Appendix 19.1
Climate Policy Context

Summary of Relevant Policy

National and EU Climate Policy

In May 2018, the European Council adopted a regulation on GHG emission reductions, the EU Effort Sharing Regulation, which sets out 2030 targets for member states. The starting point is an average of 2016 - 2018 emissions with binding emission reduction targets of 30% compared to 2005 levels.

The Effort Sharing legislation establishes binding annual greenhouse gas emission targets for Member States for the periods 2013–2020 and 2021–2030. These targets concern emissions from most sectors not included in the EU Emissions Trading System, such as transport, buildings, agriculture and waste. The Effort Sharing legislation forms part of a set of policies and measures on climate change and energy that will help move Europe towards a low-carbon economy and increase its energy security. Under the current Regulation, the national targets will collectively deliver a reduction of around 10% in total EU emissions from the sectors covered by 2020 and of 30% by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

The National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development was published on the 23 April 2014. The policy sets a fundamental national objective to achieve transition to a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. The policy states that greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of Climate Change are to be addressed in parallel national strategies – respectively through a series of National Mitigation Plans and a series of National Climate Change Adaptation Frameworks (NCCAF).

The National Policy Position envisages that development of National Mitigation Plans will be guided by a long-term vision of low carbon transition based on the following:

- An aggregate reduction in CO_2 emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors; and
- In parallel, an approach to carbon neutrality in the agriculture and land-use sector, including forestry, which does not compromise capacity for sustainable food production.

Further to the National Policy Position, the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 (No. 46 of 2015) (the 2015 Act) was enacted in December 2015. The 2015 Act sets out the proposed national objective to transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of 2050. Section 15 of the 2015 Act defines the duties of certain bodies under the Act. This section was amended by Section 17 of the 2021 Climate Action and Low Carbon (Amendment) Act (the 2021 Act) which has replaced Section 15(1) of the 2015 Act to now read as follows:

> *15. (1) A relevant body shall, in so far as practicable, perform its functions in a manner consistent with—*
>
> *(a) the most recent approved climate action plan,*
>
> *(b) the most recent approved national long term climate action strategy,*
>
> *(c) the most recent approved national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans,*
>
> *(d) the furtherance of the national climate objective, and*
>
> *(e) the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State.*

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 provides for the establishment of carbon budgets in support achieving Ireland's climate ambition. The carbon budget programme, comprising three 5-year budgets came into effect on 6 April 2022 for the following periods:

- Budget 1 from 2021-2025 has been set at 295 Mt CO_2eq. representing an average of 4.8% reduction per annum for the first budget period;
- Budget 2 from 2026-2030 has been set at 200 Mt CO_2eq. representing an average of 8.3% reduction per annum for the second budget period; and
- Budget 3 from 2031-2035 has been set at 151 Mt CO_2eq. representing an average of 3.5% reduction per annum for the third provisional budget.

To deliver these targets, in July 2022 the government has established Sectoral Emissions Ceilings which set maximum limits on greenhouse gas emissions for each sector of the Irish economy to the end of the decade.

In January 2018, Ireland's first statutory National Adaptation Framework (NAF) was published, which has been developed under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. The aim of the NAF is to build upon the work carried out under Ireland's first non-statutory NCCAF which was published in 2012. The NCCAF framework aimed to ensure that adaptation actions are carried out across key sectors and at local level to reduce the country's vulnerability to Climate Change. The NAF outlines a governmental and societal approach to climate adaptation in Ireland, setting out a national strategy to reduce the vulnerability of the Republic of Ireland to the adverse effects of Climate Change and to take advantage of positive impacts.

In June 2019, the government of Ireland published the first Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2019 which identified the nature and scale of the challenges faced by Ireland in terms of Climate Change, and the commitments and actions required to tackle climate disruption. In November 2021, the government of Ireland published an update, and in December 2022, published CAP23.

The CAP23 provides a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and setting us on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the

Summary of Relevant Policy

Programme for Government. In terms of transport, CAP23 sets out targets for the transportation sector to 2030 which include the following:

- 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;
- Increase the fleet of EVs and low emitting vehicles (LEVs) on the road to 945,000, comprising of:
  - 845,000 electric passenger cars;
  - 95,000 commercial vehicles;
  - 3,500 low emitting trucks;
  - 1,500 electric buses;
  - an expanded electrified rail network.
- Raise the blend proportion of biofuels to B20 in diesel by 2*030 (B12 by 2025)* and E10 in petrol;
- Reduce internal combustion engine (ICE) car kilometres by c.10% compared to present day levels; and
- Undertake a programme of work which will review progress and further refine measures that will seek to deliver the additional c.0.9 $MtCO_2$ reduction by 2030 in a fair and equitable manner.

The key CAP23 target of relevance for the Proposed Scheme is that transport emissions are modelled to reduce below a target of 6-7 $MtCO_2$ by 2030, which equates to a 50-57% decrease over the 2018 baseline. However, it should be noted that Section 15.2.2 states: *"The modelling assumptions are not agreed policy measures. However, they provide a series of specific interventions, which, based on the parameters of the model, demonstrate that the required reduction in sectoral emissions can be achieved."*

In 2019, the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Transport was published by the Department of Transport. This plan identifies the key vulnerabilities in the transport network and looks to promote greater resilience to safeguard its continued operation.

The Programme for Government, Our Shared Future (2020) commits to achieving a 51% reduction in Ireland's overall GHG emissions from 2021 to 2030, and to achieving net-zero emissions no later than 2050.

Meath County Council Development Plan 2021-2027

The Meath County Development Plan 2021-2027 (CDP) was adopted in 2021 as the local policy for the County. The CDP includes policy and objectives relating to risks associated with Climate Change, water, flooding, and transport which should be considered in terms of climate, including the following:

Climate Change:

- The Climate Change risk assessment undertaken for County Meath, examined specific impacts across a number of sectors and the potential likelihood and magnitude of these impacts in both the short and long term. The key risks outlined in this assessment specifically related to the scheme and major accidents and natural hazards are summarised below:
  - Increased damage to asphalt road surfaces in hotter temperatures;
  - Increase in magnitude and frequency of storm surges, increasing the risk of road damage and closure;
  - The occurrence of more frequent flood events after heavy rainfall events damaging and closing roads across the county and damaging road infrastructure such as bridges. This could have significant knock-on implications for businesses and industry in the areas affected;
  - Increase in disruption to public transport following floods and road closures and damage to public transport infrastructure, such as busses and bus terminals;
  - Water quality risks are most likely to be exacerbated during extreme weather events.
- To support the implementation of the Climate Action Plan 2019 and to facilitate measures which seek to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases in the Electricity, Enterprise, Built Environment, Transport, Agriculture and Waste sector;
- Emissions Sources in the County – Highest is Transport at 28.8%. This is because the number of cars in County Meath is marginally higher than the national average;
- The Plan outlines several mitigation measures in relation to Transport and Climate Change including:
  - Increasing the efficiency of the transport system and reducing the need for car ownership;
  - Promoting the development of 'live work' communities;
  - Focus on consolidation, brownfield, infill development close to public transport nodes;
  - Encouraging greater uptake of active transport in the region.
- The following policies and objectives have been outlined in the County Development Plan in relation to infrastructure, transport and climate change including:
  - **INF POL 20 -** To require that a Flood Risk Assessment is carried out for any development proposal, where flood risk may be an issue in accordance with the 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for

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Planning Authorities' (DoECLG/OPW, 2009). This assessment shall be appropriate to the scale and nature of risk to and from the potential development and shall consider the impact of Climate Change;

- **MOV POL 17** - To identify and seek to implement a strategic, coherent and high-quality cycle and walking network across the County that is integrated with public transport and interconnected with cultural, recreational, retail, educational and employment destinations and attractions;
- **MOV POL 18** - To support the provision of a long distance inter-connecting walking/cycling route(s) between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland;
- **MOV POL 20** - To encourage, where appropriate, the incorporation of safe and efficient cycleways, accessible footpaths and pedestrian routes into the design schemes for town centres/neighbourhood centres, residential, educational, employment, recreational developments and other uses;
- **MOV POL 22** - To prioritise the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists in proximity to public transport nodes;
- **MOV OBJ 27** - To implement, in conjunction with the NTA, the recommendations of the NTA strategy with regard to walking and cycling infrastructure;
- **MOV OBJ 28** - To revise road junction layouts, where appropriate, to provide dedicated pedestrian crossings, reduce pedestrian crossing distances, provide more direct pedestrian routes, and reduce the speed of turning traffic;
- **MOV OBJ 29** - To implement at appropriate locations pedestrian permeability schemes and enhancements;
- **MOV OBJ 31** - To implement at appropriate locations pedestrianisation schemes, particularly in central areas of high pedestrian footfall, such as core retail areas;
- **MOV OBJ 32** - To continue the development of a network of Greenways in the County in accordance with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sports Strategy for Future Development of Greenways;
- **MOV OBJ 62** - To undertake a risk assessment of County Meath transport infrastructure to identify areas at high risk of Climate Change impacts (e.g., flooding), over the life of the Development Plan;
- **MOV OBJ 63** - To ensure that any transport maintenance and improvement strategies ensure future climates are considered, to allow appropriate selection of materials and prioritisation of road for repair subject to adherence to TII standards.

Eastern Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019-2031

In June 2019, the RSES was published which sets out an integrated policy to enable the creation of sustainable regions with the capability to be resilient to future Climate Change. The RSES contains Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) designed to promote efficiencies in water and energy use and the move towards a low carbon economy. In terms of transport the RSES aims to encourage a modal shift towards green transport and energy options, as employing a regional green infrastructure strategy, RPOs related to climate include:

- RPO 7.29 refers to the preparation of a greenhouse gas inventory for the region to inform the preparation of a strategic mitigation action plan;
- RPO 7.31 requires Local Authorities to develop Climate Action Strategies (CAS) as well as local climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. The Meath Climate Action Strategy (2019-2024) was adopted in September 2019.

Meath County Council Climate Action Strategy 2019-2024[1]

The Meath County Council Climate Action Strategy (2019-2024) was published in 2019 as a response to the impact that Climate Change is having and will continue to have on the County of Meath and its citizens. The Strategy is based on eight main themes: Economy, Mobility, Built Environment, Clean Energy, Resource Management, Water, Natural Resources, and Planning. The Strategy includes policy and objectives relating to risks associated with Climate Change, including the following:

- The Meath County Council Climate Action Strategy forms part of the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) which was published in response to the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015;
- The strategy states that risks to Meath influenced by Climate Change are mainly those which are due to changes in extremes such as floods, precipitation, temperature change, storms and sea level rise;
- Increased frequency of extreme weather events (flooding, extreme heat) will impact the lifetime of roads. By developing maintenance plans that consider Climate Change roads will require less maintenance and closures due to essential works;
- Specific actions / objectives from the strategy in terms of mobility, built environment and safety include:
  - Climate resilience review of existing road network;
  - Future ready review of new Meath Climate Change infrastructure;
  - Integrate considerations around climate resilience in the Greenway cycle network;
  - Engaging with TII (Transport Infrastructure Ireland) to develop maintenance and improvement regimes.

[1] https://www.meath.ie/council/council-services/environment/climate-action/meath-county-council-climate-action

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- In terms of built environment, the strategy states 'Ensuring that climate resilience is considered for all council-lead developments, including future temperature increases and increased risks of flooding';
- B1.2 – Incorporate climate considerations into the planning and design stage to future proof all future council led developments for projected temperatures, heavy rain and local flooding;
- P9.1 – To undertake a review of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Meath following the completion of the flood mapping which has been developed as part of the Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study and Fingal East Meath Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (FEMFRAMS). This will also need to demonstrate how Climate Change has been taken into account.

Meath Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Management Plan 2020-2026

Meath Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Management Plan 2020-2026 was developed to manage flood risk and development in line with approved policies and objectives and outlines the following in terms of flood risk in Slane:

- No area specific flood risk management plans in place;
- History of flood events in February 1990, November 2000 and November 2002. There are recurring flood events at St. Patrick's terrace due to inadequate drainage;
- Slane is situated adjacent to the River Boyne. The grounds of Slane Castle are located adjacent to the watercourse and the H1 land use zoning is appropriate. The mill situated at the eastern extent of the settlement is zoned D1 and any extensions or new development within the zoning should be subject to an appropriately detailed FRA at development management stage;
- CFRAM mapping deliverables do not include Climate Change impacts, however an initial appraisal suggests that water levels are not subject to significant variation between Flood Zone A and B. The sensitivity to Climate Change is expected to be low.

Slane Public Realm Plan 2022

The Slane Public Realm Plan 2022 was published in August 2022. The Plan sets out the future approach to the streets and spaces of the village. The plan objectives also seek to be sustainable and promote measures to combat Climate Change. Objectives of the Public Realm Plan which contribute to this include:

- New pedestrian and cycling recreational links;
- Encourage active travel with more opportunities for cycle parking and use of public transport;
- Environmental improvements through proposed greening interventions including anti-pollution planting contributing to lessening the impacts of Climate Change and promotes the future-proofing of urban spaces.

TII Sustainability Implementation Plan – Our Future

TII has developed its 'Sustainability Implementation Plan - Our Future', in which it has outlined its vision to lead in the delivery and operation of sustainable transport, which includes principles aimed at strengthening resilience to address Climate Change. *Principles relevant to Climate Change and adaption outlined in the plan include:*

- Enable safe and resilient networks and services: 'We need to be responsive, adaptable and resilient in providing transport infrastructure for Ireland during an increasingly uncertain future, with impacts from Climate Change as well as wider physical, societal and economic pressures likely. We will focus on building the resilience of the services that we provide, to keep the networks available to all in an equitable way'
- Transition to net zero: 'Climate Change is a global issue, and the world is currently on track to exceed 1.5°C of warming between 2030 and 2052 if emissions continue to rise. The Irish Government, alongside other nation states from around the world, has committed to reducing emissions to net-zero by 2050 to safeguard our future and the future of the next generation'
- Create total value for society: 'By taking into account these other areas of value, we can make more informed, sustainable decisions. We commit to placing sustainability at the heart of every decision we make, thinking about our land as public space, for public good, and using it to preserve and enhance the environment, capture carbon emissions and help the fight against Climate Change, whilst providing space for people to not only move safely and access essential services, but also to socialise, and connect with each other and the environment'