Inspector's Report
PL-501382-DF-26

Development	Demolition of dwelling and construction of health care facility
Location	63 Rathbeale Road, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 EK73
Planning Authority	Fingal County Council
Planning Authority Reg. Ref.	F25A/0412E
Applicant	Health Service Executive (HSE)
Type of Application	Permission
Planning Authority Decision	Grant Permission
Type of Appeal	Third Party v Grant of Permission
Appellant	Edward Stevenson
Observer	Joe Newman
Date of Site Inspection	6th July 2026
Inspector	Anthony Kelly

1.0 Site Location and Description

1.1. The site is located on Rathbeale Road (R125) in Swords, on the opposite side of the road to the access/egress point for Swords Shopping Centre. This junction is signalised but there is no traffic light for the subject property. There is a vacant single-storey detached house on site, externally finished with dashed render and blue/black slate, with separate vehicular and pedestrian accesses to Rathbeale Road and a number of trees around the boundary. There is a two-storey commercial structure adjacent to the east and a public open space area adjacent to the west with the road serving the Glasmore Park residential area adjacent to that. Adjacent houses on Glasmore Park are to the rear/southwest of the site[1].

1.2. The site has an area of 0.15 hectares.

2.0 Proposed Development

2.1. Permission was sought to demolish the 118sqm house and construct a 750sqm, two-storey, step-down healthcare facility comprising ten en-suite bedrooms with associated resident shared accommodation including dining, social, and treatment rooms, staff and support rooms, and domestic kitchen and laundry, and for associated site works including landscaping, car parking, a 16sqm garden shed, plant compound, bicycle and bin storage, and substation. The Rathbeale Road boundary was to accommodate a wider vehicular entrance to be integrated with the existing traffic signal-controlled junction serving the Shopping Centre[2], and a revised separate pedestrian access gate.

2.2. A cover letter submitted with the application stated that residents would be transported from an acute unit in a hospital to the facility by taxi/car where they would typically spend two to three weeks. Six-eight HSE staff members would staff the unit during the day with two-four staff at night. The development is for mental health related uses, as per the supporting Engineering Report (subsection 1.1).

[1] No. 162 Glasmore Park being the closest house.
[2] The applicant's response to the clarification of further information request resulted in the permitted vehicular access being taken from Glasmore Park road.

2.3. In addition to standard plans and particulars the planning application was accompanied by, among other documents:

- a 'Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment' (AA Screening Report) dated April 2025
- an 'Arboricultural Impact Assessment' dated 15th April 2025
- a 'Bat Survey Report' dated September 2023[3]
- an 'Acoustic Assessment & Modelling Report' dated 1st May 2025
- an 'Engineering Report' dated 2nd May 2025
- an 'Operational Traffic and Servicing Report' dated May 2025
- a 'Stage 1 Road Safety Audit' (S1RSA) dated April 2025

3.0 Planning Authority Decision

3.1. Decision

3.1.1. Fingal County Council (FCC) granted planning permission for the proposed development on 23rd April 2026 subject to 11 conditions.

3.1.2. Development-specific conditions of note include:

Condition 2 – The development shall be used as a healthcare facility only.

Condition 4 – This condition includes a number of sub-conditions relating to e.g. sightlines and detail of the entrance and driveway across the public open space area.

Condition 6 – This landscaping condition includes a number of sub-conditions relating to e.g. alteration to fencing, tree protection plan, and €10,000 tree bond.

Condition 8 – The recommendations of the acoustic report dated 6th August 2025 shall be adhered to and an operational acoustic assessment shall be carried out within three months.

[3] The conclusion states 'The bat survey revealed no current usage of the affected house by bats. As such, no further action is required for this structure prior to demolition and no bat derogation licence is required at this time …'

3.2. Planning Authority Reports

3.2.1. Three Planning Reports were prepared by FCC. The first Planning Report contained, among other things, a site description, a planning history, excerpts from the Fingal Development Plan (FDP) 2023-2029, a summary of the third-party submissions and internal reports received, and an assessment of the proposed development. This assessment can be synopsised as follows, using some of the subheadings in the Report. Further information was sought on foot of this report.

Zoning and principle of development – The principle of development is acceptable.

Impact on the visual and residential amenities of the area – No concern with regard to the increase in scale, height, and massing at this corner location.

Separation distances and impact on adjoining properties – No overbearing, overlooking, or shadowing impact would arise to 162 Glasmore Park.

Transportation – The applicant will be asked to explore the possibility of providing the vehicular access from Glasmore Park given difficulties associated with providing a fourth arm to the existing signalised Rathbeale Road junction.

Air and noise – Issues raised in the Environment Section (Air & Noise Unit) report will be requested as further information.

EIAR – The proposed development does not require an EIAR.

AA screening – The conclusion of the AA Screening Report is considered acceptable and it can be concluded that the possibility of any significant impacts on any European sites, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, can be excluded.

3.2.2. Further information was sought on 1st July 2025 in relation to the provision of the vehicular entrance from Glasmore Park instead of a fourth arm on the existing signalised junction and queries in relation to the noise impact assessment. The further information response was received by FCC on 21st August 2025.

3.2.3. The second FCC Planning Report, based on the further information response, contained, among other things, a summary of third-party submissions and internal FCC section reports received on foot of the response and an assessment of the response. This can be summarised as follows. Clarification of further information was sought on foot of this second report.

Vehicular entrance – The applicant submitted additional information supporting the four-arm signalised junction and did not propose a revised entrance off Glasmore Park. The report of the Transportation Planning Section accepted the applicant's reasoning.

Noise impact assessment – The response was considered to be acceptable.

3.2.4. Clarification of further information was sought on 17th September 2025 in relation to consent from the relevant landowner to carry out the works and extension of the red line site boundary to include all proposed works. An extension of time was subsequently agreed to 8th April 2026. The clarification of further information response was received on 18th March 2026. This stated that, following a series of meetings, a letter of authority would not be forthcoming from FCC allowing vehicular access to Rathbeale Road. To secure the required letter the layout was revised to take access from Glasmore Park. Revised public notices were required as a result.

3.2.5. The third FCC Planning Report, based on the clarification of further information response, contained, among other things, a summary of third-party submissions and internal FCC section reports received on foot of the response and an assessment of the response. Having reviewed the reports from the Transportation Planning Section and the Parks Section, permission was recommended.

3.2.6. **Other Technical Reports**

3.2.7. **Transportation Planning Section –** In its first report the applicant's Operational Traffic and Servicing Report was acknowledged which put forward the case for a fourth arm to the existing signalised junction. However, the section had concerns that the addition of a fourth arm onto the existing traffic signal would have a negative impact on the junction and on pedestrians using the existing footpath. The section had a strong preference for the entrance to be directly off Glasmore Park.

In its second report (on foot of the further information response), the section, while still preferring the vehicular entrance to be from Glasmore Park, had no objection to the proposed entrance subject to conditions.

In its third report (on foot of the clarification of further information response), the section indicated that it had no objection to the Glasmore Park road access and it was considered to be a 'far more suitable location for the entrance to the proposed

development, in terms of the effects on motorised traffic and pedestrians, compared to the location of the previously proposed intensified vehicular entrance …' Conditions were attached to the report.

Parks and Green Infrastructure Division – The report prepared on foot of the clarification of further information response indicated no objection in principle with conditions relating to landscape plan and existing trees set out.

Environment (Air & Noise Unit) – In its report on foot of the original planning application commentary was provided in relation to predicted noise levels, the submitted Noise Impact Assessment, and alternative locations for the heat pumps and hot water unit. In its second report (on foot of the further information response), the Air & Noise Unit expressed no objection subject to conditions.

Environment Section (Waste Enforcement & Regulation) – In its report on foot of the original planning application a condition to be applied was set out.

Water Services Department – In its report on foot of the original planning application there was no objection in relation to flood risk and no objection to surface water drainage subject to conditions.

3.3. Prescribed Bodies

Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) – Commentary was provided relating to noise and the site location in the context of Dublin Airport.

3.4. Third Party Observations

3.4.1. Twenty-two submissions were made to FCC from residents of the area, Glasmore Park & Windmill Lands Residents Committee, and elected representatives, on foot of the initial planning application and both the further information and clarification of further information responses. Some submissions generally welcome the delivery of the HSE facility but all of these submissions also have additional comments. The main issues raised can be briefly summarised as follows:

- Concern about the access route through the green area / contrary to FDP 2023-2029 / loss of biodiversity / removal of open space

- Access relocation will create safety problems on Glasmore Park for pedestrians and motorists
- Congestion along Rathbeale Road / creation of a traffic hazard / inadequate traffic report / other road construction necessary
- Inadequate car parking
- Concern about the nature and scale of the proposed development / overdevelopment / contrary to the surrounding residential zoning
- Increase in impermeable area on site / impact on biodiversity
- Absence of consultation
- Adverse impact on residential amenity and property value / noise from operational plant
- Construction phase nuisance
- Impact on archaeology

4.0 Planning History

4.1.1. There has been one relevant previous application on site. This is:

P.A. Reg. Ref. F24A/0595E – In 2024 permission was refused for a similar development to that subject of the current application for the following reason; 'The proposed new entrance which is an intensification of an existing established residential entrance into the centre of a busy, complex signalised junction would constitute a traffic hazard and would be contrary to the requirements of Objective DMSOI 18 of the Fingal Development Plan 2023 – 2029 which aims to avoid the creation of traffic hazards and would therefore be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area'.

4.1.2. An additional application of interest was granted at 57 Rathbeale Road, approximately 30 metres to the southeast. This is:

P.A. Reg. Ref. F24A/0823E / ACP Reg. Ref. ABP-322006-25 – In 2025, following a third-party appeal of a decision by FCC to grant permission, permission was granted

for demolition of a derelict two-storey house and outbuildings and construction of a new single-storey day centre for adults with disabilities and ancillary site works.

5.0 Policy Context

5.1. Fingal Development Plan (FDP) 2023-2029

Zoning

5.1.1. The main development site area is zoned 'LC – Local Centre' with a zoning objective to 'Protect, provide for and/or improve local centre facilities'. The adjacent space to the west over which it is proposed to construct the vehicular access from Glasmore Park road is zoned 'OS – Open Space' which has a zoning objective to 'Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities'.

Health

5.1.2. Relevant policies and objectives include:

Policy SPQHP15 (Social Inclusion) – Support all members of society to enjoy a high-quality living environment and to support local communities, healthcare authorities and other bodies, such as those experts within our communities with 'lived experience', involved in the provision of facilities for groups with specific design/planning needs.

Objective SPQHO23 (Emergency Accommodation) – Facilitate and support Tusla Child and Family Agency, the Health Service Executive and other service providers and State agencies in the provision of specific emergency or other forms of accommodation within Fingal.

Policy CIOSP9 (Education and Health) – Continue to work collaboratively with Educational and Health care providers to ensure the timely provision of educational facilities, health care and community resources throughout Fingal. The Plan will support the provision of education and healthcare facilities in line with national and regional policy objectives.

Objective CIOSO25 (Healthcare Facilities) – Support and facilitate the development of health centres, hospitals, clinics and primary care centres where new communities are proposed and in towns, villages and local centres, with good accessibility for all.

Open Space

5.1.3. Relevant policies and objectives include:

Policy GINHP2 (Protection of Green Infrastructure) – Ensure that areas and networks of green infrastructure are identified, protected, enhanced, managed and created to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to communities.

Objective GINHO4 (Green Infrastructure and Development) – Resist development that would fragment or prejudice the County's strategic green infrastructure network[4].

Objective GINHO21 (Integration of Green Infrastructure) – Avoid the fragmentation of green spaces in site design and to link green spaces/greening elements to existing adjacent green infrastructure/the public realm where feasible and to provide for ecological functions.

5.2. Natural Heritage Designations

5.2.1. The nearest area of natural heritage designation is Malahide Estuary special area of conservation (SAC) approximately 1.6km to the northeast. This is also a proposed natural heritage area (pNHA). Malahide Estuary special protection area (SPA) is approximately 1.8km to the northeast. All distances are in a direct line.

6.0 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening

6.1. The proposed development has been subject to preliminary examination for EIA (refer to Appendices 1 and 2 of this Inspector's Report (IR)). Having regard to the characteristics and location of the proposed development and the types and characteristics of potential impacts, it is considered that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. The proposed development, therefore, does not trigger a requirement for EIA screening and an EIAR is not required.

[4] The wording of Objective GINHO4 is identical to that of Objective GINHO22 (Network Fragmentation).

7.0 The Appeal

7.1. Grounds of Appeal

7.1.1. The third-party grounds of appeal have been received from Edward Stevenson with an address in Warblestown, Swords (a rural townland approximately 4km northwest of the site). The main issues raised can be summarised as follows:

- It is requested that the condition requiring the altering of the layout and creation of the new vehicular access be removed.
- The second FCC Planning Report stated that the Transportation Planning Section accepted the four-arm junction proposal.
- It appears that the Council at an early stage rejected the initial design without fully assessing it. It appears the Council refused the legal consent for the initial proposal and used coercion to their preferred option, different to the data-based conclusion of the Transportation Section.
- This should be considered in light of the complete acceptance of the local community that the proposed mental health facility is essential. The implication of the condition/decision is to leave the derelict site vacant. It places the HSE in an unenviable position.
- The decision to fundamentally alter the application design and negatively impact the public realm, a substantial effort by residents, quality place-making, and exceptional in Swords, is arbitrary and unfair.
- The initial proposal would have minimal inconvenience to shopping centre traffic.

7.2. Applicant's Response

7.2.1. The applicant's response can be summarised as follows:

- The support for the proposed development is welcomed. It notes that access should be from Rathbeale Road which would avoid the need to create a new access through green space which includes a Covid memorial garden.
- Permission was refused under F24A/0595E for one reason. At the time of submission of the application there was no signalised junction. It was installed

during the application process and the then uncontrolled site access sufficiently concerned the Council that permission was refused.

- At a pre-planning meeting prior to the current application issues such as the traffic-light controlled access, parking to the rear, and a building line setback were discussed. A Transport Planning Department engineer advised of no objection in principle subject to a S1RSA, justification of why it is not possible to take access from Glasmore Park, and a demonstration that the proposed fourth arm would have minimal impact.
- A further information request on the current application sought further consideration on a possible Glasmore Park access. At a subsequent meeting the concerns of the Transport Operations Department were referenced. A detailed response was prepared and the second FCC Planning Report noted its acceptance by the Transport Planning Department. However, despite the Council's ability to impose an appropriate condition on land it controls, clarification was sought in relation to consent to carry out the works.
- Both a written and online request for a letter of authority was submitted to FCC and the applicant was subsequently informed that a letter would issue. However, the request was met with objection from Traffic Management/the Operations Department. After a number of exchanges the applicant reluctantly conceded to the Council's position in an attempt to secure permission. At no time was the applicant given a clear reason for the about-turn made.
- The original access was considered acceptable by the Transport Section. A robust case was presented by the applicant in this regard. The decision to accede to the Council did not arise from a transportation deficiency, rather it occurred because consent was not secured and the Council directed access from Glasmore Park.
- The Commission is faced with a situation where the only clear technical transportation position supported access to Rathbeale Road. Given this is acceptable there should be compelling planning reasons to justify diverting traffic through a residential estate and across public open space. None has been provided. The permitted arrangement gives rise to greater impacts on residential amenity and public open space without any transportation benefit being identified by FCC.

- The minor road works are on the public road and within FCC control. The Commission is asked to grant permission with access onto Rathbeale Road. Suggested conditions are set out. Should the Commission not be minded to follow this then the applicant is keen to ensure permission is granted

7.3. Planning Authority Response

7.3.1. The FCC response to the grounds of appeal can be summarised as follows:

- The application was assessed against the FDP 2023-2029, government policy and guidelines, and visual and residential amenity of the area. Third-party submissions were considered.
- 'It is considered the proposed access from Glasmore Park road would present a more appropriate location than the R125 in terms of pedestrian and traffic safety. It is further considered the sightlines achievable at the location of the proposed vehicular entrance align with the requirements of DMURS. Furthermore, in relation to green infrastructure, the applicant provided a landscape plan and tree protection details and a condition was attached to the permission to ensure the proposed development would have an acceptable impact in this regard'.
- If the decision is upheld provision should be made for applying relevant financial contributions or bonds/security.

7.4. Observations

7.4.1. An observation on the grounds of appeal was made by Joe Newman with an address on Hilltown Close, Rivervalley, Swords (an urban area just under 1km to the south). The main issues raised can be summarised as follows:

- This is a worthwhile HSE service which the local community is happy to accept. Changing the original design is unnecessary and it has not been properly assessed for risks and congestion at this location. It is an infringement on open space.
- Concern expressed about the location/presentation of bins for collection.

- The footprint and size of the development combined with heat pumps will be a nuisance to neighbours. The facility is at odds with residential development and should not have been considered at this location.
- The development is objected to in its present format.

7.5. **Further Responses**

7.5.1. None.

8.0 Planning Assessment

Having examined the application and appeal details and all other documentation on file, and having inspected the site, I consider that the substantive issues in this appeal are as follows:

- Zoning
- Vehicular Access
- Site Layout, Design, and Impact on Surrounding Amenity

8.1. **Zoning**

8.1.1. There are two separate zonings affected by the proposed development; Local Centre and Open Space.

Local Centre

8.1.2. The main development site area is zoned 'LC – Local Centre' which has, as its objective, 'Protect, provide for and/or improve local centre facilities'. Its 'Vision' is 'Provide a mix of local community and commercial facilities for the existing and developing communities of the County. The aim is to ensure local centres contain a range of community, recreational and retail facilities, including medical/dental surgeries and childcare facilities, at a scale to cater for both existing residential development and zoned undeveloped lands, as appropriate, at locations which minimise the need for use of the private car and encourage pedestrians, cyclists and the use of public transport ...'

8.1.3. ‘Permitted in Principle’ use classes on this zoning include ‘Health Centre’ and ‘Residential Institution’. Having regard to the foregoing I consider that development of the nature proposed is acceptable at this location and I note that it was considered acceptable in principle by the planning authority under both the previous and current applications.

Open Space

8.1.4. The area adjacent to the west of the site currently comprises open space. It is grassed with vegetation and, according to the documentation on file, is largely maintained by the local community. Access was originally proposed directly onto Rathbeale Road; however the planning authority has instead effectively directed access to be taken off Glasmore Park road and across this open space area.

8.1.5. The objective of land zoned ‘Open Space’ is ‘Preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities’. Its ‘Vision’ is ‘Provide recreational and amenity resources for urban and rural populations subject to strict development controls. Only community facilities and other recreational uses will be considered and encouraged by the Planning Authority’. It only has four ‘Permitted in Principle’ use classes. An access road, or equivalent use, is not identified in either of the use classes (Permitted in Principle or Not Permitted)[5]. A ‘Note’ is attached at the bottom of the use classes which states that ‘Uses which are neither ‘Permitted in Principle’ nor ‘Not Permitted’ will be assessed in terms of their contribution towards the achievement of the Zoning Objective and Vision and their compliance and consistency with the policies and objectives of the Development Plan’.

8.1.6. I have examined the relevant chapters of the FDP 2023-2029 i.e. Chapters 4 (Community Infrastructure and Open Space), 6 (Connectivity and Movement), and 9 (Green Infrastructure and Natural Heritage) in the specific context of an access road across an open space area. I consider that there are four relevant policies and objectives, as set out in paragraph 5.1.3 (while noting the provisions of Footnote 4). Objectives GINHO4, GINHO21, and GINHO22 essentially relate to resisting or avoiding development that would fragment green spaces or the green infrastructure

[5] ‘Concrete/Asphalt’ is cited as a ‘Not Permitted’ use class. However, this use is defined as ‘A structure and/or land used for the purpose of manufacturing concrete, asphalt, and/or related products usually in or adjacent to a quarry or mine’ in Appendix 7 (Technical Guidance Notes) of the FDP 2023-2029 and is therefore not relevant to this application.

network. This would occur on a limited and localised basis given the approximately 3.5 metres roadway width and approximately 12 metres length involved. I note the location of the access roadway is to the southern end of the open space area rather than more centrally which would likely lessen the fragmentation impact. Policy GINHP2 states that areas of green infrastructure should be managed 'to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits to communities'. In my view the provision of an access roadway across the open space area would result in a social benefit to the community given the nature of the proposed development.

8.1.7. The 'Note' for the zoning objective states that uses not referenced as permitted in principle or not permitted i.e. the access roadway, 'will be assessed in terms of their contribution towards the achievement of the Zoning Objective and Vision and their compliance and consistency with the policies and objectives of the Development Plan'. In this case I consider that the proposed use would contribute significantly towards the achievement of the zoning objective on the Local Centre zoned land, would add to the mix of uses in the area, and would contribute towards the wider policies and objectives of the Plan e.g. policies SPQHP15 and CIOSP9 and objectives SPQHO23 and CIOSO25.

8.1.8. The open space area is an attractive area of localised green space. Given its location at the junction of two roads I do not consider it to be a particularly active space, there is no playground and there are obvious safety issues for children, though nonetheless it is clearly of visual and residential amenity value. Although the FDP 2023-2029 refers to avoiding and resisting the fragmentation of green spaces, it does not prohibit it. Policy GINHP2 refers to managing such spaces to provide 'a wide range' of social benefits to communities which is what the proposed development would deliver. While I agree with the general Plan provisions that fragmentation of such spaces should generally be avoided or resisted in this case it is FCC itself which has effectively directed this new access to be created, rather than using the existing established access onto Rathbeale Road as originally sought by the applicant.

8.1.9. Having regard to the foregoing, I consider that the provisions of the FDP 2023-2029 and the specific circumstances of this planning application collectively establish that the proposed access roadway is acceptable at this location in an open space zoned area and that no material contravention issue arises.

8.2. Vehicular Access

8.2.1. The initial planning application proposed that vehicular access to the site be via the existing/widened vehicular access to Rathbeale Road/R125. This existing vehicular access is located within a recently signalised junction serving Rathbeale Road and Swords Shopping Centre and it was proposed that a fourth arm, to serve the subject site, be established.

8.2.2. I note that the grounds of appeal request the removal of the condition that requires the applicant to alter the layout and create the new vehicular access. However, there is no specific condition that requires this as it was the layout submitted by the applicant in response to the clarification of further information request.

8.2.3. The application documentation indicates that at both pre-planning and further information stages the planning authority was more in favour of an alternative vehicular access directly off Glasmore Park road. In particular, the Operations Department of FCC, which manages the signalised junction, 'expressed strong concerns with the proposal to create a new arm onto the existing junction', as per the first Transportation Planning Section report. However, after submission of a 'Traffic Technical Note' dated 8th August 2025 as part of the further information response, the second Transportation Planning Section report stated 'while it would still be the preference … for the vehicular entrance to be from Glasmore Park … following our assessment of the applicants 'Traffic Technical Note' we have no objection to the proposed entrance at the location of the existing established entrance, subject to the detailed design being agreed …' At this point it appeared that the use of the Rathbeale Road entrance was accepted.

8.2.4. FCC sought clarification of further information requesting the applicant to submit a letter of consent from the relevant landowner i.e. FCC, to carry out works for the proposed new vehicular entrance, associated proposed traffic lights, and proposed fourth arm to the existing traffic junction, and to submit a revised site layout plan extending the red line site boundary to include all areas of the proposed works[6]. On foot of this clarification request it appears that the position of the planning authority changed. The clarification of further information response cover letter stated that the applicant was informed that a 'letter of authority would not be forthcoming' from FCC

[6] I note that these works were initially proposed as part of the original planning application which had been validated by the planning authority.

for the Rathbeale Road entrance works. In order to secure permission the applicant then revised the vehicular access to Glasmore Park road and that is the layout permitted by the planning authority.

8.2.5. I note that the revised vehicular roadway does not have a significant impact on the layout of the subject site, apart from the vehicular access location. The revised roadway access enters directly at the rear of the site adjacent to the proposed car parking area. The proposed building retains its footprint and orientation facing Rathbeale Road. The original internal circulation route has been removed and is replaced by a footpath. A pedestrian access location has been retained from Rathbeale Road.

8.2.6. The rationale for the change of the FCC position has not been set out by the planning authority, either during the application process or in its response to the grounds of appeal. It appears that the issues raised by the Operations Department, as contained in the first Transportation Planning Section report, are relevant although this does not explain why the Transportation Planning Section report then accepted the further information response. Having regard to the Operations Department concerns I do not consider them to be sufficiently problematic to warrant the necessity of the alternative access from Glasmore Park road. The Traffic Technical Note submitted with the further information response notes that the fourth-arm would be 'demand only' and use would be very limited given the few car parking spaces on site. A concern was set out that a traffic signal loop was within the HSE property. In my view the issues set out are not insurmountable and agreement could have reached in relation to wayleaves or providing FCC authority to access an area of the property for maintenance.

8.2.7. I consider that the original proposal i.e. a fourth-arm and integration into the existing signalised junction, would be far more preferable than the proposal that the Council has effectively dictated. There is an existing established vehicular entrance to Rathbeale Road, access and egress could be controlled, there would be very limited impact on the existing operation of the signalised junction, and the integrity of the public open space area would be retained. The decision of the planning authority creates additional vehicular activity at an uncontrolled junction (Glasmore Park road/R125) approximately 20 metres from the signalised junction.

8.2.8. The applicant's response to the grounds of appeal requests the Commission to grant permission with access onto Rathbeale Road. While in my view this would be the preferred location for the vehicular access FCC has clearly indicated by its refusal to issue a letter of consent for this during the planning application process that this may result in a situation where the applicant is unable to carry out the development because it does not have the consent of the landowner to carry out necessary off-site works. Therefore, the applicant may not be capable of implementing the grant. A grant of permission for the access roadway from Glasmore Park road would at least be implementable. As such, given the nature of the proposed development and the wider benefit it would bring to the area I consider it appropriate to recommend a grant with access from Glasmore Park road. The planning authority's Condition 4 relates specifically to this revised access arrangement and I consider that its general restatement as a condition would be appropriate should permission be granted.

8.2.9. As noted previously the open space area does not appear to be particularly used for activities. The road environment is relatively slow given it is a residential area and the proposed junction would be relatively close to the Glasmore Park road/R125 junction. Glasmore Park road is straight at this location and the Transportation Planning Section state in their third report that it has no objection to the proposed entrance.

8.2.10. Having regard to the foregoing, I consider that the use of the Rathbeale Road entrance and its connection into the signalised junction would be a better solution than the creation of a new access roadway across a public open space area as has been dictated by FCC. However, to grant permission with access to Rathbeale Road may leave the applicant with an unimplementable permission given the position taken by the County Council to date. Given the nature of the proposed development I consider it appropriate to recommend a grant with the Glasmore Park access roadway to ensure an implementable permission for this health facility.

8.3. Site Layout, Design, and Impact on Surrounding Amenity

Site Layout

8.3.1. As referenced previously, the main alteration to the site layout as a result of the application process is the creation of a new access roadway from Glasmore Park road directly to the rear of the site adjacent to the car parking area. The Rathbeale Road

boundary would be blocked up but a pedestrian access would be retained along this boundary. The internal vehicular circulation route is replaced by a pedestrian pathway. Landscaped areas are shown around the perimeter of the site with full pedestrian permeability, open space provision, and the retention of a tree line along the southern boundary. The building line set by the adjacent commercial property is largely retained. I do not consider that the proposed building footprint is excessive in the context of the site area and urban environment.

8.3.2. I consider the site layout to be acceptable. I consider it appropriate to include a standard compliance condition, should permission be granted, that site boundaries be agreed with the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Design

8.3.3. The existing structure on site is a vacant single-storey house. Its demolition was accepted as part of the previous planning application on site and I have no objection to its removal.

8.3.4. The scale and mass of the proposed development would comprise a substantial alteration to the existing situation on site. The proposed structure is two-storey in scale with a floor area of 750sqm and a maximum height of approximately 11 metres. The structure is higher towards the Rathbeale Road elevation and reduces in height towards the rear where a flat roof is provided closer to the existing houses. The structure has a contemporary design with a primarily rendered exterior and a small brick area at the entrance. The roof is indicated as a metal roof.

8.3.5. Contiguous elevation drawings have been submitted showing the proposed structure in the context of both the existing two-storey commercial structure adjacent to the east and the two-storey houses adjacent to the southwest. There is also a shopping centre on the opposite side of the road to the northwest with extensive surface car parking. I do not consider that the proposed development would comprise an obtrusive or visually incongruous presence on the landscape. I consider that it would sit comfortably in the streetscape and reflect the Local Centre zoning objective of the site.

8.3.6. I consider the proposed design to be acceptable.

Impact on Surrounding Amenity

Shadowing, overlooking, and overbearing impact

8.3.7. Given the absence of development to the west or north, the commercial nature of the property to the east and the separation distance to the residential property to the southwest (approximately 17 metres to the boundary), I do not consider that any undue shadowing, overlooking, or overbearing impact would arise as a result of the proposed development.

Noise impact

8.3.8. I am satisfied that the noise mitigation measures set out in the 'Response to: Chief Executive's Order' and revised drawings received as part of the further information response i.e. an increase in height of the noise barrier from 2.4 metres to 2.6 metres and changing the shape of same from a 'U' shape to a rectangle, are sufficient to adequately mitigate noise impact from proposed plant.

Car parking

8.3.9. Four car parking spaces are proposed on site. The site is in Zone 1 for car parking standards as per Table 14.18 (Car Parking Zones) of the FDP 2023-2029. In my opinion, a hospital is the most appropriate land use set out in Table 14.19 (Car Parking Standards). This was also the opinion of the Transportation Planning Section. The maximum number of spaces permitted is one space per three beds. As there are ten beds proposed, I consider four spaces to be the maximum number of spaces allowable on this site under the provisions of the FDP 2023-2029.

Conclusion

8.3.10. I consider the proposed development to be acceptable in terms of site layout, design, and impact on surrounding amenity.

9.0 Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening

9.1. AA screening has been carried out in Appendix 3 to this IR.

9.2. In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended), and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I

conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on Malahide Bay SAC (site code 000205) or Malahide Bay SPA (site code 004025), or any other European site in view of the conservation objectives of these sites, and is therefore excluded from further consideration. AA is not required.

9.3. This determination is based on:

- The nature, scale, and location of the proposed development
- The presence and use of public services
- The absence of clear source-pathway-receptor connectivity
- The unsuitability of the subject site for ex-situ SPA species

9.4. No mitigation measures aimed at avoiding or reducing impacts on European sites were required to be considered in reaching this conclusion.

10.0 **Water Framework Directive**

10.1. The provisions of Appendix 4 apply to this section.

10.2. The site is in an urban location and is zoned 'Local Centre'. There are no surface waterbodies in the vicinity.

10.3. No water deterioration concerns were raised during the planning application process.

10.4. I have assessed the proposed development and have considered the objectives as set out in Article 4 of the WFD which seek to protect and, where necessary, restore surface and ground water waterbodies 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 conceivable risk to any surface and/or groundwater water bodies either qualitatively or quantitatively.

10.5. The reasons for this conclusion are as follows:

- The relatively limited nature and scale of the proposed works,
- The absence of any surface water course in the vicinity,

- The proposed connection to public surface water infrastructure,
- The standard condition that can be attached to any grant of permission that surface water shall comply with the requirements of the planning authority for such works and services.

10.6. On the basis of objective information, the proposed development would 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.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1. I recommend that planning permission should be granted, subject to conditions, for the reasons and considerations as set out below.

12.0 Reasons and Considerations

Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposed development, the 'Local Centre' zoning of the main development site area, and the provisions of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029, it is considered that, subject to compliance with the conditions set out below, the proposed development would be in accordance with the provisions of the development plan, would not result in an undue adverse impact on the residential amenity of properties in the area, on the amenity value of the public open space area, or on traffic in the area and would, therefore, be in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

13.0 Conditions

1. The development shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the plans and particulars lodged with the application, as amended by the further plans and

particulars received by the planning authority on the 21st day of August 2025 and the 18th day of March 2026, 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 following shall be complied with:

   (a) No objects, structures, landscaping, or planting exceeding a height of 900 millimetres shall be placed or installed within the visibility splays (as defined by Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets) of the access from Glasmore Park road, which would interfere or obstruct (or could obstruct over time) the required visibility splays.

   (b) The footpath and kerb shall be dished at the developer's expense to the satisfaction of the planning authority.

   (c) The detail of the new vehicular entrance and access driveway across the public open space area shall be agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

   (d) The detail of any works required to the existing landscaped/planted area in the public open space area shall be agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

   (e) Any works to the public footpath, verge, and road carriageway to facilitate the development and any repairs to the public footpath, verge, and road carriageway necessary as a result of the development shall be at the expense of the developer and completed to the planning authority's standards for taking-in-charge and to the satisfaction of the planning authority.

   (f) All underground or overhead services and poles shall be relocated, as may be necessary, to a suitable location at the developer's own expense and according

to the requirements of the relevant utility service provider/service owner/statutory undertaker

(g) The developer shall comply in full with the following:

(i) All necessary measures shall be taken by the developer to prevent the spillage or deposit of any materials including clay, rubble or other debris on adjoining roads during the course of development. In the event of any such spillage or deposit, immediate steps shall be taken to remove the material from the road surface at the developers own expense.

(ii) The applicant/developer shall be responsible for the full cost of repair in respect of any damage caused to the adjoining public road arising from the construction work associated with the proposed development and shall either make good any damage to the satisfaction of the planning authority or pay the planning authority the cost of making good any such damage upon issue of such a requirement by the planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of road safety.

3. (a) The mitigation measures contained in Section 5 of the 'Response to: Chief Executive's Order' received by the planning authority on the 21st day of August 2025 shall be implemented in full.

(b) The recommendations contained in Section 4 of the 'Bat Survey Report' received by the planning authority on the 12th day of May 2025 shall be implemented in full.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and biodiversity.

4. Details of the materials, colours and textures of all the external finishes to the proposed structure shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the planning authority prior to commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to ensure an appropriate high standard of development.

5. (a) The landscaping scheme shown on drawing number 24-618-SDA-PD-DR-GF-001, as submitted to the planning authority on the 18th day of March 2026 shall be carried out within the first planting season following substantial completion of external construction works, unless otherwise agreed with the planning authority.

   (b) All planting shall be adequately protected from damage until established. Any plants which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, within a period of five years from the completion of the development, shall be replaced within the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

   (c) A layout plan and elevation drawing indicating all proposed boundaries shall be agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: In the interest of residential and visual amenity.

6. (a) Prior to commencement of development all trees which are to be retained shall be enclosed within stout fences not less than 1.5 metres in height. This protective fencing shall enclose an area covered by the crown spread of the branches, or at minimum radius of two metres from the trunk of the tree or centre of the shrub, and to a distance of two metres on each side of the hedge for its full length, and shall be maintained until the development has been completed, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the planning authority.

   (b) No construction equipment, machinery or materials shall be brought onto the site for the purpose of the development until all the trees which are to be retained have been protected by this fencing. No work shall be carried out within the area enclosed by the fencing and, in particular, there shall be no parking of vehicles, placing of site huts, storage compounds or topsoil heaps, storage of oil, chemicals or other substances, and no lighting of fires, over the root spread of any tree to be retained.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to protect trees during the construction period.

7. Drainage arrangements, including the attenuation and disposal of surface water, shall comply with the requirements, in writing where necessary, of the planning authority for such works and services.

Reason: In the interest of public health.

8. Prior to the commencement of development the developer shall enter into Connection Agreements with Uisce Eireann to provide for service connections to the public water supply and wastewater collection network.

Reason: In the interest of public health and to ensure adequate water/wastewater facilities

9. Lighting shall be provided in accordance with a scheme which shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the planning authority prior to the commencement of development. The scheme shall include lighting along pedestrian routes through open space and shall take account of trees within landscape plan drawing no. 24-618-SDA-PD-DR-GF-001. Such lighting shall be provided prior to the operation of the proposed development.

Reason: In the interest of amenity and public safety.

10. Site development and building works shall be carried out only between the hours of 0700 to 1900 Mondays to Friday inclusive, between 0900 to 1300 hours on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and public holidays. Deviation from these times will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances where prior written approval has been received from the planning authority.

Reason: In order to safeguard the residential amenities of property in the vicinity and in accordance with Objective DMSO243 (Construction Noise) of the Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029.

11. Prior to the commencement of development a Resource Waste Management Plan (RWMP) as set out in the EPA's Best Practice Guidelines for the Preparation of

Resource and Waste Management Plans for Construction and Demolition Projects (2021) shall be prepared and submitted to the planning authority for written agreement. The RWMP shall include specific proposals as to how the RWMP will be measured and monitored for effectiveness. All records (including for waste and all resources) pursuant to the agreed RWMP shall be made available for inspection at the site office at all times.

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

12. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall lodge with the planning authority a cash deposit, a bond of an insurance company or such other security as may be accepted in writing by the planning authority, to secure the protection of the trees on site and to make good any damage caused during the construction period, coupled with an agreement empowering the planning authority to apply such security, or part thereof, to the satisfactory protection of any tree or trees on the site or the replacement of any such trees which die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of three years from the substantial completion of the development with others of similar size and species. The form and amount of the security shall be as agreed between the planning authority and the developer or, in default of agreement, shall be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála for determination.

Reason: To secure the protection of trees on the site.

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

the matter shall be referred to An Coimisiún Pleanála to determine the proper application of the terms of the Scheme.

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

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

Anthony Kelly
Senior Planning Inspector
23rd September 2026

Appendix 1 – Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Pre-Screening

Case Reference	**PL-501382-DF-26**
Proposed Development Summary	Demolition of dwelling and construction of health care facility
Development Address	63 Rathbeale Road, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 EK73
IN ALL CASES CHECK BOX / OR LEAVE BLANK	
1. Does the proposed development come within the definition of a 'Project' for the purposes of EIA? (For the purposes of the Directive, 'Project' means: - The execution of construction works or of other installations or schemes, - Other interventions in the natural surroundings and landscape including those involving the extraction of mineral resources)	☒ Yes, it is a 'Project'. Proceed to Q.2. ☐ No. No further action required.
2. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 1, Schedule 5 of the Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended)?	
☐ Yes, it is a Class specified in Part 1.	State the Class here
☒ No, it is not a Class specified in Part 1. Proceed to Q3	
3. Is the proposed development of a CLASS specified in Part 2, Schedule 5, Planning & Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended), OR a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of Roads Regulations 1994, AND does it meet/exceed the thresholds?	

☐ No, the development is not of a Class specified in Part 2, Schedule 5 or a prescribed type of proposed road development under Article 8 of the Roads Regulations, 1994. **No Screening required.**	
☐ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class and meets/exceeds the threshold. **EIA is Mandatory. No Screening Required**	
☒ Yes, the proposed development is of a Class but is sub-threshold. **Preliminary examination required** **OR** **If Schedule 7A information submitted proceed to Q.4**	Schedule 5 Part 2 Class 10 (b) (iv) refers to 'Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere. (In this paragraph, "business district" means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)' Class 14 refers to 'Works of demolition carried out in order to facilitate a project listed in Part 1 or Part 2 of this Schedule where such works would be likely to have significant effects on the environment, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7'.

4. Has Schedule 7A information been submitted AND is the development a Class of Development for the purposes of the EIA Directive (as identified in Q3)?	
Yes ☐	Screening Determination required (Complete Form 3)
No ☒	Pre-screening determination conclusion remains as above (Q1 to Q3)

Inspector: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 2 – Environmental Impact Assessment Preliminary Examination

Case Reference	**PL-501382-DF-26**
Proposed Development Summary	Demolition of dwelling and construction of health care facility
Development Address	63 Rathbeale Road, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 EK73
This preliminary examination should be read with, and in the light of, the rest of the IR attached herewith	
Characteristics of proposed development (In particular, the size, design, cumulation with existing/ proposed development, nature of demolition works, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution and nuisance, risk of accidents/disasters and to human health).	The proposed development is for a relatively modest, 750sqm two-storey health care facility. It is a standalone project and the scale of the required demolition involved is limited i.e. 118sqm. There is a shopping centre on the opposite side of the road to the northeast and a two-storey commercial property adjacent to the southeast. The proposed development would not be out of character with the existing pattern of development. Construction works would be standard construction phase works with typical construction phase pollution and nuisances to nearby areas. It would not require the use of substantial natural resources. The proposed development would be serviced by a public foul sewer. There would be no undue risk of accidents/disasters or to human health.
Location of development (The environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by the development in particular existing and approved land use, abundance/capacity of natural resources, absorption	The proposed community-type development is located within the built-up urban area of Swords on a site zoned as Local Centre. The proposed development would be consistent with the existing pattern of development in the area. It is a brownfield site with no protected structures, recorded monuments, or watercourses in the vicinity.

capacity of natural environment e.g. wetland, coastal zones, nature reserves, European sites, densely populated areas, landscapes, sites of historic, cultural or archaeological significance).	The nearest areas of natural heritage designation are Malahide Estuary SAC, Malahide Estuary pNHA, and Malahide Estuary SPA approximately 1.6km-1.8km to the northeast. I have carried out AA screening in section 9 / Appendix 3 of this report and conclude that the proposed development, individually or in-combination with other plans or projects, would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on any European site.
Types and characteristics of potential impacts (Likely significant effects on environmental parameters, magnitude and spatial extent, nature of impact, transboundary, intensity and complexity, duration, cumulative effects and opportunities for mitigation).	The proposed development is relatively modest in scale and it would not have any significant environmental impact. It would be consistent with the existing pattern of development in the immediate vicinity, the site is appropriately zoned for the type of development proposed, it is located away from any environmentally sensitive area, it would have no in-combination effects, and the proposed development is substantially below a threshold that could be considered relevant for EIA. There is no potential for significant effects on the environmental factors listed in section 171A of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

Conclusion	
Likelihood of Significant Effects	**Conclusion in respect of EIA**
There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment.	EIA is not required.

Inspector: _____ Date:_____

Appendix 3 – Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening Determination

Screening for Appropriate Assessment Test for likely significant effects	
Case Reference Number: PL-501382-DF-26	
Step 1: Description of the project and local site characteristics	
Brief description of project	Demolition of dwelling and construction of health care facility
Brief description of development site characteristics and potential impact mechanisms	The 0.15-hectare site currently comprises a vacant single-storey house with a relatively overgrown curtilage. It is located within the built-up urban area of Swords in an area zoned 'Local Centre'. Foul water is to the public system. On-site soakaway testing showed minimal infiltration, indicating that the subsoil has poor drainage characteristics. Surface water run-off will discharge to the public 600mm diameter surface water sewer at Glasmore Park with a restricted outflow. The closest watercourse, as per the publicly available www.catchments.ie website, is Broadmeadow_040 approximately 380 metres to the north. The nearest European site is Malahide Estuary SAC approximately 1.6km to the northeast.
Screening report	Yes. Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment' (AA Screening Report) dated April 2025
Natura Impact Statement	No
Relevant submissions	None of the submissions reference AA matters. The first FCC Planning Report stated that the conclusion of the AA Screening Report was considered acceptable and it can be concluded that the possibility of any significant

	impacts on any European sites, alone or in-combination with other plans and projects, can be excluded.

Step 2. Identification of relevant European sites using the Source-pathway-receptor model

In my opinion the two European sites closest to the proposed development could be considered to be within the potential zone of interest. These are also the only two sites considered within the AA Screening Report. I agree that these are the only two relevant European sites

European Site (code)	Qualifying interests (QI) / Special conservation interests (SCI)	Distance from proposed development (km)	Ecological connections	Consider further in screening Y/N
Malahide Estuary SAC (000205)	Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide [1140] Salicornia and other annuals colonising mud and sand [1310] Atlantic salt meadows [1330] Mediterranean salt meadows [1410] Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (white dunes) [2120] Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (grey dunes) [2130]	Approximately 1.6km to the northeast.	None	No (as per Step 3)

Malahide Estuary SPA (004025]	14 waterbirds and wetlands	Approximately 1.8km to the northeast.	Air	No (as per Step 3)

Step 3. Describe the likely effects of the project (if any, alone or in combination) on European Sites

In my opinion, the proposed development, which is limited in scale, would not have any potential direct or indirect impact on any European site. The nearest sites are a relatively significant distance away and there is no realistic source-pathway-receptor link. The site has a limited area, it is located within an urban environment, it would be connected to public services, and there are no watercourses on site or in the vicinity.

In addition, while there is a limited grassed area on site (including as part of the revised access from Glasmore Park road), I note and agree with the provisions of section 2.1 (Site location and extent) of the AA Screening Report which states 'The lands are not suitable for regularly occurring populations of wetland, wintering or wading birds which may be qualifying interests of coastal Natura 2000 sites, e.g. the Malahide Estuary SPA. These birds are typically associated with intertidal habitats close to the shore, however some species are known to avail of inland amenity grasslands for supplementary feeding, notably the Light-bellied Brent Goose *Anser albifrons*. No such habitats are available on the development lands'. I do not consider the subject site can be considered of any importance for ex-situ SCI species.

I do not consider that the proposed development could have any likely significant impact on any European site. As there is no likelihood of significant effects arising to European sites from the proposed development alone, I do not consider the proposed development could act in combination with any other plan or project to result in any significant effect.

Step 4: Conclude if the proposed development could result in likely significant effects on a European site

I conclude that the proposed development (alone or in combination with other plans and projects) would not result in likely significant effects on European sites. No further assessment is required for the project. No mitigation measures are required to come to these conclusions.

Screening Determination

Finding of no likely significant effects

In accordance with Section 177U of the Planning & Development Act, 2000 (as amended), and on the basis of the information considered in this AA screening, I conclude that the proposed development individually or in combination with other plans or projects would not be likely to give rise to significant effects on Malahide Bay SAC (site code 000205) or Malahide Bay SPA (site code 004025), or any other European site in view of the conservation objectives of these sites, and is therefore excluded from further consideration. AA is not required.

This determination is based on:

- The nature, scale, and location of the proposed development
- The presence and use of public services
- The absence of clear source-pathway-receptor connectivity
- The unsuitability of the subject site for ex-situ SPA species

No mitigation measures aimed at avoiding or reducing impacts on European sites were required to be considered in reaching this conclusion.

Appendix 4 – Water Framework Directive

WFD Impact Assessment Stage 1: Screening			
Step 1: Nature of the Project, the Site and Locality			
An Coimisiún Pleanála Ref. No.	PL-501382-DF-26	Address	63 Rathbeale Road, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 EK73
Description of project	Demolition of dwelling and construction of health care facility		
Brief site description relevant to WFD screening	The site is occupied by a vacant single-storey house with a relatively overgrown curtilage. It is located within the built-up urban area of Swords, and it is classified as made ground. The closest watercourse, as per the publicly available www.catchments.ie website, is Broadmeadow_040 approximately 380 metres to the north.		
Proposed surface water details	On-site soakaway testing showed minimal infiltration, indicating that the subsoil has poor drainage characteristics. Surface water run-off will discharge to the public 600mm diameter surface water sewer at Glasmore Park with a restricted outflow.		
Proposed water supply source and available capacity	Existing connection to the public main. The publicly available www.water.ie website, as viewed on 23rd September 2026 indicates that potential capacity is available in Swords.		

Proposed wastewater treatment system (WWTS) and available capacity	Existing connection to the public foul sewer. The publicly available www.water.ie website, as viewed on 23rd September 2026 indicates that spare wastewater capacity is available in Swords.
Other Issues	None

Step 2: Identification of relevant water bodies and Step 3: S-P-R connection						
Identified water body[7]	Distance	Water body name (code)	WFD status (2019 - 2024)	Risk of not achieving WFD status	Identified pressures on that waterbody	Pathway linkage to water feature
Groundwater waterbody	Underlying site	Swords (IE_EA_G_011)	Good	Not at risk	None	Drainage to groundwater
Groundwater waterbody	Underlying site	Industrial Facility (P0014-03 / P0060-01) (IE_EA_G_062)	Poor	At risk	Industry	Drainage to groundwater
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						

[7] The publicly available www.catchments.ie website shows the subject site bounding both groundwater bodies.

No.	Component	Waterbody receptor (EPA code)	Pathway	Potential for impact / what is the possible impact	Screening stage mitigation measure	Residual risk (Y/N)	Determination to proceed to Stage 2
1	Groundwater waterbody	Swords (IE_EA_G_011)	Dissipation through ground	Construction activity	Standard construction phase works involved. No basement proposed. No specific mitigation required.	No	Screened out. Standard construction stage activity.
2	Groundwater waterbody	Industrial Facility (P0014-03 / P0060-01) (IE_EA_G_062)	Dissipation through ground	Construction activity	As above	No	As above
Operational Phase							

1	Groundwater waterbody	Swords (IE_EA_G_011)	Discharge to ground	Hydrocarbons from vehicles	Negligible impact. Only four spaces to be provided. No specific mitigation required.	No	Screened out. The proposed development would be connected to the public surface water system
2	Groundwater waterbody	Industrial Facility (P0014-03 / P0060-01) (IE_EA_G_062)	Discharge to ground	Hydrocarbons from vehicles	As above	No	As above
Decommissioning Phase							
N/A							