 for the area and would set an undesirable precedent for other similar developments, which would in themselves and cumulatively not be in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

2. It is considered that the proposed development by virtue of its design and siting along a regional route and the main access into Ashbourne Town Centre would have an unduly prominent and obtrusive impact on the visual amenity of residents and road users along the R135 and would be contrary to the provisions set out in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and in particular DM OBJ 61 Any planning application for industrial, office, warehousing and Business Park Development shall address the following development assessment criteria: To require innovative contemporary designs for new industrial, office, warehousing and business park developments. And External finishes shall be suitable for the local/natural landscape. The proposal therefore would not be in the interest of the visual amenities of the area, would depreciate the value of property in the vicinity, would set an undesirable precedent for future development of this kind and would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

- 4.4 **Reg. Ref. DA70480.** Application for 5504 sq.m. (gross floor area) office development in a 4-5 storey (predominantly 4 storey) building, over semi-basement parking level incorporating 116 parking spaces and 40 No. cycle spaces (gross floor area excludes parking level), an ESB substation and associated switch room, ancillary plantroom areas; refuse storage, vehicle ramps, ventilation; lift and stair cores; formation of a new access road with junction off the Regional Road 135 (former N2) road, together with 119 No. surface car parking spaces (45 of which at deck level) and associated soft and hard landscaping, boundary treatments (including temporary hoarding for the period of construction to surround the site with associated lettering/signage employed for the purposes of advertising, announcement and direction); diversion of services, and all other necessary site development works above and below ground. Permission granted, subject to conditions.

Site to the east

- 4.5 It is noted that there are a large number of applications for various forms of light industrial and warehousing development within the Ashbourne Business Park (located to the east of the appeal site). The most recent is:

Reg. Ref. 22741. Application for fully serviced storage unit, incorporating 3 storey administration & staff facility areas, single storey storage and packing areas, access via existing service road, parking, signage, landscaping, boundary treatments, bicycle shelter, connection to existing services and all ancillary works. Permission granted, subject to conditions.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1 National Planning Framework (2040)-First Revision April 2025

- 5.1.1 The National Planning Framework - Project Ireland 2040-updated in April 2025 sets out the focus on pursuing a compact growth policy at national, regional, and local level. From an economic perspective the aim is to deliver more people, jobs and activity generally within our existing urban areas, rather than mainly 'greenfield' development. In this regard National Policy Objective 20 states that:

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.

5.1.2 Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030

- 5.1.2.1 Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) sets the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2030 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature.

5.2 Development Plan

- 5.2.1 The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 is the operative plan for the area. The appeal site is primarily within the 'E1- Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses)' with a small portion of the southern area of the site within the 'F1 Open Space Zone'.

5.2.2 High Technology Manufacturing, offices 100-1000 m² and offices > 1,000m² are permitted uses in the E1 Zone. Vehicular/cyclist/pedestrian access to zoned lands where appropriate are open for consideration in the F1 Zone. In addition to this, utility development and transportation infrastructure on F1 Open Space zoned can be considered on a case-by-case basis on FI zoned land.

5.2.3 In addition to this, I note the bulk of the Ashbourne Business Park (to the west of the appeal site) is located within the E2 Zone '*General Enterprise and Employment*' which is a broader land use zoning and includes Logistics as a permitted use.

5.2.4 The definition of Light Industrial as set out in Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) is 'an industrial building in which the processes carried on or the plant or machinery installed are such as could be carried on or installed in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit'

5.2.3 Relevant policies include the following:

ED OBJ37: which seeks to promote the development of the key strategic employment site identified in the Economic Development Strategy for County Meath – employment zoned lands to the north of the Rath Roundabout in Ashbourne.

ED OBJ38: which seeks to attract new employment development to Ashbourne which capitalises on the quality of road infrastructure at this location and its proximity to the M50, Dublin Airport and Dublin Port.

DM OBJ61: which sets out a number of criteria for the assessment of industrial, office, warehouse, and business park developments.

ASH OBJ 2: which seeks to continue to attract new industry to Ashbourne which capitalises on the quality of road infrastructure at this location and its proximity to the M50, Dublin Airport and Dublin Port.

DMOBJ61: which sets out a number of criteria under industrial, office, warehousing and Business Park Development should be considered.

5.1. Natural Heritage Designations

5.2.1 There are no European designated sites within the immediate vicinity of the site. The nearest designated sites are Malahide Estuary SAC (Site Code 000205), Malahide

Estuary SPA (004025) which are c. 15km to the east of the appeal site, Rogerstown Estuary SPA (Site Code 004015) and Rogerstown Estuary SAC (Site Code 000208) which are located c. 15km to the east of the site, North Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code 000206), North Bull Island SPA (Site Code 004006), North-west Irish Sea c.SPA (004236), Rogerstown Estuary SPA (Site Code 004015) and Rogerstown Estuary SAC (Site Code 000208).

5.2.2 In addition to this the Bog of the Ring pNHA is located c. 14km to the north-east of the site, the Balrath Woods pNHA is located c. 15km to the north-west of the site and the Rogerstown Estuary pNHA is located c.15km to the south-east of the site.

5.2.2 A full assessment is provided in Section 8.0 and Appendix 2 below relating to Appropriate Assessment

5.2. EIA Screening

5.3.1 I refer the Board to the completed Form 1 and Form 2 in Appendix 1. Having regard to the nature, size, and location of the proposed development and to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Regulations, I have concluded at preliminary examination that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development. EIA, therefore, is not required.

5.4 Water Framework Directive

5.4.1 The purpose of the EU Water Framework Directive is an initiative aimed at improving water quality throughout the European Union. The Directive was adopted in 2000 and requires governments to take a new approach to managing all their waters; rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, groundwater, protected areas (including wetlands and other water dependent ecosystems), estuaries (transitional) and coastal waters.

5.4.2 An Coimisiún Pleanála and other statutory authorities cannot grant development consent where a proposed development would give rise to a reduction in water quality.

5.4.3 The subject site is c.870m to the south-west of the Ballyboghil IE_EA_08B012200 river water body and c. 1.2km to the north of the Broadmeadow IE_EA_08B020400 river water body. Both river water bodies are classified as a poor ecological status. This is illustrated on the EPA mapping (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/agriculture>).

5.4.4 In addition to this, the appeal site is located above the Lusk-bog of the Ring groundwater body (IE_EA_G_014) which has an ecological status of 'Good' however is considered 'At Risk'. The bedrock aquifer identified beneath the Site is mapped as "Locally Important Aquifer – Bedrock which is Generally Moderately Productive

5.4.5 I have assessed the proposed development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface & ground water waterbodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration.

5.4.6 Having considered the nature, scale and location of the project including SuDS measures as proposed (including permeable paving, porous asphalt, by-pass hydrocarbon separator, attenuation pond and attenuation tank as per the Engineering Planning Services Report), I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively.

5.4.7 The reason for this conclusion is as follows:

- The land is connected to public wastewater; and
- Surface water discharges through SuDS as per the Engineering Planning Services Report and agreed with the Planning Authority prior to outfall to the surface water outfall.

6.0 The Appeal

6.1. Grounds of Appeal

6.1.1 A third party appeal has been submitted by John Conroy. The appeal can be summarised as follows:

- Major concern with respect to the safety of the entrance.
- A response from Meath County Council before granting a conditional permission which was not related to the objection.

- The Business Park is to only hold 'light industrial,' however, there is an extremely large number of HGV's travelling in and out of the park.
- Objection is not to stop growth or jobs in the area but to highlight that the entrance is not viable for the volume of traffic or HGV's, with increased growth, this will only escalate the problem.
- The objection also includes a question relating to the hours of operation of the units within the Ashbourne Business Park.

6.1.2 The third-party appeal includes a copy of their objection to the initial application. The issues raised in the objection to the initial application include:

- The entrance to the business park is not suitable for the size of HGVs. HGV's turning out of the entrance must cross over to the opposite side of the road as do HGV's turning from the Ashbourne Road to Ballymadun Road. There is a lot of congestion at peak times. The entrance should be relocated to reduce the danger of accidents. By adding more units to the park, it will increase the noise, disturbance, and dangers around the entrance to the business park and not provide a solution.
- The Business Park was supposed to be set up for 'light commercial' and under S.I No.236/1964. HGVs are not light commercial. There are a huge amount of HGV's travelling in / out of the estate day and night.
- Constant noise, light and air pollution day and night.

6.2. Applicant Response

6.2.2 A response prepared by Brock McClure Planning and Development Consultants on behalf of the applicants has been received. The response can be summarised as follows:

- There are a number of matters raised which are not planning related and should not be considered by the Board.
- The proposed development has been designed in accordance with all relevant road and traffic safety standards and guidance.

- The proposed development has been designed within the zoning provision for the lands. Ashbourne has been identified as a 'Self-Sustaining Growth Town.' There will be a focus on consolidation and provision of employment opportunities in tandem with population growth. The subject site is one of the few remaining vacant sites within the strategic employment zoning that has the capacity to deliver high-tech employment.
- The proposed development has been fully assessed by TrafficWise, Transportation Consultants against relevant technical standards. This study included a traffic model which provides a basis of comparison between existing and future junction performance from which to evaluate and determine the impact of the proposed development on the receiving road network.
- Whilst the appellant may be frustrated at the level of development within the zoned lands of Ashbourne Business Park, it is not correct to conclude that the proposed development will have a significant negative impact on traffic safety when detailed technical analysis proves otherwise.
- The application included a Mobility Management Plan, and the applicant is fully committed to implementing this plan and encouraging staff to walk, cycle, use public transport and / or car share.
- The Planning Authority undertook a site visit, a review of the planning history and a full assessment of the proposal and it was satisfied with the proposal as presented. The size, scale and design of the proposed unit was acceptable. The development is in accordance with the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (as varied) and would provide a satisfactory standard of development which would not affect the amenities of the area.
- The BMC Manufacturing development is notably different in character to the existing logistics and warehouse operations already with Ashbourne Business Park. This development will result in a low volume of HGV activity on site in comparison to the current level of HGV activity as recorded in the traffic surveys by TrafficWise.

- Whilst the proposed development would add to traffic flows entering and existing the estate, it would not manifest significant HGV activity which is the source of the appellant's concern.
- The hours of operation for the proposed high-tech manufacturing facility will be from 07.30 to 4pm Monday to Friday and the facility will be normally closed on weekends and will not operate 24/7.

6.3. Planning Authority Response

6.3.1 Response dated 19/6/25. However, the response was not received within the statutory deadline and was returned to the Planning Authority.

6.4. Observations

- None on file.

6.5. Further Responses

- None on file.

7.0 Assessment

7.1. Having examined the appeal details and all other documentation on file, including the first party response, the reports of the local authority and inspected the site, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal to be considered are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Procedural Matters
- Design and Scale
- Landscaping
- Traffic
- Flooding
- Other matters

- Appropriate Assessment

7.2. Principle of Development

- 7.2.1 The appeal site is primarily within the 'E1- Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses)' with a small portion of the southern area of the site within the 'F1 Open Space Zone'.
- 7.2.2 High Technology Manufacturing, offices 100-1000 m² and offices > 1,000m² are permitted uses in the E1 Zone. Having considered the floor plans submitted with the application, I note that c. 537m² of office space is proposed. I am satisfied that the proposed uses are in accordance with the sites zoning objective and that the proposed development is acceptable in principle.
- 7.2.3 Part of the pedestrian access points to the proposed development is potentially within the F1 Zone. Vehicular/cyclist/pedestrian access to zoned lands where appropriate are open for consideration in the F1 Zone.
- 7.2.3 In addition to this, some car parking is proposed to be located within the F1 Zone. Car parking is not identified as being either permitted or open for consideration in the F1 Zone. However, the zoning guidance states that the Planning Authority will consider development proposals for utility development and transportation infrastructure on F1 Open Space zoned land on a case-by-case basis subject to the works being ancillary to and necessary for the appropriate development of adjacent lands. I note that the car parking within the F1 zone is proposed to be grasscrete which recognises the location of the car parking within open space.
- 7.2.4 In this case, I am satisfied that the car parking proposed within the F1 zone as part of this application is ancillary to the overall use of the lands within the E1 zone and as such is acceptable.

7.3 Procedural matters

- 7.3.1 The appellant has raised a concern with respect to the operation of the Ashbourne Business Park not being used as 'light commercial' and that there are a large number of HGV's traveling in and out of the Business Park.
- 7.3.2 In addition to this, the appellant has asked for conformation of the business hours of the Business Park stating that they have been informed that there was supposed to

be strict starting and finishing times due to the nature of the park being a 'light industrial'.

7.3.3 In the first instance I note that the issues before the Coimisiún for determination relate to the appeal site and not the entirety of the Ashbourne Business Park. It is considered that the planning authority is the appropriate body to deal with any issues with respect to the general operation and opening hours of the business park as a whole or any individual unit within. However, I make the Coimisiún aware that the bulk of the Ashbourne Business Park is within the E2 Zone which is a broader employment zone than the E1 Zone and permitted uses include logistics. I respectfully suggest that such matters could be dealt with by the enforcement section of Meath County Council, should the appellant have concerns.

7.3.4 In any case, I note that the definition of Light Industrial as set out in Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) is *'an industrial building in which the processes carried on or the plant or machinery installed are such as could be carried on or installed in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit'*

7.3.5 The proposed development comprises the manufacture of low voltage switchgear. I am satisfied that this would comply with the definition of Light Industrial as set out in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) as the processes to be undertaken within the building would not impact externally on residential amenity.

7.3.6 With respect to opening hours of the proposed development, the first party response states that the development which is the subject of this appeal would operate 7.30 am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday and the business would not normally operate on the weekends. I am satisfied that these hours of operation are acceptable.

7.4 Siting and Design

7.4.1 The proposed development comprises of a high-tech manufacturing facility including associated office accommodation. At a high level, it is the policy of Meath County Council to attract new employment development to Ashbourne as set out in policies ED OBJ 38 and ASHOBJ2 of the *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*.

7.4.2 The appeal site which is located on the western boundary of Ashbourne Business Park facing onto the R-135. Given the sites location on the western boundary of the

Ashbourne Business Park the design of the proposed development is of critical importance and regard should be had to DM OBJ 61 of the *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*.

Main building

7.4.3 I have considered the plans submitted with the application (as detailed in Section 2 of this report) and I am satisfied that the design of the proposed development is innovative, contemporary and would integrate with the surrounding environment in a positive manner. In this regard, I refer the Coimisiún to the photomontages submitted with the application which demonstrate how the proposed development would look from various points within the Ashbourne Business Park and from the public realm (R-135 to the west of the site).

7.4.4 In addition to this, I note that the proposed development would be set back c. 43m from the closest residential development to the south of the site. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed building would not have any impact on the residential amenity of dwellings to the south of the site. Therefore, the design of the proposed development would comply with DM OBJ 61 of the *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*.

7.4.5 Having considered the foregoing; I am satisfied that the design and siting of the proposed development would comply with DM OBJ 61 of the *Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027*.

Signage

7.4.6 Signage is proposed on each of the elevations. The proposed signage is surface mounted. Each of the signs has a height of 1.55m and a length of 6.8m.

7.4.7 I note that full details of the proposed signage have not been included with the application. However, signage on a building such as that proposed is common. I am satisfied that the lack of detail in this regard could be dealt with by way of condition requiring detail of the signage (to include text, size, logo's, position, colour and materials and the level of illumination (lux))

Access

7.4.8 The proposed building would be serviced by 2 no. new vehicular access / egress points, both of which are proposed via the internal road network of the Ashbourne

Business Park, comprising of 1 no. HGV access point and 1 no. vehicular access points to the serve staff car parking areas separately via the internal road network of the Ashbourne Business Park.

7.4.9 I refer the Coimisiún to Drawing Numbers 03204/TR-01, 03204/TR-02, 03204/TR-03, 03204/TR-04, and 03204/TR-05 which show Swept path analysis for access / egress for HGV's, rigid vehicles and fire tenders into and out of the applicable vehicular access points into the appeal site. I am satisfied that the proposed development is acceptable with regard to vehicular access.

Pedestrian Access

7.4.10 The proposed development includes two pedestrian access points to the appeal site both form the existing footpath along the R-135 to the west of the site. I am satisfied that this provision is acceptable and would enhance the permeability of the site into the existing pedestrian and cycle network in this area of Ashbourne.

Car / Bicycle Parking

7.4.11 The proposed development would include the provision of 147 car parking spaces (including 15 EV parking spaces and 8 accessible spaces). In addition to this, 36 bicycle parking spaces are proposed.

7.4.12 I note that DM OBJ 89 and Table 11.2 relating to car parking and while the provision is slightly below the maximum standards set out in Table 11.2, I am satisfied that the level of car parking is acceptable, having regard to the accessible location of the site where employees can travel to and from work on public transport.

7.4.13 Table 11.4 relates to Bicycle Parking and requires 1 bike space per car space, or 10% of employee numbers in general (other developments). The applicant states that 240 people are proposed to be employed at the site. The bicycle parking provision is therefore above the 10% requirements and therefore, I am satisfied that the bicycle parking is acceptable.

Archaeology

7.4.14 There are no national monuments, historic monuments, or protected structures on the land. However, the application material includes an Archaeological Impact Assessment prepared Dr. Charles Mount. The assessment concluded that there are no known items of archaeological heritage within the application site or within the

vicinity. The report recommends that topsoil stripping should be subject to archaeological monitoring carried out by a qualified archaeologist. This matter could be dealt with by way of condition.

7.5 Landscaping

- 7.5.1 It is noted that the proposed development requires the removal of existing trees on the site. The application material includes an Arboricultural Report prepared by Charles McCorkell Arboricultural Consultancy which demonstrates that 33 trees are proposed to be removed. The report notes that 28 of the 33 trees are of low quality and value trees, while 5 are trees of moderate quality. I am satisfied that the trees proposed to be removed are not of high quality and their removal is mitigated by way of new planting throughout the site as detailed below.
- 7.5.2 Boundary treatments will include a 1.8m high V-mesh fence to the western boundary of the land (with the R-135) which is set back 1 meter from the road boundary with hedgerow planted between fence and the building. A 2.4m high V-mesh fence is proposed around the northern, southern, and eastern boundaries. In addition to this existing vegetation along the northern and eastern boundaries will be retained and this will be augmented by substantial planting throughout the site (including along the western, northern, and southern boundaries) A green zone is proposed to the south-western corner of the site. The car parking in this area will be of grasscrete which minimises hard surfaces within this area and responds to the green nature of this part of the site.
- 7.5.3 I am satisfied that the proposed landscaping scheme as proposed (which includes the retention of existing vegetation on the northern and eastern boundaries) is acceptable and would allow for the scheme to appropriately integrate into the character of the area and would screen the proposed development from the residential development to the south of the site.

Bats

- 7.5.4 The application material includes a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by Enviroguide which includes a Bat Survey. This survey noted that there are no records of bat species within 2km of the appeal site. A number of bats were observed within 10km of the appeal site. The appeal site is located in an area which is classified as being Medium suitability for bats. The trees on site were observed to be immature and

with no potential to support bat roosts. It was also noted that there is very limited connectivity to adjacent scrub apart from treelines to the north and south of the appeal site but the surrounding industrial estate and road network fragment the habitat connectivity and therefore there is low foraging and commuting habitat for local bats.

7.5.5 I note that there are a series of mitigation measures outlined as part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, and I recommend that they should be conditioned as part of any decision to grant permission.

7.6 Traffic and Transportation

7.6.1 The third-party appeal outlines concerns in relation to the safety of the entrance to the Business Park and the impact that it is having on the third party.

7.6.2 The first party response to the third-party appeal states that the proposed development was assessed by TrafficWise, Transportation Consultants against relevant technical standards and that the proposed development will result in a low volume of HGV activity on site in comparison to the current level of HGV. While the proposed development would add to traffic flows entering and existing the estate, it would not manifest significant HGV activity which is the source of the appellant's concern.

7.6.3 I note the concerns of the third-party with respect to the number of HGV's accessing the overall lands at Ashbourne Business Park. I refer the Coimisiún to the Traffic Report prepared by TrafficWise Limited which was submitted with the initial application.

7.6.4 In broad terms, the Traffic includes traffic surveys and junction analyses for a number of junctions in the surrounding road network including at the Ashbourne Business Park and the junction of the Ballymadun Road and the R-135. These were undertaken over a number of years 2027 (opening year), 2032 (opening year +5) and 2042 (opening year + 15) and concludes that the forecast impact on the surrounding road network arising from the proposed development would not be significant.

7.6.5 Table 5.3 of the Traffic Report shows that a total of 10 HGV's is expected to use the facility would be per day. Table 3.7b of the shows that a total of 626 HGV's enter and exit the Ashbourne Business Park per day. The proposal would increase this figure by 1.6%. I am satisfied that, while there would be an increase in HGV'S entering and exiting the Ashbourne Business Park because of the proposed development, these

increases would be minor and would not have an impact on the operational capacity of the surrounding road network.

- 7.6.6 Having considered the foregoing; I am satisfied that the proposed development would not have a detrimental impact on the operation of the surrounding traffic network and is acceptable in this regard.

HGV impact on Ashbourne Business Park junction

- 7.6.7 The appellant also outlines concerns that the entrance to the Ashbourne Business Park is not viable for the volume of traffic of HGV's and that increased growth this problem will be exacerbated.
- 7.6.8 I note the concerns of the third party, however, the entrance to the Ashbourne Business Park is not part of the application currently being considered by the Coimisiún. This entrance was granted permission under the parent permission (97/181). I note that the Traffic Report submitted with the application has not identified any issues relating to the safe operation of this junction. In addition to this, the Transportation Department of Meath County Council did not outline any concerns with respect to the operation of this junction. I have visited the site and while I note that HGV's do have to pass onto the opposite side of the road to complete a left hand turn out of the Ashbourne Business Park, there are sufficient sight lines to enable this movement to be undertaken in a safe manner. I am satisfied that the operation of this junction is acceptable in terms of traffic safety.

7.7 Flooding

- 7.7.1 I have consulted the flood mapping system (www.floodinfo.ie) and I note that the flood maps for this area of Fingal are currently under review (Map review Number MR056)
- 7.7.2 However, it would appear that the site was within Flood Zone C in previous iterations of the Flood Maps. I am satisfied that the proposed development would not result in the increase of flood risk either within the site itself or the surrounding area.

7.8 Other matters

- 7.8.1 The third-party appellant includes a copy of their objection to the initial application which outlines some concerns which were not raised in their objection.

Noise, light and air pollution day and night

- 7.8.2 The appellant outlines concern in relation to noise, light and air pollution emanating from Ashbourne Business Park.
- 7.8.3 It would appear that these concerns relate to the operation of the overall Ashbourne Business Park. While I note the concerns of the appellant in this respect, I once again state that the issues before the Coimisiún for determination relate to the appeal site and not the entirety of the Ashbourne Business Park. The planning authority is the appropriate body to deal with any issues with respect to the operation of the business park as a whole or any individual unit within.
- 7.8.4 I note that the application material includes a Noise and Vibration Assessment prepared by AWN Consulting. With regard to the operational phase of the development, the report notes that the specific plant levels should not exceed 35 at the nearest noise sensitive location and that due care should be taken to ensure that mechanical plant does not generate any potential or impulsive noise.
- 7.8.5 The appeal site adjoins residential development to the south. I am satisfied that a condition can ensure that the proposed development would not have an undue impact on the residential amenities of the properties to the south of the site.

8.0 AA Screening

- 8.1. I have considered the proposed development in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. The proposed development is located in proximity to Ashbourne Town Centre. The proposal comprises of a high-tech manufacturing facility, car parking and associated developments. Following an Appropriate Assessment Screening exercise, it has been determined that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not adversely affect the integrity of the Malahide Estuary SPA, Malahide Estuary SAC, Rogerstown Estuary SPA, Rogerstown Estuary SAC, North Dublin Bay SAC, North Bull Island SPA and North West Irish Sea c.SPA.
- 8.2 This determination is based on:
- The scale of the development and lack of impact mechanisms that could significantly affect a European site.
 - Distance from and weak indirect connections to the European sites.

- No significant ex-situ impacts on wintering birds.

See Appendix 2 for further details.

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 I recommend that planning permission be granted.

10.0 Reasons and Considerations

10.1 Having regard to the policy and objectives as set out in the *Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027* in respect of high tech manufacturing within the Strategic Employment Zones (High Technology Uses), the nature, scale and design of the proposed development, to the pattern of existing and permitted development in the area including an existing permitted main access to the Ashbourne Business Park and the limited number of HGV's associated with the proposed development, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the visual amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, would respect the visual character of the area and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

11.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application dated 10 March 2025, except as may otherwise be required in order to comply with the following conditions. Where such conditions require details to be agreed with the planning authority, the developer shall agree such details in writing with the planning authority prior

to commencement of development and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The use of the proposed unit hereby permitted shall be restricted to uses for 'light industrial building' (Class 4) purposes only as defined in the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-2025 and for no other class of use specified in Part 4 of Schedule 2 of the Regulations, unless authorised by a further grant of permission. The office floor space shall be ancillary to the permitted use.

Reason: In the interests of clarity and to prohibit an unacceptable change of use.

3. Prior to commencement of development written agreement shall be obtained in respect of the following:
 - (a) Precise details of any signage (both affixed to the permitted structure and to be erected at the site entrance) to include text, size, logo's, position, colour and materials and the level of illumination (lux) of the signage.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

4. The mitigation measures contained in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal received by the planning authority as part of the application shall be implemented in full.

Reason: In the interest of biodiversity and protecting bats

5. (a) Drainage arrangements including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the relevant Section of the Council for such works and services.
 - (b) All surface water generated within the site boundaries shall be collected and disposed of within the curtilage of the site. No surface water from roofs, paved

areas or otherwise shall discharge onto the public road or adjoining properties. All outfalls and their locations will be agreed in advance with the relevant section of the Council for such works and services.

(c) All surface water shall be managed in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems design as submitted with the application. Prior to the commencement of development, the developer shall submit to the Planning Authority for written agreement a Stage 2 - Detailed Design Stage Storm Water Audit. Upon completion of the development a Stage 3 Completion Stormwater Audit to demonstrate Sustainable Urban Drainage System measures have been installed and are working as designed and that there has been no misconnections or damage to storm water drainage infrastructure during construction, shall be submitted to the planning authority for written agreement.

Reason: In the interest of public health and surface water management

6. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) no advertisement signs (including any signs installed to be visible through the windows), advertisement structures including freestanding structures, banners, canopies, flags or other projecting element shall be displayed or erected on the building or within its curtilage or attached to glazing without a prior grant of planning permission.

Reason: To protect the visual amenities of the area

7. All service cables associated with the proposed development (such as electrical, telecommunications and communal television) shall be located underground. Ducting shall be provided by the developer to facilitate the provision of broadband infrastructure within the proposed development. All existing over ground cables shall be relocated underground as part of the site development works.
8. No additional development shall take place above roof parapet level, including lift motor enclosures, air handling equipment, storage tanks, ducts or other

external plant, telecommunication aerials, antennas, or equipment, unless authorised by a further grant of planning permission.

Reason: To protect the visual amenity of the area

9. A plan containing details for the management of waste (and, in particular, recyclable materials) within the development, including the provision of facilities for the storage, separation and collection of the waste and, in particular, recyclable materials shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. Thereafter, the agreed waste facilities shall be maintained, and waste shall be managed in accordance with the agreed plan,

Reason: To provide for the appropriate management of waste and, in particular recyclable materials, in the interest of protecting the environment and the amenities of properties.

10. Prior to the opening of the development, a Mobility Management Plan (MMP) shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority. This shall provide for incentives to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking by residents/occupants/staff employed in the development. The mobility strategy shall be prepared and implemented by the management company for all units within the light industrial park.

Reason: In the interest of encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport

11. The construction of the development shall be managed in accordance with a Construction Management Plan, which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. This plan shall provide details of intended construction practice for the development, including noise management measures and off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste.

Reason: In the interests of public safety and residential amenity.

12. A detailed construction traffic management plan shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. The plan shall include details of arrangements for routes for construction traffic, parking during the construction phase, the location of the compound for storage of plant and machinery and the location for storage of deliveries to the site.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable transport and safety

13. Lighting shall be provided in accordance with a scheme, details of which shall be submitted to the planning authority for agreement prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of amenity and public safety.

14. During the operational phase of the proposed development the noise level shall not exceed (a) 55 dB(A) rated sound level between the hours of 0700 to 2000, and (b) 45 dB(A) 15min and 60 dB LAfmax, 15min at all other times, as measured at any point along the southern boundary of the site. Procedures for the purpose of determining compliance with this limit shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: To protect the residential amenities of property to the south of the site.

15. Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0800 to 1900 Mondays to Fridays inclusive, between 0800 to 1400 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. Deviation

from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.

Reason: In order to safeguard the residential amenities of property in the vicinity.

16. a) All ground works associated with the proposed development shall be monitored under licence by a suitably qualified archaeologist. Prior to construction all previously identified archaeological features and deposits should be conserved by record (full excavation) prior to any ground works under the terms of an agreed Method Statement agreed by the Department. All topsoil stripping associated with the archaeological monitoring should be carried out using a toothless flat grading bucket only.
17. b) Should further archaeological material be found during the course of works, the work on the site shall be stopped pending a decision as to how best to deal with the archaeology. The developer shall be prepared to be advised by the Department with regard to any necessary mitigating action (e.g. preservation in situ, or excavation) and should facilitate the archaeologist in recording any material found.

Reason: To ensure the continued preservation (either in situ or by record) of places, caves, sites, features, or other objects of archaeological interest

18. The developer shall pay to the planning authority a financial contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the planning authority that is provided or intended to be provided by or on behalf of the authority in accordance with the terms of the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The contribution shall be paid prior to commencement of development or in such phased payments as the planning authority may facilitate and shall be subject to any applicable indexation provisions of the Scheme at the time of payment. Details of the application of the terms of the Scheme shall be agreed between the planning authority and the developer, or,

in default of such agreement, the matter shall be referred to An Bord Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.

Reason: It is a requirement of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, that a condition requiring a contribution in accordance with the Development Contribution Scheme made under section 48 of the Act be applied to the permission.

I confirm that this report represents my professional planning assessment, judgement and opinion on the matter assigned to me and that no person has influenced or sought to influence, directly or indirectly, the exercise of my professional judgement in an improper or inappropriate way.

Ronan Murphy
Planning Inspector

22 August 2025

Form 1 - EIA Pre-Screening

Case Reference	ABP-322565-25
Proposed Development Summary	The construction of a high-tech manufacturing facility and all other site works.
Development Address	Ashbourne Business Park, Ashbourne, County Meath
	In all cases check box /or leave blank
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'project' for the purposes of EIA? (For the purposes of the Directive, "Project" means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project.' Proceed to Q2. ☐ No, No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)?	
☒ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1. EIA is mandatory. No Screening required. EIAR to be requested. Discuss with ADP.	Part 2 Class 10 Infrastructure Projects Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.
☐ No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	
☐ No, the development is not of a Class Specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road	

development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. No Screening required.	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required	
☒ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. Preliminary examination required. (Form 2) OR If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q4. (Form 3 Required)	Less than 10 hectares – built up area

4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes ☐	
No ☒	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____ Date: _____

Form 2 - EIA Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	ABP-322565-25
Proposed Development Summary	The construction of a high-tech manufacturing facility and all other site works.
Development Address	Ashbourne Business Park, Ashbourne, County Meath
This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the Inspector's Report attached herewith.	
Characteristics of proposed development (In particular, the size, design, cumulation with existing/proposed development, nature of demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, risk of accidents/disasters and to human health).	The development of a high-tech manufacturing facility and all other site works comes forward as a standalone project, and it does not involve the use of substantial natural resources or give rise to significant risk of pollution or nuisance. The development, by virtue of its type, does not pose a risk of major accident and/or disaster, or is vulnerable to climate change. It presents no risks to human health. The site is on zoned land with a proposed light industrial use, the proposal is not exceptional in the context of permitted adjacent land uses.
Location of development (The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development in particular existing and approved land use, abundance/capacity of natural resources, absorption capacity of natural environment e.g. wetland, coastal zones, nature reserves, European sites, densely populated areas, landscapes, sites of historic, cultural or archaeological significance).	The development is situated on a greenfield site within an existing Business Park to the north of Ashbourne Town Centre. The development site is landlocked and is proposed to be accessed from the internal road network of the Ashbourne Business Park with pedestrian accesses from the R-135 to the west of the site. Having noted the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report it is noted that there is no direct hydrological links to any European sites. The development is removed from sensitive natural habitats, dense centres of population and designated

	sites and landscapes of identified significance in the County Development Plan.
Types and characteristics of potential impacts (Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects, and opportunities for mitigation).	Having regard to the nature of the proposed development, its location removed from sensitive habitats/ features; likely limited magnitude and spatial extent of effects; and absence of in combination effects, there is no potential for significant effects on the environmental factors listed in section 171A of the Act
Conclusion	
Likelihood of Significant Effects	Conclusion in respect of EIA
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.

Inspector: _____ **Date:** _____

DP/ADP: _____ **Date:** _____

(only where Schedule 7A information or EIAR required)

Appendix 2 – AA Screening Determination

Screening the need for Appropriate Assessment: Screening Determination (Stage 1, Article 6(3) of Habitats Directive)

I have considered the proposal for a high-tech manufacturing facility, car parking and associated developments at Ashbourne Business Park, Ashbourne, Co. Meath in light of the requirements S177U of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

The application material includes an Appropriate Assessment-Natura Impact Assessment Screening report prepared by Enviroguide.

Screening summary

The Appropriate Assessment Screening report identifies 5 Natura 2000 designated sites within 25km of the application site. Having consulted the EPA mapping I note that the Rogerstown Estuary SAC and Rogerstown SPA has not been included in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report.

The proposed development is identified as being within the Zone of Influence of Malahide Estuary SAC (Site Code 000205), Malahide Estuary SPA (004025), North Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code 000206), North Bull Island SPA (Site Code 004006) and North-west Irish Sea SPA (004236). I would also include the Rogerstown Estuary SAC (site Code 000208) and Rogerstown Estuary SPA (Site code 004015).

Malahide Estuary SAC (Site Code 000205)

This site is located c. 15km to the east of the site. A site-specific conservation objective has been developed for Malahide Estuary SAC (Site Code 000205) which can be summarised as *to maintain the favourable conservation condition of Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand, Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi)*, in the Malahide Estuary SAC. Site-specific conservation objectives also include *to restore the favourable conservation condition of Atlantic salt meadows (Glaucopuccinellietalia maritimae)*, *Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria ('white dunes')* and *fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes')* in the Malahide Estuary SAC. This site was screened out due to Weak

hydrological pathway via the Malahide Estuary, deemed insignificant and no other potential pathways identified.

Malahide Estuary SPA (Site Code 004025)

This site is located c. 15km to the east of the appeal site. A site-specific conservation objective has been developed for Malahide Estuary SPA (Site Code 004025) which can be summarised as to maintain the favourable conservation condition of Light-bellied Brent Goose, Shelduck, Pintail, Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, Oystercatcher, Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Knot, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Redshank and the wetland habitat in Malahide Estuary SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds. This site was screened out due to weak hydrological pathway via the Malahide Estuary, deemed insignificant. In addition to this, any potential for ex-situ Habitat deemed insignificant due to the scale and nature of the proposed Development and the large distance from the SPA site. No other potential pathways identified.

North Dublin Bay SAC (000206)

This site is located c. 23km to the south-east of the appeal site. A site-specific conservation objective has been developed for North Dublin Bay SAC (Site Code 000206) which can be summarised as to maintain the favourable conservation condition of *Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, Annual vegetation of drift lines, Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand, Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae), Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi), Embryonic shifting dunes, Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria ('white dunes'), Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes'), Humid dune slacks and Petalwort* in North Dublin Bay SAC. This site was screened out due to weak indirect hydrological connectivity via the foul waste system. Wastewater is transported to Ringsend WwTP which discharges treated water into the Lower Liffey Estuary, deemed insignificant due to dilution.

North Bull Island SPA (004006)

This site is located c. 23km to the south-east of the appeal site. A site-specific conservation objective has been developed for North Bull Island SPA (Site Code

004006) which can be summarised by *to maintain the favourable conservation condition of Shelduck, Teal, Pintail, Shoveler, Oystercatcher, Golden Plover, Grey Plover, Knot, Sanderling, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, Bar-tailed Godwit, Curlew, Redshank, Turnstone, Black-headed Gull and the wet land habitat in the North Bull Island SPA*. This site was screened out due to weak indirect hydrological connectivity via the foul waste system. Wastewater is transported to Ringsend WwTP which discharges treated water into the Lower Liffey Estuary. Deemed insignificant due to distance. In addition to this, potential for ex-situ habitat deemed insignificant due to the scale and nature of Proposed Development and the large distance from the SPA site.

North-West Irish Sea cSPA (Site Code 004236)

This site is located 23km to the south-east of the site. A site-specific conservation objective has been developed for North-West Irish Sea cSPA (Site Code 004236) which can be summarised as *to maintain the favourable conservation condition of red-throated diver, great northern diver, manx shearwater, common scoter, black-headed gull, common gull, lesser black-backed gull, great black-backed gull, roseate tern, common tern, Arctic tern, little tern, guillemot, razorbill, and little gull in the North-West Irish Sea cSPA*. Site-specific conservation objectives also include *to restore the favourable conservation condition of fulmar, cormorant, shag, herring gull, kittiwake, and puffin in the North-West Irish Sea cSPA*. This site was screened out due to weak indirect hydrological Connectivity via the foul waste system. Wastewater is transported to Ringsend WwTP which discharges treated water into the lower Liffey Estuary. Deemed insignificant due to distance. In addition to this, the potential for ex-situ habitat deemed insignificant due to the scale and nature of proposed Development and the large distance from the SPA site.

Rogerstown Estuary SAC (site Code 000208)

This site is located c. 14.5km to the south-east of the site. A site specific conservation objective has been developed for the Rogerstown Estuary SAC (Site Code 000208) which can be summarised as *to maintain the favourable conservation condition of Estuaries, mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand, Atlantic salt meadows (Glaucopuccinellietalia maritima), Mediterranean salt meadows (Juncetalia maritimi),*

Shifting dunes along the shoreline with *Ammophila arenaria* ('white dunes'), Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation ('grey dunes'), in Rogerstown Estuary SAC.

While not included in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, I am satisfied that this site can be screened out due to the distance of the proposed development from the Rogerstown Estuary SAC and the fact that the site is serviced by public infrastructure (sewerage and drainage). In addition to this, the proposed includes SuDS. I am satisfied that the proposal would not have any impact on the Rogerstown Estuary SAC.

Rogerstown Estuary SPA (Site code 004015)

This site is located c. 14.5km to the south-east of the site. A site-specific conservation objective has been developed for the Rogerstown Estuary SPA (Site Code 004015) which can be summarised as to maintain the favourable conservation condition of Greylag Goose, Light-bellied Brent Goose, Shelduck, Shoveler, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Grey Plover, Knot, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank and wetland habitat in the Rogerstown Estuary SPA.

While not included in the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, I am satisfied that this site can be screened out due to the distance of the proposed development from the Rogerstown Estuary SPA and the fact that the site is serviced by public infrastructure (sewerage and drainage). In addition to this, the proposed includes SuDS. I am satisfied that the proposal would not have any impact on the Rogerstown Estuary SAC.

In Combination Effects

The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report also considered planning applications located within a 300m radius of the appeal site within the last 5 years. The Screening report states that the majority of the few developments within the vicinity of the Site of the Proposed Development are applications granted for minor extensions or modifications of existing buildings within the surrounding residential areas. The Screening Report identifies two larger developments which have been granted planning permission in the last 5 years within the Ashbourne Business Park (Reg. Ref. 22741 and Reg. Ref. 212042). The Appropriate Assessment Screening

Report concludes there are no in-combination effects associated with the development.

I make the Coimisiún aware that I have reviewed the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's National Planning Application database and the Meath County Council's planning register, and I am satisfied that all appropriate planning applications have been considered.

The Appropriate Assessment Screening Report concludes on the basis of the best scientific knowledge available and objective information, that the possibility of any significant effects on the above listed European sites, whether arising from the project itself or in combination with other plans and projects, can be excluded in light of the above listed European sites' conservation objectives. Thus, there is no requirement to proceed to Stage 2 of the Appropriate Assessment process.

Appropriate Assessment Conclusion

The proposed development has been considered in light of the assessment requirements of Sections 177U and 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Following an Appropriate Assessment Screening exercise, it has been determined that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not adversely affect the integrity of the European site No's: 000205, 004025, 000206, 004006, 004236, 000208 and 004015 or any other European site, in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives.

This conclusion is based on a complete assessment of all aspects of the proposed project and there is no reasonable doubt as to the absence of adverse effects.

