OCSC

O'CONNOR · SUTTON · CRONIN

MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONSULTING ENGINEERS

W383: THE SOUTH – NORTH ACCESS ROAD

PART 8 REPORT

For

Kilkenny County Council

9 September 2024

NOTICE

DOCUMENT CONTROL & HISTORY

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1 INTRODUCTION

O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates (OCSC) have been appointed by Kilkenny Council (KCC) to prepare the preliminary design and Part 8 submission for a new access road a new access road in Ferrybank, Co. Kilkenny. The initial study area for the project and indicative site location is highlighted below.

Figure 1: Indicative Site Location and Study Area

The project will see the delivery of a new access road connecting Abbey Road (LP3412) and the Belmount Road (R711) along with a new car park to serve the Southeast Greenway, with a connection to same also included. The project will provide a key infrastructural link for both vehicles and active travel modes by linking existing roads and the soon to be completed Southeast Greenway which bisects the project site. It will further open up adjacent zoned lands and facilitate their development.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the project to inform the Part 8 submission. It is supported by and intended to be read in conjunction with a complete package of planning design drawings and reports which further detail the proposed design, environmental assessments, archaeological assessments and outline construction management plans.

2 SITE OVERVIEW AND CONSTRAINTS

The proposed development is located in Ferrybank within the Municipal District of Piltown in County Kilkenny. The Ferrybank area is located to the north of the river Suir and bounds Waterford City and has a population of approximately 6,500 people.

The development site is located between the Abbey Road (LP3412) to the south and the Belmount Road (R711) to the north. These represent the main road links locally, with the latter facilitating access to nearby Waterford City to the southwest and the N29 to the northeast and ultimately to the N25/M9 to the west.

Figure 2: Development Site Aerial View

As can be seen above, there is a notable extent of undeveloped land located between Belmount Road and Abbey Road. These have been subject to a multiple of planning applications over the last decades, the most significant of which started in 2003 with extensive development proposed under Planning Register References 03/760 and 03/1711. A number of subsequent applications and alterations were submitted but to date only small pockets of development having taken place, namely the Clover Meadows and Abbey Gate residential developments and the Ross Abbey Town Centre. However, all of these are located immediately adjacent the existing roads, respectively facilitated by short sections of access road.

There are a number of live planning applications relating to the study area, the most notable of which include:

- Planning Ref: 20/453 40 no. residential units north of the existing Abbeygate Development;
- Planning Ref: 20/845 23no. apartments via change of use of existing commercial unit at Ross Abbey Town Centre.

An application for a 97 no. unit residential development immediately south of the existing Clover Meadow development was refused in 2022 (Planning Reference: 22/336) with one of the reasons being prematurity relative to the delivery of the South-North Access Road.

The existing Clover meadows access road is an approximate 6.5m wide carriageway with segregated cycle and pedestrian facilities on both sides of the road in relatively good condition. It is approximately 350m long and currently terminates with a gate to the undeveloped lands. The Abbeygate access road is similar in nature but with cycle facilities present only on the northwest side of the road. It is approximately 80m long and is again gated at its terminus, with an incomplete section of access road provided thereafter.

The development site is bisected by the Southeast Greenway, which is nearing completion, repurposing a disused railway line. It has sloped embankments tying back to existing ground level on either side. The topography varies notably across the local area with highs of 44.0m to a low of 30.0m OD.

There is a small pond feature in the centre-west portion of the site which has been assessed as part of the environmental and ecological surveys and assessments. The remaining undeveloped lands are largely unused greenfield at present with a small portion in use as agricultural lands.

3 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION & DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Stakeholder consultation was carried out from the concept design stage of this project and carried through the route options selection process and development of the preliminary design to planning stage. A summary of the engagement with each and how it informed the planning stage design is summarised following.

EXISTING PRIVATE LANDOWNERS

There are 2 no. private landowners who are directly affected by the proposed works and whose landholding will be impacted by same. Should a grant of permission be forthcoming, the necessary lands will be subject to a separate Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process subsequent to planning process.

Initial consultation was held with the respective landowners in June 2024 at the concept design stages and prior to the route option selection process to advise each of the project and agree matters such as access for site investigation and surveys etc. Subsequent meetings were held in February and March, subsequent to the completion of the Route Option Selection Process to facilitate refinement of the preferred alignment and the location of the respective signalised junction to optimise same with respect to the development potential of the adjacent zoned lands.

IRISH RAIL

Irish Rail were consulted with respect to the Southeast Greenway which is located on the route of a disused railway line. Consultation was held to ensure that there was no future potential for this to revert to use as a railway line at any time. Irish Rail provided correspondence to KCC confirming same.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public Consultation was held in September of 2023 as part of the route option selection process. A total of 14 no. submissions were received. These included a mixture of responses from those showing support of the scheme to those indicating a preference for specific routes and additional design features to be considered. The feedback was taken into consideration as part of the route option assessment. Further details can be found in the Option Selection Report submitted as part of this planning package.

SOUTHEAST GREENWAY TEAM

Consultation was had with the Greenway team, particularly with respect to the proposed car park and connection to the Greenway to ensure consistency of design and incorporation of all necessary features. This included the following:

- Provision of toilet and café facilities with water and wastewater services to serve same;
- Provision of on-site cycle parking;
- Provision of 2 no. bus parking bays;
- Allowance for 20% EV charging spaces and future upgrade of all spaces, as per the County Development Plan;
- Allowance for 5% accessible spaces as per the County Development Plan;
- Public lighting design;
- Design of the Greenway connection from the new access road.

KILKENNY COUNTY COUNCIL

Consultation was held with a number of the relevant KCC departments to ensure their design requirements were taken into consideration. This included the road design and active travel sections in particular to ensure the design aligned fully with their respective requirements.

4 PLANNING CONTEXT & DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

DEVELOPMENT PLAN & LOCAL AREA PLAN OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

The statutory objective underpinning the delivery of this Scheme is provided for in the in the Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027 as per the following objective:

12S – Develop the Link Road from the Abbey Road to the Belmont Road.

The above objective aligns with the Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy. The Transport Strategy will see the development of sustainable travel options to support and facilitate improved access to the Waterford City Centre, from the wider urban area, north and south of the river by walking, cycling and public transport including provision for Park and Ride facilities in tandem with the Green Route, and additional cycle lanes.

The provision of active travel infrastructure and proposed connectivity to the Greenway also aligns with the Modal Share Objectives in the Development Plan including:

12E – To deliver on sustainable mobility with an accompanying investment in infrastructure to provide for integration between all modes of transport to support the use of sustainable travel choices.

This is a further objective in the Ferrybank- Belview Local Area Plan 2017 under Section 10.8 Transportation Objectives which states:

10F To provide a link northward across the New Ross railway line/Greenway at the Ross Abbey housing development to connect through to the Belmont Road (R711) and to Clover Meadows development.

Thus, the proposed project is directly in line with a number of objectives relating to its delivery. This will facilitate access to and development of the adjacent zoned lands which cannot proceed prior to the completion of the new access road, as evidenced by the aforementioned recent refusal of planning scheme for a residential development on the bordering lands. Refer to the below zoning map extract for further information.

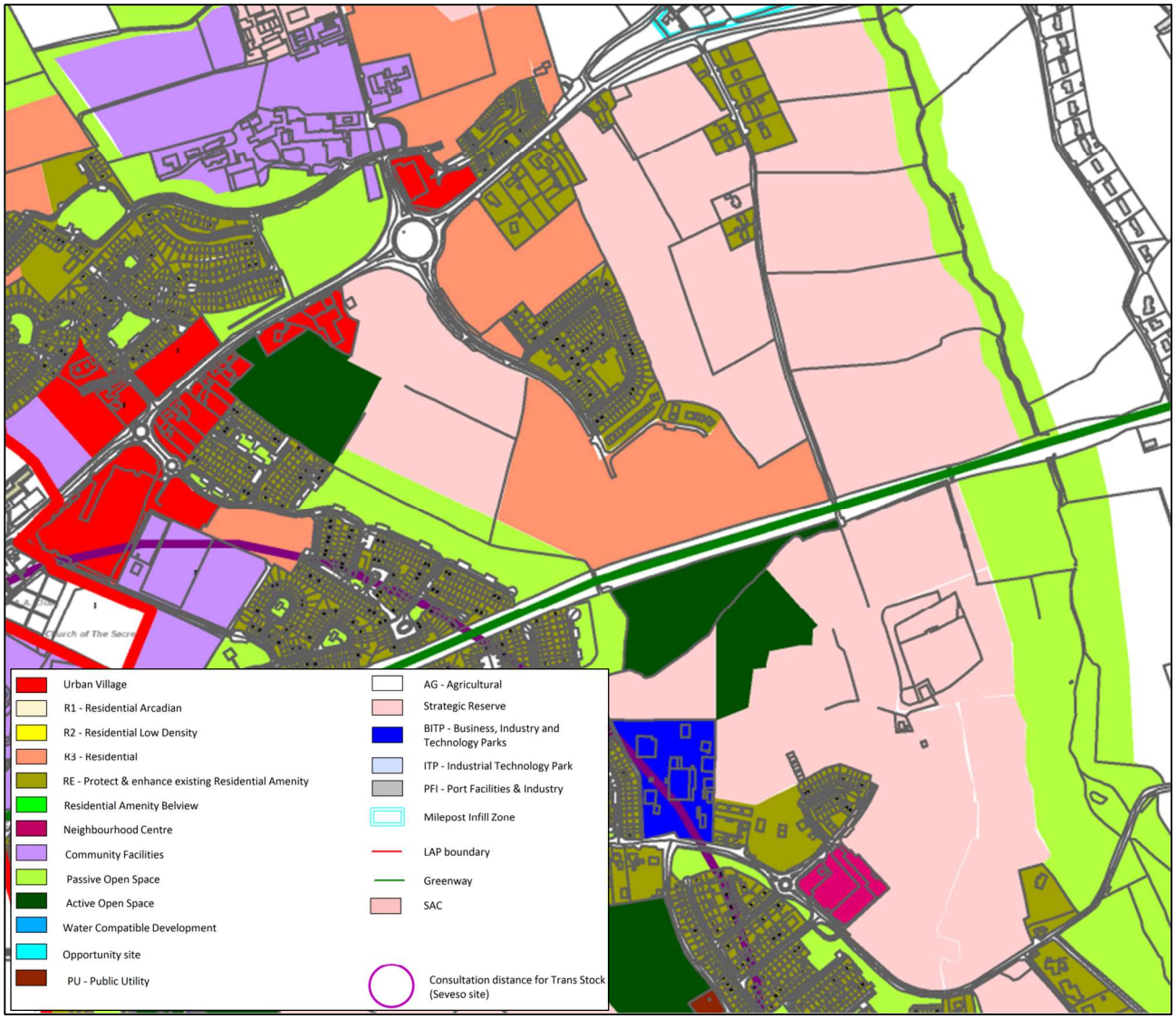

Figure 3: Land Use Zoning Map Extract

The connectivity provided to the Southeast Greenway along with the additional features proposed to serve same align with the stated intent within the Development Plan regarding positive modal shift towards sustainable transport, climate action and tourism relating to active travel modes. Relevant extracts include:

- "Contributing towards achieving climate change targets in particular by means of encouraging and facilitating a modal shift towards more sustainable travel modes and patterns";
- "Support cycle and walking tourism initiatives, in tandem with the development of greenways and blueways in the County";
- "Support for the provision of dedicated signed rural cycling networks building on Fáilte Ireland's Strategy to Develop Irish Cycling Tourism. This will cater for recreational cyclists as well as visitors";

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Taking the above into consideration, the project objectives are set out following:

- To facilitate the orderly development of the zoned lands.
- To provide a car park for the Southeast Greenway with both pedestrian/cyclist and vehicular links to the proposed access road and to create a pedestrian/cyclist link from the car park to the Southeast Greenway.
- To prioritise the needs of Vulnerable Road Users and facilitate the implementation of public transport and active travel solutions.
- To create a road to link the Abbey Road and Belmont Road.
- To create a suitable streetscape in accordance with the requirements of DMURS.
- To facilitate as far as reasonably practicable the inclusion of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) technologies and limit the discharge of surface water to the receiving environment.

5 DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

The proposed development consists of a new access road linking Abbey Road to Belmount Road via the existing Clover Meadows and Abbeygate access roads. Additional facilities including segregated footpaths and cycle tracks are proposed along with 2 no. offline bus stops to facilitate future services. A total of 2 no. signalised junctions are proposed as part of the project, strategically located to facilitate the development of adjacent zoned lands. There is the potential that additional entrances may be required along the length of the access roads but these will be subject to future, third party planning applications to allow an appropriate degree of flexibility for the associated development layouts as they are developed.

The project also allows for a new trailhead to serve the South Greenway which bisects the site. This includes car parking, coach parking, cycle parking, café facilities and toilet facilities as well as a link for cyclists and pedestrians to the Greenway. A bridge over the Greenway is also included as part of the works which is design to cater for vehicle traffic and provide appropriate clearance to the Greenway traffic. The bridge is also designed to accommodate future services associated with the buildout of the zoned lands.

The proposed development allows for minor amendments to the existing Clover Meadows and Abbeygate access roads. The former will include the provision of improved pedestrian and cycle facilities at existing junctions and a new fence to the existing green space which was identified as a preference by local residences in the preliminary public consultation. The latter will include the same improvements to pedestrian and cycle facilities at the existing Abbeygate junction as well as reorientation of the existing cycle track and footpath to align with the proposed new road facilities, bringing the footpath to the inside edge.

Ancillary services including public lighting, watermain and wastewater infrastructure to serve the proposed cafe and toilet facilities and a comprehensive surface water design. The latter has sought to maximise the provision of SuDS in accordance with the Development Plan requirements. This has seen the inclusion of above ground, nature based solutions in the form of detention basins to cater for the required attenuation volumes, supplemented by underground drainage systems as necessary. Additional features such as permeable paving and petrol interceptors are also included to improve water quality. The storm outfall is proposed along the Greenway east, discharging to an existing watercourse which has been subject to rigorous environmental and ecological assessment.

The overall development description is as follows:

- Construction of a new road, the South – North Access Road, approximately 940m in length, from the end of the existing access road serving the Clover Meadows Housing Estate to the end of the existing access road serving the Abbeygate Housing estate/Abbeygate Shopping Centre. This to create a continuous road link between the existing Belmont Road Roundabout on the Belmont Road (R711) to the existing Abbeygate Roundabout on the Abbey Road (LP3412);

- Provision of a Traffic Signal controlled crossroads junction on the access road approximately 270m north-east of the existing Abbeygate Roundabout on the Abbey Road (LP3412);
- Provision of a Traffic Signal controlled cross roads junction on the access road approximately 430m south-east of the Belmont Roundabout on the Belmont Road (R711);
- Provision of a new road overbridge over the existing Greenway;
- Minor upgrades to the existing Clover Meadows and Abbeygate access roads being tied into to provide improved pedestrian and cycle facilities and provide additional fencing where required.
- Provision of cyclist and pedestrian facilities along the new access road;
- Provision for 2 No. future bus-stops to both sides of the new road;
- Provision of a new carpark for the Greenway accommodating c.172 no. parking spaces and 2 no. coach parking spaces along with toilets (with water supply and waste water treatment), bicycle parking, accessible car parking spaces (10No.) and car parking spaces of which 20% are provided for e-cars with associated charging facilities;
- Provision of a link from the South-North Access Road footpath to the existing Greenway via a ramped shared surface (pedestrians and cyclists) with stepped access also provided;
- Public lighting along the full length of the South - North Access Road and to the Greenway carpark;
- The installation of road markings and signage throughout;
- Provision of a surface water drainage system to include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), attenuation storage both above and below ground and flow restrictors to maintain discharge of surface water to greenfield runoff rates. This also includes an outfall along the adjacent Greenway;
- Hard and soft landscaping including boundary treatments throughout.

The proposed development is designed in accordance with the following key design documents:

- The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (National Transport Authority);
- The Cycle Design Manual (National Transport Authority);
- The Design Manual for Roads & Bridges (Transport Infrastructure Ireland);
- The Traffic Signs Manual (Department of Transport).

Full detail of the proposed design can be seen in the drawings and documents submitted as part of the Part 8 application, with particular detail on the design set out in the Preliminary Design Report. An overview of the proposed layout and a cross section through the carriageway are shown following.

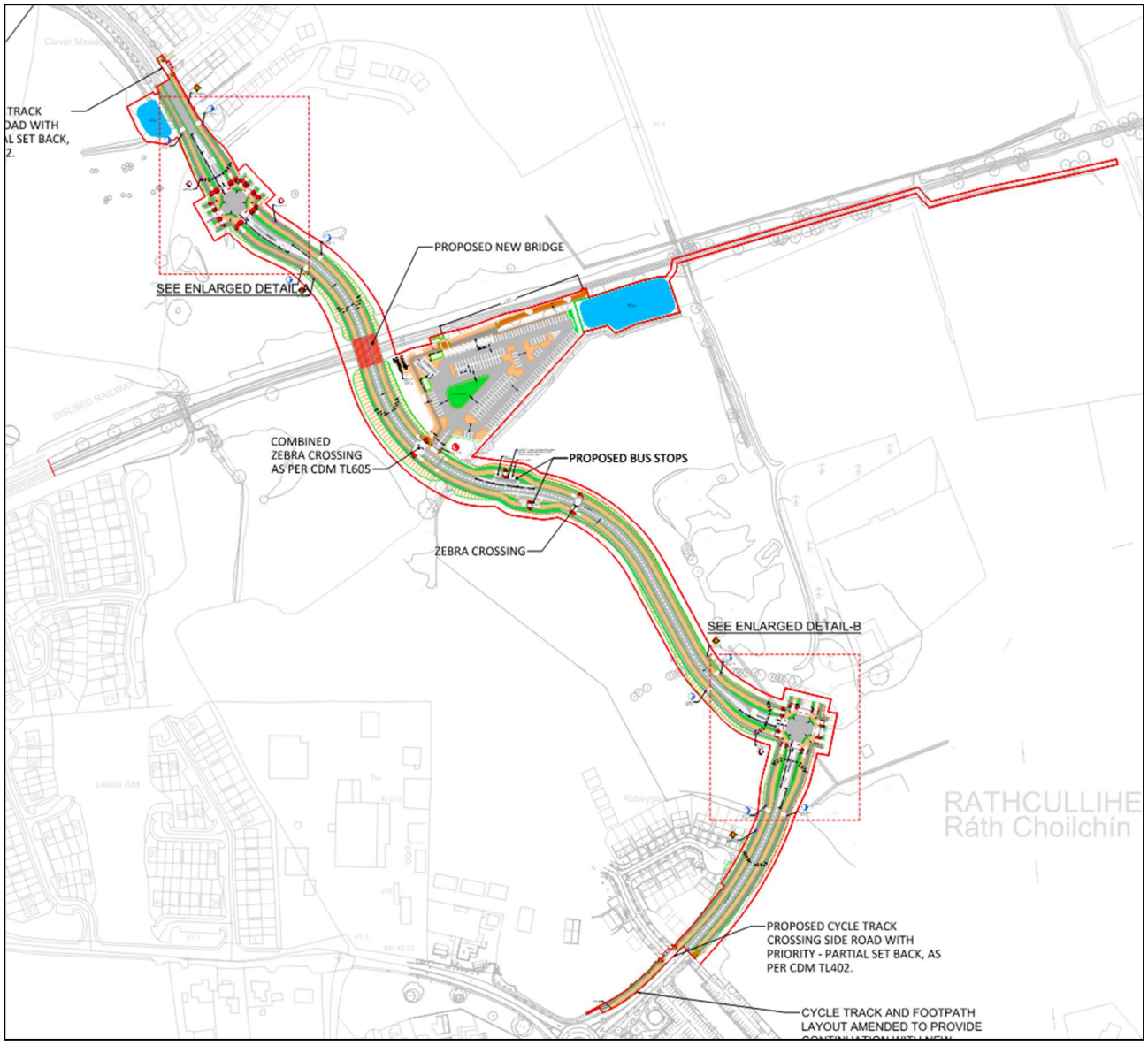

Figure 4: Proposed Development Layout

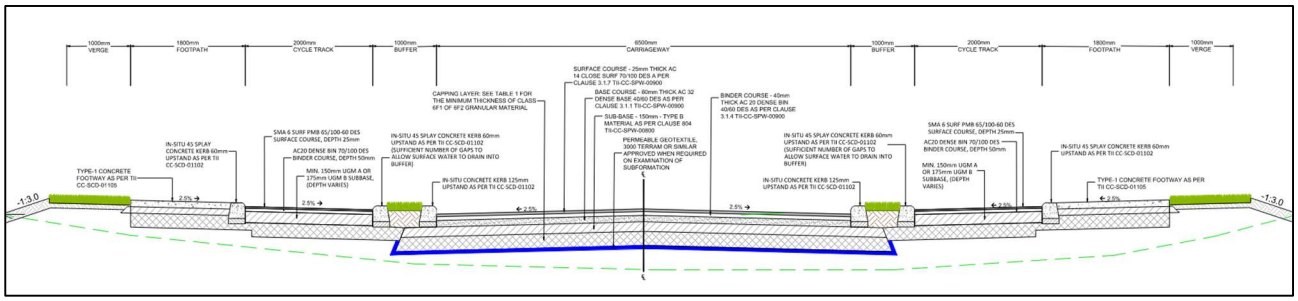

Figure 5: Proposed Access Road Typical Cross Section

6 PLANNING DOCUMENTATION OVERVIEW

The planning package consists of the following:

- Road design drawings including general arrangement, plan and long section, typical cross sections, signalised junction layouts etc.;
- Stormwater drainage design drawings including SuDS details;
- Wastewater and watermain design drawings;
- Preliminary Design Report;
- AA Screening Report;
- EIA Screen Assessment;
- Ecological Impact Assessment Report;
- Link & Junction Assessment;
- Construction Environmental Management Plan;
- Option Selection Report;
- Archaeological Desktop Assessment.

A summary of the findings of the key reports and assessments listed above is set out following.

AA SCREENING REPORT

The AA screening process has considered potential effects which may arise during the construction and operational phases as a result of the implementation of the project. Through an assessment of the pathways for effects and an evaluation of the project characteristics, taking into account the processes involved and the distance of separation from European sites, it has been evaluated that there are not likely to be significant adverse effects on the qualifying interests, special conservation interests, or the conservation objectives of the Lower River Suir SAC.

Given the nature of the development, its scale, and the localised and temporary nature of the construction effects identified as potential sources, it is concluded that the proposed project is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on any designated European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

This evaluation is made in view of the conservation objectives of the habitats or species for which these sites have been designated. Consequently, a Stage Two Appropriate Assessment is not required for the project.

EIA SCREEN ASSESSMENT

Based on the duration, nature, and scale of the proposed project, it is considered that the overall impact on the receiving environment will be unlikely, short-term, and not significant subject to the implementation of all mitigation measures detailed in the CEMP.

An AA Screening Report has been prepared by OCSC which concluded that the proposed project is not likely to give rise to adverse effects on any designated European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects. Therefore, a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) is not required for this proposed project.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

The construction of the new link road between the Clover Meadows and Abbeygate housing developments and car park in Ferrybank, County Kilkenny is likely to create impacts, especially on the local fauna in the absence of mitigation. There is a Natura 2000 site, the Lower River Suir SAC, located 0.78km direct from the site. Given that the distance between the Ferrybank stream and the is 0.26km (measured at its nearest point), despite the indirect hydrological connection between the proposed site and the Lower River Suir SAC (1.79kn downstream during the operational phase), impacts on European sites are anticipated to be unlikely and negligible.

Potential concerns arising from the works include:

- Temporary disturbance of species.
- Facilitation of the spread of invasive species within the site and further.
- Negative impacts on local fauna populations such as bats, birds and badgers

Although the negative impacts outlined above have been identified for the proposed project, the implementation of detailed design and construction stage mitigation strategies will allow for avoidance or reduction of impacts to negligible levels in the short term. It is recommended that pre-construction surveys such as dawn/dusk (emergence) for bats, pre-commencement surveys for nesting birds and pre-construction surveys for invasive species (especially for Butterfly Bush (Buddleja davidii) be carried out.

It is concluded that once mitigation has been put into place, the proposed project is not foreseen to give rise to any significant adverse effects on any of the aforementioned groups, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

LINK & JUNCTION ASSESSMENT

The following conclusions can be drawn from the outcome of the Vissim modelling:

- The access road will have sufficient link capacity to accommodate the estimated trips with a high amount of reserve capacity available;
- Based on the functionality and demand at the two main junctions located along the access road, it is proposed that both junctions should operate by means of traffic signal control;
- Based on the estimated volumes at the northern junction (Junction 5), the following layout is proposed:
  - Single-lane roads on the eastern and western approaches due to lower volumes; and
  - Single-lane roads on the northern and southern approaches with 20m right-turn bays to prevent turning vehicles from blocking the through movements.
- Based on the estimated volumes at the southern junction (Junction 6), the following layout is proposed:
  - Single-lane road on the eastern approach due to lower volumes; and
  - Single-lane roads on the northern, southern, and western approaches with 20m right-turn bays to prevent turning vehicles from blocking the through movements.
- Using these layouts, both junctions will perform with acceptable delays and queue lengths during both peak hours.

It can therefore be concluded that the proposed access road, junction control, and layouts will be sufficient to accommodate the future buildout of the zoned lands in the area, with reserve capacity available.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESKTOP ASSESSMENT.

The scheme, in its entirety, is considered to be sited in a landscape of archaeological potential, and greenfield environments on the road alignment, as well as on ancillary development, such as carparking and drainage, are considered to have archaeological potential. Earthworks carried out in association with the scheme have the potential to unearth and directly impact previously unknown archaeological remains.

As the known archaeology is all subsurface, there will be no direct visual impact on archaeological monuments, although the setting of recorded monuments, as well as the surviving designed landscape and setting of surviving architectural features associated with the former Newtown House will be directly impacted.

It is recommended that the alignment of The South – North Access Road to the south side of the railway line be subject to a programme of geophysical survey, carried out under licence by a suitably qualified archaeologist. On the alignment of The South – North Access Road to the north side of the railway line, it shall be necessary to establish with more certainty the location of archaeology identified in the early 2000s, including the location of monument KK046-010----, fulacht fia (Site 6) and the area of pit activity. The approach should be discussed with the National Monuments Service, who may require geophysical survey, test-excavation, monitoring of soil stripping or a combination of methods. Any surviving material associated with monument KK046-010, fulacht fia (Site 6) should be resolved in full through archaeological excavation in the event the remains cannot adequately be preserved in-situ.

All potential direct impacts on the surviving architectural elements associated with the late 18th century Newpark House, namely the extensive walled gardens and derelict coach house, should be avoided.

7 VERIFICATION

This report was compiled and verified by:

Patrick Raggett B.E., CEng MIEI, MCIHT
Chartered Engineer
O'Connor Sutton Cronin & Associates

OCSC

O'CONNOR · SUTTON · CRONIN

MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONSULTING ENGINEERS

Head Office

9 Prussia Street
Dublin 7
Ireland
D07KT57
T: +353 (0)1 8682000
E: ocsc@ocsc.ie | W: www.ocsc.ie

Civil | Structural | Mechanical | Electrical | Sustainability | Environmental