Appendix A2.1
Planning Report

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Acronym	Meaning
AA	Appropriate Assessment
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
AGI	Above Ground Installation
AVL	Automatic Vehicle Locator
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
BWD	Bathing Water Directive
CBC	Core Bus Corridor
CDETB	City of Dublin Educational and Training Board
CDRWMP	Construction and Demolition Resource and Waste Management Plan
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
DAU	Development Applications Unit
DCC	Dublin City Council
DCCAE	Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment
DCDP	Dublin City Development Plan
DLR	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown
DLRCC	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council
DLRCDP	Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan
DCENR	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
DoT	Department of Transport
DTTaS	Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
EGD	European Green Deal
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIAR	Environmental Impact Assessment Report
EMRA	Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly
EU	European Union
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
GDA	Greater Dublin Area
GDACNP	Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan
GDATS	Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy
GEP	Good Ecological Potential
GES	Good Ecological Status
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GNI	Gas Networks Ireland
GSI	Geological Survey Ireland
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICE	Internal Combustion Engine
Km	Kilometre
LAP	Local Area Plan
LEIP	Local Environment Improvement Plans
MASP	Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan
NCPF	National Cycle Policy Framework
NDP	National Development Plan
NIFTI	National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NPF	National Planning Framework
NPO	National Policy Objective
NPWS	National Park and Wildlife Service

Acronym	Meaning
NSO	National Strategic Outcome
NTA	National Transport Authority
OPW	Office of Public Works
PR	Planning Report
QoS	Quality of Service
rBWD	Revised Bathing Water Directive
RPO	Regional Policy Objective
RSA	Road Safety Authority
RSES	Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy
RSO	Regional Strategic Outcome
SDG's	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SIFLT	Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport
SPA	Special Protection Areas
SuDS	Sustainable (Urban) Drainage Systems
SWMP	Surface Water Management Plan
TEN-T	Trans European Transport Network
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
UCD	University College Dublin
UN	United Nations
WFC	Wanderers Rugby Football Club
WFD	Water Framework Directive

Appendix A2.1 Planning Report

1. Introduction

This Planning Report (PR) has been prepared to set out the planning context for the development of the Belfield / Blackrock to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Scheme). It identifies and considers the existing policy framework for the Proposed Scheme in the context of relevant legislative, International, European, National, Regional and Local planning strategy, plans and policy documents.

The Proposed Scheme is one of 12 stand-alone Core Bus Corridor (CBC) Schemes to be delivered under the BusConnects Dublin - Core Bus Corridors Infrastructure Works (herein after called the CBC Infrastructure Works). The CBC Infrastructure Works, once completed, will deliver the radial core bus corridors identified in the Core Bus Network contained in the Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 – 2035 (hereafter referred to as the GDA Transport Strategy) (NTA 2016).

The BusConnects Dublin Programme is the National Transport Authority's (NTA's) programme to greatly improve bus services in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and the CBC Infrastructure Works is one element of that Programme, itself containing 12 stand-alone CBC Schemes. It is a key part of the Government's policies to improve public transport and address climate change in Dublin.

1.1 Summary Description of the Proposed Scheme

The Proposed Scheme has an overall length of approximately 8.3km and will comprise two main alignments, viz., from Blackrock to the City Centre and along Nutley Lane.

The Blackrock to City Centre section will commence on the R113 at Temple Hill, approximately 80m to the north of the R827 Stradbrook Road, travel along the N31 Frascati Road, the R118 Rock Road / Merrion Road / Pembroke Road, the R816 Pembroke Road / Baggot Street Upper / Baggot Street Lower, turn onto Fitzwilliam Street Lower and terminate at the junction of Mount Street Upper / Merrion Square South / Merrion Square East. The Nutley Lane section of the Proposed Scheme will commence at the tie-in with the signalised junction on the R138 Stillorgan Road on the southern end of Nutley Lane, travel along Nutley Lane and terminate at the junction with the R118 Merrion Road.

The Proposed Scheme includes an upgrade of the existing bus priority and cycle facilities. The scheme includes a substantial increase in the level of bus priority provided along the corridor, including the provision of additional lengths of bus lane resulting in improved journey time reliability. Throughout the Proposed Scheme bus stops will be enhanced to improve the overall journey experience for bus passengers and cycle facilities will be substantially improved with segregated cycle tracks provided along the links and protected junctions with enhanced signalling for cyclists provided at junctions.

Moreover, pedestrian facilities will be upgraded, and additional signalised crossings be provided. In addition, public realm works will be undertaken at key locations with higher quality materials, planting and street furniture provided to enhance the pedestrian experience; an example of this can be seen in Ballsbridge, particularly at the Herbert Park / Pembroke Road junction.

The Proposed Scheme will support integrated sustainable transport usage through infrastructure improvements for active travel (both walking and cycling), and the provision of enhanced bus priority measures for existing (both public and private) and all future services that will use the corridor.

A full description of the Proposed Scheme is provided in Chapter 4 (Proposed Scheme Description) in Volume 2 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), and the associated scheme drawings are provided in Volume 3 Figures of the EIAR. In addition, Chapter 2 (Need for the Proposed Scheme) and Chapter 3 (Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives) in Volume 2 of the EIAR, outline the need for the Proposed Scheme and the alternatives considered, respectively.

1.2 Proposed Works Background

The GDA Transport Strategy was published by the NTA in 2016 (NTA 2016).

The GDA Transport Strategy identified a 'Core Bus Network' which highlights the most important bus routes within the GDA. They were characterised by high passenger volumes, frequent services, and significant trip attractors. The GDA Transport Strategy states that it is proposed to provide continuous bus priority, as far as is practicable, along the core bus routes. This will result in a more efficient and reliable bus service with lower journey times, increasing the attractiveness of public transport in these areas and facilitating a shift to more sustainable modes of transport. The Proposed Scheme is identified as part of the 'Core Bus Network'. The GDA Transport Strategy identified Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along the Proposed Scheme route supporting a bus-based solution.

In March 2018, BusConnects Dublin was launched as part of a major investment programme, including Metrolink and the DART Expansion Programme, to improve public transport in Dublin, as part of Project Ireland - National Development Plan 2018 – 2027 (hereafter referred to as the NDP) (Government of Ireland 2018a).

As design and planning work was progressed by the BusConnects Infrastructure team, it became clear that the level of differentiation between the BRT corridors and the CBCs would, ultimately, be limited, and that all of the radial CBCs listed here should be developed to provide a similarly high level of priority service (i.e. to provide a consistency in terms of bus priority and infrastructure to support all bus services).

The CBC Infrastructure Works encompasses a series of integrated actions which, together, would deliver a bus system that will enable more people to travel by bus than ever before. The Proposed Scheme is one of 12 stand-alone CBC schemes to be delivered under the CBC Infrastructure Works.

1.3 Overview for the Need for the Proposed Scheme

Chapter 2 (Need for the Proposed Scheme) in Volume 2 of the EIAR sets out in detail the need for the Proposed Scheme. The following Section provides an overview.

Our sustainable future relies on a built environment consisting of spaces and places that connects people and creates inclusive societies that are characterised by social cohesion. Sustainable transport infrastructure assists in creating more sustainable communities and healthier places while also stimulating our economic development. It contributes to enhanced health and well-being when delivered effectively.

The key radial traffic routes into and out of Dublin City Centre are characterised in places by poor bus and cycle infrastructure. Effective and reliable bus priority depends on a combination of continuous bus lanes and signal control priority at pinch-points and junctions. Currently bus lanes are available for 37% of the Belfield / Blackrock to City Centre route, with no signal control priority for buses. Cyclists must typically share space on bus lanes or general traffic lanes with only 4% of the route providing segregated cycle tracks. Furthermore there are key sections of the current bus lanes that are not operational on a 24-hour basis in addition to being shared with both formal and informal parking facilities and cyclists with compromises the reliability and effectiveness of the bus services in these areas.

Private car dependence has resulted in significant congestion that has impacted on our quality of life, our urban environment, and road safety. The population of the GDA is projected to rise by 25% by 2040 (National Planning Framework, 2018), reaching almost 1.5 million. This growth in population will increase demand for travel requiring improved sustainable transport options to facilitate growth.

Without intervention, traffic congestion will lead to longer and less reliable bus journeys throughout the region and will affect the quality of people's lives. The Proposed Scheme is needed in order to enable and deliver efficient, safe, and integrated sustainable transport movement along the corridor through the provision of enhanced walking, cycling and bus infrastructure on this key access corridor in the Dublin region. The objectives of the Proposed Scheme are to:

- Enhance the capacity and potential of the public transport system by improving bus speed, reliability and punctuality through the provision of bus lanes and other measures to provide priority to bus movement over general traffic movements;
- Enhance the potential for cycling by providing safe infrastructure for cycling, segregated from general traffic wherever practicable;
- Support the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service, which supports the achievement of Ireland's emission reduction targets;
- Enable compact growth, regeneration opportunities and more effective use of land in Dublin, for present and future generations, through the provision of safe and efficient sustainable transport networks;
- Improve accessibility to jobs, education and other social and economic opportunities through the provision of improved sustainable connectivity and integration with other public transport services; and
- Ensure that the public realm is carefully considered in the design and development of the transport infrastructure and seek to enhance key urban focal points where appropriate and feasible.

The objectives outlined above relating to enhancing capacity of the public transport system and enhancing safe infrastructure for cycling are underpinned by the central concept and design philosophy of 'People Movement'. People Movement is the concept of the optimization of roadway space and / or the prioritisation of the movement of people over the movement of vehicles along the route and through the junctions along the Proposed Scheme. The aim is to reduce journey times for modes of transport with higher person-carrying capacity (bus, walking and cycling), which in turn provides significant efficiencies and benefits to users of the transport network and the environment.

The aim and objectives of the Proposed Scheme are supported by International, European, National, Regional and Local policies, planning strategies and plans. The key policy and planning documents are described in Section 3.

It should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic brought about a short-term change in travel patterns in the GDA which led, for example, to fewer people using public transport and more people working from home. However, travel demand and patterns of travel have started to return to pre-pandemic levels and are anticipated to grow in line with population growth, underlining the need for the Proposed Scheme.

1.3.1 The Bus Network

To inform the preparation of the GDA Transport Strategy, the NTA prepared the Core Bus Network Report (NTA 2015) for the Dublin Metropolitan Area, which identified those routes on which there needed to be a focus on high capacity, high frequency and reliable bus services, and where investment in bus infrastructure should be prioritised and concentrated. The Core Bus Network is defined as a set of primary orbital and radial bus corridors which operate between the larger settlement centres in the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

The development and implementation of priority infrastructure on the Core Bus Network is to ensure that delays are minimised, reliability is improved through peak and off-peak periods, and mode shift from the private car is made more attractive.

The reason for focusing on the Core Bus Network is to maximise the return on future investment in bus infrastructure and to facilitate efficient operation of bus services, thereby improving the attractiveness of public transport for a large proportion of the population of the Dublin Metropolitan Area and beyond.

The Core Bus Network Report focused on the overall existing bus service network and identified locations where the bus network is operating sub-optimally. The network is dominated by a radial network to / from the Dublin City Centre, supplemented by low frequency orbital and local bus routes serving larger destinations outside of the City Centre core.

The following methodology was employed to determine the need for the future core bus infrastructure network:

1) The existing bus network and bus infrastructure in the Dublin Metropolitan Area was analysed, including the identification, mapping and categorising of the existing bus infrastructure. This analysis identified all roads that have dedicated road space for bus, and other bus priority infrastructure such as Bus Gates, junction bus priority and bus-only through routes;
2) Journey time delays of the bus network in the Dublin Metropolitan Area were examined;
3) The frequency of bus services between stops during the peak period was examined to help identify where the highest volume of bus traffic is on the network;
4) A demand analysis, including a broad understanding of trip demand, was undertaken; and
5) Using the above analysis, specific corridors where investment is to be prioritised in the network were identified and mapped.

Overall, at the time the Core Bus Network Report was prepared, there were approximately 213km of dedicated bus lanes in the GDA, of which 93km can be categorised as outbound and 120km can be categorised as inbound (City Centre or lower order centre as destination).

Bus lanes vary by quality, level of continuity, quality of treatment at junctions and operational times. Generally, all lanes are currently at least operational for their peak hours (i.e. morning peak for inbound and evening peak for outbound). Many are operational in both directions at both peak periods, some from 7am to 7pm, and others on a 24-hour basis. Some corridors benefit from a high degree of continuity whereby bus lanes are present for long sections and are not truncated at junctions. This occurs mostly in locations where a previous full lane of traffic or a pre-existing hard shoulder has been designated as a bus lane.

The GDA Transport Strategy concluded that this high-quality Core Bus Network would form an integral part of the improved public transport infrastructure measures for the Dublin Metropolitan Area. The final resulting Core Bus Network presented in the GDA Transport Strategy represents the most important bus routes within the Dublin Metropolitan Area, generally characterised by high passenger volumes, frequent services and significant trip attractors along the routes.

The GDA Transport Strategy recognised that these corridors are generally characterised by discontinuity, whereby the corridors currently have dedicated bus lanes along less than one third of their lengths on average which means that for most of the journey, buses and cyclists are sharing space with general traffic and are negatively affected by the increasing levels of congestion. This results in delayed buses and unreliable journey times for passengers.

The GDA Transport Strategy states that it is therefore intended to provide continuous bus priority, as far as is practicable, along the core bus routes, with the objective of supporting a more efficient and reliable bus service with lower journey times, increasing the attractiveness of public transport in these areas and facilitating a shift to more sustainable modes of transport.

There are two main bus corridors in the south east Dublin area. There is high quality inbound and outbound bus infrastructure on much of the N11 and R138. While there are small gaps in bus infrastructure provision, it represents the longest and most complete bus corridor in the Dublin Metropolitan Area.

The Core Bus Network study included a recommended route from Dún Laoghaire to the City Centre on the basis of the need to serve significant demand along this entire corridor, albeit on a similar catchment to the DART Line, and the need to address service deficits (lack of bus priority and associated journey time reliability) for a high level of scheduled bus services already operating along this corridor.

While there is a high level of bus service provision along this corridor, in the inbound direction there are no bus lanes in the Blackrock Village area, nor from the Lansdowne Road junction to the City Centre, with intermittent gaps in bus lane provision along Rock Road and Merrion Road. Outbound there is a significant gap without bus lane provision along the Merrion Road and there is no bus infrastructure along this corridor south of Blackrock Park.

The Proposed Scheme is supported by the objective of the GDA Transport Strategy to provide continuous bus priority, as far as is practicable, along the core bus route, that supports a more efficient and reliable bus service with lower journey times.

1.3.2 The Cycle Network

The GDA Cycle Network Plan (hereafter referred to as the GDACNP) (NTA 2013) was adopted by the NTA in early 2014 following a period of consultation with the public and various stakeholders. This plan forms the strategy for the implementation of a high quality, integrated cycle network as set out in the GDA Transport Strategy. This is further discussed in Section 3.6.5.

The predominant provision for cycling in the DCC area, including the areas associated with the Proposed Scheme, is by means of either on street cycle lanes (both advisory and mandatory) or bus lanes. These facilities are generally of a low Quality of Service (QoS) in the city area mainly due to the lack of width for cyclists, lack of segregation, and the consequent discomfort caused by large volumes of vehicular traffic sharing the road space. The GDACNP found that typically the cycle lanes achieve a QoS score of C or D in the DCC Area (QoS scores are assigned on a five-point scale from A+ to D). More information on the QoS cycling assessment criteria can be found in Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) in the EIAR. It is noted that since the production of GDACNP several interventions have taken place – both permanent and temporary. In the case of the Proposed Scheme however only 4% of the route is currently providing segregated cycle tracks.

The GDACNP proposes a network of cycle links throughout the GDA, categorised as follows:

- **Primary Routes:** Main cycle arteries that cross the urban area and carry most cycle traffic;
- **Secondary Routes:** Link between principal cycle routes and local zones;
- **Feeder Routes:** Cycle routes within local zones and / or connections from zones to the network levels above;
- **Inter Urban Routes:** Links the towns and city across rural areas and includes the elements of the National Cycle Network within the GDA; and
- **Green Route Network:** Cycle routes developed predominately for tourist, recreational and leisure purposes but may also carry elements of the utility cycle route network above. Many National Cycle Routes will be of this type.

There are two primary cycle routes (Cycle Route 13 and Cycle Route 13A) identified running along the majority of the Proposed Scheme, as well as Secondary Cycle Routes on Nutley Lane (S04) and Fitzwilliam Street (C7). The Proposed Scheme also intersects with two other primary cycle routes, namely SO1 and SO3 (the Grand Canal Greenway and the Dodder Greenway respectively) as well as a number of secondary cycle routes (including Cycle Routes SO2, SO6, 13E). In addition, a proposed greenway (N5 East Coast Trail) is identified running parallel to a section of the corridor.

It is noted that the Draft Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan 2021 has been published for consultation, as part of the review of the GDA Transport Strategy and this has been considered at Section 3.6.6.

1.3.3 Infrastructure Works

1.3.3.1 The Core Bus Network Development

In Section 5.5.4 of the GDA Transport Strategy (NTA 2016) it states that '*[a] number of the Core Radial Bus Corridors are proposed to be developed as Bus Rapid Transit routes, where the passenger numbers forecast on the routes are approaching the limits of conventional bus route capacity*.'

As design and planning work was progressed by the BusConnects Infrastructure team, it became clear that the level of differentiation between the Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) corridors and the CBC would, ultimately, be limited, and that all of the radial CBCs should be developed to provide a similarly high level of priority service provision (i.e. to provide a consistency in terms of bus priority and infrastructure to support all bus services).

Across the Core Bus Network, the corridors are generally proposed along established radial corridors into and out of the city. However, in developing the Core Bus Network a significant demand was identified for travel between UCD and Ballsbridge. It is for this reason that Core Bus Network proposed a route connecting the radial corridors on which these destinations lie, namely the 'Bray–UCD–Donnybrook' corridor and the 'Dún Laoghaire to City Centre' corridor.

The Proposed Scheme connecting Belfield and Blackrock to the City Centre serves a significant public transport demand between these locations.

1.3.3.2 The Local Transport Need

The local transport need supporting the Proposed Scheme is summarised in this Section, with the existing baseline transport environment presented in further detail in Chapter 6 (Traffic and Transport) of the EIAR.

There are sections along the route of the Proposed Scheme with poor bus priority resulting in poor journey time reliability particularly at peak times. Automatic Vehicle Locator (AVL) data from existing bus services operating along the Proposed Scheme corridor has been used to examine the current standard deviation for bus services along the corridor, as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Current Bus Journey Time Standard Deviation (Minutes)

Corridor	AM peak inbound	PM peak inbound	AM peak outbound	PM peak outbound
Belfield / Blackrock to City Centre	10.2	11.1	7.5	10.2

The AVL data indicates that current bus journey times have a standard deviation of approximately 11 minutes along the route of the Proposed Scheme and with any further increase in traffic levels these issues are expected to be exacerbated. In addition to impacting on bus passengers, longer and less reliable bus services also require operators to use additional buses to maintain headways to fill gaps in the timetable. Aligned to this, remaining sections of un-prioritised network can lead to clustering of buses which, in turn, means stops can become overcrowded, creating delays in boarding and alighting and the imbalanced use of bus capacity.

Within the extents of the Proposed Scheme route, bus priority infrastructure is currently provided along approximately 35% (outbound) and 39% (citybound), cumulatively equating to 37% of the length of the route. The Proposed Scheme will facilitate almost 100% bus priority and will complement the rollout of the Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign to deliver improved bus services on the route. This will improve journey times for bus, enhance its reliability and provide resilience to congestion.

One of the key objectives of the Proposed Scheme is to enhance interchange between the various modes of public transport operating in the city and wider metropolitan area. The CBC Infrastructure Works, including the Proposed Scheme, are developed to provide improved existing or new interchange opportunities with other existing and planned transport services, including:

- DART stations;
- Existing Dublin Bus and other bus services;
- The GDA Cycle Network Plan;
- Future public transport proposals such as the DART + Programme and MetroLink; and
- Supporting the Dublin Bus Network Re-design.

The Proposed Scheme has an overall length of approximately 8.3km and comprises of two main, namely from Blackrock to the City Centre and along Nutley Lane. The Blackrock to City Centre section commences on the R113 at Temple Hill, approximately 80m to the north of R827 Stradbrook Road, travels along the N31 Frascati Road, the R118 Rock Road / Merrion Road / Pembroke Road, the R816 Pembroke Road / Baggot Street Upper / Baggot Street Lower, turns onto Fitzwilliam Street Lower and terminates at the junction of Mount Street Upper / Merrion Square South / Merrion Square East. The Nutley Lane section of the Proposed Scheme commences at the tie-in with the signalised junction on the R138 Stillorgan Road on the southern end of Nutley Lane, travels along Nutley Lane and terminates at the junction with the R118 Merrion Road. Further infrastructure

improvements along the R138 Stillorgan Road, including the R138 Nutley Lane Junction, will be provided by a separate Core Bus Corridor Scheme, the 'Bray to City Centre Core Bus Corridor Scheme'.

Along the route of the Proposed Scheme there are a number of amenities, and village and urban centres which experience high pedestrian usage including Blackrock Village, Ballsbridge Village and the Baggot Street area. In order to improve accessibility to jobs, education and other social and economic opportunities through the provision of an integrated sustainable transport system, there needs to be a high quality pedestrian environment. The Proposed Scheme includes significant improvements to the pedestrian environment along the route in terms of footpath improvements and through upgrading facilities for pedestrians at junctions and crossings, thereby addressing existing level of service deficiencies in the pedestrian environment.

Within the extents of the Proposed Scheme there are mandatory cycle lanes provided on approximately 21% and 11% of the route outbound and inbound respectively, while advisory cycle lanes are provided on approximately 28% and 25% of the route outbound and inbound respectively, with segregated facilities provided on 4% and 5% of the route outbound and inbound respectively. The remaining extents have no dedicated cycle provision or cyclists must cycle within the bus lanes provided. The GDA Cycle Network Plan also aims to provide high quality links to DART stations from the surrounding areas in order to increase the catchment area of these stations, assuming high quality cycle parking is available at all stations. One such example is the route from UCD to Sydney Parade, which was identified within the GDA Cycle Network Plan as requiring further development – noting that Nutley Lane (which is a key link in this route) currently has no cycle facilities. Cycle facilities in the Proposed Scheme will increase to 100% in both directions, all of which being segregated with the exception of localised tie-ins to the existing of environment. There are also several uncontrolled crossings along the route of the Proposed Scheme, particularly at side roads where they are generally of poor standard, including lack of provision for the mobility and visually impaired. These are all proposed to be upgraded as part of the Proposed Scheme. The Proposed Scheme will therefore provide safe, segregated cycling infrastructure throughout and as such would greatly enhance the potential for cycling and address many of the deficiencies in the existing network.

There are a number of high frequency public bus services along the routes to be improved by the Proposed Scheme (including the 4, 7, and 7a bus routes), as well as multiple private and coach services, notably two Aircoach routes serving Dublin Airport. In addition to this there are multiple other bus services which run along this corridor intermittently, providing interchange opportunities with other bus services and DART stations.

The primary bus routes (prior to implementation of the revised Bus Network) along the corridor are listed below:

- Route 4 - From Monkstown Ave. Towards Harristown;
- Route 7 - From Brides Glen Luas Towards Mountjoy Sq.;
- Route 7a - From Loughlinstown Towards Mountjoy Sq.;
- Route 18 - Palmerstown to Sandymount;
- Route 27x - From UCD Belfield Towards Clare Hall;
- Route 37 - From Blanchardstown Centre Towards Baggot St. / Wilton Terrace;
- Route 38 / 38a - From Damastown Towards Burlington Rd;
- Route 39 - From Ongar Towards Burlington Rd;
- Route 39a - From Ongar Towards UCD Belfield;
- Route 46e - From Blackrock Rail Station Towards Mountjoy Sq.;
- Route 47 – From Belarmine Towards Poolbeg St.; and
- Route 84 - From Newcastle Towards Blackrock.

Many of these services suffer from journey time unreliability, particularly in peak times, due to the lack of bus priority provision. The route from UCD via Nutley Lane and into the City Centre via Ballsbridge along the Merrion Road, already has a number of existing public bus services (including the 47 and 27x bus routes), as well as private services including shuttle buses connecting UCD with other transport services such as the DART at Sydney Parade. These services suffer from poor journey time reliability, again particularly at peak commuter times when demand is highest as there are currently no bus lanes on Nutley Lane. The UCD Belfield to DART shuttle bus operates from 8:00 to 10:10 and 16:00 to 18:10, while the 27x leaves the UCD terminus at 7:35 and 17:05. In addition to the level of service improvements the Proposed Scheme will facilitate for existing bus services, the

ongoing Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign will see continued investment in bus services into the future, which will also be afforded similar journey-time reliability and therefore improve their attractiveness as an alternative to private car usage.

As part of the BusConnects revised bus network proposals, the Proposed Scheme will serve the B-Spine bus services. Image 2.7 in Chapter 2 (Need for the Proposed Scheme) is an extract from New Dublin Area Bus Network Map (NTA 2020) and shows the B-Spine interface with the Proposed Scheme between Monkstown Road and Nutley Lane (B3 and B4), along Nutley Lane (B1 and B2), and from Nutley Lane to the City Centre (B1, B2, B3 and B4). Demand for travel by bus is anticipated to continue to grow in this corridor into the future, in line with population growth. The bus priority measures forming part of the Proposed Scheme are required to accommodate this growth in travel demand and to facilitate the revised bus network (B-Spine) by providing journey time savings and improved reliability for passengers. This will ensure that the projected growth in passenger demand is facilitated and protected from increasing congestion, providing resilience which can in the future cater for additional bus service provision.

1.4 Overview of the Benefits of the Proposed Scheme

The Proposed Scheme has been designed to facilitate improved efficiency of the transport network through the improvement of the infrastructure for active (walking and cycling) and public transport modes making them attractive alternatives to car-based journeys. Central to the design is the optimisation of roadway space with a focus on the movement of people rather than vehicles along the route and through the junctions. A typical double-deck bus takes up the same road space as three standard cars but typically carries 50-100 times the number of passengers. On average, a typical double-deck bus carries approximately 60-70 passengers making the bus typically 20 times more efficient in providing people movement capacity within the equivalent spatial area of three cars. These efficiency gains can provide a significant reduction in road network congestion where the equivalent car capacity would require 50 or more vehicles based on average occupancy levels. Consequently, by prioritising the movement of bus over cars, significantly more people can be transported along the limited road space available. Similarly, cyclists and pedestrians require significantly less roadway space than general traffic users to move safely and efficiently along the route. Making space for improved pedestrian and cycle infrastructure can significantly benefit these sustainable modes and encourage greater use of these modes.

The Proposed Scheme design involves the prioritisation of People Movement, focusing on maximising the throughput of sustainable modes (i.e. Walking, Cycling and Bus modes). A quantitative people-movement assessment, as part of the transport impact assessment, facilitates a comparison of the Do Minimum and Do Something peak-hour scenarios for the forecast years (2028 and 2043). The benefits resulting from the 2028 AM Peak Hour people-movement assessment shows that there is an increase of 100% in the number of people travelling by bus, an increase of 67% in people walking or cycling, and a reduction of 50% in the number of people travelling by car along the Proposed Scheme.

The transport modelling also presents demand outputs for people movement by bus in terms of passenger loadings along the corridor. The results indicate that the improvements in bus priority infrastructure with the Proposed Scheme in place show a substantial increase in bus patronage during the peak hours.

A key objective of the Proposed Scheme is to enhance the potential for cycling along the route. Without the provision of cycling infrastructure, intended as part of the Proposed Scheme, the Quality of Service along the route would be insufficient to attract new cyclists. Currently within the existing extents of the Proposed Scheme there are segregated cycle tracks on approximately 4% and 5% of the route outbound and inbound respectively, with approximately 47% and 59% of the route, outbound and inbound respectively, having no cycle facilities or having cyclists sharing the bus lane. Cycle facilities in the Proposed Scheme will increase to 100% in both directions, all of which being fully segregated, with the exception of localised tie-ins to the existing of environment. In addition to this, the significant segregation and safety improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure that is a key feature of the Proposed Scheme will further maximise the movement of people travelling sustainably along the corridor. All of these changes combined will therefore cater for higher levels of future sustainable population and employment growth.

The Proposed Scheme will make significant improvements to pedestrian infrastructure through the provision of increased signal crossings, introduction of traffic calming measures, improved accessibility, increased pedestrian

directness and wider footpaths and crossings. The number of pedestrian signal crossings will increase by approximately 41% as a result of the Proposed Scheme. The scheme design has been developed in accordance with the relevant accessibility guidance. It is anticipated that the overall quality of pedestrian infrastructure will improve as a result of the Proposed Scheme. This aligns with the overarching aim to provide enhanced walking infrastructure on the corridor. The improved walking and cycling measures that the Proposed Scheme will provide will enhance the potential to grow these modes into the future.

The Proposed Scheme will address sustainable mode transport infrastructure constraints while contributing to an overall integrated sustainable transport system as proposed in the GDA Transport Strategy. It will increase the effectiveness and attractiveness of bus services operating along the corridor and will result in more people benefiting from faster journey times and improved journey time reliability.

This in turn will facilitate the increase in the bus network capacity of services operating along the corridor and thereby further increase the attractiveness of public transport. In addition, the significant segregation and safety improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure that are a key feature of the Proposed Scheme will further maximise the movement of people travelling sustainably along the corridor and will therefore cater for higher levels of future population and employment growth. In the absence of the delivery of the Proposed Scheme, growth along this key corridor would continue to contribute to increased traffic congestion and operational issues on the road network. The Proposed Scheme delivers a reliable alternative to car-based travel that can support future sustainable growth and contribute positively towards reducing carbon emissions.

In the absence of the Proposed Scheme bus services will operate in a more congested environment, leading to higher journey times for bus and lower reliability which will lead to reduced levels of public transport use, making the bus system far less attractive and less resilient to higher levels of growth. The absence of walking and cycling measures that the Proposed Scheme will provide would significantly limit the potential to grow those modes into the future. In addition to the public transport benefits, the Proposed Scheme will also improve the existing streetscape / urban realm setting along the corridor. This will include the introduction of new and improved landscaping provisions along the corridor, and a complementary planting regime and streetscape improvements at key locations will also enhance the character of the surrounding built environment along the corridor.

The Proposed Scheme and its objectives fit within the current planning frameworks that are described further below. The Proposed Scheme will help deliver many of the objectives on an international, national, regional and local level.

Overall, the Proposed Scheme will make a significant contribution to the overall aims and objectives of BusConnects, the GDA Transport Strategy and allow the city to grow sustainably into the future, which would not be possible in the absence of the Proposed Scheme.

2. Detailed Description of the Proposed Scheme by Section

2.1 Section 1: Stradbrook Road to Booterstown Avenue

The Proposed Scheme commences approximately 100m south of the junction of Temple Hill / Monkstown Road, to the north of Stradbrook Road. Between the Monkstown Road and Booterstown Avenue junctions, it is proposed to provide a single bus lane, a single general traffic lane and a segregated cycle track arrangement in each direction, with the inbound bus lane commencing just south of the Monkstown Road junction.

Along with the relocation of an existing inbound bus stop to just north of the Temple Hill / Monkstown Road Junction, a new pedestrian crossing has been introduced on the northern arm of this junction.

A raised table treatment is proposed at the access road to St. Vincent's Park, including on the access lane from Temple Hill, in order to improve pedestrian safety on the inbound side of Temple Hill. At this junction the Temple Road approach arm has been reduced to a single all-movements lane to enable the provision of cycle facilities while also providing an appropriate swept path for left-turning vehicles from Frascati Road to Temple Road.

General alterations to junctions along this section are proposed to improve cyclist safety, including the removal of the left turn slip lane from Rock Road to Rock Hill, and the provision of protected cycle tracks at other junctions with a number of additional dedicated cycle crossings provided where practicable.

The Proposed Scheme includes a controlled exit, for permitted vehicles only, provided from George's Avenue (South) onto Frascati Road. The proposed exit will include restrictions to general traffic in the carriageway of the left turn from George's Avenue (South) to Frascati Road, however, cyclists and pedestrians will be able to pass through. Dedicated cycle crossing infrastructure on Frascati Road at George's Avenue is included in the design to reflect the existing, recently-constructed, arrangement.

Similarly, it is noted that the access and egress arrangements to the Frascati Centre have been designed so as to reflect the existing, newly-constructed, arrangement.

The Proposed Scheme requires a widening of the carriageway along Rock Road, adjacent to Blackrock Park. A portion of the existing wall of Blackrock Park currently supports the road embankment, and as such is to be replaced with a new retaining wall at this location – between Ben Inagh Park and Castledawson residential estate.

At the junction of Blackrock Clinic / Emmett Square on Rock Road, a new Toucan crossing is proposed across the eastern (outbound) arm with the existing pedestrian crossing on the western (inbound) arm converted to a Toucan crossing. It is noted that the existing time-plated turn ban from the outbound lane into Blackrock Clinic will be retained.

It is proposed to reverse the direction of traffic on Seafort Parade, including the separate entrance and exit from Rock Road. This intervention is proposed to improve visibility for vehicles exiting from Seafort Parade and remove the cross-road arrangement between Castledawson Avenue and Seafort Parade.

The proposed cross-section from Blackrock Clinic to Booterstown Avenue is such that it reduces the potential need for land acquisition along Willow Park School and reduces the extent of necessary land acquisition along Blackrock College and adjacent properties, while achieving the objectives of the Proposed Scheme.

The gates, railings, and piers forming the existing entrance to Blackrock College are to be rotated on the westernmost pier to accommodate the realigning of the adjacent boundary while preserving the symmetry of the protected entrance. A dedicated mid-block Toucan crossing is also proposed immediately west of the Blackrock College entrance.

2.2 Section 2: Booterstown Avenue to Nutley Lane

Between the Rock Road / Booterstown Avenue junction and the Merrion Road / Nutley Lane junction, it is proposed to provide a single bus lane, a single general traffic lane and a segregated cycle track arrangement in each direction along the majority of the route.

Between Strand Road and Booterstown Avenue (Booterstown DART Station), a two-way cycle track is proposed on the outbound / eastern side of the route. This integrates with the proposed East Coast Trail (Sutton to Sandycove Greenway) along this section.

The design of the Rock Road cross-section and layout between the junctions of Booterstown Avenue and Trimleston Avenue is such that it avoids the need for land acquisition and provides an improved access to the nearby school, while achieving the objectives of the Proposed Scheme. This also includes the removal of the existing dedicated right turn pocket into the western access to St. Helen's Road. Right turning into St. Helen's Road at this location will still be permitted, albeit from the single general traffic lane.

At the junction of the Elmpark Green Development on Merrion Road, along with providing a protected junction for cyclists, the arrangement proposes the removal of the left turn slip lanes into and out of the development, as well as introducing a new pedestrian crossing on the western arm.

The Proposed Scheme includes works at the junction of Merrion Road and Strand Road ('Merrion Gates'), including the provision of segregated cycle facilities, the removal of the slip lane from Strand Road to Merrion Road (southbound) and the control of traffic exiting Strand Road utilising traffic signals. On the southern arm of the junction, a strip of parallel parking spaces is proposed on the outbound side.

The existing cut stone masonry archway located outside the Telford Nursing Home on the Merrion Road at the Merrion Gates junction will be carefully dismantled and re-erected at the back of the proposed footpath.

Between the Strand Road junction and Elm Court, it is proposed to provide a three-lane carriageway along this section with a footpath and cycle track in both directions. The carriageway will comprise two general traffic lanes (one in each direction) and one outbound bus lane. Priority for inbound buses will be provided via signal controlled priority at the Merrion Gates junction. A strip of parallel parking spaces is proposed to be provided on the outbound side in the vicinity of No. 264 to No. 270 Merrion Road.

The cross-section proposed between St. Vincent's University Hospital and Estate Avenue has been designed so as to minimise the extent of necessary land acquisition. The existing cut stone masonry archway (referred to as the Bloomfield Gate) located outside the Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) Above Ground Installation (AGI) between the former Gowan Motors site (R143 Merrion Road) and St. Vincent's University Hospital will, however, need to be relocated due to the proposed road widening. It will be carefully dismantled and re-erected in an adjacent area along the northern boundary of St. Vincent's University Hospital, sited within the existing hedge fronting onto the plaza at the junction of Merrion Road and Nutley Lane.

At the access junction to St. Vincent's University Hospital from Merrion Road, it is proposed to reduce the radius of the existing left turn into St. Vincent's University Hospital and remove the dedicated right-turn lane into Merrion Avenue in order to improve cyclist safety and reduce the necessary land acquisition, while achieving the objectives of the Proposed Scheme.

2.3 Section 3: Merrion Road (Nutley Lane to Ballsbridge)

2.3.1 R118 Merrion Road

The R118 Merrion Road from Nutley Lane to Sandymount Avenue is sub-divided into three portions by its main junctions with Ailesbury Road and Shrewsbury Road.

A four-lane cross-section is proposed between Nutley Lane and Ailesbury Road. On the outbound approach to Nutley Lane, it is proposed to provide signal-controlled priority at the pedestrian crossing between Ailesbury Road and Nutley Lane. This will permit buses accessing Nutley Lane to move into the right turn general traffic lane and complete their manoeuvre from this lane. This in turn facilitates continuous bus and cycle lanes along the R118 Merrion Road southbound through the junction.

Between Ailesbury Road and Shrewsbury Road, it is proposed to provide a three-lane carriageway along this stretch of Merrion Road with a footpath and cycle track in each direction and back-to-back bus lanes in opposite directions. The carriageway cross-section will comprise two general traffic lanes (one in each direction) and one bus lane. The bus lane will be inbound (northbound) on the northern half of this stretch of Merrion Road (approaching Shrewsbury Road) and outbound (southbound) on the southern half of this stretch of Merrion Road (approaching Ailesbury Road). Signal controlled priority will be implemented to give buses priority along the stretch of road that buses share with general traffic. The direction in which the bus lanes travel changes in the vicinity of Wanderers Rugby Football Club (WFC). From WFC to Shrewsbury Road, only an inbound bus lane will be provided, while from WFC to Ailesbury Road, only an outbound bus lane is proposed. This will permit the retention of a number of existing trees and avoids the requirement for land acquisition from a number of properties in the vicinity of the Dutch Embassy.

The section between Shrewsbury Road and Sandymount Avenue is proposed as a four-lane carriageway with a bus lane and a general traffic lane in both directions. There are a number of mature trees located along the footway on this section of road and the proposed layout is such that it retains a number of trees where practicable.

A small section of land acquisition is proposed within the grounds of the Clayton Hotel Ballsbridge, Merrion Road, whereby a new footpath and cycle lane is proposed to run behind the existing trees at this location, with these trees to be retained. This will require land acquisition of a portion of the grass frontage and the realignment of a section of the boundary wall and railing of this property.

Also, along this section of the R118 Merrion Road, it is proposed to reduce the proposed footpath and cycle track widths locally in certain locations which aids in the retention of a number of trees. This locally reduces footpaths to a minimum width of 1.2m and cycle tracks to a minimum width of 1.4m over the short length of each pinch point.

2.3.2 Ballsbridge

The proposed road layout between Sandymount Avenue and Anglesea Road comprises a four-lane carriageway with a bus lane and a general traffic lane in both directions, and includes the removal of the traffic islands on Merrion Road at Serpentine Avenue with associated widening of the proposed footpath.

The left slip road from the R118 Merrion Road to Anglesea Road is proposed to be removed, with the relocation of the existing vehicular access to the City of Dublin Educational and Training Board (CDETB) premises on the corner of the junction to a new proposed vehicular access on Anglesea Road. The proposed access into the CDETB premises has been positioned to minimise the impact on historic railings. A new internal roadway arrangement is proposed as a result within the CDETB premises.

Entry to Ballsbridge Avenue from Ballsbridge Park is proposed to be located at the current exit, while a new exit to the north is proposed, taking cognisance of the extent to which Ballsbridge Park is a private road. This will remove the requirement for vehicles to turn right onto Beatty's Avenue from the R118 in Ballsbridge Village.

On the eastern side of the Dodder River, it is proposed to provide a two-way cycle track from Anglesea Road to Beatty's Avenue connected by a Toucan Crossing on the R118 in Ballsbridge Village. This integrates with the proposed Dodder Greenway.

2.4 Section 4: Ballsbridge to Merrion Square (Pembroke Road, Baggot Street and Fitzwilliam Street)

2.4.1 Ballsbridge Village

At the Ballsbridge Village junction of Shelbourne Road, Herbert Park and Elgin Road, it is proposed to introduce a left turn only entry into Elgin Road from Ballsbridge. At this junction, the re-alignment of the Herbert Park arm has been designed so as to minimise the impact on adjacent properties and to retain a number of existing trees to the east of the junction.

2.4.2 Pembroke Road

On Pembroke Road, from Elgin Road to Northumberland Road, 2m wide cycle tracks are proposed where practicable. It is proposed to reduce the width of the cycle tracks to 1.5m in places, in order to facilitate the retention of a number of existing trees along this section of Pembroke Road.

At the junction of Pembroke Road, Northumberland Road and Lansdowne Road, a right turn lane will be introduced from Pembroke Road onto Lansdowne Road to replace the right turn movement at Ballsbridge Junction (Pembroke Road to Shelbourne Road) that will be removed. The western approach to the junction will be reduced from two lanes to one lane. The existing slip lane which currently allows inbound traffic to bypass the junction, will be removed, resulting in all traffic being brought up to the junction to turn left on to Pembroke Road towards Baggot Street Upper. The existing kiosk which is currently located on the existing splitter island on the south-

western corner of the junction will be relocated nearby to the new proposed urban realm as part of the proposed works.

A single bus gate is proposed on Pembroke Road, between the Eastmoreland Place and Waterloo Road junctions. This bus gate will ensure that the only traffic utilising Pembroke Road (during the hours of operation) will be local traffic with a destination on or close to Pembroke Road, as well as through buses and authorised vehicles. This removes the need for four traffic lanes including dedicated bus lanes along this section of Pembroke Road resulting in a cross-section of a general traffic lane in each direction and a cycle track in each direction, i.e. inbound and outbound buses will use the two general traffic lanes. This reduced quantum of lanes avoids any permanent land take along Pembroke Road which means that existing trees will be retained, with some on-street parking also retained. The existing footpath width along this section of the Proposed Scheme will also be retained and / or widened where practicable.

Access to Pembroke Road, between Northumberland Road and Eastmoreland Place, during the hours of operation of the proposed bus gate, will be maintained via the Lansdowne Road junction. Local access will also be maintained via Eastmoreland Place, Wellington Road and Raglan Road. Offline traffic management measures at Clyde Lane and at the Herbert Park / Pembroke Park junction are also proposed to prevent through traffic diverting inappropriately.

2.4.3 Baggot Street Upper

Along Baggot Street Upper, it is proposed to reduce the width of the existing carriageway. This is facilitated through the proposed installation of the bus gate at the western end of Pembroke Road with a short section of bus lane between the Eastmoreland Place and Waterloo Road junctions.

Eastbound general traffic on Baggot Street Upper will not be permitted to access Pembroke Road and vice versa for westbound traffic on Pembroke Road during the hours of operation of the proposed bus gate. Consequently, the existing right-turn lane from Baggot Street Upper to Waterloo Road will be retained and the existing straight-ahead general traffic lane towards Pembroke Road can be converted to a bus lane. The proposal includes providing dedicated cycle tracks through the Baggot Street Upper retail area while improving the urban realm. Some loading and parking will be retained in the Baggot Street Upper retail area with additional / compensatory parking / loading provided where practicable.

At the McCartney Bridge (Baggot Street Bridge), where Baggot Street Lower meets Baggot Street Upper, it is proposed to widen the existing footpaths on both sides of the bridge and introduce cycle tracks on both sides of the carriageway on the bridge. It is also proposed to reduce the number of lanes to one general traffic lane in each direction crossing the bridge which allows for the provision of improved widths for pedestrians and cyclists crossing the canal.

At Baggot Street Upper on the inbound approach to the Mespil Road junction, it is proposed to reduce the number of lanes at the junction from four to two. Signal controlled priority will be provided approaching the Mespil Road junction, where inbound (northbound) buses will be allowed to cross the bridge ahead of other traffic.

2.4.4 Baggot Street Lower

Along Baggot Street Lower, it is proposed to provide a bus lane in each direction, a general traffic lane in each direction, a cycle track in each direction and a footpath on both sides of the road. A similar signal controlled priority facility to that on Baggot Street Upper will be provided for buses travelling outbound from Baggot Street Lower to Upper. In order to optimise the operation of this arrangement, left and right turn bans are proposed from Herbert Place and Wilton Terrace respectively onto McCartney Bridge, as well as a right turn ban from Mespil Road onto Baggot Street Upper.

In order to maintain the existing historical lighting columns and the majority of existing trees located in the median, it is proposed to retain the existing median along Baggot Street Lower. Some recessed parking bays are proposed on both sides of the road where practicable. A new Toucan crossing is proposed on Baggot Street Lower near the school (Scoil Chaitríona).

2.4.5 Fitzwilliam Street Lower

Along Fitzwilliam Street Lower the proposed cross-section will provide a bus lane and a general traffic lane in each direction, together with cycle tracks in each direction. No land acquisition will be required to provide this cross-section; however, it requires the removal of all parking along this section.

This main alignment of the Proposed Scheme ends at the junction of Fitzwilliam Street Lower with Mount Street Upper / Merrion Square South / Merrion Square East where it ties in with the existing environment.

2.5 Section 5: Nutley Lane (R138 Stillorgan Road to Merrion Road)

This alignment of the Proposed Scheme ties in with the existing signalised junction of the R138 Stillorgan Road and Nutley Lane. Proposed works to this junction include removing the existing left turn slip lane from Nutley Lane to the R138 Stillorgan Road, and providing a new two-way cycle crossing across the R138 Stillorgan Road on the eastern arm of the junction. Between the R138 Stillorgan Road and Nutley Road, a four lane cross-section is proposed, with a bus lane and a general traffic lane in each direction. It is proposed that a two-way cycle track will be provided on the eastern side of Nutley Lane, continuing north past the entrance to Elm Park Golf & Sports Club. This proposed cross-section includes the requirement for land acquisition from the properties currently occupied by RTÉ and Eir.

Between the entrance to Elm Park Golf & Sports Club and the entrance to St. Vincent's University Hospital, no footpath is proposed on the Elm Park Golf & Sports Club side of road, however, a Toucan crossing will be provided just north of the access to Elm Park Golf & Sports Club. The proposed two-way, 3.0m wide, cycle track will continue on the Elm Park Golf & Sports Club side of Nutley Lane, as far as the St. Vincent's University Hospital access junction. The existing footpath and verge on the north-western (residential) side of this stretch of Nutley Lane, is proposed to be retained, which in turn allows the trees on this side of the road to also be retained. No land acquisition of any residential houses along this stretch of Nutley Lane will be required, however, to achieve the proposed cross section, land acquisition from the Elm Park Golf & Sports Club as well as St. Vincent's University Hospital will be required.

Toucan Crossings are proposed at the St. Vincent's University Hospital access junction to connect the two-way cycle track to the single cycle tracks to the north.

At the access junction to St. Vincent's University Hospital, a right turn lane into the hospital is proposed which requires a curtailment of the receiving southbound bus lane in order to mitigate potential impact on the operation of internal roadways within the hospital. Southbound bus priority will be enabled through signal controlled priority provided on the northern arm.

From the access junction to St. Vincent's University Hospital to the junction of Nutley Lane with Merrion Road, the proposed cross-section comprises four lanes, including a bus lane and a general traffic lane in each direction with a single cycle track in each direction also. To achieve the proposed cross section along this stretch of Nutley Lane, land acquisition from the Merrion Shopping Centre as well as St. Vincent's University Hospital will be required.

3. Legislative, Planning and Development Context

3.1 Introduction

This Section sets out the prevailing legislation, strategic planning and transport policy context relating to the Proposed Scheme addressing the following tiers:

- Legislative Context;
- International Policy;
- European Union Law & Policy Context;
- National Policy Context;
- Regional Plans / Policy Context; and

- Local Plans / Policy Context.

3.2 Legislative Context

3.2.1 The Roads Act

The Proposed Scheme is a 'proposed road development' as defined in the Roads Act, 1993 as amended (hereafter referred to as the Roads Act).

The application for approval of the Proposed Scheme is being made under Section 51 of the Roads Act.

3.2.2 Requirement for Environmental Impact Assessment under the Roads Acts

The Roads Act defines 'proposed road development' *as:*

> *'any proposed road development which is subject to an environmental impact assessment under Section 50...'*

Section 50 of the Roads Act is concerned with Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for 'road development'. Section 50(1)(a) provides as follows:

> *'(1)(a) A road development that is proposed that comprises any of the following shall be subject to an environmental impact assessment:*
>
> *(i) the construction of a motorway;*
>
> *(ii) the construction of a busway;*
>
> *(iii) the construction of a service area;*
>
> *(iv) any prescribed type of road development consisting of the construction of a proposed public road or the improvement of an existing public road.'*

Under Article 8 of the Road Regulations, 1994 (as amended)(hereafter referred to as the Roads Regulations), the prescribed types of road development for the purposes of section 50(1)(a)(iv) of the Roads Act are:

> *'(a) the construction of a new road of four or more lanes, or the realignment or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such new, realigned or widened road would be eight kilometres or more in length in a rural area, or 500 metres or more in length in an urban area;*
>
> *(b) the construction of a new bridge or tunnel which would be 100 metres or more in length.'*

The Proposed Scheme meets the threshold as set out in Article 8 of the Roads Regulations as it includes the realignment and / or widening of an existing road so as to provide four or more lanes, where such realigned and / or widened road is more than 500 metres in length and is in an urban area. Therefore, an EIAR is mandatory in respect of the Proposed Scheme. Table 5.1 includes a summary of the EIAR assessment for the Proposed Scheme.

3.3 International Policy

3.3.1 United Nations 2030 Agenda

In September 2015, Transforming Our World, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) was adopted by all 193 Members States of the United Nations (UN). The 2030 Agenda aims to deliver a more sustainable, prosperous, and peaceful future for the entire world, and sets out a framework for how to achieve this by 2030. This framework is made up of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which cover the social, economic, and environmental requirements for a sustainable future which are shown in Image 2.1.

Image 2.1 The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Source: United Nations)

The SDGs are integrated; they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Sustainable Development Goals 9 and 11 are relevant to the Proposed Scheme:

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	
Target 9.1	Develop quality, reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human wellbeing, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.
Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable	
Target 11.2	By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

3.3.1.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is supported by the goals and targets set out in the relevant SDGs. It will provide for enhanced walking, cycling and bus infrastructure, which will subsequently enable more efficient, safe and integrated sustainable transport movement along this corridor.

In Ireland, the SDGs are being implemented through the National Implementation Plan 2018-2020 (DCCAE 2018), which is in direct response to the 2030 Agenda. It provides a whole-of-government approach to implement the 17 SDGs – see brief description later in the National Policy section.

3.4 European Union Law & Policy

3.4.1 Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy 2020

The Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy (European Commission 2020) sets out a number of goals as to how people will move within and between cities in the future. It has identified 82 initiatives which have been categorised into 10 ‘flagships.’

The flagship relevant to the Proposed Scheme is '*Flagship 3 – Making interurban and urban mobility more sustainable and healthy*'. It states that:

> *'increasing the modal shares of collective transport, walking and cycling, as well as automated, connected and multimodal mobility will significantly lower pollution and congestion from transport, especially in cities and improve the health and well-being of people. Cities are and should therefore remain at the forefront of the transition towards greater sustainability.'*

A target of the strategy relevant to the Proposed Scheme is to double cycling infrastructure in cities within the European Union to 5,000km in the next decade.

3.4.1.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme supports the objectives of the EU's Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy through significant investment in cycle and pedestrian infrastructure, in addition to bus priority, along the route of the Proposed Scheme, thereby supporting and encouraging growth in active travel and sustainable public transport usage.

3.4.2 European Green Deal 2019

The European Green Deal (EGD) (European Commission 2019) sets out ambitious policies aimed at cutting emissions and preserving the natural environment. Pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021, establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999, the binding EU 2030 climate target shall be a domestic reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions (emissions after deduction of removals) by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. In addition to binding legislation and other initiatives adopted at EU level, all sectors of the economy – including transport – must play a role in contributing to the achievement of climate neutrality within the European Union by 2050.

As indicated in the European Green Deal, on 9 December 2020, the European Commission adopted a communication entitled 'Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – Putting European Transport on Track for the Future'. The strategy sets out a roadmap for a sustainable and smart future for European transport, with an action plan towards an objective to deliver a 90% reduction in emissions from the transport sector by 2050.

This Strategy has the objective of '*accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility'* and requires that*, '[t]he EU transport system and infrastructure will be made fit to support new sustainable mobility services that can reduce congestion and pollution, especially in urban areas'*. It is noted that pollution is concentrated the most in cities and that a combination of measures is needed which includes '*improving public transport and promoting active modes of transport such as walking and cycling.'*

3.4.2.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is necessary, in conjunction with a range of other initiatives, to attain the objectives of the European Green Deal, through significant investment in cycle and pedestrian infrastructure, in addition to bus priority, thereby supporting and encouraging growth in active travel and sustainable public transport usage.

3.5 National Policy

The following Section includes those National plans, policies, and strategies relevant to the Proposed Scheme.

3.5.1 Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework (NPF)

Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (hereafter referred to as the NPF) (Government of Ireland 2018b) is the Government's strategic framework to guide development and investment. The NPF's ambition is to create a single vision and a shared set of goals for each community to shape the growth and development of Ireland by providing a framework up to the year 2040. These goals are expressed as National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), shared benefits which the NPF will deliver if implemented according to the objectives of the NPF. The

NPF NSOs relevant to the Proposed Scheme are set out in Table 3.1 with a corresponding statement on how the Proposed Scheme meets each respective NSO objective.

Table 3.1: National Strategic Outcomes (NSO) of the NPF

National Strategic Outcome	How the Proposed Scheme is supported by the NSO Objective
NSO1 Compact Growth *'Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work. All our urban settlements contain many potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned, that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, amenities and services, but which need a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development, with investment in enabling infrastructure and supporting amenities, to realise their potential. Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top priority.'*	The Proposed Scheme will facilitate the sustainable growth of Dublin through delivering transport infrastructure necessary to provide a bus network that works for a growing city. The Proposed Scheme is designed to provide a better, more reliable and more efficient bus service for everyone. The Proposed Scheme will support the creation of an attractive, resilient, equitable public transport network better connecting communities and improving access to work, education and social activity. The Proposed Scheme will bring greater accessibility to the City Centre and better connect communities and locations along its route for people to avail of housing, jobs, amenities and services. The Proposed Scheme will support enhancing the capacity of a sustainable transport network, and as a consequence will help to achieve greater land use densities that will encourage compact growth in compliance with the objectives of NSO1.
NSO2 Enhanced Regional Accessibility *'A co-priority is to enhance accessibility between key urban centres of population and their regions. This means ensuring that all regions and urban areas in the country have a high degree of accessibility to Dublin, as well as to each other. Not every route has to look east and so accessibility and connectivity between places like Cork and Limerick, to give one example, and through the Atlantic Economic Corridor to Galway as well as access to the North-West is essential.'*	NSO2 recognises the importance of accessibility to Dublin for all regions and urban areas in Ireland. Dublin is clearly a vital artery in Ireland's transport network and the Proposed Scheme, in enhancing links to regional bus, rail and roads infrastructure, meets the objectives of NSO2.
NSO4 Sustainable Mobility *'In line with Ireland's Climate Change mitigation plan, we need to progressively electrify our mobility systems moving away from polluting and carbon intensive propulsion systems to new technologies such as electric vehicles and introduction of electric and hybrid traction systems for public transport fleets, such that by 2040 our cities and towns will enjoy a cleaner, quieter environment free of combustion engine driven transport systems.'*	The Proposed Scheme will provide infrastructure to support a sustainable transport network that will facilitate a modal shift from private car usage to sustainable transport. It will reduce journey times and increase journey time reliability and increase the attractiveness of active travel and public transport for travel, which will in turn facilitate sustainable transport option alternatives to private car usage. The Proposed Scheme will support integrated sustainable transport usage through infrastructure improvements for active travel (both walking and cycling), and the provision of enhanced bus priority measures for existing (both public and private) and all future services who will use the corridor.
NSO5 A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills *'This will depend on creating places that can foster enterprise and innovation and attract investment and talent. It can be achieved by building regional economic drivers and by supporting opportunities to diversify and strengthen the rural economy, to leverage the potential of places. Delivering this outcome will require the coordination of growth and place making with investment in world class infrastructure, including digital connectivity, and in skills and talent to support economic competiveness* [sic]*and enterprise growth.'*	The Proposed Scheme is a high-quality development that will provide the infrastructure required to facilitate sustainable transport options which will service the transport needs of Dublin. Accessibility to jobs and education that underpin the economy is of fundamental importance. The Proposed Scheme will bring enhanced access to housing, employment opportunities, education and social / amenity services for the communities along the route of the Proposed Scheme through supporting improved transport services.

National Strategic Outcome	How the Proposed Scheme is supported by the NSO Objective
NSO6 High-Quality International Connectivity *'This is crucial for overall international competitiveness and addressing opportunities and challenges from Brexit through investment in our ports and airports in line with sectoral priorities already defined through National Ports Policy and National Aviation Policy and signature projects such as the second runway for Dublin Airport and the Port of Cork - Ringaskiddy Redevelopment.'*	The Proposed Scheme will provide the infrastructure required to facilitate enhanced sustainable transport onward access to key international points of entry to Ireland in compliance with the objectives of NSO6.
NSO7 Enhanced Amenity and Heritage *'This will ensure that our cities, towns and villages are attractive and can offer a good quality of life. It will require investment in well-designed public realm, which includes public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure. It also includes amenities in rural areas, such as national and forest parks, activity-based tourism and trails such as greenways, blueways and peatways. This is linked to and must integrate with our built, cultural and natural heritage, which has intrinsic value in defining the character of urban and rural areas and adding to their attractiveness and sense of place.'*	The overall landscape and urban realm design strategy for the Proposed Scheme aims to create attractive, consistent, functional and accessible places for people alongside the core bus and cycle facilities. It aims to mitigate any adverse effects that the proposals may have on the streets, spaces, local areas and landscape through the use of appropriate design responses. In addition, opportunities have been sought to enhance the public realm and landscape design where possible. Furthermore, built and natural heritage have been key considerations in the design of the Proposed Scheme in compliance with the objectives of NSO7.
NSO8 Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society *'The National Climate Policy Position establishes the national objective of achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. This objective will shape investment choices over the coming decades in line with the National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework. New energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary for a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generation system, harnessing both the considerable on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar and connecting the richest sources of that energy to the major sources of demand.'*	The Proposed Scheme comprises transport infrastructure that supports the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service. The primary objective of the Proposed Scheme therefore, through the provision of necessary bus, cycle, and walking infrastructure enhancements, is the facilitation of modal shift from car dependency, and thereby contributing to an efficient, integrated transport system and a low carbon and climate resilient City in compliance with NSO8 The Proposed Scheme will provide the advantage of segregated cycling facilities. These high-quality cycle tracks will be typically 2m in width offering a high level of service and help to reduce dependency on private car use for short journeys in compliance with the objectives of NSO8. Furthermore, all drainage structures for newly paved areas are designed with a minimum return period of no flooding in 1:30 years with a 20% climate change allowance.
NSO9 Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources *'Ireland has abundant natural and environmental resources such as our water sources that are critical to our environmental and economic wellbeing into the future. Conserving and enhancing the quality of these resources will also become more important in a crowded and competitive world as well as our capacity to create beneficial uses from products previously considered as waste, creating circular economic benefits.'*	The Proposed Scheme has been designed to minimise the amount and extent of major construction works required, and therefore minimise the quantities of construction materials required. The Proposed Scheme has taken into consideration the objectives of a circular economy and aims to re-use materials, where possible. Consideration has been given to the sustainability of material being sourced for the construction of the Proposed Scheme. Insofar as is reasonably practicable, materials required for the construction of the Proposed Scheme will be sourced locally in order to reduce the amount of travelling required to transfer the material to the site. Construction materials will be managed on-site in such a way as to prevent over-ordering and waste. A Construction and Demolition Resource and Waste Management Plan (CDRWMP) has been developed and will be implemented (and updated as necessary) by the appointed contractor. In regard to water during the construction phase, the EIAR includes details on guidance documents and control measures for site

National Strategic Outcome	How the Proposed Scheme is supported by the NSO Objective
	clearance, construction compound, silty water runoff, storage of materials, working in-stream or in close proximity to watercourses, fuel storage, use of concrete and monitoring. Mitigation for the operational phase has been built into the design of the Proposed Scheme. The Proposed Scheme is compliant with the objectives of NSO9.
NSO10 Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services *'Good access to a range of quality education and health services, relative to the scale of a region, city, town, neighbourhood or community is a defining characteristic of attractive, successful and competitive places. Compact, smart growth in urban areas and strong and stable rural communities will enable the enhanced and effective provision of a range of accessible services.'*	The Proposed Scheme provides infrastructure to support the delivery of sustainable transport that will benefit the entire community in terms of greater accessibility, capacity and speed of service improvements. The infrastructure improvements are along key arterial routes which include many of Dublin's childcare, educational and health care services in compliance with the objectives of NSO10.

Specifically, in regard to the Dublin City and Metropolitan Area, the NPF states that:

> '*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.'* It further outlines that *'Dublin's continued performance is critical to Ireland's competitiveness. Improving the strategic infrastructure required to sustain growth will be a key priority as part of the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP), and will include enhanced airport and port access and capacity, expansion and improvement of the bus, DART and Luas/Metro networks*…'

Under the heading '*Key future growth enablers for Dublin include*' it highlights:

> '*The development of an improved bus-based system, with better orbital connectivity and integration with other transport networks'* and *'Delivery of the metropolitan cycle network set out in the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan inclusive of key commuter routes and urban greenways on the canal, river and coastal corridors*.'

3.5.1.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme supports the goals of the NPF by delivering infrastructure that will facilitate high-quality sustainable active travel and public transport networks. In doing so, the Proposed Scheme will facilitate an accelerated shift and the urgent transition needed to deliver a low carbon and climate resilient society. The Proposed Scheme also includes localised public realm improvements that will ensure a more attractive, liveable urban place for the local community living adjacent to the Proposed Scheme.

The Proposed Scheme supports the outcome of the NPF related to Compact Growth. The NPF describes how the careful management and sustained growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work. A key NPF priority involves achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development. One of the overall objectives of BusConnects is to enhance compact growth, regeneration opportunities and more effective use of land in Dublin, for present and future generation through the provision of safe and efficient sustainable transport networks. The Proposed Scheme supports this objective.

3.5.2 National Development Plan 2021 – 2030

Project Ireland 2040 is the government's long-term overarching strategy to make Ireland a better country for all its people. The National Development Plan (hereafter referred to as the NDP) (Government of Ireland 2021a) and the National Planning Framework (hereafter referred to as the NPF) (Government of Ireland 2018b) combine to form Project Ireland 2040. The NDP 2018 – 2027 and the NPF were adopted in May 2018. The review of the NDP

was originally planned for 2022 but this was brought forward in an effort to stimulate the economy and bring about an 'Infrastructure-led recovery' and 'green recovery' in the wake of COVID-19. The revised NDP 2021-2030 was adopted in October 2021.

The NDP is the National capital investment strategy plan. It sets out the framework of expenditure commitments to secure the Strategic Investment Priorities to the year 2030 and support the delivery of the 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSO's) identified in the NPF, and described in Section 3.5.1 as applicable to the Proposed Scheme. The NDP under Section 4.1 (National Strategic Outcomes) sets out '*This National Development Plan will incorporate a total public investment of €165 billion over the period 2021-2030*.'

Under the heading 'Major Investments' the NDP sets out that '*This NDP will be the largest and greenest ever delivered in Ireland, with a particular focus on supporting the largest public housing programme in the history of the state. While many of the investments in this NDP are already well known and have been progressing through planning for some time (e.g. BusConnects), there are a range of investments which are new or enhanced in the NDP. A selection of these are listed below*.' This includes under NSO 4 'Sustainable Mobility' '*BusConnects for Ireland's Cities*'.

In Section 3.9 'Catalysing the shift towards accessibility-based mobility systems' it comments that '*The greenhouse gas emissions associated with public transport will be addresses by replacing diesel buses with lower emitting alternatives under the BusConnects programme.*'

Figure 5.4 'Selection of Major Regional Investments Planned in the National Development Plan' includes in the section entitled 'Selection of investments for the Eastern and Midland Region'. Inter alia: BusConnects.

The NDP sets out a programme of investment that includes indicative Exchequer allocations. BusConnects is specifically identified as one of the five 'Strategic Investment Priorities' that aligns with NSO4 (Sustainable Mobility) of the NPF. The NDP outlines under the heading 'Sustainable Mobility' that; '*The National Planning Framework (NPF) recognises the importance of significant investment in sustainable mobility (active travel and public transport)' networks if the NPF population growth targets are to be achieved. Investing in high quality sustainable mobility will improve citizens' quality of life, support our transition to a low-carbon society and enhance our economic competitiveness*.'

It continues:

> *'Improved and expanded sustainable mobility services and infrastructure can also act as an enabler of the NPF's commitment toward the compact growth of the cities, towns and villages within their existing urban footprint.'*

It further states:

> *'….transport led development will become an increasingly important area of investment focus for the sustainable mobility programme over the period of the NDP.'*

It also highlights that:

> *'The NDP provides for significant investment in active travel, bus and rail infrastructure over the next ten years in terms of expanding sustainable mobility options in our cities, towns and villages.'* It continues *'In the previous NDP, the Transport sector had an allocation of approximately €21 billion for the period 2018-2027. The revised NDP sets out further ambitious plans to enhance public transport, active travel options and the connectivity of communities throughout Ireland. Transport projects by their nature are delivered over a multi-year horizon. The scale of the Transport-related requirements under the revised NDP amounts to c. €35 billion in total over 2021-2030.'*

Under the heading 'Sectoral Strategies' it makes reference to the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and recognises *'..that Ireland must achieve a significant modal shift from car to active travel and public transport if we are to achieve our target of a 51% reduction in Green House Gas emissions by 2030 and ultimately net zero by 2050*.'

In regard to 'Active Travel', the NDP comments:

'This NDP represents a step-change in the approach towards funding active travel in Ireland. Over the next 10 years approximately €360 million per annum will be invested in walking and cycling infrastructure in cities, town and villages across the country, including Greenways.' It continues 'The investment proposed for the major urban centres over the next 5 years will target over 700km of improved walking and cycling infrastructure delivered across the five cities.'

Specifically in regard to BusConnects, the NDP outlines the following:

'*Transformed active travel and bus infrastructure and services in all five of Ireland's major cities is fundamental to achieving the overarching target of 500,000 additional active travel and public transport journeys by 2030*.'

It also sets out that:

'BusConnects will overhaul the current bus system in all five cities by implementing a network of 'next generation' bus corridors (including segregated cycling facilities) on the busiest routes to make journeys faster, predictable and reliable. BusConnects will enhance the capacity and potential of the public transport system by increasing and replacing the bus fleets with low emission vehicles and introducing a new system of ticketing known as Next Generation Ticketing and cashless payments. Increasing the attractiveness of the bus systems in the cities will encourage modal shift away from private car use, leading to a reduction in congestion and associated costs in the major urban areas. Over the lifetime of this NDP, there will be significant progress made on delivering BusConnects with the construction of Core Bus Corridors expected to be substantially complete in all five cities by 2030.'

3.5.2.1 Revised National Development Plan

It is noted that the explanatory text under each National Strategic Outcome (NSO) within the NPF has not been fully replicated within the revised NDP. The table below sets out some changes in the explanatory wording of each applicable NSO between the NPF and the revised NDP.

Table 3.2: NSO Objective Differences NPF and NDP

NPF National Strategic Outcome (NSO)	Revised NDP NSO explanatory text	Consideration of explanatory text changes between NPF and revised NDP
NSO1 Compact Growth *'Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work. All our urban settlements contain many potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned, that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, amenities and services, but which need a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development, with investment in enabling infrastructure and supporting amenities, to realise their potential. Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top priority.'*	**NSO1 Compact Growth** *'Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work. All our urban settlements contain many potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned, that are suitable and capable of being developed to provide housing, jobs, amenities and community services, but which need a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development, with investment in enabling infrastructure and supporting amenities, to realise their potential. Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top priority.'*	The explanatory text in the revised NDP mostly mirrors that within the NPF. The only change is the insertion of the word '*community*' when it refers to services that have the potential to be developed within urban settlement '*potential development areas*'.
NSO2 Enhanced Regional Accessibility	**NSO2 Enhanced Regional Accessibility**	The revised NDP maintains the objectives of NPF NSO2 and emphasizes improving

NPF National Strategic Outcome (NSO)	Revised NDP NSO explanatory text	Consideration of explanatory text changes between NPF and revised NDP
'A co-priority is to enhance accessibility between key urban centres of population and their regions. This means ensuring that all regions and urban areas in the country have a high degree of accessibility to Dublin, as well as to each other. Not every route has to look east and so accessibility and connectivity between places like Cork and Limerick, to give one example, and through the Atlantic Economic Corridor to Galway as well as access to the North-West is essential.'	The revised NDP does not fully replicate the explanatory text as set out under the NPF. However, it does comment (inter alia), as follows: *'This National Strategic Outcome seeks to enhance intra-regional accessibility through improving transport links between key urban centres of population and their respective regions, as well as improving transport links between the regions themselves.'*	transport links as a means to enhancing intra-regional accessibility.
NSO4 Sustainable Mobility *'In line with Ireland's Climate Change mitigation plan, we need to progressively electrify our mobility systems moving away from polluting and carbon intensive propulsion systems to new technologies such as electric vehicles and introduction of electric and hybrid traction systems for public transport fleets, such that by 2040 our cities and towns will enjoy a cleaner, quieter environment free of combustion engine driven transport systems.'*	**NSO4: Sustainable Mobility** The revised NDP does not fully replicate the explanatory text as set out under the NPF. However, it does comment (inter alia), as follows*: 'The National Planning Framework (NPF) recognizes the importance of significant investment in sustainable mobility (active travel and public transport) networks if the NPF population growth targets are to be achieved. Investing in high-quality sustainable mobility will improve citizens' quality of life, support our transition to a low-carbon society and enhance our economic competitiveness.'*	The revised NDP maintains the objectives of NPF NSO4 and includes added emphasis on active travel and public transport as a means to support Ireland's transition to a '*low-carbon society and enhance our economic competitiveness.'*
NSO5 A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills *'This will depend on creating places that can foster enterprise and innovation and attract investment and talent. It can be achieved by building regional economic drivers and by supporting opportunities to diversify and strengthen the rural economy, to leverage the potential of places. Delivering this outcome will require the coordination of growth and place making with investment in world class infrastructure, including digital connectivity, and in skills and talent to support economic competitiveness and enterprise growth.'*	**NSO5 A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills** The revised NDP does not fully replicate the explanatory text as set out under the NPF. However, it does comment (inter alia), as follows*: 'A competitive, innovative and resilient enterprise base is essential to provide high-quality jobs and employment opportunities for people to live and prosper in all regions. The next decade will see profound changes in our economy and society. While the impacts of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic will continue to challenge businesses in the first part of the decade, the digitization of entire sectors and the transition to a low-carbon economy will be even more transformative.'*	The revised NDP maintains the objectives of NPF NSO5 and places added emphasis on providing high quality jobs and employment opportunities. In addition, it acknowledges the impacts of Brexit, COVID-19, digitization and the transition to a '*low carbon economy'*.
NSO6 High-Quality International Connectivity *'This is crucial for overall international competitiveness and addressing opportunities and challenges from Brexit through investment in our ports and*	**NSO6 High-Quality International Connectivity** The revised NDP does not fully replicate the explanatory text as set out under the NPF. However, it does comment (inter alia), as follows: *'As an island, continued*	The revised NDP maintains the objectives of NPF NSO6 and includes in the explanatory text not only aims to improve international connections via airports and ports but also the need to enhance the '*surface connectivity'* to same.

NPF National Strategic Outcome (NSO)	Revised NDP NSO explanatory text	Consideration of explanatory text changes between NPF and revised NDP
airports in line with sectoral priorities already defined through National Ports Policy and National Aviation Policy and signature projects such as the second runway for Dublin Airport and the Port of Cork - Ringaskiddy Redevelopment.'	*investment in our port and airport connections to the UK, the EU and the rest of the world, is integral to underpinning international competitiveness. It is also central to responding to the challenges as well as the opportunities arising from Brexit.'* It also comments '*Plans for strengthening surface connectivity to ports and airports will continue to be prioritised..*'	
NSO7 Enhanced Amenity and Heritage *'This will ensure that our cities, towns and villages are attractive and can offer a good quality of life. It will require investment in well-designed public realm, which includes public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure. It also includes amenities in rural areas, such as national and forest parks, activity-based tourism and trails such as greenways, blueways and peatways. This is linked to and must integrate with our built, cultural and natural heritage, which has intrinsic value in defining the character of urban and rural areas and adding to their attractiveness and sense of place.'*	**NSO7 Enhanced Amenity and Heritage** The revised NDP does not fully replicate the explanatory text as set out under the NPF. However, it does comment (inter alia), as follows: *'Investment in our heritage has the dual benefit of protecting our natural and historic built environment while improving health, wellbeing and providing a catalyst for the economy through the development of recreational activities and the expansion of tourism as appropriate within heritage sites. Keeping this national tourism product intact, enhanced, developed and promoted will help secure the long-term viability of sustainable tourism incomes and will need to be a priority going forward.'*	The revised NDP maintains the objectives of NPF NSO7.
NSO8 Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society *'The National Climate Policy Position establishes the national objective of achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. This objective will shape investment choices over the coming decades in line with the National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework. New energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary for a more distributed, renewables-focused energy generation system, harnessing both the considerable on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar and connecting the richest sources of that energy to the major sources of demand.'*	**NSO8 Transition to a Climate-Neutral and Climate-Resilient Society** The revised NDP does not fully replicate the explanatory text as set out under the NPF. However, it does comment (inter alia), as follows: *'The next 10 years are critical if we are to address the climate crisis and ensure a safe and bright future for the planet, and all of us on it. In Ireland we have significantly stepped up our climate ambition. The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 commits us to a 51% reduction in our overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and to achieving net zero emissions no later than by 2050.'* *'The investment priorities included in this chapter must be delivered to meet the targets set out in the current and future Climate Action Plans, and to achieve our climate objectives. The investment priorities represent a decisive shift*	The revised NDP has changed the NPF wording for NSO8 and replaces 'low carbon' with 'climate neutral'. Climate neutral implies removing all greenhouse gases to zero which appears to be a greater government commitment than to aspire to a 'low carbon' society'. The revised NDP refers to the 'climate crisis' and the carbon reduction commitments made within the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. This new legislation places a greater sense of urgency and importance on addressing climate change.

NPF National Strategic Outcome (NSO)	Revised NDP NSO explanatory text	Consideration of explanatory text changes between NPF and revised NDP
	towards the achievement of a decarbonized society, demonstrating the Government's unequivocal commitment to securing a carbon neutral future.'	
NSO9 Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources *'Ireland has abundant natural and environmental resources such as our water sources that are critical to our environmental and economic wellbeing into the future. Conserving and enhancing the quality of these resources will also become more important in a crowded and competitive world as well as our capacity to create beneficial uses from products previously considered as waste, creating circular economic benefits.'*	**NSO9 Sustainable Management of Water and Other Environmental Resources** The revised NDP does not fully replicate the explanatory text as set out under the NPF. However, it does comment (inter alia), as follows: *'In a Circular Economy, the inherent value of products, materials and our natural resources is maintained for as long as possible. Additionally, the NPF highlights the centrality of our sustainable water resources to the implementation of the NPF to underpin our environmental and economic well-being into the future which is against the backdrop of the significant deficits in water services capacity and quality reflecting historic underinvestment.'*	The revised NDP omits the word 'waste' from NSO9 but otherwise maintains the objectives of NPF NSO9. The need for a circular economy is re-emphasised within the revised NDP.
NSO10 Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services *'Good access to a range of quality education and health services, relative to the scale of a region, city, town, neighbourhood or community is a defining characteristic of attractive, successful and competitive places. Compact, smart growth in urban areas and strong and stable rural communities will enable the enhanced and effective provision of a range of accessible services.'*	**NSO10 Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services** The revised NDP does not fully replicate the explanatory text as set out under the NPF. However, it does comment (inter alia), as follows: *'Access to quality primary education, health services and childcare, relative to the scale of a region, city, town, neighbourhood or community is a defining characteristic of attractive, successful and competitive places.'*	The revised NDP maintains the objectives of NPF NSO10.

In summary, it is considered that the revised NDP brings up to date the explanatory text associated with the NSOs under the NPF. The enactment of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 has placed greater emphasis on tackling climate change and utilising government policy as a means to bring about a climate neutral society and economy. The Proposed Project will provide the infrastructure required to deliver sustainable public transport that will assist in the drive towards a carbon / climate neutral future for Ireland.

3.5.2.2 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme forming part of the CBC Infrastructure Works within the overall BusConnects Programme is therefore identified as a component of a 'Strategic Investment Priority', with an associated investment commitment, which has been determined as central to the delivery of the NPF vision. The Proposed Scheme is an integral part of Ireland's policy to reduce emissions by providing the infrastructure necessary to deliver a sustainable transport network. The Proposed Scheme will facilitate continued planned and forecasted population growth in the GDA and along the route of the Proposed Scheme by meeting existing and future travel demand through investment in a sustainable transport network and services. As required in the NDP, the Proposed

Scheme will provide the infrastructure needed to help facilitate a modal shift from private car to public transport, cycling and walking. It will also bring to fruition a 'Strategic Investment Priority' of the NDP to help deliver the full '*BusConnects programme'*.

3.5.3 National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland

The Department of Transport (DoT) has finalised the transport framework, the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (hereafter referred to as NIFTI) (DoT 2021) to ensure alignment with the policies of the NPF. NIFTI sets out the Department of Transport's strategy for the development and management of Ireland's land transport network (roads, public transport, walking and cycling) over the next two decades. The NPF and its projections around population and settlement patterns are central to the development NIFTI. The purpose of NIFTI is to enable the delivery of Project Ireland 2040 and the ten National Strategic Objectives (NSOs) by guiding the appropriate investment in Ireland's roads, active travel and public transport infrastructure.

To invest sustainably, NIFTI establishes hierarchies which prioritise environmentally sustainable and proportional solutions to a given transport need or opportunity. In combination, it is intended that these hierarchies will ensure that we tackle the right problems with the right solutions.

NIFTI sets out the types of positive outcomes transport investment can deliver, including:

- Delivering clean, low carbon and environmentally sustainable mobility;
- Supporting Successful Places and Vibrant Communities;
- Facilitating Safe, Accessible, Reliable and Efficient Travel on the Network; and
- Promoting a Strong and Balanced Economy.

NIFTI was published by the DoT on 21 December 2021 and includes investment hierarchies that ensure strategic alignment of future transport investment and to support the NPF. The investment priorities are based on two hierarchies, Modal and Intervention which are set out below:

Modal Hierarchy

NIFTI Modal Hierarchy is:

1. Active Travel;
2. Public Transport; and
3. Private Vehicles.

The plan states that future transport planning will prioritise sustainable modes and

> *'……sets out a hierarchy of travel modes to be accommodated and encouraged when investments and other interventions are made. Sustainable modes, starting with active travel and then public transport, will be encouraged over less sustainable modes such as the private car.*
>
> *Active travel is the most sustainable mode of travel. Increasing the share of active travel can reduce the carbon footprint of the transport sector, improve air quality, reduce urban congestion, and bring about positive health impacts as a result of increased physical activity. The attractiveness of this mode is dependent on infrastructure — for example, dedicated footpaths, segregated cycle lanes and the quality and priority of road crossing points all impact upon the number of people engaging in active travel.'*

Intervention Hierarchy

NIFTI Intervention Hierarchy is:

1. Maintain;
2. Optimise;
3. Improve; and
4. New.

'To support the delivery of the NPF, and to make best use of our existing assets, a hierarchy of these intervention types will be applied. Maintaining the existing transport network will be given first priority, followed by maximising the value of the network through optimising its use. Infrastructural investments will only be considered after these two categories have been assessed as inappropriate for the identified problem, with upgrades to existing infrastructure to be considered before new infrastructure.'

De-carbonising the transport sector is a key priority for reaching Ireland's climate change targets. NIFTI supports sustainable mobility and encourages active travel and public transport. It supports projects that will reduce urban congestion, particularly those that include new sustainable mobility infrastructure and optimises the existing infrastructure to prioritise sustainable transport modes.

3.5.3.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is compliant with NIFTI (DoT 2021) as it will facilitate accessible and reliable public transport. It supports sustainable transport modes including active travel modes. NIFTI recognises that active travel is the most sustainable mode of travel and acknowledges that the attractiveness of this mode is dependent on infrastructure, for example, dedicated footpaths, segregated cycle tracks and the quality and priority of road crossing points all impact upon the number of people engaging in active travel. The Proposed Scheme will provide improved infrastructure for active travel modes.

3.5.4 Department of Transport: Statement of Strategy 2021 – 2023

The Statement of Strategy sets out goals and strategic approach which are designed to support continuing economic recovery, fiscal consolidation, job creation and social development. It notes that '*Aligned with the National Planning Framework and the National Economic Plan we will maintain and develop high quality sustainable road, public transport and active travel networks to enable economic activity, essential services and social connections between and within our cities, regions and communities*.'

The Statement of Strategy includes a commitment to '*support any necessary adaptation of our critical transport infrastructure and services in response to Ireland's changing climate*.'

The Statement of Strategy mission is "*To deliver an accessible, efficient, safe and sustainable transport system that supports communities, households and businesses*."

In regard to connectivity, the Strategy sets out that:

'Aligned with the National Planning Framework and the National Economic Plan we will maintain and develop high quality sustainable road, public transport and active travel networks to enable economic activity, essential services and social connections between and within our cities, regions and communities.'

3.5.4.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme will provide the infrastructure necessary to support a high quality and sustainable road, public transport and active travel network along the route. The Proposed Scheme will contribute towards economic recovery through enhanced connectivity by improving both bus and cycle infrastructure allowing for greater modal choices.

3.5.5 Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) Smarter Travel - A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020 (hereafter referred to as Smarter Travel) (DTTAS 2009a) is the National planning policy document to deliver an integrated transport policy for Ireland as supported by Government. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) were carried out as part of Smarter Travel.

It sets out a series of actions and measures covering infrastructural and policy elements to promote and encourage the vision of a sustainable travel and transport system for the period 2009 to 2020. The Smarter Travel Policy also provides funding over the lifetime of the Policy to provide information and improve facilities for cyclists, walkers, and public transport users.

The vision presented in Smarter Travel is summarised by five key goals:

- *'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*'.

In regard to Public Transport, it sets out that:

> '*We estimate that by 2020 we will need to provide public transport to meet the needs of an additional 90,000 commuters on top of the 140,000 likely to be catered for by Transport 21. The bus will be at the heart of moving these additional people*.'

It further comments that:

> '*Bus use is particularly important for those without access to a car, the young, older people and people with mobility issues. If we are to encourage the use of public transport in Ireland, the availability of a safe, accessible, integrated and reliable service for 18+ hours of the day is essential in any attempts to increase patronage and gain more users*.'

Table 3.3 sets out how the Proposed Scheme meets the key goals of Smarter Travel.

Table 3.3: Key Goals - Smarter Travel

Key Goals	How the Proposed Scheme meets the Key Goals of Smarter Travel
'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'	More bus shelters, seating, accessible footways and bus infrastructure to make the bus transit experience more accessible for users of all abilities and ages. Provision and enhancement of cycling facilities along the Proposed Scheme, creating routes that are safe, accessible and attractive for people of all abilities and ages.
'Improve economic competitiveness through maximising the efficiency of the transport system and alleviating congestion and infrastructural bottlenecks'	Accessibility to jobs and education that underpin the economy is of fundamental importance. The Proposed Scheme will bring enhanced access options to Dublin's employment and educational centres by improving bus speeds, reliability and punctuality through the provision of bus lanes and other measures.
'Minimise the negative impacts of transport on the local and global environment through reducing localised air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions'	The Proposed Scheme comprises transport infrastructure that supports the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service. The EIA assessment has been carried out according to best practice and guidelines relating to climate and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and in the context of similar large-scale transport infrastructural projects. Following the application of mitigation measures, it is expected that there will be a short-term, negative and significant residual impact on

Key Goals	How the Proposed Scheme meets the Key Goals of Smarter Travel
	climate as a result of the Construction Phase of the Proposed Scheme. The operational traffic GHG emissions associated with the Operational Phase of the scheme is predicted to be positive, significant and permanent. Thus, the residual Operational Traffic Phase impact of the Proposed Scheme is permanent and neutral.
'Reduce overall travel demand and commuting distances travelled by the private car'	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as it will promote modal shift from private car to a more sustainable forms of transport. It enhances active travel networks and thus encourages the use of these modes reducing reliance on the private car.
'Improve security of energy supply by reducing dependency on imported fossil fuels'	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the goal as it is providing the infrastructure necessary to facilitate sustainable transport.

3.5.5.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is supported by what Smarter Travel (DTTAS 2009b) states in relation to public transport in that it is recognised that a safe, accessible service is essential to increase patronage. The Proposed Scheme will maximise the efficiency of the transport network through the integration of cycling and public transport modes and support the provision of sustainable transport alternatives to reliance on car-based journeys.

3.5.6 The National Cycle Policy Framework (NCPF) 2009 – 2020

The National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020 (hereafter referred to as the NCPF) (DTTAS 2009b) is Ireland's cycling policy framework. The vision is to create a strong cycling culture in Ireland, stating that '*Cycling will be a normal way to get about, especially for short trips'*. The NCPF outlines 19 specific objectives, so that by the year 2020, 10% of all journeys made were intended to be by bike. This policy framework outlines a number of interventions to make cycling easier and safer.

The interventions specific to the Proposed Scheme are set out below in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4: NCPF Intervention and Objectives

Interventions and Objectives	How the Proposed Scheme meets the Interventions and Objectives
'We will pay special attention to integrating cycling and public transport (PT). As commuting distances are lengthening, the importance of combining the bicycle with the bus, tram or train grows. We will provide state-of-the-art cycling parking at all appropriate PT interchanges and stops.'	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as it will enhance the interchange between the various modes of public transport operating in the city and wider metropolitan area, both now and in the future. Bus Infrastructure as well as cycle and pedestrian infrastructure largely run in parallel proximate to each other which improves the potential for interchange between the modes. Furthermore, bus stops will include bike parking where possible to encourage integration between modes.
Objective 2: 'Ensure that the urban road infrastructure is designed/retrofitted so as to be cyclist-friendly and that traffic management measures are also cyclist friendly'	The design of each junction has given priority to pedestrian, cycle and bus movements. Junctions have been designed to ensure a high level of comfort and priority for sustainable modes of travel e.g. walking, cycling and public transport by prioritising the space and time allocated to these modes within the operation of a junction.
Objective 8: 'Ensure proper integration between cycling and public transport' will assist in increasing the uptake in cycling across the region.'	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as it will provide improved travel times combined with increased services, which will promote an efficient, reliable and frequent public transport service as well as provide the advantage of segregated cycling facilities along the preferred route in both directions. Also, as set out above, bus

Interventions and Objectives	How the Proposed Scheme meets the Interventions and Objectives
	stops will include bike parking where possible to encourage / facilitate interchange between modes.

The NTA's Canal Cordon Count measures the number of trips into Dublin City Centre on a typical morning in November of each year. Data is collected for all common modes of transport including walking and cycling. Transport Trends 2020 (DoT 2021a) states that data for 2019 shows an increase in the number of cyclists recorded entering the city to 13,131, up from 12,227 in 2018. It should be noted that the 2019 data represents the last Canal Cordon Count dataset prior to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel patterns and volumes entering Dublin City Centre.

3.5.6.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is supported by the objectives set in the NCPF through the provision of safe cycling infrastructure segregated from general traffic, wherever practicable. In addition, the Proposed Scheme provides bike parking adjacent to bus stops to encourage interchange between bus and cycle modes in accordance with the objectives of the NCPF.

3.5.7 Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2030

The Road Safety Strategy 2021 – 2030 (RSA 2021) is towards achieving 'Vision Zero' which is to achieve the long term goal of eliminating deaths and serious injuries in road traffic collisions by 2050. The strategy '*involves the promotion of the safer modes (e.g., public transport, such as bus and rail travel), and the promotion and provision of safe road environments for otherwise healthy, active modes. This includes walking and cycling, where the risks of death and serious injury in the event of a collision are higher than for protected in-vehicle road users.'*

The Strategy acknowledges that '*The promotion and increased uptake of public transport can greatly contribute to fatality and serious injury reductions over the course of the 2021-2023 strategy'*. It continues '*The substantial societal benefits of increased active travel (i.e. walking or cycling) must also be acknowledged in light of Ireland's climate objectives, including reduced emissions, traffic congestion and noise pollution, and increased physical activity and its related health benefits*.'

A key action of Phase 1 of the strategy is during the 2021 – 2025 period is to '*construct 1,000km of segregated walking and cycling facilities to provide safe cycling and walking arrangements for users of all ages'.*

3.5.7.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme will provide the infrastructure necessary to facilitate a public transport network which the Strategy acknowledges is a '*safer mode'* of travel. The Proposed Scheme will contribute to improved road safety through improvement works at key junctions and upgrades to the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure along the route. The Proposed Scheme provides for significant additional segregation between active travel users and the public road to help enhance safety.

3.5.8 Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (Government of Ireland 2021) sets out the central objective relating to emission reductions. It legally binds Ireland to have net-zero emissions no later than 2050 and to a 51% reduction in emissions by the end of the decade (2030), against a base of 2018 emissions. The Act sets out the following:

> *'The first two carbon budgets proposed by the Advisory Council shall provide for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions such that the total amount of annual greenhouse gas emissions in the year ending on 31 December 2030 is 51 per cent less than the annual greenhouse gas emissions reported for the year ending on 31 December 2018, as set out in the national greenhouse gas emissions inventory prepared by the Agency.'*

3.5.8.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The implementation of the Proposed Scheme will deliver transport infrastructure required to support a significant shift towards sustainable transport options that will in turn support the targets set out in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.

3.5.9 Climate Action Plan 2021

The Climate Action Plan 2021 (Government of Ireland 2021b) sets out at a National level how Ireland is to halve its emissions by 2030 (51% reduction) and reach net zero no later than 2050. The Climate Action Plan is a road map to delivering Irelands climate ambition. There are 475 actions identified that extend to all sectors of the economy aiming to transform Ireland into a low carbon nation over the next three decades.

In regard to modal shift the Climate Action Plan 2021 sets out that:

> *'The proposed pathway in transport is focused on accelerating the electrification of road transport, the use of biofuels, and a* ***modal shift*** *to transport modes with lower energy consumption (e.g. public and active transport)'.* (emphasis added).

Promoting more sustainable travel modes is seen as critical for climate policy. It offers an opportunity to '*improve our health, boost the quality of our lives, meet the need of our growing urban centres and connects our rural, urban and suburban communities'.*

The key targets to meet the emissions reduction include:

- *'Provide for an additional 500,000 daily public transport and active travel journeys';*
- *'Develop the required infrastructural, regulatory, engagement, planning, innovation and financial supports for improved system, travel, vehicle and demand efficiencies';* and
- *'Reduce ICE [1]kilometres by c. 10% compared to present day levels'.*

ICE reduction measures include:

- *'Reallocating road space from the private car to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport';*
- *'Enhancing permeability for active travel'; and*
- *'Delivering safer walking and cycling routes to encourage greater uptake of active transport.'*

BusConnects is referenced as a major transport project that will help to deliver the 500,000 additional sustainable journeys. A key goal of the plan is to provide citizens with reliable and realistic sustainable transport options. The Climate Action Plan further states:

> '*The new approach to public transport will be based on a vision of an integrated public transport network, enabling short, medium and long distance trips for people in every part of Ireland. This will mean increasing the frequency of existing rail and bus services and expanding the road network through the Connecting Ireland approach.'*

Table 3.5 describes the Actions and how the Proposed Scheme meets the specific action.

Table 3.5: Climate Action Plan Transport Actions

Action Number	Action	How the Proposed Scheme meets the Action
225	*'Continue the improvement and expansion of the Active Travel and Greenway Network'*	The Proposed Scheme will promote active travel through the provision of enhanced cycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
227	*'Construct an additional 1,000km of cycling and walking infrastructure'*	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the action as it will provide segregated cycling facilities along the Proposed Scheme in both directions.

[1] Internal Combustion Engine

Action Number	Action	How the Proposed Scheme meets the Action
228	*'Encourage an increased level of modal shift towards Active travel (walking and cycling) and away from private car use'*	The Proposed Scheme will provide the infrastructure required to promote modal shift from private car to a more sustainable forms of transport and increased bus priority which are key actions in the plan.
233	*'Commence delivery of BusConnects Network Redesign Dublin'*	BusConnects Dublin Programme is the National Transport Authority's programme to greatly improve bus services in the Greater Dublin Area of which the Proposed Scheme is part.
235	*'Commence delivery of BusConnects Core Bus Corridor Infrastructure Works'*	BusConnects Dublin Programme is the National Transport Authority's programme to greatly improve bus services in the Greater Dublin Area of which the Proposed Scheme is part.
256	*'Deliver sustainable bus priority measures on the National Road Network'*	The Proposed Scheme will provide the infrastructure required to increase bus priority which is a key action of the plan. The Proposed Scheme includes the provision of enhanced bus priority measures for existing (both public and private) and all future services who will use the corridor.

3.5.9.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The delivery of the Proposed Scheme will provide the transport infrastructure required to provide sustainable transport options that will support the key actions set out in the Climate Action Plan 2021. The Proposed Scheme will expand, enhance and connect to pedestrian and cycle networks and will assist in facilitating the delivery of modal shift.

BusConnects will support the delivery of an efficient low carbon and climate resilient public transport service, contributing to emission reduction target achievement. BusConnects will contribute to Ireland's journey to a low carbon / carbon neutral, energy efficient and reliable transport system which aligns with Government net zero policy commitments and enable customers to make sustainable choices.

Acknowledging that various policy initiatives are required to deliver national targets that are aligned to the Paris Agreement, BusConnects can facilitate services that are beneficial to communities. While mandated reductions are not required at an individual scheme level, carbon must be invested wisely. EIAR Chapter 8 (Climate) contains an assessment of the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the Proposed Scheme.

3.5.10 Programme for Government – Our Shared Future 2020

The Programme for Government – Our Shared Future 2020 (hereafter referred to as the Programme for Government) (Government of Ireland 2020) sets out the Government's plan for the next five years. It sets out to, '*Develop and implement existing strategies for our cities such as 'the greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy'.* The key objectives of the programme include:

- '*Address pinch points for buses and expand priority signaling for buses and real time information;* and
- *Give greater priority to bus services by expanding quality bus corridors and consider the introduction of Bus Rapid Transport services.'*

Specifically, in regard to BusConnects, the Programme for Government states it will also *'prioritise plans for the delivery of…BusConnects in Dublin'.*

3.5.10.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The BusConnects Programme, with the Proposed Scheme forming an important part, continues to be identified as a key project to help deliver Ireland's long-term growth aspirations and climate commitments. The Proposed Scheme is to be delivered as part of the Programme for Government (Government of Ireland 2020) and fully complies with the key objectives of same.

3.5.11 Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2016 – 2021

The Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform 2015) (hereafter referred to as the Capital Plan) was published by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in September 2015. It presented the findings of a Government-wide review of infrastructure and capital investment policy and outlined the Government's commitment to ensuring that the country's stock of infrastructure is capable of facilitating economic growth.

This report identifies the need to improve public transport facilities noting:

> *'It is therefore essential that road, rail and public transport networks are developed and maintained to the standard required to ensure the safe and efficient movement of people and freight. In addition, getting people out of cars and onto public transport has a key role to play in reducing Ireland's carbon emissions, by providing a viable, less polluting alternative to car and road transport for many journeys.'*

The transport capital allocation in this Capital Plan is largely framed by the recommendations and priorities set out in the 2015 DTTAS Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport (DTTAS 2015), which centre on:

- Maintaining and renewing the strategically important elements of the existing land transport system;
- Addressing urban congestion; and
- Maximising the contribution of land transport networks to our national development.

The Capital Plan incorporates the following key objectives relevant to this Proposed Scheme:

- €3.6 billion of Public Transport Investment including further upgrading of Quality Bus Corridors.

3.5.11.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is supported by these recommendations, priorities and objectives as set out in the Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport (DTTAS 2015), and the Capital Plan. The Proposed Scheme is a significant investment in the improvement of public transport facilities including bus, cycle and pedestrian network enhancements and extensions.

3.5.12 The Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018 – 2020

The UN's 2030 Agenda aims to deliver a more sustainable, prosperous, and peaceful future for the entire world. The Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018 - 2020 (DCCAE 2018) is in direct response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provides a whole-of-government approach to implement the 17 SDGs.

The Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan also sets out 19 specific actions to implement over the duration of this first SDG National Implementation Plan. Goals 9 and 11 are particularly relevant to the Proposed Scheme. These are set out in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Sustainable Development Goals and Targets aligned with the Proposed Scheme

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	
Target 9.1	Develop quality, reliable, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human wellbeing, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.
Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable	
Target 11.2	By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

3.5.12.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme supports the goals and targets set out in the Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan as it provides infrastructure that will support sustainable transport and will improve the safety of road users through the segregation of road vehicles and active travel modes.

3.5.13 Investing in Our Transport Future – Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport 2015

Investing in Our Transport Future – Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport (DTTAS 2015) (hereafter referred to as SIFLT) sets out the priorities to guide the allocation of future investment to develop and manage Irelands transport network. It establishes:

- *'High level priorities for future investment in land transport; and*
- *Key principles, reflective of those priorities, to which transport investment proposals will be required to adhere'.*

Addressing urban congestion and maximising the contribution of land transport networks to our national development are key priorities of the SIFLT Measures, including:

- *'Improved and expanded public transport capacity';*
- *'Improved and expanded walking and cycling infrastructure'*; and
- '*Support identified national and regional spatial planning priorities'*.

The key principles for land transport investment proposals are:

- *'The foremost priority for land transport funding should be the maintenance and renewal of identified strategically important elements of the existing land transport system, so as to protect earlier investment and maintain essential functioning';*
- *'The second key priority for future investment involves measures to address current and future urban congestion including, in particular, improved public transport and additional transport capacity, better and additional walking and cycling infrastructure, improving efficiency and increased use of Intelligent Transport Systems';* and
- *'To receive funding, transport projects must be implemented in conjunction with the implementation of supportive national and regional spatial planning policies, along with other demand management measures where appropriate'.*

The SIFLT states that the overall outcomes of transport investment, as governed by these principles, should maintain and improve the quality of life of citizens and be consistent with environmental, climate and biodiversity objectives, imperatives and obligations, including those arising from the EU Habitats Directive'.

3.5.13.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is supported by the 'priorities' set out by the SIFLT (DTTAS 2015) as the infrastructure will support the improvement and expansion of public transport capacity and provide significantly improved facilities for active travel. The Proposed Scheme will improve the efficiency of public transport and encourage mode shift through delivering journey time savings and reliability on the corridor.

3.6 Regional Policy

3.6.1 Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 – 2035

The NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 - 2035 (hereafter referred to as the GDA Transport Strategy) (NTA 2016) has been prepared in accordance with Section 12 of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 (as amended) and was approved in April 2016 by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport. The GDA Transport Strategy is an essential component for the orderly development of the GDA over the next 20 years. The purpose and primary objective of the GDA Transport 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 GDA Transport Strategy sets out the necessary transport provisions, for the period up to 2035, to achieve the above objective for the region.

As part of the GDA Transport Strategy the Core Bus Network is to be developed to achieve a continuous priority for bus movement on sections of the Core Bus Network within the Metropolitan area. This is to be achieved through enhanced bus lane provisions and the removal of delays along the routes to enable the bus to provide a faster mode of transport than the private car along these routes.

The GDA Transport Strategy highlights Core Radial Bus Networks under the heading '*Bus Infrastructure'* and sets out that:

> '*In order to ensure an efficient, reliable, and effective bus system, it is intended, as part of the Strategy, to develop the Core Bus Network to achieve, as far as practicable, continuous priority for bus movement on the portions of the Core Bus Network within the Metropolitan Area. This will mean enhanced bus lane provision on these corridors, removing current delays on the bus network in the relevant locations and enabling the bus to provide a faster alternative to car traffic along these routes, making bus transport a more attractive alternative for road users. It will also make the overall bus system more efficient, as faster bus journeys means that more people can be moved with the same level of vehicle and driver resources*.'

Section 5.6 of the GDA Transport Strategy sets out cycle policy in the GDA. The routes identified in the GDA Transport Strategy are those established in the Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan.

The provisions of the GDA Transport Strategy (including bus-based transport modes) were evaluated for potential significant effects, and measures integrated into the Strategy on foot of SEA recommendations in order to ensure that potential adverse effects were mitigated.

The Draft GDA Transport Strategy 2022- 2042 has now been published for consultation and this is reviewed in section 3.6.3 below.

3.6.1.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The need for the Proposed Scheme is supported by the GDA Transport Strategy as it will provide infrastructure required to facilitate *'a continuous priority for bus movement on sections of the Core Bus Network within the Metropolitan area*.' The Proposed Scheme will realise the objectives of the GDA Transport Strategy by providing the enhanced bus lanes, removing 'bottlenecks' and making the bus a faster option to commuters than car-based transport.

3.6.2 GDA Transport Strategy Integrated Implementation Plan 2019 - 2024

The NTA is required to prepare a series of 'Integrated Implementation Plans' (for the GDA Transport Strategy) (NTA 2016) under Section 13(1) of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 (as amended). These plans set out the transport planning investment priorities over a six-year period. The most recent Integrated Implementation Plan 2019 – 2024 (hereafter referred to as the 2019 Implementation Plan) (NTA 2019) was published in December 2019. An SEA and AA was prepared as part of the Implementation Plan process.

An Integrated Implementation Plan is required to comprise '*inter alia*';

- An infrastructure investment programme, identifying the key objectives and outputs to be pursued by the Authority over the period of the Plan; and
- The actions to be taken by the Authority to ensure the effective integration of public transport infrastructure over the period of the Plan.

The 2019 Implementation Plan was prepared to be aligned with the Government's review on capital spending. As such, the 2019 Implementation Plan identifies the key objectives and outputs to be followed by the NTA within the

corresponding period of the NDP (Government of Ireland 2018a) and the actions to be taken to ensure effective integration of public transport infrastructure. The key objectives of the 2019 Implementation Plan include to:

- '*Provide a well-designed and effective bus network that optimises routes and services to meet passenger demand;*
- *Ensure the efficient use of available resources in delivering bus services;*
- *Seek to reduce overall journey times and improve the reliability of bus services;*
- *Improve service patterns by enhancing services in off-peak periods, in the evenings, and at weekends. 24-hour bus services will be introduced on key cross-city corridors in Dublin;*
- *Develop greater interchange with other transport modes;'*
- *'Provide an attractive, comfortable, clean, accessible and modern bus fleet'*;
- *'Improve the environmental performance of the bus fleet'*; and
- *'Building a network of new bus corridors on the busiest bus routes to make bus journeys faster, predictable, and reliable'.*

The Implementation Plan also sets out under the heading *'Strategic Framework for Investment in Land Transport'* that:

> *'it is not just the bus system that will be transformed under BusConnects Dublin. The same corridors that are important for buses are also the main cycling routes in the city. BusConnects Dublin will see safe cycling facilities provided along each corridor, segregated as far as practicable from other traffic. The cycling infrastructure delivered under this programme will form the core of the region's cycling network and deliver a radical step change in cycling facilities.'*

The background to the 2019 Implementation Plan was Ireland's continuing emergence from the severe economic recession experienced for a period from 2008 onwards. The 2019 Implementation Plan acknowledged the strong growth in the economy in the years leading up to 2019, with more and more people at work and the number of visitors to the country at record levels. However, alongside the recovery, there were growing challenges identified, with traffic and transport among the key issues facing the Dublin region.

Congestion was identified in the 2019 Implementation Plan as being one of the most significant challenges facing the State. To plan for significant population growth, and associated economic, social, cultural and recreational activity, it is necessary to provide a transport system that not only addresses this challenge but supports and fosters further sustainable development.

The 2019 Implementation Plan recognised the significance of the need for action to reduce the use of fossil fuels and diminish the generation of greenhouse gases. Transport, as a major producer of greenhouse gases, requires transformation to contribute to the achievement of these objectives.

The NTA therefore seeks to ensure primacy for transport options which provide for unit reductions in carbon emissions. This can most effectively be done by improving public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure that can lead to reduced car use dependence in circumstances where alternative options are available.

The overall findings of the SEA of the plan, concluded that the 2019 Implementation Plan will facilitate a mode shift away from the private car to public transport, walking and cycling and associated positive effects.

It is an objective of the 2019 Implementation Plan to build on the work already achieved in the GDA with respect to catering for greater bus movement. The intention set out in the 2019 Implementation Plan is to progress the development of the Core Bus Corridors (the CBC Infrastructure Works) to achieve, as far as practicable, continuous priority for bus movement.

3.6.2.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is supported by the 2019 Implementation Plan's stated aim to *'overhaul the current bus system in the Dublin region by* (inter alia*):*

- *'Building a network of new bus corridors on the busiest bus routes to make bus journeys faster, predictable, and reliable'.*

The Proposed Scheme will provide the infrastructure necessary to deliver the transformational change of the current bus network required to meet objectives such as, greater efficiency, reduction in journey times and improve environmental performance. The Proposed Scheme design has been developed by NTA and takes account of policy objectives in the Implementation Plan.

3.6.3 Draft Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2022 - 2042

The Draft NTA Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042 (NTA 2021a) (hereafter described as the Draft GDATS) was published for consultation on the 9 November 2021 and has been prepared in accordance with Section 12 of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 (as amended). It will replace the previous Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016-2035. Under the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008, the NTA must review its Transport Strategy every six years. The Draft GDATS is considered to be an essential component for the orderly development of the GDA for the next 20 years. The overall aim of the strategy is '*To provide a sustainable, accessible and effective transport system for the Greater Dublin Area which meets the region's climate change requirements, serves the needs of urban and rural communities, and supports economic growth'.* A key focus of the strategy is to enable increased use of other transport modes to meet environmental, economic and social objectives related to emissions, congestion and car dependency.

The Transport Objective is: *'To deliver a high quality, equitable and accessible transport system, which caters for the needs of all members of society.'*

The Draft GDATS sets out the necessary transport provision, for the period up to 2042, to achieve the above objective for the region.

The Draft GDATS considers that due to the dispersed nature of development in the GDA the bus system represents the most suitable public transport solution across much of the region.

The Draft GDATS comments that the NTA in recent years have introduced a '*step change in the quality of the overall bus system*' through different programmes, one of which being BusConnects. The main objective of these programmes is increasing the share of people using public transport. The Draft GDATS also comments that the NTA intends to have submitted applications to An Bord Pleanála for the 12 Core Bus Corridor Schemes in the early months of 2022. The Draft GDATS further comments:

> *'Subject to obtaining statutory planning approvals, the NTA will proceed to construct these key bus arteries within the Dublin area. They will facilitate faster and more reliable bus journeys on the busiest bus corridors in the Dublin region, making the overall bus system more convenient and useful for more people. In addition, key elements of the Cycling Network Plan for the GDA will be delivered as part of these corridors.'*

The revised GDA Cycle Network forms part of the Draft GDATS, (See Section 3.6.6 below).

The Draft GDATS aims to:

- Increase Cycle Mode Share to 12% by 2042;
- Provide 322km of Primary Cycle network,
- Include 1,060km of Secondary Cycle Network; and
- Promote an additional 450,000 daily cycling trips.

The Draft GDATS sets out a range of measures and those of relevance to the Proposed Scheme are outlined in Table 3.7 below.

Table 3.7: Draft GDA Transport Strategy 2022 – 2042 Measures

Measure Number	Measure	How the Proposed Scheme meets the Measure
PLAN12 - Urban Design in Major Infrastructure Projects	*'The NTA will incorporate a high standard of urban design and placemaking into the planning and design of all major public transport infrastructure schemes and will consider how greater biodiversity could be fostered.'*	The overall landscape and public realm design strategy for the Proposed Scheme aims to create attractive, consistent, functional and accessible places for people alongside the core bus and cycle facilities. In addition, opportunities have been sought to enhance the public realm and landscape, where possible.
Measure PLAN13 – Urban Design in Walking and Cycling Projects	*'In the design, planning and prioritisation of walking and cycling schemes, the NTA and the local authorities will ensure the incorporation of urban design and placemaking considerations.'*	The overall landscape and public realm design strategy for the Proposed Scheme aims to create attractive, consistent, functional and accessible places for people alongside the core bus and cycle facilities Along the route of the Proposed Scheme, improvements and enhancements will be made to footpaths, walkways, and pedestrian crossings. Additional landscaping and outdoor amenities will be provided, including junction reconfiguration, reinforcement of existing vegetation areas and the establishment of new public realm and landscape opportunity areas.
Measure PLAN14 – Reallocation of Road Space	*'The NTA, in conjunction with the local authorities, will seek the reallocation of road space in Dublin City Centre, Metropolitan towns and villages, and towns and villages across the GDA to prioritise walking, cycling and public transport use and prioritise the placemaking functions of the urban street network.'*	The Proposed Scheme will support integrated sustainable transport usage through road space reallocation in support of infrastructure improvements for active travel (both walking and cycling), and the provision of enhanced bus priority measures for existing (both public and private) and all future services who will use the corridor.
MEASURE PLAN16 – The Road User Hierarchy	*'The NTA, in the decision-making process around the design, planning and funding of transport schemes in the GDA, will be guided by the priority afforded to each mode in the Road User Hierarchy as set out in the Transport Strategy.'*	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the measure as it will promote modal shift from private car to a more sustainable forms of transport. It enhances active travel networks and thus encourages the use of these modes reducing reliance on the private car
Measure INT1 – Integration of all Modes in Transport Schemes	*'It is the intention of the NTA, in the design and planning of transport schemes, to ensure that the needs of all transport modes are considered, as appropriate, based on the objectives of the scheme and on the road user hierarchy.'*	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the measure as it will service the current and future transport needs of Dublin. It enhances active travel networks and thus encourages the use of these modes reducing reliance on the private car.
Measure INT5 - Interchange	*'It is the intention of the NTA, in conjunction with local authorities and transport operators, to ensure that passengers wishing to change between services on the transport network are provided with as safe, convenient and seamless interchange experience.'*	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the measure as it will enhance the interchange between the various modes of public transport operating in the city and wider metropolitan area, both now and in the future. The design has been developed with this in mind and, in so far as possible, is seeking to provide for improved existing or new interchange opportunities with other transport services.
Measure INT14 – Walking and Cycling at Night	*'The NTA and local authorities will ensure that personal security and safety for those travelling at night by walking and cycling are carefully considered in the design process for new schemes and in retrofitting existing schemes where such issues arise.'*	The Proposed Scheme has considered security and safety in its design and it provides lighting as appropriate to the end use. The Proposed Scheme will include upgrades to existing public lighting.

Measure Number	Measure	How the Proposed Scheme meets the Measure
Measure INT15 – Accessible Infrastructure	*'During the period of the Transport Strategy, the NTA will ensure that public transport infrastructure, and facilities in the GDA are made accessible for all users.'*	The Proposed Scheme has been designed to include: More bus shelters, seating, accessible footways and bus infrastructure to make the bus transit experience more accessible for users of all abilities and ages. Provision and enhancement of cycling facilities along the Proposed Scheme, creating routes that are safe, accessible and attractive for people of all abilities and ages.
Measure WALK3 – Improved Junctions	*'The NTA, in conjunction with local authorities, will implement junction improvements across the GDA as follows:* *To enhance safety at junctions, a programme of "narrowing" junctions by reducing kerb-line radii will be undertaken as a means of managing vehicular speeds; and* *To enhance movement by pedestrians and cyclists, a programme of removal of slip lanes will be undertaken at appropriate locations, together with consideration of junction signaling changes to better balance the use of the junction between motorised and vulnerable modes.'*	The Proposed Scheme provides infrastructure that will support sustainable transport and will improve the safety of road users through junction improvement and the segregation of road vehicles and active travel modes. The design of each junction has given priority to pedestrian, cycle and bus movements. Junctions have been designed to ensure a high level of comfort and priority for sustainable modes of travel e.g. walking, cycling and public transport by prioritising the space and time allocated to these modes within the operation of a junction.
Measure WALK8 – Persons with Disabilities	*'Local authorities in the GDA and the NTA will take full account of people with disabilities and pedestrians with mobility impairments when delivering transport schemes which affect the pedestrian environment; and will implement improvements to existing facilities where appropriate and encourage the enforcement of the Road Traffic Laws in this regard.'*	An audit of the existing infrastructures provided for people with disabilities along the Proposed Scheme was carried out to identify any existing issues for mobility-impaired persons. This audit has informed the design of the Proposed Scheme. The audit assessed footpaths, crossings / junctions, bus stops, parking and access for users with disabilities. Traffic signal layout design included accessibility considerations for the mobility impaired. Potential areas of conflict with other non-motorised users were considered to provide suitable separation where possible. It has been designed to include: • More bus shelters, seating, accessible footways and bus infrastructure to make the bus transit experience more accessible for users of all abilities and ages; and • Provision and enhancement of cycling facilities along the Proposed Scheme, creating routes that are safe, accessible and attractive for people of all abilities and ages.
Measure CYC1 – GDA Cycle Network	*'It is the intention of the NTA and the local authorities to deliver a safe, comprehensive, attractive and legible cycle network in accordance with the updated Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network.'*	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the measure as it provides segregated cycling facilities along the route of the Proposed Scheme in both directions. The full route accords with Primary and Secondary routes identified in the updated GDA Cycle Network. These high-quality cycle track will generally be 2.0 m in width offering a high level of service and help to reduce dependency on private car use for short journeys

Measure Number	Measure	How the Proposed Scheme meets the Measure
Measure PT2 – Climate Proofing New Public Transport Infrastructure	*'The NTA will ensure that all new public transport infrastructure is proofed against the potential impacts arising from climate change.'*	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the measure as it comprises transport infrastructure that supports the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service.
Measure BUS1 – Core Bus Corridor Programme	*'Subject to receipt of statutory consents, it is the intention of the NTA to implement the 12 Core Bus Corridors as set out in the BusConnects Dublin programme.'*	The Proposed Scheme is part of the BusConnects programme to enhance bus services and active travel options in the Greater Dublin Area.
Measure BUS10 – New Bus Stops and Shelters	*'It is the intention of the NTA to continue to roll-out the program of bus stop and shelter provision, and to monitor potential for further expansion and upgrade during the lifetime of the strategy.'*	The Proposed Scheme includes additional bus shelters, seating, accessible footways and bus infrastructure to make the bus transit experience more accessible for users.
Measure TM2 – Management of Urban Centres	*'The NTA and relevant local authorities, in collaboration, will deliver the public transport, cycling and walking networks, and public realm that are required to serve local centres, and to facilitate a post-Covid recovery based on sustainable transport.'*	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the measure as it will support sustainable transport modes through infrastructure improvements for active travel (both walking and cycling). The Proposed Scheme will bring greater accessibility to the city centre and other strategic areas for people to avail of housing, jobs, amenities and services. It aims to mitigate any adverse effects that the proposals may have on the streets, spaces, local areas and landscape through the use of appropriate design responses. In addition, opportunities have been sought to enhance the public realm and landscape design where possible.

3.6.3.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Draft GDA Transport Strategy is currently undergoing consultation and is subject to change. Nonetheless, the Draft Strategy clearly puts the delivery of Dublin BusConnects, of which the Proposed Scheme is part, at the heart of its objectives. There is added emphasis on the delivery of public transport, active travel and enhanced accessibility to sustainable modes of transport, all of which the Proposed Scheme will help to deliver.

3.6.4 Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019 – 2031

The principal purpose of the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019 – 2031 (hereafter referred to as RSES) (EMRA 2019a) is to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Region. An SEA and AA were carried out prior to the adoption of the strategy.

The RSES represents the Regional tier for planning policy and provides a vision: a spatial plan and investment framework to shape future development of the Eastern and Midland Region to the year 2031. There are also Sub-Regional planning functions: Strategic Planning Areas. The RSES was formally adopted in June 2019 by EMRA and replaces the previous Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 – 2022 (Regional Planning Guidelines Office 2010).

The RSES provides key environmental, economic, and social principles for the region. These principles are:

- Healthy Placemaking – to create healthy and attractive places to live, work and study;

- Climate Action – to enhance climate resilience and accelerate a transition to a low carbon economy; and
- Economic Opportunity – to create the right conditions and opportunities for the region to realise sustained economic growth and employment that ensures good living standards for all.

The RSES develops Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) that are aligned to the principles above. These are aligned to the United Nations SDGs (UN 2015), EU thematic objectives (EU 2014) and the NPF (Government of Ireland 2018b).

The RSOs relevant to the Proposed Scheme and the principles to which each is aligned, are:

- Number 2 - Compact Growth and Urban Regeneration - 'Healthy Placemaking';
- Number 4 - Healthy Communities - 'Healthy Placemaking';
- Number 6 - Integrated Transport and Land Use - 'Climate Change';
- Number 9 - Support the Transition to Low Carbon and Clean Energy - 'Climate Change';
- Number 14 - Global City Region - 'Economic Opportunity'; and
- Number 15 – Enhanced Strategic Connectivity - 'Economic Opportunity'.

In the RSES, the policy responses are known as Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs). Those RPOs that relate to the Proposed Scheme are as follows:

> *'RPO4.2: 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'*

The Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (hereafter referred to as the Dublin MASP) (EMRA 2019b) is contained within the RSES and identifies the strategic planning and investment framework to enable growth. The Dublin MASP is aligned with the RSOs in the RSES to support integrated transport and land use. The vision for the MASP is as follows:

> *'Over the years to 2031 and with a 2040 horizon, the Dublin metropolitan area will build on our strengths to become a smart, climate resilient and global city region, expanding access to social and economic opportunities and improved housing choice, travel options and quality of life for people who live, work, study in or visit the metropolitan area'.*

To achieve the vision, the Dublin MASP sets Guiding Principles. Those most relevant to the Proposed Scheme are set out below.

> *Compact sustainable growth and accelerated housing delivery – To promote sustainable consolidated growth of the Metropolitan Area, including brownfield and infill development, to achieve a target to 50% of all new homes within or contiguous to the built-up area of Dublin City and suburbs, and at least 30% in other settlements. To support a steady supply of sites and to accelerate housing supply, in order to achieve higher densities in urban built up areas, supported by improved services and public transport.*
>
> *Integrated Transport and Land use – To focus growth along existing and proposed high quality public transport corridors and nodes on the expanding public transport network and to support the delivery and integration of '**BusConnects**', DART expansion and LUAS extension programmes, and Metro Link, while maintaining the capacity and safety of strategic transport networks* (emphasis added).
>
> *Increased employment density in the right places – To plan for increased employment densities within Dublin City and suburbs and at other sustainable locations near high quality public transport nodes, near third level institutes and existing employment hubs, and to relocate less intensive employment uses outside the M50 ring and existing built-up areas.*

Alignment of growth with enabling infrastructure – To promote quality infrastructure provision and capacity improvement, in tandem with new development and aligned with national projects and improvements in water and wastewater, sustainable energy, waste management and resource efficiency.

Metropolitan Scale Amenities – To enhance provision of regional parks and strategic Green Infrastructure, to develop an integrated network of metropolitan scale amenities, and to develop greenways/blueways along the canals, rivers and coast, as part of the implementation of the National Transport Authority's Cycle Network Plan for the Greater Dublin Area.'

A number of RPOs are relevant to the Proposed Scheme:

'RPO 5.2: Support the delivery of key sustainable transport projects including Metrolink, DART and LUAS expansion programmes, BusConnects and the Greater Dublin Metropolitan Cycle Network and ensure that future development maximises the efficiency and protects the strategic capacity of the metropolitan area transport network, existing and planned'.

'RPO 5.3: Future development in the Dublin Metropolitan Area shall be planned and designed in a manner that facilitates sustainable travel patterns, with a particular focus on increasing the share of active modes (walking and cycling) and public transport use and creating a safe attractive street environment for pedestrians and cyclists.'

'RPO 5.6: The development of future employment lands in the Dublin Metropolitan Area shall follow a sequential approach, with a focus on the re-intensification of employment lands within the M50 and at selected strategic development areas and provision of appropriate employment densities in tandem with the provision of high-quality public transport corridors.'

'RPO 5.8: Support the promotion and development of greenway infrastructure and facilities in the Dublin metropolitan area and to support the expansion and connections between key strategic cycle routes and greenways as set out in the NTA Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan.

The Dublin MASP sets out a list of key transport infrastructure investments in the metropolitan area as supported by National policy.

'RPO 8.7: To promote the use of mobility management and travel plans to bring about behaviour change and more sustainable transport use'.

'RPO 8.9: The RSES supports delivery of the bus projects set out in Table 8.3 subject to the outcome of appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process'.

The bus projects include:

- *'Core Bus Corridors comprising 16 radial routes and 3 orbital routes in Dublin'*;
- '*Regional Bus Corridors connecting the major regional settlements to Dublin'*; and
- '*Improvements to bus waiting facilities.*'

The cycling objectives include:

- *'Delivery of the cycle network set out in the NTA Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan inclusive of key commuter routes and urban greenways on the canal, river and coastal corridors'*;
- *'Investment priorities for cycleways feasibility and route selection studies for cycleways shall identify and subsequently avoid high sensitivity feeding or nesting points for birds and other sensitive fauna'*; and
- *'Delivery of the National Cycle Plan within the Region inclusive of the Greenway and Blueway projects*.'

3.6.4.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is supported by the RSES. BusConnects (of which the Proposed Scheme is a part) is identified as a key infrastructure project to deliver on the principles of Healthy Placemaking, Climate Action and Economic Opportunity, which will support the regional growth strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region including the Dublin MASP area. The Proposed Scheme will support continued improved integration of transport with land use planning. The delivery of improved high-capacity Core Bus Corridors will enable and support the delivery of both residential and economic development opportunities, facilitating the sustainable growth of Dublin City and its metropolitan area. The dedicated bus lanes proposed will significantly increase bus travel speeds and reliability while the cycle lane infrastructure will promote modal shift from private car to a more sustainable forms of transport. The RSES not only seeks an improved and enhanced bus network but also places cycling at the core of its transport objectives.

3.6.5 Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan (GDACNP) 2013

The NTA's GDACNP 2013 (NTA 2013) is a Regional level plan for an integrated cycle network across the seven Local Authorities comprising the GDA. It includes an Urban Network, Inter-Urban Network, and a Green Route Network for the GDA. A SEA and AA were carried out as part of the GDACNP. The context for the GDACNP is given as '*The Irish Government, the NTA and various State Agencies are committed to ensuring that cycling as a transport mode is supported, enhanced and exploited, in order to achieve strategic objectives and reach national goals*.'

The following are the networks identified in the GDACNP:

- '*The Urban Cycle Network at the Primary, Secondary and Feeder Level*':
  - '*Primary corridors are the main cycle arteries that cross urban area and carry most of the traffic;*
  - *Secondary corridors links between the principal cycle routes and local zones; and*
  - *Feeder corridors are connections from zones to the network levels above and / or cycle routes within local zones.*'
- '*The Inter-Urban Cycle Network linking the relevant sections of the Urban Network and including the elements of the National Cycle Network within the GDA. It shall also include linkages to key transport locations outside of urban areas such as airports and port'*; and
- '*The Green Route Network being cycle routes developed predominately for tourist, recreational and leisure purposes*.'

There are two primary cycle routes (Cycle Route 13 and Cycle Route 13A) identified running along the majority of the Proposed Scheme, as well as Secondary Cycle Routes on Nutley Lane (13E) and Fitzwilliam Street (C7). The Proposed Scheme also intersects with two other primary cycle routes, namely SO1 and SO3 (the Grand Canal Greenway and the Dodder Greenway respectively) as well as a number of secondary cycle routes (including Cycle Routes SO2, SO6, 13E, SO4 9B). In addition, a proposed greenway (N5 East Coast Trail) is identified running parallel to a section of the corridor.

3.6.5.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is supported by the GDACNP as it will provide infrastructure that will support and enhance cycling as a transport mode, including the delivery of infrastructure for specific routes identified as part of the cycle network plan.

3.6.6 Draft Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan 2021

The Draft GDA Cycle Network Plan (NTA 2021b) is a Regional level plan for an integrated cycle network across the GDA. The Draft Plan is an update to the 2013 GDA Cycle Network Plan. The 2013 Plan sought to identify the links needed to provide for an adequate cycling network. The Draft Plan aims to strengthen access and local permeability and offer greater cycling connectivity between Dublin and GDA Towns.

The vision of the plan is set out, as follows:

'The Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network seeks to be an inclusive cycling environment that is safe for all cycling abilities and ages with strong functional and recreational connectivity between homes and key destinations'

The main goals of the Draft Plan are:

- *'To increase participation,*
- *Improve safety and accessibility,*
- *Improve connectivity; and*
- *Create a navigable and coherent network.'*

The following are the networks identified and classified in the Draft Plan:

- *'Primary Arterial - Main cycling arterials enabling high levels of utility movements among town centres and Dublin City in a radial manner;*
- *Primary Orbital - Main cycling arterials enabling high levels of utility movements orbitally among Dublin's suburban town centres;*
- *Secondary - Moderately trafficked cycling connections between local zones and other network classifications, and provides resilience to the Primary Networks;*
- *Greenway – Utility - Parkland, coastal or waterway links providing utility functions for commuting, education, community service access and onward transport connections;*
- *Greenway – Leisure - Parkland, coastal or waterway links providing recreational and leisure functions;*
- *Inter Urban - Routes which connect towns and urban centres over longer distances throughout the GDA; and*
- *Feeder - Localised cycling connections providing access among residential areas and local zones as well as providing access onto other classifications.'*

It outlines that projects that may interact / impact with the Draft Plan include BusConnects and comments, as follows:

'BusConnects Dublin is a 10-year programme to improve the quality, speed and reliability of bus service in the Dublin area. As part of its delivery 16 Core Bus Corridors (CBCs) are proposed, each with segregated cycle track and/or tracks. A limited number of quiet routes for cycling are proposed in parallel to some sections of the CBCs'.

3.6.6.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Draft Plan is subject to change, however, it demonstrates a further commitment by the NTA to provide an enhanced cycle network within the GDA. BusConnects Dublin, of which the Proposed Scheme forms part, will deliver the infrastructure necessary to expand and enhance the cycle network in line with the objectives of the Draft Plan.

3.7 Local Policy Context

The Proposed Scheme is located within two Local Authority areas; Dublin City Council (DCC) and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC). DLRCC encompasses the length of the Proposed Scheme from the Stradbrook Road to approximately the Rock Road and Trimleston Avenue Junction. The remainder of the Proposed Scheme is within DCC.

3.7.1 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022

The DLRCDP (DLRCDP 2016) sets out the primary goals and objectives that will help guide and shape the proper planning and continuing sustainable development of the County for the period 2016 to 2022. The vision is:

'To continue to facilitate appropriate levels of sustainable development predicated on the delivery of high quality community, employment and recreational environments - allied to the promotion of sustainable transportation and travel patterns - but all the while protecting Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown's unique landscape, natural heritage and physical fabric, to ensure the needs of those living and working in the County can thrive in a socially, economically, environmentally sustainable and equitable manner.'

The DLRCDP recognises the need to facilitate the provision and enhance public transport system via locally-focused policy documents and plans that feed into the DLRCDP. Those policies of particular relevance are set out in Table 3.8

Table 3.8: Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Development Plan 2016-2022

Transport Policies (relevant to Bus Improvements) Transport Policies	How the Proposed Scheme meets the Policy
'Policy CC1: It is Council policy to implement the 'National Climate Change Adaptation Framework - Building Resilience to Climate Change' by supporting the preparation of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as it makes public transport and active travel a key component to the solution as well as exploring opportunities for sustainable urban realm. The Proposed Scheme comprises transport infrastructure that supports the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service. The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objectives and actions set out in the National Adaptation Framework. Responses to risks from climate change on the integrity of the infrastructure has been considered both in the design and approach taken and the EIAR.
'Policy CC3: It is Council policy to support on an ongoing basis the Government Programme for the development of Energy Policy and Legislation through the implementation of supporting policies in this County Development Plan - particularly those promoting use of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, sustainable transport and land use planning	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as it is providing the infrastructure necessary to facilitate sustainable transport.
'Policy CC5: It is Council policy to support National and International initiatives for limiting emissions of greenhouse gases.	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as it will provide the infrastructure to facilitate a reduction in emissions from the transport sector. The Proposed Scheme comprises transport infrastructure that supports the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service. It will provide the infrastructure to deliver a modal shift from private car usage to sustainable transport. It will reduce bus journey times which will in turn reduce fuel usage and it will promote active travel through enhanced cycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

The DLRCDP sets out an extensive number of policies and objectives relevant to the Proposed Scheme, specifically in the Local Area Plans. These are set out in Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report.

3.7.1.1 Zoning Objectives

The DLRCDP (DLRCDP 2016) establishes a number of zoning objectives to regulate and manage future land uses within the council area. The DLRCDP zoning objectives are set out in Table 2.3 of Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report.

3.7.1.2 Local Area Plans (LAP) within the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Council Area Relevant to the Proposed Scheme

The following adopted LAP is relevant to the Proposed Scheme. The Blackrock LAP 2015-2021 was published in 2015 and in 2020, the life of the Plan was extended for a further five years to March 2025. The Proposed Scheme is within the LAP area from Stradbrook Road to Rock Road at the Phoenix Terrace Junction.

Table 3.9: Blackrock Local Area Plan 2015

LAP	Reference / Section	Objective	Proposed Scheme Response
Blackrock LAP 2015	4.1 Transport Network Strategy	*Policy BK12 It is Council Policy to promote the principles of sustainable travel both to-and-from and within the Blackrock Local Area Plan Boundary.*	The Proposed Scheme will facilitate this objective by providing an appropriate environment for users of public transport and for pedestrians and cyclists
Blackrock LAP 2015	4.2.2 Frascati Road	*RI4 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate improvements to the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and environment along and across Frascati Road in accordance with Maps 13A and 13B - 'Transport Network Strategy' and Section 3.6 'Public Realm Strategy'.*	The Proposed Scheme directly contributes to the delivery of improved cycle networks within the plan area.
Blackrock LAP 2015	4.4 Public Transport Interchange, Bus Terminus & Routes	*PT3 It is an objective of the Council, with the agreement of the NTA, to facilitate the provision of appropriate bus routes and stops in co-ordination with the overall Blackrock Transport Network Strategy (see Maps 13A and 13B - Transport Network Strategy).*	The Proposed Scheme will facilitate this objective.

3.7.1.3 Proposed Scheme Response

Within the Blackrock LAP, the transport objectives of the DLRCDP are adopted at a local level. The recurring transport objectives in relation to the provision of an improved public transport network as well as the promotion of enhanced and expanded walking and cycling facilities will be facilitated by the Proposed Scheme.

3.7.2 Draft Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2022-2028

DLRCC has reviewed the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan (hereafter referred to as the DLRCDP) and prepared a new DLRCDP. At the time of writing, material alterations to the Draft Plan went on display for an 8 week period from 11th November 2021 to 17th January 2022. The Executive have prepared a Chief Executive's Report on all public submissions / observations received. The Elected Members will consider the proposed amendments to the Draft Plan not later than 6 weeks after receiving the Chief Executive's Report. The next steps will be for the Elected Members to make the plan with our without proposed amendments.

Policy Objective '*T5: Quality Bus Network/Bus Connects'* states:

> *'It is a Policy Objective to co-operate with the NTA and other relevant agencies to facilitate the implementation of the bus network measures as set out in the NTA's 'Greater Dublin Area Transport 2016-2035' and 'Draft Integrated Implementation Plan 2019-2024' and the BusConnects Programme, and to extend the bus network to other areas where appropriate subject to design, environmental assessment, public consultation, approval, finance and resources.'*

It is clear that BusConnects is an important consideration, and its development is to be considered as part of the shaping of emerging policy for DLRCC. Key themes include the *'Avoid–Shift Improve'* approach which changes emphasis from moving cars to moving people. There are draft policy objectives in the Transport and Mobility Chapter which relate to integrated land use and transport policies, promoting modal change, promoting active travel and demand management and travel planning.

3.7.2.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The emerging DLRCDP 2022- 2028 is in draft and subject to change. However, it is clear that the BusConnects is an important consideration, and its development has helped to shape emerging DLRCDP policy. Key themes, such as promoting more environmentally friendly transport options are consistent with the aims and objectives of the Proposed Scheme, with policy objective T5 being titled: *'Quality Bus Network/BusConnects'*. The Proposed Scheme, through the provision of enhanced public transport infrastructure will help to improve accessibility to key destinations and promote walking, cycling and public transport options.

3.7.3 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Climate Change Action Plan

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown's (DLR) Climate Change Action Plan (DLR 2019) was adopted in 2019. A SEA, AA and NIS were produced as part of plan. The Climate Change Action Plan was a collaborative response to the impact climate change is having on the Dublin region. The DLR Climate Change Action Plan is unique to its functional area. It contains 123 actions that cover five key areas – Energy and Buildings, Transport, Flood Resilience, Nature Based Solutions and Resource Management (waste and water). There are four key targets:

1. *33% better energy use by the Council by 2020.*
2. *40% reduction in the Council's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.*
3. *To make Dublin a climate resilient region, by reducing the impacts of future (and current) climate change-related events.*
4. *To actively engage and inform citizens on climate change.*

DLR's Climate Change Action Plan has a focus on sustainable transport measures to reduce pollutants and to achieve modal shift from private car to public transport. One of the public transport actions (T14) is specifically related to the Proposed Scheme '*Expand bus network in the County'* and the indicator for this action is to *Work with NTA on BusConnects'.*

3.7.3.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme through the provision of enhanced public transport infrastructure will facilitate sustainable transport options that will help to achieve DLR's targets as set out in the Climate Action Plan.

3.7.4 Dublin City Development Plan 2016 - 2022

The DCDP (DCC 2016a) guides the future growth and development of the functional area of DCC. A SEA, AA and SFRA were carried out as part of the DCDP.

The vision of the DCDP is to champion compact city living, distinct character, a vibrant culture, and a diverse, smart, green, innovation-based economy. In the longer term (25 to 30 years), DCC aims to establish the City as one of Europe's most sustainable, dynamic, and resourceful city regions. The DCDP places sustainable transport as a core principle in the future development of the city.

> *'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.'* (Emphasis added.)

In 'Translating the Core Strategy into Development Plan Policies and Objectives', the core strategy has the following supports:

> *'Dublin City Council will work with the emerging strategy of the National Transport Authority and supplement it with supporting local improvements, particularly to the city centre environment through the implementation of the public realm strategy and locally focused objectives.'*

The DCDP recognises that increasing capacity on public transport including bus corridors is a means to promoting modal change and active travel.

Within the transport objectives of the DCDP, bus improvements are identified as projects to be supported. The key policies are set out in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10: Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022

Transport Policies (relevant to Bus Improvements) Transport Policies	How the Proposed Scheme meets the Policy
'MT3: To support and facilitate the development of an integrated public transport network with efficient interchange between transport mode, serving the existing and future needs of the city in association with relevant transport providers, agencies and stakeholders.'	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as it will enhance the interchange between the various modes of public transport operating in the city and wider metropolitan area, both now and in the future. The design has been developed with this in mind and, in so far as possible, is seeking to provide for improved existing or new interchange opportunities with other transport services. BusConnects Dublin Programme is the National Transport Authority's programme to greatly improve bus services in the Greater Dublin Area of which the Proposed Scheme is part.
'MT4: To promote and facilitate the provision of Metro, all heavy elements of the DART Expansion Programme including DART Underground (rail interconnector), the electrification of existing lines, the expansion of Luas, and improvements to the bus network in order to achieve strategic transport objectives.'	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as it will improve the Bus Network along the scheme corridor.
'MT04: To support improvements to the city's bus network and related services to encourage greater usage of public transport in accordance with the objectives of the NTA's strategy and the governments 'Smarter Travel' document.'	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as BusConnects Dublin Programme is the National Transport Authority's programme to greatly improve bus services in the Greater Dublin Area of which the Proposed Scheme is part. It will support the objectives in the NTA Smarter Travel document by providing improvements to pedestrian and cycle amenities along the proposed route, whilst also providing greater reliability for road-based public transport.
'MT05 (i): 'To facilitate and support measures proposed by transport agencies to enhance capacity on existing public transport lines and services, to provide/improve interchange facilities and provide new infrastructure.'	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as BusConnects Dublin Programme is the National Transport Authority's programme to greatly improve bus services in the Greater Dublin Area of which the Proposed Scheme is part.
'MT11: To continue to promote improved permeability for both cyclists and pedestrians in existing urban areas in line with the National Transport Authority's document 'Permeability – a best practice guide.'	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as Chapter 6 (Traffic & Transport) of the EIAR has considered permeability as part of the project.
MT20: To increase capacity of public transport, cycling and walking, where required, in order to achieve sustainable transportation policy objectives. Any works undertaken will include as an objective, enhanced provision for safety, public transportation, cyclists and pedestrians, and will be subject to environmental and conservation considerations.	The Proposed Scheme aligns with the objective as it will provide the infrastructure required to increase the capacity of bus, cycle and pedestrian networks along the Proposed Scheme corridor. Furthermore, the Proposed Scheme provides enhanced safety through the provision of segregated cycling facilities.

3.7.4.1 Zoning Objectives

The DCDP (DCC 2016a) establishes a number of zoning objectives to regulate and manage future land uses within the city council area. The DCC zoning objectives are being set out in Table 1.2 of Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report.

Within the DCDP, the following approach is taken by DCC to the uses permitted under each of the zoning objectives.

> *'14.4 Permissible and Non-Permissible Uses*

A permissible use is one which is generally acceptable in principle in the relevant zone, but which is subject to normal planning consideration, including policies and objectives outlined in the plan. An open for consideration use is one which may be permitted where the planning authority is satisfied that the proposed development would be compatible with the overall policies and objectives for the zone, would not have undesirable effects on the permitted uses, and would otherwise be consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.'

Appendix 21 of the DCDP defines a 'Public Service Installation' as follows:

'*A building, or part thereof, a roadway or land used for the provision of public services. Public services include all service installations necessary for electricity, gas, telephone, radio, telecommunications, television, data transmission, drainage, including wastewater treatment plants and other statutory undertakers: bring centres, green waste composting centres, public libraries, public lavatories, public telephone boxes, bus shelters, etc. but does not include incinerators/waste to energy plants. The offices of such undertakers and companies involved in service installations are not included in this definition.'*

As defined above, the secondary elements associated with the Proposed Scheme such as bus shelters, stops and real time information signage comes within the public service installation class.

3.7.4.1.1 Proposed Scheme Response

Given the nature of the Proposed Scheme the majority of the proposed works are within the public road and pavement area where there is no specific zoning objective. On lands subject to a zoning objective that are affected by works, in general, the Proposed Scheme will not significantly impact upon the principal use of the zoning objective. However, there may be instances of temporary or limited impacts upon a given zoning objective, such as in the case of temporary construction compound use on open space / amenity zoned lands. The Proposed Scheme complies with the DCDP in terms of the uses and works proposed in principle.

3.7.4.2 LAPs within the Dublin City Council Area Relevant to the Proposed Scheme

Whilst there are no adopted LAPs relevant to the Proposed Scheme, a number of Local Environment Improvement Plans (LEIP) have been prepared in conjunction with the relevant local area committees for a small defined area. The primary focus of these LEIPs is the improvement of the public realm and those parts of the urban neighbourhood which are for use by everyone, and includes streets, squares, parks, public buildings and accessible ground floor uses.

3.7.4.2.1 Proposed Scheme Response

At a strategic level, the overall landscape and public realm design strategy for the route aims to create attractive, consistent, functional and accessible places for people alongside the bus and cycle facilities. It aims to mitigate any adverse effects that the proposals may have on the streets, spaces, local areas and landscape through the use of appropriate design responses. In addition, opportunities have been sought to enhance the public realm and landscape design where possible and the LEIPs aim to target those areas in need of revitalisation.

3.7.4.3 The Heart of Dublin – City Centre Public Realm Masterplan 2016

The Heart of Dublin – City Centre Public Realm Masterplan (DCC 2016b) for Dublin City Centre was published by DCC in 2016. The overall vision is one of a pedestrian friendly core within the City Centre, so that the city can be easy, comfortable, and enjoyable to move within, the strategy will require the full completion of the planned public transport network.

3.7.4.3.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Landscape and Urban Realm proposals for the Proposed Scheme are based on an urban context and landscape character analysis of the route. The proposals have been informed through discussions with the NTA, local authorities and stakeholders. The overall landscape and public realm design strategy for the route aims to create attractive, consistent, functional and accessible places for people alongside the bus and cycle facilities. It aims to mitigate any adverse effects that the proposals may have on the streets, spaces, local areas and

landscape through the use of appropriate design responses. In addition, opportunities have been sought to enhance the public realm and landscape design where possible. In the context of the above, the Proposed Scheme is therefore compliant with the Heart of Dublin – City Centre Public Realm Masterplan (DCC 2016).

A comprehensive Tree Survey was conducted which analysed the quality and character of the existing trees along the Proposed Scheme. The information from the survey was used to inform the design proposals by seeking to avoid the higher quality trees and identifying measures which will be put in place during detailed design and construction to mitigate potential effects on the trees.

3.7.4.4 Your City Your Space – Dublin City Public Realm Strategy

The Your City Your Space – Dublin City Public Realm Strategy (DCC 2012) was published in 2012. It seeks to co-ordinate the approach to the public realm and to address its many existing challenges through a series of actions. The Your City Your Space – Dublin City Public Realm Strategy includes part of the Proposed Scheme from Baggot Street Upper and Waterloo Road Junction to Baggot Street Lower and Herbert Street Junction. Baggot Street Upper is designated as a Historic and Baggot Street Lower is designated as a Secondary Street within the Strategy. The design principles for these areas are set out in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11: City Centre Public Realm Strategy Design Policies

Public Spaces	Desired Character and Experience	Design Policies
Secondary Streets	These streets are important commercial and cultural streets in the city, as such the quality of the public realm is exemplary and of the highest international standard. The public realm is coherent and consistent in design, and constructed using the highest quality materials leading to a pleasant environment, easy to move around with a mix of activities which make the secondary streets a key attraction Nationally and Regionally	Develop comprehensive design briefs in order to achieve the required standards of quality in the public realm. Building proposals to enclosures must protect historic character and achieve high quality. Initiate comprehensive study to investigate possibilities of rebalancing vehicular and pedestrian movement in these areas.
Historic Approach Routes	These major routes are high quality routes for moving around and navigating the inner suburbs.	Building proposals to enclosures must protect historic character and achieve high quality, emphasising the importance of these streets in the neighbourhoods they pass through.

3.7.4.4.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Landscape and Urban Realm proposals for the Proposed Scheme are based on an urban context and landscape character analysis of the route. The proposals have been informed through discussions with the NTA, local authorities and stakeholders. The overall landscape and public realm design strategy for the route aims to create attractive, consistent, functional and accessible places for people alongside the bus and cycle facilities. It aims to mitigate any adverse effects that the proposals may have on the streets, spaces, local areas and landscape through the use of appropriate design responses. In addition, opportunities have been sought to enhance the public realm and landscape design where possible. In the context of the above, the Proposed Scheme is therefore compliant with the Your City Your Space – Dublin City Public Realm Strategy.

3.7.5 Draft Dublin City Development Plan 2022 – 2028

Stage 1 (Pre-Draft Stage) has been completed by DCC and they have now commenced Stage 2. On the 25 November 2021, DCC published the Draft Dublin City Development Plan 2022 – 2028 (DCC 2021). Public consultation was undertaken and concluded in February 2022. Whilst the Board is required to have regard to the Development Plan in force at the date upon which it makes its decision on the application for approval, as opposed to any draft Development Plan, there are a number of aspects of the current Draft Dublin City Development Plan 2022 - 2028 which are of note.

The draft Plan sets out in Chapter 8 (Sustainable Movement and Transport) under the heading 'Introduction' that '*Sustainable and efficient movement of people and goods is crucial for the success and vitality of the city.'* It continues *'The policy approach promotes the integration of land use and transportation, improved public transport and active travel infrastructure, an increased shift towards sustainable modes of travel and an increased focus on public realm and healthy placemaking, while tackling congestion and reducing transport related CO2 emissions*.'

Chapter 8 of the draft Plan further states under the heading 'Sustainable Modes' that '*Key strategic transport projects such as the proposed Metrolink, DART+, BusConnects programme and further LUAS Line and rail construction and extension will continue the expansion of an integrated public transport system for the Dublin region and have the potential for a transformative impact on travel modes over the coming years. Dublin City Council actively supports all measures being implemented or proposed by other transport agencies to enhance capacity on existing lines/services and provide new infrastructure.*'

Chapter 8 of the draft Plan also recognises under the heading 'Challenges' that '*Ireland is committed to cutting it greenhouse gas emissions by at least 51% by 2030 and to achieve this, a significant mode shift to active travel and public transport as well as decarbonised/low carbon mobility is required. Despite a positive shift in the travel behaviours of commuters, congestion and transport related CO2 emissions have continues to rise. One of the significant challenges is the need to enable and foster behavioural change to support continued mode shift to more sustainable options*.'

3.7.5.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 is set to be adopted in 2022. Although the draft Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028 is subject to change, it is clear that BusConnects is an important consideration, and its development is to be considered as part of the shaping of emerging policy for the city.

3.7.6 DCC Climate Change Action Plan 2019-2024

DCC's Climate Change Action Plan (DCC 2019) was adopted in May 2020. A SEA, AA and NIS were produced as part of the plan. It is a collaborative response to the impact that climate change is having on the Dublin Region, and their commitment to lead by example in tackling this global issue. DCC's Climate Change Action Plan is unique to its functional area and contains 219 actions that cover five key areas – Energy and Buildings, Transport, Flood Resilience, Nature-Based Solutions and Resource Management (waste and water). There are four key targets:

5. *33% better energy use by the Council by 2020.*
6. *40% reduction in the Council's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.*
7. *To make Dublin a climate resilient region, by reducing the impacts of future (and current) climate change-related events.*
8. *To actively engage and inform citizens on climate change.*

DCC's Climate Change Action Plan focuses on the sustainable transport measures to reduce pollutants and to achieve modal shift from private car to public transport. One of the Public Transport actions number T22 is specifically related to the Proposed Scheme; '*DCC to liaise with NTA on BusConnects programme'*

3.7.6.1 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme through the provision of enhanced public transport infrastructure will help to achieve DCC's targets as set out in the Climate Action Plan.

4. Proposed Scheme Sections

4.1 Introduction

This section is a review of the land affected by the Proposed Scheme. It summarises the land zonings, development plan map-based objectives and relevant LAPs / Masterplan objectives.

4.2 Stradbrook Road to Booterstown Avenue

4.2.1 Zoning

The lands are within the functional areas of DLRCC and are zoned in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan 2016 – 2022 (DLRCC 2016). For a detailed description of the zonings refer to Table 2.3 in Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report.

There is one Construction Compound in this section of the Proposed Scheme.

The application boundary that incorporates the Proposed Scheme works includes lands within the following zoning objectives outlined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Zoning Objectives Affected by the Proposed Scheme

Planning Authority	Zone	Objective
DLRCC	A	*To protect and/or improve residential amenity.*
	F	*To preserve and provide for open space with ancillary active recreational amenities.*
	MH	*To improve, encourage and facilitate the provision and expansion of medical hospital uses and services.*
	NC	*To protect, provide for and/or improve mixed-use neighbourhood centre facilities.*
	DC	*To protect, provide for and/or improve mixed-use district centre facilities*

As noted above, in general, the red line extends to zonings which are on existing pavement, roads or planting areas. The works being carried out at these locations will enhance the sites and will not prohibit the overall objective of the zoning from being achieved.

4.2.1.1 Map Based Objectives

Along this section of the Proposed Scheme there are a number of distinct map-based objectives from the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Development Plan (DLRCDP) (DLRCC 2016).

Table 4.2: Map Based Objectives

Map Based Objective	Description	Proposed Scheme Response
DLRCC		
Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)	*'The Planning and Development Act 2000 provides the legislative basis for the protection of such areas, known as Architectural Conservation Areas. Under this Act, an Architectural Conservation Area is defined as a place, area, group of structures or townscape, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical, social interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of Protected Structures. An Architectural Conservation Area may consist of groupings of buildings and streetscapes and associated open spaces. The protected status afforded by inclusion in an ACA only applies to the exteriors of structures and features of the streetscape. It does not prevent internal changes or rearrangements provided that these*	Along the Proposed Scheme all archaeological and cultural heritage issues will be resolved by mitigation during the pre-construction phase or construction phase, in advance of the operational phase. It aims to mitigate any adverse effects that the proposals may have on the streets, spaces, local areas and landscape through the use of appropriate design responses. In addition, opportunities have been sought to enhance the public realm and landscape design where possible.

Map Based Objective	Description	Proposed Scheme Response
DLRCC		
	changes do not impact on the external appearance of the structure.'	
Proposed Quality Bus-Bus Priority Route	*'As part of the continuing development of the Bus Network in the County, the Council will facilitate the provision of radial and orbital bus priority schemes to integrate with established high quality and frequency bus and rail routes'*	The Proposed Scheme through the provision of enhanced transport infrastructure will support the delivery of a sustainable transport system including bus and active travel modes.
Preserve views	*'Specific Views and Prospects for protection have been identified in the Plan and are considered when assessing planning applications'*	The Proposed Scheme primarily extends to areas which are on existing pavement, roads or planted areas. However, the existing retaining wall overlooking the pond in Blackrock Park which supports the road embankment will be replaced with a 90m long retaining wall with a maximum height of 4m. The new retaining wall follows the guidance of Technical Acceptance of Road Structures on Motorways and Other National Roads. In general the operation of the Proposed Scheme will have minimal effects following reinstatement of boundaries. Some loss of amenity area and loss of trees / vegetation will remain but will be reduced over time with replacement planting. The magnitude of change is low. While ensuring protection of retained characteristics, mitigation measures will not reduce effects.

4.2.1.2 Local Area Plans / Masterplans

A portion of this section of the Proposed Scheme (from Stradbrook Road to Rock Road at the Phoenix Terrace Junction) is within the Blackrock LAP.

Table 4.3: Blackrock Local Area Plan 2015

Section	Policy / Objective	Proposed Scheme Response
4.1	*Policy BK12 It is Council Policy to promote the principles of sustainable travel both to-and-from and within the Blackrock Local Area Plan Boundary.*	The Proposed Scheme will facilitate this objective. The Proposed Scheme aims to create attractive, consistent, functional and accessible places for people alongside the core bus and cycle facilities.
4.2.2	*RI4 It is an objective of the Council to facilitate improvements to the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and environment along and across Frascati Road in accordance with Maps 13A and 13B - 'Transport Network Strategy' and Section 3.6 'Public Realm Strategy'.*	The Proposed Scheme will facilitate this objective. The Proposed Scheme aims to create attractive, consistent, functional and accessible places for people alongside the core bus and cycle facilities.
4.4	*PT3 It is an objective of the Council, with the agreement of the NTA, to facilitate the provision of appropriate bus routes and stops in co-ordination with the overall Blackrock Transport Network Strategy (see Maps 13A and 13B - Transport Network Strategy).*	The Proposed Scheme is being promoted by the NTA; it will provide the infrastructure necessary to support a sustainable transport network in the area.

4.2.1.3 Planning History

Table 2.1 in Appendix 2 (Planning History) contains the extant planning permissions along this section of the Proposed Scheme.

4.2.1.4 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is consistent with the policies and objectives of the DLRCDP as set out above and in Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report. The Proposed Scheme is largely within the existing public road / pavement area and where required, in general, only small portions of those zoning objectives listed further above may be necessary to facilitate the proposed Scheme. However, the main use associated with the zoning objective will remain.

4.3 Booterstown Avenue to Nutley Lane

4.3.1 Zoning

The lands are within the functional areas of DLRCC and DCC and are zoned in the DLRCDP (DLRCC 2016) and DCDP (DCC 2016). (For a detailed description of the zonings refer to Table 1.2 and Table 2.3 in Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report.)

There are no construction compounds in this section of the Proposed Scheme.

The application boundary that incorporates the proposed works includes lands within the following zoning objectives outlined in Table 4.4

Table 4.4: Zoning Objectives Affected by the Proposed Scheme

Planning Authority	Zone	Objective
DLRCC	F	*To preserve and provide for open space with ancillary active recreational amenities.*
DCC	Zone Z1 - Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods	*To protect, provide and improve residential amenities.*
	Zone Z2 - Residential Neighbourhoods (Conservation Areas)	*To protect and/or improve the amenities of residential conservation areas.*
	Zone Z6 - Employment/Enterprise	*To provide for the creation and protection of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment creation.*
	Zone Z9 – Amenity / Open Space Lands / Green Network	*To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space and green networks.*
	Zone Z10 - Inner Suburban and Inner City Sustainable Mixed-Uses	*To consolidate and facilitate the development of inner city and inner suburban sites for mixed uses, with residential the predominant use in suburban locations, and office/retail/residential the predominant uses in inner city areas.*
	Zone Z15 - Institutional and Community	*To protect and provide for institutional and community uses.*

4.3.1.1 Map Based Objectives

Along this section of the Proposed Scheme there are a number of distinct map-based objectives from the DLRCCDP (DLRCC 2016) and DCDP (DCC 2016).

Table 4.5: Map Based Objectives

Map Based Objective	Description	Proposed Scheme Response
DLRCC		
Objective 139	*To recognise that infrastructure pertaining to the National Gas Grid runs through this site.*	The Proposed Scheme comprises lands within the existing public road and pedestrian pavement area where there is no specific zoning objective. The Proposed Scheme will not contravene delivery of this objective.
ACA	*'The Planning and Development Act 2000 provides the legislative basis for the protection of such areas, known as Architectural Conservation Areas. Under this Act, an Architectural Conservation Area is defined as a place, area, group of structures or townscape, that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical, social interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of Protected Structures. An Architectural Conservation Area may consist of groupings of buildings and streetscapes and associated open spaces. The protected status afforded by inclusion in an ACA only applies to the exteriors of structures and features of the streetscape. It does not prevent internal changes or rearrangements provided that these changes do not impact on the external appearance of the structure.'*	Along the Proposed Scheme all archaeological and cultural heritage issues will be resolved by mitigation during the pre-construction phase or construction phase, in advance of the operational phase. It aims to mitigate any adverse effects that the proposals may have on the streets, spaces, local areas and landscape through the use of appropriate design responses. In addition, opportunities have been sought to enhance the public realm and landscape design where possible.
Candidate ACA	*'It is Council policy to assess candidate Architectural Conservation Areas (cACA) to determine if they meet the requirements and criteria for re-designation as Architectural Conservation Areas.'*	No direct impacts are predicted but there is potential for damage of features during construction. The pre-mitigation Construction Phase impact is Indirect, Negative, Moderate and Temporary. Mitigation is the recording, protection and monitoring of the sensitive fabric prior to, and for the duration of the Construction Phase.
Strategic Road Reservation	*Sandyford to Coast*	The Proposed Scheme will not prejudice the development of the proposed road.
DCC		
Protected Structures (numbers 179, 181 and 183 Merrion Road and the residential properties at Estate Avenue.)	*The purpose of protection is to manage and control future changes to these structures so that they retain their significant historic character. Works which would materially affect the character of the protected structure require planning permission.*	Along the Proposed Scheme all archaeological and cultural heritage issues will be resolved by mitigation during the pre-construction phase or construction phase, in advance of the operational phase. It aims to mitigate any adverse effects that the proposals may have on the streets, spaces, local areas and landscape through the use of appropriate design responses. In addition, opportunities have been sought to enhance the public realm and landscape design where possible.

4.3.1.2 Local Area Plans / Masterplans

There are no Local Area Plans or Masterplans in this section of the Proposed Scheme.

4.3.1.3 Planning History

Table 2.1 in Appendix 2 (Planning History) contains the extant planning permissions along this section of the Proposed Scheme.

4.3.1.4 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is consistent with the policies and objectives of the DCDP as set out above and in Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report. The Proposed Scheme is largely within the existing public road / pavement area and where required, in general, only small portions of those zoning objectives listed above are necessary to facilitate the proposed Scheme. However, the main use associated with the zoning objective will remain.

4.4 Merrion Road (Nutley Lane to Ballsbridge)

4.4.1 Zoning

The lands are within the functional area of DCC and are zoned in the DCDP (DCC 2016). For a detailed description of the zonings refer to Table 1.2 in Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report.

There is no construction compound in this section of the Proposed Scheme.

The application boundary that incorporates the Proposed Scheme works includes lands within the following zoning objectives outlined in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Zoning Objectives Affected by the Proposed Scheme

Planning Authority	Zoning Objective	Objective
DCC	Zone Z1 - Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods	*To protect, provide and improve residential amenities*
	Zone Z2 - Residential Neighbourhoods (Conservation Areas)	*To protect and/or improve the amenities of residential conservation areas.*
	Zone Z4 - District Centres (incorporating Key District Centres)	*To provide for and improve mixed-services facilities.*
	Zone Z9 – Amenity / Open Space Lands / Green Network	*To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space and green networks*
	Zone Z15 - Institutional and Community	*To protect and provide for institutional and community uses.*

4.4.1.1 Map Based Objectives

Along this section of the Proposed Scheme there is a map-based objective from the DCDP (DCC, 2016).

Table 4.7: Map Based Objectives

Map Based Objective	Description	Proposed Scheme Response
DCC		
Conservation Area – Along the River Dodder	*'Conservation Areas have been designated in recognition of their special interest or unique historic and architectural character and important contribution to the heritage of the*	Along the Proposed Scheme all archaeological and cultural heritage issues will be resolved by mitigation during the pre-construction phase or construction phase, in advance of the operational phase. It aims to mitigate any adverse effects that

Map Based Objective	Description	Proposed Scheme Response
DCC		
	city…All new development must have regard to the local context and distinctiveness and the contribution to the local scene of buildings, landmarks, views, open spaces and other features of architectural, historic or topographical interest.'	the proposals may have on the streets, spaces, local areas and landscape through the use of appropriate design responses. In addition, opportunities have been sought to enhance the public realm and landscape design where possible.

4.4.1.2 Local Area Plans / Masterplans

There are no Local Area Plans or Masterplans in this section of the Proposed Scheme.

4.4.1.3 Planning History

Table 2.1 in Appendix 2 (Planning History) contains the extant planning permissions along this section of the Proposed Scheme.

4.4.1.4 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is consistent with the policies and objectives of the DCDP as set out above and in Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report. The Proposed Scheme is largely within the existing public road / pavement area and where required, in general, only small portions of those zoning objectives listed above are necessary to facilitate the proposed Scheme. However, the main use associated with the zoning objective will remain.

4.5 Ballsbridge to Merrion Square (Pembroke Road, Baggot Street and Fitzwilliam Street)

4.5.1 Zoning

The lands are within the functional area of DCC and are zoned in the DCDP (DCC 2016). For a detailed description of the zonings refer to Table 1.2 in Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report.

There is no construction compound in this section of the Proposed Scheme.

The application boundary that incorporates the Proposed Scheme works includes lands within the following zoning objectives outline in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Zoning Objectives Affected by the Proposed Scheme

Planning Authority	Zoning Objective	Objective
DCC	Zone Z4 - District Centres (incorporating Key District Centres)	*To provide for and improve mixed-services facilities.*
	Zone Z6 - Employment / Enterprise	*To provide for the creation and protection of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment creation.*
	Zone Z8 - Georgian Conservation Areas	*To protect the existing architectural and civic design character, and to allow only for limited expansion consistent with the conservation objective.*

Planning Authority	Zoning Objective	Objective
	Zone Z9 – Amenity / Open Space Lands / Green Network	*To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space and green networks*
	Z1 - Sustainable Residential Neighbourhoods	*To protect, provide and improve residential amenities.*
	Z2 - Residential Neighbourhoods (Conservation Areas)	*To protect and/or improve the amenities of residential conservation areas.*

4.5.1.1 Map Based Objectives

Along this section of the Proposed Scheme there are a number of distinct map-based objectives from the DCDP (DCC 2016). It is noted that there is a row of Protected Structures along Pembroke Road, Baggot Street Upper, Baggot Street Lower and Fitzwilliam Street Lower.

Table 4.9: Map Based Objectives

Map Based Objective	Description	Proposed Scheme Response
DCC		
Conservation Area – The Dodder, Baggot Street Upper, The Grand Canal, Baggot Street Lower, Fitzwilliam Street Lower and Merrion Square.	*'Conservation Areas have been designated in recognition of their special interest or unique historic and architectural character and important contribution to the heritage of the city…All new development must have regard to the local context and distinctiveness and the contribution to the local scene of buildings, landmarks, views, open spaces and other features of architectural, historic or topographical interest.'*	Along the Proposed Scheme all archaeological and cultural heritage issues will be resolved by mitigation during the pre-construction phase or construction phase, in advance of the operational phase. It aims to mitigate any adverse effects that the proposals may have on the streets, spaces, local areas and landscape through the use of appropriate design responses. In addition, opportunities have been sought to enhance the public realm and landscape design where possible.

4.5.1.2 Local Area Plans / Masterplans

There is a commitment in DCDP to prepare a schematic masterplan for a linear park along the length of the River Dodder. However, there is no location map locating this park and it is not known whether the Proposed Scheme will affect it.

4.5.1.3 Planning History

Table 2.1 in Appendix 2 (Planning History) contains the extant planning permissions along this section of the Proposed Scheme.

4.5.1.4 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is consistent with the policies and objectives of the DCDP as set out above and in Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report. The Proposed Scheme is largely within the existing public road / pavement area and where required, in general, only small portions of those zoning objectives listed above are necessary to facilitate the proposed Scheme. However, the main use associated with the zoning objective will remain.

4.6 Nutley Lane (R138 Stillorgan Road to Merrion Road)

4.6.1 Zoning

The lands are within the functional area of DCC and are zoned in the DCDP (DCC 2016). For a detailed description of the zonings refer to Table 1.2 in Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report.

There are no construction compounds in this section of the Proposed Scheme.

The application boundary that incorporates the proposed works includes lands within the following zoning objectives outlined in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Zoning Objectives Affected by the Proposed Scheme

Planning Authority	Zoning Objective	Objective
DCC	Z4 - District Centres (incorporating Key District Centres)	*To provide for and improve mixed-services facilities.*
	Z9 – Amenity / Open Space Lands / Green Network	*To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space and green networks*
	Z12 - Institutional Land (Future Development Potential)	*To ensure existing environmental amenities are protected in the predominantly residential future use of these lands.*
	Z15 - Institutional and Community	*To protect and provide for institutional and community uses.*

4.6.1.1 Map Based Objectives

There are no map-based objectives from the DCDP in this section of the Proposed Scheme.

4.6.1.2 Local Area Plans / Masterplans

There are no Local Area Plans or Masterplans in this section of the Proposed Scheme.

4.6.1.3 Planning History

Table 2.1 in Appendix 2 (Planning History) contains the extant planning permissions along this section of the Proposed Scheme.

4.6.1.4 Proposed Scheme Response

The Proposed Scheme is consistent with the policies and objectives of the DCDP as set out above and in Appendix 1 (Local Policy) of this Report. The Proposed Scheme is largely within the existing public road / pavement area and where required, in general, only small portions of those zoning objectives listed above are necessary to facilitate the proposed Scheme. However, the main use associated with the zoning objective will remain.

5. EIAR Structure and Summary of Assessment

5.1 EIAR Structure and Summary of Assessment

The EIAR includes four volumes and is structured as set out in Table 5.1

Table 5.1: EIAR Structure & Summary of Assessment

EIAR Chapter	Summary Descriptive Text	Assessment Outcome
Volume 1: Non-Technical Summary		
Non-Technical Summary (NTS)	Summary of the EIAR in non-technical language.	N/A
Volume 2: Main Report		
Chapter 1 - Introduction	The Introduction Chapter summarises the procedure for the submission of an application for the Proposed Scheme, describes the methodology used to prepare this EIAR and outlines the consultation activities that have been carried out to date.	N/A
Chapter 2 -Need for the Proposed Scheme	The Need for the Scheme Chapter outlines the need for the Proposed Scheme in terms of the supporting statutory basis and its evolvement.	N/A
Chapter 3 – Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives	The Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives Chapter describes the process undertaken in considering reasonable alternatives and the main reasons for the selection of the Proposed Scheme.	N/A
Chapter 4 – Proposed Scheme Description	The Proposed Scheme Description Chapter describes in detail the scheme infrastructure, elements, and route.	N/A
Chapter 5 - Construction	The Construction Chapter describes the construction activities associated with the Proposed Scheme.	A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been prepared which describes the overall environmental management strategy that will be implemented during the Construction Phase of the Proposed Scheme. The CEMP includes the mitigation measures which will be implemented to provide environmental protection during the Construction Phase of the Proposed Scheme. The CEMP includes the mitigation measures which will be implemented to provide environmental protection during the Construction Phase of the Proposed Scheme. Construction Traffic Management is addressed in the CEMP, to show how the interface between the public and construction-related traffic will be managed and how vehicular movement will be controlled.
Chapter 6 – Traffic & Transport	The Traffic & Transport Chapter considered the potential traffic & transport impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	The assessment concludes that the impact during the Construction Phase will be negative, moderate, and temporary in nature. The Proposed Scheme will deliver strong positive impacts ranging from moderate to very significant and long-term in terms of people movement, pedestrian, cycling and bus infrastructure during the Operational Phase. These improvements will help to provide an attractive alternative to the private car and promote a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport, allowing for greater capacity along the corridor to facilitate the movement of people. The assessment demonstrates that the Proposed Scheme can be readily utilised by sustainable modes

EIAR Chapter	Summary Descriptive Text	Assessment Outcome
		and that the surrounding road network has the capacity to accommodate the associated traffic and transport impacts. Given that the Proposed Scheme results in a positive impact for walking, cycling, bus and people movements, mitigation and monitoring measures have not been considered for these assessments. The impacts to general traffic and parking / loading, including the mitigation measures are incorporated into the Proposed Scheme and no further mitigation measures are required to be considered.
Chapter 7 - Air Quality	The Air Quality Chapter considered the potential air quality impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	The potential air quality impacts during the Construction Phase includes emissions from activities such as site clearance and preparation, utility diversions, road and junction construction works, landscaping. Air quality impacts during to construction traffic are also assessed. The assessment concludes that air quality impacts associate with Construction Phase activities, including construction traffic, as the works will be short-term and temporary in nature, and with the application of the proposed mitigation measures described above, the impact on air quality will not be significant. Potential impacts during the Operational Phase include the air quality impacts associated with changes to traffic flows along the Proposed Scheme, realigned traffic lanes and redistributed traffic. No mitigation measures are proposed during the Operational Phase. Overall, the residual effects as a result of the Proposed Scheme's operation are predicted to be neutral and long-term. There are, however, residual moderate adverse (significant) effects expected on R138 Leeson Street and Donnybrook Road as a result of the 2028 Operational Phase of the Proposed Scheme. However, these are predicted to reduce to negligible by 2043. .
Chapter 8 - Climate	The Climate Chapter considered the potential climate impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	Following the application of mitigation measures, it is expected that there will be a short-term, negative and significant residual impact on climate as a result of the Construction Phase of the Proposed Scheme. The impacts assessed during the Operational Phase included the potential impacts associated with altered traffic flows along the Proposed Scheme, realigned traffic lanes and displaced traffic flows. The Operational Phase GHG emissions associated with the maintenance of the infrastructure is predicted to be negative, significant and permanent. In relation to the operational traffic GHG emissions associated with the Operational Phase of the scheme is predicted to be positive, significant and permanent. The overall Operational Phase impact associated with GHG emissions is predicted to be positive, significant and permanent.

EIAR Chapter	Summary Descriptive Text	Assessment Outcome
		By creating a resilient, accessible public transport network, BusConnects will provide an attractive alternative to private car travel, encouraging more passenger travel by more sustainable modes. As a result, a greater share of the demand will be by sustainable modes (public transport, walking and cycling).
Chapter 9 – Noise & Vibration	The Noise & Vibration Chapter considers the potential noise and vibration impacts associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of Proposed Scheme.	Following the application of mitigation measures, it is expected that there will remain some negative significant residual noise or vibration impacts that are temporary in nature, as a result of the Construction Phase of the Proposed Scheme. The Operational Phase impact assessment has determined that changes in traffic noise levels will be indirect, positive, imperceptible to slight, short to medium term to indirect, negative, slight to moderate, short to medium term on the surrounding road network (Opening Year – 2028). In the Design Year (2043) the impact on the surrounding road network is predicted to be indirect, positive, imperceptible to slight, long-term, to indirect, negative, moderate long-term.
Chapter 10 - Population	The Population Chapter considered the potential population impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	The assessment concluded that there will be some negative, moderate to significant and short-term impacts on any community and commercial receptors areas in terms of amenity and accessibility during the Construction Phase. Localised negative, significant and short-term land take impacts are expected at a small number of residential properties during the Construction Phase. During the Operational Phase, positive, moderate to significant and long-term impacts are expected for walkers, cyclists and bus users in the community areas - Blackrock, Booterstown, Merrion Road, Donnybrook and Haddington Road during the Operational Phase. Access to community facilities and commercial businesses via private vehicles is expected to be a positive, moderate and long-term impact.
Chapter 11 – Human Health	The Human Health Chapter considered the potential human health impacts associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	No significant residual health impacts are predicted as a result of the Construction Phase of the Proposed Scheme. In the Operational Phase, reductions in general through-traffic, improved pedestrian infrastructure and improvements to the streetscape are likely to encourage more social interaction along the Proposed Scheme, resulting in positive health outcomes such as good mental wellbeing. The new public transport infrastructure is expected to bring improved journey times and improved reliability for public transport journeys, resulting in improved mental health outcomes such as reduced stress, as well as improved access to health, employment, education, and leisure services. The inclusion of bus priority measures and improvements to pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure will

EIAR Chapter	Summary Descriptive Text	Assessment Outcome
		support safer and more equitable access for those who do not or cannot use a car. This is expected to have positive impacts on health, by addressing these wider determinants and health inequalities. In addition the urban environment would be improved and easier to use for a wider variety of pedestrians, including the visually impaired, wheelchair users and the persons with mobility impairment.
Chapter 12 - Biodiversity	The Biodiversity Chapter considered the potential biodiversity impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	During the Construction and Operational Phase of the Proposed Scheme there will not be any significant residual effect above the local scale on the key ecological receptors identified in the assessment as a result of the scheme on its own, or cumulatively together with other proposed developments.
Chapter 13 - Water	The Water Chapter considered the potential water impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	Following the implementation of mitigation measures no significant remaining impacts are anticipated on any water body as result of the Construction Phase of the Proposed Scheme. The impacts assessed during the Operational Phase include the potential surface water impacts associated with areas of impermeability and traffic displacement. During the Operational Phase, the design of the Proposed Scheme will ensure that there will be no net increase in surface water runoff rates to any of the connected waterbodies, using a combination of sustainable drainage systems in the form of filter drains and bioretention systems, which also reduce the potential risks to water quality from routine road contaminants. No additional mitigation is required, and no impacts are anticipated on any water body as result of the Operational Phase of the Proposed Scheme.
Chapter 14 – Land, Soils, Geology & Hydrology	The Land, Soils, Geology & Hydrology Chapter considered the potential land, soils, geology & hydrology impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	Appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented to avoid or reduce negative impacts on land, soils, geology and hydrogeology during the Construction Phase. It is predicted that there will be no residual significant construction impacts on land, soils, geology and hydrogeology. In the Operational Phase the infrastructure will be maintained by the Local Authorities and will be subject to their management procedures to ensure that the correct measures to be taken in the event of any accidental spillages and this will reduce the potential for any impact. It is predicted that there will be no residual operational impacts on land, soils, geology and hydrogeology.
Chapter 15 – Archaeological & Cultural Heritage	The Archaeological & Cultural Heritage Chapter considered the potential archaeological & cultural heritage impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	The mitigation measures proposed to avoid or reduce negative impacts on archaeological and cultural heritage during the Construction Phase include the provision for and funding of the necessary archaeological monitoring, inspection and excavation works that will be required during and prior to construction.

EIAR Chapter	Summary Descriptive Text	Assessment Outcome
		There will be no Operational Phase impacts as a result of the Proposed Scheme and no mitigation is required. With the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, it is expected that there will be no residual significant impacts on archaeological and cultural heritage.
Chapter 16 – Architectural Heritage	The Architectural Heritage Chapter considered the potential architectural heritage impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	With the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, it is expected that there will be no significant residual impacts on architectural heritage.
Chapter 17 – Landscape (Townscape) & Visual	The Landscape (Townscape) & Visual Chapter considered the potential landscape (townscape) & visual impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	It is predicted that there will be significant or very significant, negative, short-term impacts on all townscape sections of the scheme during construction. There will be very significant, negative, short-term townscape / visual impacts on Residential Conservation Areas, protected structures, amenity designations, preserved views and properties from which land will be temporarily acquired and where there will be loss of trees. There will also be significant, negative, short-term landscape/visual impacts on Conservation Areas, properties from which land will be temporarily acquired with no loss of trees, properties fronting the scheme with minimal direct contact, and trees and vegetation. While alterations in the road corridor and changes in traffic, pedestrian and cycle movements are features of the Proposed Scheme, it is not anticipated that these aspects in themselves will give rise to significant landscape, townscape or visual effects. Changes in road corridors, including in traffic signalisation, signage, and in carriageway / parking allocation and traffic movements are a common and regular aspect of active road and traffic management for urban roads and streets. Therefore, these changes may be considered part and parcel of on-going or regular changes that may be expected to occur, and do occur, from time to time in any urban streetscape environment and such changes are considered as a low or negligible magnitude of change. It is expected that there will be slight to moderate/significant long-term impacts on the townscape of Sections 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the Proposed Scheme, with a positive moderate significant impact predicted along Section 4 of the Proposed Scheme. There will be locally significant, negative, long-term townscape/visual impacts at Blackrock Park and at other amenity areas. A negative, moderate / significant and long-term impact is predicted on Residential Conservation Areas, protected structures, at residential and non-residential properties in permanent acquisition, and trees and vegetation.
Chapter 18 – Waste & Resources	The Waste & Resources Chapter considered the potential waste & resources impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	A range of mitigation measures will be implemented to avoid or reduce negative impacts on waste and resources during the Construction Phase, including minimising waste disposal. Opportunities for reuse of materials, by-products and wastes will be sought

EIAR Chapter	Summary Descriptive Text	Assessment Outcome
		throughout the Construction Phase of the Proposed Scheme. This will be managed through the Construction Phase by implementing a Construction and Demolition Resource and Waste Management Plan. The approximately 2,000 tonnes of demolition waste that will be generated as a result of the Proposed Scheme is equivalent to 0.02% of the construction and demolition waste management baseline in the Eastern-Midlands Waste Region. The predicted impact of Demolition Waste during the Construction Phase is adverse, not significant, and short-term. The total forecast of surplus excavation material from the Proposed Scheme will be approximately 76,000 tonnes. and is equivalent to 0.71% of the construction and demolition waste management baseline for the Eastern-Midland Waste Region. There is potential for incorporating reused aggregates in the Proposed Scheme, and this will be done where practicable. There are no significant waste management impacts as a result of the Construction or Operational Phase of the Proposed Scheme.
Chapter 19 – Material Assets	The Material Assets Chapter considered the potential material assets impact associated with the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	With the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures there will be no significant residual impacts on material assets as a result of the Proposed Scheme. There will be no significant Operational Phase impacts on utility infrastructure. Due to the measures included in the design of the Proposed Scheme and the fact that there are minimal impacts predicted during the Operational Phase, no specific mitigation measures are required
Chapter 20 – Risk of Major Accidents and / or Disasters	The Risk of Major Accidents and / or Disasters Chapter assesses the potential significant adverse impacts on the environment during the Construction and Operational Phases of the Proposed Scheme.	The Proposed Scheme complies with relevant design standards, which include measures to reduce the likelihood of risk events occurring. Appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented during the Construction Phase. Once these mitigation measures are applied, there are no remaining identified incidents or major accidents and / or disasters risk events that present a level of risk that would lead to significant impacts or environmental effects. No significant risks were identified as likely to occur during the Operational Phase.
Chapter 21 – Cumulative Impacts & Environmental Interactions	The Cumulative Impacts & Environmental Interactions Chapter considers the potential cumulative impacts on the environment of the Proposed Scheme with other developments.	The Landscape (Townscape) and Visual assessment identified the potential for temporary indirect cumulative townscape and visual effects to occur if the DART+ Coastal South project was constructed with the Proposed Scheme. These effects are most likely to occur at locations where concurrent construction of both schemes have the potential to overlap, however, it is also likely that the extent of any such impacts will be localised and contained. No significant construction related cumulative effects were identified from the Proposed Scheme in combination with other projects (including the other Core Bus Corridor Schemes) over and above those identified in the standalone assessments.

EIAR Chapter	Summary Descriptive Text	Assessment Outcome
		The traffic and transport impact assessment predicts a long term, profound positive cumulative effect on People Movement by sustainable modes, as a result of the Proposed Scheme and the other 11 Core Bus Corridor schemes. The climate impact assessment predicts a negative, significant and permanent cumulative impact on climate during the maintenance phase, as a result of the Proposed Scheme and the other 11 Core Bus Corridor schemes. The climate impact assessment predicts a significant and positive cumulative impact on climate in 2028, as a result of the Proposed Scheme and the other 11 Core Bus Corridor schemes. Fewer climate benefits are seen in 2043 relative to 2028 due to the further electrification of the wider fleet in both the Do Minimum and Do Something scenarios. However, it is concluded that the Core Bus Corridor Infrastructure Works achieves the project objectives in supporting the delivery of an efficient, low carbon and climate resilient public transport service, which supports the achievement of Ireland's emission reduction targets. The Core Bus Corridor Infrastructure Works has the potential to reduce GHG emissions equivalent to the removal of approximately 105,500 and 102,200 car trips per weekday from the road network in 2028 and 2043 respectively. This represents a very significant contribution towards the national target of 500,000 additional trips by walking, cycling and public transport per day by 2030 as outlined as a target in the 2021 Climate Action Plan (CAP) (DCCAE 2021). It is concluded that, cumulatively, the Core Bus Corridor Infrastructure Works will make a significant contribution to carbon reduction. The human health assessment predicts a positive, very significant and long-term cumulative impact on human health due to the encouragement of active travel and increased use of public transport through offering a choice of routes from the proposals for the cycle network, the other 11 Core Bus Corridor schemes and the Proposed Scheme. Significant environmental interactions occur between the topics of population, human health, air quality, noise and vibration and traffic and transport. The assessments made for each of those topics consider those interactions both directly and indirectly. As an environmental factor, landscape and visual considerations have natural relationships with all other environmental factors. Some are direct relationships, e.g., population and visual impacts; biodiversity and landscape; land, soils and water and landscape; or the setting around features of cultural heritage etc. Others may be indirect, e.g. human health, air quality and landscape, material assets and landscape and visual aspects. Wherever possible these potential interactions have been incorporated into the relevant assessments.
Chapter 22 – Summary of Mitigation	The Summary of Mitigation Chapter summarises the mitigation measures recommended for each of the environmental topics examined within the EIAR.	N/A
Chapter 23 – Summary of	The Summary of Significant Residual Impacts Chapter collates the predicted residual impacts on the environment as identified in this EIAR, stemming	N/A

EIAR Chapter	Summary Descriptive Text	Assessment Outcome
Significant Residual Impacts	from the Proposed Scheme, during construction and operational phases.	

5.1.1 Other Requirements

5.1.1.1 Water Framework Directive

A Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment was carried out on the Proposed Scheme (Appendix 13.1 in Volume 4 of the EIAR).

Taking into consideration the anticipated impacts of the Proposed Scheme on the biological, physico-chemical and hydromorphological quality elements, following the implementation of design and mitigation measures, it is concluded that it will not compromise progress towards achieving Good Ecological Status (GES) or cause a deterioration of the overall Good Ecological Potential (GEP) of any of the water bodies that are in scope (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Compliance of the Proposed Scheme with the Environmental Objectives of the WFD

Environmental Objective	Scheme	Compliance with the WFD Directive
No changes affecting high status sites	No waterbodies identified as high status	Yes
No changes that will cause failure to meet surface water good ecological status or potential or result in a deterioration of surface water ecological status or potential	After consideration as part of the detailed compliance assessment, the operation of the Scheme will not cause deterioration in the status of the water bodies nor will the construction phase if the mitigation measures detailed in Chapter 13 (Water) of the EIAR, the surface water management plan and the CEMP are implemented in full.	Yes
No changes which will permanently prevent or compromise the Environmental Objectives being met in other water bodies	The Scheme options will not cause a permanent exclusion or compromise achieving the WFD objectives in any other bodies of water within the River Basin District.	Yes
No changes that will cause failure to meet good groundwater status or result in a deterioration groundwater status.	The Scheme options will not cause deterioration in the status of the of the groundwater bodies.	Yes

The WFD also requires consideration of how a new scheme might impact on other water bodies and other EU legislation. This is covered in Articles 4.8 and 4.9 of the WFD.

Article 4.8 states:

> '*a Member State shall ensure that the application does not permanently exclude or compromise the achievement of the objectives of this Directive in other bodies of water within the same river basin district and is consistent with the implementation of other Community environmental legislation*'.

All water bodies within the Study Area have been assessed for direct impacts; indirect impacts on Dublin Bay have also been assessed. The Proposed Scheme will not compromise the achievement of the objectives of the WFD for any water body. In addition, the Proposed Scheme has been assessed for the potential for cumulative impacts with other Proposed Developments within 1km of the Study Area. This concludes that in combination with other Proposed Developments the Proposed Scheme will not compromise the achievement of the objectives of the WFD for any water body. Therefore, the Proposed Scheme complies with Article 4.8.

Article 4.9 of the WFD requires that '*Member States shall ensure that the application of the new provisions guarantees at least the same level of protection as the existing Community legislation'.*

The Habitats Directive (1992) promotes the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring Member States to take measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species listed on the Annexes to the Directive at a favourable conservation status, introducing robust protection for those habitats and species of European importance. There are European designated sites in the vicinity of the Proposed Scheme which have been assessed and are presented in the NIS. The NIS is a standalone document included in the planning application for the Proposed Scheme. It concludes that the Proposed Scheme will not lead to a deterioration in the features of any designated site. The Proposed Scheme is not considered to be a risk to designated habitats and therefore is compliant with the Habitats Directive.

The Nitrates Directive (1991) aims to protect water quality by preventing nitrates from agricultural sources polluting ground and surface waters and by promoting the use of good farming practices. The Scheme will not influence or moderate agricultural land use or land management.

The revised Bathing Water Directive (rBWD) (2006/7/EC) was adopted in 2006, updating the microbiological and physico-chemical standards set by the original Bathing Water Directive (BWD) (76/160/EEC) and the process used to measure/monitor water quality at identified bathing waters. The rBWD focuses on fewer microbiological indicators, whilst setting higher standards, compared to those of the BWD. Bathing waters under the rBWD are classified as excellent, good, sufficient or poor according to the levels of certain types of bacteria (intestinal enterococci and Escherichia coli) in samples obtained during the bathing season (May to September). Following implementation of measures set out in the Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP), the Proposed Scheme will not have a significant impact on any designated bathing water. It is therefore compliant with the Bathing Water Directive.

5.1.1.1.1 Conclusion

Considering all requirements for compliance with the WFD, the Proposed Scheme will not cause a deterioration in status in any water body, not prevent it from achieving GES or GEP; there are no cumulative impacts with other Schemes; and it complies with other environmental legislation.

5.1.1.2 Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been carried out as part of the Planning Application for the proposed route from Belfield / Blackrock to the City Centre.

Sections 1 and 2

There are a number of historic flood events at different locations along or near to Sections 1 and 2 of the Proposed Scheme. The Proposed Scheme is largely on existing roads and will result in minimal additional paved areas and will therefore not increase the risk of these events reoccurring compared to the current scenario. The groundwater vulnerability varies along the proposed scheme. As most of the Proposed Scheme is on existing roads with no known flooding specifically due to groundwater, it is not expected that this risk will increase with the construction of the scheme.

The pluvial flood risk along the majority of the proposed route is medium, however, this risk exists in the current scenario and will be reduced as a result of the Proposed Scheme.

All new surface water sewers provided as part of the Proposed Scheme shall be designed so that no flooding will occur for a return period up to 30 years. This is an improvement when compared to some of the existing historical drainage infrastructure to be replaced and will reduce the risk of pluvial flooding. Also, as part of the Proposed Scheme, new drainage infrastructure will be provided which will include new Sustainable (Urban) Drainage Systems (SuDS) such as rain gardens, swales and tree pits. These SuDS features will provide some surface water storage and thus reduce the risk of pluvial flooding.

There are two areas along the Proposed Scheme where there is a risk of fluvial flooding. The two areas consist of Area 1 at Merrion Road and Area 2 at Frascati Road which lies within Flood Zone B. There is one area identified along the proposed scheme where there is a risk of coastal flooding. Area 3 at Merrion Strand falls within Flood Zone A.

As areas of the Proposed Scheme are identified as being within Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B, the Justification Test is required. The Plan-Making Justification Test and Development Management Justification have been assessed and passed, therefore, further investigation of the flood risk in the form of a Stage 2 FRA does not need to be carried out.

Sections 3, 4 and 5

There are a number of historic flood events at different locations along or near to Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Proposed Scheme. Parts of the River Dodder Flood Alleviation Scheme and upgrades to the local drainage network have since been carried out, reducing the risk of flooding in this area. The pluvial flood risk along the majority of the proposed route is medium to high, however, this risk exists in the current scenario and will be reduced as a result of the proposed scheme.

As with Sections 1 and 2, all new surface water sewers provided as part of the Proposed Scheme shall be designed so that no flooding will occur for a return period up to 30 years. This is an improvement when compared to some of the existing historical drainage infrastructure to be replaced and will reduce the risk of pluvial flooding. Also, as part of the scheme, new drainage infrastructure will be provided which will include new SuDS such as rain gardens, swales and tree pits. These SuDS features will provide some surface water storage and thus reduce the risk of pluvial flooding.

The groundwater vulnerability varies along the Proposed Scheme from low to moderate. As most of the Proposed Scheme is on existing roads with no known flooding specifically due to groundwater, it is not expected that this risk will increase with the construction of the Proposed Scheme.

There are two areas along the proposed route where there is a risk of fluvial flooding. The two areas consist of Area 1 at Ballsbridge which lies within Flood Zone A and Area 2 at Merrion Road which lies in Flood Zone B.

As areas of the Proposed Scheme are identified as being within Flood Zone A and Flood Zone B, the Justification Test is required. The Plan-Making and Development Management Justification Tests have been assessed and passed. Therefore, further investigation of the flood risk in the form of a Stage 2 FRA does not need to be carried out.

5.1.1.3 AA and NIS

A screening for AA was carried out. It was determined that there is a possibility for significant effects on European Sites in the absence of mitigation, as such an AA and NIS is required and was undertaken for the Proposed Scheme.

The NIS for the Proposed Scheme concluded that the effective implementation of the mitigation measures proposed will mean that the Proposed Scheme will not adversely affect (either directly or indirectly) the integrity of any European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

5.1.2 Consultations

In addition to the extensive non-statutory public consultation on the Proposed Scheme, the BusConnects Infrastructure team undertook consultation on the EIAR with certain prescribed bodies and relevant non-statutory consultees.

Consultations were also conducted with organisations such as the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and relevant local authorities, and these are considered in the development of the relevant impact assessments chapters in Volume 2 of this EIAR.

In addition to feedback from the non-statutory public consultation process and affected landowners consultations were also undertaken with Dublin City Council (DCC) and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC). Consultation was also undertaken with the prescribed bodies and interested parties outlined in Table 5.3 with regard to the approach to the EIAR.

Table 5.3: Prescribed Bodies and Interested Parties

Prescribed Bodies and Interested Parties	
An Chomhairle Ealaíon (Arts Council)	Irish Water
An Taisce	Office of Public Works (OPW)
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications	TII
Development Applications Unit (DAU) - Department of Housing. Local Government & Heritage	Waterways Ireland
Department of Transport	Geological Survey Ireland (GSI)
National Tourism Development Authority trading as Fáilte Ireland	DCC
Health Service Executive (HSE)	DLRCC
The Heritage Council	

Where practicable, the information and advice received during the consultation process was subsequently incorporated into the design of the Proposed Scheme and addressed in the relevant chapters of the EIAR. Issues raised during the consultation process with the prescribed bodies and interested parties included the following:

- Development Applications Unit (DAU) – Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Consultation meeting held 5 February 2020 to apprise the DAU of BusConnects and the envisaged approach with regard to EIA / AA;
- DAU - Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht: Comments provided related to the assessment of the impacts of the Proposed Scheme on biodiversity, the completion of ecological surveys (such as trees, hedgerows, bats, birds etc.) alien invasive species, mitigation and monitoring measures and CEMP;
- DCC comments in relation to the BusConnects Dublin - Core Bus Corridors Infrastructure Works related to transport, air quality, noise, built heritage, street lighting, utility infrastructure, surface water management/ flood risk, landscaping, biodiversity and integration with other transportation projects. Specifically, DCC requested that the EIAR should address alternatives, cumulative impacts and mitigation. In relation to the Proposed Scheme DCC identified protected structures, Conservations Areas, historic paving and gateways etc. which have the potential to be impacted due to the Proposed Scheme;
- DLRCC: Observations made by DLRCC related to biodiversity (specifically along the Booterstown stretch of the Proposed Scheme), drainage and pollution control, climate change and infrastructure, conservation, planning and traffic. Additionally DLRCC noted that many of buildings listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) will be added to the Record of Protected Structures under the new County Development Plan. Specific comments were noted by DLRCC in relation to the Bray to City Centre CBC Scheme. An additional submission was made by DLRCC which noted the Council's "Tree Cities of the World" certification;
- Health Service Executive (HSE) comments related to the assessment of likely significant impacts on sensitive receptors, surface water, groundwater, air, noise, vibration, dust and on content of CEMPs;
- The Environmental Health Office of the Health Service Executive provided recommendations in relation to the management of potential pollutants and discharge entering surface waters, the design of suitable drainage systems and storage of fuels and chemicals; and
- Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) were consulted on 21 May 2021, to discuss the BusConnects proposals, and the proposed approach to the assessment of Land, Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology.

Since the initiation of the pre-application public consultation process in February 2019 there has been ongoing engagement with landowners, and / or anyone with an interest in potentially impacted properties or lands along the corridor of the Proposed Scheme, as the design development has progressed.

During each round of public consultation those landowners identified as being either potentially impacted or no-longer potentially impacted were written to directly to receive information on the consultation in advance of any

wider publication of the proposals. One-to-one meetings were offered on a face-to-face basis pre-COVID-19, and via Zoom or over the phone since March 2020, for those who wished to discuss the proposals further in relation to their own property with the minutes being recorded as part of the consultation process. Over the three rounds of consultation 275 letters of this kind were issued.

In addition 27 letters were issued between July to September 2020 to request access to properties to undertake more detailed noise or topographical surveys.

Throughout the planning process any requests for meetings, phone conversations, or other requests for information have been accommodated where possible. Many of the submissions received during consultations have been from potentially impacted owners and as with all other submissions they have been considered in the design development.

Most recently between May and December 2021, 166 letters (registered) have been issued to properties likely to be the subject of the Proposed Scheme Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) process seeking to engage with them to ascertain ownership details (or to confirm ownership details based on Property Registration Authority – Registry of Deeds referencing research), or to ascertain any others with an interest in the property/lands. Follow-up conversations have been facilitated as a result of these letters on request. In addition a further attempt was made to contact those occupiers that had yet to make contact by visiting each property during October 2021. Where no one answered the door a letter was placed through the letterbox again requesting the occupiers to make contact with the NTA.

Over the course of the engagements, affected property owners have had the opportunity to discuss, among other things, the following aspects with the BusConnects Infrastructure team:

- Overall scheme proposals and potential impacts;
- Timelines for the scheme design development and associated EIAR assessment;
- Procedural matters such as planning and CPO process;
- Specific details of impact of scheme on landowner property including approximate extent of encroachment; and
- General information around reinstatement and accommodation works.

6. References

DCC (2012) Your City Your Space – Dublin City Centre Realm Strategy

DCC (2016b) The Heart of Dublin – City Centre Public Realm Master Plan

DCC (2016a). Dublin City Development Plan 2016 – 2022

DCC (2019). Climate Change Action Plan 2019 – 2024

DCC (2021). Draft Development Plan 2022 - 2028

DCCAE (2018). National Adaptation Framework

DCENR (2015). Energy White Paper; Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015 - 2030

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (2015). Building on Recovery: Infrastructure and Capital Investment Plan

DLRCC (2015) Blackrock Local Area Plan 2015 - 2021

DLRCC (2016) County Development Plan 2016 - 2022

DLRCC (2019) Climate Change Action Plan 2019 - 2024

DLRCC (2022) Draft County Development Plan 2022 -2028

DoT (2016). Statement of Strategy 2016 – 2019

DoT (2021). Draft Future Land Transport Investment Framework

DTTAS (2009a). National Cycling Policy Framework 2009 – 2020

DTTAS (2009b). Smarter Travel - A Sustainable Transport Future: A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009 – 2020

DTTAS (2015). Our Transport Future – Strategic Investment Framework for Land Transport

EMRA (2019a). Regional Spatial Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midlands Region 2019 - 2031

EMRA (2019b). Dublin Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan

EU (2014).

European Commission (2019). EU Green Deal

European Commission (2020). Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy

Government of Ireland (2021a). Project Ireland 2040 National Development Plan 2021 – 2030

Government of Ireland (2018a). Project Ireland 2040 National Development Plan 2018 – 2027

Government of Ireland (2018b). Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework

Government of Ireland (2019). Climate Action Plan 2019

Government of Ireland (2020). Programme for Government – Our Shared Future 2020

Government of Ireland (2021b) Climate Action Plan 2021

NTA (2013). Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan

NTA (2015). Core Bus Network Report

NTA (2016). Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 – 2035

NTA (2019) Integrated Implementation Plan 2019 – 2024

NTA (2019). Dublin Area Bus Network Redesign Revised Proposal (October 2019)

NTA (2021a). Draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2022-2042

NTA (2021b) Draft Greater Dublin Area Cycle Network Plan

Regional Planning Guidelines Office (2010). Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 – 2022

RSA (2013). Road Safety Strategy 2013

UN (2015).

Directives and Legislation

Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (as amended)

Council Directive of 8 December 1975 concerning the Quality of Bathing Water (76/160/EEC)

Directive 2006/7/EC Of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 February 2006 concerning the management of bathing water quality and repealing Directive 76/160/EEC

Number 14 of 1999 - Roads Act, 1993 (as amended)

Number 15 of 2008 - Dublin Transport Authority Act, 2008 (as amended)

Regulation (EU) No. 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network

S.I. No. 119 of 1994 - Road Regulations, 1994 (as amended)