



## **Statement on Housing Mix**

**Proposed Strategic Housing Development at Jacob's Island,  
Ballinure, Mahon, Cork**

**Client:** Hibernia Star Limited

June 2022

**Connecting people.**  
**Connecting places.**

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# Introduction

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HW Planning have been appointed by Hibernia Star Limited to prepare this statement in response to Item 2 of An Bord Pleanála's Pre-Application Consultation Opinion, Case Reference ABP-311818-21, which reads as follows

*The proposed development shall be accompanied by detailed report providing a justification and rationale for the apartment mix proposed, having regard to, inter alia, National and Local planning policy, the site's context, and locational attributes.*

As the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022 -2028, which will come into effect on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022, will be the development plan in place, at the date of the decision of the Board in respect of the application this statement is based on this Draft Plan

The proposed development may be considered to materially contravene Draft CDP 2022 Objective 11.2 Dwelling Size Mix which sets out that:

*'all planning applications for residential developments or mixed-use developments comprising more than 50 dwellings will be required to comply with the target dwelling size mix specified in Tables 11.3-11.9, apart from in exceptional circumstances. Where a clear justification can be provided on the basis of market evidence that demand / need for a specific dwelling size is lower than the target then flexibility will be provided according to the ranges specified.'*

	Min	Max	Target
<b>Studios / PBSA</b> (at LRT Stops / Urban Centre / HEI Campus Only)	0%	15%	10%
<b>1 Bedroom</b>	15%	25%	20%
<b>2 Bedroom</b>	25%	40%	34%
<b>3 Bedroom</b>	18%	38%	28%
<b>4 Bedroom / Larger</b>	5%	15%	8%

Figure 1.1 Based on Draft CDP 2022 - Table 11.8 'City Suburbs Dwelling Size Mix for Housing Developments'

The rationale and justification for the proposed housing mix is detailed in this Statement which also outlines National and Local policy as it pertains to housing mix and provides a detailed review of the site's context and demographic profile.

# Planning Policy & Context

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## 2.1 National Planning Framework (NPF)

Section 6.5 of the NPF identifies the need to effectively reconcile future housing requirements with demand in local areas and increase supply. This is formalised under National Policy Objective 37 which requires each Local Authority Area to undertake a 'Housing Need Demand Assessment' to provide robust evidence to support decisions about housing supply:

*"A 'Housing Need Demand Assessment' (HNDA) is to be undertaken for each Local Authority Area in order to correlate and accurately align future housing requirements".*

## 2.2 Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartment Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2020

In terms of Housing Mix the 2020 Apartment Guidelines specify the following Specific Planning Policy Requirement

### Specific Planning Policy Requirement 1

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

## 2.3 Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028

Objective 6.8 Housing Mix of the Draft Cork City Development Plan aims :

*"to encourage the establishment of sustainable residential communities by ensuring a mix of housing and apartment types, sizes and tenures is provided. Planning applications for multiple housing units shall submit a Statement of Housing Mix detailing the proposed mix and why it is considered appropriate. The needs of special groups such as the elderly and disabled shall also be considered as part of this process."*

### 2.3.1 Draft Cork Joint Housing Strategy & Housing Need Demand Assessment July 2021

In accordance with Specific Planning Policy Requirement 1 of the 2020 Apartment Guidelines a *Draft Cork Joint Housing Strategy & Housing Need Demand Assessment* was prepared by the Planning Authority to accompany the Draft Cork City Development Plan.

*“The HNDA has provided the basis for the dwelling size mix across Cork City and the identification of targets for the whole development plan period. Cork City Council has applied the household size distribution from the HNDA population modelling for the City to dwelling sizes to provide guidelines to be applied in the planning system to ensure that the forecast households will be able to find suitable accommodation in Cork City.*

*The HNDA forecasts a requirement for a mixed dwelling type product to meet the needs of the market, as 73% of new homes will need to be tailored around providing for households of between 1 and 3 people. When combined with location and density targets this will mean that new development will need to combine dwelling types across Cork City and its urban towns and hinterland villages including market evidence and the housing authority that they (or an approved AHB) have declined the option to acquire the units. Applicants will need to fund an independent peer review of market data to ensure validation of the evidence presented. In the event that the Planning Authority accepts this evidence then development proposals must include an alternative dwelling size mix that assists in achieving a balanced community.”*

	Min	Max	Target
Studios / PBSA (at LRT Stops / Urban Centre / HEI Campus Only)	0%	15%	10%
1 Bedroom	15%	25%	20%
2 Bedroom	25%	40%	34%
3 Bedroom	18%	38%	28%
4 Bedroom / Larger	5%	15%	8%

Table 11.8: City Suburbs Dwelling Size Mix for Housing Developments.

The Draft HDNA which informed the Draft Development Plan caveats that:

*“While information has been presented on dwelling type mix (apartments/flats) and households composition (number of persons per households), a dwelling size mix has not been presented due to a lack of suitable data (as the Census does not record sufficient data on dwelling sizes or bedrooms to provide an accurate forecast).”*

*“Viability remains an issue across most large-scale apartment schemes, particularly those that have greater densities. Recent research by EY in Cork City suggests that viability issues including high construction and development costs are negatively affecting apartment delivery, with delivery rates relatively*

*low when compared to Dublin. New apartments in Cork City tend to sell or rent at higher prices as a result, while the build-to-rent sector is currently under-delivering in Cork. This means that the market is not providing a mix of property types to meet purchaser and renter demand.”*

Section 4.4.3 of the Draft HNDAs indicates that

*“As noted in Section 3, there is strong demand in Cork for apartments, while the proportion of households in apartments is relatively low by European standards and may be expected to rise.”*

# Demographic Profile

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## 3.1 Study Area

In assessing the demographic trends in the vicinity of the subject site a focused assessment of the relevant Central Statistics Office (CSO) boundaries has been conducted. This initially considered the subject site in relation to Electoral Divisions (EDs), the smallest legally defined administrative areas in the State. The area falls within the boundary of the Mahon B ED, which is characterised by a mix of uses, incorporating a number of key strategic employment areas to the north, east and west, including the Mahon District Centre (Mahon Point Shopping Centre), Mahon Retail Park, and a number of technology and business parks (City Gate, Loughmahon Technology, Mahon Industrial Estate, Blackrock Business Park, Heritage Business Park and Riverview Business Park). The ED also includes established residential areas to the south and north in Jacobs Island and Ballinure/Mahon which are supported by a range of amenities in the form of pedestrian and cycling facilities at the Joe McHugh Park (developed in conjunction with the existing residential development at Jacob's Island) which continues along the western edge of Lough Mahon via the River Lee/Lough Mahon Waterfront Greenway and links the site with Blackrock and onto the City Centre, similarly the Passage West Greenway provides excellent linkage to Passage West, the Marina and the City Centre, with other amenities including Mahon Golf Club, Ballinure and Saint Michael's Gaelic Football Clubs, Skehard Road Park and Lough Mahon Park. The ED is relatively discrete, bounded and delineated by an inlet of Cork Harbour and the N40 to the south and east by Skehard Road and Ringmahon Road to the north. However, the residential element of the area extends slightly northwards into the smaller, predominantly residential ED of Mahon A where the Mahon and Blackrock neighbourhoods meet.

It was considered that while it would not be appropriate to include the entire Mahon A ED within the study area, the small south-western portion which includes residential areas off Ferney Road, Beechwood Road and Dunlocha Cottages, readily accessed from Ringmahon Road, should naturally be included within the study area to represent more realistically the population of the Mahon neighbourhood area. Therefore, five Census Small Areas (SAs), were included to the north. Small Areas are areas of population generally comprising between 80 and 120 dwellings, designed as the lowest level of geography for the compilation of statistics and which nest within ED boundaries. These SAs are listed below:

- 048042002
- 048042011
- 048042012
- 048042013
- 048042016



We note that the resulting study area corresponds to the Mahon Neighbourhood Area as defined in the Cork City Neighbourhood Profile prepared by AIRO to support the Cork City Draft Development Plan 2022 - 2028.

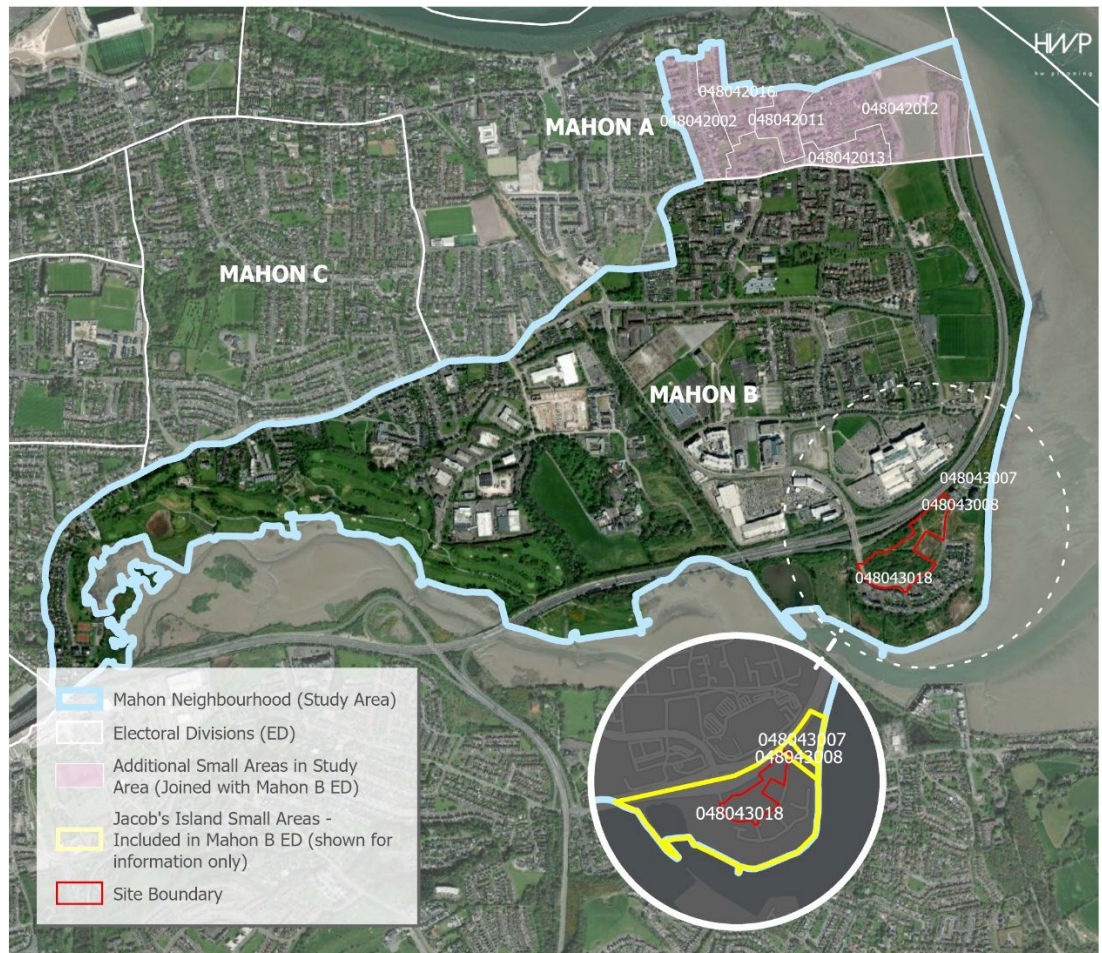


Figure 3.1 Study Area

### 3.2 Population

Mahon is amongst Cork's strongest performing areas in terms of population and employment growth during the last two intercensal periods 2006-2016, presenting sustainable and viable employment opportunities for existing and future residents of the area. The most recent available Census data dates from 2016, as the 2022 Census data is still being collated by the CSO. In 2016 the Mahon Neighbourhood Study Area accounted for 3% or 6,421 persons of the extended Cork City population of 210,853 persons.

Small Area Statistics have only been captured by the CSO since 2011 so it is not possible to determine a long-term trend in the Study Area population. However, the trend for the two ED areas that include the study area indicates that between 1996 and 2016 the population in both Mahon A and Mahon B EDs increased by 22%. This is in stark contrast to the wider city whose population declined by -1.2% in this period. Continued growth was experienced within the study area, with the population increasing by 2.7% in the last intercensal period. This recent growth rate, while lower than that experienced by the city as a whole, masks the fact that exceptionally high growth was still being experienced within areas of the subject site, namely the Small Areas 048042002 (15.9%) and 048042016 (7.7%) where rates in excess of the city, county and state population increases of 5% and

4% were recorded in the same period. Specifically in the 3 no. small areas that make up Jacob's Island extremely strong growth was also evident with population growth between 2011 and 2016 ranging from 8.3% to 21.7%. By contrast the Small Areas 048042013 experienced a -1.3% population decline.

Area	1996	2002	2006	2011	2016	% Change 1996 - 2016	% Change 2011 - 2016
Mahon A ED	4,150	4,168	4,206	4,931	5,066	22.1%	2.7%
Mahon B ED	4,042	4,275	4,241	4,843	4,937	22.1%	1.9%
048042002	-	-	-	244	290	-	15.9%
048042011	-	-	-	245	248	-	1.2%
048042012	-	-	-	358	367	-	2.5%
048042013	-	-	-	232	229	-	-1.3%
048042016	-	-	-	323	350	-	7.7%
Study Area Total	-	-	-	6,245	6,421	-	2.7%
Cork City Boundary	127,187	123,062	119,418	119,230	125,657	-1.2%	5.1%
Cork County	420,510	447,829	481,295	519,032	542,868	29.1%	4.4%
State	3,626,087	3,917,203	4,239,848	4,588,252	4,761,865	31.3%	3.6%

### 3.3 Households

The average household size in the study area, at 2.82, is higher than the state and city averages, and more in line with suburban areas in Cork County. The average household size is less in general in the more mature and long-established communities of Mahon A ED to the north. However, Small Area 048042016, containing Nutley Road and Avenue, Beechwood Court, Coach House Avenue and Hunters Green, is an outlier of this pattern, located in Mahon A ED but having an average household size of 3.15, significantly in excess of city, county and state averages. A similarly high average

household size of 3.14 is apparent if we look specifically at the small area that covers the majority of Jacob's Island (048043018).

Area	Average Household Size
Mahon B ED	2.84
048042002	2.87
048042011	2.65
048042012	2.88
048042013	2.21
048042016	3.15
Study Area	2.82
Mahon A ED	2.66
Cork City	2.45
Cork County	2.83
State	2.75

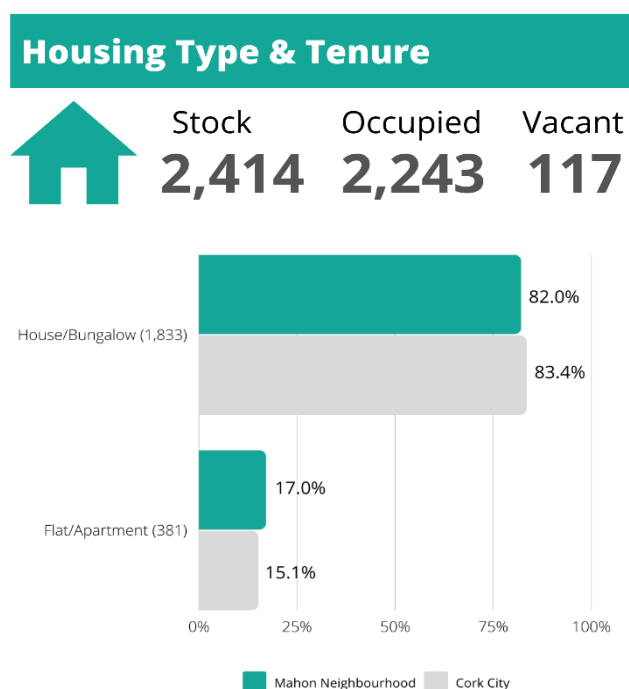
These large household sizes are accounted for by the relatively high percentage of families in the area with children between pre-school and adolescent family cycle stages. The city average for family members which are in this cohort is 44% whereas in the study area overall it is 52%. This is more in line with the County and State population profile. It should be noted that in the small areas with notably high average household sizes, small areas 048042016 and 048043018, as highlighted above, the percentage of family members between pre-school and adolescent family cycle stages is 60% and 76% respectively. The latter small area accounts for over half of the Jacobs Island population.

There is a clear correlation between the type and date of the housing stock developments and the family lifecycle of the residents. In Jacob's Island the pre-school to adolescent population is aligned to the city average or below the city average in the small areas which are predominantly apartments. Whereas this section of the population in small area (048043018) which is predominantly housing, at 76% is significantly above the city average.

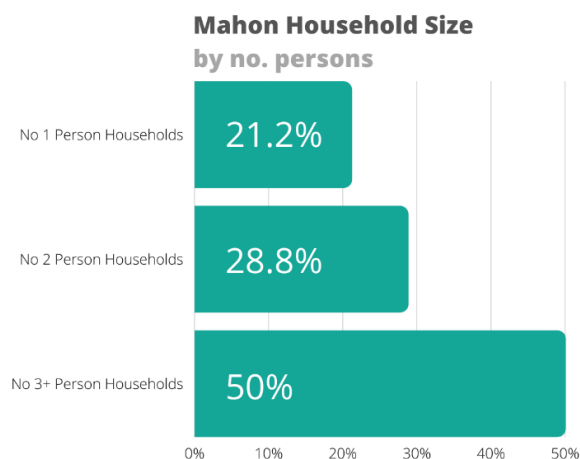
Overall, there are more adolescent and adult families in this area, with retirees notably under-represented compared to the wider city. In particular this trend is visible in Small Areas 048042016, and 048043018 where there are 1% and 0% retirees respectively. In fact, there are no retirees recorded in any of the 3 no. small areas within Jacobs Island. There is a large divergence across the study area however, with Small Area 048042013 conversely having 8.3% of the family members retired and lower than the city average in the pre-school to adolescent cohort. This Small Area is notable for including a wider housing mix, ranging from the mature residential area of Eden Court and Eden Grove, Ferney Close, the Orchard to the more recent Ringmahon Court.

### 3.4 Housing Stock

Of the 2,243 homes recorded in Mahon during the 2016 Census, 1,833 (82%) were classified as houses/bungalows, with only 381 being flats/apartments (17%).



Although the Census does not collect data on the number of bedrooms per dwelling, it does record the number of people living per household. The graphic below highlights the large percentage of households that consist of 3 or more people in the Mahon neighbourhood.



### 3.4.1 Jacobs Island Profile & Existing Housing Stock

As highlighted on the Infographic below (based on the results of the 2016 Census) Jacob's Island attracts a young sustainable population, the majority of which live in apartments and who spend shorter times commuting to work than the national average. It is considered that the proposed development will help to reinforce these trends and lead to the development of a mixed use residential community within easy walking and cycling distance to all the required services and amenities.

## Jacob's Island, Cork City

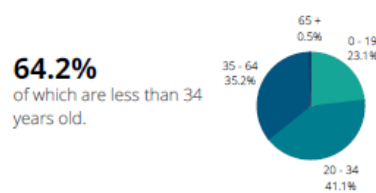
### Key Facts

CENSUS 2016

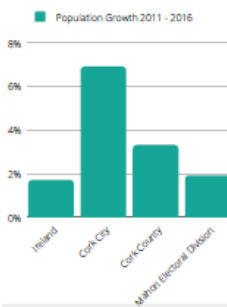


#### Population

**732** people were living at Jacob's Island.



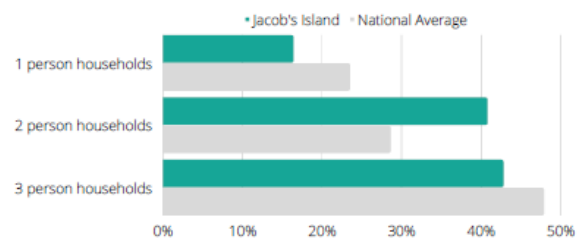
**64.2%** of which are less than 34 years old.



**13.3%** Population growth within Jacob's Island between 2011 and 2016.

#### Housing

**337** permanent dwellings  
**75.7%** flats or apartments  
**24.3%** houses or bungalows  
**2.51** people per household



#### Transport

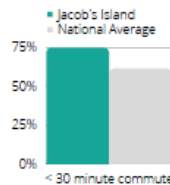
**26.1%** of people used sustainable modes of transport to get to school, work or college.



**74.6%** of which took less than 30 minutes

#### Key Fact

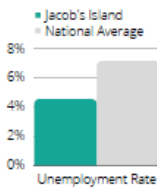
People living at Jacob's Island spend less time commuting to school, work or college than the national average.



**Key Fact** Jacob's Island is a 25 minute cycle from Cork City Centre via the Passage West Greenway.

#### Employment

**473** people are at work or **82%** of the local population.



#### Key Fact

Unemployment rate at Jacob's Island is 37% lower than the national average.

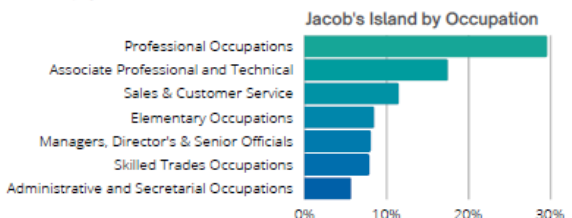


Figure 1.2 Infographic of Jacob's Island's Key Statistic (2016 Census)

As of June 2022, there are 343 residential units constructed on Jacob's Island. A breakdown of the existing housing mix is shown below:

Unit Type	1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom or more	Total
Apartment	28	202	32	262
House	14	4	67	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>347</b>
% of Total	12%	59%	29%	100%

## Assessment/Housing Mix Rationale

A breakdown of the proposed housing mix is detailed below alongside the Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 (CDP) housing mix targets. We highlight that the proposed housing mix is in excess of CDP targets for 1- and 2-bedroom units, and that no 3-bedroom or larger type units are to be provided.

Unit Size	No. Units Proposed	Proposed Unit Mix (%)	CDP 2022-2028 Housing Mix Targets		Consistency
			Min %	Max %	
Studio	1	0.2%	0%	15%	Compliant
1 bed	161	32.9%	15%	25%	Exceeds Max
2 bed	327	66.9%	25%	40%	Exceeds Max
3 bed	0	0	18%	38%	-
4 bed / larger	0	0	5%	15%	-
<b>Total</b>	489	100%	-	-	-

We consider that the proposed housing mix is appropriate when the wider neighbourhood context is considered. The Mahon neighbourhood consists primarily of houses or bungalows, at 82% of the 2016 housing stock. Given that the average household size in Mahon is nearing 3 persons per household, and that 3 person or more type households are the most common household type, we consider that the majority of this housing stock consists of 3-bedroom or more type units.

Based on the demographic profile it's reasonable to conclude that in excess of 50% of the existing housing stock in Mahon consists of 3-bedrooms or more, this percentage already in excess of the maximum CDP target of 53% (the lower being 23%). We consider that given the existing Mahon housing market consists of predominantly traditional 3 or more-bedroom type housing units, that the proposed development housing mix will add variety and choice to future residents of the Mahon neighbourhood. We also note that as of June 2022, almost 30% (29%) of the existing housing stock at Jacob's Island consists of 3 or more-bedroom apartments and houses.

The Infographic outlined above, highlights that Jacob's Island contains a young professional workforce who commute shorter distances to work. The market demand for residential units in Jacob's Island is within this cohort. We consider that this demographic analysis, Census results and market demand provide the evidence required to illustrate that the need for 3 and 4 bedroom units is lower than the Draft City Plan target in Mahon. In accordance with Objective 11.2 of the Draft CDP 2022, we consider that the Board should interpret these targets flexibly and we consider that the proposed housing mix is appropriate.



## Conclusion

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The proposed development comprises 489 no. units containing 1 no. studios (0.2%), 161 no. 1 bedroom apartments (32.9%) and 327 no. 2 bedroom apartments (66.9%). This housing mix is not in compliance with the Draft City Development Plan 2022-2028 (CDP) policy targets; however, we propose that it is in accordance with current market demand and will cater towards local need given that the Mahon housing supply consists of predominantly traditional houses and bungalows (82%), which are typically 3-bedroom or more type units.

We consider that the proposed housing mix will form a positive contribution to the Mahon area and contribute towards diversifying its housing offer, through increasing the supply of 1- and 2-bedroom apartments.

