



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Inspector's Report

ACP-324204-26

Development

LRD: Demolition of existing farm buildings and associated works. The construction of 249 units consisting of 170 houses and 79 apartment/ duplex units, a creche and all associated site works. The application is accompanied with an EIAR and NIS.

Location

Lands to the East of the M1 motorway and west of the Rathmullan Road, Oldbridge, Drogheda, Co. Meath.

Website

www.boyneridgelrd.com

Planning Authority

Meath County Council

Planning Authority Reg. Ref.

2560940

Applicant(s)

Earlsfort Developments Drogheda Limited

Type of Application

Large-Scale Residential Development

Planning Authority Decision

Refuse Permission.

Type of Appeal

First Party

Observer(s)

None

Date of Site Inspection

19th June 2026

Inspector

Paul O'Brien

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1.0 Site Location and Description

- 1.1. The subject site with a stated area of 9.2 hectares comprises agricultural lands to the south of the River Boyne, approximately 2.6km to the west of Drogheda town centre to the east of the M1 Dublin to Belfast road. The site comprises of two large fields in agricultural use – arable farming was evident on the day of the site visit. The site slopes steadily from the south to north downwards towards the River Boyne but remains at a higher elevation than the adjoining road.
- 1.2. Access to the site is from the east off the Rathmullan Road. This connects the Oldbridge Road, west of the M1 to the R132 to the east, leading to the west of Drogheda town centre. The road forms the eastern boundary of the site with extensive planting and trees along its length. To the south-eastern corner are agricultural buildings which are in a poor state of repair. A section of the road heads north to connect to the southern bank of the River Boyne and which runs parallel to a greenway which provides a pedestrian/ cycle connection along this southern bank of the Boyne between Drogheda and Oldbridge House/ Battle of the Boyne site to the west.
- 1.3. There is no public transport adjacent to the subject site. Bus Éireann route 173 serves a stop approximately 340m to the east of the site. The 173 provides a ‘town service’ which covers a wide area of Drogheda between the hours of 9.00 and 19.00 only Monday to Friday and finishes an hour earlier on a Saturday, there is no Sunday service at present. This service is primary for shoppers and those requiring services/ facilities along its route/ within Drogheda town centre, the current timetable limiting its use for employment and educational purposes. The greenway along the Boyne provides a direct route to the town centre.
- 1.4. For the benefit of the commission, Drogheda railway station is approximately 3.6km to the east as the crow flies and Drogheda bus station is 2.4km, also to the east. Train services operate to Dublin Connolly to the south and Dundalk/ Belfast to the north. Bus services from the bus station operate to a range of local and regional destinations, including Dublin City Centre, Dundalk, Clogherhead, Laytown, Navan, Trim and west to Athlone.

Note: The Rathmullan Road extends from the R132 to the east and to Oldbridge to the west. The road diverges north and south to the east of the site. When I refer to

the Rathmullan Road in my report, this will primarily refer to the section to the east of the site and to the north where it adjoins the Boyne Greenway.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1. The proposal, as per the submitted public notices, provides for the demolition of existing farm buildings/ structures on site and the construction of 249 residential units in the form of 170 houses and 79 apartment/ duplex units. The proposed development also provides for a three storey creche, new vehicular entrance off the Rathmullan Road, and all associated site works. The applicant is accompanied with an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS).

2.2. The following tables set out some key elements of the proposed development:

Table 1: Key Figures

Gross Site Area	9.2 hectares
Net Site Area	6.92 hectares
Area to be Demolished	315sq m
No. of Houses	170
No. of Apartments	79
Total	249
Density –	36 units per hectare
Public Open Space Provision	1.17 hectares – 16.9%
Communal Open Space	1,576sq m (477sq m required)
Childcare Provision	411sq m – 58 Spaces
Associated Open Space	143.24sq m
Car Parking –	
Apartments/ Residents	388
Creche	8
Total	396
Bicycle Parking –	
Residents Standard	163
Creche	10

Total	173
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Table 2: Unit Mix - Apartments

	Bedrooms		
Block	1 Bed	2 Beds	Total
26/A	2	3	5
32/A	2	2	4
39/A	2	3	5
51/A	2	2	4
60/A	2	2	4
14/C	2	2	4
12/D	2	3	5
26/D	2	2	4
9/G	2	2	4
10/G	2	2	4
1/H	2	2	4
Total	22 – 47%	25 – 53%	47 – 100%

Table 3: Unit Mix - Duplexes

	Bedrooms		
Block	1 Bed	2 Beds	Total
1/B	1	1	2
2/B	1	1	2
3/B	1	1	2
4/B	1	1	2
5/B	1	1	2
6/B	1	1	2
7/B	1	1	2
9/B	1	1	2
10/B	1	1	2

11/B	1	1	2
12/B	1	1	2
13/B	1	1	2
14/B	1	1	2
15/B	1	1	2
16/B	1	1	2
17/B	1	1	2
Total	16 – 50%	16 – 50%	32 – 100%

Table 4: Unit Mix - Houses

Bedrooms			
2 Beds	3 Bed	4 Beds	Total
37 – 22%	111 – 65%	22 – 13%	170 – 100%

Table 5: Unit Mix - Summary

Unit Type	Bedrooms				
	1 Beds	2 Beds	3 Bed	4 Beds	Total
Apartment	22	25	0	0	47
Duplex	16	16	0	0	32
Houses	0	37	111	22	170
Total	38	78	111	22	249
Percentage	15%	31%	45%	9%	100%

2.3. The total internal gross floor area is stated to be 28,066.60sq m. The creche has a stated floor area of 411sq m.

2.4. A single vehicular access to the site is proposed from the eastern side of the site off the Rathmullan Road. This will result in the upgrading of the existing junction in this location. A foul drainage pumping station is proposed to the north east of the site.

- 2.5. Open space is dispersed through the site, though larger areas are proposed to the north of the site, includes a play area, and along the north eastern and eastern boundaries and towards the centre of the site, which also includes a play area.

3.0 Planning Authority Pre-Application Opinion

- 3.1. A Section 247 pre-application consultation was held between Meath County Council and the applicant in November 2024.

- 3.2. An LRD/ Section 32C meeting took place between Meath County Council and the applicant on the 5th of March 2025. The LRD Opinion was issued on the 1st of April 2026, the applicant refers in their 'Statement of Response to Pre-Application Consultation Opinion' to this date as the 1st of April 2025 and which appears to be a more accurate date) and stated that the application required further consideration and/ or amendment to constitute a reasonable basis for an application for permission for the proposed LRD. The following issues were to be addressed:

1. The applicant was requested to provide an Appropriate Assessment Screening/ Natura Impact Statement for the proposed development due to its location adjacent to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA, and the Boyne Estuary SAC and SPA and the North West Irish Sea SPA.

2. The applicant has proposed to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) in support of their application. The applicant is requested to consider any impacts on European Sites/ Natura 2000 Sites including habitats and species. To be assessed in accordance with 'Guidance on Appropriate Assessment for Planning Authorities (2009/ 2010)', 'Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out EIA (2018)', or other guidelines including EPA (2022) Guidelines on EIAR, as appropriate.

In addition, in accordance with Article 16A(7) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended, the following information is requested to be submitted with an LRD application for permission:

Zoning, Density, Phasing, Social Infrastructure etc.

1. Statement of Consistency demonstrating compliance with National, Regional and Local Policy including the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.
2. Demonstrate that there is capacity available in the Core Strategy allocation for the Southern Environs of Drogheda.
3. Demonstrate that the relevant parts of the proposed development are located within the appropriate zoned lands.
4. Requested to provide a Social Infrastructure Audit demonstrating that social and recreational facilities are sufficient to cater for the needs of the future residents of the development as per Objective SH OBJ 24 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.
5. Provide a suitable phasing proposal demonstrating provision of suitable access. EV charging, infrastructure, open space, childcare, water and drainage. Suitable access during the construction phase is to be demonstrated and details of housing types to be provided in each phase.
6. Density to be in accordance with Compact Settlement Guidelines – 35 dph to 50 dph. The proposal at 35.25 is within this range and the applicant is requested to explore if a higher density can be provided here.

Design, Layout including Residential Unit Mix & Childcare Facilities

7. Details of the proposed childcare facility are to be provided and be in accordance with the Childcare Guidelines 2001.
8. Demonstrate good connectivity/ permeability within and to/ from the site. Also, suitable connections to the Boyne River Greenway to the north of the site are to be demonstrated.
9. Provision of a Design Statement in accordance with Objectives DM OBJ 13 and DM OBJ 40 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027.
10. Full details of the visual impact of the development.
11. Design and Layout –

- a) Suitable design having regard to placemaking. Mix of housing types, high quality finishes and suitable open space. Details are provided under points i. to xiv.
- b) Character areas to be different but to demonstrate an overall coherent development.
- c) Provision of a suitable unit mix in accordance with Objective DM OBJ 13 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027.
- d) Use dual aspect/ active frontages for the proposed development.
- e) Details of the creche design/ layout. Consult with service provider to ensure that the design is suitable.
- f) Indicate on the site layout plan that adequate separation distances are provided – ensure that privacy is protected. Also ensure that adequate separation distances are provided between proposed houses and the proposed pumping station.
- g) Provide for bin and cycle storage in accordance with Objective DM OBJ 52 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. Specific requirements are detailed and are to be provided in the application.
- h) Boundary treatments are to be provided in accordance with the requirements set out in Chapter 11 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.
- i) The development to demonstrate compliance with the Building Height Guidelines. Drogheda is identified as a suitable location for increased building heights, and the applicant is requested to consider higher structures in suitable key locations on site, which will also allow for increased densities on these lands.
- j) Demonstrate compliance with BRE 209 for Daylight/ Sunlight.
- k) Site coverage and the proposed plot ratio to demonstrate compliance with Objectives DM OBJ 15 and DM OBJ 16 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027.

l) Provide a Housing Quality Assessment in accordance with the Apartment 'Guidelines and Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, 2007.' Clearly indicate the location of all private amenity and communal amenity space. A list of requirements for the HQA is provided by the Planning Authority for the applicant to demonstrate compliance with.

Landscaping and Boundary Treatment

12. Provide contiguous elevations and section drawings.
13. Full details of boundary treatments in accordance with the requirements of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.
14. Provision of a Landscape Strategy and Management Plan.
15. Requirement for 15% Public Open Space – 16.77% is proposed. Specific requirements are set out and should be useable as intended.
16. Provide details of children's play areas and facilities.
17. Provision of a site specific planting schedule and use native species in accordance with All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.
18. Provision of a piece of public art in consultation with the Arts Office of Meath County Council.
19. Provision of a tree and hedgerow survey and indicate appropriate tree protection measures on site.

Part V

20. Demonstrate Part V is complied with and consult with the Meath County Council Housing Section. Requirements are set out for the applicant to comply with in terms of the house types/ layout.
21. Demonstrate universal design is incorporated into the overall design of units, layout etc.

22. Provide a Community Safety Strategy – directed to Secure by Design, UK Guidance.

Traffic and Transport

23. Specific road, cycle and pedestrian design requirements to be addressed by the applicant.

24. Demonstrate that a tanker can turn on the proposed road in the area of the pumping station.

25. Provide a clear diagrammatic breakdown of the internal road hierarchy.

26. Address issues raised in the appropriate Road Safety Audits and Quality Audits.

27. Provision of suitable EV charging in accordance with the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

28. Full details of bicycle storage on site. To be sheltered, secure and suitable for all users.

Water & Wastewater

29. Provide a Confirmation of Feasibility and Statement of Design Acceptance in accordance with Uisce Éireann requirements. Specific details are provided for the applicant to address. If an EIAR is to be provided, then Uisce Éireann request that they be consulted via an EIAR Scoping Letter circa 6 months prior to the completion of the planning application.

Flood Risk Management

30. The site is mostly in Flood Zone C but a section of the northern part of the site is within Flood Zone A/ B. The Meath County Council Environment Department have set out specific requirements for the applicant to address.

Surface Water Management

31. The development broadly meets the requirements of Meath County Council in relation to surface water drainage. The Meath County Council Environment

Department have set out specific requirements (points a. to o. in their report) for the applicant to address.

Architectural Heritage

32. The proximity of the site to Oldbridge Estate and Brú na Bóinne buffer zone is noted. A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) is requested to evaluate the visual impact when viewed from listed locations. Specific requirements in relation to the VIA are provided.

Archaeology

33. There are a number of recorded monuments in close proximity to the subject site. There is a high likelihood of archaeological materials in the vicinity of the subject lands. The Meath County Council Archaeologist notes the submitted 'Archaeological Impact Assessment & Method Statement for Residential development at Rathmullan Road, Drogheda Co Meath' and this is considered to provide for excellent background information and suitable mitigation measures. A list of requirements/ considerations is provided.

Environmental Assessments

34. EIA, AA, EcIA and Flood Risk Assessments to be undertaken and submitted in support of this application. Specific details are listed (items a) to f)).

Other

35. Noise – To be addressed as required.

36. Provision of a Resource and Waste Management Plan, Construction and Environmental Management Plan and an Operational Waste Management Plan. For the Construction and Operational phases with suitable requirements listed.

37. Energy Efficiency requirements of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 to be addressed in full by the applicant.

38. Provision of suitable telecommunications/ broadband to serve the proposed development/ subject site.

39. Provide details of a Taking in Charge/ Management Company.

40. Full details of a suitable public lighting scheme.

41. Provide fire safety and estate name details.

General

42. Have regard of any changes in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and changes due to updates to Section 28 guidelines.

43. All documents to reflect changes to the layout and final design. Mitigations measures to be incorporated into the final design.

3.3. The applicant responded to the above items in their 'Statement of Response to Pre-Application Consultation Opinion'. I consider that the following are relevant to this appeal:

Item 1. The applicant has prepared an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and a Natura Impact Statement. The submitted NIS concludes with the following:

On the basis of the content of this report, it is the considered view of the authors of this NIS that the competent authority is enabled to conduct an Appropriate Assessment and consider whether the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of best scientific knowledge and in view of the sites conservation objectives, will adversely affect the integrity of any European site. is the considered view of the authors of this NIS that it can be lawfully concluded by Meath County Council that the Proposed Development will not, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, result in adverse effects to the integrity and conservation status of European Sites in view of their Conservation Objectives and, on the basis of best scientific evidence, there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to that conclusion.'

Item 2. The applicant has prepared and submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment Report in support of their application. The applicant reports 'Notwithstanding the fact that the proposed development of 249 no. residential units on a site of 9.2 hectares is sub-threshold for the mandatory preparation of an EIAR, the decision to prepare this assessment is considered appropriate in the context of

demonstrating that there are no apparent characteristics or elements of the design of the scheme that are likely to cause any significant effects on the environment.’

The applicant has addressed Items 1 to 43 in their ‘Statement of Response to Pre Application Consultation Opinion’. The development was revised and additional details/ information/ documents provided in support of the submitted application.

4.0 Planning Authority Decision

4.1. Decision

Following the receipt of further information:

‘The Planning Authority decided to refuse permission for a single reason as follows:

It is objective (HER OBJ 33) of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027, “To ensure an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with Article 6(3) and Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directives (92/43/EEC) and in accordance with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009 and relevant EPA and European Commission guidance documents, is carried out in respect of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary for the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site(s), either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of the site’s conservation objectives”.

Having examined the submitted documentation, it is considered that the updated Natura Impact Statement (NIS) fails to provide a sufficiently robust or comprehensive assessment of the proposed development to adequately evaluate the potential for significant adverse effects on the integrity of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957) and Boyne Estuary SPA (004080), the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236), the River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (004158), and the Clogher Head SAC (001459), including their qualifying interests, associated protected species, and other sensitive habitats and species within the zone of influence of the proposed development.

In the absence of such information, the Planning Authority cannot conclude, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the aforementioned European sites. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Objective HER OBJ 33 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 (as varied), as well as the requirements of the ‘Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland, Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009’ and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.’

4.2. Planning Authority Reports

4.2.1. Planning Reports

As reported a single issue was raised in the reason for refusal. No specific concerns were raised in relation to the other aspects of the development and the submitted ‘EIAR is a fair and reasonable assessment of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment and is considered acceptable.’

Further information was sought on Appropriate Assessment/ Natura Impact Statement – see ‘Table 7: AA Request – Meath County Council’ in Section 9.1.2 of my report. Revised details were submitted and assessed and the Planning Authority concluded, ‘Having regard to the information provided it is considered that the further information provided is unacceptable. In the absence of such information, the Planning Authority cannot conclude, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the aforementioned European sites. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Objective HER OBJ 33 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021–2027 (as varied), as well as the requirements of the ‘Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland, Guidance for Planning Authorities, 2009’ and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.’

4.2.2. Other Technical Reports

- Architectural Conservation Officer: Notes that the applicant has identified no visual impact on the sites of Oldbridge Estate, the Battle of the Boyne Site and Brú na Boinne. Reports that there is a high potential for archaeological material to be

found on the subject site. No objection and no specific conditions recommended, though recommends that the Meath County Council Planner be guided by the National Monuments Service and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's comments.

- Housing Section: No objection subject to condition regarding Part V housing provision.
- Environment Flooding - Surface Water Section: Most of the site is within Flood Zone C, though a section to the north is within Flood Zone A. Note the submitted Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment but request by condition that all recommendations within be implemented, apply a justification to the entire site and provide an emergency response plan for the 1% AEP when the Rathmullan Road may be flooded. Surface water drainage proposals are generally acceptable subject to recommended conditions.
- Transportation Department:
 - Reports that the applicant undertook traffic surveys in January 2025 at four named junctions in the area of the subject site. Forecasting was provided for the baseline, opening year in 2028 and for 2033 and 2043. Junction 1 – Rathmullan Road and local roads junction would operate within capacity for 2043 for the do something scenario, as would junction 2 (Rathmullan Road and Marley's Lane – next junction east of the subject site). The other two surveyed and named junctions are below the 5% threshold, and no further assessment is required. No objection to the development in terms of traffic generation from this proposal.
 - The proposed car parking provision is not acceptable for the apartments, visitors and the creche.
 - The number of bicycle parking spaces is acceptable; however, the proposed bicycle parking stores are not acceptable, parking should be integrated into the overall development.
 - Further details requested in relation to the pedestrian/ cycle connection to the Boyne greenway as gradients appear to be too steep in places.

- All communal parking spaces to be provided with functioning electric vehicle charging points.

Report that the above issues can be addressed by way of suitable conditions.

- Public Lighting: Details are incomplete and additional details are required.
- AA Report/ NIS Review: Meath County Council have engaged an outside consultancy to assess the submitted AAR/ NIS. The planning report includes this under Prescribed Bodies; however, I am including this report here as it was commissioned by Meath County Council.

Some issues of concern were raised including:

- Need to consider additional feasible impact pathways to Likely Significant Effects.
- In-combination assessment needs to be revised and updated, with greater consideration of recreational disturbance to be given.
- Unable to agree with the conclusion of no adverse effect on site integrity – Advise that the requested information be fully addressed before Meath County Council can adopt the conclusions.
- A concern was also raised about the lack of detail about the author(s) of the submitted AAR/ NIS.

4.2.3. Prescribed Bodies

- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage – Development Applications Unit (DAU) –
 - Archaeology: Refers to Chapter 12 of the EIAR and recommends conditions in relation to proposed mitigation measures if permission is granted for the proposed development.
- National Environmental Health Service (HSE): Full consideration of relevant chapters of the submitted EIAR are provided. Conditions recommended if permission is granted.
- Uisce Éireann: No objection subject to standard conditions. It was reported that the applicant has engaged with Uisce Éireann and a Confirmation of Feasibility

was issued to the applicant. Some upgrade works to the local networks may be required to facilitate this development.

4.2.4. Third Party Observations

A single letter of objection was received to the original application as made to Meath Council from the Highland Residents Association. The issues raised are summarised as follows:

Impact on the historical character of the area:

- The subject site forms part of the eastern extent of the Battle of the Boyne site. The site is considered to be where William of Orange crossed the River Boyne.
- The site should be a national heritage site, should be suitably protected and turned into a national park.

Inadequate Road Infrastructure:

- The Rathmullan Road is the only road connection between the site and Drogheda town centre.
- There is already an extensive volume of traffic using this road, including traffic accessing a local secondary school.
- Query over the submitted traffic survey provided as part of the 'Traffic and Transport Assessment – Rathmullan Road' with particular reference to 'Appendix A' and surveys undertaken in January 2022 and considered to be out of date and surveys do not provide queueing depth which would indicate the current state of traffic on the road network.
- Request that photographic evidence be provided to show the impact of traffic on the local road network.
- No junctions are proposed to be upgraded, and three junctions have been identified as requiring upgrades to facilitate the proposed development. A new road from the Donore Road to the site is also requested.
- Queuing in the area can stretch for 500m in the morning peak with traffic backed up to the entrance to Highlands.

School Capacity:

- The primary schools in the area are at capacity. Either these would have to be upgraded, or pupils would have to travel elsewhere in Drogheda.
- St Olivers secondary school is one of the largest such schools in the country and gives rise to traffic congestion in the area. Traffic is also generated here by pupils using the school car park as a pick-up point for bus services to other schools in Drogheda.

East Meath - County Development Plan:

- There have been a number of new housing developments in the immediate area – details listed.
- Consider that the expected growth for housing, in this part of County Meath, has been met.

Environmental Assessment:

- Report that there are bat roosts in the existing building which are proposed for demolition on site.
- Question of validity over the licences required for removal of the bat roosts.

Submissions made in response to Further Information Response:

The following comments were made following the receipt of further information:

New Junction Layout:

- Opposed to the proposed junction design at the entrance to the site.
- Would have a negative impact on flora and fauna and on a historic stone wall in this location.

Road Infrastructure Issues:

- Road infrastructure is not sufficient in the area to facilitate this development.
- The Rathmullan Road is the only road in the area and has a wide range of uses.
- Request that junction and road upgraded be undertaken in the area in order to support the proposed development.
- There is a need for a new link road from the west of the Rathmullan Road to the Donore Road.

- Insufficient details provided in relation to existing traffic queues in the area.

Retention of Old Walls and Wooded Area:

- Existing stone walls should be included as a feature of this development.
- Need to retain the wooded area to the northeast of the subject site.

East Meath County Development Plan (repeated issues):

- There have been a number of new housing developments in the immediate area – details listed.
- Consider that the expected growth for housing, in this part of County Meath, has been met.

Environmental Assessment (repeated issues):

- Report that there are bat roosts in the existing building which are proposed for demolition on site.
- Question of validity over the licences required for removal of the bat roosts.

Comments are supported with photographs and plans.

5.0 Planning History

There is a complicated planning history associated with the lands in this area. I note that a number of applications were withdrawn prior to decision and full details are available in the Meath County Council Planning Report.

ABP Ref. 305552-19 refers to a Strategic Housing Development (SHD) application for the demolition of existing buildings/structures on site and construction of 661 no. residential units (509 no. houses and 152 no. apartments), childcare facility and associated site works on an area of land to the west of the Rathmullan Road and which includes the subject site. The decision of the Board to grant permission was quashed by Order of the High Court on the 16th of December 2020.

ABP Ref. 224875 refers to an October 2008 decision to grant permission for 509 units, comprising 395 houses and 114 apartment units, a creche, car parking and all associated site works at Oldbridge, Rathmullan Road, Drogheda. The original

application was for 745 residential units, and the number of units was reduced by way of further information by the Planning Authority and subsequently by condition in the ABP grant of permission. The subject site forms a part of these development lands.

ABP Ref. 314170 refers to a May 2024 decision to grant permission for the construction of a 3m shared Footway/Cycleway on the eastern side of the Rathmullan Road. The development includes public lighting, drainage works, signage, landscaping & ancillary works. This application was supported with a NIS and the Board were 'satisfied that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of the European Sites, in view of the Sites' conservation objectives.' This footway/ cycleway is constructed and provides access from the Rathmullan/ the Boyne Greenway to/ from the subject site.

6.0 Policy Context

6.1. National Policy

6.1.1. National Planning Framework First Revision – April 2025

Chapter 4 of the National Planning Framework (NPF) is entitled 'Making Stronger Urban Places' and it sets out to enhance the experience of people who live, work and visit the urban places of Ireland.

A number of key policy objectives are noted as follows:

- National Policy Objective 12 seeks to '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'.
- National Planning Objective 22 provides that '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.'

Chapter 6 of the NPF is entitled 'People, Homes and Communities' and it sets out that place is intrinsic to achieving a good quality of life.

A number of key policy objectives are noted as follows:

- National Policy Objective 27 seeks to '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.'
- National Policy Objective 43 seeks to 'Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.'
- National Policy Objective 45 seeks to 'Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including restrictions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration, increased building heights and more compact forms of development.'

6.1.2. **Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines**

The following is a list of Section 28 - Ministerial Guidelines considered of relevance to the proposed development. Specific policies and objectives are referenced within the assessment where appropriate.

- Guidelines for Planning Authorities – Design Standards for New Apartments, (DHLGH, 2025).
- Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoHLGH, 2024).
- Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (DoEHLG, 2007).
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Management including the associated Technical Appendices (DEHLG/ OPW, 2009).
- Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001).

Other Relevant Policy Documents include:

- The Climate Action Plan 2024
- The Climate Action Plan 2025
- National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 – 2030

- Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025 – 2030
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) - 2023 Update.
- Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020.
- Permeability Best Practice Guide – National Transport Authority.

6.2. Regional Policy

6.2.1. Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019 – 2031

The Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly 'Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy 2019-2031' provides for the development of nine counties including Meath and supports the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP).

6.3. Local/ County Policy

6.3.1. Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027

The Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 is the current statutory plan for County Meath, including the subject site.

The following variations have been adopted:

- **Variation No.1** – Replacement of written statements for respective settlements as new Local Area Plans, Joint Local Area Plan or Joint Urban Area Plan are adopted, Amendments to Core Strategy/ Figures and Reallocation of Housing Units. Adopted on the 13th of May 2024.
- **Variation No.2** – Amended zonings for certain settlements and updated maps. Adopted on the 13th of May 2024.
- **Variation No.3** – Update the Meath County Development Plan to take account of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines, to take into account the actions in 'Housing Options for our Ageing Population', and to provide a percentage range for the quantum of residential uses permitted on Town Centre and Mixed Use zoned lands. Adopted on the 27th of January 2025.
- **Variation No.4** – Revise the Meath County Development Plan to take account of the Maynooth & Environs Joint LAP. Adopted on the 7th of July 2025.
- **Variation No.5** – To take account of the National Planning Framework Implementation Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines, revised household

allocation/ population growth and revised land zonings including the Southern Environs of Drogheda but not impacting the subject site. Adopted on the 8th of June 2026.

The site consists of the following zoning objectives:

A2 – New Residential with an objective: ‘To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate.’ Permitted uses include, ‘Residential/ Sheltered Housing, Community Facility / Centre, Childcare Facility, Convenience Outlet, Children Play/ Adventure Centre, Halting Site/ Group Housing, Leisure/ Recreation/ Sports Facilities, Retirement Home/ Residential Institution/ Retirement Village and Utilities.’

F1 – Open space with an objective: ‘To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.’ Permitted uses include, ‘Car Park for Recreational Purposes, Community Facility/ Centre, Cycleways/ Greenways/ Trail Development, Leisure/ Recreation/ Sports Facilities, Playing Pitches, Playgrounds, Utilities.’

The following Chapters/ Sections and Objectives are considered to be relevant to this development:

Chapter 02. Core Strategy.

Population is given as 195,000 in 2016, rises to between 216,000/ 221,000 in 2026 and up to 225,500/ 231,500 in 2031. Headroom provision allows for 25% increase on the above figures and provided in Table 2.3 of the plan, screenshot provided:

County	2016	2026	2026 population including 25% headroom	2031 ⁸
Meath	195,000	216,000-221,000	221,250-227,500	225,500-231,500

Table 2.3: Transitional Population Projections including headroom

Drogheda is defined as one of the Regional Growth Centres and which is a large town ‘with a high level of self-sustaining employment and services that act as regional economic drivers and play a significant role for a wide catchment area.’

Table 2.8 provides the ‘Population growth in Meath 2006 – 2027’:

	Population increase 2006-16	Average annual increase 2006-16	Projected increase 2016-27	Projected annual average increase 2016-27
Meath	32,206	3,221	33,256	3,023

Table 2.9 provides the ‘RPG Population and Housing Targets up to 2022’.

	Census 2002	Census 2006	Census 2011	Census 2016	RPG Target 2016	RPG Target 2022
Population	134,005	162,831	184,135	195,044	195,898	210,260
Housing	44,972	61,257	69,697	70,649	79,729	95,458
Occupancy rate		2.66	2.89 ²¹	2.96	2.62 ²²	2.35

Table 2.12 provides the ‘Core Strategy Table, Population and Household distribution to 2027’. The following is an excerpt referring to Drogheda:

Settlement	Population 2016	Projected population increase to 2027	Projected population 2027	Approximate households completed 2016-2019	Extant units not yet built
Regional Growth Centre					
Drogheda	6,527	3,300	9,827	113	572

Note: The High Court Order dated 3rd of May 2023 removed the zoned lands on Sheet 35(a), which included the Southern Environs of Drogheda-Combined, and they were made 'white lands' with no zoning applicable to these lands. The submitted details indicates that the subject lands are not subject to this High Court Order and remain zoned as voted on by the Elected Members of Meath County Council.

Chapter 03. Settlement and Housing Strategy.

Section 3.4.6 refers to the 'Regional Growth Centre' which is Drogheda. The RSES sets out a population target of 50,000 by 2031. The RSES requires the preparation of a Joint Urban Area Plan (UAP) for Drogheda by both Louth County Council and Meath County Council. Settlement Strategy Objective SH OBJ 6 seeks 'To prepare a Joint Vision and Urban Area Plan for Drogheda in partnership with Louth County Council within the lifetime of this Plan in accordance with the requirements of Regional Policy Objective 4.11 of the RSES for the Eastern and Midland Region.'

Chapter 05. Movement Strategy.

Objective MOV OBJ 1 seeks 'To prepare and commence implementation of Local Transport Plans (LTP), in conjunction with the NTA and relevant stakeholders, for Drogheda (in conjunction with Louth County Council as part of the Joint Urban Plan), Ashbourne, Navan, Ratoath, and other settlements where Local Area Plans are undertaken, having regard to the Area Based Transport Assessment Guidance Notes (2019).'

Objective MOV OBJ 59 seeks 'To carry out a transport study for Drogheda in conjunction with Louth County Council as part of the future Joint Urban Plan.'

Chapter 11. Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives.

The following are especially relevant:

Section 3 – Public Realm

Section 4 – General Development Standards

Section 5 – Residential Development Standards

‘DM OBJ 14: The following densities shall be encouraged when considering planning applications for residential development:

Regional Growth Centres and Metropolitan towns

Centre and Urban Neighbourhoods	50-150 uph
Suburban/Urban Extension	35-50 uph Up to 100 uph open for consideration at accessible ² suburban/urban extension locations

The subject site would be a Suburban/ Urban Extension.

Section 11.5.7 provides details on Separation Distances which in summary are:

- 16m between directly opposing side/ rear windows above ground floor for houses (DM OBJ 19) and also 16m in the case of apartments/ duplex units up to three storeys in height (DM OBJ 20). Adequate separation distances to be demonstrated for developments in excess of three storeys (DM OBJ 20).
- 2.3m between dwellings (DM OBJ 21).

Section 11.5.8 provides details on Dwelling Design, Size and Mix.

Section 11.5.9 provides details on Building Height.

Section 11.5.10 provides details on Open Space.

Section 11.5.16 provides details on Light and Overshadowing

Section 11.5.17 provides details on Apartments.

6.4. Natural Heritage Designations

- The Boyne River Islands pNHA (Site Code 001862) is approximately 30m to the north of the subject site.
- The nearest European designated sites are the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (Site Code 002299) and which are approximately 30m to the north of the subject site.

- The River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (Site Code 004232) is located approximately 250m to the west of the subject site.

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal.

There is only one issue, that is the reason the Planning Authority refused the permission for development and

The First Party Appeal makes the following points:

- The planning history of the site/ Rathmullan lands is set out.
- Meath County Council sought further information on a single point – Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statement details. Full details were submitted.
- The Planning Authority had no objection to the proposed development but reported that it could not be concluded beyond reasonable doubt that the proposed development would not have adverse effects on the integrity of designated European Sites.
- The applicant does not concur with the conclusion of the Planning Authority but acknowledge that any doubt would preclude a grant of planning permission.
- Notes that the review of the submitted AA/ NIS and subsequent refusal reason comes from the conclusions of an external technical review by Tetra Tech, who are appointed consultants by Meath County Council.
- Unsure if the external consultants were fully informed of the LRD process and the inability to seek clarification of further information.
- In response to the decision of Meath County Council, the applicant has conducted a comprehensive review of the AA/ NIS and revised the documents as identified/ required. There are no amendments to the applied methodology or the outcomes which have been arrived at.
- The applicant considers the proposed development to be compliant with Objective HER OBJ 33 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

- Reference is made in Tetra Tech Review to SANG¹ (Sustainable Alternative Natural Greenspaces) criteria. This is not a requirement of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and is not referenced in national planning policy documentation. This is a UK requirement and is not relevant to applications in Ireland. The applicant has, however, listed a number of mitigation measures including green spaces and amenity facilities as part of this development. There are a range of amenity spaces and facilities located within the Boyne Valley SAC.
- A strict application of the SANG requirements finds the subject development deficient as the following are not provided:
 - Information boards on local biodiversity and heritage.
 - Bins for dog waste.

The applicant states that these are part of a scheme that Meath County Council does not require compliance with, however they can be included by way of condition if deemed necessary.

- Conclusion:

Request that the Commission overturn the decision of Meath County Council and grant permission for the proposed development. Included in support of the appeal are maps, aerial photographs and photographs of the site/ adjoining areas.

7.2. **Planning Authority Response**

Request that the Commission upheld the decision to refuse permission for the proposed development for the reason provided.

7.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

None received.

7.4. **Observations**

None received.

¹ 'SANG is land that is designed and managed to provide an alternative recreational space for people, helping to reduce visitor pressure on protected habitats.' – The Land Trust, UK.

8.0 **Assessment**

8.1. The main issues that arise for consideration in relation to this appeal can be addressed under the following headings:

- Principle of Development
- Impact on Existing Character and Residential Amenity
- Traffic, Access and Car/ Bicycle Parking
- Infrastructure and Flood Risk
- Other Matters
- Appropriate Assessment (AA)
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.2. **Principle of Development**

8.2.1. **Nature of Development:** The proposed development provides for a total of 249 residential units in the form of apartments and houses, and is supported with a creche, roads/ access, car/ bicycle parking and all associated infrastructure. The site is located to the west of Drogheda, south of the River Boyne within County Meath.

8.2.2. The subject lands are zoned A2 – New Residential and F1 – Open Space and the development layout conforms to these zonings, i.e. housing is located on the A2 lands and the F1 lands provide for open space. Additional open space is provided on the A2 lands ensuring future residents have easy access to suitable open space from their homes.

8.2.3. In the interests of clarity, by order of the High Court Order dated 3rd of May 2023 zoned lands on Sheet 35(a), which included the Southern Environs of Drogheda-Combined, were removed and were designated as ‘white lands’ with no zoning applicable. The submitted details indicate that the subject lands are not subject to this High Court Order and remain zoned for residential and open space uses.

Appeal:

8.2.4. Meath County Council refused this development for a single reason – the failure of the submitted Natura Impact Statement (NIS) to provide a sufficiently robust/ comprehensive assessment of the proposed development to adequately evaluate the potential for significant adverse effects on the integrity of designated European sites.

The failure to do this would be contrary to Objective HER OBJ 33 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. All other aspects of the proposed development were considered to be acceptable.

8.2.5. I will consider the reason for refusal under Section 9.0 - Appropriate Assessment of my report. The applicant has submitted a revised Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and a Natural Impact Statement in support of their appeal; the submitted revisions clarify matters previously raised by the Planning Authority and there is no need for revised public notices. Meath County Council have requested that the Commission uphold the decision to refuse permission for this development. As this is the only issue raised in the appeal, I will provide a short assessment of the key points that I consider relevant in this development.

8.2.6. **Conclusion on Principle of Development:** I have no objection to the proposed scheme in terms of the development of these suitably zoned lands for residential use with associated open space, childcare etc. The subject lands have been zoned by the elected members of Meath County Council and are subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

8.3. **Impact on Existing Character and Residential Amenity**

8.3.1. **Background:** No issues raised in the appeal, the third party submission on the original application raised no specific issues of concern and the Planning Authority were satisfied that relevant aspects of the development were acceptable, raising no issues of concern.

8.3.2. **Assessment:** I will assess relevant aspects of the development under sub-headings as follows:

8.3.3. **Density:** A total of 249 units are proposed on a net site area of 6.92 hectares; giving a density of 36 dwellings per hectare. This demonstrates compliance with Objective DM OBJ 14 of the Meath County Development Plan which provides for a range of 35-50 units per hectare, for sites that are considered to be within a Suburban/ Urban Extension location. Whilst higher densities may be considered on such sites, this is when the lands are within 1,000m of existing/ proposed high capacity public transport node/ interchange, which this site is not. The development also demonstrates compliance with the requirements of the Compact Settlement Guidelines for Suburban/ Urban Extension for Regional Growth Centres under Table 3.4 with an

acceptable density range of 35 to 50 dph. The development is therefore compliant with the requirements for density.

- 8.3.4. **Layout and Scale:** The layout consists of a single vehicular access off the Rathmullan Road, requiring an upgrade of the existing T Junction to a full four sided junction and the provision of a central road through the site. The upgraded junction is not proposed to be signalised. To the north east and north, a loop is provided with units located between the main access route and the loop road. To the south west a secondary access road is provided and off this are cul-de-sacs and another loop. These roads including the main access route allow for connections to the lands to the south and west, which allows for the development of these lands in the future. A central area of open space is provided with larger open space to the north and north eastern sides of the site. A narrow strip of open space is provided to the south west of the main access road forming a corridor from the Rathmullan road to the central green space.
- 8.3.5. The site primarily consists of houses but the provision of the apartment units at the end of streets/ lines of houses/ corner sites will provide for visual variety throughout the development area. The provision of low height buildings through houses and three storey apartment units will ensure that the development does not dominate the landscape to the south west of Drogheda, or when viewed from the M1/ Mary McAleese Bridge to the west of the site.
- 8.3.6. Open spaces are provided with good passive surveillance and the positioning of the apartment units on site also increases passive surveillance throughout the site. The creche is located towards the north west/ centre of the site and will be accessible to future residents of the site.
- 8.3.7. Drawing PL-SP-06 – ‘Proposed Site Plan – Character Area’ indicates that three distinct character areas are to be provided – ‘West Field’, ‘The Green’ and ‘Central Park’. Within each of these areas, variety is provided through a mix of house/ apartment types and through different material finishes. I consider the submitted details to be acceptable. Drawing PL-SP-10 – ‘Proposed Site Plan – Phasing’ indicates that three phases are proposed, and which align with the character areas. Phase 1 will be to the east of the site, Phase 2 includes the southern section and the open space to the south of the River Boyne, and Phase 3 will be the remaining lands, those to the west of the

site. The submitted details are acceptable and demonstrates compliance with Objective DM OBJ 23 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

- 8.3.8. I am satisfied that the proposed layout and scale of development is acceptable. The applicant has proposed as scheme at the lower end of the acceptable density range, whilst this is acceptable, a higher density could be achieved through additional apartment units throughout the site. In the absence of good quality public transport, the development will be reliant on car use, though a good alternative to the car is available through the use of the greenway to the north of the site.
- 8.3.9. **Unit Mix:** The proposed development provides for a mix of houses, apartment and duplex units and which provide for one, two, three and four bedroom units. I have provided in Table 5 a summary of the unit mix and the proposed mix demonstrates compliance with DM POL 6 and DM OBJ 39 of the Meath County Development Plan.
- 8.3.10. **Height:** The proposed houses are two storey units. Apartment Block Type A1 and A2 and the proposed creche are three storey units. Apartment Block Type A3 are four storey units, and these are the tallest structures on site. Three of these Type A3 blocks are proposed and two are located towards the centre of the site and the third is to the north east. These will not have a negative impact on the visual amenity or character of the area. They are located on site as a means of wayfinding and also providing for a good quality in terms of urban design. They also allow for good passive surveillance in the areas that they are located within. I have no objection to the proposed layout and design in terms of the heights proposed.
- 8.3.11. **Impact on Existing Residential Amenity:** The subject site is located to the western side of the Rathmullan Road, with no houses adjoining to the west or south of these lands. Existing houses to the east are within the 'The Square' and 'The Dale' but are at least 22m from the roadside edge and a greater distance again from the proposed units within the subject site. Between the road and the proposed houses is an area of open space and internal access road. I am satisfied that no issues of overlooking leading to a loss of privacy arise, and no issues of concern arise in terms of loss of daylight/ sunlight received by the existing houses in the area. The development will not negatively impact on open space areas serving existing residential areas such as through loss of sunlight. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed development would not have a negative impact on existing residential amenity.

- 8.3.12. **Quality of Proposed Residential Amenity:** The applicant has provided an Architectural Design Statement and Housing Quality Assessment in support of their application. One and two bedroom apartment/ duplex units are proposed and proposed floor areas are in accordance with Objective DM OBJ 14 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and SPPR 2 of the Apartment Guidelines. All apartments are dual aspect exceeding the requirements of SPPR 3 and floor to ceiling heights of 2.7m on the ground floor demonstrates compliance with SPPR4 of the Apartment Guidelines.
- 8.3.13. Full details of the house types/ floor areas are provided in the submitted HQA for Houses. The proposed floor areas are acceptable, and each house is provided with adequate private amenity space demonstrating compliance with Table 11.1 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. Rear garden depths of 16m are acceptable and demonstrate compliance with Objective DM OBJ 18 of the Meath County Development Plan. Side separation of 2.3m between houses is also provided for in accordance with Objective DM OBJ 21.
- 8.3.14. The applicant has engaged Chris Shackleton Consulting to undertake a ‘Sunlight, Daylight & Shadow Assessment (Development Performance and Impact on Neighbours)’. As I have already reported, and confirmed by the applicant’s report, there is no impact on existing residential amenity in terms of loss of daylight or sunlight. In terms of received daylight for the proposed units, 92% of rooms tested comply with the BS/EN 17037 Annex NA room targets for 50% of the floor area tested. This result increased to 98% if those rooms with marginal results are included. Compensatory measures are listed and which include increased living room floor area, if the floor area were reduced to the minimum required, the pass rate would increase. Rooms have direct access to their rear which provides for improved residential space/ amenity.
- 8.3.15. 100% of tested living rooms receive at least 1.5 hours of sunlight for the test day of the 21st of March as per BS EN 17037. 92% of the tested amenity spaces are compliant with the BRE requirements. One area of space, which is north facing, receives 33% sunlight for 1.5 hours on the 21st of March. Adjacent units are provided with increased balcony/ private amenity space.

- 8.3.16. **Conclusion on Daylight and Sunlight Assessments:** I have had appropriate and reasonable regard of quantitative performance approaches to daylight provision, as outlined in the relevant guidance. I am satisfied that the design and layout of the scheme has been fully considered alongside relevant sunlight and daylighting factors. The standards achieved, when considering all site factors and the requirement to provide for housing on this zoned and serviced site located within the Meath County area, in accordance with national policy guidance, are in my opinion acceptable and will result in an acceptable level of residential amenity for future occupants of this development. Overall, I am satisfied that the proposed development will provide for good daylight and sunlight to the proposed units.
- 8.3.17. **Childcare Provision:** The proposed development provides for a total of 249 residential units; with a mix of one, two, three and four bedroom units. A three storey childcare facility with an internal floor area of 411sq m is proposed and this is supported with 143sq m of outdoor space. The applicant considers that this facility can accommodate 58 children.
- 8.3.18. In support of the application, a Social and Community Infrastructure Audit, dated September 2025, has been prepared by the applicant and which has full regard to the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 (in particular Chapter 7 – Community Building) and the Childcare Guidelines 2001. Section 6.2 of the applicant’s report considers ‘Childcare Facilities’ and Tabel 7.0 details 6 facilities within 2.5km of the subject site. Combined these facilities provide for 318 childcare spaces, though the available spare capacity is not given. The applicant considers that the proposed development will generate demand for 50 spaces and the proposed facility with capacity for 58 children will meet this requirement.
- 8.3.19. The apartment guidelines, 2025, state that ‘One-bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision and subject to location, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms’.
- 8.3.20. I have provided the following table for the benefit of the Commission, outlining the requirements/ demand for childcare places.

Table 6: Childcare Requirements

	2001 Childcare Guidelines	2025 Apartment Guidelines – without 1 beds	2025 Apartment Guidelines – without 1 beds and only 50% of 2 beds
Number of Units	249	211	172
1 Facility with capacity for 20 children for every 75 units	66	52	46

8.3.21. The applicant has proposed a childcare facility with capacity for 58 children, and this will easily meet the requirements of the subject development and also provide for additional capacity to serve the southern/ south western part of Drogheda. This is to be welcomed and will also provide for a mix of uses on site, increased employment and improved services for the area. I am satisfied that the childcare facility is served with adequate open space and is located in an accessible location for residents of this proposed development.

8.3.22. **Conclusion on Childcare Provision:** The proposed development provides for a creche which is designed to accommodate 58 children. The expected generated demand as a result of the proposed development is approximately 50 children and the proposed unit will easily accommodate this number. I am satisfied that this is an acceptable addition to this development.

8.3.23. **Open Space:** The Meath County Development Plan, under Objective DM OBJ 26, has a requirement that ‘Public open space shall be provided for residential development at a minimum rate of 15% of total site area. In all cases lands zoned F1 Open Space, G1 Community Infrastructure and H1 High Amenity cannot be included as part of the 15%.’ The proposed development provides for 1.17 hectares of public open space or 16.9% of the net site area. This is dispersed throughout the site area, but it is designed to ensure that the different areas of space connect. This will support ecological corridors and also allow for looped walking routes for amenity purposes.

8.3.24. An additional 1.68 hectares, the lands located to the north of the site and Zoned F1, are to provide for a landscaped parkland – Boyne Valley Park. This park will serve the wider area and also connects into the other open space areas on site. It also connects

to the Boyne Greenway and again there is a good integration of amenity facilities. Play facilities are provided throughout the site within the open space areas, and their location allows for easy access for future residents of the proposed development.

- 8.3.25. **Conclusion on Residential Amenity:** It is considered that the proposed development will provide for a high quality of residential amenity in this part of Drogheda. The proposed development provides for a mix of houses and apartments which are supported by high quality open space and a creche. The development is considered to be acceptable in terms of layout, density, height and ensures that the existing residential amenity of adjacent properties are protected. I have no reason to recommend refusal of the proposed development in terms of the quality of residential amenity.

8.4. **Traffic, Access and Car/ Bicycle Parking**

- 8.4.1. **Background:** No issues were raised by the applicant in their appeal about traffic and access. Third party comments were made on the original application to Meath County Council about the impact of the development on traffic in the area.
- 8.4.2. **Planning Authority Comment:** The Planning Authority did not raise any issues of concern in relation to transport and road safety. The further information request did not seek any details in relation to traffic, access or car parking.
- 8.4.3. **Assessment:**
- 8.4.4. **Mode of Transport:** This site is located towards the edge of Drogheda and despite comments made by the applicant positively emphasising the location relevant to Drogheda train and bus stations, I am of the opinion that this development will be car orientated. There is no regular public transport within walking distance of the site, I have referred to the 173 town bus service, but this operates during the day Monday to Saturday only and does not provide for a morning peak service. I note that consultation work commenced on a Drogheda Joint Local Area Plan in 2024, with a report on submissions received in June 2025, however no further details are provided. Section 1.2 of this report states:

‘A Joint Transport Plan for Drogheda continues to be progressed and is currently under preparation. The submissions received as part of the Drogheda Issues Paper have

also been shared with the team preparing the Transport Plan.’ There is no further information available on this plan at present.

- 8.4.5. Drogheda is well served by train and bus services, but these are not easily accessible by foot from this site. The Boyne Greenway does allow for a direct route to the town centre and stations, but at 2.7km to the bus station, it would be quicker done by bicycle rather than by foot. So, whilst public transport is available, it is not easily accessible from this site. That said, there is no indication that residents of this development would require public transport and they may take up employment locally in the area. Significant areas of employment lands are located to the south east of the subject site and within the town centre.
- 8.4.6. Car Parking: I consider that car use will be significant for this development. A total of 384 parking spaces will be provided for the residential element of this development. Table 14 of the applicant’s ‘Traffic and Transport Assessment’ provides a breakdown of the proposed car parking to serve this development. The three and four bedroom houses will be served by two car parking each. The two bedroom units will have a single parking space. These spaces will be in-curtilage. The apartment units will be served with one parking space each and the creche will have four spaces.
- 8.4.7. The applicant has sought to justify this in accordance with the requirements of Objective DM OBJ 89 and Table 11.2 ‘Car Parking’ of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. For peripheral locations the maximum is 2 per dwelling unit for dwellings/ apartments. I note the comments of the Meath County Council Transportation Department regarding the need for additional car parking to serve the residential element of the development, however I am satisfied that the provision of two spaces for three/ four bedroom houses and one space for each of the other unit types is acceptable. As the specified requirement in the Meath County Development Plan is a maximum, there is a no issue of material contravention when a lower number of car parking spaces is proposed. The applicant has also stated that the car parking provision has regard to the Compact Settlements Guidelines.
- 8.4.8. As per Table 11.2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027, the car parking requirement for a creche is one space per employee with a dedicated set down area and 1 per four children plus dedicated set down area. The applicant indicates in their report that the creche will employ 10 staff and accommodate 47 children. The number

of children is different to that proposed elsewhere when 58 children can be accommodated – see Section 6.2.1 of the Social & Community Infrastructure Audit. The applicant has proposed that four car parking spaces for staff be provided; they have created a ratio of 0.25 spaces for staff, 10 staff are proposed, therefore three spaces would be required. Four spaces for visitors are proposed.

- 8.4.9. It is not clear how the applicant has come to this ratio or the number of visitor parking spaces. Meath County Council Transportation Department state that the provision ‘for the creche is not acceptable. The standard number of car parking spaces for 10 staff and 47 pupils would be 22 spaces.’ I calculate this figure as: 10 staff spaces and $47/4=11.75$, total of 22 spaces. I note the shortfall in car parking, but I refer to the Guidance Notes under Table 11.2 of the Meath County Development Plan, and which includes ‘Non-residential car parking standards are set down as “maxima” standards’. This allows for a reduction in car parking, and the proposed car parking provision here could be considered to be acceptable.
- 8.4.10. In support of the reduced car parking for the creche, the following points can be made. The intention is that the majority of the users will be from within the development area and demand for car use will be reduced than if this was a commercial creche located independently of a residential development. The creche location is relatively central on site and is easily accessible on foot or by bicycle by residents of this development. As already stated, the car parking requirement is for maxima.
- 8.4.11. Alternatively, it is possible to increase the car parking through the removal of unit no. 9B, relocating the proposed bin storage and cycle parking to the north on the partial footprint of 9B and providing for 4 – 5 spaces in the location of the bin/ cycle area. This may also allow the applicant to clearly define a set down area for the creche. The loss of one unit would have no significant impact on the number of units and density proposed but would allow for adequate car parking for staff and an appropriate number for visitor parking also. Such amendments would not have a material impact on the overall layout and nature of the development and no negative impacts to existing residents in the area would arise. I recommend that these amendments be undertaken by way of condition if permission is to be granted for this development.
- 8.4.12. Traffic: The submitted Traffic and Transport Assessment has considered in full the potential traffic increase generated as a result of this development. Four junctions

were considered in their assessment, two would not be impacted to any significant amount by the proposed development as they were below the 5% threshold. The other two junctions on the Rathmullan Road, east of the site and including the junction access to the site, would remain within capacity for the 2043 do something scenario. Meath County Council Transportation Department raised no concern about the traffic generated and final details on junction upgrade, cycle/ pedestrian facilities etc. can be agreed by way of condition.

8.4.13. I note the applicant's report and the report from Meath County Council, and I agree with their assessments and note that there is no evidence to the contrary. I am also satisfied that the proposed development would generate the primary source of traffic at this junction. The existing roads going north and south do not provide convenient access/ routes to significant traffic generating locations. The road to the north does eventually reach Oldbridge/ Battle of the Boyne Visitor Centre, but access to there is primarily from the N51 to the north of the River Boyne or from the L16012 to the south from Donore. The southern section of the Rathmullan Road also provides access to Oldbridge but via the L16012 and there are no other significant traffic generators on this section of road.

8.4.14. Other: Table 17 of the applicant's Traffic and Transport Assessment details the proposed allocation of bicycle parking for the proposed development. 120 spaces for apartment/ duplex units are proposed, and an additional 50 visitor spaces are also to be provided on site. I consider that this demonstrates adequate provision for bicycle parking on site in accordance with Table 11.4 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027. I note the comments of the Meath County Council Transportation Department regarding the need for more substantial/ permanent form of bicycle parking storage. This can be addressed by way of condition. Adequate provision is made for cyclist and pedestrians to and from the site towards Drogheda and the adjoining area, as well as within the development lands. The applicant has indicated that the gradient of the path from the development to the Boyne Greenway is 1:20 and this is acceptable.

8.4.15. **Conclusion on Traffic and Access:** The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed development will not give rise to adverse increased traffic in the area. Junctions that may be impacted are found to be within capacity for the period up to 2043. Although there is no public plan to improve public transport in the area, the

proposed development would appear to be an appropriate location for the extension of bus services to at some point. Adequate car and bicycle parking is provided though I consider it appropriate that additional parking be provided to serve the creche. The development demonstrates good pedestrian and cycle provision.

8.5. Infrastructure and Flood Risk

8.5.1. **Background:** No issues of concern were raised in relation to the provision of a water supply and drainage infrastructure, and no issues of concern were raised about potential flood risk.

8.5.2. **Planning Authority Comments:** No issues of concern were raised about surface water drainage or flooding.

8.5.3. **Assessment:** No issues were raised in relation to water supply and foul drainage, and Uisce Éireann reported no concern to the proposed foul drainage and water supply and recommended conditions in the event that permission was to be granted. Uisce Éireann have indicated that the applicant has consulted with them prior to the lodging of this application.

8.5.4. Capacity exists as per the Uisce Éireann Capacity Registers for foul drainage and water supply connections. I have accessed the UÉ Capacity Register dated April 2026 on the 1st of July 2026, and for Drogheda – there is a Green ‘Capacity Available – LoS improvement required. The Uisce Éireann report identifies upgrade work including a 50m section of 450mm watermain and flow control valve and a need for 140m of new 200mm diameter watermain to connect to the existing 300mm watermain. The applicant will have to fund these upgrades as they are not included in the Uisce Éireann investment plan. In terms of foul drainage, there is a Green indication of available capacity and no identified need for infrastructure upgrades.

8.5.5. Meath County Council Environment Flooding-Surface Water Section report that the proposed surface water drainage is acceptable and meets their requirements subject to conditions.

8.5.6. A ‘Flood Risk Assessment’ – prepared by JBA Consulting has been included with the application, dated August 2025. The assessment has full regard to ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009’, the ‘Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment (Eastern CFRAM)’ and the ‘Flood Risk

Assessment and Management Plan for the Meath CDP 2021 – 2027'. Full details of the site and flood history are provided; there is no history of flooding on these lands.

8.5.7. The submitted report has regard to the following forms of potential flooding:

- **Fluvial Flooding:** The applicant reports that prior to the opening of the M1 Motorway in 2003, fluvial flooding was the primary source of flood risk in the area, associated with the Sheephouse watercourse. This watercourse is no longer present, and the risk of flooding is removed due to works associated with the development of the motorway. The site is sufficiently elevated that the River Boyne does not give rise to flood risk. Fluvial Flooding is screened out at this stage.
- **Coastal Flooding:** The proposed finished floor level to the northern part of the site is at 19.6m OD and due to it being well above any coastal flood levels, coastal flooding can be screen out at this stage.
- **Ground Water:** Ground investigations were undertaken on the site, and no groundwater was found at depths of up to 8m below the ground level. This is screened out at this stage.
- **Pluvial Flooding:** OPW PFRA mapping has indicated that there is minimal potential for this form of flooding on site. The applicant acknowledges that a poor surface water drainage design could impact on the risk from pluvial flooding. The applicant has provided further details and mitigation measures in Section 4 of their report. Consideration is given to existing watercourses and culverts in the area.

8.5.8. The site is located within Flood Zone C with a small section' to the north within the proposed park, within Flood Zone A/B. The applicant considers this to be incorrectly classified as the Eastern CFRAMS has not reflected changes in surface water drainage such as revisions to the Sheephouse Stream and the revision of flows associated with the M1 motorway. The applicant concludes 'the site is located in Flood Zone C and appropriate mitigation measures has been implemented to manage flood risk to the development.' Less vulnerable open space uses are proposed in the Flood

Risk A/ B areas. I am satisfied that there is no risk arising to adjoining lands as a result of the proposed development.

8.5.9. The Meath County Council Environment Flooding-Surface Water Section have reported no objection to the development but condition that all recommendations of the SFRA be implemented, the applicant to apply the justification test as the development is classified as a 'highly vulnerable development' and an emergency response plan to be provided as the Rathmullan Road could be flooded during the 1%AEP for the River Boyne. The applicant has outlined in Section 4.1.4 of the SFRA details of the 'Access/ Flood Management Plan'.

8.5.10. **Conclusion:** The proposed development can be served by public water supply and foul drainage, Uisce Éireann have confirmed that capacity exists within their network to serve this development. Foul drainage will be treated at the Drogheda Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP). I am satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated that a suitable surface water drainage system can be provided and no issues in relation to flooding arise subject to compliance in full with appropriate conditions.

8.6. Other Matters

8.6.1. As the appeal is first party only, the following issues were not raised in the appeal however I note the comments made in the observation to the original application/ further information response and in the interest of completeness I have included the following.

8.6.2. **Archaeology:** Concern was raised about the historical importance of this site primarily as a potential landing site for William of Orange in advance of the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The M1 motorway, west of the site forms the eastern edge of the buffer zone associated with the Brú na Bóinne UNESCO World Heritage Site. The applicant has provided an 'Archaeological Impact Assessment & Method Statement' in support of their application. Geophysical surveys and archaeological test trenching have been undertaken on these lands and Figure 12 of the applicant's report provides details of the 'Extent of archaeology uncovered across the study area, including results of geophysical survey and archaeological test trenching.' Nothing of significance was found here. ME020-072 on the SMR was considered to be of potential significance though doubt of its importance was raised through a geophysical survey undertaken

in 2008 and a subsequent test trench found the feature to be a dump of modern construction material and no archaeological remains were uncovered. The applicant reports that further analysis of effects of this feature can be discounted at this stage.

- 8.6.3. The applicant reports that the development would negatively affect any archaeological deposits within the subject site, and a suitable programme of pre-construction archaeological investigation is proposed here. Full details of the proposed measures are provided. The applicant will also undertake a Level 2 Historic Building Survey of the existing structures on site – former agricultural buildings prior to their demolition. It is reported that sections of walls of these may date to the early 19th century, but I also note that these are not protected structures and are in generally poor condition.
- 8.6.4. The Development Applications Unit (DAU) have reported no objection to the development subject to condition that archaeological monitoring as appropriate be undertaken. The Planning Authority have reported no objection to the proposed development.
- 8.6.5. **Conclusion on Archaeology:** The immediate area is noted for its historical importance and the length of the Boyne extending east provides for a wide range of historical sites from Brú na Bóinne to Oldbridge/ Battle of the Boyne and to the east of the site on to the historic town of Drogheda and its railway viaduct to the east. Other than a potential enclosure (ME020-072) located to the south of the site, there are no other known archaeological sites here. I consider it appropriate that suitable archaeological conditions be included as recommended by Meath County Council/ the DAU.
- 8.6.6. **Social Infrastructure:** A concern was raised about the impact of the development on existing social infrastructure in the area specifically schools. The Planning Authority raised no issues of concern in relation to this.
- 8.6.7. As reported, the applicant has provided a Social & Community Infrastructure Audit with in support of their application. In summary they have identified six primary schools (three to the south of the Boyne) and four post-primary schools (three to the south of the Boyne). Total enrolment is given in Tables 5.0 and 6.0 though the available capacity is not provided. School enrolments are expected to continue to decrease over the next two decades with secondary school enrolments expected to have

peaked in 2025. The applicant considers that there is adequate school place capacity in Drogheda, and the available capacity is expected to increase into the future.

8.6.8. The submitted information is noted. The Planning Authority have raised no issues of concern in relation to existing and future school capacity. Considering the high number of three and four bedroom units proposed, it is almost certain that the proposed development will generate demand for school places. I am satisfied that this can be met within this part of Drogheda.

8.6.9. **Ecology:** Third party observations referred to concerns about the removal of bat roosts on site. The applicant has provided an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) Report in support of their application. Section 4.9.2 of the EclA refers to Volant Mammals – Bats. Table 4.4 outlines the roost potential factors at the former agricultural buildings on site – there is found to be a decreased potential due to the materials used and the condition of the structures/ their roofs. The report considers that these structures are unsuitable for roosting bats. No roosting bats were recorded at the farmyard complex. I note that reference is made to bat surveys in 2018, 2022, 2024 and 2025. Commuting bats were recorded on the site and details are provided in Table 4.5 and Table 4.6 indicates that activity for Common Pipistrelle was high but low for other bat types. The results are expected due to the nature of the site and location with a mix of woodland and open grasslands present.

8.6.10. From the submitted information there is no concern raised about the impact of the development on bats. The site is primarily used for commuting but there is no record (historically or current) of roosting on site. There is no requirement for a derogation licence for the removal of bats from this site. No other issues of concern were raised in the EclA and I note the listed Mitigation Measures outlined in Section 5.1.3.

9.0 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

9.1. First Party Appeal

9.1.1 Meath County Council refused permission for this development as ‘the Planning Authority cannot conclude, beyond reasonable scientific doubt, that the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would not have significant adverse effects on the integrity of the aforementioned European sites.’ Meath County Council employed external consultants to assess the submitted AA and NIS. Further information was sought in relation to the submitted reports, and the

applicant submitted a response in the form of revised AA and NIS, dated December 2025. The Planning Authority/ their consultants (I will refer to as PA), through report dated 16th February 2026, were not satisfied with the submitted documentation and a refusal was issued.

9.1.2 Fifteen items (Points i to xv) were sought in the FI request, and I have summarised the Planning Authority/ their consultants response to each of these. I have also provided details of updates through the information provided in the appeal documents:

Table 7: AA Request – Meath County Council

FI Issues		PA Response	Appeal Revisions
i)	Identification of European Sites. 7 sites were identified – PA query why a 15km ZOI was chosen.	Report that Figure 4.1 has been updated and addressed issues previously raised.	Justification given for the ZOI in Section 3.5 and 4.6 of the AA.
ii)	Report Authors	Satisfied with the information provided.	Table 1.1 of the AA and Table 1.1 of the NIS give report author details.
iii)	Assessment of Likely Significant Effects – Surface Water	Satisfied with response – Tables 4.1 and 5.1 have been updated.	Detailed in Section 5.1 of the AA.
iv)	Assessment of Likely Significant Effects – Waste Water	Satisfied with response – Tables 4.1 and 5.1 have been updated.	Detailed in Section 5.2 of the AA.
v)	Assessment of Likely Significant Effects – Noise	Satisfied with response – Tables 4.1 and 5.1 have been updated.	Detailed in Section 5.4 of the AA.
vi)	Assessment of Likely Significant Effects – Air	Agrees with rationale provided, however, the Planning Authority consultants wished to see a referenced Air Quality Report and request that details previously provided in terms of construction phase dust emissions be reinstated into the report.	Construction phase details are provided. Referenced report is not included.
vii)	Assessment of Likely Significant Effects – Mobile Species	Welcome made for clarifications – mobile species pathways refer to Birds only, and loss of foraging habitat to be considered in the NIS.	Five Natura 2000 sites are identified – 2 x SAC and 3 X SPA.

		Unsure if Five SPAs or Five SCIs are referenced. – Tables 4.1 and 5.1 have been updated.	
viii)	Assessment of Likely Significant Effects – Human Disturbance	Agree with part of the revised information. Notes that Table A4 of the NIR (NIS) does not assess the North West Irish Sea SPA.	This section is revised – 6.7 in the NIS. Assessment is expanded to include the River Boyne and Blackwater SAC/ SPA, the Boyne Estuary SPA and the North West Irish Sea SPA.
ix)	Additional Pathways for Consideration	Agrees with revised details provided in the FI response. Further details requested in relation to Water Abstraction.	Section 5.8 of the AA. None is proposed to be abstracted – details in Section 5.3 of the AA.
x)	AA Screening Conclusion	Agrees in part with the conclusion but considers that the AA conclusions should align with amendments to the rest of the AA.	AA and NIS have been revised and updated. New Table 5.2 replaces former Table 5.1. Information provided is clear.
xi)	NIS – Noise and Vibration Disturbance to Waterbirds	Agrees with updates but notes references to Otters which are in SACs and Birds in SPAs.	Section is revised – reference to Waterbirds is removed from section heading.
xii)	NIS – Mobile Species	PA agree with the conclusions reached for the Kingfisher of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA and Otter of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC. Only some species are included in the Section 6.5 – not all gulls are listed.,	Section 6.5 of the NIS has been revised in response. No mobile species pathway to SAC or SPA.
xiii)	NIS – Human Disturbance	Agrees in part – no human disturbance	Detailed in Section 6.7 of the revised NIS

		during construction phase. Concern about impact on the greenway and in turn there is a threat to the key conditions of the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC, Clogher Head SAC, Boyne Estuary SPA and River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA.	submitted in support of the appeal. No issues of concern are identified through the increase in population associated with this development.
xiv)	NIS – Cumulative Effects	Welcome the revisions made to the Cumulative Effects section of the NIS. Raises issues in relation to planning portals, need to exclude plans referenced for the County Meath area, and need to consider development more than 1km from the site. Do note legal judgements and ‘which it was said that the in-combination provision must be applied in a manner that is proportionate to the timing, planning stage and legality of the proposed plans and projects.’ Recommend that cumulative effects be considered for greater than 1km and including those upstream of the site.	Cumulative effects are outlined in Section 6.8. Table 6.1 provides a ‘Summary of Approved Planning Application Proximal to the Proposed Development.’ Justification for the radius is outlined in the NIS. No issues of concern were identified.
xv)	Mitigation Measures	Agree with the submitted details in the NIS. Refer to Section 7.1.5 - Mitigation Measures: Minimise Disturbance to Oak-Ash-Hazel Woodland and it is not a QI of a designated site. Mitigation measures refer to construction phase and not operational phase.	Mitigation measures are detailed in Section 7.1 for Construction Phase and 7.2 for Operational Phase. Specific details for Greenway Operations Management in Section 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 provides Additional Design

		Reference is made to Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) criteria for pressures occurring at coastal SACs and SPAs.	Features that Mitigate Recreational Pressures on Designated Sites.
	Conclusions	Welcome for amendments to the AA and NIS. The main issues that remain to be addressed are: 1) Consideration of additional feasible impact pathways from water abstraction / supply. 2) Consideration of additional feasible impact pathways from recreational pressure / human disturbance at other European sites (not just the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA). 3) In-combination assessment should be revisited, and greater consideration of recreational disturbance needs to be given.	These issues have been considered in the submitted documentation and revisions made accordingly. 1) No water abstraction is proposed – Section 5.3 of the AA. 2) Consideration of additional human disturbance is addressed under Section 5.7 of the AA and 6.7 of the NIS. 3) In-Combination assessment is provided in Section 5.10 of the AA and 6.8 of the submitted NIS.

9.1.3 I have serious concerns taken about the approach by Meath County Council to Appropriate Assessment. I have read their reports, those of their consultant and the information provided by the applicant. The originally submitted AA and NIS were clearly lacking in information and there was uncertainty over elements of the submitted data. The revised details, dated December 2025, were considered by the Meath County Council Consultant to be generally acceptable except for issues relating to water abstraction, human disturbance/ impact and need for additional cumulative

impact assessment. Reference was made by the Planning Authority consultants in their assessment to a Noise Report which was not provided, and I have not been able to find this one file; it is not listed on the Document Issue Sheet. I am satisfied that adequate information is available on file and although they are separate processes the submitted EIAR includes details on Noise and Vibrations through its Chapter 10 and which verifies information contained within the AA and NIS.

9.1.4 The Planning Authority reports imply that no assessment of the technical details provided were made, and as such Meath County Council as the competent authority did not assess the available information. Whilst the originally submitted AA and NIS were deficient, I am satisfied that adequate details were provided in the revised documents dated December 2025. Whilst the applicant has further updated these documents to April 2026, the revisions made are primarily through the clarification of comments made by the PA Consultant.

9.1.5 I am also concerned about the PA Consultant referring to SANG, which is not a requirement in this country though I accept it could be considered a form of best practice. The comments on Human Disturbance request that additional designated European sites be considered. From my site visit and knowledge of the file, I would consider it highly unlikely that development on this site would impact on other designated sites to any significant effect due to distance and nature of these locations. The subject lands were zoned by the elected members of Meath County Council through the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 and which underwent Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The Greenway also underwent Environmental Assessment as required and I agree with the applicant that this was developed in accordance with available information and there was a clear expectation that its use would increase over time.

9.1.6 I am therefore satisfied that the submitted information is adequate to enable an Appropriate Assessment Screening of the proposed development and Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment. Adequate information is available for the competent authority to assess the development.

9.2 Stage 1 – Appropriate Assessment Screening

An Appropriate Assessment Screening was undertaken by Verdé, and it is included in Appendix 1 of this report. It was concluded that the proposed development could have

a likely significant effect 'alone' on QIs associated with River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236) -

- Hydrological impacts,
- Noise and vibration disturbance
- Air Emissions
- Human Disturbance

An Appropriate Assessment is required on the basis of the effects of the project 'alone'. Further assessment in-combination with other plans and other projects is not required at this time.

9.3 Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment

The proposed residential development on lands to the west of the Rathmullan Road, Drogheda, Co. Meath have been considered in light of the assessment requirements of Sections 177U and 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. Having carried out screening for Appropriate Assessment of the project, it was concluded that it may have a significant effect on the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236). Consequently, an AA was required of the implications of the project on the qualifying features of the site in light of its conservation objectives.

Following an Appropriate Assessment, it has been ascertained that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not adversely affect the integrity of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236) subject to the implantation in full of appropriate mitigation measures.

This conclusion is based on:

- A full and detailed assessment of all aspects of the proposed project including proposed mitigation measures and monitoring in relation to the Conservation

Objectives of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236)

- Detailed assessment of in combination effects with other plans and projects including historical projects, plans and current proposals.
- No reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of adverse effects on the integrity of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236).

I have had full consideration of the information, assessment and conclusions contained within the NIS. I have also had full regard to National Guidance and the information available on the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website in relation to the identified designated Natura 2000 site. I consider it reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information submitted in the NIS, including the recommended mitigation measures, and submitted in support of this application, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to adversely affect the integrity of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236).

10.0 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

10.1 Background

- 10.1.1 This application was submitted to the Commission after the 1st of September 2018 and therefore after the commencement of the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 which transpose the requirements of Directive 2014/52/EU into Irish planning law.
- 10.1.2 This section of the report comprises an EIA of the proposed development. Some of the matters considered have already been addressed in the Planning Assessment above. This section of the report should be read, where necessary, in conjunction with relevant sections of the Planning Assessment and the Appropriate Assessment.

10.1.3 The applicant has addressed the issue of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) within the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Report (Prepared by DNV – Dated September 2025) and I have had regard to same. The EIAR is mandatory for the development in accordance with the provisions of Part X of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended.

10.1.4 Item 10(b) of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended, and section 172(1)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended provides that an EIA is required for infrastructure developments comprising of urban development which would exceed:

- 500 dwellings
- 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. A business district is defined as ‘a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use’.

10.1.5 The development as submitted proposes 249 residential units, creche, and has a stated area of 9.2 hectares. The applicant has indicated that the development will form part of a phased development of the Rathmullan lands, but the development as submitted is sub-threshold. Under Section 8.0 of their ‘Statement of Consistency & Planning Report’ it is stated ‘The decision to prepare an EIAR is considered appropriate in the context of demonstrating that there are no apparent characteristics or elements of the design of the scheme that are likely to cause significant effects on the environment.’ I refer to the site area of 9.2 hectares as just below the required 10 hectares for other parts of a built up area.

10.1.6 The List of ‘Consultants and Specialist Area’ are provided in Table 1-1 ‘EIAR Project Team’ and which also lists the relevant chapter(s) that these specialists contributed to in the EIAR.

10.2 Environmental Impact Assessment Report

10.2.1 An EIAR prepared on behalf of the applicant by DNV has been submitted with the application. The EIAR consists of several parts:

- Volume A

Non-Technical Summary (NTS) which summarises the EIAR in plain language.

- Volume B

Main Report which considers a range of specific environmental topics in compliance with Article 5 of the EIA Directive and Schedule 6 of the PDR.

- Volume C

Appendices which contain supplemental information to the main body.

10.2.2 The likely significant direct and indirect effects of the development are considered under the following specific headings, which collectively address the factors set out in Article 3 of the EIA Directive 2014/52/EU:

- Chapter 4 Population and Human Health
- Chapter 5 Biodiversity
- Chapter 6 Land and Soils
- Chapter 7 Hydrology and Hydrogeology
- Chapter 8 Air Quality
- Chapter 9 Climate
- Chapter 10 Noise and Vibration
- Chapter 11 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Chapter 12 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
- Chapter 13 Material Assets: Traffic and Transport
- Chapter 14 Material Assets: Waste and Utilities
- Chapter 15 Risk Management
- Chapter 16 Interactions
- Chapter 17 Mitigation and Monitoring

The impact of the proposed development was assessed under all the relevant topics as set above. Mitigation measures are set out in each chapter. Where further detailed surveys or assessments were required under each topic these have been compiled and are contained in the appendices.

The documentation prepared by DNV with the support on specific topics for different specialist consultants and dated September 2025 is in line with current best practice guidance and allows for a complete examination and identification of any potential significant effects of the development, alone, or in cumulation with other plans and projects.

I am satisfied that the information provided in the EIAR is up to date. I am satisfied that authors of each chapter of the EIAR, as listed in Table 1-1 of the EIAR, have suitable professional competencies, qualifications and experience to prepare an EIAR in their respective field. Specific details are provided in each of the relevant chapters. The EIAR and supplementary information provided by the applicant complies with Article 94 of the PDA – see full assessment below.

I have carried out an examination of the information presented by the applicant, including the EIAR. The relevant issues arising are addressed below under the relevant headings, and, as appropriate, in the reasoned conclusions and recommendation. The Commission should also have regard to other sections of this report including:

- Planning Assessment – Section 8.0
- Environmental Impact Assessment – Section 10 – This chapter
- Water Framework Direction – Section 11
- Appropriate Assessment – Section 12

There is an inevitable overlap between the assessments with certain matters falling into the planning assessment, EIA, AA and WFD. In the interest of brevity, matters are not repeated but the Commission should have regard to all sections when deliberating and reaching its conclusions in respect of the planning application and each discrete assessment under EIA, WFD and AA.

Details of the consultations entered into by the applicant as part of the preparation of the application are set out in Section 3 of the Planning Report. As required the

application is accompanied by copies of the relevant notices, with details of the application provided on a publicly accessible website. I consider that the engagement has been effective in terms of advising the public of the proposed development and that third parties were not disenfranchised.

The limitations of the EIAR set out in respect of each topic of the EIAR are noted, however, none are considered material to the assessment or result in a defective assessment which occurs below.

10.3 Issues Raised in Respect of EIA

- 10.3.1 No issues were raised in the grounds of appeal that refer directly to EIA, and no revisions were made in response to the further information request or in support of the first party appeal.

10.4 Compliance with the Requirements of Article 94 and Schedule 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations

- 10.4.1 In the following table, I assess the compliance of the submitted EIAR with the requirements of article 94 and schedule 6 of the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 as amended.

Table 8. – Compliance with the Requirements of Article 94 and Schedule 6 of the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended)

The information specified in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 6		
	Description of proposed development: Site, design, size and other relevant features	See Chapter 2 of the EIAR– 2.2: Site Location and Description 2.3: Site Background and Site History – also Tabel 2-1 Site Planning History 2.4 Description of the Proposed Development 2.5 Construction of the Proposed Development 2.6 Cumulative Schemes – also Table 2-2 List of Cumulative Schemes 2.7 Description of Alternatives 2.8 Existence of the Project

		The description is adequately detailed to allow assessment of the likely effects on the environment.
	Likely significant effects on the environment	See Chapters 4 – 16. Each of these chapters describes the relevant significant effects on the environment. Chapter 16 provides full details on 'Interactions'.
	Design and mitigation measures to avoid, prevent and reduce significant adverse effects	Mitigation measures are provided in each of the relevant chapters. Chapter 17 provides details on 'Mitigation and Monitoring'.
	Reasonable alternatives and main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account effects on the environment	See Chapter 2. under Section 2.7 'Description of Alternatives' Alternatives include Alternative locations, Alternative designs, Alternative layouts and Alternative processes.
Any additional information specified in Paragraph 2 of Schedule 6 relevant to the specific characteristics of the development concerned and the environmental features likely to be affected and methods of assessment		
(a) Description		
	Description of location	See Chapter 2
	Physical characteristics including where relevant demolition and land use requirements during construction and operation	See Chapter 2. The development includes demolition of former agricultural buildings/ sheds. Full details of site description are provided under Section 2.2.
	Main characteristics of the operational phase	The development consists of 249 residential units in the form of 170 houses and 79 duplex/ apartment units, a creche, open space, car/ bicycle parking and all associated works on lands to west of the

		Rathmullan Road, Drogheda, Co. Meath.
(b) Reasonable Alternatives		See Section 2.7 of Chapter 2 of the EIAR. The main alternatives would be in terms of location and design/ layout. The site is suitably zoned, and the layout is determined by geography, topography and planning requirements.
(c) Baseline scenario and 'Do Nothing'		The baseline context is provided in Chapter 2 and the relevant baseline is provided for each chapter as necessary. The 'Do-Nothing' scenario (Section 2.7 of the EIAR) would result in the land remaining in agricultural use and this would be an inappropriate, unsustainable and inefficient use of lands zoned for residential use.
(d) Factors likely to be significantly affected	Climate	See Chapter 9
	Land & Geology	See Chapter 6
	Water	See Chapter 7
	Biodiversity	See Chapter 5
	Population & Human Health	See Chapter 4
	Population & Human Health – Noise & Vibration	See Chapter 10
	Landscape & Visual Impact	See Chapter 11
	Archaeology, Architecture & Cultural Heritage	See Chapter 12
	Material Assets: Site Services	See Chapter 14
	Material Assets: Traffic & Transport	See Chapter 13
(e) Significant effects		See Chapters 4 – 15 as appropriate
(i) Description of:	(I) Construction and existence of proposed development and demolition	See Chapter 2
	(II) Use of natural resources	See Chapter 2, 6 and 7
	(III) Emissions	See Chapter 7, 8 and 10

	(IV) Risk from accidents or disasters	See Chapter 15 – Risk Management
	(V) Cumulative effects with existing or approved developments	Considered under main chapter headings
	(VI) Impact on Climate and vulnerability to Climate Change	See Chapter 9 and individual chapters.
	(VII) Technology and Substances used	See Chapter 1 - Methodology
(ii) Likely Significant Effects	Direct	Considered under main chapter headings
	Indirect / Secondary	Considered under interactions
	Cumulative	Considered under main chapter headings
	Transboundary	Not relevant
	Short term	Most effects are temporary or short term
	Medium Term	Not generally relevant
	Long Term	Considered under relevant chapters.
	Permanent	Permanent development of the site including the provision of a residential development, infrastructure and open spaces.
	Temporary	Construction effects are temporary or short term; operational effects are permanent and generally positive.
	Positive	Development of new housing, and biodiversity is enhanced through the proposed landscaping plan. Improvements to active travel measures through connection to the Boyne Greenway to the north of the site.
	Negative	Most effects are temporary or short term.
(f) Forecasting methods, evidence, difficulties encounters and	Yes	

main uncertainties		
(g) Measures to avoid, prevent, reduce or offset adverse effects, monitoring during construction and operation	Yes	
(h) Significant adverse effects arising from vulnerability to risks of major accidents and/or disasters, mitigation measures and preparedness and response to emergencies arising from such events	Full consideration given in Chapter 15. Risks have been identified and assessed, and the site is considered suitable for residential development of the nature proposed.	
Non-Technical Summary	Yes – the Non-Technical Summary accurately reflects the chapters in the main volume of the EIAR.	
Reference list of sources	This is provided for each chapter.	
List of experts and their competence	The EIAR Project Team is listed in Table 1.1 and individual details/ qualifications are provided in the relevant chapters of the submitted EIAR.	

I am satisfied that the submitted information is reasonable and sufficient to allow the Commission to reach a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the proposed development on the environment, taking into account current knowledge and methods of assessment. I am also satisfied that the information contained in the EIAR complies with the provisions of Articles 3, 5 and Annex (IV) of EU Directive 2014/52/EU amending Directive 2011/92/EU.

10.5 Assessment of Environmental Factors

Each topic in the EIAR has been for the most part considered in the following format:

- Introduction
- Quality Assurance and Competence
- Study Methodology
- Baseline Situation
- Characteristics of the Proposed Development
- Potential Effects of the Proposed Development
- Potential Cumulative Effects
- Avoidance, Remedial & Mitigation Measures
- Residual Impacts
- Monitoring
- Interactions
- Conclusion
- References

The EPA published the 'Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports in 2022'. The applicant has demonstrated consistency with these guidelines as appropriate.

Unless otherwise stated below the methodology and the approach to, description of the receiving environment of each topic is considered appropriate. This assessment can rely on the EIAR submitted and addresses key issues, impacts and mitigations of the proposed development. Table 9 below provides the Assessment of Environmental Factors. No submissions were received in relation to the submitted EIAR.

It is considered that the corresponding sections of the EIAR has adequately identified, described and assessed the direct and indirect effects of the proposed development in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Directive. It is considered that the proposed development, on the basis of information submitted and submission received on the file, and subject to mitigation and monitoring measures, would be likely to have significant effects on any topic.

Table 9: Assessment of Environmental Factors								
1. Population and Human Health – Chapter 4								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			
Impacts	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significant Residual
Population Level and Vulnerable Groups	Construction Phase is approximately 24 months; workers will be from the local/ regional area. I am satisfied there will be no effects on population as a result of construction phase activities given the nature, scale and suburban environment of the proposed development.	N/A	Detailed in Chapter 2 of the EIAR.	None	Provision of 249 new homes providing for a mix of housing types, including accessible units, and an eventual increase in the local population. The creche will provide for additional facilities in the area. Effect will be slight, not significant, positive and long-term.	N/A	Detailed in Chapter 2 of the EIAR.	None
Economic Effects	I agree that the development will have a short-term, positive impact	N/A		Slight in terms of Employment	Proposed creche will be a positive addition to the area.	N/A		Imperceptible

	on the local economy through job creation and increased demand for local goods and services.				The proposed open space and amenity spaces as well as pedestrian/ cycle infrastructure will enhance amenity and promote healthy lifestyles.			
Environmental Pathways to Health – Water Quality	Potential for risk to surface and groundwater through run-off, fuel spills or wastewater discharge.	Use of standard measures such as those outlined in the Construction Environmental Management Plan – Risk is low, localised and short term. Detailed in Chapter 7 of the EIAR.	Detailed in Chapter 7 of the EIAR.	None	Development will use new foul drainage system and subject to compliance with Uisce Éireann requirements, there will be no adverse impacts on water quality. Failure to maintain the pumping station could result in localised pollution or odour issues which may impact local residents.	See Chapter 7 – Hydrology and Hydrogeology	Detailed in Chapter 7 of the EIAR.	None
Environmental Pathways to Health – Air Quality	Potential for dust generation from groundworks and vehicle movements to temporarily affect local air quality.	Given the suburban nature of the site, exposure is expected to be minimal. Emissions from	Detailed in Chapter 8 of the EIAR.	None	Effects are expected to be minimal and limited; such as from domestic heating and car use. Car usage to be reduced through pedestrian/ cycle	N/A	Detailed in Chapter 8 of the EIAR.	None

		construction machinery and vehicles will be short-term and not significant in terms of air quality. Further detailed in Chapter 8 of the EIAR and in the CEMP.			infrastructure through the traffic associated with 249 units will give rise to localised emissions. Further detailed in Chapters 8 and 9 of the EIAR.			
Environmental Pathways to Health – Noise and Vibration	Potential for construction noise and vibration to cause temporary disturbance to nearby receptors, particularly during site clearance and heavy machinery use.	Given the number of sensitive receptors in the vicinity and the short duration of works, these effects are expected to be minor and manageable through standard mitigation measures such as restricted working hours, and noise barriers if needed.	Detailed in Chapter 10 of the EIAR.	Slight	Expected to be consistent with a residential development and not result in disturbances. Sources include traffic, domestic activity and use of open spaces. Will be localised and no sources of vibration are anticipated. Further detailed in Chapter 10 of the EIAR.	N/A	Detailed in Chapter 10 of the EIAR.	Slight

		Detailed in Chapter 10 of the EIAR.						
Environmental Pathways to Health – Landscape and Visual	It is inevitable that there will be machinery and materials located on site in addition to ancillary storage and hoarding. There may be potential for a slightly negative impact on the visual appearance of the site which is anticipated to be temporary in nature and will ultimately provide a positive visual appearance on completion of the development.	N/A	Detailed in Chapter 11 of the EIAR.	None	The view of the site will change with due to the development of the lands. Fully considered in Chapter 11 of the EIAR. The development is designed in the context of the topography of the site – tallest structures located in least sensitive locations for example. A Daylight and Sunlight assessment has been provided in support of the application.	The pedestrian links and site landscaping will result in the integration of the site with the existing landscape, providing an attractive addition for the area. Alos landscaping and planting will ensure visual integration.	Detailed in Chapter 11 of the EIAR.	None
Transport, Connectivity and Accessibility	Construction traffic will give rise to increased traffic on the local road	N/A	Detailed in Chapter 13 of the EIAR.	Imperceptible	Car parking is provided in accordance with the Meath County Development Plan and Bicycle Parking	N/A	Detailed in Chapter 13 of the EIAR.	Imperceptible

	network. See Chapter 13 of the EIAR for greater detail.				is provided in accordance with SPPR 4 of the Compact Settlements Guidelines. Additional traffic may give rise to additional pressure on the local road network. Further detailed in Chapter 13 of the EIAR.			
Recreational , Community and Tourism Facilities	No tourism assets in the immediate vicinity of the site – therefore no impact.	N/A	None	None	The site is located in an area with good health, education and recreational facilities. The site is located within an area that contains Newgrange World Heritage Site, the Battle of the Boyne site and Drogheda Museum, however the development will not attract tourists and will not impact on the referenced sites due to its location and urban context.	N/A	None	None

					The development will have a negligible, not significant, positive and long-term effect in terms of general amenity/ tourism.			
Human Health	Construction and related activity may give rise to stress or inconvenience during this phase of the development. Expected to be negligible and short term.	N/A		None	Improved impact through access to housing, amenity lands and childcare. Improved human interaction. Potential increase in stress through density of development and traffic, as well as through potential for overstretched local services. The development to have a negligible, not significant, neutral and long term effect in terms of mental health and well-being.	N/A		None
Summary Effects	Construction Phase is not anticipated to have any				Overall Impact is low – See Table 4-11 of the EIAR.			

	significant adverse effects on population or human health.							
2. Biodiversity – Chapter 5								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			
Impacts	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significant Residual
Effects through Hydrological Pathways/ Runoff	Potential for contaminated water to enter the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and SPA, and the Boyne River Estuary SPA.	Use of Best Practice as listed under Section 5.5 of the EIAR and 5.5.1 – Surface Water Quality. Monitoring is detailed under Section 5.7.1 of the EIAR.	None as developments listed in Table 5-9 of the EIAR does not have the potential to combine with the subject development resulting in adverse effects on water quality.	None	Surface water will discharge through proposed pathways into the River Boyne. Potential for fuel leaks to contribute to pressures on water quality.	Use of Best Practice as listed under Section 5.5 of the EIAR. Monitoring is detailed under Section 5.7.2 of the EIAR.	None.	None
Effects through Noise and Vibration	May impact on various species within the SPA such as Kingfisher and Otters. Noise assessment	Use of Best Practice as listed under Section 5.5 of the EIAR and 5.5.1 – Noise	None as developments listed in Table 5-9 of the EIAR does not have the	None	Sources from everyday activity and traffic – See Chapter 10. These would only slightly increase ambient noise levels and	Use of Best Practice as listed under Section 5.5 of the EIAR.	None.	None

	found no significant impacts within 50m of the construction area. No otter holts were recorded within 150m of the site; 150m is where disturbance may give rise to risk. There is low bat activity in the area, therefore unlikely to impact on them. Concludes that there is a low potential impact on Otters and Kingfishers. There is no functional noise/vibration impact pathway connecting the Proposed Development site to these features of	and Vibration Emissions. Monitoring is detailed under Section 5.7.1 of the EIAR.	potential to combine with the subject development resulting in adverse effects on noise and vibration.		would be reduced within 50m of the surrounding area. Overall effect on Kingfishers, Otters and Waterbirds would be low/ no potential for significant effects.	Monitoring is detailed under Section 5.7.2 of the EIAR.		
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	interest of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC and the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA.							
Effects through Dust and Airborne Pollutant Emissions	Boundary of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC is within 100m of the construction area and is susceptible to dust, however no qualifying species or habitats are within 100m of this footprint and will not be impacted by dust. See Chapter 8.	Use of Best Practice as listed under Section 5.5 of the EIAR and 5.5.1 – Dust and Airborne Pollutants. Monitoring is detailed under Section 5.7.1 of the EIAR.	None as developments listed in Table 5-9 of the EIAR does not have the potential to combine with the subject development resulting in adverse effects through dust.	None	No statutory ecological receptors within 200m of the site and effects can be scoped out.	Use of Best Practice as listed under Section 5.5 of the EIAR. Monitoring is detailed under Section 5.7.2 of the EIAR.	None.	None
Effects to Mobile Species and Habitat Connectivity Corridors	Site does not function as an ex-situ habitat. There is an absence of mobile species	N/A Monitoring is detailed under Section	N/A.	None	N/A.	N/A.	None.	None

	pathway between the development site and tested SPAs and SACs, and no potential for adverse effects.	5.7.1 of the EIAR.						
Effects from Artificial Sources of Lights	Bats	N/A.	N/A.	None	None.	Use of Best Practice.	None.	None
Effects through Human Disturbance	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	N/A.	There is an existing recreational route along the River Boyne, this is likely to experience increased use. This was subject to AA and was found to not impact on designated sites. A woodland to the north, not within the SAC, could be impacted by increased recreational use and mitigation measures are proposed here.	Use of Best Practice as listed under Section 5.5 of the EIAR and specific measures outlined in Section 5.5.3 of the EIAR. Monitoring is detailed under Section 5.7.2 of the EIAR.	None.	None
Conclusion	The Proposed Development will not, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, result in adverse effects to the integrity and conservation status of Natura 2000 Sites in view of their Conservation Objectives and, on the							

basis of best scientific evidence, there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to that conclusion.								
3. Land and Soil – Chapter 6								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			
Impacts	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significant Residual
Land Take and Land Use	Land is suitably zoned, therefore there is an unavoidable land take giving rise to a negative, significant and permanent effect. Significant in terms of EIA Directive.	Development will be in accordance with CWMP, CEMP, and RWMP. Full details provided in Section 6.6.1 of the EIAR. Materials will be appropriately stored on site.	None	Details are provided in Table 6-5 of the EIAR. The residual effects regarding the construction phase and operational phase of the Proposed Development are considered 'imperceptible' to the	Limited potential for effects. Design in accordance with Building Regulations, earthquake and landslides are unlikely in this area, a small section of the site is within a 'High' Radon Area and suitable measures will be undertaken. Overall effect is neutral, imperceptible and not significant. Not-significant in terms of EIA Directive.	No requirement for the Operational Phase of the development. No requirement for specific monitoring for the Operational Phase of the development.	None	Details are provided in Table 6-5 of the EIAR. The residual effects regarding the construction phase and operational phase of the Proposed Development are considered 'imperceptible' to the
Excavation and Removal of Soil and Subsoil	No requirement for excavation of bedrock. 44,058.35m ³ of soil and subsoil to be excavated, 12,437.84 m ³ to be reused and rest to be disposed off-site. Soils here are considered	Fuels and oils will be appropriately stored on site. Welfare Facilities will be provided, and suitable waste management/foul drainage	Soil and materials to be disposed off-site could be directed to the same site as for other developments in the area. Effect would be neutral,				None	

	to be of 'low' importance. Impact to be negative, slight and permanent – non-significant in terms of EIA Directive.	will be provided for on site. Monitoring details are provided in Section 6.8.1 of the EIAR.	imperceptible and permanent. Not-significant in terms of EIA Directive.	receiving environment (land, soil and geology) and considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive.				ptible' to the receiving environment (land, soil and geology) and considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive.
Soil Quality and Contamination - Reuse of Soil and Subsoil	Reuse will result in neutral, imperceptible and permanent effect. Non-significant in terms of EIA Directive.		None				None	
Soil Quality and Contamination – Concrete Works	Potential risk through use of cement – impact would be negative, moderate and long-term. Non-significant in terms of EIA Directive.		None				None	
Soil Quality and Contamination – Piling	Assessed in Chapter 7 of the EIAR.		None				None	
Soil Quality and Contamination	Accidental Release: Impact would		None				None	

on – Handling of Fuels and Hazardous Materials	be negative, moderate to significant and long-term. Significant in terms of EIA Directive due to long-term degradation of soils in the absence of mitigation though this scenario is unlikely to occur.							
Soil Structure	Stockpiling could result in changes to the soil content. Impact would be negative, slight and long term. Non-significant in terms of EIA Directive.		None				None	
Importation of Fill Materials	Changes could occur to the geological regime of the site. Impact would be indirect, neutral,	Materials will be sourced from appropriate suppliers. Materials will be managed/assessed	Soil and materials to be imported onto the site could be from the same site as for other				None	

	imperceptible and permanent. Imperceptible and Non-significant in terms of EIA Directive.	prior to transport.	developments in the area, though this would be dependent on contracts and material quality etc. Effect would be indirect, neutral, imperceptible and permanent. Not-significant in terms of EIA Directive.					
Dust Generation	Assessed in Chapter 8 of the EIAR.	Full details provided in Section 6.6.1.2 of the EIAR.	None				None	
Geological Heritage Sites	None on site, but the Boyne Valley geological heritage site is located along the northern boundary. Potential for		None				None	

	impacts due to fuel spills though unlikely. This would be a negative, moderate and medium-term effect. Moderate and Non-significant in terms of EIA Directive.							
Geological Hazards	Not within a Karst area. Strict control on materials therefore the effects are imperceptible and Non-significant in terms of EIA Directive. Overall effects on geohazards would be neutral, imperceptible and permanent and not significant in the context of the EIA Directive.		None				None	

Conclusion	The residual effects associated with both the construction and operational phases of the subject Development are considered imperceptible in terms of their impact on the receiving environment - land, soil, and geology. These effects are deemed non-significant within the context of the EIA Directive. Furthermore, no soil-related constraints have been identified that would be expected to hinder or prevent the subject development from proceeding as planned.							
4. Hydrology and Hydrogeology – Chapter 7 Chapter supported with Appendix 7-1 Hydrological and Hydrogeological Risk Assessment Report and Appendix 7-2 Water Framework Directive Assessment								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			
Impacts	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significant Residual
Hydrological and Hydrogeological Flow Regime	No direct abstraction of water and water course diversion is not required. No dewatering is proposed or necessary on site, there will be surface water drainage provided during this phase. No effect on the hydrological and hydrogeological flow regime.	There will be no significant effect on groundwater or the surface water environment subject to the measures outlined in Section 7.7.1 of the EIAR.	None.	Details in Table 7-10 of the EIAR.	No water abstraction during this phase of the development. The development will result in increased hardstanding on site. No change to impact on aquifer within the Drogheda GWB. There will be a negative, imperceptible and permanent effect on the hydrogeological flow regime and	There will be no significant effect on groundwater or the surface water environment subject to the measures outlined in Section 7.7.2 of the EIAR.	Uisce Éireann have confirmed that connection can be made to the public water supply system subject to upgrades by the developer; there are no cumulative impacts on water supply.	Details in Table 7-10 of the EIAR.

					non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive. A surface water drainage system is to be provided in accordance with SuDS and the requirements of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS). It is considered that the potential flooding effects associated with the Proposed Development are neutral, imperceptible and long-term. They are non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive			
Water Quality	There is no identified hydraulic connection between the site and the Sheephouse Stream, which is now culverted along	There will be no significant effect on groundwater or the surface water environment subject to the measures outlined in	None	Details in Table 7-10 of the EIAR.	Limited potential for contaminate run-off to enter watercourses due to the implementation of SuDS. No requirement for the storage of oils,	There will be no significant effect on groundwater or the surface water environment subject to	Foul drainage will be treated at the Drogheda WWTP. Connection can be made	Details in Table 7-10 of the EIAR.

	the eastern boundary of the site. Potential for surface water runoff along the northern boundary during rainfall events. Potential for suspended materials to enter waterbodies. In the absence of mitigation measures, this may result in negative slight to moderate and short terms effect on water quality of the Boyne Estuary. This is non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive. Potential for fuels, chemical and materials used on site	Section 7.7.1 of the EIAR.			the development will rely on space heating for the apartments and heat pumps for the other proposed buildings. SuDS will be implemented in full and petrol interceptors will be provided as required. The SuDS drainage strategy for the Proposed Development will result in an overall positive, slight permanent effect on receiving surface water quality and groundwater quality. Foul water will be treated in the Drogheda WWTP before discharge to the Boyne Estuary Plume Zone Coastal Waterbody. The	the measures outlined in Section 7.7.2 of the EIAR.	subject to upgrades by the developer including the provision of a new pumping station. Drogheda WWTP operates within statutory approvals and the increase in use as a result of the development would not significantly impact on the loading of the treatment plant. There is no cumulative impact on water quality or WFD status.	
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	being accidentally released. Impact from such a scenario would be negative, moderate to significant and long-term. This would be significant in the context of the EIA Directive. Excavation works could give rise to contaminants entering the underlying rock aquifer. it is considered that this could result in a 'negative' 'moderate to significant' and 'long term' effect on a local area of the underlying aquifer environment and the				use of this WWTP will reduce the available capacity. Uisce Éireann have confirmed that connection is possible subject to upgrades. The effect on water quality would be negative, imperceptible and permanent. This would be non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive.			
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	receiving Boyne Estuary and downstream waterbodies depending on the nature of the incident. Such effects are considered potentially significant in the context of the EIA Directive Run-off will be managed and undertaken in accordance with best practice/ legal requirements. The potential effects will have been adequately assessed and mitigated and there will be neutral, imperceptible and temporary effect on the							
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	receiving water environment. It is noted that this effect is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive. Potential impact through the use of cement and which may result in a negative, moderate to significant and medium-term' effect on the receiving water environment at the Proposed Development and is considered significant in the context of the EIA Directive. Foul drainage from the							
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	temporary welfare units will be either tanked off site or discharged in accordance with temporary consent to Uisce Éireann foul drainage system. The effect relating to foul water during the construction phase will be neutral, imperceptible and temporary and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive. Surplus materials and waste will be removed offsite in accordance with the RWMP. Removal to an unapproved							
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	site could impact on the hydrogeology in that location. This could result in a negative, slight to moderate and medium-term effect on the hydrogeology there. This would be potentially significant in the context of the EIA Directive, though subject to appropriate controls, this would be an unlikely scenario. Site is within Flood Zone C – there is potential for pollutants during a flood event, though the site is sufficiently high							
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	to avoid this and no identified risk associated with this.							
Water Framework Directive – Assessment considers: • Drogheda GWB • Boyne Estuary Transitional Waterbody • Boyne Valley Plume Zone Coastal Waterbody	Could be a potential impact on WFD status in the absence of mitigation.	Specific CEMP measures provided for the construction Phase.	N/A		Could be a potential impact on WFD status in the absence of mitigation.	SuDS will be implemented and used for the operational phase of the development.		Will comply with the EU Water Framework Directive.
Conclusion	Subject to implementation of submitted design and mitigation measures, there will be no deterioration of the status of hydrologically and hydrogeologically connected waterbodies and will not compromise the surface water status. Effects are non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive. Overall, there will be a neutral to positive, slight to moderate and long-term effect on the WFD Status and which is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive.							
5. Air Quality – Chapter 8.								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			
Impacts	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significant Residual

Dust Soiling –	Medium to High Risk	Measures provided in Section 8.6.1 of the EIAR. Include: • Communications • Site Management • Monitoring • Preparing and Maintaining the Site • Operating Vehicle/Machinery and Sustainable Travel • Operations • Waste Management • Measures specific to Demolition • Measures Specific to Earthworks • Measures Specific	No other potential cumulative impacts on Air Quality. No significant effects in terms of dust subject to use of best practice methods during the construction phase. Cumulative traffic impacts have been considered in the design and details are based on traffic data.	Not Significant.	No significant effects likely.	No site specific measures are proposed.	No exceedances of air quality standards. No other cumulative effects.	Not Significant.
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		to Construction • Measures Specific to Trackout • Measures Specific to Ecological Receptors						
Dust – Human Health	Negligible to Low Risk							
Dust – Ecological Impacts	Medium to High Risk							
Dust – Traffic	Direct, short-term, negative and imperceptible effect on air quality and human health Not significant in EIA terms.							
NO ₂	N/A				Predicted NO ₂ concentrations are significantly below 60 µg/m ³ . It can be concluded that the short-term NO ₂ limit value will be complied with at all receptor locations.			

					Overall effect is Neutral – details provided in Table 8-26 of the EIAR.			
PM ₁₀ and PM _{2.5}	N/A				Effect is neutral and - details in Table 8-27 and 8-28 of the EIAR.			
Ecological Impacts	N/A				Details provided in Tables 8-29 to 8-32. The ecological impacts associated with operational phase traffic emissions are considered to be direct, long-term, negative and slight, which is overall not significant in EIA terms.			
CO ₂					Potential for increases due to traffic and which would affect climate. Details provided in Table 8-33 of the EIAR. Emissions will increase in the period 2028 to 2043 but drop due to improved roads, EV vehicles and			

					improved sustainable transport. Further details in Chapter 9 of the EIAR.			
Conclusion	The subject development is not expected to give rise to any significant adverse effects in terms of air quality, and the site is considered suitable for development from an air quality perspective. WFD details are outlined in Appendix 7-2.							
6. Climate – Chapter 9.								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			
Impacts	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significant Residual
GHG Assessment	Potential effects include: Production generated carbon (largest effect), transportation generated carbon, Site/Construction work/demolition generated carbon and material replacement and refurbishment generated carbon.	Measures outlined in Section 9.10.1 of the EIAR. Monitoring details under Section 9.14.1.	The assessment has considered cumulative impacts as part of the process. Consideration given to GHG Emissions, Water use/Flooding, Biodiversity/Habitat Loss, Air Quality and Human Health, Soil	The impact of the Proposed Development in relation to GHG emissions is considered long-term, minor adverse and not significant.	Increase in GHG due to home heating, water heating and lighting. Sustainable/renewable energy will be incorporated into the development design. Increase in traffic could give rise to increased GHG – details in Table 9.8 of the EIAR – encouragement to use sustainable/	Measures outlined in Section 9.10.2 of the EIAR Monitoring details under Section 9.14. of the EIAR.	The assessment has considered cumulative impacts as part of the process. Consideration given to GHG Emissions, Water use/Flooding, Biodiversity/Habitat Loss, Air Quality and Human Health, Soil	The impact of the Proposed Development in relation to GHG emissions is considered long-term, minor adverse and not significant.

	Details in Table 9.6 of the EIAR. The impact of the development on GHG Emissions on Sectoral Budgets is provided in Table 9.7 of the EIAR - annualised over the Proposed Development's 50-year lifespan, the estimated total GHG emissions amount to 0.0003% of Ireland's total GHG emissions in 2023 and 0.0005% of Ireland's non-ETS 2030 emissions target. Impact is negligible on GHG. Demolition would give rise		Degradation and Erosion and Infrastructure/ Energy Demand.	In relation to climate change vulnerability, it has been assessed that there are no significant risks to the Proposed Development as a result of climate change.	active travel measures. Effect is direct, long-term, negative, and slight, which is overall not significant.		Degradation and Erosion and Infrastructure/ Energy Demand.	In relation to climate change vulnerability, it has been assessed that there are no significant risks to the Proposed Development as a result of climate change.
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	to 1 ton of CO ₂ or 0.000091% of the relevant Carbon budget.							
Climate Change – Flood Risk	Flood Risk measures have been included into the design. Site is primarily in Flood Zone C, adequate freeboard is provided and SuDS will be implemented on site. Further details in Chapter 7 of the EIAR.	N/A	N/A	No concerns raised in the EIAR.				
Climate Change Risk Assessment	Consideration has been given to Vulnerability due to: • Flood Risk • Temperature change impacts • Geotechnical impacts • Storm Damage There are no residual				Details of Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment/ Screening are provided in Table 9.10. In conclusion there is no additional vulnerability with respect to all identified climate hazards subject to full implementation			

	medium or high-risk vulnerabilities to climate change hazards and therefore a detailed CCRA is not required. The effects of climate change on the development are considered direct, long-term, negative, and imperceptible, and are therefore not deemed significant in terms of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).				of design mitigation measures. The effects of climate change on the development are considered direct, long-term, negative, and imperceptible, and are therefore not deemed significant in terms of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).			
Conclusion	Subject to implementation of all mitigation measures including design embedded and prescribed measures, adequate implementation of construction phase mitigation, and adherence to operational best practice no significant effects to the climate will arise from the Proposed Development during either the construction or operational phases.							
7. Noise and Vibration – Chapter 10.								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			

Impacts	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significant Residual
Noise	Construction Phase is over a 24 month period and generated noise is detailed in Table 10-10 of the EIAR. Mitigation measures are proposed having regard to location of Noise Sensitive Receptors (NSRs). Noise Sensitive Locations are identified in Figure 10-6 of the EIAR and distances are provided in Table 10-11.	Details of mitigation are provided in Section 10.6.1 of the EIAR.	Noise effects are anticipated to be negligible, localised, and compliant with relevant criteria, ensuring that they remain within acceptable levels.	Phase is temporary and no permanent long-term effects. Noise monitoring to take place as required.	Due to Traffic, Creche and use of amenity spaces. No concern raised.	Details of mitigation are provided in Section 10.6.2 of the EIAR.	Noise effects are anticipated to be negligible, localised, and compliant with relevant criteria, ensuring that they remain within acceptable levels.	Unlikely to be an impact on NSLs. No monitoring required on an on-going basis.
Vibration	Not expected during the entire construction phase – will be		None.		Not significant in this phase.		None	

	limited to when earthworks and piling are underway; these will be limited in duration.							
Noise Thresholds	Detailed in Table 10.8 and also thresholds in Table 10.11 of the EIAR. Noise sensitive locations are indicated in Figure 10-6. Upper limited of 65dB is acceptable for large developments such as this.		N/A		Use of plant on site, creche, traffic and amenity space.		N/A	
Noise Predictions	Predicted noise levels are indicated in Table 10-12, with worst-case scenarios given.		None		Plant Noise: Final details on heat pumps not provided to date but will not have a negative impact on future residents. Creche: Details of plant not available to date but no negative impact on nearby NSRs. Play		Noise effects are anticipated to be negligible, localised, and compliant with relevant criteria, ensuring that they	

					area also within acceptable noise range. Open Space/ Amenity sites: Will not have a negative effect on nearby NSLs.		remain within acceptable levels.	
Traffic Noise	120 two way vehicle movements per day includes 80 x two way HGV movements per day. Will not have a negative impact on nearby Noise Sensitive Locations.		No negative impact.		Predicted traffic data provided in Table 10-9 of the EIAR. Operational traffic noise levels associated with the Proposed Development will not have a negative effect on nearby NSLs and the magnitude of effect is no effect.		Noise effects are anticipated to be negligible, localised, and compliant with relevant criteria, ensuring that they remain within acceptable levels.	
Inward Noise Effect	N/A		No negative impact.		Impacts on NSLs during the night and daytime is considered. Good acoustic design will address any issues of concern here.		None	

Conclusion	The construction and operational phases generated noise, and vibration, will not have a negative effect on nearby NSLs. Suitable mitigation measures have been proposed.							
8. Landscape and Visual Impact – Chapter 11.								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			
Impacts	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significant Residual
Landscape Sensitivity	Site is within two character areas: - Meath LCA 7 - Coastal Plan – High Sensitivity – Very small area of the LCA is impacted – magnitude is low, significance is moderate-slight and effect is adverse and temporary. - Subject site itself – Medium Sensitivity – magnitude is high, effect is significant and quality is	Mitigation Measures are outlined in Section 11.6.1 of the EIAR. Works will be supervised by a landscape architect and planting will be undertaken in the first available season after completion of the main civil works.	None.	None additional to those identified under Effects.	Woodlands and hedgerows to be protected. Site will provide for open spaces and trees/swales on the main streets with additional planting to the northern side of the site. Impact on LCA 7 would be limited with a low magnitude, effect is moderate-slight and quality is neutral, permanent. In terms of the subject lands, a high magnitude, effect is significant and quality is neutral, permanent.	Mitigation Measures are outlined in Section 11.6.2 of the EIAR. Landscaping will be monitored for establishment for three years after planting.	None.	None additional to those identified under Effects.

	adverse and temporary.							
Visual Effects	Viewpoints listed in Table 11-9 of the EIAR – Visibility ranges from one to visible. None of the lands are visible from viewpoints assessed within the World Heritage Site to the west of the subject lands. The visibility of the site is not necessarily problematic. Construction effects are visually Adverse and of a Temporary duration. Table 11-11 provides a Summary of Visual Effects –		None		13 Selected viewpoints are identified under Section 11.5.2.4 of the EIAR. Sensitivity ranges from Low to High. Table 11-12 provides a Summary of Visual Effects – Operational Phase.	Site landscaping and tree planting.	None – will integrate with existing housing to the east of the site.	Not Significant.

	Construction Phase.							
Conclusion	No significant effects identified.							
9. Archaeology and Cultural Heritage – Chapter 12.								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			
Impacts	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significant Residual
Archaeology	One known site - ME020-072--- - on the SMR – test trenching in 2008 found it to be a dump of modern construction material and can be discounted from further assessment. ME020-088 is located outside of the subject site, to the north east – possible Bronze Age enclosure and will be protected during the	Recommended that pre-development mitigation takes place in the form of pre-development archaeological investigations and preservation by record apart from the Bronze Age enclosure to the northwest of the Proposed Development site, which will be the subject of a	None	None	Slight impact on Bronze Age enclosure MH020-088 through the replacement of its rural setting with urban development. No effects on the main site of Cultural Heritage to the west. Any adverse effects on views from the west will be reduced to a negligible level by the presence of existing and proposed landscape planting along this boundary.	Visual impact is the main consideration for this phase of the development. Landscaping and appropriate tree planting are proposed.	None	None

	construction phase. Other features have been located on site and are not of any significance. The construction phase will not impact on any other known sites.	specific targeted mitigation strategy as detailed in Section 12.6.10 of the EIAR. It is proposed to undertake a phase of pre-topsoil stripping investigations of lands associated with the Battle of the Boyne. Additional details are provided under Section 12.6.3 in relation to Archaeology. Site monitoring to be undertaken by Archaeologist as required.						
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Architecture	Cluster of farm buildings to the east of the site and proposed for demolition. These have been heavily modified over time and will be adversely effected through demolition. Their significance is moderate/minor, they are heavily modified and historic remains are in a poor state of preservation. There will be negligible effects on any other architectural sites outside the development area.	A historic building survey (Level 2), is recommended to be undertaken in advance of the demolition of the agricultural buildings to the east of the site.			Drybridge House is located some 750m to the northwest of the site but is separated from the site by distance and the M1 Motorway. Also assessed are the Boyne Navigation and World War 2 Pillboxes. The significance of effects on Drybridge House, the Boyne Navigation and pillboxes is considered neutral.	None		No Significant effects.
Cultural Heritage	Importance of the site in terms of the Battle of	Archaeologist to be employed to			No impact on the Battle of the Boyne			

	the Boyne was assessed and no physical evidence of features or artifacts were found. The effects on potential buried archaeological deposits associated with the Battle of the Boyne are considered major, as the construction phase would, if present, involve the extensive ground disturbance across the Proposed Development site which will significantly affect any buried archaeological deposits associated with the battle.	monitor groundworks.			Site and the effect would be minor. No other impact on cultural heritage landscape.			
Conclusion	No significant adverse effects identified.							

10. Material Assets: Traffic and Transport – Chapter 13.								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			
Impacts	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significant Residual
Junctions	4 junctions were assessed and their locations are provided on Figure 13-5.	N/A	N/A	N/A	4 junctions were assessed and their locations are provided on Figure 13-5.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Trip Generation	Construction and worker traffic will be generated during this phase of the development. The impact would be moderate on the surrounding environment, but effects would be short to medium-term.	Details provided in Section 13.6.1. A Coordinator responsible for the implementation of a Construction Stage Mobility Management Plan will be appointed. Other requirements include a limited number of car parking spaces,	Assessment is in accordance with TII Guidance and as the modelling considers growth factors – potential cumulative impacts have been assessed. Any future development would require full Traffic and Transport Assessment	Car traffic will be pre 8am and in the evening between 17.00 and 18.00 hours. Increased traffic will be a short term event. Existing cycle tracks will be maintained and	Details provided in Section 13.5.2 of the EIAR. Table 13-5 provides 'Car Trip Rates and Car Trip Generation – AM & PM Peak Hours'. 148 movements in AM peak and 126 in the PM peak. 85% of movements are expected to travel westbound along the Rathmullan Road towards the subject site from Drogheda. Figure 13-21 provides the 'Subject Site Trip Distribution' and Figure 13-22 in the	Details provided in Section 13.6.2. A mobility management plan (MMP) to be implemented and developed on an on-going basis. This will support and encourage transport other than by car. An Action Plan will	Assessment is in accordance with TII Guidance and as the modelling considers growth factors – potential cumulative impacts have been assessed. Any future development would full Traffic and Transport Assessment	There will be an increase in the use of the road network by cars, however the implementation of the Mobility Management Plan will support the use of more sustainable forms of

		suitable access arrangements to be deployed, scheduling of materials/ machinery to/ from the site, wheel washes, hoarding and other measures to prevent unauthorised pedestrian access, and measures to be implemented to reduce car use. Measures to be implemented to reduce nuisance/ noise and site control measures will also be implemented.	s to be undertaken.	kept operational by the developer as necessary.	EIAR provides the 'Subject Site Trip Generation'. Full details of other developments in the area are provided and considered in the assessment and 'Traffic Growth Rates' up to 2043 are factored in to the assessment. In summary the following was found: Junction 1: Would operate within capacity for 2043 Do Something scenario. Junction 2: Would operate within its capacity for the 2043 Do Something Scenario. Junctions 3 and 4: Would be below the 5% threshold and no further assessment is required.	support Walking, Cycling and Bicycle Parking. Car Sharing will be supported. The Mobility Management Plan Coordinator will also monitor and promote improvements to public transport in the area. Monitoring: The impact on traffic and sustainable forms of transport during the operational phase will be monitored by the Mobility Management	s to be undertaken.	transport . Pedestrian and cycle use will also increase as a result of this development. The transport assessment carried out in the EIAR indicates that all assessed junctions , operating with improved layouts as proposed as part of the scheme,
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		Monitoring: Traffic management and deliveries would be subject to on-going monitoring during this phase. Modal shift and cycle parking provision will be assessed on a regular basis.				nt Plan Coordinator It is recommend er that they meet stakeholder s including Meath County Council within 6 months of the occupation of the units on site and every twelve months thereafter.		would operate within capacity and the effect arising from the subject scheme would be considered negligibl e.
Conclusion	The submitted details indicate that existing junctions can accommodate the increased traffic generated by this development and that adequate cycle/ pedestrian provision is provided for. The proposed development is considered to be appropriate for this location.							
11.Material Assets: Waste and Utilities – Chapter 14.								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			
Impacts	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significa nt Residual

Surface Water Drainage	Potential for run-off leading to contamination of watercourses. Surface water will be managed on site, and unauthorised discharge will not be permitted. Rainfall events could give rise to runoff – however the development has been designed to have regard to 1-100 year storm events. The potential effects will be negative, slight and short term and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive. Further detailed	Mitigation: Full details are outlined in Chapter 7 of the EIAR. All works will be undertaken in accordance with a CEMP and in accordance with UÉ Code of Practice. The SSFRA has also informed the preparation of the Surface Water Drainage design on site.	Full review of other developments in the area has been undertaken and there is no potential for the subject development to act in combination with other permitted developments such that it would cause likely significant effects on drainage, water supply, utilities and waste. Construction related effects are short-term and managed through		The development will increase the area of impermeable surfacing and potential for contaminants to enter the surface water network. The development will be designed in accordance with SuDS and the likely effect of the development on surface water drainage is negative, slight and long-term and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive. Further details in Chapter 7 of the EIAR.	Potential for discharge of contaminants to watercourses. The development to be designed in accordance with SuDS and the GDSDS. Other measures such as water butts, swales, paving and interceptors are detailed under Section 14.6.2.1 of the EIAR. No additional measures are required.	Full review of other developments in the area has been undertaken and there is no potential for the subject development to act in combination with other permitted developments such that it would cause likely significant effects on drainage, water supply, utilities and waste. No significant cumulative effects are anticipated during the operational	
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	in Chapter 7 of the EIAR.		standard protocols. No significant cumulative effects are anticipated during the construction phase of this development.				phase of this development.	
Wastewater Drainage	Will be an increase in foul water produced on site. It is expected that this will be treated at the Drogheda WWTP., connection is confirmed as feasible with capacity available. As the construction phase is for a temporary period, the likely effect of the	Mitigation: Full details are outlined in Chapter 7 of the EIAR. All works will be undertaken in accordance with a CEMP and in accordance with UÉ Code of Practice. The SSFRA has also informed the preparation of the Surface Water Drainage design on site.			Foul drainage will be treated at the Drogheda WWTP which has capacity and connection can be made. The likely effect on the water quality from wastewater generated onsite runoff will be negative, imperceptible and long-term and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive.	No additional measures required.	Capacity exists to serve this development – confirmed by Uisce Éireann.	

	scheme on the existing foul water network will be negative, slight and short term and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive. Further details in Chapter 7 of the EIAR.							
Water Supply	Increased demand for water supply and a temporary connection will be provided. Possible for short term disruption to the existing users of the network during the construction phase. Likely effect is negative, imperceptible and short term	Water supply to be in accordance with UÉ design requirements and no mitigation measures are required.			Water demand is calculated to be 101.45m³/day. Water supply can be made subject to upgrades by the developer. The impact on water supply is neutral, imperceptible, long-term and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive.	No additional measures required.	Capacity exists to serve this development – confirmed by Uisce Éireann.	

	and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive.							
Electricity	Connection to the network will be provided and there is a possibility for short term disruption to the existing users of the network during the construction phase. Likely effect is neutral, slight and temporary and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive.	Electricity connections to be in accordance with Utility Operator design requirements and no mitigation measures are required.		None identified .	The development will give rise to an increased demand in electricity use. The potential effect from the operational phase on the electricity supply network is likely to be neutral, imperceptible, and long-term and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive.	No additional measures required.		None identified .
Gas Supply	No requirement during the construction phase.	N/A			The development is not proposed to be served by a gas supply.	N/A		
Telecommunications	No significant impact during this phase of	Connections to be in accordance			Marginal increase in demand on the telecommunication	No additional		

	the development.	with Utility Operator design requirements and no mitigation measures are required.			s/ broadband networks, which are available in the area. The likely effect of the operational phase on the local telecommunication s network will be neutral, and imperceptible in the long-term and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive.	measures required.		
Waste	A Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP) will be put in place and implemented. A Refurbishment and Demolition Asbestos Survey was undertaken and confirmed the presence of asbestos on site, which was	Measures are outlined in the RWMP and CEMP and are detailed under Section 14.6.1.7. Monitoring: A waste audit will be undertaken in accordance with the RWMP. Corrective actions to be			An Operational Waste Management Plan (OWMP) will be put in place for this phase of the development. There will be an increase in demand for waste collection, which is available in the immediate area. The potential effect from the operational phase	Details are provided in the OWMP and in accordance with best practice guidance. This will also be monitored during this phase of the development.		None identified.

	assessed to be of a low potential for fibre release. Removal will be undertaken in accordance with regulations. The potential effect from the construction phase on waste recovery and disposal will be negative, slight and short-term and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive	implemented if required.			on municipal waste disposal is likely to be long-term, negative and slight in nature and is considered non-significant in the context of the EIA Directive.			
Conclusion	The submitted details indicate that following all mitigation measures including design embedded and prescribed, adequate implementation of the CEMP, RWMP and OWMP and adherence to construction best practice that no significant effects on built services and waste will arise from the Proposed Development during the construction or operational phases. Accordingly, the site is considered suitable for development as proposed.							
12.Risk Management (Vulnerability of the development to Major Accidents and Disasters) - Chapter 15.								
	Construction Phase				Operational Phase			
Impacts	Potential Direct and	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Residual	Potential Direct and Indirect Effects	Mitigation and Monitoring	Cumulative Impacts	Significant Residual

	Indirect Effects							
Large Crowd Event	N/A due to nature of the development	No Monitoring required.	N/A	Suitable control measures will be put in place and compliance with relevant codes of practices and relevant legislation ensures no issues of specific concern.	N/A due to nature of the development	No Monitoring required.	N/A	Suitable control measures will be put in place and compliance with relevant codes of practices and relevant legislation ensures no issues of specific concern.
Water Supply Contamination	No public health issues have been identified				No public health issues have been identified			
Food Chain Contamination	N/A due to nature of the development				N/A due to nature of the development			
Animal Disease	N/A due to nature of the development				N/A due to nature of the development			
Terrorist Incident	N/A due to nature of the development				N/A due to nature of the development			
Maritime Incident	Drogheda Port is 3.5km to the east of the site. The site is not within the designated emergency planning zone for the port. Other ports are over 15km from the site.				Drogheda Port is 3.5km to the east of the site. The site is not within the designated emergency planning zone for the port. Other ports are over 15km from the site.			
Air Incident	Unlikely due to distance from Dublin and Belfast Airports.				Unlikely due to distance from Dublin and Belfast Airports.			

Transport Hub	Is not within or adjacent to such a transport hub.				Is not within or adjacent to such a transport hub.			
Cultural, Archaeological and Architectural Heritage	There is one known site of archaeological interest within the Proposed Development site, recorded as ME020-072- --- on the SMR. Works will take place in the vicinity of this site. Full details of vulnerability and mitigation measures are provided in Chapter 12 of this EIAR				N/A			
Landslides	The majority of the site has a low landslide susceptibility rating with a small area to the north having a				N/A			

	moderately low rating. Design measures are outlined in Chapter 6 of the EIAR and include details on avoidance/mitigation.							
Earthquakes	Site is not vulnerable.				Site is not vulnerable.			
Floods/ Storm Surge	Low Risk/ In Flood Zone C. Further details in Chapters 7 and 9 of the EIAR.				Low Risk/ In Flood Zone C. Further details in Chapters 7 and 9 of the EIAR.	Applicant has proposed an Emergency Plan in the event that the road is shut due to flood event – This is contained in supporting SFRA.		
Severe Weather	Site is not considered to be vulnerable. Details in Chapter 9. Any alerts will be made through public notification.				Site is not considered to be vulnerable. Details in Chapter 9. Any alerts will be made through public notification.			

Air Quality	Site is not considered to be vulnerable. Details in Chapter 8.				Site is not considered to be vulnerable. Details in Chapter 8.			
Wildfires	Site is not vulnerable.				Site is not vulnerable.			
Fire	Potential risk during the construction phase – details in Chapter 14 of the EIAR. Fire Safety Measures to be employed on site.				The design incorporates fire safety measures in accordance with building regulations and fire codes, and emergency response planning has been integrated to ensure risks are appropriately managed.			
Invasive Species	None recorded on site.				None – Further details in Chapter 5 of the EIAR.			
Building Collapse	Buildings designed in accordance with required standards.				Buildings designed in accordance with required standards.			
Structural Collapse – Bridge, Dam, Tunnel.	Not vulnerable as these are not proposed as part of this development.				Not vulnerable as these are not proposed as part of this development.			

Flood Defence Failure	Designed as part of the SuDS scheme. Further details in Chapter 7 of the EIAR.				Designed as part of the SuDS scheme. Further details in Chapter 7 of the EIAR.			
Nuclear Incident	Site is not vulnerable.				Site is not vulnerable.			
Cyber Incident	Site is not vulnerable.				Site is not vulnerable.			
Disruption of energy supply	Site is not vulnerable.				Site is not vulnerable.			
Utilities Failure	Site is not vulnerable.				Site is not vulnerable.			
Industrial Accident	Nearest SEVESO site is at Flogas Ireland Limited and is approximately 5.7km east of the site. A Tier 2 site in Slane is 9km west of the subject site. These are sufficiently distant from the site and no pathways for off-site effects have been identified.				The nearest SEVESO site is at Flogas Ireland Limited and is approximately 5.7km east of the site. A Tier 2 site in Slane is 9km west of the subject site. These are sufficiently distant from the site and no pathways for off-site effects have been identified.			

Conclusion	The subject site is considered suitable for development, with risks appropriately identified, assessed, and mitigated to ensure the safety, resilience, and sustainability of the Proposed Development.
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10.6 The following issues, not within the above table, are assessed here:

- Decommissioning: Not relevant to this development as this is an application for a residential scheme with no end date for the operational phase.
- Transboundary Effects: No potential for significant transboundary effects between Ireland and the UK. On a National level, the site is within County Meath and adjoins County Louth. I am satisfied that all County transboundary effects have been adequately considered in the EIAR and assessment.
- Interactions: These are provided in Chapter 16 of the submitted EIAR, and I am satisfied that these have been adequately identified and assessed.

10.7 Reasoned Conclusion

Having regard to the examination of environmental information contained above, and in particular to the EIAR and supplementary information provided by the applicant, and the submissions from the planning authority, prescribed bodies in the course of the application, it is considered that the main significant direct and indirect effects of the proposed development on the environment, with the implementation of the proposed migration measures, are as follows:

- Population and Human Health: Impacts are likely to be positive with the provision of additional housing and an increased local population that will avail of services/facilities in the area.
- Biodiversity: Impacts to be mitigated by the proposed landscaping strategy; the significant provision of active and passive open space; protection of trees to be retained, and measures to avoid disturbance to bats and birds.
- Noise & Vibration: Impacts will be mitigated by adherence to requirements of relevant code of practice; location of noisy plant away from noise sensitive locations and through the use of suitable noise control techniques on site. Excessive levels of vibration are not expected on site. Operational phase impacts will be imperceptible to noise sensitive receptors outside the site area.
- Landscape & Visual Impact: The development will present as a new development in the landscape. This will be mitigated through the design having regard to the

topography of the site and through the existing trees/ vegetation on site and the proposed landscaping provided in support of the development.

- Cultural Heritage: The proposed development would not impact on cultural heritage – known archaeology on site will be sufficiently protected. Measures will be taken to ensure that unrecorded features are also protected; a site archaeologist will be employed during the clearance/ groundworks phase of the development. The structures to be demolished are not of any architectural importance.
- Traffic and Transport: The assessment has found that the proposed development will not impact on existing and relevant junctions in the area, with capacity for increased traffic up to the test period of 2043. The development will provide for suitable pedestrian and cycle facilities.

The submitted EIAR has been considered with regard to the guidance provided in the EPA documents ‘Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on Carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment’ (2018); ‘Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports’ (draft August 2017) and ‘Advice Notes for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements’ (draft September 2015).

In conclusion, the submitted details have sufficiently demonstrated that the proposed development would not adversely impact on the existing environment. The proposed development of housing is located on lands that are zoned A2 New Residential with an objective ‘To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities and employment uses as considered appropriate for the status of the centre in the Settlement Hierarchy’ and open space is to be provided on lands that are zoned F1 Open Space with an objective ‘To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities’.

11.0 Water Framework Directive

- 11.1 The subject site is located approximately 30m to the south of the River Boyne and is approximately 10m to the west of the Stagrennan watercourse, to the south west of Drogheda, Co. Meath, and to the east of the M1 Motorway.
- 11.2 The proposed Large Scale Residential Development (LRD) comprises of the construction of a residential development of 249 units in the form of houses and apartment units, a creche and all associated site works on an overall site of 9.2 hectares.
- 11.3 An assessment of the proposed development has been undertaken in accordance with Article 4 of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC), as transposed by the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003, as amended, and with regard to the Eastern/ South Eastern River Basin Management Plan 2022–2027. A Water Framework Directive (WFD) Assessment is provided as Appendix 7-2 in support of the submitted EIAR.

The receiving water environment has been identified and assessed. Relevant water bodies within the zone of influence of the proposed development include:

- Boyne Estuary Plume Zone Coastal Waterbody (IE_EA_010_0000) – WFD Status is classified as moderate.
- Boyne Estuary Transitional Waterbody (IE_EA_010_0100) – WFD Status is classified as moderate.
- Groundwater (Drogheda GWB - IE_EA_G_025) – WFD Status is classified as good.

Having regard to the nature, scale, and location of the proposed development, and the mitigation measures incorporated into the design; it is concluded that the proposed development will not:

- Result in deterioration of the ecological, chemical, or quantitative status of any relevant surface water or groundwater body;
- Increase pollutant loading or alter the hydrological regime of any receiving

watercourse;

- Prevent or impede achievement of environmental objectives under the applicable River Basin Management Plan.

Any residual risks are capable of being addressed through the proposed mitigation measures and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Conclusion

The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with the requirements of Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive.

12.0 Recommendation

- 12.1 I consider the principle of development as proposed to be acceptable on this site. The location of proposed housing is on lands suitably zoned for residential development, is a serviced area, where social, educational and recreational services are available. The proposed development is of a suitably high quality and provides for a mix of one, two, three and four bedroom units in a mix of houses and apartments/ duplex units.
- 12.2 I do not foresee that the development will negatively impact on the existing residential and visual amenities of the area. Suitable pedestrian and cycling provision is available to serve the development.
- 12.3 The development is generally in accordance with National and Regional Guidance and Local Policy and is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. I am satisfied that this subject site, which is located to the edge of the established urban area, on appropriately zoned lands, with a range of services available and which is in an accessible location, is suitable for the development of 249 residential units in the form of houses and apartments and note the following:
- The lands are suitably zoned for development of this nature. Under the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027, the lands where housing is proposed to be located is zoned A2 – New Residential with an objective: ‘To provide for

new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate.'

- The remaining lands are zoned F1 – Open space with an objective: 'To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.' These lands will primarily provide for open space/ amenity uses for future residents/ the general public.
- The area is well served by community, social, retail and amenity infrastructure. The proposed development provides for a creche.
- The proposal is acceptable in terms of meeting the requirements of relevant guidelines including the Apartment Guidelines 2025 and also demonstrates compliance with the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 in terms of meeting relevant residential standards.

12.4 I recommend that permission be GRANTED for the development, for the reasons and considerations and subject to the conditions set out below.

13.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to:

- (i) the site's location on lands with a zoning objective A2 – New Residential with an objective: 'To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate' in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 in respect of residential development,
- (ii) A section of the site is located on lands with a zoning Objective F1 – Open space with an objective: 'To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities' in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 in respect of open space/ amenity provision,
- (iii) the nature, scale and design of the proposed development which is consistent with the provisions of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 and appendices contained therein,
- (iv) to Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030: An Action Plan on Housing Supply and Targeting Homelessness,

- (v) the provisions of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030, which have been considered,
- (vi) the provisions of the Sustainable Residential and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities (January 2024),
- (vii) the Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, July 2025,
- (viii) the Climate Action Plan 2024 and the Climate Action Plan 2025,
- (ix) the availability in the area of a wide range of social and active transport infrastructure,
- (x) to the pattern of existing and permitted development in the area,
- (xi) Planning Report and supporting technical reports of Meath County Council,
- (xii) to the submissions received,
- (xiii) the Inspectors report;

it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, would be acceptable in terms of urban design, height and quantum of development and would be acceptable in terms of traffic and pedestrian safety and convenience. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

14.0 Recommended Draft Order

14.1 Application:

For permission under the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, in accordance with plans and particulars, lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 8th of April 2026 by Earlsfort Developments Drogheda Limited.

Proposed Development:

- Demolition of existing farm buildings and associated works. The construction of 249 units consisting of 169 houses and 79 apartment/ duplex units, a creche and all associated site works on lands to the East of the M1 motorway and west of the Rathmullan Road, Oldbridge, Drogheda, Co. Meath.

Appeal:

First-Party appeal against the decision to refuse permission for the proposed development by Meath County Council.

14.2 Decision:

Grant permission for the above proposed development in accordance with the said plans and particulars based on the reasons and considerations under and subject to the conditions set out below.

14.3 Matters Considered:

In making its decision, the Commission had regard to those matters to which, by virtue of the Planning and Development Acts and Regulations made thereunder, it was required to have regard. Such matters included any observations received by it in accordance with statutory provisions.

In coming to its decision, the Commission had regard to the following:

- (i) the site's location on lands with a zoning objective A2 – New Residential with an objective: 'To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate' in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 in respect of residential development,
- (ii) A section of the site is located on lands with a zoning Objective F1 – Open space with an objective: 'To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities' in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 in respect of open space/ amenity provision,
- (iii) the nature, scale and design of the proposed development which is consistent with the provisions of the Meath County Development Plan 2021 - 2027 and appendices contained therein,
- (iv) to Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030: An Action Plan on Housing Supply and Targeting Homelessness,

- (v) the provisions of the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030, which have been considered,
- (vi) the provisions of the Sustainable Residential and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities (January 2024),
- (vii) the Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, July 2025,
- (viii) the Climate Action Plan 2024 and the Climate Action Plan 2025,
- (ix) the availability in the area of a wide range of social and active transport infrastructure,
- (x) to the pattern of existing and permitted development in the area,
- (xi) Planning Report and supporting technical reports of Meath County Council,
- (xii) to the submissions received,
- (xiii) the Inspectors report;

it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, would be acceptable in terms of urban design, height and quantum of development and would be acceptable in terms of traffic and pedestrian safety and convenience. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

14.4 Appropriate Assessment (AA):

The Commission completed an Appropriate Assessment screening exercise in relation to the potential effects of the proposed development on European Sites, taking into account the nature and scale of the proposed development on serviced lands, the nature of the receiving environment which comprises a site in an established urban area, the distances to the nearest European sites, and the hydrological pathway considerations, submissions on file, the information submitted as part of the applicant's Appropriate Assessment Screening Report documentation and the Inspector's report.

The Commission completed an Appropriate Assessment screening exercise in relation to the potential effects of the proposed development on designated European sites,

taking into account the nature, scale and location of the proposed development within a suitably zoned and adequately serviced urban site, the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report submitted with the application, the Inspector's Report, and reports on file.

In completing the screening exercise, the Commission adopted the report of the Inspector and concluded that, by itself or in combination with other development in the vicinity, the proposed development would not be likely to have a significant effect on any European site in view of the conservation objectives of such sites, other than the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236) which there is a likelihood of significant effects. There was therefore a requirement to carry out a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

Appropriate Assessment Stage 2

The Commission considered the Natura Impact Statement and all other relevant submissions including expert submissions received and carried out an appropriate assessment of the implications of the proposed development on the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236) in view of the sites' Conservation Objectives. The Commission considered that the information before it was sufficient to undertake a complete assessment of all aspects of the proposed development in relation to the site's Conservation Objectives using the best available scientific knowledge in the field.

In completing the assessment, the Commission considered, in particular, the following:

- (a) the likely direct and indirect impacts arising from the proposed development both individually or in combination with other plans or projects,
- (b) the mitigation measures which are included as part of the current proposal, and
- (c) the conservation objectives for the European sites.

In completing the Appropriate Assessment, the Commission accepted and adopted the Appropriate Assessment carried out in the Inspector's report in respect of the potential effects of the proposed development on the aforementioned European sites, having regard to the site's conservation objectives.

In overall conclusion, the Commission was satisfied that the proposed development, by itself or in combination with other plans or projects, would not adversely affect the integrity of 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 scientific doubt as to the absence of adverse effects.

14.5 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – Reasoned Conclusion:

The Commission completed an environmental impact assessment of the proposed development, considering:

- (a) The nature, scale and extent of the proposed development.
 - (b) The environmental impact assessment report and associated documentation submitted in support of the planning application;
 - (c) The submissions from the Planning Authority, and the prescribed bodies in the course of the application;
- and
- (d) The Inspector's report.

The Commission considered that the environmental impact assessment report, supported by the documentation submitted by the applicant, adequately identifies and describes the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment.

The Commission agreed with the examination, set out in the Inspector's report, of the information contained in the environmental impact assessment report and associated documentation submitted by the applicant and submissions made in the course of the planning application.

The Commission completed an environmental impact assessment in relation to the proposed development and concluded that, subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures set out in the environmental impact assessment report and subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the effects on the environment of the proposed development, by itself and in combination with other development in the vicinity, would be acceptable. In doing so, the Commission adopted the report and conclusions of the Inspector.

Conclusions on Proper Planning and Sustainable Development:

14.6 The Commission considered the proposed development to be generally in accordance with National and Regional Guidance and Local Policy and is in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. They were satisfied that this subject site, which is located in an established urban area in Drogheda, on appropriately zoned lands, with a range of services available and which is in an accessible location, is suitable for the development of 249 residential units and a creche and they note the following:

- The location of the site within an established urban area. This greenfield site is located in Drogheda, within the County Meath administrative area and which has an established history of residential development.
- The lands are suitably zoned for residential development of this nature. Under the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027, the section of the site proposed for residential development is zoned A2 – New Residential with an objective: ‘To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate.’
- The remaining lands are zoned F1 – Open space with an objective: ‘To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities’ in the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027,
- The area is well served by community, social, retail and amenity infrastructure.
- There is a clear requirement for residential units in this part of County Meath and more specifically in the Drogheda area. The proposed development offers a mix of units sizes – one to four bedroom and also a mix of unit types in the form of houses, apartments and duplex units,

- The proposal is acceptable in terms of meeting the requirements of relevant guidelines including the Apartment Guidelines 2025 and also demonstrates compliance with the Meath County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 in terms of meeting relevant residential standards.

The Commission considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would constitute an acceptable residential density at this location, would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, would be acceptable in terms of urban design, height, and quantum of development, as well as in terms of traffic and pedestrian safety and convenience. The proposal would, subject to conditions, provide an acceptable form of residential amenity for future occupants.

The proposed development would therefore be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

15.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, 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, or as otherwise stipulated by conditions hereunder, and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars. In default of agreement the matter(s) in dispute shall be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála for determination.

Reason: In the interest of clarity.

2. The proposed development shall be amended as follows:
- a) Omit unit no 9B in its entirety.

- b) Relocate the proposed bin storage and cycle parking to the north of where proposed, on the partial footprint of Unit 9B.
- c) Provide for a defined set down area for the creche and additional car parking as can be provided on the remaining area of land.

Full details, including the number of car parking spaces to be provided, revised site layout plan and site sectional drawings shall be submitted for the written agreement of the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of adequate set down area and car parking to serve the proposed creche.

3. The number of residential units permitted by this grant of permission is 248 residential units in the form of 169 houses and 79 duplex/ apartment units.

Reason: In the interests of clarity.

4. The mitigation measures contained in the submitted Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), the Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EclA) and the Natura Impact Statement (NIS) shall be implemented in full.

Reason: To protect the environment.

5. Details of the materials, colours, and textures of all the external finishes to the proposed building shall be as submitted with the application, unless otherwise agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development. In default of agreement the matter(s) in dispute shall be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála for determination.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and visual amenity.

6. a) The creche shall be provided and operational on completion of the first phase of the development.

b) The hours of operation of the creche and the number of children to be accommodated shall be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of operation.

Reason: In the interest of clarity and proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

7. The developer shall provide a suitable piece of public art in a public location on site. Final details to be agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of public amenity and promotion of public art.

8. Proposals for a development name and numbering scheme and associated signage shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development. Thereafter, all such names and numbering shall be provided in accordance with the agreed scheme.

Reason: In the interest of urban legibility.

9. No advertisement or advertisement structure (other than those shown on the drawings submitted with the application) shall be erected or displayed on the proposed buildings (or within the curtilage of the site) in such a manner as to be visible from outside the buildings, unless authorised by a further grant of planning permission.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

10. Public lighting shall be provided in accordance with a scheme, which shall include lighting along pedestrian routes through the communal open spaces, details of which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development/installation of lighting. Such lighting shall be

provided prior to the making available for occupation of any apartment unit.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and public safety.

11. 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.

Reason: In the interests of visual and residential amenity.

12. The road network serving the proposed development, including turning bays, the junction with the Rathmullan Road, parking areas, footpaths and kerbs, access road to service areas, provision of suitable set-down/ pick-up areas/ service delivery areas and the undercroft car park shall be in accordance with the detailed construction standards of the Planning Authority for such works. A Stage 3 Road Safety Audit shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of Meath County Council. In default of agreement the matter(s) in dispute shall be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála for determination.

Reason: In the interest of amenity and of traffic and pedestrian safety.

13. a) The car parking facilities hereby permitted shall be reserved solely to serve the proposed development. All car parking spaces shall be assigned permanently for the residential development as indicated and shall be reserved solely for that purpose. These residential spaces shall not be utilised for any other purpose, including for use in association with any other uses of the development hereby permitted, unless the subject of a separate grant of planning permission.

b) Prior to the occupation of the development, a Parking Management Plan shall be prepared for the development and shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that adequate parking facilities are permanently available to serve the proposed residential units and the remaining development.

14. All houses and a minimum of 20% of all car parking spaces serving the apartment units should be provided with functioning EV charging stations/ points. Ducting shall be provided for all remaining car parking spaces. Where proposals relating to the installation of EV ducting and charging stations/points has not been submitted with the application, in accordance with the above noted requirements, such proposals shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development.

Reason: To provide for and/or future proof the development such as would facilitate the use of Electric Vehicles.

15. The developer shall implement in full the recommendations of the submitted Residential Mobility Management Plan which shall be overseen by an appointed Mobility Manager.

Reason: In the interest of promotion of sustainable transport.

16. Drainage arrangements including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements of the Planning Authority for such works and services.

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

17. The developer shall enter into water and waste water connection agreement(s) with Uisce Éireann, prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of public health.

18. a) The site shall be landscaped (and earthworks carried out) in accordance with the detailed comprehensive scheme of landscaping, which accompanied the

application submitted, unless otherwise agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development.

b) Full details of site management to be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

c) A fully qualified Landscape Architect, and a fully qualified Arborist shall be employed during the site clearance and landscaping phases of the development.

Reason: In the interest of residential and visual amenity.

19. (a) The communal open spaces, including hard and soft landscaping, car parking areas and access ways, communal refuse/bin storage, and all areas not intended to be taken in charge by the local authority, shall be maintained by a legally constituted management company

(b) Details of the management company contract, and drawings/particulars describing the parts of the development for which the company would have responsibility, shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority before any of the residential units are made available for occupation.

Reason: To provide for the satisfactory future maintenance of this development in the interest of residential amenity.

20. The developer shall engage a suitably qualified (licensed eligible) archaeologist to monitor (licensed under the National Monuments Acts) all site clearance works, topsoil stripping and groundworks as appropriate, following consultation with the Local Authority Archaeologist. Prior to the commencement of such works the archaeologist shall consult with and forward to the Local Authority archaeologist or the National Monument Service as appropriate a method statement for written agreement. The use of appropriate tools and/or machinery to ensure the preservation and recording of any surviving archaeological remains shall be necessary. Should archaeological remains be identified during the course of archaeological monitoring, all works shall cease in the area of archaeological interest pending a decision of the planning authority, in consultation with the National Monuments Service, regarding appropriate mitigation.

The developer shall facilitate the archaeologist in recording any remains identified. Any further archaeological mitigation requirements specified by the planning authority, following consultation with the National Monuments Service, shall be complied with by the developer. Following the completion of all archaeological work on site and any necessary post-excavation specialist analysis, the Planning Authority and the National Monuments Service shall be furnished with a final archaeological report describing the results of the monitoring and any subsequent required archaeological investigative work/excavation required. All resulting and associated archaeological costs shall be borne by the developer.

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

21. (a) 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 and for the ongoing operation of these facilities for each apartment unit shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority not later than 6 months from the date of commencement of the development. Thereafter, the waste shall be managed in accordance with the agreed plan.

(b) This plan shall provide for screened communal bin stores, the locations, and designs of which shall be included in the details to be submitted.

(c) This plan shall provide for screened bin stores, which shall accommodate not less than three standard sized wheeled bins within the curtilage of each house plot.

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity, and to ensure the provision of adequate refuse storage.

22. Construction and demolition waste shall be managed in accordance with a construction waste and demolition management plan, which shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development. The plan shall include details of waste to be generated during site

clearance and construction phases, and details of the methods and locations to be employed for the prevention, minimisation, recovery and disposal of this material in accordance with the provision of the Waste Management Plan for the Region in which the site is situated.

Reason: In the interest of sustainable waste management.

23. 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:

- a) Location of the site and materials compound(s) including area(s) identified for the storage of construction refuse;
- b) Location of areas for construction site offices and staff facilities;
- c) Details of site security fencing and hoardings;
- d) Details of on-site car parking facilities for site workers during the course of construction;
- e) Details of the timing and routing of construction traffic to and from the construction site and associated directional signage, to include proposals to facilitate the delivery of abnormal loads to the site;
- f) Measures to obviate queuing of construction traffic on the adjoining road network;
- g) Measures to prevent the spillage or deposit of clay, rubble or other debris on the public road network;
- h) Alternative arrangements to be put in place for pedestrians and vehicles in the case of the closure of any public road or footpath during the course of site development works;
- i) Details of appropriate mitigation measures for noise, dust and vibration, and monitoring of such levels;
- j) Containment of all construction-related fuel and oil within specially constructed bunds to ensure that fuel spillages are fully contained. Such bunds shall be roofed to exclude rainwater;

- k) Off-site disposal of construction/demolition waste and details of how it is proposed to manage excavated soil;
- l) Means to ensure that surface water run-off is controlled such that no silt or other pollutants enter local surface water sewers or drains.
- m) A record of daily checks that the works are being undertaken in accordance with the Construction Management Plan shall be kept for inspection by the Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of amenities, public health and safety.

24. Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0700 to 1900 Mondays to Saturdays inclusive, 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.

25. Prior to commencement of development, the applicant or other person with an interest in the land to which the application relates shall enter into an agreement in writing with the Planning Authority in relation to the provision of housing in accordance with the requirements of section 94(4) and section 96(2) and (3) (Part V) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, unless an exemption certificate shall have been applied for and been granted under section 97 of the Act, as amended. Where such an agreement is not reached within eight weeks from the date of this order, the matter in dispute (other than a matter to which section 96(7) applies) may be referred by the Planning Authority or any other prospective party to the agreement to An Coimisiún Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Part V of the Planning and development Act 2000, as amended, and of the housing strategy in the development plan of the area.

26. (a) Prior to the commencement of the development as permitted, the applicant or any person with an interest in the land shall enter into an agreement with the

planning authority (such agreement must specify the number and location of each house or duplex unit), pursuant to Section 47 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, that restricts all relevant residential units permitted, to first occupation by individual purchasers i.e. those not being a corporate entity, and/or by those eligible for the occupation of social and/or affordable housing, including cost rental housing.

(b) An agreement pursuant to Section 47 shall be applicable for the period of duration of the planning permission, except where after not less than two years from the date of completion of each specified housing unit, it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that it has not been possible to transact each of the residential units for use by individual purchasers and/or to those eligible for the occupation of social and/or affordable housing, including cost rental housing.

(c) The determination of the planning authority as required in (b) shall be subject to receipt by the planning and housing authority of satisfactory documentary evidence from the applicant or any person with an interest in the land regarding the sales and marketing of the specified housing units, in which case the planning authority shall confirm in writing to the applicant or any person with an interest in the land that the Section 47 agreement has been terminated and that the requirement of this planning condition has been discharged in respect of each specified housing unit.

Reason: To restrict new housing development to use by persons of a particular class or description in order to ensure an adequate choice and supply of housing, including affordable housing, in the common good.

27. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the Planning Authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company, or other security to secure the provision and satisfactory completion and maintenance until taken in charge by the local authority of roads, footpaths, watermains, drains, public open space and other services required in connection with the development, coupled with an agreement empowering the local authority to apply such security or part thereof to the satisfactory completion or maintenance of any part of the development. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the Planning

Authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory completion and maintenance of the development until taken in charge.

28. 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 Coimisiún 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.

Paul O'Brien
Inspectorate
21st July 2025

Appendix 1: Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects	
Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics	
Brief description of project	A Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) for 249 apartment units, creche, open space and all associated site works on lands to the west of the Rathmullan Road, to the south west of Drogheda in Co. Meath.
Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms	The subject site with a stated area of 9.2 hectares comprises agricultural lands to the south of the River Boyne, approximately 2.6km to the west of Drogheda town centre to the east of the M1 Dublin to Belfast road. The site comprises of two large fields in agricultural use. A small cluster of agricultural buildings, which are semi-derelict, are located to the south east corner of the site, and which are proposed for demolition. Site boundaries consist of mature trees, hedgerows and shrubs, access through these is difficult due to their overgrown state. The fields are subdivided by hedgerows. Potential Impact Mechanisms: Construction Phase: • Surface water run-off: Run off containing silt, sediments and/or other pollutants discharging into nearby waterbodies or surface water network – there are no surface water features therefore surface water will drain to ground and

	could pollute surface water drainage generated on site. • Wastewater Emission: Foul drainage to watercourses etc. • Water Abstraction/ Supply: Use of groundwater or rivers for water supply. Water supply is through public system and therefore can be screened out. • Noise Emission: Noise and vibration can impact on species up to 200m away. • Air Emissions: Impact through release of dust to air. • Mobile Species Pathway: ex-situ impacts to species that rely on habitats within the development site. • Human Disturbance Pathway: Increased human presence and activity could impact on species ex-situ. • Land Pathways: Large developments can give rise to habitat loss/ ecosystem disruption. Conditions for this are not present here and can be screened out at this stage. • Presence of Alien Species: None on site – therefore can be screened out at this stage. Operational Phase: • Surface water drainage from the Site of the Proposed Development could discharge to the River Boyne – Given the location and scale of event necessary to contaminate the river or materially affect its WFD status, such an event is unlikely though cannot be ruled out at this stage.
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	• Impacts on the North West Irish Sea SPA and Clogher Head SAC can be screened out due to distance and dilution effect. • Wastewater Emission: Foul drainage to watercourses etc. • Water Abstraction/ Supply: Water supply is through public system and therefore can be screened out. • Noise Emission: Through traffic and human activity on site. • Air Emissions: Through increased traffic raising particulates to air. • Mobile Species Pathway: No impact during this phase. • Human Disturbance Pathway: Through increased use of amenity lands etc. • Land Pathways: Conditions for this are not present here and can be screened out at this stage. • Presence of Alien Species: None on site.
Screening report	Y - The Applicant submitted an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report dated April 2026 – Updated in support of the First Party Appeal.
Natura Impact Statement	Y - The Applicant submitted a Nature Impact Statement dated April 2026 – Updated in support of the First Party Appeal.
Relevant submissions	No third party appeal. The application was refused permission by Meath Council due to the updated Natura Impact Statement (NIS), submitted in response to a further information request, failing to provide a sufficiently robust/

		comprehensive assessment of the proposed development to adequately evaluate the potential for significant adverse effects on the integrity of identified designated European sites. The applicant has appealed the decision of Meath County Council, and an updated AA Screening and updated NIS have been provided in support of this appeal.		
Step 2. Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model – The applicant’s AA Screening identified the following:				
European Site (code)	Qualifying interests ¹ Link to conservation objectives (NPWS, date)	Distance from proposed development (km)	Ecological connections ²	Consider further in screening ³ Y/N
• River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299)	• River Lamprey (1099) • Salmon (1106) • Otter (1355) • Alkaline fens (7230) • 91E0 Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (NPWS, December 2021)	50m to the north	• Surface water to River Boyne • Wastewater will go via the public foul drainage system, to be treated at the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant before discharge. • Air & Noise Impacts through construction	Y – Potential for discharge the River Boyne. N – Will be treated and potential for significant effects is unlikely. Y – Impact is likely through air and noise emissions.

			and increased traffic during the operational phase. • Mobile Species • Human Disturbance	Y - Potential for significant effects. Y - Potential for significant effects.
• Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957)	• Estuaries [1130] • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] • Annual vegetation of drift lines [1210] • Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] • Atlantic salt meadows [1330] • Embryonic shifting dunes [2110] • Shifting dunes along the shoreline with <i>Ammophila arenaria</i> (white dunes) [2120] • Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]	5.86km to the east.	• Surface water to River Boyne • Wastewater will go via the public foul drainage system, to be treated at the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant before discharge. • Air & Noise Impacts through construction and increased	Y – Potential for discharge the River Boyne. N – Will be treated and potential for significant effects is unlikely. N – Screen out due to distance.

	(NPWS, October 2012)		traffic during the operational phase. • Mobile Species • Human Disturbance	N – Not an ex-situ site. Y - Potential for significant effects.
• Clogher Head SAC (001459)	• Vegetated Sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts (1230) • European dry heaths (4030) (NPWS, January 2017)	13.2km to the north east	• Surface water. • Wastewater will go via the public foul drainage system, to be treated at the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant before discharge. • Air & Noise Impacts through construction and increased traffic during	N – Distance and Dilution effect. N – Will be treated and potential for significant effects is unlikely. N – Screen out due to distance.

			the operational phase. • Mobile Species • Human Disturbance	N – Screen out due to distance. N – Screen out due to distance. Can screen out this SAC at this stage.
• River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232)	• Kingfisher [A229] (NPWS, July 2024)	50m to the north	• Surface water. • Wastewater will go via the public foul drainage system, to be treated at the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant before discharge. • Air & Noise Impacts through construction and increased traffic during	Y – Potential for discharge the River Boyne. N – Will be treated and potential for significant effects is unlikely. Y- Potential effects though air and noise emissions.

			the operational phase. • Mobile Species • Human Disturbance	N – Effects unlikely to this QI. Y - Potential for significant effects.
• Boyne Estuary SPA (004080)	• Shelduck [A048] • Oystercatcher [A130] • Golden Plover [A140] • Grey Plover [A141] • Lapwing [A142] • Knot [A143] • Sanderling [A144] • Black-tailed Godwit [A156] • Redshank [A162] • Turnstone [A169] • Little Tern [A885]	5.4km to the east.	• Surface water. • Wastewater will go via the public foul drainage system, to be treated at the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant before discharge. • Air & Noise Impacts through construction and increased traffic during	Y – Potential for discharge the River Boyne. N – Will be treated and potential for significant effects is unlikely. N – Due to distance from the site.

	Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] (NPWS, February 2013)		- the operational phase. - Mobile Species - Human Disturbance	N – Effects unlikely to these QIs – not a supporting foraging site. Y - Potential for significant effects.
River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (004158)	- Oystercatcher [A130] - Ringed Plover [A137] - Golden Plover [A140] - Knot [A143] - Sanderling [A144] - Herring Gull [A184] - Wetland and Waterbirds [A999] (NPWS, September 2012)	9.58km to the south east.	- Surface water. - Wastewater will go via the public foul drainage system, to be treated at the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant before discharge. - Air & Noise Impacts through construction and increased traffic during	Y – Potential for discharge to the River Boyne. N – Will be treated and potential for significant effects is unlikely. N – Due to distance from the site.

			the operational phase. • Mobile Species	N – Effects unlikely to these QIs – not a supporting foraging site. N – Due to distance from the site.
• North -West Irish Sea SPA (004236)	• Red-throated Diver [A001] • Great Northern Diver [A003] • Fulmar [A009] • Manx Shearwater [A013] • Cormorant [A017] • Shag [A018] • Common Scoter [A065] • Black-headed Gull [A179] • Common Gull [A182] • Lesser Black-backed Gull [A183] • Herring Gull [A184] • Great Black-backed Gull [A187] • Kittiwake [A188] • Roseate Tern [A192]	9.77km to the east.	• Surface water. • Wastewater will go via the public foul drainage system, to be treated at the Drogheda Wastewater Treatment Plant before discharge. • Air & Noise Impacts through construction and increased traffic during the operational phase.	Y – Potential for discharge the River Boyne. N – Will be treated and potential for significant effects is unlikely. N – Due to distance from the site.

	• Common Tern [A193] • Arctic Tern [A194] • Guillemot [A199] • Razorbill [A200] • Puffin [A204] • Little Gull [A862] • Little Tern [A885] (NPWS, September 2023)		• Mobile Species • Human Disturbance	N – Effects unlikely to these QIs – not a supporting foraging site. N – Due to distance from the site.
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Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone or in combination) on European Sites

AA Screening matrix

Site name Qualifying interests	Possibility of significant effects (alone) in view of the conservation objectives of the site*	
	Impacts	Effects
• River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299) (QIs as above)	Surface Water - Potential for discharge to the River Boyne during construction and operational phases. Discharge of silt and other debris during construction and potential for fuel/ oils during the operational phase. Noise and Vibration Disturbance – Potential for impact during the construction and operational phases of the development.	Potential impact on water quality, and potential for combined effect with other pressures on water quality such as agricultural/ urban development sources. Mitigation measures are recommended. Potential to disturb otters.

	Air Emissions - Increase in NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} during the operational phase and though this is a slight effect, it cannot be ruled out at this stage. Mobile Species Pathway – Potential for loss of lands which may function as foraging habitats for QI species. Human Disturbance – Increase in human population will result in increased activity and use of amenity lands including along the River Boyne.	Potential for significant effects to QIs. Lands do not function as a habitat for Otter – Can be screened out. Potential for significant effects on QIs in the absence of suitable mitigation measures.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): Yes. Consideration is also given to In-Combination Effects.	
	Impacts	Effects
Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957)	Surface Water - Potential for discharge to the River Boyne during construction and operational phases. Discharge of silt and other debris during construction and potential for fuel/ oils during the operational phase. Noise and Vibration Disturbance – Potential for	Potential impact on water quality, and potential for combined effect with other pressures on water quality such as agricultural/ urban development sources. Mitigation measures are recommended. No impact due to distance and nature of the QIs.

	impact during the construction and operational phases of the development. Air Emissions - Increase in NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} during the operational phase and though this is a slight effect, it cannot be ruled out at this stage. Mobile Species Pathway – Potential for loss of lands which may function as foraging habitats for QI species. Human Disturbance – Increase in human population will result in increased activity and use of amenity lands including along the River Boyne.	Potential for significant effects to QIs. No impact due to distance and nature of the QIs. Potential for significant effects on QIs in the absence of suitable mitigation measures.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): Yes. Consideration is also given to In-Combination Effects.	
	Impacts	Effects
River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232)	Surface Water - Potential for discharge to the River Boyne during construction and operational phases. Discharge of silt and other debris during construction	Potential impact on water quality, and potential for combined effect with other pressures on water quality such as agricultural/ urban development sources,

	and potential for fuel/ oils during the operational phase. Noise and Vibration Disturbance – Potential for impact during the construction and operational phases of the development. Air Emissions - Increase in NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} during the operational phase and though this is a slight effect, it cannot be ruled out at this stage. Mobile Species Pathway – Potential for loss of lands which may function as foraging habitats for QI species. Human Disturbance – Increase in human population will result in increased activity and use of amenity lands including along the River Boyne.	which could impact on Kingfishers. Mitigation measures are recommended. Potential impact on Kingfishers. Potential for significant effects to QI – Kingfisher. No impact due to distance and nature of the QI foraging areas not within this site. Potential for significant effects on QI - Kingfisher in the absence of suitable mitigation measures.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): Yes. Consideration is also given to In-Combination Effects.	

	Impacts	Effects
Boyne Estuary SPA (004080)	Surface Water - Potential for discharge to the River Boyne during construction and operational phases. Discharge of silt and other debris during construction and potential for fuel/ oils during the operational phase.	Potential impact on water quality, and potential for combined effect with other pressures on water quality such as agricultural/ urban development sources, which could impact on QIs - waterbirds. Mitigation measures are recommended.
	Noise and Vibration Disturbance – Potential for impact during the construction and operational phases of the development.	Potential impact on Wetland and Waterbirds.
	Air Emissions - Increase in NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} during the operational phase and though this is a slight effect, it cannot be ruled out at this stage.	Potential for significant effects to QIs.
	Mobile Species Pathway – Potential for loss of lands which may function as foraging habitats for QI species.	No impact due to distance and nature of the QI foraging areas not within this site.
	Human Disturbance – Increase in human population	Potential for significant effects on QI - Kingfisher in

	will result in increased activity and use of amenity lands including along the River Boyne.	the absence of suitable mitigation measures.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): Yes. Consideration is also given to In-Combination Effects.	
	Impacts	Effects
River Nanny Estuary and Shore SPA (004158)	Surface Water - Potential for discharge to the River Boyne during construction and operational phases. Discharge of silt and other debris during construction and potential for fuel/ oils during the operational phase. Noise and Vibration Disturbance – Potential for impact during the construction and operational phases of the development. Air Emissions - Increase in NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} during the operational phase and though this is a slight effect, it cannot be ruled out at this stage. Mobile Species Pathway – Potential for loss of lands which may function as	Potential impact on water quality can be screened out due to distance, location on the coast and due to dilution effect. Can be screened out at this stage due to distance and location relative to the subject site. Can be screened out at this stage due to distance and location relative to the subject site. Can be screened out at this stage due to distance and

	foraging habitats for QI species. Human Disturbance – Increase in human population will result in increased activity and use of amenity lands including along the River Boyne.	the location relative to the subject site. Unlikely due to location and distance from the subject site.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): No. Can be screened out from further consideration. Consideration is also given to In-Combination Effects.	
	Impacts	Effects
North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236)	Surface Water - Potential for discharge to the River Boyne during construction and operational phases. Discharge of silt and other debris during construction and potential for fuel/ oils during the operational phase. Noise and Vibration Disturbance – Potential for impact during the construction and operational phases of the development. Air Emissions - Increase in NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} during the operational phase and though this is a slight	Potential impact on water quality can be screened out due to distance, and due to dilution effect. Can be screened out at this stage due to distance and location relative to the subject site. Potential for significant effects to QIs.

	effect, it cannot be ruled out at this stage. Mobile Species Pathway – Potential for loss of lands which may function as foraging habitats for QI species. Human Disturbance – Increase in human population will result in increased activity and use of amenity lands including along the River Boyne.	Can be screened out at this stage due to distance and the location relative to the subject site. Potential for significant effects to QIs.
	Likelihood of significant effects from proposed development (alone): Yes. Consideration is also given to In-Combination Effects.	
Step 4 Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site		
I conclude that the proposed development would have a likely significant effect ‘alone’ on QIs associated with: • River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299) • Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957) • River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232) • Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) • North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236) Due to: • Potential for water pollution due to surface water drainage runoff during the construction and operational phases of the development.		

- Noise and Vibration Disturbance
- Air Emissions – Due in particular to increases in NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}
- Human Disturbance

An Appropriate Assessment is required on the basis of the effects of the project 'alone'. Further assessment in-combination with other plans and other projects is not required at this time.

Appendix 2

Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment

Background

The applicant has provided a Natura Impact Statement (NIS), in accordance with the requirements of the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment process. A detailed list of supporting documentation is provided in the submitted Natura Impact Statement. The NIS is dated April 2026 and is provided in support of the first party appeal against the decision of Meath County Council to refuse permission for this development.

I am satisfied that the submitted NIS is in accordance with current guidance/ legislation/ best practice and the information included within the report in relation to baseline conditions and potential impacts are clearly set out and supported with sound scientific information and knowledge. The NIS examines and assesses the potential adverse effects of the proposed development on the following European designated sites:

- River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299)
- Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957)
- River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232)
- Boyne Estuary SPA (004080)
- North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236)

where it has been established that there is a possibility for significant effects on the designated European sites, in the absence of mitigation as a result of:

- Hydrological impacts,
- Noise and vibration disturbance
- Air Emissions
- Human Disturbance

As reported in the Appropriate Assessment Screening, all other European designated sites can be excluded from the need for further assessment.

Impacts on Designated European Sites

Section 6.0 of the applicant's NIS provides a 'Consideration of Potential Impacts to European Sites' and details the potential adverse effects associated with the identified pathways for each of the designated sites. These are detailed under Sections 6.1 to 6.7. The applicant has also detailed impacts which have been screened out under Stage 1 of the AA process. Section 6.8 provides details on Cumulative Effects and Table 6.1 provides a 'Summary of Approved Planning Applications Proximal to the Proposed Development'.

Section 6.9 provides a 'Consideration of Potential Impacts to Conservation Objectives'. The applicant reports that Site Specific Conservation Objectives (SSCOs) have not been provided for the River Boyne and Blackwater SPA and the River Nore SPA; the Kingfisher is listed as a special conservation interest for these two SPAs. The applicant has used the Conservation Objectives for cormorant as part of their assessment, whilst acknowledging that the ecology of these birds differ significantly but both rely on a similar foraging resource – fish, and no conservation objectives are published for any other bird species which have a similar ecology to the Kingfisher.

SSCOs have been provided for the River Boyne and Blackwater SPA and the River Nore SPA. For the River Boyne and Blackwater SPA, as relevant to this site, the Conservation Objective is 'To maintain the Favourable conservation condition of Kingfisher in River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA'. Targets include:

Attribute	Target
Population Size	No Significant decline in the long term.
Productivity Rate	Sufficient productivity to maintain the population trend as stable or increasing.
Spatial distribution of territories	No significant loss of distribution in the long term, other than that occurring due to natural patterns of variation.
Extent and quality of nesting banks and other suitable nesting features	Sufficient area of high quality nesting habitat to support the population target
Forage spatial distribution, extent, abundance and availability	Sufficient number of locations, area of suitable forage habitat and available

	forage biomass to support the population target
Water quality	Both biotic (i.e. Q-value) and abiotic indices reflect overall good-high quality status
Barriers to connectivity	No significant increase
Disturbance to breeding sites	Disturbance occurs at levels that do not significantly impact upon breeding Kingfisher

Kingfishers are to be found along shallow freshwater systems, though movement to coastal areas can occur in winter. The proposed development does not extend to the river bank of the Boyne. Slow-flowing, shallow watercourses which cover along river banks are preferred. The existing greenway and roadway will provide a buffer between the river bank and the north of the site, which is itself proposed to be developed for open space/ amenity uses. Kingfishers diet consists of mostly small fish/ aquatic invertebrates. The subject development does not remove or result in the loss of any such feeding areas.

The applicant also reports that although they have assessed Natura 2000 sites within 5 – 10km of the subject site, these include multiple bird species that are highly mobile and which may use a range of habitats/ types throughout the region. The bird surveys undertaken (between 2021 and 2025) did not find any rare, protected or endangered bird species listed under the Natura 2000 sites within the identified Zone of Influence. The presence of the M1 to the west of the site has resulted in an increase in background noise and agricultural lands to the north/ west and south of the site would be potential refuge sites for local mammals and bird species. The applicant reports that they consider that the subject development would not have a significant impact on local biodiversity.

Mitigation Measures

Section 7.0 of the NIS provides a 'Description and Evaluation of Mitigation Measures' and I have listed the following in summary:

Construction Phase:

- Hydrological/ Hydrogeological Pathways – Surface Water Runoff: Details provided in Section 7.1.1 include the suitable storage of oils/ chemicals, bunding, management/ control of refuelling operations, suitable control of runoff, control on the use of cement, foul drainage during this phase to be routed to public system, provision of suitable procedures for accidental pollution and spillages, and training of staff in these procedures. Water quality details are provided in Section 7.1.2 and include the appointment of a suitably qualified person to ensure that measures to prevent pollution of receiving waters are fully implemented. The developer to provide surface water catch-trenches on the northern, western and eastern boundaries of the site prior to earthworks on site. Catch trenches to include settlement pond silt trap with overflow with other measures incorporated into the design and listed in Section 7.1.2 of the NIS. A clean water diversion drain to be provided, silt fence to be installed, settlement ponds/ traps to be provided, testing of surface water discharges to be undertaken with trigger points for halting works to be agreed with a project ecologist. Other measures include the provision of a designated wash down area, temporary traffic management measures to be put in place for the construction of outfalls on the Rathmullan/ River Roads, use of suitable surface water drainage and SuDS measures, recording of water use, monitoring of foul drainage operations and full adherence to the Construction and Waste Management Plans on site.
- Noise and Vibrations: Section 7.1.3 outlines the measures to be taken to control noise emissions. These include the use of best practice/ appropriate guidance on site, provision of site/ noise barriers on the western and northern boundaries of the site, limit on operating hours, use of plant with a lower decibel generating level, location of plant/ compounds away from noise sensitive locations on site, the control of delivery times/ locations, management of equipment/ plant on site, use of acoustic lagging as appropriate, communication between the developer and nearby residents, ensure that roads are kept as level as possible so as to reduce the potential for vibrations on site and monitoring of noise during critical periods.

- **Dust and Soiling – Air:** Details provided in Section 7.1.4 of the NIS. Dust and particle disposition to be controlled on site. Acceptance that this is difficult to control and is best done at source. Notes that existing roads in the area are surfaced and this significantly reduces the potential for dust generation, limit to be put on vehicle speeds, wet road sweeping to be put into operation in and adjoining the subject site, air quality monitoring is to be put in place on site, footpaths/ equipment/ plant etc. to be maintained and kept clean, located generators away from existing residential areas, control and management of stockpiles/ earthworks/ equipment, use of processes that reduce the generation of dust, identify processes that may generate dust and ensure that it is suitably controlled. Details to be provided, including name and contact details, of a person who can be contacted regarding air quality and noise issues.

Operational Phase:

- **Surface Water Runoff:** Details provided in Section 7.2.1 include the use of on-site attenuation measures, use of hydrobrakes, provision of a full hydrocarbon/ silt interceptor at the outlet of the attenuation pond and the full implementation of suitable SuDS measures on site.
- **Greenways Operations Management – Human Impact:** Residents will be encouraged to use the greenway; however additional measures will be provided to ensure that sensitive areas are protected. These include the use of clear wayfinding/ boundary treatment to ensure the designation of a defined route on site/ through sensitive areas. Provide for safe pedestrian/ cycle access from the subject site to the immediate surroundings. Provision of signage that creates an awareness about wildlife and biodiversity conservation. Suitable site management, provision of wildlife protection barriers, maintenance of vegetation along the greenway, use of pollinator friendly plants along the greenway, reduce wildlife fragmentation, suitable waste disposal on site, prevent litter accumulation, and continued monitoring of the greenway and treatment as appropriate of invasive plant species.

- Additional Features to Mitigate Recreational Pressures on Designated Sites – these are detailed under Section 7.2.3 of the NIS. Consideration of appropriate measures has been made having regard to ‘Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) as implemented in the UK. Measures include the provision of suitable grass areas for dog walking and kickabout areas, play spaces for different age groups, provision of fitness equipment, seating areas, use of native planting species to be provided following agreement of the site ecologist, new planting that links into existing green infrastructure corridors, retention of existing trees and understorey planting, use of nature based solutions within SuDS and planting of Wildflower Meadows.

Section 8.0 of the NIS provides an ‘Evaluation of Mitigation Measures’ and which includes an extensive list of best practice guidance that have informed the mitigation measures to be deployed in this development.

NIS Conclusion:

Section 9.0 of the NIS provides the ‘Conclusions’ and which outlines the assessment of potential for adverse impacts on four designated European sites during the AA process. Suitable mitigation measures have been outlined and detailed by the applicant through the NIS.

The NIS concludes:

‘Based upon the information provided in this NIS, it is the considered view of the authors of this NIS that it can be concluded by Meath County Council that the Proposed Development will not alone or in-combination with other plans or projects, result in adverse effects to the integrity and conservation status of Natura 2000 Sites in view of their conservation objectives and on the basis of best scientific evidence, and there is no reasonable scientific doubt as to that conclusion.’

NIS Assessment:

I have relied on the following guidance: Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities, DoEHLG (2009); Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EC, EC (2002); Managing Natura 2000 sites, The provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC, EC (2018).

The following are subject to appropriate assessment:

- River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299)
- Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957)
- River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232)
- Boyne Estuary SPA (004080)
- North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236)

A description of the sites and their Conservation Objectives and Qualifying Interests are set out in the submitted NIS and have already been outlined in this report as part of my assessment. I have also examined the Natura 2000 data forms as relevant and the Conservation Objectives supporting documents for these sites available through the NPWS website.

Aspects of the Development that could adversely affect the designated sites: The main aspects of the development that could impact the conservation objectives of the European sites are through:

- Hydrological impacts,
- Noise and vibration disturbance
- Air Emissions
- Human Disturbance

Mitigation: A range of mitigation measures are provided in the NIS, and these are noted. These refer to the construction and operational phases of this development.

Overall, I consider that the proposed mitigation measures are clearly described, and precise, and definitive conclusions can be reached in terms of avoidance of adverse effects on the integrity of designated European sites based on the outlined mitigation measures. I consider that the mitigation measures are necessary having regard to the proximity/ hydrological connection of the site to the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236). Overall, the measures proposed are effective, reflecting current best practice, and can be secured over the short and medium term and the method of implementation will be through a detailed management plan and appropriate monitoring through the construction and operational phases of the development.

Appropriate Assessment Conclusion:

The proposed residential development on lands to the west of the Rathmullan Road, Drogheda, Co. Meath have been considered in light of the assessment requirements of Sections 177U and 177V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. Having carried out screening for Appropriate Assessment of the project, it was concluded that it may have a significant effect on the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236). Consequently, an AA was required of the implications of the project on the qualifying features of the site in light of its conservation objectives.

Following an Appropriate Assessment, it has been ascertained that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not adversely affect the integrity of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236) subject to the implantation in full of appropriate mitigation measures.

This conclusion is based on:

- A full and detailed assessment of all aspects of the proposed project including proposed mitigation measures and monitoring in relation to the Conservation Objectives of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236)
- Detailed assessment of in combination effects with other plans and projects including historical projects, plans and current proposals.
- No reasonable scientific doubt as to the absence of adverse effects on the integrity of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236).

I have had full consideration of the information, assessment and conclusions contained within the NIS. I have also had full regard to National Guidance and the information available on the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) website in relation to the identified designated Natura 2000 site. I consider it reasonable to conclude that on the basis of the information submitted in the NIS, including the recommended mitigation measures, and submitted in support of this application, that the proposed development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to adversely affect the integrity of the River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC (002299), the Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC (001957), the River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA (004232), the Boyne Estuary SPA (004080) and the North-West Irish Sea SPA (004236).