

D C W N E Y

**STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY
WITH PLANNING POLICY**

**Proposed Strategic Housing Development
on Lands at Oldtown, Swords,
Co. Dublin**

Applicant: Gerard Gannon Properties

March 2022

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Downey, Chartered Town Planners, 29 Merrion Square, D02RW64, have prepared this Statement of Consistency with Planning Policy, on behalf of the applicant, Gerard Gannon Properties. This Statement accompanies a planning application to An Bord Pleanála for a proposed Strategic Housing Development on lands at north of Rathbeale Road and to the west of and north of Miller's Avenue and Glen Ellan Road, Oldtown, Swords, Co. Dublin, with associated engineering works on lands locally known as the Celestica/Motorola site, junction of Glen Ellan Road and Balheary Road, and at/on Balheary Road, Swords, Co. Dublin (the application site). The proposed development, as per the description contained within the statutory planning notices, provides for:

"We, Gerard Gannon Properties, intend to apply to An Bord Pleanála for permission for a strategic housing development at lands to the north of Rathbeale Road and to the west of and north of Miller's Avenue and Glen Ellan Road, Oldtown, Swords, Co. Dublin, with associated engineering works on lands locally known as the Celestica/Motorola site, junction of Glen Ellan Road and Balheary Road, and at/on Balheary Road, Swords, Co. Dublin.

The development will consist of the removal of the temporary site office/site compound structures on site and the construction of a total of 377 no. residential units (173 no. houses, 134 no. apartments, and 70 no. duplex units [comprising 35 no. duplex 'house' units and 35 no. duplex 'apartment' units]), and 1 no. childcare facility, all of which will be provided as follows:

- *173 no. residential houses (9 no. 2 bed houses, 147 no. 3 bed houses, and 17 no. 4 bed houses) in semi-detached, end-terraced, and mid-terraced houses ranging from two to three storey in height;*
- *Duplex Block A containing a total of 18 no. units comprising of 9 no. 1 bed units, 8 no. 2 bed units, and 1 no. 3 bed unit, in a building three storeys in height, and all units provided with private balconies/terraces; car parking and bicycle spaces, and bin stores;*
- *Duplex Block B containing a total of 8 no. units comprising of 4 no. 1 bed units and 4 no. 2 bed units, in a building three storeys in height, and all units provided with private balconies/terraces; car parking and bicycle spaces, and bin stores;*
- *Duplex Block C containing a total of 8 no. units comprising of 4 no. 1 bed units and 4 no. 2 bed units, in a building three storeys in height, and all units provided with private balconies/terraces; car parking and bicycle spaces, and bin stores;*
- *Duplex Block D containing a total of 20 no. units comprising of 10 no. 1 bed units, 9 no. 2 bed units, and 1 no. 3 bed unit, in a building three storeys in height, and all units provided with private balconies/terraces; car parking and bicycle spaces, and bin stores;*
- *Duplex Block E containing a total of 8 no. units comprising of 4 no. 1 bed units and 4 no. 2 bed units, in a building three storeys in height, and all units provided with private balconies/terraces; car parking and bicycle spaces, and bin stores;*
- *Duplex Block F containing a total of 8 no. units comprising of 4 no. 1 bed units and 4 no. 2 bed units, in a building three storeys in height, and all units provided with private balconies/terraces; car parking and bicycle spaces, and bin stores;*

- *Apartment Block A containing a total of 48 no. units comprising of 18 no. 1 bed units and 30 no. 2 bed units with all units provided with private balconies/terraces, in a building four to five storeys in height, with internal bicycle stores, bin stores and plant rooms at ground floor level; car parking within the parking court, the undercroft and on-street, and bicycle parking;*
- *Apartment Block B1 containing a total of 32 no. units comprising of 17 no. 1 bed units and 15 no. 2 bed units with all units provided with private balconies/terraces, in a building four to five storeys in height, with internal bicycle stores, bin stores and plant rooms at ground floor level; car parking within the parking court, the undercroft and on-street, and bicycle parking;*
- *Apartment Block B2 containing a total of 32 no. units comprising of 17 no. 1 bed units and 15 no. 2 bed units with all units provided with private balconies/terraces, in a building four to five storeys in height, with internal bicycle stores, bin stores and plant rooms at ground floor level; car parking within the parking court, the undercroft and on-street, and bicycle parking;*
- *Apartment Block C containing a total of 22 no. units comprising of 11 no. 1 bed units and 11 no. 2 bed units with all units provided with private balconies/terraces, in a building four to five storeys in height, with internal bicycle stores, bin stores and plant rooms at ground floor level; car parking within the parking court, the undercroft and on-street, and bicycle parking;*
- *1 no. childcare facility in a one to two storey building, with associated outdoor play area, car parking and drop-off/visitor parking, bicycle parking, and bin stores.*

The development will provide for a total of 600 no. car parking spaces within the scheme; a total of 440 no. bicycle spaces serving the apartments, duplexes and childcare facility; the completion of Meadowbank Road adjoining Park Avenue; new vehicular accesses onto Miller's Avenue; proposed upgrades to public realm including footpaths, landscaping including play equipment, boundary treatments, and public lighting; and all associated engineering and site works necessary to facilitate the development including the proposed stormwater storage tank and overflow outfall gravity sewer to the Broadmeadow River with associated manholes on lands locally known as the Celestica/Motorola site, junction of Glen Ellan Road and Balheary Road, and at/on Balheary Road, along with the proposed vehicular/service access onto Balheary Road, Swords.

The application contains a statement setting out how the proposal will be consistent with the objectives of the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023.

The application contains a statement indicating why permission should be granted for the proposed development, having regard to a consideration specified in section 37(2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, notwithstanding that the proposed development materially contravenes a relevant development plan or local area plan other than in relation to the zoning of the land.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) have been prepared in respect of the proposed development."

This Statement of Consistency with Planning Policy has been prepared in accordance with Section 8 (1)(a)(iv) of the Planning and Development (Housing) and Residential Tenancies Act 2016 and in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2017 (as amended by Planning and Development (Strategic Housing Development) Regulations 2017) and the

“Strategic Housing Development: Section 4 Applications to An Bord Pleanála - Guidance for Applicants” issued by An Bord Pleanála.

This Statement demonstrates that the proposed development is consistent with the relevant national, regional, and local planning policy and guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). This Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying detailed documentation prepared by the design team.

For details of compliance with the quantitative standards for residential units of *“Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments”*, *“Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities”*, and the *“Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023”*, please refer to the Housing Quality Assessment and Urban Design And Architectural Statement prepared by Conroy Crowe Kelly Architects (CCK Architects) which is included as part of the architectural planning pack.

2.0 NATIONAL POLICY AND GUIDELINES

The key provisions of the national planning policy, including Section 28 Guidelines, as it relates to the proposed development are now set out in the following sections. The key national policy and guidance documents of relevance include:

- Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework
- Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2021-2030
- Rebuilding Ireland, An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness (2016)
- Housing for All: A New Housing Plan for Ireland
- Affordable Housing Act 2021 & Housing Circular 28/2021
- The Housing Agency Statement of Strategy 2022-2024
- Residential Densities in Towns and Villages (Circular Letter: NRUP 02/2021)
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and Best Practice Urban Design Guidelines (2009)
- Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities: Statement on Housing Policy (2007)
- Quality Homes for Sustainable Communities (2007)
- Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (Dec 2020)
- Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Dec 2018)
- Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)
- Childcare Facilities operating under the ECCE Scheme (Circular Letter: PL 3/2016)
- Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)
- National Cycle Manual (June 2011)
- EIA Directive
- Bird and Habitats Directive - Appropriate Assessment
- The Planning System and Flood Risk Guidelines (2009)
- All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025
- National Adaptation Framework: Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland
- Climate Action Plan 2019

2.1 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework is *“the Governments high-level strategic plan for shaping the future growth and development of our country out to the year 2040”*. It is a Framework to guide public and private investment, to create and promote opportunities for our people, and to protect and enhance our environment - from our villages to our cities and everything in between. It is stated within the National Planning Framework that, *“a major new policy emphasis on renewing and developing existing settlements will be required, rather than continual expansion and sprawl of cities and towns out into the countryside, at the expense of town centres and smaller villages”*.

It is also stated that there will be an ongoing shift in population and jobs to the east and to the counties around Dublin in particular. The NPF will support the future growth and success of Dublin as Ireland’s leading global city of scale, by better managing Dublin’s growth to ensure that more of it can be accommodated within and close to the city.

According to the National Planning Framework, Dublin needs to accommodate a greater proportion of the growth it generates within its metropolitan boundaries and to offer improved housing choice, transport mobility and quality of life. Dublin’s continued performance is critical to Ireland’s competitiveness.

The NPF states that, *“the long-term vision for Ireland’s housing future aims to balance the provision of good quality housing that meets the needs of a diverse population, in a way that makes our cities, towns, villages and rural areas good places to live now and in the future.”*

It is outlined within the Plan that future homes are required to be located where people have the best opportunities to access a high standard quality of life. In Ireland, the location of housing has taken on a dispersed and fragmented character which has led to people living further away from their jobs and often being at a sizeable remove from important services such as education and healthcare. It is stated that it is important to *“prioritise the location of new housing provision in existing settlements as a means to maximising a better quality of life for people through accessing services, ensuring a more efficient use of land and allowing for greater integration with existing infrastructure.”*

The NPF has a number of national policy objectives which are relevant to this application, which include:

National Policy Objective 3a: *“Deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements.”*

National Policy Objective 4: *“Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.”*

National Policy Objective 6: *“Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.”*

National Policy Objective 11: *“In meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth.”*

National Policy Objective 13: *“In urban areas, planning and related standards, including in particular building height and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high-quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth. These standards will be subject to a range of tolerance that enables alternative solutions to be proposed to achieve stated outcomes, provided public safety is not compromised and the environment is suitably protected.”*

National Policy Objective 33: *“Prioritise the provision of new homes at locations that can support sustainable development and at an appropriate scale of provision relative to location.”*

National Policy Objective 35: *“Increase residential density in settlements, through a range of measures including reductions in vacancy, re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and increased building heights.”*

The proposed development will provide for a high-quality residential development which forms part of the overall Oldtown lands development granted under Reg. Ref. F11A/0436 (Phase 1), Reg. Ref. F11A/0473 (Phase 2), Reg. Ref. F15A/0390 (Phase 3), Reg. Ref. F17A/0666 (Phase 4A), Reg. Ref. F17A/0735 (Phase 4B), and Reg. Ref. F17A/0687 (Phase 4C). In relation to residential density and building heights, it is respectfully submitted that the proposed development comprising 173 no. houses, 134 no. apartments, and 70 no. duplex units [i.e. 35 no. duplex ‘house’ units and 35 no. duplex ‘apartment’ units], provides for a net density of c.48 units per hectare (7.8h developable land) which is submitted to be in line with Government guidance and evolving trends for sustainable developments in urban areas.

It is envisaged that all future residential developments will be required to provide multiple housing and accommodation types in order to meet the challenges of providing for an increasing population where the composition of households is to be comprised of smaller family units and an increased age dependent population are both expected to grow by 2040. Outlined in the NPF, 7 out of 10 households in the State currently consist of three people or less, with an average household size of 2.75 people. This is expected to decline to around 2.5 people per household by 2040. Thus, it is submitted that the proposed residential development adheres to the core principles of the NPF and will provide multiple accommodation types for specific housing needs.

Downey are of the considered opinion that the proposed development is in line with the objectives of the NPF as its states that, *“to more effectively address the challenge of meeting the housing needs of a growing population in our key urban areas, it is clear that we need to build inwards and upwards, rather than outwards. This means that apartments will need to become a more prevalent form of housing, particularly in Ireland’s cities”*.

The NPF also states that, *“this is underpinned by ongoing population growth, a long-term move towards smaller average household size, an ageing and more diverse population, greater mobility in the labour market and a higher proportion of households in the rented sector”*. Furthermore, the NPF adds that *“apartments made up 12% of all occupied households in Ireland and 35% of occupied households in the Dublin City Council area in 2016 (census data)”*. It is evident that Ireland is a long way behind European averages in terms of the numbers and proportion of households living in apartments, especially in our cities and larger towns. It is stated within the Project Ireland 2040 plan that, *“in many European countries it is normal to see 40-60% of households living in apartments.”*

Apartment developments have become an increasingly attractive and desirable housing option for a range of household types and tenures, building on and learning from experience to date, and that the economic and regulatory conditions are such that apartment development attracts investment that will result in greater delivery of apartments in Ireland’s cities and towns and other appropriate locations. It is evident that apartment developments are required in urban areas to meet the current demand for housing, particularly in Dublin. It is therefore considered that the provision of 173 no. houses, and 204 no. apartment/duplex units on the subject site will assist in achieving the objectives of the NPF.

2.2 Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2021-2030

Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (NPF), which sets the overarching spatial strategy for the next twenty years, includes the National Development Plan, which sets out the ten year investment strategy. The recent Review of the NDP was led by the National Investment Office in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and was structured in two phases with associated outputs. The review was founded upon a strongly evidence based approach, building upon the extensive data and analyses that have been produced by the NIO and by the work of IGEEES and other policy units across other Government Departments and agencies, including other newly commissioned and targeted research. The NDP sets out funding to underpin key Government priorities. Specifically, allocations will support the realisation of critical goals laid out in Housing for All and will enable a step-change in investment to ameliorate the effects of climate change.

Outlined in the NDP, the key achievements of NPF over 2018-2021 and in relation to housing includes delivery of over 63,000 homes and 26,256 new social housing homes. To underpin NPF population targets, a detailed assessment of structural housing demand identifies demand for almost 400,000 new homes in Ireland between 2020 and 2031, or 33,000 new homes per annum. At city and county level, this is broken down to form a Housing Supply Target (HST) for each local authority area, to guide planning for future development.

The NPF housing supply target has been refined to reflect recent (2020) ESRI research based on NPF population growth, taking into account both existing demand and a legacy of undersupply to date. There is now a need to accommodate around 600,000 new households by 2040, with the Department of Housing planning to deliver an average of 33,000 homes per annum to 2030 including an average of 10,000 new social homes each year and an average of 6,000 affordable homes each year.

Set out in the NDP, public capital investment must, as a top priority, support the delivery and location of the homes that society will need over the next decade and beyond, while also ensuring that in the

future the pattern of housing development underpins the development of more compact higher-density cities, towns, and other areas. It is also a priority to enable infill development, with up to 50% of future housing in our cities and major urban centres and 30% elsewhere to be provided within existing built-up areas serviced by existing facilities and along high-capacity public transport corridors.

The proposed development will provide for a sustainable residential development on appropriately zoned lands, which forms part of the overall Oldtown/Mooretown scheme as the fifth and final phase of the Oldtown lands. It is therefore considered that the provision 377 no. residential units with 1 no. childcare facility on the subject site will assist in achieving the objectives of the National Development Plan 2021-2030. Furthermore, the proposed development will support the completion of the overall scheme of the area and will provide the population needed to facilitate the economic growth of Swords. Oldtown-Mooretown, Swords, is an emerging attractive area for people to live and work in, supported by high-quality physical and social infrastructure as well as vast recreational amenities within the area.

The proposed development will benefit from the built environment already established within the Oldtown-Mooretown lands and surrounding areas of Swords including the network of local streets, public spaces and in particular natural open spaces. The proposed development will also be close to several schools, health services and childcare facilities which will cater for the influx of population arising from the proposed development. In light of the above, it is submitted that the proposed development is consistent with the National Development Plan in this instance.

2.3 Rebuilding Ireland, An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness (2016)

'Rebuilding Ireland, an Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness', provides a multi-stranded, action-oriented approach to achieving many of the Government's key housing objectives. The overarching aim of the Plan is to ramp up delivery of housing from its current undersupply across all tenures to help individuals and families meet their housing needs, and to help those who are currently housed to remain in their homes or be provided with appropriate options of alternative accommodation especially those families in emergency accommodation.

The Action Plan comprises of 5 key pillars which are addressing homelessness, accelerating social housing, building more homes, improving the rental sector and utilising existing housing. The Action Plan sets ambitious targets to double the annual level of residential construction to 25,000 homes and deliver 47,000 units of social housing in the period to 2021, while at the same time making the best use of the existing housing stock and laying the foundations for a more vibrant and responsive private rental sector.

Achieving the aim of accelerated delivery will contribute to the following core objectives:

- *Addressing the unacceptable level of households, particularly families, in emergency accommodation;*
- *Moderating rental and purchase price inflation, particularly in urban areas;*
- *Addressing a growing affordability gap for many households wishing to purchase their own homes;*

- *Maturing the rental sector so that tenants see it as one that offers security, quality and choice of tenure in the right locations and providers see it as one they can invest in with certainty;*
- *Ensuring housing's contribution to the national economy is steady and supportive of sustainable economic growth; and,*
- *Delivering housing in a way that meets current needs while contributing to wider objectives such as the need to support sustainable urban and rural development and communities and maximise the contribution of the built environment to addressing climate change.*

The provision of 377 no. residential units on the subject site will help the Government to achieve the objectives of the Housing Action Plan. Therefore, it is submitted that the proposed development is consistent with the policy in this regard.

2.4 Housing for All: A New Housing Plan for Ireland

The Housing for All: A New Housing Plan for Ireland states that Ireland's housing system is not meeting the needs of enough of our people, and therefore, it needs to increase new housing supply to an average of at least 33,000 new units per year over the next decade. This will include over 10,000 social homes each year over the next five years, with 9,500 of these being new-builds, and an average of 6,000 affordable homes for purchase or rent. As per, Housing for All provides four pathways to achieving four overarching objectives:

- *Supporting Homeownership and Increasing Affordability;*
- *Eradicating Homelessness, Increasing Social Housing Delivery and Supporting Social Inclusion;*
- *Increasing New Housing Supply; and*
- *Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock.*

Outlined in the Plan, the State must act decisively to increase supply of both private and public housing. An average of 33,000 homes must be provided every year between now and 2030. Increased housing output is needed in all sectors - private, affordable, and social - to meet the needs of people in a wide variety of circumstances.

It is submitted that provision of 377 no. residential units on the subject site will help the Government to achieve the objectives of the Housing for All Plan in increasing the housing output. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the development framework in this regard.

2.5 Affordable Housing Act 2021 & Housing Circular 28/2021

In July 2021, the Affordable Housing Act 2021 was published, aiming to address problems associated with the high cost of housing for the portion of the population that do not qualify for social housing. Coming to effect from 3rd September 2021, the Housing Circular 28/2021, amends Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The Programme for Government contained commitments in relation to expanding Part V to encompass affordable purchase and cost rental units and introducing affordable homes requirements to Part V. Part 6 of the Affordable Housing Act 2021, which was enacted on 21 July 2021, gives effect to this commitment.

The principal change to Part V made by these amendments is to increase the Part V contribution for new housing developments from 10% social housing to a mandatory 20% requirement, at least half of which must be applied to social housing provision and up to half of which may be applied to affordable and cost rental housing. It is noted that these changes to Part V primarily apply to land purchased on or after 1 August 2021. Any new planning permissions for housing development on that land will have a 20% Part V requirement. However, a 10% Part V requirement will apply where land already has planning permission or was purchased between 1 September 2015 and 31 July 2021 and planning permission is granted before 31 July 2026.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the Affordable Housing Act 2021, Housing Circular 28/2021, and the requirements under Part V of the Act as it is proposed to provide 20% of the housing units for social and affordable housing. For further details, please refer to the enclosed Part V Validation Letter from Fingal County Council with associated indicative costings and layout.

2.6 The Housing Agency Statement of Strategy 2022-2024

Launched in late January 2022, the Housing Agency's Statement of Strategy, outlines how more affordable housing, increasing the supply of social and private homes and addressing social inclusion issues such as homelessness and ageing will be the priorities for the work of The Housing Agency over 2022-2024. The Statement of Strategy frames the work of The Housing Agency under three broad themes:

- Being a centre for housing knowledge;
- Bridging housing supply and demand; and,
- Building capacity for housing.

It also outlines how, over the coming years, the Housing Agency will use research, informed policy insights and data to work *“to achieve a housing system that meets the housing needs of the nation and promotes viable, sustainable communities”*.

The Housing Agency's Strategic Plan 2022-2024 has been framed in the context of supporting Housing for All, the Government's housing plan for Ireland and key trends in the housing system including:

- Diverse and changing housing needs for people living in Ireland.
- Long-term government policy and strategic planning for the Irish housing system.
- A continuing focus on building inclusive, sustainable communities.

It is submitted that the provision of 377 no. residential units on appropriately zoned land under the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 would help utilise an existing capacity within the built-up area of Oldtown-Mooretown, Swords, and facilitate meeting the housing target for the area and the overall County. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the foregoing Strategy in this regard.

2.7 Residential Densities in Towns and Villages (Circular Letter: NRUP 02/2021)

The purpose of this Circular, issued on 21st April 2021, is to provide clarity in relation to the interpretation and application of current statutory guidelines, in advance of issuing updated Section

28 guidelines that will address sustainable residential development in urban areas. It is considered important to address this matter in the context of both the need for significantly increased and more sustainable housing supply throughout Ireland, and national recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Outlined in the Circular, while the *Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines* clearly encourage net densities in the 35-50 dwellings per hectare range within cities and larger towns, net densities of 30-35 dwellings per hectare may be regarded as acceptable in certain large town contexts and net densities of less than 30 dwellings per hectare, although generally discouraged, are not precluded in large town locations.

These “outer suburban” provisions apply to cities and larger towns, and the *Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines* define larger towns as having a population in excess of 5,000 people. Large towns therefore range from 5,000 people up to the accepted city scale of 50,000 people. Given the very broad extent of this range and variety of urban situations in Ireland, it is necessary for An Bord Pleanála and Planning Authorities to exercise discretion in the application and assessment of residential density at the periphery of large towns, particularly at the edges of towns in a rural context.

Accordingly, the full range of outer suburban density, from a baseline figure of 30 dwellings per hectare (net) may be considered, with densities below this figure permissible subject to Section 5.12 of the *Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines*. It is also clarified that in certain circumstances, the neighbourhood or district referred to in Section 5.12, may comprise a significant portion of a rural town.

Considering that the Census 2016 recorded a population of 39,248 people for Swords, the town stands within the larger towns category, contributing to the consolidation of the Dublin Metropolitan Area. Accordingly, the proposed development of the subject lands is submitted to strengthen the urban role of Swords and reinforcing the vital role of Swords in the settlement’s hierarchy of the County, and therefore, is considered to be consistent with the foregoing Circular.

2.8 Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and Best Practice Urban Design Guidelines (2009)

This document reviews and updates the Residential Density Guidelines (1999), and its aim is to assist both planning authorities and developers in meeting certain standards in the design of residential development. The main objective of the ‘*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines*’ is to produce high-quality sustainable developments through providing:

- *Quality homes and neighbourhoods;*
- *Places where people actually want to live, to work and to raise families; and,*
- *Places that work - and will continue to work - not just for us, but for our children and for our children’s children.*

The Guidelines state that sustainability is about the integration of schools, community facilities, employment, transport, and amenities with the housing development process in a timely, cost-effective way.

The aim of the Guidelines is to set out the key planning principles which should be reflected in development plans and local area plans and which should guide the preparation and assessment of planning applications for residential developments in urban areas. The Guidelines support a plan-led approach to development in accordance with the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and state:

“The scale, location and nature of major new residential development will be determined by the development plan, including both the settlement strategy and the housing strategy”.

In this regard, the subject site is zoned for new residential development under the *“RA – Residential Area”* zoning designation of the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023, where both residential and childcare facilities are a permitted in principle land use.

Section 2.3 of the Guidelines promote a sequential approach to the zoning of residential lands. In this regard, the Guidelines state that:

“Zoning shall extend outwards from the centre of an urban area, with undeveloped lands closest to the core and public transport routes being given preference, encouraging infill opportunities, and that areas to be zoned shall be contiguous to existing zoned development lands and that any exception must be clearly justified in the written statement of the development plan”.

The subject site is located on appropriately zoned lands to the west of Swords. The site is contiguous to existing residential developments at Oldtown lands to the north and east of the site, and Mooretown lands to the south of the site. In light of this, the zoning and future development of the subject site is in accordance with these Guidelines.

The Guidelines also support increased residential densities particularly for sites located in ‘Outer Suburban/Greenfield’ sites, particularly for such sites on the periphery of cities or larger towns, as it states:

“The greatest efficiency in land usage on such lands will be achieved by providing net residential densities in the general range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare and such densities (involving a variety of housing types where possible) should be encouraged generally.”

In addition to the above, the guidelines go on to further state the following in terms of residential development in ‘Outer Suburban/Greenfield’ sites:

“Development at net densities less than 30 dwellings per hectare should generally be discouraged in the interests of land efficiency, particularly on sites in excess of 0.5 hectares.”

The application site will achieve an overall net density of c. 48 dwellings per hectare (net developable area is 7.8 hectares). It is considered that the site is classified as an outer suburban/greenfield site appearing as a natural urban extension connected to the existing town of Swords at its western development boundary, situated within an accessible location on appropriately zoned lands.

In terms of planning for sustainable neighbourhoods, there is focus on “*planning at the district or neighbourhood scale within larger towns and cities, whether on brownfield or green-field sites*”. The Guidelines state that, “*national policy makes it clear that sustainability is not confined to the physical environment. Sustainability also includes the concept of stable, integrated communities, and planning for such communities must embrace both tangible issues - such as the timely provision of school places - and the intangible, such as people’s perception of what constitutes an attractive, secure environment in which to rear children. Planning objectives at the district/neighbourhood scale can thus be grouped under four main themes:*

- (a) Provision of community facilities;*
- (b) Efficient use of resources;*
- (c) Amenity/quality of life issues; and*
- (d) Conservation of the built and natural environment.”*

The document goes on to state that, “*sustainable neighbourhoods require a range of community facilities, and each district/neighbourhood will need to be considered within its own wider locality, as some facilities may be available in the wider area while others will need to be provided locally*”. It then outlines the importance of the provision of schools, community centres, healthcare facilities and district/neighbourhood centres use to the sustainability of communities. The subject site is located within the Oldtown part of the Oldtown-Mooretown lands and is an extension of Millers Glen. As it stands, the permitted development in Oldtown includes the commercial centre and village square, c. 5.5 ha of Class 1 open space within the regional park, a new playing pitch, attenuation ponds and a number of small pocket parks. The overall development at Oldtown includes a cumulative total of 967 no. dwellings, 5 no. crèches and the commercial centre. Thus, this proposed scheme is contributing to the completion of the Oldtown lands, proposing 377 no. residential units, a childcare facility of 519 sqm, and overall of 0.8 ha amenity space spread across the lands with the remaining to be developed on the OS zoned lands to the north of the site.

In relation to amenity/quality of life issues, “*public open space can have a positive impact on physical and mental well-being as it provides spaces to meet, interact, exercise and relax. It needs to be appropriately designed, properly located, and well maintained to encourage its use. It is one of the key elements in defining the quality of the residential environment. Apart from the direct provision of active and passive recreation, it adds to the sense of identity of a neighbourhood, helps create a community spirit, and can improve the image of an area (especially a regeneration area). Well-designed open space is even more important in higher density residential developments*”. The proposed development provides for 8,715 sqm of amenity space (including Class 2 open space) within Phase 5 of the overall residential scheme whilst being in close proximity to Broadmeadow Park, the future Regional Park, alongside the Rathbeale Archaeological Park to serve the residents of Oldtown and the wider area.

The design of the proposed development has placed considerable emphasis on the context of the site and location as well as the surrounding built environment. The proposed development successfully incorporates the criteria of the ‘*Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide*’ and its 12 criteria, including: *Context, Connections, Inclusivity, Variety, Efficiency, Distinctiveness, Layout, Public Realm, Adaptability, Privacy/Amenity, Parking, and Detailed Design*, of which Planning Authorities are recommended to assess planning applications. It is evident that the form, layout, and architectural and landscaping design of the proposed development have been informed by the development’s place

and time. Well-designed homes in the right locations are fundamental to building strong, sustainable communities. Such communities will ensure Ireland's continued success in attracting and generating investment and improving the quality of life for residents.

Downey are of the considered opinion that the proposed development represents a development that has been carefully and appropriately designed, giving full consideration to its neighbouring properties and will integrate successfully with its environs. The proposed development has had regard to the surrounding environment and carefully assesses the proposal in light of same. The development positively contributes to the character and identity of the surrounding neighbourhood. The proposed scheme is also considered to be of an appropriate density which will help to support efficient public transport. It is submitted that the proposed development would be a positive addition to the surrounding built environment of Oldtown and to the identity of the locality. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed buildings will meet the aspirations of a range of people and the design and layout of such allows easy access by all. For further information on the proposed development's consistency with the '*Urban Design Manual*', please refer to the Architectural Design Statement (Architects Report) prepared by CCK Architects and the Statement of Response to An Bord Pleanála's Pre-Application Consultation Opinion letter prepared by Downey.

2.9 Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities: Statement on Housing Policy (2007)

The Department's policy statement '*Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*' provides the overarching policy framework for an integrated approach to housing and planning. The statement notes that demographic factors will continue to underpin strong demand for housing, which in turn will present considerable challenges for the physical planning of new housing and the provision of associated services. The quality of the housing environment is recognised as being central to creating a sustainable community. Sustainable neighbourhoods are areas where an efficient use of land, high quality design and effective integration in the provision of physical and social infrastructure combine to create places people want to live in.

The "*Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities*" policy statement is accompanied by Best Practice Guidelines entitled "*Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities*". The purpose of these Guidelines is to promote high standards in the design and construction and the provision of residential units and services in new housing developments. Best use of land is encouraged and optimal utilisation of services and infrastructure in the provision of new housing; point the way to cost effective options for housing design that go beyond minimum codes and standards; promote higher standards of environmental performance and durability in housing construction; seek to ensure that residents of a new housing scheme enjoy the benefits of first-rate living conditions in a healthy, accessible and visually attractive environment; and provide homes and communities that may be easily managed and maintained.

This planning application is accompanied by an Architectural Design Statement (Architects Report) and a Housing Quality Assessment (HQA) document prepared by CCK Architects, which demonstrate that the proposed development is compliant with the relevant standards in the '*Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities*' document and the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023.

2.10 Quality Homes for Sustainable Communities (2007)

The aim of these Guidelines is to identify principles and criteria that are important in the design of housing and to highlight specific design features, requirements and standards that have been found, from experience to be particularly relevant. The guidelines set out some recommended standards in terms of space provision and room sizes, etc.

The proposed scheme has been cognisant of the need to facilitate a high standard of living for future occupants, while representing a proposal that is conducive to complimenting and augmenting the established residential character of the surrounding area. In this regard it is noted that all of the residential units have been designed to comply with the room standards as set out in these Guidelines, as well as in the Fingal Development Plan. An Urban Design Statement has also been prepared by CCK Architects under a separate cover and submitted as part of this SHD application, which the Board are invited to refer to. This outlines the rationale behind the design of the scheme and how it will contribute to a positive and attractive residential development.

2.11 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (Dec 2020)

The *“Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments”* build on the content of the 2015 and 2018 apartment guidance, much of which remains valid, particularly with regard to design quality safeguards such as internal space standards for apartments, internal storage and amenity space. The Guidelines state that, *“in the longer term to 2040, the Housing Agency has identified a need for at least 45,000 new homes in Ireland’s five cities (Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford), more than 30,000 of which are required in Dublin City and suburbs, which does not include additional pent-up demand arising from under-supply of new housing in recent years”*. It is also stated that it is *“critical to ensure that apartment living is an increasingly attractive and desirable housing option for a range of household types and tenures.”*

The Guidelines also state that, *“aspects of previous apartment guidance have been amended and new areas addressed in order to:*

- *enable a mix of apartment types that better reflects contemporary household formation and housing demand patterns and trends, particularly in urban areas;*
- *make better provision for building refurbishment and small-scale urban infill schemes;*
- *address the emerging ‘build to rent’ and ‘shared accommodation’ sectors; and*
- *remove requirements for car-parking in certain circumstances where there are better mobility solutions and to reduces costs.”*

The Guidelines state that Ireland is a long way behind European averages in terms of the numbers of households living in apartments, especially in our cities and larger towns. Given the gap between Irish and European averages in numbers of households living in apartments and the importance of addressing the challenges of meeting the housing needs of a growing population in our key cities and towns and by building inwards and upwards rather than outwards, apartments need to become the norm for urban housing solutions. The Guidelines state that, *“ongoing demographic and societal changes mean that in addition to families with children, the expanding categories of household that may wish to be accommodated in apartments include:*

- *Young professionals and workers generally;*
- *Those families with no children;*
- *'Downsizers'; and,*
- *Older people, in both independent and assisted living settings."*

The Guidelines identify types of locations that may be suitable for apartment developments. In this regard, it is considered that the proposed development falls within "*(2) Intermediate Urban Locations*" as it meets the criteria for this location in that the site is located approximately within circa 3-4km of Swords Town Centre, is in close proximity to high-frequency bus routes at peak times and is located within the town's development boundary, and as such is suitable for a net density of 48 units per hectare.

The Guidelines also have specific planning policy requirements (SPPRS), which include:

Specific Planning Policy Requirement 1: *"Apartment developments may include up to 50% one-bedroom or studio type units (with no more than 20-25% of the total proposed development as studios) and there shall be no minimum requirement for apartments with three or more bedrooms. Statutory development plans may specify a mix for apartment and other housing developments, but only further to an evidence-based Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA), that has been agreed on an area, county, city or metropolitan area basis and incorporated into the relevant development plan(s)."*

Specific Planning Policy Requirement 3: *"Minimum Apartment Floor Areas:*

- *Studio apartment (1 person) 37 sqm*
- *1-bedroom apartment (2 persons) 45 sqm*
- *2-bedroom apartment (4 persons) 73 sqm*
- *3-bedroom apartment (5 persons) 90 sqm"*

In this regard, the proposed development at Oldtown (subject to this application) provides for 173 no. houses (9 no. 2 beds, 147 no. 3 beds, and 17 no. 4 beds), 204 no. apartment/duplex units (98 no. 1 beds, 104 no. 2 beds, and 2 no. 3 beds), all with associated car and bicycle parking spaces, areas of amenity space, and 1 no. childcare facility. It is considered that the overall quality of the facilities provided throughout the proposed scheme are appropriate and of high-quality, thus providing an enhanced standard of amenity for the future residents of the scheme. The development provides residents with the required level of amenity as outlined within the Guidelines. Furthermore, the proposed development comprises the final phase for the overall residential scheme on the subject lands and will support the completion of the same. Downey are of the professional opinion that the proposed development complies with the SPPRs of the "*Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments*" Guidelines.

This SHD application also includes a Housing Quality Assessment (HQA) and Building Lifecycle report prepared by CCK Architects, and a detailed Daylight, Sunlight, and Internal Light Analysis Report prepared by DK Partnership International, and is submitted in accordance with Chapter 6 of the Guidelines. The proposed development will help to meet the current demand for apartment type developments. For further information in this regard, please refer to the enclosed architectural

drawings and detailed HQA schedules prepared by CCK Architects, which provide confirmation that the proposed development is consistent with the design standards of these Guidelines.

The Guidelines also note the following with regard to aspect of units under Specific Planning Policy Requirement 4 which states:

“In relation to the minimum number of dual aspect apartments that may be provided in any single apartment scheme, the following shall apply:

- (i) A minimum of 33% of dual aspect units will be required in more central and accessible urban locations, where it is necessary to achieve a quality design in response to the subject site characteristics and ensure good street frontage where appropriate.*
- (ii) In suburban or intermediate locations, it is an objective that there shall generally be a minimum of 50% dual aspect apartments in a single scheme.*
- (iii) For building refurbishment schemes on sites of any size or urban infill schemes on sites of up to 0.25ha, planning authorities may exercise further discretion to consider dual aspect unit provision at a level lower than the 33% minimum outlined above on a case-by-case basis, but subject to the achievement of overall high design quality in other aspects.”*

The proposed development in this instance is located in a suburban location on appropriately zoned lands in an accessible location to the western development boundaries of Swords. In this regard, the minimum requirement for dual aspect units is 50%. The proposed development provides for a minimum of 60% dual aspect units and therefore accords with the aforementioned Guidelines.

In terms of Children’s Play areas, the proposed development has considered the recreational needs of children and incorporates children play equipment as part of the communal amenity space within the scheme. As stated within the Guidelines,

“Children’s play needs around the apartment building should be catered for:

- within the private open space associated with individual apartments;*
- within small play spaces (about 85-100 sqm) for the specific needs of toddlers and children up to the age of six, with suitable play equipment, seating for parents/guardians, and within sight of the apartment building, in a scheme that includes 25 or more units with two or more bedrooms; and,*
- within play areas (200-400 sqm) for older children and young teenagers, in a scheme that includes 100 or more apartments with two or more bedrooms.”*

The proposed development comprises a range of green open spaces, including various green spaces providing for more than 0.8ha of open space across the lands. This includes a triangular-shaped open space overlooked on all sides featuring desire lines which would create and encourage a vibrancy to the space. A large play area is to be provided featuring playing structures and native-planting, in addition to various smaller play areas throughout the scheme. The proposed childcare facility would also comprise of a garden playground located to the front of the proposed building. As such, it is submitted that the proposed development is consistent with the Guidelines in this instance. For

further details, please refer to the enclosed landscape drawings prepared by Doyle O'Troithigh Landscape Architecture and Urban Design and Architectural Statement prepared by CCK Architects.

In relation to bicycle and car parking requirements, the proposed development subject to this SHD application provides a total of 600 no. car parking spaces comprising on-street, on-curtilage, and undercroft parking, and a total of 440 no. bicycle spaces, in high quality, safe and accessible locations throughout the scheme. This is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the requirements of the Guidelines and the pertaining Development Plan standards.

Specific Planning Policy Requirement	Compliance
SPPR1 (Housing Mix)	In compliance
SPPR2 (Building Refurbishment and Urban Infill Development on sites up to 0.25ha)	Not Applicable; SPPR1 applies to the entire development
SPPR3 (Minimum Apartment Floor Areas)	In compliance with the standards
SPPR4 (Dual Aspect Ratios)	In compliance with the requirements
SPPR5 (Floor to Ceiling Height)	In compliance with the requirements
SPPR6 (Lift and Stair Cores)	In compliance with the required quantum
SPPR7 (Specific BTR Developments)	Not Applicable
SPPR8 (Qualified as BTR Developments)	Not Applicable

Table 1. Compliance with Specific Planning Policy Requirements

2.12 Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Dec 2018)

The “Urban Development and Building Heights, Guidelines for Planning Authorities” are intended to set out national planning policy guidelines on building heights in relation to urban areas, building from the strategic policy framework set out in the National Planning Framework 2040 (NPF). This document recognises that in recent years local authorities, through the statutory plan processes, have begun to set generic maximum height limits. However, such limits if inflexibility and unreasonably applied, can undermine national policy objectives to provide more compact urban forms as outlined in the National Planning Framework and instead can continue unsustainable patterns of development.

These Guidelines reinforce that, “a key objective of the NPF is therefore to see that greatly increased levels of residential development in our urban centres and significant increases in the building heights and overall density of development is not only facilitated but actively sought out and brought forward by our planning processes and particularly so at local authority and An Bord Pleanála levels.”

The document states that it is critically important that development plans identify and provide policy support for specific geographic locations or precincts where increased building height is not only desirable but a fundamental policy requirement. Locations with the potential for comprehensive urban development or redevelopment (e.g. brownfield former industrial districts, dockland locations,

etc.) should be identified where, for example, a cluster of higher buildings can be accommodated as a new neighbourhood or urban district or precinct.

In light of the above, the guidelines go on to further state that *“newer housing developments outside city and town centres and inner suburbs, i.e. the suburban edges of towns and cities, typically now include town-houses (2-3 storeys), duplexes (3-4 storeys) and apartments (4 storeys upwards). Such developments deliver medium densities, in the range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare net”*.

Section 1.11 of the Guidelines states, *“these guidelines therefore set out national planning policy that:*

- *Expand on the requirements of the National Planning Framework; and*
- *Applies those requirements in setting out relevant planning criteria for considering increased building height in various locations but principally (a) urban and city-centre locations and (b) suburban and wider town locations.”*

The proposed development at Oldtown is submitted to be in line with the foregoing development policies and with the physical and social infrastructure already in place which can easily accommodate the proposed apartment heights of 5 storeys.

The following Special Planning Policy Requirements are contained within the Guidelines and are relevant to the proposed development:

SPPR1: *“In accordance with Government policy to support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly town/city cores, planning authorities shall explicitly identify, through their statutory plans, areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for both redevelopment, regeneration and infill development to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and shall not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height.”*

The proposed development is situated within the wider Oldtown-Mooretown lands and comprises the final phase of a wider residential scheme within Oldtown immediately adjoining the R125 regional road and is considered capable of supporting taller buildings and increased density.

SPPR2: *“In driving general increases in building heights, planning authorities shall also ensure appropriate mixtures of uses, such as housing and commercial or employment development, are provided for in statutory plan policy. Mechanisms such as block delivery sequencing in statutory plans could be utilised to link the provision of new office, commercial, appropriate retail provision and residential accommodation, thereby enabling urban redevelopment to proceed in a way that comprehensively meets contemporary economic and social needs, such as for housing, offices, social and community infrastructure, including leisure facilities.”*

The proposed development seeks to provide for a residential development that is surrounded by a wide range of uses. As part of the scheme, a childcare facility is also proposed. There are numerous retails, health, community, and commercial facilities within the vicinity of the subject site, as well as a number of recreational/leisure amenities including parks and sports clubs. A Community and Social

Infrastructure Audit has been prepared by Downey, enclosed with this SHD application, which provides an overview and assessment of existing social infrastructure and facilities within Oldtown that ensures compliance with the aforementioned specific planning policy.

SPPR3: *“It is a specific planning policy requirement that where;*

(A) 1. An applicant for planning permission sets out how a development proposal complies with the criteria above, and

2. the assessment of the planning authority concurs, taking account of the wider strategic and national policy parameters set out in the National Planning Framework and these guidelines;

Then the planning authority may approve such development, even where specific objectives of the relevant development plan or local area plan may indicate otherwise.”

It is submitted that this SHD application contains sufficient reports, documentation, plans and justification to support the proposed development and outlines how the development is in accordance with the relevant planning policies and guidelines pertaining to the area. Such documents include architectural plans and elevations, Urban Design Statement (Architects Report), DMURS statements, Traffic Assessment, EIAR, planning reports, and engineering reports.

This document outlines how the proposal is consistent with the relevant national and local planning policy as it pertains to the site and area and as such the development accords with SPPR 3. This application has adhered to the Development Management Criteria set out within the Guidelines, which outline the specific criteria a planning must meet when proposing increased height. Within section *3.0 Building Height and the Development Process* four criteria are set out in *3.2 Development Management Criteria* which the applicant must demonstrate to the Planning Authority/An Bord Pleanála when making a planning application, this application satisfies that:

1. At the scale of the relevant city/town

- The site is within the development boundary of Swords and is served by various public bus routes.
- This development has been carefully modulated to respect the character of the area and residential amenity of neighbouring properties. It successfully integrates and enhances the public realm of the locality having regard to the surrounding area and existing residential developments. All such considerations have been made during the design process which has involved a multi-disciplinary team, which includes Ecologists, Architects, Landscape Architects, Engineers, Archaeologists, etc.
- A positive contribution has been made towards achieving densities within this locality, which is predominantly characterised by low density suburban style development. The unit mix provides a good choice for future residents and caters for a broad range of housing requirements within the housing market, namely first-time buyers, singles, downsizers, and retirees.

2. At the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street

- The proposed height will help to create and add visual interest in this area, while protecting views in the wider area, as confirmed within the Landscape/LVIA chapter of the EIAR.
- It is respectfully considered that the proposal introduces a high-quality development at an underutilised, zoned site. The proposed development responds appropriately to the massing and scale of the residential pattern and scale in the town of Swords and creates a strong sense of place through the introduction of key buildings at various nodes within the scheme (at Rathbeale Road junction and overlooking the park).
- A positive contribution has been made towards integrated and cohesive house and apartment design in this emerging area of Swords.

3. At the scale of the site/building

- As submitted within the Specific Site Assessments, the form, massing and height of proposed development has been carefully modulated to maximise access to natural daylight, ventilation and views and minimise overshadowing and loss of light.
- The design of the houses, duplexes and apartments is bespoke for this site in terms of the palette of materials and provision of public and communal open space to create an attractive public realm.

It is important to note that the scale and height of the proposed buildings do not exceed any height specifications within the Development Plan.

SPPR4: *“It is a specific planning policy requirement that in planning the future development of greenfield or edge of city/town locations for housing purposes, planning authorities must secure:*

1. *The minimum densities for such locations set out in the Guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), titled “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2007)” or any amending or replacement Guidelines;*
2. *A greater mix of building heights and typologies in planning for the future development of suburban locations; and*
3. *Avoid mono-type building typologies (e.g. two storey or own-door houses only), particularly, but not exclusively so in any one development of 100 units or more.”*

The proposed development provides for 173 no. houses (9 no. 2 beds, 147 no. 3 beds, and 17 no. 4 beds), 204 no. apartment/duplex units (98 no. 1 beds, 104 no. 2 beds, and 2 no. 3 beds). This provides for a net density of 48 units per hectare for the proposed scheme (377 units on 7.8 hectares of developable lands on the application site), which is in accordance with relevant local and national policy guidelines. Additionally, there is an appropriate mix of housing typologies and heights ranging from 2- to 3-storey houses, 3 storey duplex apartments to 5 storey apartment units. The development

is therefore in accordance with SPPR 4 of these Guidelines, keep consistent with the aforementioned Guidelines.

Specific Planning Policy Requirement	Compliance
SPPR1 (Building height and density)	In compliance
SPPR2 (Building height and mix of uses)	In compliance
SPPR3 (Assessment of planning applications)	In compliance in light of content of application submission
SPPR4 (Development of greenfield/edge of city/town centre sites)	In compliance

Table 2. Compliance with Specific Planning Policy Requirements

In light of the above, it is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the requirements of these guidelines on building heights for urban developments. The proposed development steps in height from 2 to 5 storeys with cognisance given to existing built environment in the vicinity of the subject site and the provision of appropriate separation distances. The existing lands at Oldtown are zoned for development and are serviced with road and public transport infrastructure. Therefore, the proposed residential development can be achieved on the lands in accordance with the aforementioned policy guidelines.

2.13 Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)

Government policy on childcare is to increase the number of childcare places and facilities available and to improve the quality of childcare services for the community. These Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities provide a framework to guide both local authorities in preparing development plans and assessing applications for planning permission, and developers and childcare providers in formulating development proposals.

The following definition of Childcare is included in the Guidelines:

“In these Guidelines, “childcare” is taken to mean full day-care and sessional facilities and services for pre-school children and school-going children out of school hours. It includes services involving care, education, and socialisation opportunities for children. Thus services such as pre-schools, naíonraí (Irish language playgroups), day-care services, crèches, playgroups, and after-school groups are encompassed by these Guidelines. Conversely childminding, schools, (primary, secondary and special) and residential centres for children are not covered by these Guidelines.”

For housing schemes, the Guidelines provide a benchmark provision of 1 no. 20 space childcare facility per 75 dwellings. The threshold for provision should be established having regard to existing location of facilities and the emerging demography of the area where new housing is proposed. The recommendations provided within the Guidelines must be considered in the context of the ‘Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments’ (2018), which state that:

“Notwithstanding the Department’s Planning Guidelines for Childcare Facilities, which are currently subject to review and recommend the provision of one childcare facility

(equivalent to a minimum of 20 child places) for every 75 dwelling units, the threshold for provision in apartment scheme should be established having regard to the scale and unit mix of the proposed development and the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities and the emerging demographic profile for the area.”

As recommended in the Guidelines, a maximum of 5 no. childcare facilities providing for 100 no. childcare spaces would be required as part of the proposal to cater for the influx of population arising from the proposed scheme. It is worth noting that as stated within the apartment guidelines, “one-bedroom or studio type units should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision and subject to location, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with two or more bedrooms”. Excluding the 1-bedroom apartment/duplex units from the overall provision for 377 no. residential units, this leaves a total of 279 no. units that can be deemed to accommodate families and therefore may generate demand for childcare places. With respect to the foregoing and as per the following calculations, the proposed scheme would require c. 74 childcare places.

$$(279 \div 75) \times 20 = 74.4 \text{ childcare places}$$

Therefore, 1 no. childcare facility capable of catering for c. 74 pre-school children would be required to cater for the influx of population arising from the proposed scheme. However, the proposed scheme provides for 1 no. childcare facility with an area of 519 sqm catering for c. 102 pre-school children, which is well above the requirements of the Guidelines.

In light of the above, it is submitted that the proposed development is consistent with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines. For further details and information in this regard, please refer to the Childcare Provision Assessment report prepared by Downey under a separate cover.

2.14 Childcare facilities operating under the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme (Circular Letter: PL 3/2016)

The purpose of this Circular, issued on 31st March 2016, is to revise the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001, and having regard to the extension of the ECCE scheme and the associated increased demands on childcare facilities with effect from September 2016, planning authorities are hereby requested to:

- Expedite all pre-planning application consultation requests from Childcare facility providers in relation to proposals to extend opening hours, to increase capacity or to provide new facilities.
- Expedite, insofar as is possible, consideration of all planning applications or Section 5 declaration submissions in respect of childcare facilities in order to facilitate the expansion of required capacity as appropriate.

The Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001 outline general planning related standards for childcare facilities. Planning Authorities are advised that the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 set out a range of childcare related standards for childcare facilities as stipulated by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs. The Child and Family Agency, also known as TUSLA, is responsible for inspecting pre-school services under, and enforcing compliance with, the afore-mentioned 2006 Regulations.

In light of the foregoing, planning authorities are requested to exclude matters relating to childcare facility standards outlined in Appendix 1 of the Childcare Facilities Planning Guidelines 2001 - including the minimum floor area requirements per child - from their consideration of planning applications relating to childcare facilities and to solely focus on planning related considerations that fall within the remit of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in the determination of such planning applications.

It is submitted that the scheme would bring the proposed childcare facility to the southern portion of the application site, facing onto the provisioned one-way access route separated from the Millers Avenue by a verge of green space, providing for full accessibility of this facility. The childcare would also benefit from an approximately 210 sqm playground designed to the back of the building. The neighbouring houses and duplex block will also enhance activity within the surrounding public realm, which would also contribute positively to achieve a safe and dynamic bounding public realm for the creche.

It is submitted that the proposed childcare facility provides for adequate capacity to cater for the influx of population arising from the proposed development. Therefore, it is suggested that the proposed development is consistent with Circular PL 3/2016.

2.15 Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future

In summary, *'Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future'* states that, *"to achieve the vision of a sustainable transport system, individual lifestyles will have to change and collectively we will have to work progressively on a range of solutions which deal with apparently conflicting goals: economic growth, reduced emissions, less use of motorised transport and better accessibility."*

The 5 key goals of this transport policy are as follows:

- *Improve quality of life and accessibility to transport for all and, in particular, for people with reduced mobility and those who may experience isolation due to lack of transport;*
- *Improve economic competitiveness through maximising the efficiency of the transport system and alleviating congestion and infrastructural bottlenecks;*
- *Minimise the negative impacts of transport on the local and global environment through reducing localised air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions;*
- *Reduce overall travel demand and commuting distances travelled by the private car; and,*
- *Improve security of energy supply by reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels.*

It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with *'Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future'*. The Oldtown lands are currently served by various bus services which serve a number of bus stops distributed across the area. The subject site is located approximately 100 metres from R125 Rathbeale Road and closest bus stops (currently served by Dublin Bus Route 41B and Go-Ahead Bus Route 197). Additionally, there are 2 no. bus stops on Glen Ellan Road c. 700m east of the subject site (currently served by Swords Express bus routes 506 and 506X). These routes provide direct access to Dublin City Centre from the proposed development.

The proposed development also provides considerable secure bicycle parking for future residents and visitors to again encourage use of sustainable modes of transportation. This can also be noted within the scheme with an enhanced permeability and connectivity to adjoining sites. It is evident that the proposed scheme's main aim is to facilitate and support the use of sustainable transport, particularly by facilitating connectivity within the lands.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development is consistent with this national transport policy and will assist in its implementation. Please refer to the enclosed Traffic and Transport Assessment prepared by Waterman Moylan Engineering Consultants for further details in this regard.

2.16 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)

The '*Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*' (DMURS) 2013 and as updated in 2019, sets out design guidance and standards for constructing new and reconfigured existing urban roads and streets. It also sets out practical design measures to encourage more sustainable travel patterns in urban areas. The engineering assessment report prepared by Waterman Moylan Engineering Consultants provide further details in respect of the compliance of the proposed development with the provision of DMURS. Please refer to the pertaining documents prepared by Waterman Moylan Engineering Consultants for further information in this regard.

2.17 National Cycle Manual (June 2011)

The '*National Cycle Manual*' 2011 embraces the Principles of Sustainable Safety as this will offer a safe traffic environment for all road users including cyclists. It offers guidance on integrating the bike in the design of urban areas. The Manual challenges planners and engineers to incorporate cycling within transport networks more proactively than before.

Outlined in the Manual, many residential and access streets already offer a high quality of service to cycling. Cycling two-abreast on quiet, interesting, well-surfaced streets and roads can be attractive to cyclists. In many cases there is no physical infrastructure involved, other than the self-evident and self-enforcing nature of the environment.

The Manual also gives guidance on the minimum number of spaces which should be provided initially at new private and public facilities in urban areas. For housing developments, this is stated to be:

- 1 no. private secure bicycle space per bed space (note - design should not require bicycle access via living area), minimum 2 spaces; and
- 1 visitor bicycle space per two housing units.

The following gives an overview of the varying characteristics of parking at residential areas that should be considered in determining the most appropriate parking facility.

- Convenience is essential for frequently used bicycles, and preferably not via living areas;
- Private parking should accommodate residents and visitors; and,
- Shared parking facilities can be suitable for multiple dwellings (e.g. apartment complex).

It is submitted that connections in the proposed development have been addressed by provision of high standard and prioritised cycle infrastructure along Rathbeale Road, Glen Ellan Road, key roads on

the network, and the northern extension of the Swords Western Distributor Road. Additionally, a new feeder route is proposed to link Oldtown-Mooretown with Swords Main Street. Please refer to the enclosed Traffic and Transport drawings and documentation prepared by Waterman Moylan Engineering Consultants for further details in this regard.

2.18 EIA Directive

The EIA Directive 85/337 EEC, as amended, is the key legislation in EU Environmental Policy. The EIA Directive aims to determine the likely significant effects of a project on the environment. Screening is the first stage in the EIA process required by Article 4 of the EIA Directive and this process determines whether an EIA is required for a specific project. The Directive outlines in Article 4(1) 24 Annex 1 projects that require a mandatory EIA. Article 4(2) outlines Annex 2 projects that require consideration for EIA further to a case by case examination or through thresholds and criteria set out by Member States. In an Irish context, projects requiring a mandatory EIA or consideration for EIA further to a case by case examination or thresholds are listed in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations.

Development projects requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) are set out in Schedule Five of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended). Part 1 of this schedule lists those projects that require a mandatory EIA irrespective of size in any EU Member State whereas Part II identifies the threshold limits for projects that require a mandatory EIA in Ireland. Article 10(b)(i) of Part II 'Infrastructure Projects' indicates that an EIA is required for the construction of more than 500 dwellings. Another threshold is the size of the development site and in this regard, Article 10(b)(iv) requires that an EIAR be prepared for urban developments 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 instance, the application site extends to c. 10.223 hectares within what can be considered a built-up area. Therefore, the project exceeds the stated threshold, and an EIA is therefore required on this basis. In light of this, an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) has been prepared for the proposed development and is submitted as part of this application.

2.19 Bird and Habitats Directive - AA Screening & Natura Impact Statement

The proposed development has been screened for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/32/EEC). OPENFIELD Ecological Services has prepared a report for Screening for Appropriate Assessment for the proposed development. This screening report has evaluated the proposed development on lands at Oldtown to determine whether or not significant negative impacts on Natura 2000 sites are likely to arise by virtue of its construction and use. Hydrological pathways exist to the Malahide Estuary; at this stage significant effects cannot be ruled out to the following areas: Malahide Estuary SAC and Malahide Estuary SPA.

It is considered that the potential for large quantities of sediment to be washed into the Estuary, due to the proximity of works to the River Broadmeadow, means that significant effects to habitats within the SAC, and species within the SPA, cannot be ruled out at this stage. A full AA is required following on from a full design review of the development. No significant effects are likely to arise to any Natura 2000 site from the proposed stormwater overflow which will substantially reduce current volumes of

undertreated effluent entering the River Ward and the Malahide Estuary. OPENFIELD Ecological Services has prepared a Natura Impact Statement for the proposed development. This report contains an analysis of the proposed project and its relationship with areas designated under the Habitats and Birds Directives. Pathways exist between the development site and two such areas and these have been described in detail in the AA Screening Report. Following this analysis, it was concluded that significant effects to the Malahide Estuary SAC and SPA could not be ruled out. Specifically, this may arise from the impact to intertidal habitats and species from pollution during the construction phase. Arising from this assessment, mitigation has been proposed. With the implementation of these measures, adverse effects to the integrity of the Malahide Estuary SAC and SPA will not occur. This conclusion is based on best scientific knowledge. For further information in this regard, please refer to the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report and NIS prepared by OPENFIELD Ecological Services.

2.20 The Planning System and Flood Risk Guidelines (2009)

These Guidelines require the planning system at all levels to avoid developments in areas at risk of flooding, particularly floodplains, except where there are no suitable alternative sites available in areas at lower risk that are consistent with the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development. Where such development has to take place, in the case of urban regeneration for example, the type of development has to be carefully considered and the risks should be mitigated and managed through location, layout and design of the development to reduce flood risk to an acceptable level. Applicants are advised to carefully examine their development proposals to ensure consistency with the requirements of these Guidelines including carefully researching whether there have been instances of flooding or there is the potential for flooding on specific sites and to carry out a site-specific flood risk assessment.

In accordance with these Guidelines, Waterman Moylan Engineering Consultants have carried out a flood risk assessment of the subject site. The site has been assessed in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines, with appropriate mitigation measures proposed such as SuDs design, attenuation ponds, overland flood routing, appropriate floor levels, and regular inspections. Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the requirements of this national flood risk management policy. For further information in this regard, please refer to the enclosed Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Waterman Moylan Engineering Consultants.

2.21 All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is a shared plan of action which is to bring about a landscape where pollinators can flourish over 2021-2025. To achieve this, the Plan sets out six objectives; (1) Making farmland pollinator friendly, (2) Making public land pollinator friendly, (3) Making private land pollinator friendly, (4) All-Ireland Honeybee Strategy, (5) Conserving rare pollinators, and (6) Strategic coordination of the Plan.

With respect to the aforementioned, the proposed development has taken into consideration the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan along with the Pollinator-friendly Planting Code, all considered in detail as part of the specific plant section of trees, shrub, hedging and herbaceous species. A diverse range has been chosen, along with a high percentage of native species in order to provide for pollinators from early spring through to late autumn. Please refer to the Landscape Design Report prepared by Doyle &

O'Troithigh Landscape - Architecture for further details on inclusion of the Plan guidelines within the proposed landscape of the scheme.

2.22 National Adaptation Framework: Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland

In accordance with the 'Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015', this National Adaptation Framework (NAF) specifies the national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors and by local authorities in their administrative areas in order to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of any positive effects that may occur. This NAF and its successors will set out the context to ensure local authorities, regions and key sectors can assess the key risks and vulnerabilities of climate change, implement climate resilience actions and ensure climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed into all local, regional and national policy making. The 'Built Environment and Spatial Planning' section within this Framework recognises that, "*climate change considerations need to be taken into account as a matter of course in planning-related decision making processes and that the deepening of adaptation considerations in the planning and building standards processes is considered the most appropriate way of increasing the resilience of the built environment*". Furthermore, "*effective planning reduces vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change by integrating climate considerations into decision making in order to avoid inappropriate forms of development in vulnerable areas and promoting compact development in less vulnerable areas*". It is important to mention that this Framework envisions 'flood resilience' and 'access to wildlife and green space' as no-regret benefits of effective adaptation which would continue to be worthwhile regardless of future climate scenarios. As such, the proposed development has taken into consideration the context of the site and it can be noted that an assessment of Flood Risk has been prepared by Waterman Moylan Engineering Consultants, with appropriate mitigation measures proposed such as SuDs design, attenuation ponds, overland flood routing, etc. Thus, the proposed development with access to high-quality green communal space and introduction of best practice energy efficiency measures as required to meet the Energy Strategy and Building Regulations and promoting a compact urban form for 'less vulnerable areas' is consistent with this national framework.

2.23 Climate Action Plan 2019

Climate disruption is already having diverse and wide-ranging impacts on Ireland's environment, society, economic and natural resources. The Climate Action Plan 2019 sets out an ambitious course of action over the coming years to address this issue. The Plan clearly identifies the nature and scale of the challenge. It outlines the current state of play across key sectors including Electricity, Transport, Built Environment, Industry and Agriculture and charts a course towards ambitious decarbonisation targets. The Plan sets out governance arrangements including carbon-proofing policies, establishment of carbon budgets, a strengthened Climate Change Advisory Council and greater accountability to the Oireachtas. The Plan clearly recognises that Ireland must significantly step up its commitments to tackle climate disruption. The leadership role both the Government and public bodies can play in taking early action on climate is fundamental to achieving our decarbonisation goals. The Plan notes that the built environment accounted for 12.7% of Ireland's greenhouse gases in 2017. It is important that we improve the energy efficiency of our buildings, including our homes, workplaces, and schools by meeting higher energy performance standards and by increasing retrofit activity. This will not only

reduce Ireland's dependence on fossil fuels, but will also improve our living standards by making our buildings more comfortable, healthier, safer, and less costly to heat. Our buildings are 70% reliant on fossil fuels, including oil fired boilers; over 80% of our homes and other buildings assessed for their BER have a rating of C or worse; and the current annual retrofit activity for existing stock is far too limited (approximately 23,000, mainly shallow, retrofits). A hierarchy of the most cost effective investments underpin this, including:

- Improving the fabric of buildings
- District heating in commercial buildings
- Switching from oil burners to heat pumps
- Setting new building standards.

The scheme has been designed to allow all the dwellings achieve nZEB status, meaning they will need a very low amount of energy, which will be fuelled mainly by renewable energy sources. Measures adopted include optimised siting for solar gains and optimised window sizes for daylighting, a high amount of insulation to floors, walls and roofs and careful detailing to limit thermal bridging. The use of high-performance windows and doors, careful airtightness detailing, and a designed ventilation system will limit heat loss and ensure thermal comfort. All private houses will have electric car charging points on their driveways, usually a power point that can be fitted with the appropriate socket for their electric vehicle. Charging points for on-street parking and managed private parking courts will bollard-style and located between bays where they would not cause an obstruction to pedestrians. As such, the proposed development has taken into consideration the Climate Action Plan and measures have been included within the design of the development to reduce carbon emissions in line with the requirements of the Action Plan.

3.0 REGIONAL POLICY AND GUIDELINES

The key provisions of the regional planning policy as it relates to the proposed development are now set out in the following sections. The key regional policy of relevance includes:

- Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031; and,
- Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035.

3.1 Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Eastern & Midland Region

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) was published by the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly. The RSES outlines the long-term regional level strategic planning and economic framework in support of the National Planning Framework for the period 2019-2031. The RSES identifies regional assets, opportunities, pressures and constraints and provides a framework for investment to better manage spatial planning and economic development throughout the Eastern & Midland Region. The RSES is tasked with the development of planning policy for future housing needs in the region upon consideration of the availability of land, resources, environment and infrastructure capacity.

In conjunction with the NPF, the RSES predicts Dublin City and Suburbs to experience continued population growth over the period 2019-2031 with a predicted increase of 220,000. The NPF targets 50% of all housing to be provided within or contiguous to the built-up area of Dublin city and suburbs.

In order to combat and provide for compact residential development, the RSES outlines a number of key Regional Policy Objectives that pertain to the NPF targets. The key Regional Policy Objectives applicable to the development proposal is the following:

Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 5.4 – *“Future development of strategic residential development areas within the Dublin Metropolitan area shall provide for higher densities and qualitative standards as set out in the ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’, ‘Sustainable Urban Housing; Design Standards for New Apartments’ Guidelines, and ‘Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities’.”*

Regional Policy Objective (RPO) 5.5 – *“Future residential development supporting the right housing and tenure mix within the Dublin Metropolitan Area shall follow a clear sequential approach, with a primary focus on the consolidation of Dublin and suburbs, and the development of Key Metropolitan Towns, as set out in the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) and in line with the overall Settlement Strategy for the RSES. Identification of suitable residential development sites shall be supported by a quality site selection process that addresses environmental concerns.”*

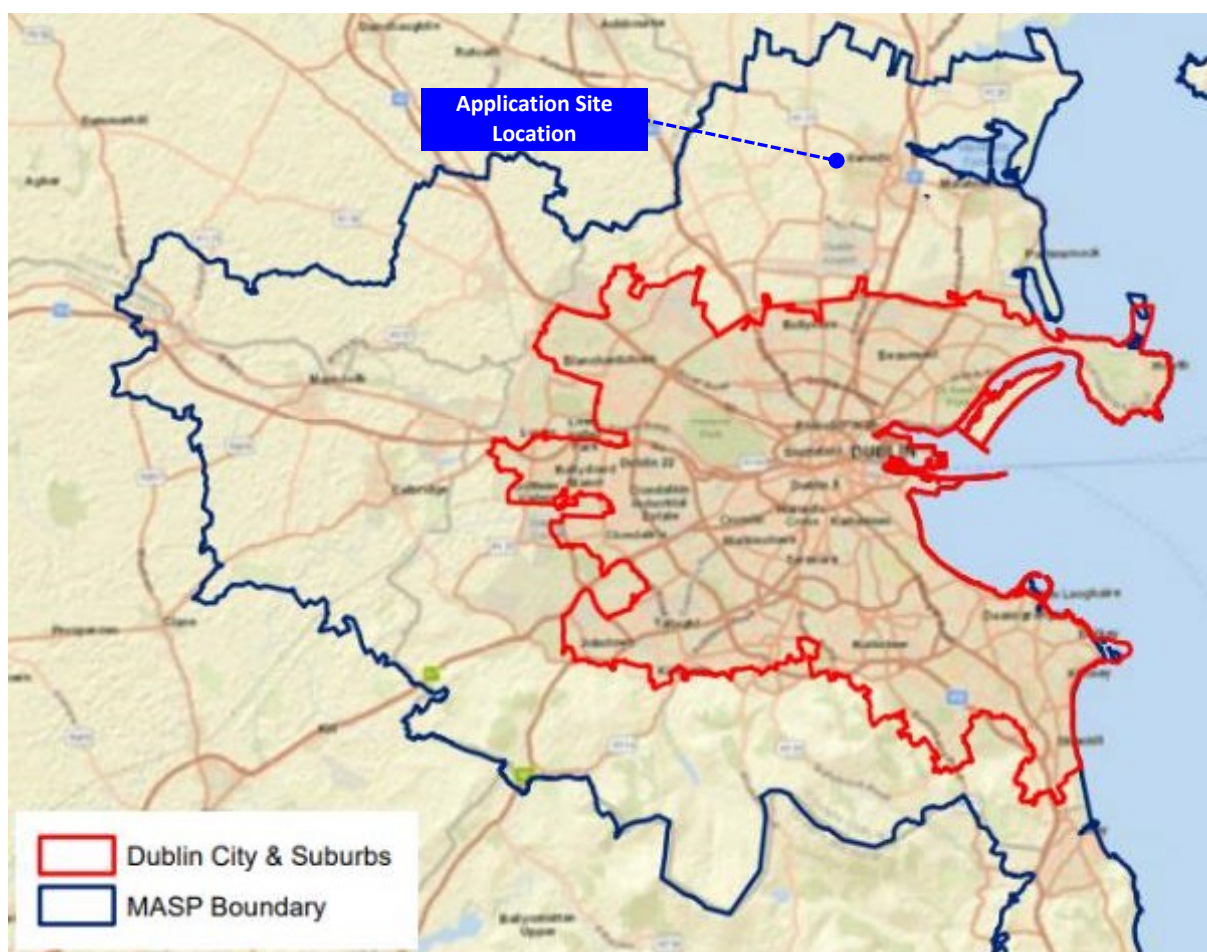


Figure 1. Application Site Location within the Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan' (MASP) Area under the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly)

The RSES seek to deliver strategic development areas identified in the MASP, located within existing settlement development boundaries including locations where there an excellent provision of public

transport services. The proposed development at Oldtown is located on already serviced zoned lands, comprises the final phase (Phase 5) of a wider residential scheme for the area, and provides for a residential development in close proximity to a wide range of services and amenities. It is submitted that the provision of a high-quality residential development consisting of 377 no. units comprising 173 no. houses, 134 no. apartments, and 70 no. duplex units [i.e. 35 no. duplex 'house' units and 35 no. duplex 'apartment' units] as proposed within this SHD application at Oldtown, Swords, will assist in achieving the aforementioned objectives and it also complies with the pertaining policies and standards. For further details on how the proposed development is in accordance with these policies, please refer to the Housing Quality Assessment (HQA) and Urban Design and Architectural Statement (Architects Report) prepared by CCK Architects submitted as part of the architectural planning packs.

In relation to Settlement Strategies, Regional Policy Objectives (RPO) 4.1 and 4.2 of the RSES set out the rationale and basis for preparing these strategies. RPO 4.1 states:

“In preparing Core Strategies for development Plans, Local Authorities shall determine the hierarchy of settlements in accordance with the hierarchy, guiding principles and typology of settlements in the RSES, within the population projections set out in the National Planning Framework to ensure that towns grow at a sustainable and appropriate level, by setting out a rationale for land proposed to be zoned for residential, employment and mixed-use development across the Region. Core strategies shall also be developed having regard to the infill/brownfield targets set out in the National Planning Framework, National Policy Objectives 3a-3c.”

RPO 4.2 states:

“Infrastructure investment and priorities shall be aligned with the spatial planning strategy of the RSES. All residential and employment developments should be planned on a phased basis in collaboration with infrastructure providers so as to ensure adequate capacity for services (e.g. water supply, wastewater, transport, broadband) is available to match projected demand for services and that the assimilative capacity of the receiving environment is not exceeded.”

It is submitted that the proposed development on existing zoned, serviced lands within Swords will adhere with the policies and objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly area and will contribute to providing additional housing units and employment opportunities within the existing envelop of Dublin Metropolitan Area.

3.2 Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035

This transport strategy provides a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The purpose of the Strategy is: *“To contribute to the economic, social and cultural progress of the Greater Dublin Area by providing for the efficient, effective and sustainable movement of people and goods.”*

The core of the strategy seeks the better integration of land use planning and transport planning. This can be achieved through the consolidation of development into higher order centres. In terms of the provision of housing, the strategy seeks to directly enable the sustainable development of strategically important residential sites, particularly in Metropolitan Dublin, where demand is highest.

The proposed development at Oldtown, Swords seeks to develop on appropriately zoned lands and in order to complete the overall Oldtown residential scheme. The application site is located to the north of R125 (Rathbeale Road), as the main route serving the Swords Northwest area, enjoying a frequently-serviced bus route within accessible distances of several bus stops along this road. It is therefore, considered that the proposed scheme will represent an appropriate form of development in the context of supporting the vision and objectives of the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035.

4.0 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

This section of the report provides an account of the relevant local planning policy framework pertaining to the application site and proposed development, all of which is contained within the Fingal County Development Plan 2017-2023.

4.1 Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023

4.1.1 Overarching Considerations

The subject site is located within the functional area of Fingal County Council. The development of the site is therefore informed by the policies and objectives of the Fingal County Council Development Plan. The policies and objectives of the Development Plan are underpinned by the following vision:

“Within the next 25 to 30 years, Dublin will have an established international reputation as one of Europe’s most sustainable, dynamic and resourceful city regions. Dublin, through the shared vision of its citizens and civic leaders, will be a beautiful, compact city, with a distinct character, a vibrant culture and a diverse, smart, green, innovation-based economy. It will be a socially inclusive city of urban neighbourhoods, all connected by an exemplary public transport, cycling and walking system and interwoven with a quality bio-diverse green space network. In short, the vision is for a capital city where people will seek to live, work, experience, invest and socialise, as a matter of choice”.

4.1.2 Core Strategy & Housing Strategy

Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023

The purpose of the Core Strategy is to articulate a medium-to-longer term quantitatively based strategy for the spatial development of the area of the Planning Authority and in doing so, to demonstrate that a Development Plan and its policies and objectives are entirely consistent with national and regional policies and strategies.

Swords has been identified as a Metropolitan Consolidation Town in the Fingal Development Plan. The County Plan notes that the town benefits from its close proximity to Dublin Airport and has a strong industrial base which underpins its role as an important centre for employment in the County.

The vision of the Fingal Development Plan is to grow the county in a long-term sustainable way as it enters a period of economic and population growth. The plan states that, *“the emphasis of this Plan is to continue to consolidate the existing zoned lands and to maximise the efficient use of existing and proposed infrastructure. In this way the Council can ensure an integrated land use and transport*

strategy in line with national and regional policy. [...] The development of larger areas of residential or mixed-use lands will only take place subject to the necessary infrastructure being available and to this end will be subject to a Local Area Plan. It is through the LAP process that, within the towns and villages, the detailed phasing and distribution of housing will be determined in line with the population and housing targets established at a strategic level.”

In this instance, the subject site forms part of the Oldtown and Mooretown lands in Swords which were previously subject to the Oldtown-Mooretown LAP 2010-2016 (extended to July 2020 and since expired). However, this final phase of the Oldtown lands has been designed and proposed within the spirit of the Plan. The proposed development also forms part of a wider residential scheme for the Oldtown lands granted under Reg. Ref. F11A/0436, Reg. Ref. F11A/0473, Reg. Ref. F15A/0390, Reg. Ref. F17A/0666, Reg. Ref. F17A/0735 and Reg. Ref. F17A/0687, in various phases. The proposed scheme comprises the final phase (Phase 5) of the overall development for the Oldtown lands. The expired LAP estimates that Oldtown-Mooretown LAP lands has the potential to accommodate 3,400 units, at a net density of 35-50 dwellings per hectare, resulting in a population of c. 10,000 on these lands.

Applications made to date on the Oldtown-Mooretown lands provide for a combined total of 967 dwellings, 5 crèches, and 1,537 sqm of retail uses have been granted planning permission. Of these, 647 dwellings are complete, and 207 dwellings are under construction. This is submitted to be within the envisaged housing target on the lands in the expired LAP and the Core Strategy for Swords in the current Development Plan. Moreover, considering that the quantum of developable lands on the application site stands at 7.8 hectares, the scheme would provide for a net density of c. 48 units per hectare, which is also submitted to be within the spirit of the expired Local Area Plan, and in line with the current Development Plan and national policy guidance.

Table 3. An Overview of the Earlier Phases of Oldtown-Mooretown Lands (source: CCK Architects)

Reg. Ref.	Description	Status
F11A/0436 “Miller’s Glen”	“Phase 1” Parent Permission: 245 units, amended by subsequent permissions to 243 units	243 units complete
F11A/0473 “Westmill”	“Phase 2” Parent Permission: 224 units and the village centre, amended by subsequent permissions to 249 units	Civic Square, 1,372 sqm commercial uses, 48 dwellings and creche complete 108 dwellings under construction
F13A/0185 “Longview”	“Phase 3” Parent Permission: 246 units, amended by both planning conditions and subsequent permissions to 181 units.	161 units complete
F17A/0735 “Meadowbank”	“Phase 4A” Parent Permission: 96 units amended by condition to 95 units	41 units complete 54 units under construction
F17A/0735 “Meadowbank”	“Phase 4B” Parent Permission: 98 units granted	53 units complete 54 units under construction
F17A/0687 “Meadowbank”	“Phase 4C” Parent Permission: 92 units amended by subsequent permission to 101 units	101 units complete

With regards to the housing strategy as set out within the Development Plan, there are three core principles which inform and guide the core strategy which are as follows:

- *“To ensure Fingal County Council provides for the development of sufficient housing to meet its obligations as set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines.*
- *To identify the existing and likely future need for housing in the area of the Development Plan.*
- *To ensure that sufficient zoned lands are provided to meet the needs of the different categories of households.”*

It is submitted that the proposed development at Oldtown is consistent with the housing strategy as it will assist in the delivery of housing, of a sustainable density, within a wider residential scheme granted under Reg. Ref. F11A/0436, Reg. Ref. F11A/0473, Reg. Ref. F15A/0390, Reg. Ref. F17A/0666, Reg. Ref. F17A/0735 and Reg. Ref. F17A/0687, immediately adjoining a public transport corridor, whilst providing a variety of unit types and mixed tenures for all, in a high-quality, vibrant community setting.

Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 Variation no. 2

This Variation No. 2 (adopted) to the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023 seeks to respond to the changes in National and Regional planning policy, namely the publication of the National Planning Framework (NPF) in 2018 and the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) in 2019. The NPF includes a National Strategic Outcome (NSO) to achieve compact growth and consolidation of Ireland’s cities as a top priority.

Outlined in the adopted variation, Swords is listed as a ‘Key Town’ in the Metropolitan Area with a development strategy of consolidation, active land management, employment generation and residential transport in the form of Metrolink and Bus-connects. Under the adopted variation, Swords has a remaining capacity of 14,799 residential units from the overall 34,806 units envisaged for the county. The document goes on to state that having regard to the status of the Key Town designation and the ongoing delivery of housing within Swords, a 15% increase in population is appropriate.

Furthermore, the key tenet of the overall Settlement Strategy is the continued promotion of sustainable development through positively encouraging consolidation and densification of the existing urban built form - and thereby maximising efficiencies from already established physical and social infrastructure.

Set out under **Objective SS02** of the Fingal Development Plan, Fingal County Council seeks to:

“Ensure that all proposals for residential development accord with the County’s Settlement Strategy and are consistent with Fingal’s identified hierarchy of settlement centres.”

Town/Village	Remaining Capacity (hectares)	Remaining Residential Units	Metropolitan Core % Land	Metropolitan Core % Units
Metropolitan Area				
Key Town				
Swords	481	14,799		
Dublin City and Suburbs				
Blanchardstown	260	9,306		
Howth	14	436		
Baldoyle/Sutton	29	1498		
Other Settlements*	66.5	2,320		
Other Metropolitan Areas				
Portmarnock	43	1,116		
Self Sustaining Growth Towns				
Donabate	101	3,532		
Self Sustaining Town				
Malahide	75.5	956		
Towns/Villages	92	844		
Total Metropolitan	1,162	34,806	76%	81%

Figure 2. Residential Capacity under Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023, updated as of September 2019

The variation notes that, “The key towns function as part of the Dublin Metropolitan Area and will continue to perform the role of the County’s primary development centres during the Plan period.” As a Key Town, Swords has been identified as the administrative capital of the County and a key location for housing, enterprise and retail development, which will continue to perform the role of a primary development centre for the County during the Plan period.

Objective SS12 of the Fingal Development Plan, Fingal County Council seeks to:

“Promote the Key Town of Swords and the Metropolitan Area of Blanchardstown, respectively, as Fingal’s primary growth centres for residential development in line with the County’s Settlement Hierarchy.”

Also, **Objective SS14** of the Fingal Development Plan, Fingal County Council seeks to:

“Promote the continued sustainable development of Swords and Blanchardstown as core economic areas for enterprise in partnership with relevant State agencies.”

As stated in the adopted variation, “Swords is a large economically active county town that provides employment for the surrounding areas and with existing and proposed high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as a growth driver to complement the Regional Growth Centres. In order to fulfil this role and in light of the emerging role that settlements such as Swords will be required to play in maintaining the success of the Metropolitan Area, a long term, adequately planned vision is necessary. In this regard, the long-term strategic vision for Swords is to create a sustainable city with a

commensurate level of jobs, services and infrastructure to support a potential population of 100,000. In endeavouring to achieve this vision of an emerging green city with a thriving economy it is critical that adequate lands are zoned in the future to accommodate the full range of needs of the city's residential population, business community and visitors. Within the current development envelope of Swords, even allowing for the introduction of possible new intensive mixed use zonings along the Metro line, Swords would have the capacity only to reach a population of circa 65-70,000."

It is submitted that the proposed development of 377 units complies with the objectives of the proposed variation to promote sustainable development through completion of the development of the Oldtown-Mooretown LAP lands. The proposed scheme also seeks to ensure the objectives for the LAP lands and Swords as a Key Town are achieved and do not exceed the remaining capacity of 14,799 units as set out in the Adopted Variation No. 2 to Fingal County Development Plan 2017-2023.

4.1.3 Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Communities

In terms of sustainable communities and urban design in residential developments, the Development Plan states that, *"successful areas are places where people want to live, work and visit"*. The Development Plan emphasises several characteristics that attractive places have in common:

- *"Include a range of facilities focused in a consolidated area with a critical mass of attractions and make best use of the already established investment in the built environment; these attractions include a mix of shops as well as a wide range of financial, professional and government services together with cultural, entertainment and leisure facilities.*
- *Include a thriving local residential population which adds to the vitality and vibrancy of the area as it ensures activity outside of standard retail and office opening hours.*
- *Are easily accessible by a range of transport modes including cycling and walking, have sufficient good quality short stay car parking close to the core area, have good transport linkages within the centre, and have efficient arrangements for delivery of goods.*
- *Present an attractive amenity in terms of the built environment and streetscape, streets and public spaces which are considered clean and safe, and have a sense of local identity and character, all of which greatly enhances the attraction of the centre.*
- *Have the vision and mechanisms in place to build on these existing assets, can overcome problems, adapt to both market and consumer needs and can secure appropriate and necessary improvements where required.*
- *Encourage and facilitate sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods."*

It is submitted that the proposed development at Oldtown is consistent with these criteria. The proposed residential development which incorporates 1 no. childcare facility that is located in an area which benefits from ease of access to a range of transport modes (including bus) with cycling and walking also taken as a key consideration of the proposed scheme. The influx of population arising from the proposed development will increase the critical mass required to further support public transport infrastructure.

There is a range of facilities in the immediate vicinity of the subject lands including community facilities, sports clubs, etc. and within the wider Swords area. A Community and Social Infrastructure Audit, prepared by Downey, also accompanies this SHD application which provides detailed information and assessment of the existing services currently supply the Oldtown lands. The design of the proposed development provides for an attractive development with a sense of character and place that will integrate the proposed development with the surrounding area and assist in the completion of the wider residential scheme for the lands.

4.1.4 Movement and Transport

In relation to movement and infrastructure, the Development Plan states that a safe, efficient, effective and sustainable transportation system is essential to the future economic, social and physical development of Fingal. The Development Plan seeks to:

- *“Promote and facilitate movement to, from, and within the County of Fingal, by integrating land use with a high quality, sustainable transport system that prioritises walking, cycling and public transport.*
- *Provide an appropriate level of safe road infrastructure and traffic management, in particular to support commercial and industrial activity and new development.*
- *Work with all relevant stakeholders to seek a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from transport.”*

Some of the policies and objectives in this regard include:

Objective MT01 – *“Support National and Regional transport policies as they apply to Fingal. In particular, the Council supports the Government’s commitment to the proposed new Metro North and DART expansion included in Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016-2021. The Council also supports the implementation of sustainable transport solutions.”*

Objective MT02 – *“Support the recommendations of the National Transport Authority’s Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035 to facilitate the future sustainable growth of Fingal.”*

Objective MT03 – *“Implement Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Travel Future policy and work to achieve the Key Goals set out in this policy.”*

Objective MT04 – *“At locations where higher density development is being provided, encourage the development of car-free neighbourhoods, where non-motorised transport is allowed and motorised vehicles have access only for deliveries but must park outside the neighbourhood, creating a much better quality public realm with green infrastructure, public health, economic and community benefits.”*

It is submitted that the proposed development at Oldtown is consistent with the foregoing policies and objectives. This additional development in Oldtown will ensure walking and cycling are viable options for the community, with the area also served by existing public transport infrastructure (Dublin Bus Stop located within close proximity to the application site), all of which will ensure that

the future population utilise sustainable public transport and active travel options rather than car transport.

The Plan notes that the integration of land-use and transport involves locating trip intensive land uses (such as high-density housing, offices, and comparison retail) near high capacity public transport (such as DART, Metro, Luas, and Bus Rapid Transit). It benefits the land uses by providing high quality public transport for the greatest number of residents and employees. It benefits public transport by providing sufficient customers within its catchment to sustain the high cost of public transport infrastructure and services. Allowing higher density development to occur along public transport corridors increases the number of people within the walking catchment of the public transport service, which in turn increases the patronage of the service, and leads to an increase in its financial and economic viability and positive environmental impact. In this instance, the proposed development provides for a residential development of sustainable density immediately adjoining high-frequency public transport in accordance with objectives set out within the Development Plan including:

Objective MT05: *“Integrate land use with transportation by allowing higher density development along higher capacity public transport corridors.”*

Objective MT08: *“Control on-street parking in the interests of the viability, vitality and amenity of commercial centres by maximising the supply of short stay parking for shoppers, while providing appropriate levels of long-term parking within a reasonable distance for employees.”*

Objective MT13: *“Promote walking and cycling as efficient, healthy, and environmentally friendly modes of transport by securing the development of a network of direct, comfortable, convenient and safe cycle routes and footpaths, particularly in urban areas.”*

Objective MT19: *“Design roads and promote the design of roads, including cycle infrastructure, in line with the Principals of Sustainable Safety in a manner consistent with the National Cycle Manual and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.”*

Objective MT22: *“Improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to stations and other public transport interchanges.”*

Objective MT37: *“Implement traffic calming on particular roads and in appropriate areas of the County, especially residential areas, to reduce vehicle speeds in the interests of road safety and residential amenity. Ensure that where appropriate, traffic calming is included as a pre-condition as part of the development of all new estates or extensions to existing estates.”*

It is submitted that the proposed development at Oldtown is consistent with these policies and objectives. The completion of this area of the Oldtown-Mooretown lands and wider area will ensure walking and cycling are viable options for the community, with the area also very well served by existing public transport infrastructure all of which will ensure that the future population utilise sustainable public transport and active travel options rather than car transport. This is outlined further

in the enclosed Traffic and Transport Assessment prepared by Waterman Moylan Engineering Consultants.

4.1.5 Land Use Zoning

Under the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023, the subject site is zoned “RA - Residential Area” and therefore aims to:

“Provide for new residential communities subject to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure.”

The vision for this objective seeks to:

“Ensure the provision of high quality new residential environments with good layout and design, with adequate public transport and cycle links and within walking distance of community facilities. Provide an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet household needs and to promote balanced communities.”

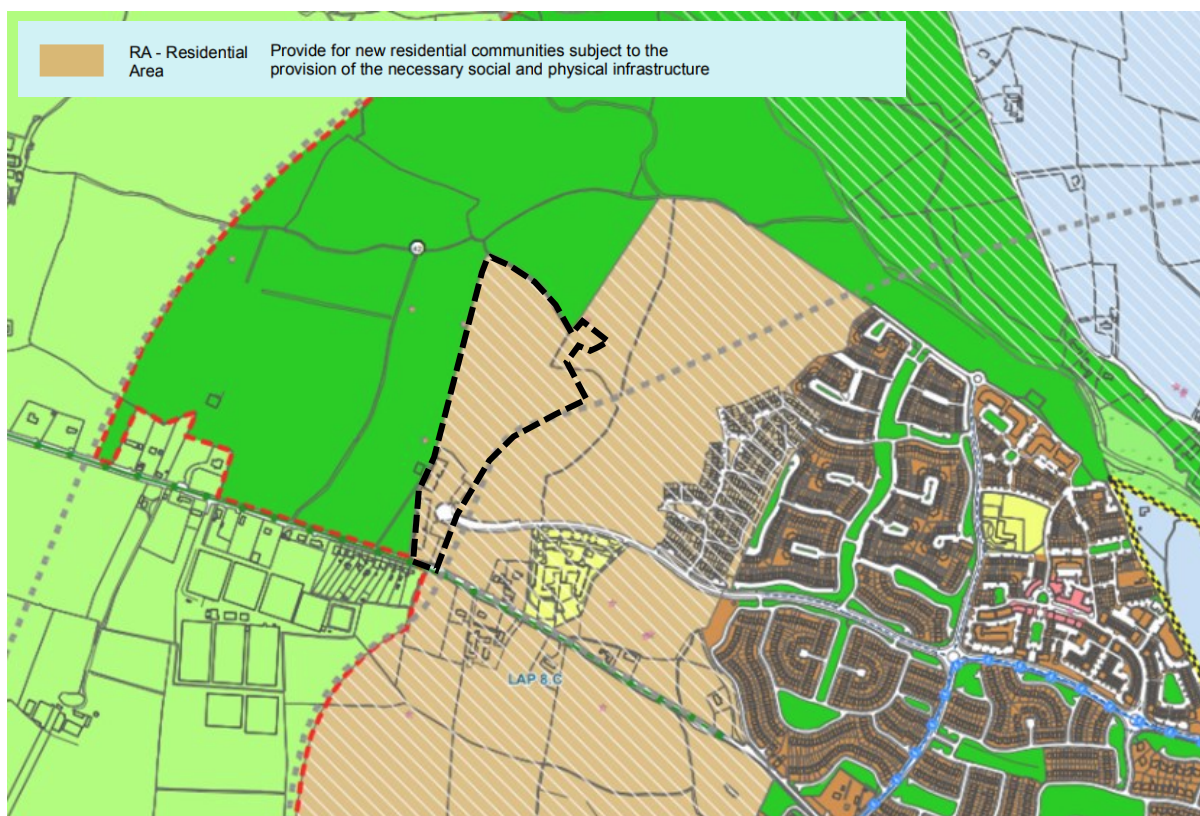


Figure 3. Land Use Zoning Map Extracted from the County Development Plan (application site outlined in black)

The lands are also subject to the LAP designation, LAP 8.C, Oldtown-Mooretown Local Area Plan. In July 2015, Fingal County Council extended the life of the Oldtown-Mooretown Local Area Plan 2010-2016, for a further period of 5 years from the 13th July 2015 up to the 12th July 2020. Thus, the LAP has since expired during the lifetime of the current Development Plan, however, the lands are still designated as lands subject to an LAP. No new LAP has been prepared or adopted for the lands since the expiration of the previous plan, therefore the making of an application for the proposed development may be considered to be a potential material contravention of the Fingal Development

Plan 2017-2023 in this regard. Please refer to the Material Contravention Statement prepared by Downey which accompanies this application.

Under the RA zoning, the following uses are permitted in principle.

Uses Permitted in Principle under the RA Land Use Zoning

Amusement Arcade⁹; Bed and Breakfast; Betting Office⁹; Childcare Facilities; Community Facility; Education; Funeral Home/Mortuary⁹; Guest House; Health Centre; Health Practitioner; Hospital; Office Ancillary to Permitted Use; Office ≤ 100sqm⁹; Office >100sq.m. and, 1,000sqm¹¹; Open Space; Place of Worship; Public House⁹; Public Transport Station; Recreational Facility/Sports Club; Residential; Residential Care Home/Retirement Home; Restaurant/Cafe⁹; Retail-Local < 150 sqm nfa; Retail – Convenience ≤ 500 sqm nfa⁹; Retail – Comparison ≤ 500 sqm nfa⁹; Retail – Supermarket ≤ 2,500 sqm nfa⁹; Retirement Village; Sheltered Accommodation; Sustainable Energy Installation; Taxi Office; Traveller Community Accommodation; Utility Installations; Veterinary Clinic.

⁹ In a local centre only

¹¹ Only located in a local centre and of a scale appropriate to that centre

Table 4. Permitted Uses under the RA Land Use Zoning

Therefore, the proposed development of residential units and 1 no. childcare facility are permitted in principle under the zoning objectives pertaining to the subject lands.

The Class 1 open space lands to the north are zoned OS-Open Space – “to preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities”. The proposed open space in this area is therefore permitted in principle under this zoning designation. The proposed storage tank site is zoned ME-Metro Economic Corridor – “to facilitate opportunities for high-density mixed-use employment generating activity and commercial development and support the provision of an appropriate quantum of residential development within the Metro Economic Corridor”. The tank can be considered essential infrastructure and has been designed in conjunction with Irish Water. It will not only facilitate the connection requirement of this subject application but will also have the capacity to allow for continued development in the Oldtown/Mooretown catchment.

4.1.6 Development Standards

Chapter 12 of the Fingal County Development Plan sets out development standards and criteria that from the policies and objectives of the Development Plan to ensure that development occurs in an orderly and efficient manner and that it is in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. The following section assesses the main set of standards and criteria required for high-quality, sustainable development:

Table 5. Compliance with Chapter 12 - Development Management Standards

Criteria	Compliance
12.1 Background	
Pre-Planning	On 12/12/2019, the applicant and the design team engaged in a Section 247 pre-application consultation meeting with representatives of Fingal County Council regarding the proposed Strategic Housing Development on lands at Oldtown, Swords, County Dublin.

	<p>On 30/11/2020, Downey and the applicant engaged in a Section 5 pre-application consultation meeting with representatives of An Bord Pleanála and Fingal County Council regarding the proposed development as part of a Stage 2 consultation meeting. On 16/12/2020, An Bord Pleanála issued the notice of pre-application consultation opinion for the proposed development, under case reference ABP-307498-20.</p> <p>For the detailed response to this opinion and to source the requested information within the application documentation, please refer to the “Statement of Response to An Bord Pleanála’s Pre-Application Consultation Opinion” prepared by Downey.</p>
12.2 Common Principles for all Planning Applications	
Access for All	<p>It is noted that the design of the proposed development has taken cognisance of people with reduced mobility through the provision of universally accessible dwelling units as well as readily adaptable dwellings.</p> <p>It is submitted that inclusivity and access have fully influenced the design of the scheme, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The development will be fully Part M compliant with easy access. Physical and visual barriers have been avoided and full passive surveillance has been designed into overlook all public realm areas. Street layouts, footpath arrangements, street and verge planting combine to allow pedestrians and cyclists easily navigate the scheme through the different character areas proposed and connecting into the adjacent Oldtown schemes currently constructed and occupied. - The provision of 1 to 4-bed units in a proportioned mix will include a wide diversity of households in line with the earlier phases of development at Oldtown-Mooretown lands, which would bring an inclusive community at Swords. - An adequate compliance with Part V, delivering 20% of affordable and social apartments and houses. Please refer to architectural drawings for further detail on the Part V plan. - The proposed development is also submitted to be designed in accordance with the recommendations of ‘Buildings for Everyone’ 2002 published by the National Disability Authority and Technical Guidance Document M Access and Use of the Building Regulations 2010. <p>For further details in this regard, please refer to Universal Access Statement prepared by CCK Architects and submitted as part of this application.</p>
Green Infrastructure	<p>The proposed development provides for an overall of c. 0.8ha public open space, comprising of Class 2 public open spaces, as specified within the Fingal Development Plan. With respect to the developable site area of 7.8ha, this would provide for 11% public open space provision which exceeds the threshold envisaged in the Development Plan. Class 1 open space is also being provided to the north of the proposed scheme. It is noted that the earlier phases of the developing Oldtown-Mooretown provide for an overall of approximately 22.4ha Class 1 public open space, including 2 regional parks.</p> <p>The proposed scheme would also benefit from green infrastructure conceived for earlier phases of development at Oldtown-Mooretown lands, with intuitive and clear connections to the future Swords Regional Park.</p> <p>For further information in this regard, please refer to the detailed landscaping proposals prepared by Doyle O’Troithigh Landscape Architecture.</p>

<p>Sustainable Design</p>	<p>Efficiency through design has been achieved in the macro scale in terms of layout and site configuration with good attention to detailing of the individual dwelling plan forms providing energy efficiency and reduced lifetime running costs of the overall scheme. Efficient planning and design have also been brought into the layouts of the individual dwelling units planned, along with apartments and duplex units.</p> <p>The design brief was set to create an exemplar of sustainable design to ensure all new development can be delivered in a manner that protects and enhances the biodiversity of the local environment, mitigates climate change, and delivers high energy efficiency in accordance with NZEB strategies.</p>
<p>Environmental Impact Assessment</p>	<p>Given that 377 no. units are proposed and indeed noting that the application site extends to an overall of c. 10.22 hectares within what can be considered a built-up area, an Environmental Impact Assessment Report is required and has been prepared as part of the proposed application. Please refer to the enclosed EIAR which assesses the overall development and is enclosed with this SHD application for the consideration of the Board.</p>
<p>Screening for Appropriate Assessment</p>	<p>An Appropriate Assessment Screening report has been carried out by OPENFIELD Ecological Services as part of this SHD application which indicate pathways do exist to a number of these areas. A Natura Impact Statement has also been prepared with mitigation measures proposed. An assessment of the aspects of this project has shown that significant negative effects are not likely to occur to these areas either alone or in combination with other plans and projects provided that the mitigation measures outlined are upheld. Please refer to the enclosed Screening Report for Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Statement prepared by OPENFIELD Ecological Services for further details.</p>
<p>12.3 Design Criteria for Urban Development</p>	
<p>High Quality Urban Design</p>	<p>The Development Plan defines several objectives to support high quality urban design. It will allow the creation of accessible places where people want to live, work, and spend time. It is the policy of the Council to ensure all development is of a high-quality design and promotes the achievement of accessible, safe, and sustainable built and natural environments, which reflect the special character and heritage of the County and its varied townscapes and landscapes. Design principles are based on the <i>'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities'</i> and <i>'Best Practice Urban Design Manual'</i>. Which contains twelve design principles to be applied to all developments with Objective DMS03 requiring:</p> <p><i>“Submit a detailed design statement for developments in excess of 5 residential units or 300 sqm of retail/commercial/office development in urban areas. The design statement is required to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Explain the design principles and design concept.</i> ▪ <i>Demonstrate how the twelve urban design criteria (as per the 'Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide') have been taken into account when designing schemes in urban areas. Each of the twelve criteria is of equal importance and has to be considered in an integrated manner.</i> ▪ <i>Outline how the development meets the Development Plan Objectives, and the objectives of any Local Area Plan, Masterplan,</i>

	<p><i>Urban Centre Strategy, Framework Plan, or other similar Plan affecting the site.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Include photographs of the site and its surroundings.</i> ▪ <i>Include other illustrations such as photomontages, perspectives, sketches.</i> ▪ <i>Outline detailed proposals for open space and ensure the provision of open space is designed in from the beginning when designing a new scheme.</i> ▪ <i>Outline a detailed high-quality open space and landscape design plan including specifications, prepared by suitably qualified professionals.</i> ▪ <i>Outline how Green Infrastructure integrates into the scheme.”</i> <p>In accordance with the aforementioned, an Urban Design and Architectural Statement has been prepared by CCK Architects which sets out the proposed development’s compliance with the 12 Urban Design criteria and how the proposed development accords with the requirements of Objective DMS03. Please refer to the enclosed Urban Design and Architectural Statement and associated drawings prepared by CCK Architects for further information in this regard. Please also refer to the detailed landscaping proposals prepared by Doyle O’Troithigh Landscape Architecture.</p>
12.4 Design Criteria for Residential Development	
Residential Zoning	<p>Under the current Fingal County Council Development Plan, the developable subject site is zoned “RA – Residential Area” which seeks: <i>“Provide for new residential communities subject to the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure.”</i></p> <p>It is also submitted that the proposed development of residential units and 1 no. childcare facility are permitted in principle under the zoning objectives pertaining to the subject lands.</p> <p>It is noted that the subject site forms part of the Oldtown and Moorestown lands in Swords, which were previously informed by the Oldtown-Moorestown Local Area Plan 2010-2016. The LAP had also been extended for a further five years from 13th July 2015 up to 12th July 2020. Despite expiration of the LAP since, this final phase of the Oldtown lands has been designed and proposed within the spirit of the Plan.</p> <p>The Class 1 open space lands to the north are zoned OS-Open Space – “to preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities”. The proposed open space in this area is therefore permitted in principle under this zoning designation. The proposed storage tank site is zoned ME-Metro Economic Corridor – “to facilitate opportunities for high-density mixed-use employment generating activity and commercial development and support the provision of an appropriate quantum of residential development within the Metro Economic Corridor”. The tank can be considered essential infrastructure and has been designed in conjunction with Irish Water. It will not only facilitate the connection requirement of this subject application but will also have the capacity to allow for continued development in the area.</p>
Mix of Dwelling Types	<p>The Development Plan states that the dwelling mix in any residential scheme should provide a balanced range of dwelling types and sizes to support a variety of household types. In this regard, the proposed development provides for 377 no. residential units with 1 no. childcare facility. The proposal provides for a variety of</p>

	<p>unit types encompassing a mix of one, two and three bed apartments, two, three, and four bed houses, two and three bed duplex units, all of which provide for a mix and variety of unit types in accordance with the Development Plan and indeed the mix requirements as set out within the <i>'Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities'</i> and the <i>'Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities: Statement on Housing Policy'</i>.</p> <p>Whilst there are different apartment unit types and different house unit types provided, in terms of bedroom provision, it is also important to note that within these units, there is a significant amount of diversity in terms of size, layout, storage, aspect, room dimensions, etc. This ensures that the proposed scheme provides for the various needs of potential future residents and that it is a sustainable form of residential development which can cater for all age demographics and is adaptable and flexible for their future needs, be it, single professionals, young couples, small young families, older families, the elderly, those looking to downsize, etc.</p>
<p>Residential Density & Height</p>	<p>The Development Plan provides that the number of dwellings to be provided on a site should be determined with reference to the <i>'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities'</i> (2009). As a general principle and to promote sustainable forms of development, higher residential densities will be promoted within walking distance of town and district centres and high-capacity public transport facilities. In this regard, the proposed development provides for a sustainable development with an overall net density of c. 48.3 dwellings per hectare (net developable area is 7.8 ha), on appropriately zoned lands, in an accessible location within the development boundaries of Swords and therefore accords with the density requirements of both the Development Plan and national guidelines.</p> <p>It is also noted that the proposed density is in line with the earlier phases of the Oldtown lands, and within the spirit of the expired Oldtown-Mooretown Local Area Plan 2010-2020 (July).</p>
<p>Apartment Development</p>	<p>The <i>'Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities'</i> have superseded the design standards for apartments as set out in the Development Plan. With regards to Dual Aspect the proposed development provides for 60% dual aspect units within the proposed apartment units in accordance with Objective DMS20 of the Development Plan.</p> <p>The apartment floor areas are also in accordance with the <i>'Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities'</i> as set out in the enclosed Urban Design and Architectural Statement and Housing Quality Assessment (HQA) prepared by CCK Architects. Please refer to the enclosed report for full details on the proposed development's compliance with standards for apartment developments.</p>
<p>Quantitative Standards</p>	<p>The development proposal adheres with the <i>"Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities; Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes and Sustaining Communities (DEHLG, 2007)"</i> and <i>"Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DEHLG, 2018)"</i> when assessing proposals for apartment development.</p> <p>Please refer to the HQA and Urban Design and Architectural Statement prepared by CCK Architects for compliance in this regard.</p>

Separation Distances	Appropriate separation distances between dwellings have been provided. Furthermore, sufficient separation between side gables has also been provided for in accordance with Objective DMS28 & DMS29 of the Development Plan.
Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing	Objective DMS30 of the Development Plan requires that all new residential units comply with the recommendations of ' <i>Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice</i> ' (B.R.209, 2011) and B.S. 8206 ' <i>Lighting for Buildings, Part 2 2008: Code of Practice for Daylighting</i> ' or other updated relevant documents. For further details in this regard, please refer to the Daylight & Sunlight Assessment as provided by DKPI Environmental.
Acoustic Privacy	Objective DMS31 of the Fingal County Development Plan requires that sound transmission levels in semi-detached, terraced, apartments and duplex units comply as a minimum with the 2014 Building Regulations Technical Guidance Document Part E or any updated standards. It is submitted that the proposed development will comply with Objective DMS31 of the Development Plan in this regard. For further details in this regard, please refer to the Noise Chapter of EIAR prepared by DKPI Environmental.
Open Plan Estates	The removal of the exempted development rights is subject to agreement with the Planning Authority and An Bord Pleanála as part of a condition to the granting planning permission.
Gated Communities	Objective DMS32 of the Fingal County Development Plan prohibits proposals that would create a gated community for any new residential developments. It is viewed that the proposed development is not a 'gated community' and will adhere with Objective DMS32 of the Development Plan in this instance.
Management Companies and Facilities for Apartment Developments	Outlined in the Development Plan, higher-density apartment type development will require a management company to maintain communal areas. It is a specific objective to adhere with the following: - Objective DMS33 - <i>Require properly constituted management companies in apartment type schemes are set up and necessary management structures are put in place for the benefit of the residents.</i> Objective DMS34 - <i>Provide in high density apartment type schemes in excess of 100 units facilities for the communal use of residents as deemed appropriate by the Council.</i> Objective DMS35 - <i>Require the provision of communal laundry rooms and storage facilities in high density apartment type developments where deemed appropriate.</i> The proposed apartment/duplex units within the scheme will be privately managed by the establishment of a management company. This management company will be responsible for maintaining the external appearance of the apartments, maintaining the internal and external communal spaces, bins management, etc. It is also important to note that the public parks and main roads are proposed to be taken in charge by Fingal County Council. For information in this regard, please see the enclosed pertaining drawing prepared by CCK Architects.
Refuse Storage and Bins	The proposed development provides for convenient and well-designed proposals for the storage of refuse. For further details, please refer to the Housing Quality Assessment (HQA), and Urban Design and Architectural Statement prepared by CCK

	Architects. Please also refer to the Operational Waste Management Plan prepared by Enviroguide Consulting.
12.7 Open Space	
Public Open Space	<p>The proposed development provides for an overall of c. 0.8ha Class 2 public open space. This includes outdoor play opportunities for children which are accessible to all within the scheme and the wider community. With respect to the developable site area of 7.8ha, this would provide for 11% public open space provision. It is noted that the Class 1 open space for the proposed scheme is to be provided on OS zoned lands within and forming part of the Swords Regional Park. The proposed scheme would also benefit from green infrastructure conceived for the earlier phases of development at Oldtown.</p> <p>It is submitted that given the proximity of the application site to Swords Regional Park and Broadmeadow Linear Park there is an excellent provision of public open space facilities in the locality. Also, when the Metro is constructed, the Estuary stop will be c.3km from Miller's Glen via the Broadmeadow Linear Park, which is a comfortable distance for cyclists, taking c.10 minutes travel time.</p>
Private Open Space	<p>In accordance with national policy and particularly the Urban Design Manual and new Apartment Guidelines, the proposed development has achieved appropriate separation distances to maintain privacy and protect residential amenity, with design solutions and appropriate landscaping also proposed to protect privacy for residents.</p> <p>It is noted that each residential unit benefits from the provision of adequately sized private open space in the form of gardens, balconies, or patios/terraces (designed in accordance with quantitative and qualitative standards), with the units at ground floor level provided with appropriate boundary treatments to ensure privacy and security whilst also providing visual interest and distinction between spaces.</p> <p>For further information on the private open space proposed as part of this SHD application, please refer to the Urban Design and Architectural Statement prepared by CCK Architects, and the landscaping pack prepared by Doyle O'Troithigh Landscape Architecture.</p>
12.8 Community Infrastructure, Facilities and Services	
Childcare Facilities	All childcare facilities shall be provided in accordance with the ' <i>Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> ' (DEHLG). The proposed SHD development will provide for a purpose-built childcare facility with a gross floor area of 519 sqm to accommodate approximately 102 children within the site with appropriate outdoor play space, drop off facilities, etc. For further details in this regard, refer to the Childcare Provision Assessment prepared by Downey and enclosed as part of this SHD application.
12.10 Movement and Infrastructure	
Car Parking Standards	Set out under Chapter 12 of the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023, the car parking standards based on land use provision are as follows: -

Table 12.8 - Car Parking Standards

Land Use	Criterion	Proposed	Notes	Category	Norm or Max
House - urban/suburban 1 or 2 bedrooms	Unit	1-2	Within curtilage	Residential	Norm
House - urban/suburban 3 or more bedrooms	Unit	2	Within curtilage	Residential	Norm
House - rural	Unit	2-3	Within curtilage	Residential	Norm
Apartment, townhouse 1 bedroom	Unit	1	Plus 1 visitor space per 5 units	Residential	Norm
Apartment, townhouse 2 bedrooms	Unit	1.5	Plus 1 visitor space per 5 units	Residential	Norm
Apartment, townhouse 3+ bedrooms	Unit	2	Plus 1 visitor space per 5 units	Residential	Norm
Sheltered housing	Unit	0.5	Plus 1 visitor space per 5 units	Residential	Norm
Caravan / mobile home park	Stand	1		Residential	Norm
Hotel, Motel, Motor Inn, Guest House	Bedroom	1		Residential	Norm
Pre-school facilities / creche	Classroom	0.5		Education	Maximum

Figure 4-4. Car Parking Standards extracted from the Development Plan

The Development Plan requires that each dwelling to be provided with 2 no. car parking spaces which is being provided within this scheme. The car parking for apartments and duplex units, however, is provided at a reduced rate per unit. Thus, the overall car parking provision may be considered to potentially materially contravene the Fingal Development Plan 2017-2023.

However, adherence of the proposed scheme to the national and regional policy guidance in terms of car parking provision reflects the prime location of the development in relation to its connectivity and access to R125 (Rathbeale Road) and public transport services. The Oldtown lands are situated in an accessible location within 3km distance from Swords town centre, which are served by Dublin Bus and Swords Express services. The lands are also accessed via the Glen Ellan Road and Miller's Avenue, a partly completed link road that is also known as the Western Distributor Link Road (WDLR). Moreover, there is access to the site through Miller's Glen development, to which the proposed scheme is an extension. The excellent connectivity of the subject site, in line with the national and regional policy guidance, would allow for a reduced quantum of car parking space which consequently promote green modes of transport as well.

Please refer to the enclosed Statement of Material Contravention prepared by Downey, Traffic and Transport report prepared by Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers, and the Urban Design and Architectural Statement prepared by CCK Architects for further details in this regard.

Bicycle Parking Standards

The proposed development provides considerable secure, covered bicycle parking for the apartment and duplex units as part of the development proposal (440 no. spaces in total). This ensures that future residents and visitors are encouraged to use sustainable modes of transportation. It is considered that the bicycle parking provision as part of the proposed development is consistent with Table 12.9 -

	<p>Bicycle Parking Standards of the Development Plan, and Section 4.15 of the 2020 guidelines Design Standards for Apartments.</p> <p>Houses are proposed to secure and store their bicycles on their own private property, and all duplex and apartment buildings will have a secure, accessible and sheltered purpose-built store. These are integrated into ground floors of the larger apartment blocks and are provided as individual external storage buildings for duplex units.</p> <p>For further information on the bicycle parking, please refer to the Traffic and Transport report prepared by Waterman Moylan Consulting Engineers, and Housing Quality Assessment (HQA), and Urban Design and Architectural Statement and associated drawings prepared by CCK Architects.</p>
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4.2 Oldtown-Mooretown Local Area Plan 2010-2016 (extended to July 2020)

The subject site forms part of the Oldtown and Mooretown lands in Swords, which were previously informed by the Oldtown-Mooretown Local Area Plan 2010-2016. The LAP had also been extended for a further five years from 13th July 2015 up to 12th July 2020 but has now since expired. This final phase of the Oldtown lands has been designed and proposed within the spirit of the Plan. As such, the proposed scheme is considered to comply with the vision and aims of the since expired LAP and pertaining planning guidelines for the application site in the context of the wider Oldtown-Mooretown lands.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This Statement of Consistency demonstrates that the proposed development is in compliance with relevant national, regional and local planning policy. The proposed development will provide an appropriate form of development on the subject lands that are zoned for residential, where the zoning designation permits in principle complementary land uses such as the proposed creche. The proposed development will provide for an effective, efficient, sustainable use of what is a greenfield site in an accessible location within the development boundaries of Swords town.

The nature, form and extent of the proposed development has been informed and guided by the Section 5 pre-application consultation with An Bord Pleanála and the planning authority's internal departments, and section 247 consultation meeting with the planning authority in December 2019 and off-line discussions with the internal departments of the planning authority in recent months prior to the finalisation of this Strategic Housing Development application.

In light of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the proposed development is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which it is located as expressed in national, regional and local planning policy and Guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development, 2000 (as amended), and as such, it is considered that the proposed development at Oldtown, Swords represents a high-quality Strategic Housing Development application which is now being submitted for the consideration of An Bord Pleanála.