Inspector's Report

ACP-324557-26

Development	Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) comprising (i) construction of 124 no. apartments in three blocks (A, B and C) ranging in height of from 4 to 5 storeys, (ii) a foul pumping station, (iii) all ancillary development works including footpaths, cycle lanes, parking, drainage, lighting and substation, and landscaping/amenity areas. The proposed development will replace 76 no. apartments previously permitted under Reg. Ref. 23/60290 and ABP-320049-24. An EIAR addendum report is submitted with the application. www.bennetstown5lrd.ie
Location	Bennetstown (townland) to the south of the M3 Parkway park and ride and railway station, Dunboyne North, Co. Meath.
Planning Authority	Meath County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	2660607

Applicant	Marina Quarter Limited
Type of Application	Large-Scale Residential Development
Planning Authority Decision	Grant permission subject to conditions
Type of Appeal	Third Party
Appellant	Anthony and Olivia Malone
Observers	None
Date of Site Inspection	26th September 2026
Inspector	John Duffy

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1.0 Introduction

1.1. The proposed development relates to a residential development on a site at Bennetstown Townland, immediately south of the M3 park and ride facility and railway station, Dunboyne North, Co. Meath.

1.2. A Masterplan for Dunboyne North (MP22) was completed in October 2022 by the applicant and is intended to provide a framework for the development of these lands to include phasing arrangements, land uses, residential unit numbers and infrastructure details. The vast majority of the appeal site is earmarked for residential use in MP22. I am not aware that this Masterplan has been incorporated into the Meath County Development Plan (MCDP), and as such it is a non-statutory document. However, the Masterplan may be considered as providing an indicative framework as to the type of development one might expect for the lands at Bennettstown. I have attached a copy of the Masterplan to the file.

1.3. The appeal site forms the northern part of the Bennetstown LRD, being developed over three phases. Permission for Phase 1, which includes the appeal site, was granted subject to conditions under An Bord Pleanála Reference ABP-320049-24 in November 2024. Permitted Phase 1 development relates to 267 no. dwellings and associated development works.

1.4. The application which is the subject of this appeal is a modification to the permitted Phase 1 development and proposes alterations to permitted Blocks A, B and C to provide a greater number of units. The proposal seeks to increase the number of apartments in Phase 1 from 76 to 124 units and the number of permitted units in that phase from 267 to 315.

1.5. The combined number of units from permitted LRD Phases is stated as 932 units, which comprises 267 no. units in Phase 1, 309 units in Phase 2 and 356 units in Phase 3. All three phases are by the same developer. Section 5 of this report outlines the planning history of the appeal site and the various LRD applications in the vicinity which relate to the three phases at Bennetstown, Dunboyne North, Co. Meath.

2.0 Site Location and Description

2.1. The subject site which is stated to measure c.0.92ha is located in the townland of

Bennetstown, to the north of the defined development boundary of Dunboyne town and approximately 3km from the town centre. The site forms part of a larger landholding within the applicant's control and where planning permission for residential development has been granted previously (see Planning History section below).

2.2. The site is located immediately south of the M3 Parkway railway station and park and ride facility, west of the Tolka River and the Dunboyne to Clonsilla railway line and east of the R149 (Clonee-Lucan Road). It is accessible from the R157 located to the west of the site. The Tolka River flows beyond the eastern site boundary and the M3 Motorway runs further east of the site.

2.3. Construction works have commenced on the Bennettstown lands, including the subject site.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1. Permission is sought for a Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) and the public notices reflect that the proposal will replace 76 no. apartments previously permitted under Reg. Ref. 23/60290 and ABP-320049-24. In essence the proposed development relates to modifications of the aforementioned LRD application. The proposed development consists of the following elements:

- The construction of 124 no. apartments in two blocks (denoted on drawings as Blocks A, B and C). Block A is of five storey design and has a principal roof height of 16.95m. Blocks B and C are of four storey design and have a principal roof height of 13.95m.
- Block A accommodates 62 apartments consisting of 15 no. studios, 32 no. 1 bed units and 15 no. 2 bed units. At ground floor level there is a storage room for 77 no. bikes, a Plant/Tank Room and a Bin Store.
- Blocks B and C, which are physically attached, each accommodate 31 no. apartments consisting of 8 no. studios, 16 no. 1 bed units and 7 no. 2 bed units. Each block has the benefit of internal bike stores for 39 no. bicycles. There is also a Bin Store in Block B which is accessible to both blocks.

- Compared to the parent permission Block A has increased in width from c.14.35m to c.18.15m (+3.8m), while its length has increased from c.42.2m to c.50.8m (+c.8.6m).
- Compared to the parent permission Blocks B and C have each increased in width from c.14.35m to c.14.77m (+0.42m), while their lengths have each increased from c.41.85m to c.43.7m (+c.1.85m).
- An urban plaza is located to the front of the proposed apartment blocks and bounded to the north by the existing road, beyond which lies the M3 park and ride facility. The plaza includes a variety of soft and hard landscaping measures in accordance with the previously permitted scheme. Areas of communal open space are located to the south-east of Blocks B and C and to the rear (east) of Block A, cumulatively measuring 710 sqm.
- The proposed foul pumping station is located at the eastern extremity of the appeal site. It is designed to serve the amended development, subject to an upgrade of the associated storage volume to accommodate the increased residential load arising from the proposed amendment.
- Ancillary development works include footpaths, cycle lanes, car parking (49 no. spaces to include 4 no. Go Car spaces), bicycle parking (155 spaces to include visitor and resident's parking), drainage, public lighting, and an ESB substation located at the western extremity of the site.

3.2. The following Tables set out some key aspects of the proposed development.

Table 3.1 – Key Figures

Site Area	0.92 hectares (subject site)
Number of Units	124 apartments which represents an uplift of 48 units on the development permitted under ABP-320049-24.
Height	Block A: 5 storeys. Block B: 4 storeys.
Density (units per hectare – uph)	Density is examined in the context of the overall Phase 1 development lands rather than the

	appeal site in isolation. Arising from the proposed increase in units from 76 to 124, net density will increase from 51.5 to 60.8 uph based on a net developable area of 5.18.
Dual Aspect	36 no. apartments (29%) are dual or triple aspect which is in excess of the minimum 25% requirement. All single aspect units are either east, west or south facing. No single aspect units face north.
Open Space / Amenities	<u>Public Open Space</u> The subject site is zoned A2 Residential in the County Development Plan (CDP). Three areas of public open space within the site are identified in Drawing No. 2522/P/004 and measure 2,528 sqm in total. Drawing No. 2522/P/004 notes that the developable area of A2 Residential Zoned Lands across the whole Phase 1 lands is 5.18ha and indicates that public open space provision on A2 lands is 15.6%. <u>Communal Open Space</u> Two areas totalling 710 sqm adjoining the apartment blocks is provided and comprises landscaped spaces with tree planting.
Pedestrian / Cycle Infrastructure	Active travel and vehicular connectivity linking to surrounding proposed residential areas. Also connectivity to transport infrastructure / railway station proximate to the site.

Car and Bicycle Parking	Car – 49 spaces in total all at surface level. 4 of the spaces are designated for a car shared service (GoCar). Bicycle – 155 no. spaces which are distributed within three storage rooms at ground floor level in the blocks. 62 visitor spaces stated to be distributed across the scheme within the public realm.
Part V	12 no. units in total, within Block C.

Table 3.2 – Overall Unit Breakdown

	Block A	Block B	Block C	Total	% Mix
Studio	15	8	8	31	25%
1 Bed	32	16	16	64	52%
2 Bed	15	7	7	29	23%
Total	62	31	31	124	100%

Table 3.3 – Overview of changes to the permitted Phase 1 scheme (ABP-320049-24 refers)

	Permitted	Proposed	Change in number (- +)
Residential Units	267	315	+48
Density (net)	52 uph	60.8 uph	+8.8 uph
Unit Mix	28 x 1 beds (10.5%) 144 x 2 beds (54%) 87 x 3 beds (32.5%)	31 x studios (9.8%) 64 x 1 beds (20.3%) 125 x 2 beds (39.7%) 87x 3 beds (27.6%)	+31 studios +36 x 1 beds - 19 x 2 beds No change

	8 x 4 beds (3%)	8 x 4 beds (2.6%)	No change
Houses	145	145	No change
Apartments	122 x apartments in 7 blocks (A-G)	170 x apartments in 7 blocks (A-G)	+48
Blocks A, B and C	76 units 28 x 1 beds (36.8%) 48 x 2 beds (63.2%)	124 units 31 x studios (25%) 64 x 1 beds (51.6%) 29 x 2 beds (23.4%)	+31 studios +36 x 1 beds - 19 x 2 beds
Creche	65 spaces (280sqm)	65 spaces (280sqm)	No change
Car Parking	357	366	+2 GoCar spaces +7 standard spaces
Cycle Parking	649	671	+30 secure spaces - 8 visitor spaces
Open Space	16.1%	15.6%	-0.5%
Access	Link Road from Navan Road	Link Road from Navan Road	No change

3.3. A Confirmation of Feasibility (COF) has issued to the applicant from Uisce Eireann noting that both water supply and wastewater connections are feasible subject to upgrades. Application documentation indicates that the public watermain is presently under construction. The pumping station which forms part of the proposed development will serve the upsized development subject to an upgrade of the associated storage volume to accommodate the increased loading from the proposed modification to the development.

3.4. In relation to surface water drainage, run-off from the proposed apartment development will remain as permitted under the parent planning application and will discharge to the existing drainage network which is constructed and operational. SUDS features include tree pits and rain gardens.

3.5. In addition to standard plans and particulars, this LRD application was accompanied by several supporting documents. These include, but are not limited to:

- Letter of consent from landowner for applicant to lodge LRD application
- Statement of Consistency
- Planning Report
- Daylight and Sunlight Assessment Report
- Visuals / CGIs
- Housing Quality Assessment (HQA)
- Statement of Housing Mix
- Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- Architectural Design Statement
- Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP)
- Landscape Design Statement
- Building Lifecycle Report
- Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)
- Climate Action Energy Statement
- Operational Waste Management Plan (OWMP)
- Mobility Management Plan (Amendment)
- Outdoor Lighting Report
- Childcare Demand Report
- School Demand Report
- Social Infrastructure Audit
- EIAR Addendum Report
- Ecology Technical Note

4.0 Planning Authority Pre-Application Opinion

4.1. According to the application form, the LRD Section 247 meeting was held on 10th March 2026 between the applicant and Meath County Council.

4.2. The LRD Opinion subsequently issued by the planning authority on 9th April 2026 considered that (a) the proposed development is substantially the same as the previously permitted on the lands, and (b) the nature, scale and effect of any alterations to the permitted development are not such that require the consultation process to be repeated. The planning authority determined that no further consultation is required in relation to the proposal.

5.0 Planning Authority Decision

5.1. Decision

5.1.1. The planning authority granted permission on 15th July 2026 subject to 15 no. conditions. The majority of the conditions are standard in nature. Noteworthy conditions (summarised below) include:

Condition 2: The development to comply with the conditions and expiry date of parent permission ABP. Ref. 320049-24, given as 19th November 2029.

Condition 3: The final number of permitted units is 124, with the overall development (Phase 1) to contain 315 no. units.

Condition 4: The mitigation and monitoring measures in the EIAR and EIA Addendum Report to be implemented.

Condition 5: (a) The transportation conditions of ACP Ref. 320049-24 to be complied in full. (b) A Mobility Management Plan to be finalised prior to occupation of any units on site, with details to be agreed with the planning authority.

Condition 7: Part V condition.

Condition 9: Details of universally designed units (at least 15%) to be submitted to planning authority.

Conditions 10 to 15 inclusive relate to cash deposit and financial contribution conditions.

Condition 14 relates to a contribution condition of €200 per unit towards expenditure incurred by the planning authority in the monitoring of the construction phases of the development.

Condition 15 relates to a financial contribution condition in respect of the re-opening of the Navan to Dublin Railway Line Phase 1 in accordance with the Supplementary Development Contribution Scheme.

5.2. **Planning Authority Reports**

5.2.1. **Planning Report:** The planning report dated 10th July 2026 includes a site description, details of the proposed development, planning history, summaries of relevant national and local policies, summaries of both internal and external reports received, a synopsis of the third party submission and a planning assessment. Some of the sub-headings of the assessment may be summarised as follows:

5.2.2. *Principle of development* – Amendments to the permitted development are limited and principally relate to the reconfiguration and redesign of the permitted apartment blocks in order to provide an additional 48 no. apartments. Given the *A2 – New Residential* zoning objective of the site, the nature of the proposal and the relevant planning history (ABP-320049-24 refers), the development is acceptable in principle.

5.2.3. *Siting, Design and Layout* – Proposed blocks A, B and C would occupy positions on the site almost identical to those permitted under ABP-320049-24 and will have roof heights below those permitted under the parent permission. The planning authority is therefore satisfied that no additional loss of privacy or overlooking or loss of daylight/sunlight would occur on neighbouring properties.

5.2.4. The proposed scheme retains the same pedestrian and vehicular access arrangements and landscaping/open space strategy as previously permitted. The proposed apartment footprints are increased in both length and width to facilitate the

additional number of units. Proposed density at 60.8uph as given by the applicant is acceptable.

5.2.5. Separation distances are compliant with CDP standards and those outlined in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Guidelines (2024). Private open spaces comprising terraces or balconies are compliant with all relevant standards. The proposed unit mix is acceptable. All units exceed minimum requirements outlined in the Section 28 Guidelines. When accounting for the proposed amendment, Phase 1 provides c.15.6% of the site area (5.18ha) as public open space and therefore is compliant with the CDP.

5.2.6. *Appropriate Assessment* – Given the mitigation measures identified in the NIS (which was submitted as part of the previous Phase 1 application on the overall landholding) it is concluded that significant adverse effects to the Qualifying Interests are unlikely to occur as a result of the proposal, alone or in-combination with other plans.

5.2.7. *Environmental Impact Assessment* – An addendum EIAR is submitted and concludes that the proposed modifications to the permitted LRD application do not have a significant impact on the conclusions of the completed EIAR. The planning authority concludes that the effects on the environment of the proposed development, by itself and in combination with other development in the vicinity, is acceptable.

5.2.8. **Other Technical Reports**

Ecology Report (25th June 2026)

- No impacts anticipated provided mitigation measures outlined in the original EIAR are implemented.
- Minor changes to the number of units proposed. The proposal is supported by an Ecology Letter provided on behalf of the applicant stating that proposed amendments would not result in impacts to designated sites.
- The local authority ecologist has determined following implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the NIS provided with the previous application that significant adverse effects to the Qualifying Interests are unlikely to occur as a result of this proposal, alone or in-combination with other plans. In reaching that determination

the ecologist considered the scale, nature and location of the proposed development, as well as mitigation measures to prevent water quality impacts and that sufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate that foul emissions can be accommodated within the Ringsend WWTP. There is no objection to the proposal subject to the mitigation measures outlined in the original EIAR and NIS being implemented in full.

Environment - Waste Section (10th July 2026)

- No objection subject to conditions.

Housing (26th June 2026)

- Part V requirement to be met by delivery of units on site.

Transportation Department (19th June 2026)

- No objection subject to conditions.

Public Lighting

- The lighting design submission is satisfactory.

5.3. **Prescribed Bodies**

Uisce Eireann (UÉ): A Confirmation of Feasibility (COF) has issued advising that water and wastewater connections are feasible with infrastructure upgrades. In terms of water supply, the upgrade project is scheduled to be completed by Q1 2027 and proposed connection could be completed after these works. In relation to wastewater, the COF notes the applicant is to engage with UÉ regarding the design/sizing of the wastewater pumping station to cater for the additional units and to ensure storage requirements are met for the additional flows. The Engineering Services Report submitted notes the pumping station has been upgraded to accommodate the proposal, as agreed with UÉ.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII): The submission requests the planning authority to have regard to Chapter 3 (Development Management and Roads) of DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines in respect of this application. Any

works interacting with the national road network are subject to national road policy requirements.

Dublin Airport Authority (DAA): The submission notes the proposed development is located within Dublin Airport Noise Zone C, where aircraft noise may give rise to annoyance and sleep disturbance. The submission lists relevant CDP policies in this regard. While DAA indicates no objection in principle to residential development in Noise Zone C, the proposal is within an area in which any population increase will be counted against the achievement of the Noise Abatement Objective (NAO). If permitted, the number of people Highly Annoyed (HA) and Highly Sleep Deprived (HSD) will increase having regard to the way in which the measurable criteria of the NAO are currently enumerated. To address such concerns it is requested that considerations are applied when assessing the proposal and these include alignment with the NAO, noise impact assessments, enhanced disclosure of Noise Zone location to prospective occupiers/purchasers and post-planning compliance verifying implementation and effectiveness of noise mitigation measures.

I note that condition 7 of the parent permission (ABP-320049-24) relates to internal noise levels and submission of a scheme of noise mitigation measures for agreement by the planning authority, in the interest of residential amenity and to address the site location relative to flight paths associated with Dublin Airport and within Noise Zone C.

5.4. Third Party Observations

One third party observation was received from nearby residents. Some matters raised are reflected in the grounds of the third party appeal as set out in section 9 of this report, below. Other issues raised are summarised as follows:

- The proposal is a substantial departure from the development permitted on this site under the parent permission, and constitutes a significant increase in residential density, adjoining the third part's property.
- Proposed apartment blocks are significantly larger and more intensive than those permitted and will result in overshadowing and blocking of daylight and sunlight to the rear garden and living areas.

- Inadequate infrastructure within the site including insufficient car parking, bin storage, bicycle storage.
- Childcare provision inadequate; the proposed creche should be enlarged.
- Inadequate community facilities including medical and educational infrastructure.
- Internal road layout may be inadequate given the proposed increased density.

6.0 Planning History

Overall lands

Phases

Phase 1: ABP-320049-24 (Reg. Ref. 23/60290) refers to a LRD for 267 residential units, childcare facility and all ancillary development works. The application included an EIAR and NIS. Permission was granted by An Bord Pleanála on 20th November 2024.

Amendment to Phase 1: Reg. Ref. 25/61001 refers to a November 2025 decision to grant permission made by Meath County Council for a LRD comprising modifications to ABP-320049-24 (Reg. Ref. 23/60290) consisting of realignment of a portion of the link road connecting the R157 and Old Navan Road, the provision of a foul sewer and new pumping station (to facilitate improvements to existing adjoining homeowners along the Old Navan Road which are presently served by individual septic tanks) and all associated ancillary development works at Bennetstown and Dunboyne, Dunboyne North, Co. Meath. The application included an EIA Addendum Report and NIS.

Phase 2: Reg. Ref. 24/60805 refers to a November 2024 decision to grant permission made by Meath County Council for a LRD consisting of 309 residential units, creche and all associated works, principally located in Bennetstown, to the west of the R157 and also extending into Pace and Dunboyne townlands, Dunboyne North, Co. Meath. The red line boundary overlaps with Reg. Refs. 23/60290, 23/60065 and 23/424. The application included an EIAR and NIS.

Phase 3: ACP-324353-26 (Reg. Ref. 26/60001) refers to a LRD for 356 dwelling units and all site works. The application included an EIAR and NIS. Both a first and third party appeal were submitted. The third party appeal was withdrawn on 28th August 2026. The first party appeal was in respect of Condition No. 39 of the decision of Meath

County Council relating to the imposition of a supplementary development contribution under Section 49 (1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Commission decided to uphold imposition of the contribution condition on 10th September 2026.

North-west of the appeal site

ABP-320091-25 (Reg. Ref. 23/424) refers to a March 2025 decision to grant permission for construction of 3 office buildings (3 to 4 storeys in height) and associated site works. Located north-west of the appeal site. The application included an NIS.

Adjoining to the west

Reg. Ref. 23/60065 refers to a June 2024 decision by Meath County Council to grant a 10 year permission for a supermarket, commercial units, café, a four arm signalised junction, upgrade works to existing roads, car and bicycle parking, electricity substation, foul sewer connection, pumping station and all associated works located south-west of the M3 Parkway and south-east of the Dunboyne Bypass, in the townland of Bennetstown and in the townlands of Pace, Bennetstown and Dunboyne, Co. Meath.

Other

A significant number of decisions to grant permission for LRD developments, railway development and road upgrade works have been made in the wider area.

7.0 Policy Context

7.1. National Planning Framework (NPF) – First Revision (2025)

7.1.1. The NPF is the long-term 20-year strategy for strategic planning and sustainable development of Ireland's urban and rural areas to 2040, with the core objectives of securing balanced regional development and a sustainable 'compact growth' approach to the form and pattern of future development. It is focused on delivering 10 National Strategic Outcomes.

7.1.2. Relevant National Policy Objectives (NPOs) include:

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

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

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

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

NPO 42 – To target the delivery of housing to accommodate approximately 50,000 additional homes per annum to 2040.

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

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

7.2. Delivering Homes, Building Communities (2025)

7.2.1. This plan aims to further accelerate the delivery of new homes, to deliver 300,000 by the end of 2030, which will be achieved through the individual and collective effort of the key delivery partners. Local authorities, together with Approved Housing Bodies, the Land Development Agency, and the construction sector, will be critical to delivering and enabling the delivery of the quantum of homes needed over the lifetime of the plan. This is a wide-ranging strategy, encompassing two pillars: Activating Supply and Supporting People.

7.3. Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2025

7.3.1. CAP 2025 is the third statutory annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. It lays out a roadmap of actions which will ultimately lead Ireland to meeting our national climate objective of pursuing and achieving, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy. It aligns with the legally binding economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings that were agreed by Government in July 2022. It should be read in conjunction with CAP 2024.

7.4. **Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030**

7.4.1. This aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature. It strives for a 'whole of government, whole of society' approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss, while also understanding how they can act to address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to 'act for nature.'

7.4.2. **Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)**

7.4.3. The Guidelines set out policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of urban and rural settlements, with a focus on sustainable residential development and the creation of compact settlements. There is a renewed focus in the Guidelines on, inter alia, the interaction between residential density, housing standards, and quality urban design and placemaking to support sustainable and compact growth.

7.4.4. I consider the subject site to be within the 'Centre and Urban Neighbourhoods' category in the context of a Metropolitan town with a population of more than 1,500, having regard to Table 3.3 which 'includes (i) the town centre and immediately surrounding neighbourhoods, (ii) strategic and sustainable development locations, and (iii) lands around existing or planned high capacity public transport nodes or interchanges (defined in Table 3.8). It is a policy and objective of these Guidelines that

residential densities in the range 50 dph to 150 dph (net) shall generally be applied in the centres and in urban neighbourhoods of Metropolitan Towns.

7.5. Planning Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025)

7.5.1. These set national planning policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of apartment schemes. Fulfilling commitments set out in the NPF will require a substantial increase in housing output of all types, and in particular the delivery of apartments at central and accessible urban locations. The overall purpose of the Guidelines is to strike an effective regulatory balance, ensuring that apartment development meets the needs of society in terms of standards and quality, while promoting an increased level of output overall.

7.5.2. The Guidelines include seven Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPR). SPPRs relevant to this Large Scale Residential Development are summarised below.

SPPR 2	This SPPR relates to minimum floor areas to generally apply to apartment schemes, noting statutory plans shall not specify minimum floor areas that exceed the minimum floor areas set out as follows: • Studio – 32sqm • 1 bedroom apartment (2 persons) – 45sqm • 2 bedroom apartment (3 persons) – 63sqm • 2 bedroom apartment (4 persons) – 73sqm • 3 bedroom apartment (4 persons) – 76sqm • 3 bedroom apartment (5 persons) – 90sqm
SPPR 3	(i) A minimum of 25% of units within a development shall be required to be dual aspect. Statutory plans shall not specify minimum requirements that exceed the requirements of this SPPR. (ii) Planning authorities may exercise further discretion to consider dual aspect unit provision at a level lower than the 25% minimum outlined above on a case-by-case basis for building refurbishment schemes, subject to the achievement of overall high design quality in other aspects.
SPPR 4	Ground level apartment floor to ceiling heights shall be a minimum of 2.7m. Planning authorities may exercise discretion on a case-by case basis for building refurbishment schemes, subject to overall design quality.
SPPR 5	There shall be no requirement within statutory plans or within an individual scheme in respect of a minimum number of units per floor per core.

7.6. Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly: Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031

7.6.1. The RSES provides for the development of nine counties / 12 local authority areas, including Meath County Council. It is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities, and pressures, and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives. It provides a framework for investment to better manage spatial planning and economic development throughout the region and supports the implementation of Project Ireland 2040.

7.6.2. Dunboyne is situated in the Dublin Metropolitan Area, where it is intended to deliver sustainable growth through the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) to facilitate a steady supply of zoned serviced land. Key MASP principles include compact sustainable growth, accelerated housing delivery and integrated transport. Dunboyne is identified in the RSES alongside Leixlip, Maynooth and Dublin 15 lands, as forming part of a North-West corridor that has short to long-term additional population capacity for between 24,000 and 37,000. Short to medium-term strategic development of this area is dependent on phasing of enabling infrastructure, which the RSES refers to as comprising LUAS extension to Maynooth, roads upgrades, community and social infrastructure, wastewater and local water network upgrades.

7.6.3. Table 5.1 of the RSES 'Strategic Development Areas and Corridors, Capacity Infrastructure and Phasing' notes that residential development at Dunboyne, located along the North-West Corridor (Maynooth/Dunboyne commuter line / DART expansion) of the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan will comprise 'Sequential development prioritising zoned and serviced lands near the railway station and town centre and at Dunboyne North / M3 Parkway station.'

7.6.4. The following Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) summarised below are considered relevant to this application:

- RPO 3.2 – In promoting compact urban growth, a target of at least 50% of all new homes should be built within or contiguous to the existing built-up area of Dublin City and its suburbs, with a target of at least 30% required for other areas.

- RPO 3.3 – Regeneration areas and increase of densities in line with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009), the New Apartment Guidelines and the Building Height Guidelines.

7.7. **Meath County Development Plan (MCDP) 2021-2027**

7.7.1. The MCDP 2021-2027 is the operational statutory plan for Meath including Dunboyne and the subject lands. I note that the original MCDP 2021-2027 (adopted on 22nd September 2021) has been superseded by a Consolidated version of the MCDP 2021-2027, including Variations 1 to 5, outlined below.

7.7.2. The majority of the appeal site is zoned 'A2-New Residential.' The proposal also involves some development on lands zoned 'F1-Open Space' including a foul pumping station. Utilities are a permitted use under the F1 zoning objective.

7.7.3. Five variations have been made to the MCDP and these are summarised below.

Variation No. 1, made on 13th May 2024, relates to the following:

- Introduces an objective to facilitate the replacement of the Written Statements for respective settlements in the Meath CDP 2021-2027 with a new Local Area Plan, Joint Local Area Plan or Joint Urban Area Plan.
- Incorporates guidance from the 'Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2022', into Chapter 2 'Core Strategy' to ensure an adequate supply of housing can be delivered to meet demand in the county.
- Reallocation of residential units to larger settlements in Tier 3-4 in accordance with the CDP growth and settlement strategy and to ensure full utilisation of existing infrastructure and resources in the County.

Variation No. 2, also made on 13th May 2024, relates to the following:

- The zoning objective of several land parcels was changed to reflect revised and new circumstances that have emerged since the adoption of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

- Amendment (j) updates the text of Section 7.0 of Dunboyne, Clonee and Pace Written Statement, Volume 2 of the MCDP. The amended text removes reference to 'a maximum of 500 residential units' given that the land is proximate to the train station and the potential to accommodate between 800-1000 residential units, and that it is not reflective of the current development strategy for Dunboyne, Pace and Clonee.

Variation No. 3, made on 27th January 2025, relates to the following:

- Updates the MCDP to take account of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guideline for Planning Authorities (2024).
- Updates the MCDP to take account of age friendly housing measures outlined in various policy documents.
- Increases the percentage range for the quantum of residential uses permitted on Town Centre/Mixed use zoned lands.

Variation No. 4, made on 7th July 2025 incorporates the Maynooth and Environs Joint Local Area Plan (LAP) into the MCDP.

Variation No. 5, made on 8th June 2026, relates to the following:

- Updates the MCDP to take account of the new housing targets set out in the National Planning Framework Implementation: Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines published in July 2025 and issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.
- The written statements for settlements (Volume 2) that contain lands proposed for rezoning are amended, with adjustments primarily relating to the household allocation for the relevant areas and projected population growth and the new annual growth requirements for the county as outlined in the NPF Implementation Housing Growth Requirements Guidelines 2025.
- Amends land use zonings and development / settlement boundaries to reflect any lands identified for development in the lifetime of the MCDP. Lands in eleven settlements are rezoned. This includes lands located to then north-west of the settlement, proximate to employment lands at Dunboyne Business Park and Dunboyne College of Further Education, rezoned from A2 Phasing – Post 2027 to A2 – New Residential. Volume 1 of the MCDP provides the Written Statement;

Volume 2 contains the Written Statement and Maps for Settlements; Volume 3 provides the Book of Maps; Volume 4 includes Environmental Assessments SEA, AA and SFRA along with a number of appendices.

7.7.4. Chapter 2 relates to the Core Strategy. Based on its location within the MASP, the MCDP, as varied, recognises that Dunboyne as having capacity to deliver significant residential and employment growth. Dunboyne / Dunboyne North is identified in the Plan as a Self-Sustaining Growth Town within the third tier of the county settlement strategy.

I have extracted the following relevant information for Dunboyne from Table 2.12: Core Strategy Table, Population and Household distribution to 2027.

Settlement	**Population 2016**	**Projected Population 2027**	**Household Allocation for Plan Period**
Dunboyne	7,272	10,572	2,002

I have extracted the following relevant information from Table 2.12B: Core Strategy Supplementary Table, which outlines the lands to be brought forward to accommodate revised housing growth requirements as set out in the NPF Housing Growth Requirements: Implementation Guidelines (2025). Variation 5 of the MCDP 2021-2027 refers.

Settlement	**Area of Adjusted Lands (ha)**	**Previous zoning**	**Revised zoning**	**Area of additional A2 residential zoned lands**	**Potential No. of Units**
Dunboyne	8.56	A2 Phasing – Post 2027	A2 - New Residential	8.56	308

I note that the Written Settlement for Dunboyne, Clonee and Pace within Volume 2 of the Consolidated MCDP 2021-2027, as varied, confirms Core Strategy Household Allocation 2020-2027 for Dunboyne as 2,310 units.

7.7.5. **Chapter 3** relates to Settlement and Housing Strategy. Relevant policies / objectives, summarised below include:

SH POL 9: Promote higher residential densities un appropriate locations close to town centres and along public transport corridors in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines.

SH POL 13: To require that all new residential developments shall be in accordance with the standards set out in the Development Management Standards and Land Use Zoning Objectives set out in Chapter 11.

SH OBJ 8: To continue to promote Dunboyne as a key settlement in the Metropolitan Area of Dublin.

SH OBJ 15: To address the identified need to increase the supply of social housing in Dunboyne and other areas.

SH OBJ 21: To require that, where relevant, all new residential developments shall be in accordance with SSPR 1 to SPPR 4 of the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, December 2018 as well as SPPR 1 to SPPR 9 of the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2023. All new residential development should comply with the densities outlined in Chapter 11 of this plan.

SH OBJ 22: Require the provision of between 15-30% of dwellings and apartments in new residential developments of ten units or more to be Age Friendly Lifetime Adaptable Homes, suitable to accommodate or adaptable to provide accommodation for people with disabilities and older people.

SH OBJ 23: Require that all new residential development applications of 50 units or more are accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Assessment (SIA) to determine if social and community facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents in accordance with the requirements of policy SOC POL 6 in the 'Community Building Strategy' (Chapter 7).

7.7.6. **Chapter 5** relates to Movement Strategy. Relevant objectives (summarised) include:

MOV OBJ 3: To ensure that design for cycle infrastructure for all relevant developments shall be carried out in accordance with the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan, other relevant design standards or any successors to these documents.

MOV OBJ 25: To facilitate the provision of electricity charging infrastructure for electric vehicles both on street and in new developments in accordance with car parking standards and best practice.

MOV OBJ 46: To require provision of parking standards in accordance with the standards set out in Chapter 11 Development Management for all developments.

7.7.7. Chapter 6 relates to Infrastructure Strategy. Relevant objectives (summarised) include:

INF OBJ 12: The Planning Authority shall consider the provision of temporary wastewater treatment facilities for new developments only in circumstances where a permanent solution is identified and committed to by Irish Water. The temporary solution shall only be considered where it is deemed to be environmentally sustainable and would not affect the water quality status of receiving waters. Adequate provision shall be made by the developer for the operation and maintenance of the temporary facility for the duration of the operation of the required infrastructure.

INF OBJ 15: To require the use of SuDS in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works for new developments (including extensions).

7.7.8. **Chapter 11** relates largely to Development Management Standards. Relevant policies/objectives (summarised below) include:

DM OBJ 7: Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems(SuDS) measures are required to form part of the design of all developments.

DM POL 4: All proposals for residential development to demonstrate compliance with the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines 2024.

DM OBJ 13: A detailed Design Statement to accompany all planning applications for residential development on sites in excess of 0.2ha or for more than 10 units.

DM POL 5: To promote a range of densities appropriate to the scale of settlement, site location, availability of public transport and community facilities.

DM OBJ 14: Indicates net densities to be encouraged. Densities at or above the mid-density range encouraged at the most central and accessible locations.

DM OBJ 16: Site coverage shall generally not exceed 80%. Higher site coverage may be permissible in certain limited circumstances such as adjacent to public transport corridors.

DM OBJ 20: Any residential development proposal exceeding 3 or more storeys in height shall demonstrate adequate separation distances having regard to layout, size and design between blocks to ensure privacy and protection of residential amenity.

DM OBJ 23: All applications for residential development to be accompanied by a detailed phasing plan.

DM OBJ 24: To require provision of EV charging points to serve residential development.

DM OBJ 25: To require development with increased building height at a number of locations including Dunboyne Central rail station and Pace rail station.

DM OBJ 26: Public open space to be provided at a minimum rate of 15% of the total site area for residential development.

DM POL 12: Apartment schemes shall generally be encouraged in appropriate sustainable locations accessible to public transport in a number of named locations including Dunboyne.

DM POL 14: All apartment planning applications shall demonstrate compliance with the 2023 Apartment Guidelines and any updates thereof.

DM OBJ 39: An appropriate unit mix shall be provided to cater for a variety of household types and tenures. Proposals shall be assessed having regard to a number of requirements including amenity spaces, floor to ceiling heights, lift/stair core access and storage.

Table 11.2 relates to Car Parking. At accessible locations a maximum of 1.5 spaces per dwelling/unit is stated.

DM OBJ 94: All car parks shall include the provision of necessary wiring and ducting to be capable of accommodating future Electric Vehicle charging points, at a rate of 20% of total space numbers.

DM OBJ 95: In any car park in excess of 20 spaces where public access is available, four fully functional charging points for EVs shall be provided in accordance with IEC 61854 Standard for Electric Vehicle Conductive Charging Systems.

Section 12 of Chapter 11 relates to Dublin Airport Noise Zones. Relevant policy (summarised below) includes:

DM POL 31: Manage noise sensitive development in Noise Zones B and C, where aircraft noise zones may give rise to annoyance and sleep disturbance and to ensure, where appropriate, noise insulation is incorporated within the development.

Section 14 relates to Land Use Zoning Objectives.

7.7.9. Development Plan Volume 2: Written Statement - Dunboyne, Clonee and Pace settlement area, notes the following:

Section 5.1 Residential

- Primary areas for population growth will be in Dunboyne and Dunboyne North adjacent to the M3 Parkway Park and Ride.
- A Master Plan is to be prepared for Dunboyne North lands, which have the potential to deliver a sustainable mixed use 'live work' community adjacent to a rail station with capacity to accommodate employment and residential growth.
- The lands at Dunboyne central rail station and the M3 Parkway are considered capable of accommodating buildings of increased height.

Section 6 - Various policies and objectives for Dunboyne, which include the following (summarised):

Settlement and Housing

DCE OBJ 1: To support and encourage residential development on under-utilised land and/or vacant lands including 'infill' and 'brownfield' sites, subject to a high standard of design and layout being achieved.

DCE OBJ 4: To prioritise the delivery of residential development on the residentially zoned lands adjacent to Dunboyne Rail Station and Dunboyne North.

Infrastructure

DCE OBJ 7: To liaise with and support Irish Water to endeavour to provide adequate water services to meet the development needs of Dunboyne and Clonee within the Plan period.

Master Plans

DCE OBJ 8: To facilitate the preparation of a Master Plan at MP22 Lands at Dunboyne North.

Social Infrastructure

DCE OBJ 10: To support and facilitate the provision of new educational facilities for Dunboyne College of Further Education preferably at lands proximate to the rail station at Dunboyne North.

Movement

DCE OBJ 13: To encourage and facilitate the provision of east – west connections across the railway on the lands zoned for new residential development.

DCE OBJ 16: To support and facilitate in conjunction with the National Transport Authority the extension of the existing bus service to the M3 parkway and development lands to the north of Dunboyne.

7.7.10. Section 7 notes that there are 3 Master Plan areas in Dunboyne. Master Plan 22 relates to Dunboyne North. It is stated that the Master Plan shall address land use, transportation, connectivity, urban design, recreation, and environmental impacts, and provide unifying vision and goals for the various land uses. In relation to residential uses, the following is stated: *In regard to the residential element of the Master Plan, it shall be a requirement that proposals will include the provision of residential units with a range of typologies to support the delivery of a sustainable "live work" community-based model.*

7.8. **Natural Heritage Designations**

The closest European Sites and the direction and distance to same are identified in the table below:

Closest European Sites

Site Name	Site Name	Distance (approx.)	Direction
001398	Rye Water Valley / Carton SAC	7km	southwest
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA	18km	southeast
000210	South Dublin Bay SAC	20km	southeast
004006	North Bull Island SPA	20km	southeast
000206	North Dublin Bay SAC	20km	southeast
004236	North-west Irish Sea SPA	22km	southeast

The Rye water Valley / Carton site is also a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA). The Liffey Valley pNHA is located c.7.5km south-east of the subject site.

8.0 The Appeal

8.1. Grounds of Appeal

A third party appeal has been made by Anthony and Olivia Malone of Bennettsbridge, Bennettstown, Dunboyne, Co. Meath against the decision of the planning authority to grant permission for the proposed development. The grounds of appeal may be summarised under relevant headings, as follows.

Overlooking impact

- Block A is located opposite the front elevation of the appellants' home. Due to the 5 storey height and proximity, overlooking impacts leading to a significant loss of privacy will occur.

Finished Ground Levels

- The proposed development includes roads, foundations and finished ground levels that are several metres higher than originally anticipated by neighbouring residents. Concern that the impact of raised levels has not been fully assessed in terms of the appellants' property.
- The increase in site levels materially intensifies the impact of the development. When measured from the elevated finished ground levels, the effective height of Block A is substantially greater than would otherwise be the case. As such overlooking, visual dominance and loss of residential amenity are significantly increased.

Visual Impact

- The five storey block together with elevated site levels creates an imposing built-form adjacent an established residential area. The development will dominate the outlook from the appellants' property and change the character of the area.
- The scale, massing and elevated position of the building results in an excessive visual impact which is not appropriately mitigated by the planning conditions attached to the permission.

Inadequate protection of existing residents

- Housing should not be provided at the expense of the established residential amenities of neighbouring properties.
- Insufficient weight is given to the impact on existing residents, in terms of impacts on privacy, overlooking and the cumulative effect of building height combined with increased ground levels.

Other

- Particular attention should be given to the relationship between Block A and adjoining existing homes, site levels and impacts on existing residential amenity.
- If the Commission is minded to grant permission measures to reduce adverse impacts on neighbouring properties should be considered including reduction in height of Block A, increasing separation distances, lowering finished site levels, redesigning fenestration or attaching other conditions to adequately protect residential amenity.

An excerpt of the proposed site plan is attached to the appeal. This indicates the location of the appellants' house relative to the proposed development.

8.2. **Applicant Response**

The applicant's agent responded to the appeal on 3rd September 2026. This may be summarised as follows:

Design and Scale

- The proposal relates to modification of a previously permitted development to facilitate an additional 48 no. apartments. The height, massing and scale of the proposed development is consistent with the previously permitted apartment buildings as permitted under ABP-320049-24.
- The modified scheme maintains the pedestrian and vehicular access arrangements, the plaza and open space areas as previously permitted, ensuring that the development integrates within Phase 1 and subsequent phases of development.
- The proposed apartment blocks are marginally increased in width to facilitate increases in residential density and to allow more efficient unit design and configuration.

Overlooking and Privacy

- While the permitted Phase 1 development provided a separation distance of 42.89m from the appellants' dwelling, this is reduced under the current proposal to 34.18m due to the increased width of the apartment block.
- The separation distance remains substantial and generous, and accords with Objective 20 of section 11.5.7 of the MCDP, relating to adequate separation distances to be demonstrated for residential developments exceeding three or more storeys.
- Views towards the appellants' property would be limited and oblique in nature, with the proposed development being more than 34m from that site. This distance, combined with restricted viewing angles and additional balcony setback safeguards the privacy and residential amenity of the appellants' adjoining

property. There would be no undue overlooking or any unacceptable loss of privacy or residential amenity.

- The proposal is consistent with policy set out in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities which supports compact growth and efficient use of serviced residential land.
- The modification proposes no changes to the height of the buildings from the permitted scheme (ABP-320049-24). The building heights (4 and 5 storeys) accord with CDP provisions and the Building Height Guidelines which are supportive of increased building heights in easily accessible locations, such as the subject site which directly adjoins a railway station.

Protection of residential amenity

- A daylight and sunlight assessment was included with the planning application and demonstrates the proposed amendments do not give rise to materially different daylight or sunlight effects when compared to the permitted scheme. It also confirms the proposal will not give rise to any material adverse impacts on existing neighbouring residential amenity.
- The appellants' site was comprehensively assessed for daylight, sunlight and garden sunlight access and was found to experience only negligible effects across all BRE assessment criteria.

Finished floor levels (FFLs)

- Proposed FFLs of the apartment blocks are consistent with those approved under the parent permission (ABP-320049-24). While minor amendments to surrounding ground levels are required to accommodate the revised site layout, the overall finished building heights remain lower than those previously permitted. The blocks are marginally reduced in height compared to the permitted scheme.
- It is considered that the modified proposal maintains the permitted height and overall character of the Phase 1 development.

Visual Impacts

- Verified views submitted with the planning application confirm that the proposal would result in only minor changes to the development's massing, scale and appearance.
- As the site is zoned for new residential development, the scheme can be accommodated without causing unacceptable landscape or visual impacts. The EIAR addendum report confirms that no new or materially different effects would arise and that the conclusions of the original landscape and visual assessment remain valid.

8.3. Planning Authority Response

No response received within the statutory period.

8.4. Observations

None.

9.0 Assessment

9.1.1. Having examined the application details and all other documentation on file, including the grounds of appeal, and inspected the site, and having regard to relevant local, regional and national policies and guidance, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal are as follows:

- Principle of development
- Density
- Design and Unit Mix
- Building scale, height, bulk and Visual Impact
- Impact on existing residential amenity
- Other matters
- EIA
- AA Screening
- Water Framework Directive – Screening
- Planning conditions

9.2. **Principle of development**

Zoning / Material Contravention

9.2.1. The significant majority of the subject site area is zoned 'Objective A2 – New Residential' in the MCDP 2021-2027, which seeks 'To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate.' 'Residential' development and 'Utilities' are permitted uses within the A2 zoning objective. The application provides residential development on residentially zoned land, which I consider is acceptable in principle subject to detailed consideration of the proposal. However, I note that the site also includes another land-use zoning, as outlined below.

9.2.2. Remaining lands within the red line boundary are zoned 'Objective F1 - Open Space' which seeks 'To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities.' Use classes within F1 zoned lands include 'Permitted Uses' such as 'Car Park for Recreational Purposes' and 'Utilities.' 'Open for Consideration Uses' include 'Childcare Facility' and 'vehicular / cyclist / pedestrian access to zoned lands where appropriate.'

9.2.3. The pumping station and car parking associated with the 65 place childcare facility, which itself was permitted under the parent permission ABP-320049-24 on the adjoining lands to the south, are located on lands zoned 'Objective F1 – Open Space.' It appears, however, that residential car parking (approximately 20 spaces, including one 'Go Car' space) is located on F1 Open Space lands.

9.2.4. Under the F1 Zoning Category in Chapter 11 there is a 'Guidance' note which states the following: *The Planning Authority will consider development proposals for utility development and transportation infrastructure on F1 Open Space zoned land on a case by case basis subject to the works being ancillary to and necessary for the appropriate development of adjacent lands. In all instances the integrity of the open space land as an amenity area shall not be significantly reduced.*

9.2.5. While I acknowledge the text set out above relating to the F1 Open Space Zoning Objective, in my view, the provision of car parking associated with the proposed

residential development on F1 lands is a non-conforming use. As such, in my opinion, I consider this aspect of the proposal to give rise to a material contravention of the F1 Open Space Zoning Objective and associated policy SH POL 13, requiring all new residential developments to accord, inter alia, with the Land Use Zoning Objectives set out in Chapter 11.

9.2.6. Notwithstanding, I advise the Commission that if it is minded to grant permission for the proposed development, it may do so having regard to section 37(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. I consider the proposed development to be of acceptable design quality which offers future residents a reasonable standard of amenity, and is appropriate in this location proximate to the M3 Parkway railway station. I note that Dunboyne is identified as a Self-Sustaining Town within the Dublin Metropolitan Area and these lands are identified for the development of new residential communities in the MCDP 2021-2027. Having regard to this strategic context, along with the current national housing shortage and national policy to significantly increase national housing output and increase residential densities in appropriate locations as detailed in the Revised NPF (2025) and *Delivering Homes, Building Communities* (2025), and having regard to the Compact Settlements Guidelines which focuses on sustainable residential development, seeks to increase residential densities and the creation of compact settlements, I consider the proposed development to be acceptable. I note there is ample open space in the immediate vicinity of the open space area earmarked for car parking.

Apartment Guidelines

9.2.7. The proposed apartment scheme has been designed in accordance with the Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025). I advise the Commission that Policy DM POL 14 of the MCDP notes that apartment planning applications shall demonstrate compliance with the 2023 Apartment Guidelines and 'any updates thereof.' Having regard to this Development Plan policy I consider it appropriate that the proposed apartment scheme is assessed against the 2025 Apartment Guidelines (section 9.1.1 above refers).

9.3. **Density**

9.3.1. In terms of national policies there is a clear focus on securing increased residential densities on zoned and serviced land. This is encapsulated in several national guidance documents, including the NPF – First Edition (2025) and the Sustainable Residential Development Compact Settlement Guidelines (2024). The Building Height Guidelines (2018) also support increased building height and density in locations with good transport accessibility and disallows blanket numerical limits on building heights. Chapter 3 of the Guidelines relate to the assessment of planning applications and appeals and notes there is a presumption in favour of buildings of increased height in city cores and urban locations with good public transport accessibility.

9.3.2. RPO 3.3 of the RSES is supportive of increased residential densities in line with national policy and guidance. In terms of local planning policy, SH POL 9 seeks to promote higher residential densities in appropriate locations including along public transport corridors. DCE OBJ 4 aims to prioritise delivery of residential development on the zoned lands adjacent to Dunboyne Rail Station and Dunboyne North and DM OBJ 25 seeks to require development with increased building height at a number of locations including Dunboyne Central rail station and Pace rail station.

9.3.3. Dunboyne / Dunboyne North is identified as a Self-Sustaining Town in the MCDP 2021-2027 and the RSES. DM OBJ 14 encourages residential densities of 50-150uph in Centre and Urban Neighbourhoods within Metropolitan towns and this aligns with the density parameters as set out in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Guidelines (2024).

9.3.4. I consider the site may be classified as located within a Metropolitan Town (>1,500 population) – Centre and Urban Neighbourhood as per Table 3.3 of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024. These areas are defined as being (i) the town centre and immediately surrounding neighbourhoods, (ii) strategic and sustainable development locations, and (iii) lands around existing or planned high capacity public transport nodes or interchanges (defined in Table 3.8). Residential densities in the range 50 dph to 150 dph (net) shall generally be applied in urban neighbourhoods of Metropolitan Towns.

9.3.5. Table 3.8 of the Compact Guidelines define high-capacity public transport nodes or interchanges as lands within 1,000 metres (1km) walking distance of an existing or planned high capacity urban public transport node or interchange, namely an interchange or node that includes DART, high frequency Commuter Rail, light rail or MetroLink services; or locations within 500m walking distance of an existing or planned Bus Connects 'Core Bus Corridor' stop.

9.3.6. The appeal site measures 0.92ha. For the purposes of calculation of net density the developable area of A2 zoned lands across the totality of Phase 1 development is indicated as 5.18ha (see section 3.1 of the submitted HQA). On this basis, the net density for all Phase 1 development, including the uplift of 48 units, is calculated as 60.8 uph.

9.3.7. I concur with the approach to density as taken by the applicant in this instance. The proposed development forms an integral part of the first phase of development on these lands and I consider it appropriate to calculate the density in the context of the wider Phase 1 development. Should permission be granted, Phase 1 net density would increase from 51.5 uph to 60.8 uph. Such a density would align with density parameters contained in both local and national policy documents, which seek to encourage higher residential densities at suitable locations, such as this site, proximate to a railway station, where possible.

9.3.8. Overall, having regard to the location of the subject site and its close proximity to railway services, I consider that the proposed development constitutes an appropriate quantum of development on the subject site. The proposal would accord with residential densities outlined in DM OBJ 14 of the MCDP and the requirements of Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024).

9.4. **Design and Unit Mix**

9.4.1. I note the planning authority undertook an assessment of the proposed development and concluded that it would generally comply with the relevant sections of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, the Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025), the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (2024) and Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities, Best

Practice Guidelines (2007), and in so doing would offer an acceptable level of residential amenity. Following a review of all the documentation available to me including the floor plans, the HQA, the Architectural Design Statement, the Planning Officer's report and all other submitted supporting documentation, I concur with the planning officer's conclusions in this regard. In terms of the proposed unit mix, Table 3.2 above provides the overall breakdown and notes that 25% of units are studios, 52% are 1 bed units and 23% are 2 bed units. CDP objective DM OBJ 39 requires an appropriate unit mix to be provided to cater for a variety of household types and tenures. The applicant has submitted a Statement of Housing Mix in support of the application, utilising Census 2022 data and considers that the proposed amendments to the unit mix will rebalance Phase 1 development toward smaller units to reflect the current household formation in Dunboyne. Notwithstanding the introduction of studios the applicant considers that Phase 1 will retain a significant family housing component ensuring a balanced community profile. The planning authority is satisfied with the proposed unit mix. The HQA is prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025). All units within the proposed development comply with minimum floor area standards set out in SPPR 2. I calculate, based on the HQA, that c.27.5% of units (i.e. 34 apartments) within the development exceed the minimum floor area standard by 10% and as such compliance with SPPR 2 is achieved. In terms of storage provision, all units either comply with minimum standards or are slightly above standard in this regard. The proposed units are served with private amenity space in the form of balconies or terraces, with all units meeting minimum standards, and many exceeding the minimum standard by 1sqm. In terms of SPPR 3, 36 no. units (29%) are indicated to be either dual or triple aspect, in excess of the minimum 25% requirement. The applicant has stated that all single aspect units are either east, south or west facing, with no single aspect unit facing north. Apartment floor to ceiling heights in all blocks meet the minimum standard of 2.7m as set out in SPPR 4, while floor to ceiling heights in all upper floors of the blocks are 2.5m. Block A has 13 units per floor per core on all floors with the exception of the ground floor, which accommodates 10 units. In this regard I note SPPR 5 of the 2025 Guidelines which states that there shall be no requirement within statutory plans or within an individual scheme in respect of a minimum number of units per floor per core. In terms of Blocks

B and C, there are 8 units per floor per core on all floors with the exception of the ground floor, which accommodates 7 units.

9.5. **Building scale, height, bulk and Visual Impact**

9.5.1. Scale, Height and Bulk

9.5.2. The appellants consider that Block A, by reason of its scale and five storey height would dominate and change the character the adjacent established residential area, and result in an excessive visual impact.

9.5.3. The heights of the proposed buildings on these lands are already established under the parent permission (ABP-320049-24). In this regard, Block A has a permitted height of five storeys, whilst Blocks B and C have permitted heights of four storeys.

9.5.4. The revised / modified proposal seeks to develop a total of 124 units within the blocks, equating to an additional 48 units overall. This proposed uplift in units would be facilitated mainly by increasing both the widths and lengths of the blocks, and developing units in line with the standards outlined in the 2025 Apartment Guidelines, which facilitate the construction of more modestly sized apartments than heretofore.

9.5.5. Upon examination of the elevation drawings and comparing these with the elevation drawings submitted with the parent application, it is evident that the proposed development involves no increases in the heights of any of the apartment blocks. In fact, as noted by both the planning authority and the first party, there are marginal decreases in the heights of the proposed blocks. Block A has a proposed finished roof height of 16.95m in this current application, compared with 17.05m under the parent Phase 1permission. Similarly, Blocks B and C have a maximum roof height of 13.95m under this application, compared with 14.85m under the parent Phase 1 permission. Based on the foregoing, I am satisfied that the block heights proposed in this application are acceptable and generally reflect the permitted heights under the Phase 1 parent permission (ABP-320049-24).

9.5.6. In terms of Blocks B and C, their width and length are very marginally increased in this application (by approximately 0.42m and 1.85m respectively). The increased

dimensions are modest in scale and in my view there would be little discernible difference relative to the size, scale and bulk of the permitted blocks (B and C). Having regard to the foregoing I would not anticipate any undue impacts arising from this change on any nearby sensitive receptor.

9.5.7. Increases to the width and length of Block A, as permitted under the parent permission, are greater. Examination of elevation drawings and plans show that Block A will increase in width from approximately 14.35m to approximately 18.15m (+3.8m), and it will increase in length from approximately 42.2m to 50.8m (+8.6m). As such the scale and bulk of Block A will increase.

9.5.8. In my opinion, there is sufficient space available around Block A, along with suitable separation distances from site boundaries, which enables the increased scale and bulk to be absorbed without unduly impacting on the appellants' property to the north-east of the site. Post-development, a good separation distance of 37m is evident between Block A and the appellants' house located to the north west.

Visual Impact

9.5.9. I note the concerns raised by the appellants regarding the potential visual impact of the proposed development and that it would change the character of this area. In this context I would note the planning history of this area which demonstrates planning permission is in place for significant residential and commercial developments. It is evident from policy contained in the MCDP and other plans that this area, known as Dunboyne North, is earmarked for significant development, not least on account of its proximity to the M3 railway station.

9.5.10. The appellants express concern that the proposed development by reason of its scale and design would have an excessive impact on the visual amenity of the area. As referred to above, I would note that the parent permission has established the principle of 4-5 storey heights on the subject site.

9.5.11. Proposed increases to the scale and bulk of Block A are outlined above and arise due to expansion in the length and width of the block to facilitate additional units. The increases in length (+8.6M) and width (+3.8m) are not very significant in the context of

the site, which is sufficiently sized and has capacity to accommodate these changes. Therefore, I consider that Block A would not appear overly dominant on the site when compared to its original iteration permitted under the parent LRD permission, and that its size, scale and bulk would be acceptable at this location.

9.5.12. I note that a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was provided in respect of the Phase 1 LRD application, which incorporates the subject lands. The LVIA was examined and assessed in the context of the subsequent appeal (ABP-320049-24 refers) and the Inspector was satisfied that the visual change arising from the proposed development would largely be imperceptible from wider areas, but moderate visual impacts would arise along the R157 when approaching the site, as well as the accesses and parking at the rail station. The report concludes that the appearance of the development would not be out of character with the emerging character of the area, including the permitted supermarket building of similar scale and height to the majority of the buildings proposed in the development.

9.5.13. Having reviewed the verified views provided with the current application, the subject of this appeal, which compare the permitted Phase 1 development with the proposed amendments and demonstrate the cumulative effects of Phases 1 to 3 inclusive, I consider that the proposal would, overall, result in relatively minor alterations to the scale, bulk and appearance of the permitted development and would not alter the 'moderate' visual amenity impact on the immediate area.

9.5.14. I note the LVIA in the Addendum EIAR finds that the proposed changes do not give rise to material changes in landscape or visual effects compared with those previously assessed, and that therefore the Phase 1 LVIA remains applicable and landscape effects and their significance remains unchanged. I concur with this conclusion, which is based on the relatively modest changes proposed in this LRD application relative to the permitted Phase 1 LRD which includes the appeal site.

9.5.15. To conclude, I consider that the proposed amendments to the permitted development would not be out of character with the emerging character of the area and would not seriously injure the visual amenity of the area.

Finished floor levels

9.5.16. The third party contends that the impact of the development is intensified because finished floor levels are several metres higher than anticipated by neighbouring residents. In response to this point, I note the applicant confirms that no significant changes to finished floor levels are proposed in this amendment application, when compared to the permitted development under the parent permission (ABP-320049-24).

9.5.17. Having regard to the public notices submitted with the planning application, I note that no increases in finished floor levels are sought. In this context I have examined the spot levels indicated on the 'Proposed Site Plan' (Drawing No. 25222/P/003E/P1) against those indicated on the 'Permitted Site Plan' (Drawing No. 25222/P/003C/P1) and note no significant disparities or significant increases in levels across the site over what has already been permitted under the parent permission.

9.5.18. I have also had regard to the site section drawings submitted in support of the application which show the permitted and proposed site sections (Drawings Nos. 25222/P005B/P1; 25222/P/005A/P1; 25222/P/005C/P1 refer). Based on my examination of these drawings I conclude that the finished floor levels of the proposed development generally accords with those permitted in the parent permission, with only minor changes to surrounding ground levels to facilitate the relatively modest changes to the site layout as proposed. As outlined above, the height of Block A is very marginally lower (0.1m) than that previously permitted, while the height of Block B and C is c. 0.9m lower than previously permitted under the parent permission.

9.6. **Impact on existing residential amenity**

9.6.1. Concerns are raised in the appeal that Block A particularly, would adversely affect the residential amenity of the appellants' home, which is located to the north-east of the appeal site. Below I assess the proposal in terms of impact on existing residential amenity.

Overbearing Impact

9.6.2. Block A within the proposed development is the nearest apartment block to the appellants property, and is positioned c.37.18m south-west of their dwelling, as indicated on the proposed site layout plan. Having regard to this separation distance,

which I consider to be significant, I conclude that the proposed development would not result in an overbearing impact on the appellants' property.

Overlooking

9.6.3. The appellants raise a concern that Block A is positioned opposite the front elevation of their dwelling and that given the 5 storey height and proximity of the block, occupants of upper floors would have direct views towards their house, resulting in significant loss of privacy.

9.6.4. In terms of local policy, DM OBJ 20 of the MCDP requires that any residential development proposal exceeds three or more storeys in height shall demonstrate adequate separation distances to ensure privacy and protection of residential amenity. SPPR 1 of the Compact Settlements Guidelines (2024) outlines, inter alia, that a separation distance of at least 16m between opposing windows serving habitable rooms at the rear or side of houses, duplex units and apartment units, above ground level be maintained, with separation distances below 16m potentially acceptable where there are no opposing windows serving habitable rooms and where privacy measures are designed into the scheme to prevent undue overlooking impacts.

9.6.5. I note under the parent permission (ABP-320049-24) that a separation distance of c.42.9 metres was maintained between Block A and the appellants' house. In this current application, the separation distance is reduced by 8.71m to 34.18m on account of the necessity to increase the widths and lengths of the blocks to accommodate the proposed additional units. I would note that none of the blocks have increased in height under this amendment proposal.

9.6.6. The proposed site layout plan demonstrates that Block A does not directly overlook the appellants dwelling, which is located north-east of the appeal site. I concur with the applicant's contention, set out in the appeal response, that views from Block A towards the appellants property would be limited and oblique in nature, given the separation distance of c.34m. In this context, I note that the separation distance of c.34m is twice that of the quantum (16m) outlined in the Compact Settlement Guidelines for residential development proposals exceeding three or more storeys in height, to ensure privacy and protection of residential amenity.

9.6.7. Fenestration on the north-eastern elevation of Block A generally relate to windows serving bedrooms and bathrooms. In my view, having regard to the separation distance to the appellants' property, no significant overlooking impacts would arise from windows on the north-eastern elevation of Block A, when compared to the permitted development as approved under ABP-320049-24. Similarly, in terms of potential overlooking impacts from upper floor balconies of Block A onto the appellants property, I would not anticipate such impacts arising given the separation distance involved and their orientation, directly overlooking either the car parking area to the east or the plaza to the west.

9.6.8. Having regard to the foregoing, I do not consider that the proposal would give rise to any undue overlooking impacts on to the appellant's property.

Overshadowing

9.6.9. The applicant has provided a Daylight and Sunlight Assessment Report in support of the proposed development. This notes, at the outset, that given the limited nature of the proposed amendments and the absence of any material increase in scale or proximity relative to the houses in the permitted scheme, no materially different daylight or sunlight effects on the permitted Phase 1 properties adjoining to the south would be anticipated. The Assessment includes examination of the appellants' property, which is the nearest existing neighbouring property to the appeal site, in terms of effect to daylight (Vertical Sky Component - VSC), effect to sunlight (Annual Probable Sunlight Hours – APSH and Winter Probable Sunlight Hours – WPSH), and effect to sun on ground (SOG). Section 3 of the report outlines an analysis of the assessment results.

VSC

9.6.10. The effect to daylight is assessed for the three windows / rooms on the front elevation of the appellants' house. The VSC results confirm that when the proposed development is in place it would have a negligible effect on all three windows.

APSH and WPSH

9.6.11. The effect to sunlight is assessed for the same three windows. The effect on the APSH and WPSH from the proposed development is found to be negligible. In this regard, 100% of the tested windows meet the criteria for effect on APSH and WPSH as set out in the BRE Guidelines.

SOG

9.6.12. This study assessed the effect the proposed development would have on the level of sunlight on March 21st in the appellants' rear garden. The study found that the assessed garden would experience a 'negligible' level of effect, and the assessed space has met the criteria for effect on sun lighting as set out in the BRE Guidelines.

9.6.13. Given the findings of the Daylight and Sunlight Assessment Report, I am satisfied that the proposed amended development would not cause undue overshadowing impacts or loss of light to the appellants' property.

9.6.14. Having regard to the foregoing, in terms of impact on the appellants' residential amenity, I conclude that the proposed amended development would not result in significant adverse impacts on the appellants' property by way of overbearing, overlooking, and overshadowing impacts, and would not therefore adversely impact on the residential amenity of the appellants' property which adjoins the site, in any significant way.

9.7. **Other matters**

9.7.1. Car parking provision

9.7.2. A total of 49 no. car parking spaces, inclusive of 4 no. GoCar spaces, are proposed to serve the revised development of 124 no. units. This compares with 40 spaces, inclusive of 2 no. GoCar spaces permitted for the 76 units on this part of the overall Phase 1 lands under the parent permission.

9.7.3. I note the Transportation Department's report is satisfied with the parking quantum proposed, stating that it is consistent with the reduced parking standards set out in the MCDP. The report also states that provision of additional GoCar sharing vehicles is an effective mitigation measure to support reduced car parking provision and notes the applicant has indicated that each GoCar space equates to 15 no. standard spaces each.

9.7.4. Both the MCDP and the Compact Settlements Guidelines are aligned in relation to car parking standards. Section 11.9.1 of the MCDP relates to parking standards, with Table 11.2 'Car Parking' identifying a maximum provision of 1.5 spaces per unit at 'accessible'

locations (defined in the Compact Settlements Guidelines). SPPR 3 of the Compact Settlements Guidelines identify three car parking zones (accessible, intermediate and peripheral locations) and the subject site is within an accessible location in which the maximum rate of car parking for residential development is 1.5 no. spaces per unit. Table 3.8 relates to 'Accessibility' and it is apparent that the appeal site is located at a High Capacity Public Transport Node or Interchange, given that the existing railway station which provides high frequency commuter rail services is located proximate to the site. Having regard to both the MCDP and the Compact Settlements Guidelines, a total maximum of 186 no. car parking spaces would potentially be acceptable.

9.7.5. In my opinion the provision of 49 no. car parking spaces is acceptable and appropriate at the subject location. I consider that Table 11.2 'Car Parking' in the MCDP along with SPPR 3 of the Compact Settlements Guidelines both allow flexibility in the application of car parking quantum's within 'accessible' locations, such as the subject site. In this regard, I would note that the site is proximate to public transport services, specifically high frequency commuter rail services and I am satisfied with the level of service available. In my view, reduced parking provision would safeguard investment in sustainable transport and encourage a modal shift. As detailed above, 4 no. GoCar spaces are proposed to serve the proposed development. Further, I support the planning authority's view that an updated Mobility Management Plan to include appropriate measures to reduce private car dependency should be submitted for its written agreement prior to occupation of any residential unit. I also note from the parent application (ABP-320049-24) that the internal road network serving Phase 1 lands, including the subject site, is designed generally in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS).

9.7.6. Having regard to the foregoing, I consider that the proposed development warrants reduced parking standards as specified in the MCDP and the Compact Settlements Guidelines.

9.7.7. In relation to EV parking, the site plan indicates 2 no. EV charging spaces. The Statement of Consistency notes that the car park will be equipped with the necessary wiring and ducting to be capable of accommodating future EV charging points at a rate of 20% of total space numbers and this provision is in accordance with DM OBJ 94.

9.7.8. Bicycle parking provision

9.7.9. Table 11.4 of the MCDP relates to Cycle Parking Standards and it requires a minimum of 1 no. private secure bicycle space per bed space along with 1 no. bicycle space per two housing units for visitor cycle parking. Reference is made under this standard to SPPR 4 of the Compact Settlements Guidelines, which provides a general minimum standard of 1 no. cycle storage space per bedroom and notes that it is important to make provision for a mix of bicycle parking types including cargo and electric bikes. In terms of the design of cycle storage spaces, a dedicated facility of permanent construction, within the building footprint is recommended.

9.7.10. In terms of unit mix, Table 3.2 provides the overall breakdown. The total number of units with one bedroom, consisting of both studios (31) and one bed apartments (64) is 95, while there are 29 no. 2 bed units. Based on this breakdown, a total of 153 no. bicycle spaces are required to serve the units in accordance with SPPR 4.

9.7.11. A total of 155 no. bicycle spaces are distributed across three storage rooms at ground floor level in proposed Blocks A, B and C, with this provision marginally in excess of those outlined in SPPR 4 of the Compact Settlements Guidelines. I note that the wording of Table 11.4 of the MCDP indicates a requirement of 1 no. private bicycle space per bed space, which implies that a one bedroom apartment would potentially require 2 no. private bicycle spaces. I note however that pursuant to Variation No.3 of the MCDP, made on 27th January 2025, that the MCDP is updated to take account of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guideline for Planning Authorities (2024), which seeks one bicycle space per bedroom, under SPPR 4 as outlined above. As such, no material contravention of the MCDP arises in terms of the number of bicycle storage spaces proposed, given that SPPR 4 has been incorporated into the MCDP by way of the aforementioned variation.

9.7.12. The report from the Transportation Department indicates bicycle parking provision for the apartments exceed CDP requirements, while visitor cycle parking provision meets minimum MCDP standards.

9.7.13. Having reviewed the floor plans provided, I note that 7 no. spaces are indicated for the storage of cargo / bulky bikes within the footprint of the blocks. One such space is located within the bike storage area of Block A, while three larger spaces each are located within the bike storage areas of Blocks B and C.

9.7.14. Having regard to the foregoing, I consider that the proposed quantum and storage arrangements for bicycles in this amended scheme are appropriate and acceptable.

9.7.15. Childcare provision

9.7.16. The parent permission (ABP-320049-24) granted a childcare facility (280sqm) with 65 places as part of the overall Phase 1 development, and it is to be located immediately south-east of the appeal site. It was previously projected in the childcare demand report provided in support of the parent application that the permitted Phase 1 development would result in 46 pre-school children attending the facility.

9.7.17. A Childcare Demand Report is submitted with this LRD application; it details current and future capacity of existing and proposed childcare facilities in the area in addition to the demand for places likely to be generated by the proposed development. While there will be an overall increase in the number of units by 48 as a result of the current proposal, the permitted scheme on the subject lands within Phase 1 provided for 28 no. 1 bed units and 48 no. 2 bed units. This compares with the current proposal seeking to modify the unit mix on this part of the Phase 1 lands to consist of 31 no. studios, 64 no. 1 bed units and 29 no. 2 bed units.

9.7.18. The Planning Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2025) note the following: *Notwithstanding the Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities (2001), which are subject to review, and which recommend the provision of one child care facility (equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision of any such facilities in apartment schemes should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development, the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile of the area. One-bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered*

to contribute to a requirement for any on-site childcare provision and subject to the factors above, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms.

9.7.19. Having regard to the foregoing and as highlighted in the Childcare Demand Report submitted in support of this LRD application, the revised unit mix proposed features the introduction of 31 no. studio units, increases the number of 1 bed units by 36, and decreases the number of 2 bed units by 19. I concur with the report's conclusions that based on the revised unit mix as proposed, there would be a reduction in childcare demand generated by the proposed development. Based on the proposed modifications to the unit mix as outlined above, it is projected that 45 pre-school children would attend the facility from the overall Phase 1 development. No change to the size of the childcare facility or number of spaces (65) are proposed.

9.7.20. To conclude, based on the information provided and the modifications to the unit mix proposed, I consider that the childcare facility is adequately sized to cater for the needs of the proposed development.

9.7.21. **New Issue: Contribution Condition No. 14**

9.7.22. Condition 14 of the planning authority's decision to grant permission seeks the payment of a financial contribution in the amount of €200 per residential unit 'towards expenditure incurred by the planning authority in the monitoring of the construction phases of the development.' The total contribution sought in this regard is €24,800 (i.e. €200 x 124 units).

9.7.23. I have examined the current Meath County Council Development Contribution Scheme 2024-2029 and note there is no reference within that Scheme for any such contribution relating to residential development. I conclude, therefore, that there is no policy basis for imposition of this financial contribution. As such, should the Commission decide to grant permission for the proposed development, I recommend that Condition 14 is omitted from the schedule of conditions.

10.0 Environmental Impact Assessment

10.1. An EIAR was submitted in respect of the parent Phase 1 application (ABP-320049-24 refers) which includes lands consisting of the subject site and adjoining lands to the south. Under Phase 1, 267 no. residential units (consisting of 145 no. houses and 122 no. apartments), a childcare facility along with modifications to roads and associated works were permitted.

10.2. This current LRD application includes an EIAR Addendum Report for the proposed development, which provides a review of the Phase 1 EIAR, having regard to the proposed amendments outlined in this application.

10.3. As outlined above, the proposal relates to an amendment to the Phase 1 permission and involves construction of 124 no. apartments, replacing the permitted 76 no. apartments in Blocks A, B and C, and resulting in an overall additional 48 no. apartments within those blocks. The proposed amendment, if permitted, would provide a total of 315 no. residential units in Phase 1.

10.4. Having regard to the foregoing, it is considered that the proposal may result in amendments / changes to the EIAR as carried out under the Phase 1 LRD application. The Addendum EIAR provided in this current LRD application sets out the degree or extent of change.

10.5. Table 10.1 below provides a summary of the EIAR assessment undertaken of relevant disciplines/chapters pertaining to the Phase 1 LRD, a summary of the relevant disciplines/ chapters outlined in the Addendum EIAR, and finally my assessment of the degree of change proposed .

Table 10.1

EIAR Assessment under Phase 1 LRD (ABP-320049-24 refers)	EIAR Addendum for current LRD proposal	Degree of Change
Population and Human Health		
267 no. residential units provided. Population of development: 732.	315 no. residential units provided. Population of development: 863.	+48 units +131 persons
Lands, Soil and Geology		
Table 9.3 provides a summary of potential effects on lands, soil and	No material changes. No significant impacts to the	No material change.

geology during both construction and operational phases. Impacts are mitigated through a suite of appropriate mitigation measures, resulting in no significant residual effects on lands soil and geology.	receiving environment anticipated.	
Hydrology and Hydrogeology		
Table 9.4 provides a summary of potential effects in terms of hydrology and hydrogeology during both construction and operational phases, and also on a cumulative basis. A range of mitigation measures are identified and significant impacts for water are not anticipated.	No material changes	No material change.
Air Quality		
Table 9.5 provides a summary of potential effects on air and climate during both construction and operational phases, and also on a cumulative basis. During operational stage there would be a release of particulate matter via vehicular movements. Potential for dust emissions to occur from earthworks, construction works and vehicular movements during the construction phase. Direct negative effects for air quality during construction phase would be mitigated by a range of construction phase management measures, including dust minimisation measures. Traffic volumes for the operational phase of the development have been modelled and significant impacts are not envisaged for air quality, primarily as the expected resultant air pollutant concentrations would be in compliance with the respective air quality standards.	Number of construction vehicles not predicted to change. 'Medium risk' of dust impacts remains appropriate. The assessment that no significant air quality impacts to human health from dust emissions remains appropriate. Traffic emissions remain the primary source of air quality impacts for the proposed development. The Dunboyne LRD Phase 3 application (Reg. Ref. 26/61001) includes cumulative traffic associated with Phases 1 and 2 on wider lands and relative cumulative developments. The Phase 3 air quality assessment is most appropriate for determining whether proposed amendments to Phase 1 development will cause a significant air quality impact. Predicted impact to air quality at operational stage is long term, direct, negative and not significant, as previously assessed.	No material change.
Climate Change		
Table 9.5 provides a summary of potential effects on air and climate	The revised development includes an increase in the	No material change.

during both construction and operational phases, and also on a cumulative basis. It is considered that expected GHG emissions would have negligible impact on climate given the proportionate impact relative to Irish emissions limits. The main significant direct and indirect effects on air quality and climate will be appropriately mitigated through a suite of construction phase management measures including dust minimisation measures.	number of units and an amended unit mix. Previously identified impacts of GHG emissions from construction activities and materials, traffic, operational energy use and climate change vulnerability remain appropriate for the amended development. The amended development would not significantly impact climate, as previously assessed. Operational phase: No change in terms of project location and therefore potential climate hazards remain unchanged. Impact on climate is considered to be not significant in EIA terms. Phase 1 development was assessed as having at most low risks to identified climate hazards and this remains appropriate for the amended development. No significant impacts predicted.	
Noise and Vibration		
Table 9.6 provides a summary of potential effects relating to noise and vibration during both construction and operational phases, and also on a cumulative basis. The expected change in noise levels associated with the additional and altered traffic regime would not be anticipated to have a significant permanent impact on the environment. Direct negative effects arising from noise and vibration during the construction phase would be mitigated by a suite of appropriate construction phase management measures, including the control of construction hours and noise minimisation measures.	Proposed amendments will not have a significant impact on conclusions of the EIAR Noise chapter, beyond those already assessed in the Phase 2 EIAR, Phase 3 EIAR and Phase 1 EIAR Addendum Report completed for the road realignment application.	No material change.
Landscape and Visual Impact		
Table 9.9 provides a summary of potential effects on landscape and visual impact during both construction and operational phases, and also on a cumulative basis.	The proposal involves revisions to development parameters and layout. The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Addendum considers whether the changes give rise to material change in landscape or visual	The proposal does not result in any new or materially different landscape or visual effects compared with those previously assessed. As such the Phase 1 LVIA remains

The visual change arising from the proposed development would be largely imperceptible from the wider areas, but moderate visual impacts would arise along the R157 regional road when approaching the site. The appearance of the development would not be out of character with the emerging character of the area. Direct negative effects for visual amenities and landscape during construction phase would not be significant and would be temporary. Direct effects arising for the landscape from proposed buildings would have negligible to moderate negative effects for the appearance of the area.	effects compared with those previously assessed. The receptors identified as most affected in the original LVIA are unchanged. The proposal does not introduce new land-take affecting landscape character and does not result in new influence on designated or valued landscapes. Receptor selection and assessment framework remain valid and no additional visual receptor assessments are required. Landscape effects and their significance remains unchanged.	applicable and unchanged.
Traffic and Transport		
Table 9.7 provides a summary of potential effects on traffic and transport during construction and operational phases and also on a cumulative basis. The main significant direct and indirect effects are as follows: - significant direct positive impacts for material assets, due to the substantive increase in the housing stock during the operational phase; - direct negative effects arising for traffic during the construction phase, to be mitigated by a suite of appropriate construction phase management measures, including a construction traffic management plan; - direct negative effects arising for traffic and transport during the operation phase, to be mitigated by conditions of a permission restricting phased opening of the proposed link road and the occupancy of the proposed residences and childcare facility until appropriate infrastructures are available.	On behalf of the applicant, AtkinsRealis has provided a Phase 1 EIAR Traffic Chapter Addendum report in respect of the proposal to increase the number of residential units from 267 to 315. The following conclusions are made: - The majority of the additional 48 units consist of studio and 1 bed units, while the number of 2 bed units is reduced. The traffic modelling undertaken for Phase 3 is highly conservative and the transport assessment submitted with that application (Reg. Ref. 26/60001) remains robust with no amendments to the traffic model required. - In terms of overall road network performance for impact on proposed development trips, the average delay was found to increase by approximately 5 – 30 seconds across all scenarios. The impact of the proposed development on overall network performance was found to be 'not significant.' - In terms of travel time, the impact of the proposal and the cumulative impact of all	No significant change.

	development on the M3 mainline was found to be 'not significant.' - In terms of impact at junctions, the impact of the proposal was found to be 'not significant' for all junctions with the cumulative impact of all development considered to be 'slight.' - For key junctions near the M3 Junction 5 Interchange and along the R157 corridor, the impact of the proposed development was found to be 'slight' to 'moderate.' - Increased car and bicycle parking accords with MCDP provisions.	
Service Infrastructure and Utilities		
Impacts on material assets specifically in relation to service infrastructure and utilities are outlined in Chapter 12 of the EIAR.	It is anticipated that the proposal will not result in any significant impacts to the receiving environment, with respect to material assets, specifically utilities and waste management.	No material change.
Biodiversity		
Table 9.2 provides a summary of potential effects on biodiversity during construction and operational phases and also on a cumulative basis. During operational phase, bat-friendly lighting would be installed, replacement tree and hedgerow planting would be undertaken. Biodiversity enhancement measures would be implemented, incorporating log piles for invertebrates and fauna, wildflower planting and bird-box schemes. Monitoring would be undertaken to ensure the effectiveness of the stated mitigation measures. Direct negative effects arising for aquatic habitat during the construction phase would be mitigated by a suite of appropriate construction phase surface water management measures, including sediment and pollution control measures, sensitive timing of works within the river corridor and agreement with the Planning Authority regarding a construction method statement for the road	DNV (formerly Enviroguide) has submitted a letter concluding that the proposed development by reason of its small scale nature would have no material effect on the findings and conclusions of the ecological assessments provided with the Phase 1 application. It is considered that the construction and mitigation measures and embedded design features detailed in the EIAR Biodiversity chapter are sufficient to reduce any adverse effects on any valued habitats or species as a result of the proposed LRD.	No material change.

bridge element of the project, resulting in no residual impacts on biodiversity.		
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology		
Table 9.8 provides a summary of potential effects on cultural heritage and archaeology both construction and operational phases, and also on a cumulative basis. The development is a substantive distance from known features of cultural heritage significance and as such would not result in direct impacts on such features. Direct negative effects for undiscovered archaeological remains during construction to be mitigated by monitoring and recording by an archaeologist under licence.	There are no extant archaeological sites listed in the SMR/RMP located in the boundary of the proposed development site. As such the construction phase will have a neutral effect on the known archaeological resource listed in these records. There are no protected structures within the surrounding 1km study area. There are no NIAH listed buildings or lands within the site; the nearest structure listed is a railway bridge located c.160m southeast of the site boundary. The construction phase of the proposed development will have a neutral effect on the architectural heritage resource. Test trenching was carried out in February 2025 pursuant to condition 18 of the Phase 1 permission. This identified two areas of archaeology both located outside the boundary of the proposed apartment development and its immediate vicinity.	No material change.
Cumulative impacts		
The cumulative effects from the planned and permitted developments in the area alongside the subject project would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment other than those that have been described in the EIAR and considered in the EIA.	There are no material changes to cumulative impacts, arising from the proposal.	No material change.
Significant interaction of Impacts		
Having considered the embedded design and the mitigation measures to be put in place, it is considered that no residual risk of significant negative interaction between any of the disciplines would arise and no further mitigation measures to those already provided for in the EIAR, or as conditions of the permission, would arise.	No material changes to the significant interaction of impacts between disciplines arising as a result of the proposal.	No material change.

Mitigation and Monitoring Measures		
The EIAR includes designed in or embedded mitigation measures and measures to address potential adverse effects identified in technical studies. These measures and arrangements for monitoring, are summarised in the EIAR (Chapter 16) and in the CEMP. The mitigation measures comprise standard good practices and site-specific measures that are capable of offsetting significant adverse effects identified in the EIAR.	No material changes to the mitigation and monitoring measures as a result of the proposal.	No material change.
Screening for Major Accidents		
Given the location, zoning and characteristics of the site, there are unlikely to be any significant effects of the project deriving from risks of major accidents and/or disasters.	No material changes to the screening in relation to risk of major accidents.	No material change.

Conclusion

10.6. The EIAR Addendum Report considers that there would be no material changes to the mitigation and monitoring measures outlined in the Phase 1 EIAR (ABP-320049-24 refers) as a result of the proposed development.

10.7. Noting the nature of the proposed development, having reviewed the information on file including the EIAR Addendum relative to the Phase 1 EIAR, and given the findings in terms of the degree/extent of change as set out in Table 10.1 above, I concur with the applicant that there would be no material changes required to the mitigation and monitoring measures in the parent / Phase 1 EIAR. Therefore, I consider that the proposed modifications to the permitted LRD application on the subject lands do not have a significant impact on the conclusions of the completed Phase 1 EIAR.

10.8. In terms of the Phase 1 development permitted under ABP-320049-24, that project was sub-threshold, and not within a class of development as set out in Class 10 of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. Notwithstanding, the applicant submitted an EIAR with the Phase 1 application, having regard to the specific characteristics and nature of the site, its overall size and the quantum of development proposed.

10.9. The following classes of development as set out in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, are relevant to the proposal before the Commission:

- Class 10(b)(i) Construction of more than 500 dwelling units,

- Class 10(b)(iv) Urban development, which would involve an area greater than 2ha in the case of a business district,* 10ha in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20ha elsewhere (*a 'business district' means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use).

- Class 13(a) Any change or extension of development already authorised, executed or in the process of being executed (not being a change or extension referred to in Part 1) which would:-

  (i) result in the development being of a class listed in Part 1 or paragraphs 1 to 12 of Part 2 of this Schedule, and

  (ii) result in an increase in size greater than –

  - 25 per cent, or

  - an amount equal to 50 per cent of the appropriate threshold, whichever is the greater.

- Class 15 Any project listed in this Part which does not exceed a quantity, area or other limit specified in this Part in respect of the relevant class of development but which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7.

10.10. The proposal, on its own, is sub-threshold in terms of mandatory requirements arising from Class 10(b)(i) and Class 10(b)(iv) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended.

10.11. In terms of mandatory EIA requirements arising from Class 13(a), it is clear that the proposed development of an additional 48 apartments (resulting in a total of 124 units in Blocks A, B and C), along with 267 permitted units under ABP-320049-24, totalling 315 units, does not cause the development to fall into any classes of development listed in Part 1 or classes 1 to 12 of Part 2 of Schedule 5.

10.12. In relation to Class 15, given the nature and scale of the proposed development, I do not anticipate significant negative effects on the environment to occur arising from the project.

10.13. Notwithstanding that the proposed development before the Commission could have been screened out for EIA purposes, an EIAR Addendum was submitted with the application. I note that Article 102 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, states that *' Where a planning application for sub-threshold development is accompanied by an EIS, the application shall be dealt with as if the EIS had been submitted in accordance with section 172(1) of the Act.'*

10.14. In terms of cumulative effects on the environment, an EIAR was submitted for the Phase 1 development and it assessed potential environmental impacts of that phase as well as cumulative effects. No significant individual or cumulative environmental effects were anticipated to occur. Permission was granted for 267 no. units in Phase 1. I note also that EIARs were also submitted in respect of Phases 2 and 3.

10.15. To conclude, having regard to the foregoing, and given that an EIAR was carried out and submitted with the Phase 1 development (ABP-320049-24), and that the proposed development, as demonstrated above, involves relatively modest and non-significant amendments to the development which was assessed within the parent LRD for the subject and adjoining lands, I find that that the Phase 1 EIAR prepared in relation to the parent development remains applicable and relevant to this modified proposal, that no significant adverse effects arise over and above those already identified in the Phase 1 EIAR assessment, and that no new EIAR is required in respect of this amended LRD application. As such, I further consider that the Reasoned Conclusion on the Significant Effects detailed within the Phase 1 (ABP-320049-24) EIAR Assessment remains relevant and applicable to the proposal. This Reasoned Conclusion on the Significant Effects is replicated below.

10.16. **Reasoned Conclusion on the Significant Effects**

Having regard to the examination of environmental information set out above, to the EIAR and other information provided by the first party, and to the submissions from the Planning Authority, prescribed bodies and observers during the course of the application and appeal, it is considered that the main potential direct, indirect, secondary and

cumulative effects of the proposed development on the environment are as follows:

- *significant direct positive impacts for population and material assets, due to the substantive increase in housing stock during the operational phase;*
- *direct negative effects arising for human health, air quality, traffic, noise and vibration during the construction phase, which would be mitigated by a suite of appropriate construction phase management measures, including the control of construction hours, implementation of a construction traffic management plan, noise and dust minimisation measures and monitoring, resulting in no residual impacts on human health, air quality, traffic, noise and vibration;*
- *direct negative effects arising for water quality and biodiversity during the construction phase, which would be mitigated by a suite of appropriate construction phase surface water management measures, including sediment and pollution control measures, sensitive timing of works within the river corridor and agreement with the Planning Authority regarding a construction method statement for the proposed road bridge, resulting in no residual impacts on water and biodiversity;*
- *direct negative effects arising for water and human health as a result of flooding during the operation phase, which would be mitigated by the design of the road bridge and site drainage accounting for medium and high-risk flood events, resulting in no residual impacts on water and human health;*
- *direct negative effects arising for land, soils and geology during the construction phase, which would be mitigated by a suite of appropriate construction phase management measures, including monitoring of excavated materials, resulting in no residual impacts on land, soils and geology;*
- *direct negative effects arising for traffic and transport during the operation phase, which would be mitigated by conditions of a permission restricting phased opening of the proposed link road and the occupancy of the proposed residences and childcare facility until appropriate infrastructures are available, resulting in no residual impacts on traffic and transport;*
- *direct negative effects arising for undiscovered archaeological remains during the construction phase, which would be mitigated by monitoring and recording by a*

suitably qualified archaeologist under an appropriate licence, resulting in no residual impacts for archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage.

- *direct effects arising for landscape / townscape during the operation of the proposed development, which would have slight to moderate effects for the appearance of the area, resulting in no residual impacts for landscape and the visual amenities of the area.*

Arising from my assessment of the project, including mitigation measures set out in the EIAR and the application, and as conditions in the event of a grant of planning permission for the project, the environmental impacts identified would not be significant and would not justify refusing permission for the proposed development.

11.0 AA Screening

11.1. The nearest European Sites and their distances relative to the appeal site are outlined in section 7.8 of this report (above).

11.2. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was submitted with the parent Phase 1 LRD application (ABP-320049-24 refers), which included the subject site, and under which a total of 267 residential units were permitted. It was concluded, based on information provided with the application in the form of the AA Screening, that the proposed development would potentially have a likely significant effect on the qualifying interests associated with European Site No. 004024 (South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA), European Site No. 004006 (North Bull Island SPA) and European Site No. 000206 (North Dublin Bay SAC) from activities and works that could impact on water quality in the river channel discharging to the Tolka estuarial area of Dublin Bay. As such, an appropriate assessment was required on the basis of the effects of the project on these three European sites.

11.3. Specific measures for the Phase 1 project to prevent pollution downstream affecting water quality are outlined in the NIS and CEMP provided in the parent Phase 1 LRD application. Implementation of these measures ensures that there are no likely effects in the River Tolka from surface water run-off during the construction phase, thereby avoiding negative effects on water quality. The CEMP provided with this LRD application relating to modifications to the parent LRD application, also includes such measures.

11.4. During operational phase, both the Phase 1 development (currently underway) and the proposed development includes a range of SUDS measures to intercept, store and treat surface and stormwaters leaving the site and entering the River Tolka. Such measures include fuel interceptors, allowing for the removal of hydrocarbons and sediment.

11.5. It was concluded in the context of the parent Phase 1 LRD application which pertains to the appeal site and adjoining lands, that the development, individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not adversely affect the integrity of any European site.

11.6. The current LRD proposes relatively modest changes to the permitted Phase 1 development, consisting of an additional 48 no. residential units within the permitted apartments blocks (A, B and C) which are to be marginally widened, nine additional car parking spaces, additional bicycle storage, and a marginal decrease in open space.

11.7. The submission lodged with the application from DNV, that has since taken over Enviroguide Consulting, which had previously prepared the AA Screening, and NIS for the Phase 1 LRD application, considers that the proposed amendments would not result in any adverse impact on the integrity of downstream designated sites, and will also not significantly affect the surrounding environment and biodiversity of the site.

11.8. Having examined all the information on file and given the limited nature and extent of the proposed modifications, I consider that the proposal would not result in the pollution of water or significant adverse impacts for qualifying interests, that there would be no material changes to the mitigation and monitoring measures in the NIS that accompanied the parent Phase 1 LRD application and that the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of any European Site.

11.9. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed development would not cause changes to the key indicators of conservation value, hence there is no potential for any adverse impacts to occur on either the habitat or the species associated with any European Site.

12.0 **Water Framework Directive**

12.1. Appendix 2 sets out the WFD Impact Assessment.

12.2. A drainage ditch runs along the eastern boundary of the site towards the River Tolka. The River Tolka flows in a south-easterly direction proximate to the site boundary. 2no. tributaries of the Tolka River flow in a south-easterly direction c.200m (Naulswood) and

c.500m (unnamed) from the wider Phase 1 lands. The Dunboyne River is located c.1km south-east of the wider site. The Pinkeen Stream is located c.1km east of the wider site and flows in a south-easterly direction.

12.3. No water quality deterioration concerns were raised in the planning appeal.

12.4. I have assessed the proposed LRD and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the Water Framework Directive which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface, groundwater, coastal and transitional water bodies in order to reach good status (meaning both good chemical and good ecological status), and to prevent deterioration. Having considered the nature, scale, and location of the project, I am satisfied that it can be eliminated from further assessment because there is no significant risk to any surface and groundwater bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively. The reasons for this are as follows:

- The nature of works comprising a medium scale of development on greenfield lands zoned for new residential development.
- Location-distance from the site to the nearest coastal, surface and transitional water bodies.
- Pollution controls that would be implemented (as contained in submitted documentation and pollution control measures outlined in documentation (including CEMP and NIS) associated with the Phase 1 parent LRD permission (ABP-320049-24 refers).
- The proposals to incorporate several SuDS features as part of the proposed development.

12.5. I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment.

12.6. I conclude that on the basis of objective information, that the proposed development will not result in a risk of deterioration on any water body (rivers, lakes, groundwaters, transitional and coastal) either qualitatively or quantitatively or on a temporary or

permanent basis or otherwise jeopardise any water body in reaching its WFD objectives and consequently can be excluded from further assessment.

13.0 Conditions and Recommendations Table

13.1. The following Table summarises the conditions/recommendations of the grant of permission made by Meath County Council on 15th July 2026, and how they will be potentially addressed in a decision to grant permission.

MCC Condition No. and Subject	Recommended Relevant Condition: Include / Modify / Exclude
1. Development to be undertaken in accordance with the plans and details submitted.	**Modify** Addressed in Condition No.1. (Standard ACP condition)
2. The development shall comply with the conditions and expiry date of the parent permission (ABP-320049-24), in so far as they are relevant, except where conditions hereunder specify.	**Include** Condition No. 2.
3. The final number of units permitted as part of this development shall be 124, with overall Phase 1 development to contain 315 no. units.	**Exclude** Addressed in Condition No. 1.
4. Mitigation and monitoring measures contained in EIAR and EIAR Addendum Report shall be implemented.	**Include** Addressed through Condition No. 3.
5. (a) The transportation conditions attached to the parent permission shall be complied with in full. (b) A Mobility Management Plan shall be finalised prior to occupation of any units on site and details to be agreed with planning authority.	**Exclude** (a) Addressed in Condition No. 2. Condition Nos. 13 and 14 of the Parent Permission relate to transportation matters. **Include** (b) Condition No. 4.
6. Details of external material finishes to be agreed with planning authority.	**Exclude** Addressed in Condition No. 2. Condition No. 6 of the Parent permission refers (ABP-320049-24).
7. Part V condition.	**Exclude**

	Addressed in Condition No. 2. Condition No. 27 of the Parent permission refers (ABP-320049-24).
8. Section 47 condition.	**Exclude** Not applicable; all proposed units are apartments.
9. Submit details for a minimum of 15% universally designed units.	**Include** Addressed through Condition No. 5.
10. Contribution condition (social infrastructure).	**Exclude** Addressed in Condition No. 2. Condition No. 28 of the Parent permission refers (ABP-320049-24).
11. Contribution condition (public roads and public transport infrastructure).	**Exclude** Addressed in Condition No. 2. Condition No. 28 of the Parent permission refers (ABP-320049-24).
12. Contribution condition (surface water infrastructure).	**Exclude** Addressed in Condition No. 2. Condition No. 28 of the Parent permission refers (ABP-320049-24).
13. Lodgement of cash deposit.	**Exclude** Addressed in Condition No. 2. Condition No. 26 of the Parent permission refers (ABP-320049-24).
14. Contribution of €200 per unit towards expenditure incurred by the planning authority in the monitoring of the construction phases of the development.	**Exclude** No policy basis for inclusion. Not contained in the MCC Development Contribution Scheme 2024-2029. See section 9.6.15 of this report, above.
15. Supplementary Development Contribution in respect of the re-opening of the Navan to Dublin Railway Line Phase 1 – Clonsilla to Dunboyne (PACE)	**Exclude** Addressed in Condition No. 2. Condition No 29 of the Parent permission refers (ABP-320049-24).

14.0 Recommendation

I recommend that permission is granted for the LRD as proposed for the reasons and considerations set out below, and subject to conditions.

15.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the following:

(i) the location of the proposed development predominantly on lands with a zoning objective 'A2 – New Residential' which seeks 'To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate' and also on lands with the zoning objective 'F1 – Open Space,' which seeks 'To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities' in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027,

(ii) the nature, scale and design of the proposed development which is consistent with the provisions of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, which has been varied to increase population and housing targets, to be consistent with the Revised NPF, with the exception of one instance of material contravention (detailed below),

(iii) the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031 (RSES);

(iv) 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 location of the site which is proximate to a high capacity public transport node in the form of the M3 Parkway rail station,

(x) the pattern of existing and permitted development in the area,

(xi) the availability of a range of social, community and transport infrastructure and services in the general area,

(xii) the planning report and the supporting technical reports of Meath County Council,

(xiii) the planning history and extant permissions,

(xiv) the submissions received including the third party submission, and

(xv) the Inspector's report

it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would constitute an appropriate scale and density of development at the subject location in Dunboyne North, would be acceptable in terms of layout, urban design, height and quantum of development, would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, and would be acceptable in terms of the provision of car parking spaces and bicycle storage spaces. The proposed development would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The proposed development which involves the provision of residential car parking spaces on lands zoned 'F1 – Open Space' would materially contravene this zoning objective and associated policy SH POL13 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, on the basis that such development is not listed within the 'Permitted Uses' or 'Open to

Consideration Uses' of the F1 zoning objective. However, having regard to section 37(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and having regard to the identification of the lands proximate to the M3 Parkway railway station for the development of new residential communities in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, along with the current national housing shortage and national policy to significantly increase national housing output as detailed in the NPF First Revision (2025) and Delivering Homes, Building Communities (2025), and having regard to the Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) which focuses on sustainable residential development, seeks to increase residential densities and the creation of compact settlements, it is considered that the proposed development should be granted permission.

16.0 **Recommended Draft Order**

Application for permission under the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in accordance with plans and particulars lodged with Meath County Council on the 21st day of May 2026 and appealed to An Coimisiún Pleanála on the 7th day of August 2026.

Proposed Development:

- The construction of 124 number apartments, comprising 31 studios, 64 number one bed units and 29 number two bed units.

- Block A is five storeys in height and accommodates 15 number studios, 32 number one bed units and 15 number two bed units. Block A contains internal bin and bicycle storage rooms.

- Blocks B and C are four storeys in height with each block accommodating eight studios, 16 number 1 bed units and 7 number two bed units. Both blocks contain internal bike storage rooms, while Block B contains an internal bin storage area accessible to both blocks.

- The development includes a foul pumping station and all ancillary development works including footpaths, cycle lanes, car and bicycle parking, drainage, public

lighting, a substation and landscaping / amenity areas.

Appeal:

Third party appeal from Anthony and Olivia Malone against the decision to grant permission subject to conditions as issued by Meath County Council.

Decision:

Grant permission for the proposed development based on the reasons and considerations set out above and subject to the conditions set out below.

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 location of the site on lands with the zoning objective 'A2 – New Residential' with the objective 'To provide for new residential communities with ancillary community facilities, neighbourhood facilities as considered appropriate,' and also on lands with the zoning objective F1 – Open Space 'To provide for and improve open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities,' in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027,

(ii) the nature, scale and design of the proposed development which is consistent with the provisions of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, with the exception of one instance of material contravention (detailed below),

(iii) the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031 (RSES),

(iv) Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030: An Action Plan on Housing

Supply and Targeting Homelessness,

(v) the provisions of the National Biodiversity Action Plan, 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 location of the site which is proximate to a high capacity public transport node in the form of the M3 Parkway rail station,

(x) the availability of a range of physical social, community and transport infrastructure and services in the general area,

(xi) the planning report and supporting technical reports of Meath County Council,

(xii) the pattern of existing and permitted development in the area,

(xiii) the planning history and the extant permissions,

(xiv) the submissions received including the third party submission, and

(xv) the report and recommendation of the Planning Inspector,

it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would constitute an appropriate scale and density of development at the subject location in Dunboyne North, would be acceptable in terms of layout, urban design, height and quantum of development, would not seriously injure the residential or visual amenities of the area or of property in the vicinity, and would be acceptable in terms of the provision of car parking spaces and bicycle storage spaces. The proposed

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

The Commission agreed with the Inspector that the proposed development which involves the provision of residential car parking spaces on lands zoned 'F1 – Open Space' would materially contravene the F1 zoning objective and associated policy SH POL 13 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, on the basis that such development is not listed within the 'Permitted Uses' or 'Open to Consideration Uses' of the F1 zoning objective. However, having regard to section 37(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, and having regard to the identification of the lands proximate to the M3 Parkway railway station for the development of new residential communities in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, along with the current national housing shortage and national policy to significantly increase national housing output as detailed in the NPF First Revision (2025) and Delivering Homes, Building Communities (2025), and having regard to the Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) which focuses on sustainable residential development, seeks to increase residential densities and the creation of compact settlements, that the proposed development should be granted permission.

Appropriate Assessment:

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 zoned and serviceable lands, the nature of the receiving environment which comprises a site proximate to the M3 Parkway rail station, the distances to the nearest European sites, and the hydrological pathway considerations, submissions on file, the information submitted and the Inspector's report.

In completing the screening exercise, the Commission agreed with and adopted the report of the Inspector, noted that Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment had already been undertaken in the context of the parent LRD application (ABP-320049-24 refers) and considered that the limited nature and extent of proposed modifications to the parent LRD permission, by themselves or in combination with other development, plans and projects

in the vicinity, would not be likely to have a significant effect on any European Site in view of the conservation objectives of such sites.

Environmental Impact Assessment:

The Commission considered that the EIAR Addendum submitted by the applicant demonstrates there would be no material changes to the mitigation and monitoring measures set out in the environmental impact assessment report provided with the parent LRD application relating to the subject site and adjoining lands. The Commission also considered that the Phase 1 EIAR prepared in relation to the Phase 1 development along with the EIAR Phase 1 assessment and Reasoned Conclusion remains applicable and relevant to the proposed development, that no significant adverse effects arise over and above those already identified in the Phase 1 EIAR assessment, and that no new EIAR is required in respect of this amendment LRD application.

Having regard to:

(a) The limited extent of proposed modifications to the parent LRD permission (ABP-320049-24) of the proposed development,
(b) The nature and scale of the proposed development which is below the threshold in respect of Classes 10(b)(i) and (iv) and Class 13 of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended,
(c) Class 15 of Part 2 of Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended,
(d) The planning history of the site, particularly the previous LRD application (ABP-320049-24) related to the site and adjoining lands which included an EIAR that concluded no significant individual or cumulative environmental effects were anticipated to occur,.
(e) The location of the site on lands governed by zoning objectives 'A2 – New Residential' and 'F1 – Open Space' in the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027, and the results of the strategic environmental assessment of the current Meath County Development Plan undertaken in accordance with the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC),

(f) The criteria set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended), and

(g)The features and measures proposed by applicant envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise be significant effects on the environment, including measures identified in the Construction Environmental Management Plan,

it is considered that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment and that the preparation and submission of a new environmental impact assessment report would not, therefore, be required.

17.0 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 and the development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the agreed particulars. **Reason:** In the interest of clarity.
2.	The proposed development shall comply with the conditions of An Bord Pleanála reference number ABP-320049-24 and the expiry date of that permission, except as otherwise may be required in order to comply with the following conditions. **Reason:** In the interest of clarity.
3.	The mitigation and monitoring measures contained in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report, and the Environmental Impact Assessment Addendum Report received with the planning application, shall be implemented. **Reason:** To protect the environment.
4.	Prior to occupation of any residential unit on this site, the developer shall submit a Mobility Management Plan for the written agreement of the planning

	authority, to include specific modal shift targets, monitoring arrangements and appropriate corrective measure measures. **Reason**: In the interests of sustainable transportation and amenity.
5.	Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall submit full details which demonstrate that a minimum of 15% of proposed units consist of universally designed units, in accordance with the requirements of 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design,' developed by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design. **Reason:** To comply with the requirements of Objective SH OBJ 22 of the Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

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 me, directly or indirectly, following my professional assessment and recommendation set out in my report in an improper or inappropriate way.

John Duffy
Planning Inspector
12th October 2026

Appendix 1

WFD IMPACT ASSESSMENT STAGE 1: SCREENING			
Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality			
An Coimisiún Pleanála ref. no.	ACP-324557-26	**Townland, address**	Bennetstown (townland) to the south of the M3 Parkway park and ride and railway station, Dunboyne North, Co. Meath.
Description of project		Large-Scale Residential Development (LRD) comprising (i) construction of 124 no. apartments in three blocks (A, B and C) ranging in height of from 4 to 5 storeys, (ii) a foul pumping station, (iii) all ancillary development works including footpaths, cycle lanes, parking, drainage, lighting and substation, and landscaping/amenity areas. The proposed development will replace 76 no. apartments previously permitted under Reg. Ref. 23/60290 and ABP-320049-24.	
Brief site description, relevant to WFD Screening		The appeal site measuring c.0.92ha is located in the townland of Bennetstown, to the north of the defined development boundary of Dunboyne town and approximately 3km from the town centre. The site forms part of a larger landholding within the applicant's control and where planning permission for residential development has been granted previously (see Planning History section above). The site is located immediately south of the M3 Parkway railway station and park and ride facility, west of the Tolka River and the Dunboyne to Clonsilla railway line and east of the R149 (Clonee-Lucan Road). The site is accessible from the R157 located to the west of the site. The M3 Motorway runs east of the site.	

	A drainage ditch runs along the eastern boundary of the site towards the River Tolka. The River Tolka flows in a south-easterly direction proximate to the site boundary. 2no. tributaries of the Tolka River flow in a south-easterly direction c.200m (Naulswood) and c.500m (unnamed) from the wider Phase 1 lands. The Dunboyne River is located c.1km south-east of the wider site. The Pinkeen Stream is located c.1km east of the wider site and flows in a south-easterly direction.
Proposed surface water details	In relation to surface water drainage, run-off from the proposed apartment development will remain as permitted under the parent planning application. Several SuDS features to manage stormwater and surface water run-off are permitted in the context of the parent permission on Phase 1 lands which incorporates the appeal site, including include tree pits and rain gardens. SuDS measures would restrict surface water discharge from the site to greenfield runoff rates, with fuel interceptors installed to remove hydrocarbons and audits of the system to ensure that it is installed in a safe and appropriate manner. Surface and storm waters would be discharged by gravity into the Tolka river, which ultimately discharges at Dublin Bay.
Proposed water supply source & available capacity	A Confirmation of Feasibility (COF) has issued from UÉ advising that water and wastewater connections are feasible with infrastructure upgrades. The water supply upgrade project is scheduled to be completed by Q1 2027 and proposed connection could be completed after these works.
Proposed wastewater treatment system & available capacity, other issues	In relation to wastewater, the applicant is to engage with UÉ regarding the design/sizing of the wastewater pumping station to cater for the additional units and to ensure storage requirements are met for the additional flows. According to the Engineering Services Report submitted with the parent application, foul wastewater from the operational phase of the proposed development would discharge to the public network running along the Old Navan Road with the proposed pumping station and rising

	main required to connect into this. The associated foul wastewaters would be treated at Ringsend WWTP in Dublin, which has been upgraded in recent years is 'Green' on the Wastewater Capacity Register and stated to have spare capacity available. Treated effluent from this WWTP is discharged into Dublin Bay.
Other issues	No.

Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection

Identified water body	Distance to (m)	Water body name(s) (code)	WFD Status	Risk of not achieving WFD Objective e.g.at risk, review, not at risk	Identified pressures on that water body	Pathway linkage to water feature (e.g. surface run-off, drainage, groundwater)
Surface water body - River	Approx 90m. Flows beyond eastern site boundary of the appeal site	Tolka_020 IE_EA_09T010600	Moderate	At Risk	Agriculture pressures	Surface water run-off, drainage.

Surface water body – Estuary/Transitional	None in vicinity					
Groundwater body	Underlying site	Dublin IE_EA_G_008	Good	Review	None identified	Drainage to groundwater
Coastal	None in vicinity					

Step 4: Detailed description of any component of the development or activity that may cause a risk of not achieving the WFD Objectives having regard to the S-P-R linkage.

CONSTRUCTION PHASE

No.	Component	Water body receptor (EPA Code)	Pathway (existing and new)	Potential for impact / what is the possible impact	Screening Stage Mitigation Measure	Residual Risk (yes/no) Detail	Determination** to proceed to Stage 2. Is there a risk to the water environment? (if 'screened' in or 'uncertain' proceed to Stage 2.
1.	Surface	Tolka_020 IE_EA_09T01 0600	Surface water runoff	Surface water pollution / Hydrocarbon spillages / Potential for silt to	Standard Construction Practices / CEMP mitigation	No. Appropriate mitigation is proposed.	Screened out

				enter watercourse.	measures (see parent permission). Distance to river.		
2.	Groundwater	Dublin IE_EA_G_008	Pathway exists – discharge to ground	Deterioration in groundwater quality.	Standard Construction Practice / CEMP mitigation measures.	No. Appropriate mitigation is proposed.	Screened out
OPERATIONAL PHASE							
1.	Surface	Tolka_020 IE_EA_09T010600	Surface water runoff.	Pollution	Primarily SuDS features. Surface water will be attenuated prior to outfall.	No. This is a standard residential development.	Screened out
2.	Groundwater	Dublin IE_EA_G_008	Discharge to ground	Hydrocarbon spillages	Standard operational management.	No. This is a standard residential development.	Screened out
DECOMMISSIONING PHASE							
Decommissioning is not anticipated as this is a permanent residential development.							