

# Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

Proposed Innovation Centre at Belgard Square North,  
Tallaght, Dublin 24.

September 2020



Prepared on behalf of  
South Dublin County Council

  
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# 1. Introduction

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) requirements derive from EU Directives. Council Directive 2014/52/EU amended Directive 2011/92/EU and is transposed into Irish Law by the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018.

Proposed development which falls within one of the categories of development specified in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, which equals or exceeds, a limit, quantity or threshold prescribed for that class of development must be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). Where a project is of a specified type but does not meet, or exceed, the applicable threshold then the likelihood of the project having significant effects (adverse and beneficial) on the environment needs to be considered.

The purpose of this Screening Report is to provide the required information to enable South Dublin County Council to determine whether an EIAR is required to accompany the application for permission.

The criteria for determining whether development listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5 should be subject to an EIA are set out under Schedule 7. The information to be provided by the applicant or developer for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for environmental impact assessment is set out under Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001, as amended by the 2018 Regulations. Paragraph 4 of Schedule 7A requires that: *'The compilation of the information at paragraphs 1 to 3 shall take into account, where relevant, the criteria set out in Schedule 7.'* In this report, the information has been set out under the more detailed headings provided for under Schedule 7. In effect, this ensures that all of the information required under Schedule 7A has been furnished. It also presents the information in a manner that facilitates the competent authority in its screening assessment.

This Report was prepared by Kayleigh Sexton of McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants. Kayleigh holds an MA in Planning and Sustainable Development and a BA in Geography. She has practised as both a planning consultant for over 3 years in both the UK and Ireland and has directed the preparation of EIARs for a range of development types including residential.

## 2 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening

### 2.1 Mandatory EIA

The subject development does not fall within any of the specified classes of development set out in Part 1 of Schedule 5.

The proposed development falls within the category of an 'Infrastructure Project' within Schedule 5 (10) (b) (iv) of the Planning and Development Regulations, which provides that a mandatory EIA must be carried out for:

*Construction of more than 500 units.*

*Urban development which would involve an area greater than 2 hectares in the case of a business district, 10 hectares in the case of other parts of a built-up area and 20 hectares elsewhere.*

*(In this paragraph, "business district" means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.)*

The proposed development is for an Innovation Centre located on Belgard Square North, Tallaght, Dublin 24. Belgard Square North is located in Tallaght Town Centre and given the sites location, may be considered to meet the business district criteria. Accordingly, the applicable threshold is 2 hectares i.e. '*business district*'. The proposed development site is 0.21 hectares and is significantly below the 2ha threshold.

### 2.2 Sub-threshold EIA

In cases where a project is mentioned in Part 2 but is classed as "sub-threshold development", it is necessary for the competent authority, in this instance South Dublin County Council, to undertake a case-by-case examination to determine whether the proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The criteria for determining whether development listed in Part 2 of Schedule 5 should be subject to an EIA are set out in Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 ('the 2001 Regulations'), as inserted by Article 7 of the European Union (Planning and Development) (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018 ('the 2018 Regulations') and the information to be provided by the Applicant for the purposes of screening sub-threshold development for EIA is set out in Schedule 7A.

### 3. Methodology

According to European Commission Guidance (2017) “Screening has to implement the Directive’s overall aim, i.e. to determine if a Project listed in Annex II is likely to have significant effects on the environment and, therefore, be made subject to a requirement for Development Consent and an assessment, with regards to its effects on the environment. At the same time, Screening should ensure that an EIA is carried out only for those Projects for which it is thought that a significant impact on the environment is possible, thereby ensuring a more efficient use of both public and private resources. Hence, Screening has to strike the right balance between the above two objectives.”

As identified in section 2.2, the proposed development is a ‘project’ for the purpose of the EIA Directive and implementing Regulations. However, it does not meet the applicable mandatory thresholds of 500 dwelling units/2 hectares area.

The key issue for the competent authority in the context of the possible need for EIA of sub-threshold is whether or not such development is likely to have significant effects on the environment. Consideration of significant effect should not be determined by reference to size only. The nature and location of a project must also be taken into account.

This EIA Screening Report is therefore being undertaken to determine in light of the criteria listed in Schedule 7a of the Planning and Development Regulations whether or not this proposed development will require full EIA.

According to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (2018) “For all sub-threshold developments listed in Schedule 5 Part 2, where no EIAR is submitted or EIA determination requested, a screening determination is required to be undertaken by the competent authority unless, on preliminary examination it can be concluded that there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment. This is initiated by the competent authority following the receipt of a planning application or appeal. A preliminary examination is undertaken, based on professional expertise and experience, and having regard to the ‘Source – Pathway – Target’ model, where appropriate. The examination should have regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 7 to the 2001 Regulations. Where, based on a preliminary examination of the information submitted with the application and any other supplementary information received, the competent authority concludes that, having considered the nature, size and location of the proposed development, there is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment, this should be recorded with reasons for this conclusion stated, and no EIA required or formal determination made. The recording of the competent authority’s view should be brief and concise, but adequate to inform the public. In many cases this considered view will be included in the planner’s/inspector’s report on the planning application and this may be cross-referenced in the competent authority’s decision. Normally, this will be published at the time of the decision of the competent authority.”



## 4. Description of the Project

This section provides information on the physical characteristics of the proposed development, and a description of the location of the project, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected, as is required under paragraph 1 of Schedule 7A of the 2001 Regulations (as inserted by the 2018 Regulations, Article 97): See also Annex II(A) of 2014/52/EU.

### 4.1 Physical Characteristics

#### 4.1.1 Size and Design

##### 4.1.1.1 Development Description

The 0.21 hectare site is located to the north of Tallaght town centre with Tallaght Hospital located to the west. The site was formerly used as temporary traveller accommodation known as Maelruan, and concrete bays and service areas associated with this former use are still present. Further north of the site is a number of Industrial warehousing units which are zoned as regeneration in the Development Plan and they will be redeveloped for a mix of uses in the future. The site is currently being used as a temporary site compound to serve a number of road projects which are currently being implemented to regenerate and improve on the town centre public realm area.

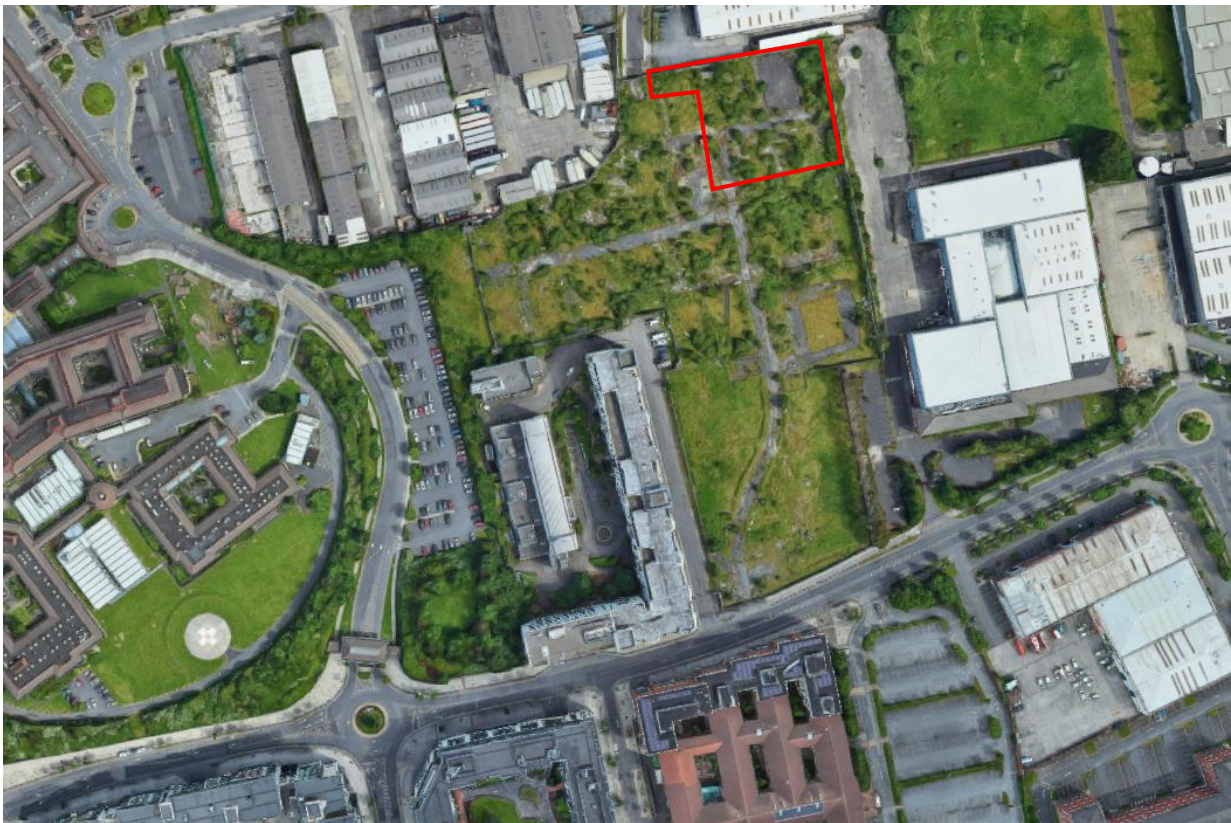


FIGURE 1 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT SITE

The proposed development will consist of:

The construction of a new “Innovation Centre” for Tallaght which extends to c 2,980msq in a bespoke standalone building. The scheme comprises;

- New four storey structure, which will accommodate;
  - Town hall, reception and café at street level engaging with new Public Square (which forms separate Part 8 application)
  - Three levels of flexible office accommodation- to support start up enterprise.
- New access road to the north of the site, to include the provision of 11no. new car parking spaces.
- Associated site works to include secure bicycle parking, an integrated ESB sub station, plant, landscaping, lighting and signage and other support facilities.

#### 4.1.1.2 Drainage (Foul & Surface Water)

There is currently no existing foul drainage connection from the site. The infrastructure to serve the site will be provided along with the new Cookstown Road to Belgard Square North link road. The proposed development will link to the new foul manhole being installed. All foul effluent generated from the proposed development will be collected in 150mm pipes, and will flow under gravity to the proposed new connection which will be provided to the south western corner of the site as part of the link road works as mentioned previously.

It is calculated that on occupation, the development will generate a total hydraulic loading of 15m<sup>3</sup> per day. This equates to an average flow of 0.174 litres/second and a peak flow of 1.04 litres/second. The discharge from the municipal sewer will be treated in Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant prior to discharge to Dublin Bay.

In terms of surface water management, Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDs) are integrated to the design including interception, primary and secondary treatment. Surface water will drain by gravity and discharge at a restricted flow rate into the landscaped areas, tree pits and the existing municipal combined sewer which runs along Cookstown Road to Belgard Square North to the eastern corner of the application site.

The proposed design is compliant with the requirements of the Greater Dublin Strategic Drainage Study (GDSDS) which aims to minimise the impact of urbanisation, by replicating the run-off characteristics of a greenfield site. The criteria provide a consistent approach to addressing the increase in both rate and volume of run-off, as well as ensuring that the environment is protected from pollution sources such as roads and buildings.

The 2-stage treatment proposed includes a attenuation storage, permeable pavement and filter drain prior to discharge at a controlled rate to the municipal sewer. The proposed SuDS measures will reduce the quantity and improve the quality of water discharging into the receiving municipal network.

The peak runoff discharge is restricted to 7.1 litres/second/hectare in line with the GDSDS. The attenuation is sized to accommodate storm events up to and including the 1:100 year event with an additional 20% for climate change.

#### 4.1.1.3 Water Supply

The proposed water supply connection is from a new connection to a 160mm watermain which is currently being installed along the with the Cookstown Road to Belgard Square north link road in addition to the existing mains water infrastructure. The peak flow demand generated by the proposed development is calculated as 1.09 litres/second, with an average water demand of 0.174 litres per second.

#### 4.1.1.4 Energy

The design incorporates energy efficiency measures that will meet the requirements of Near Zero Energy Building (NZEB) regulations. The building will achieve a Building Energy Rating (BER) of A3. To achieve these BER ratings it is necessary to incorporate renewable energy technologies which include a green roof on the proposed Innovation Centre development.

In terms of services, the maximum electrical demand will be 240 kVA. Connections will be made to the existing electricity infrastructure and the scheme will connect to a new District Heating scheme which will avail of waste heat generated by a local data centre.

#### 4.1.1.5 Operational Waste Management

A bin store has been proposed within the Innovation Centre building at ground floor level. A 3-bin system will be provided for by the operator which will allow future occupants to separate waste into organic, recyclables and residual waste therefore promoting the principles of the waste hierarchy.

The bin store proposed is capable of accommodating the waste that will be generated during the operational stage. All waste will be segregated at source before presentation for collection.

### 4.1.2 Cumulation with other Existing &/or Approved Plans and Projects

In August 2018, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government issued “*Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment*”. These Guidelines were issued pursuant to section 28 of the 2000 Act and planning authorities and the Board are required to have regard to same when carrying out their functions under the Act.

The Guidelines summarise “*cumulative effects*” as:

*“Effects are not to be considered in isolation but cumulatively i.e. when they are added to other effects. A single effect on its own may not be significant in terms of impact on the environment but, when considered together with other effects, may have a significant impact on the environment. Also, a single effect which may, on its own, have a significant effect, may have a reduced and insignificant impact when combined with other effects.*”

The Directive requires that the EIAR describes the cumulation of effects. Cumulative effects may arise from:

- The interaction between the various impacts within a single project;
- The interaction between all of the differing existing and / or approved projects in the same areas as the proposed project.

The Irish Courts, in *Ratheniska Timahoe and Spink Substation Action Group v An Bord Pleanála* [2015] IEHC 18, have held that the obligation to take into account the cumulative impact of the development, the subject matter of a planning application, with other developments is **confined to existing and permitted development** in the relevant area. It **does not necessitate deliberation on possible future development which may be at the concept, design or the early planning stage and which may not yet have been authorised.** (emp. added)

Notwithstanding the above, the proposed development site is part of a larger regeneration area located in Tallaght, which totals 0.21 ha in size. The zoning allocation is REGEN and the objective is ‘to facilitate enterprise and/or residential led regeneration’. It is intended that the balance of the non-statutory Masterplan lands will be developed for use as a new ‘affordable rental’ residential development, a new school and a new urban square, together with an innovation Centre (the subject development) which is also consistent with the land use designations as outlined in the Tallaght Local Area Plan.

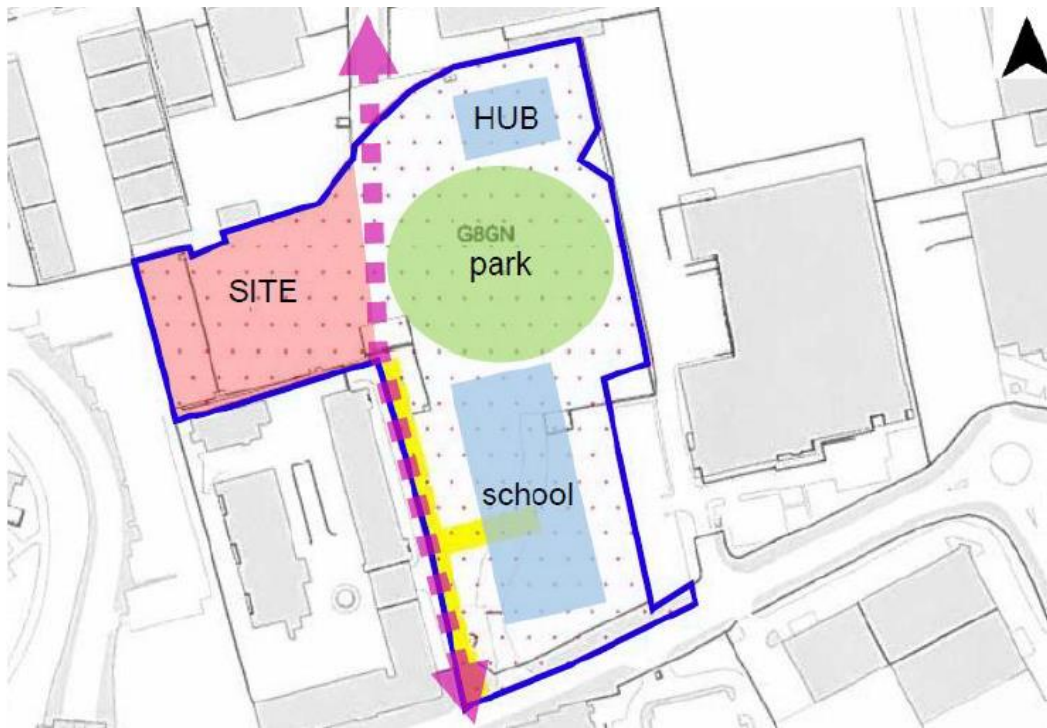


FIGURE 2 NON-STATUTORY MASTERPLAN LANDS PREPARED BY SDCC

The Innovation Centre element of this non-statutory Masterplan (the subject of this application for permission), and any future development of the Masterplan lands are separate sites. Should there be any overlap between the construction phase of the proposed development and development of the wider Masterplan proposals, a coordinated approach to the management of the development during the construction phase will be implemented. A coordinated approach to traffic management would be adopted to limit the effect on the surrounding local road network.

**Importantly, the proposed development of the residential scheme is standalone, it is not functionally dependent on the wider development of the Masterplan lands. Accordingly, the screening out of the proposed development from the need for EIA does not give rise to project splitting.**

The supporting application documentation in so far as is reasonably practical takes account of the impacts of the delivery of the wider Masterplan development.

A search of the **South Dublin County Council Planning Database** did not reveal any existing or approved consents within the immediate catchment of the subject site, however, an SHD application was approved east of the application site (ABP Ref: 303306-18), which could have in-combination effects that would be capable of resulting in likely significant impacts to the environment. This application was accompanied by an EIAR which aims to mitigate any impact on the environment. It is reasonable to assume that all development consents would incorporate conditions requiring protection of the environment during the construction phase and will therefore not have a long-term impact on the environment in this town centre location.

The **'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities'** promotes building up urban infill sites (which may not have been built on before) and states *"there is a presumption in favour of buildings of increased height in our town/city cores and in other urban locations with good public transport accessibility"*. The proposed development is consistent with this Specific Planning Policy Requirement (SPPR) and satisfies the development management criteria for increased building height.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed development will have a significant permanent positive impact when considered in the context of existing and or approved plans or projects.

### 4.1.3 The Nature of any associated Demolition Works

The proposed demolition works to clear the site involve the removal of the concrete bays and servicing areas left behind from the site use as traveller accommodation.

### 4.1.4 Use of Natural Resources

Development of the proposed scheme will necessitate the removal of the existing concrete bays, stripping of topsoil and excavation of subsoils. Initial estimates indicate that approximately 3,000 cubic meters of material will be excavated to facilitate the development which include the removal of any foundations, ground floor build-up and road build-up. Any suitable topsoil will be retained for use as engineering fill, where possible. It is anticipated that the majority of subsoils excavated will be removed off site as there is limited opportunity for reuse within the proposed development.

During the operational stage potable water will be sourced from the Poulaphouca Reservoir and the average demand is calculated as 0.174 litres per second. A pre-connection enquiry has been submitted to Irish Water and a confirmation of feasibility has been received. A copy of the letter received is included in the Engineering Report prepared by OCSC which is submitted with this application.

The design incorporates energy efficiency measures that will meet the requirements of Near Zero Energy Building (NZEB) regulations. The building will achieve a Building Energy Rating (BER) of A3. Full details of the proposed measures are included in the **Energy Statement** that accompanies this application and the proposals seek to significantly reduce the use of natural resources for generating heat. This will have a positive long-term effect as the need for fossil fuel derived energy will be significantly reduced.

### 4.1.5 Production of Wastes

The main non-hazardous and hazardous waste streams that could be generated by the construction and demolition activities at a typical site are shown in the Table below.

Waste Material	LoW Code
Concrete, blocks, tiles, ceramics	17 01
Wood, glass and plastic	17 02
Bituminous mixtures, coal tar and tarred products	17 03
Metals (including their alloys)	17 04
Soil and stones	17 05
Gypsum based construction material	17 08
Paper and cardboard	20 01 01
Mixed C&D waste	17 09
Green waste	20 02 01
Electrical and electronic components	20 01 35 & 36

TABLE 1 TYPICAL CONSTRUCTION WASTE STREAMS

Table 2 shows the predicted construction waste generation for the proposed development based on the information available to date along with the targets for management of the waste streams. The predicted waste amounts are based on an average large-scale development waste generation rate per m<sup>2</sup>.

Waste	Tonnes	Reuse/Recovery		Recycle		Disposal	
		%	Tonnes	%	Tonnes	%	Tonnes
Concrete, bricks, tiles, ceramics and plasterboard	12	40	5	55	7	5	1
Asphalt, tar and tar products	1	0	0	80	1	20	0
Metals	1	5	0	90	1	5	0
Other	4	10	1	70	3	20	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>

**TABLE 2 ESTIMATED REUSE, RECYCLE, DISPOSAL RATES WHICH HAS BEEN CALCULATED AS PART OF THE INITIAL DESIGN PROCESS AND IS NOT FINAL**

The current proposal is initial design process which will be further refined through a tendering process. On this basis, a number of design assumptions with regard to recycling, reuse and disposal rates have been given to inform this report. The Council will seek to optimise the reuse and recycling of generated waste during the formal design stage and the later construction phase. All waste will be segregated on site and stored separately prior to removal to an accredited facility. This will have a positive environmental effect as waste to landfill will be minimised where possible as to limit any impacts on the environment.

Wastewater generated during the operational stage will be discharged to the municipal sewer and treated in Ringsend Wastewater Treatment Plant prior to discharge.

#### **4.1.6 Pollution and Nuisances**

Construction sites, by their very nature, can create nuisance, due to noise generation, dust arising from site preparation and mud tracked onto public roads. However, there are standard proven mitigation measures that effectively minimise the effect.

There is no direct hydrological connection between the proposed development site and any surface water bodies so therefore there is no risk of run-off from the construction phase causing pollution.

There is an indirect pathway to Dublin Bay via the municipal combined sewer. It is not considered likely that a perceptible effect would occur in this coastal water body from accidental spillages or suspended solids arising from the construction phase having regard to the relatively minor scale of the proposed development site and the distance to Dublin Bay.

There is no likelihood of pollution or nuisances occurring during the operational phase as the development includes engineered drainage proposals that will be integrity tested during the commissioning phase.

#### **4.1.7 Risks of Accidents and/or Disasters**

The contractor's Construction Management Plan will be informed by a detailed risk assessment and the implementation of standard proven construction mitigation measures, will negate the risk of major accidents or disasters arising during the construction phase.

The design of the proposed storm water drainage system makes allowance for climate change, full details are set out in the Engineering Services Report prepared by OCSC Consulting Engineers and included with the planning application documentation. The surface water design makes allowance for climate change.

The site is located in a Flood Risk Area C, where the risk of flooding is low.

A search of the Office of Public Works (OPW) National Flood Hazard Mapping service confirms that there has been no historical flood incident within the proposed development site.

A detailed site investigation was undertaken in 2017 as part of the design work for the adjacent Belgard Gardens residential development by Atlas Developments. These investigations included trialpit and borehole works on the site for the proposed Innovation Centre. The general ground conditions consist of:

- Topsoil/surfacing
- Made Ground
- Granular Deposits
- Cohesive Deposits

The interpretive section of the 2017 site investigation report recommends an allowable bearing pressure of 250kN/m<sup>2</sup> on the stiff cohesive deposits. This layer is of the order of 3m below existing ground level in the vicinity of the site.

A review of the Geological Society of Ireland's (GSI) groundwater vulnerability mapping indicates a moderate risk of groundwater contamination at the site. The site will be largely covered in hardstanding that will protect the underlying hydrogeological environment. There will be no direct discharge to ground during the operational stage.

The application area is defined as Flood Zone C in accordance with the OPWs *Planning and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities* where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 for both river and coastal flooding). Development in this zone is appropriate from a flood risk perspective (subject to assessment of flood hazard from sources other than rivers and the coast) and where it meets the normal range of other proper planning and sustainable development considerations.

The foul water discharge will be licensed by Irish Water, collected in the public sewer and treated at Irish Water's Ringsend wastewater treatment plant (WwTP) prior to discharge to Dublin Bay. Given the scale of the proposed development, the peak foul discharge from the proposed development is considered to be an insignificant volume of wastewater in the context of the organic design of Ringsend WwTP.

A search of the Road Safety Authority road collision map confirmed that there have been no fatal collisions on Belgard Square North during the reporting period 2005-2016, however, there was one minor and one serious casualty as a result of a car collision in 2005. The proposed main vehicular entrance to the site is off the new link road being built between the Cookstown Industrial Estate Road and Belgard Square North which was approved as part of the Part 8 Planning Process.

Given the nature of the proposed development, during the operational stage, the risk of major environmental accidents or disasters is considered to be negligible. The scheme has been assessed by a Fire Consultant and all the required mitigation measures are integrated into the design.

It is concluded that the risk of major accidents and disasters arising from the proposed development during both the construction and operational stage are not likely.

#### **4.1.8 Risks to Human Health**

Construction sites pose potential risk to the health and safety of the public. However, access by the public would be considered trespassing on private property. Assuming observance of private property, no health and safety impacts to the public would be anticipated.

A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be adopted to manage traffic on the public road to ensure the protection of human health.

To reduce the potential for health and safety risks, the project developer would require that all contractors prepare a site-specific health and safety plan before initiating construction activities. The plan would inform those on site of the measures to take in the event of an emergency and would be maintained for the duration of the construction phase.

During the operational phase the risk to human health is not significant. The proposed design provides for the segregation of pedestrians and traffic and incorporates the principles of universal access and the requirements of Part M of the Building Regulations so that the development will be readily accessible to all, regardless of age, ability or disability.

The design has been reviewed by a Fire Consultant and has been assessed as meeting all requirements to ensure the protection of residents and users of the community facility including employees in the event of a fire.



## 5 Location of the Proposed Development

### 5.1 Existing & Approved Landuse

The proposed development site is an undeveloped site which was previously used as traveller accommodation for the Traveling community.

The site is zoned 'REGEN' - To facilitate enterprise and/or residential lead regeneration in the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022. An Innovation Centre development is a permissible use.

### 5.2 Natural Resources & Absorption Capacity

#### 5.2.1 Landscape Character

The proposed development site has a high capacity to accept change without adversely affecting the character, setting as the site is located within the town centre and the area surrounding the application site is already built up coupled with the REGEN zoning objective as included in the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022.

The proposed development site is therefore not identified as a sensitive location and has been earmarked for development by South Dublin County Council within the Tallaght Local Area Plan.

On its own, the proposed development of a 4-storey Innovation Centre is likely to appear as a modest contemporary urban intervention set in a town centre location.

As part of the wider Masterplan development, it will contribute to a new urban area with its own character and identity. Resulting cumulative impacts on local landscape character and visual amenity are likely to be positive.

#### 5.2.2 Visual/Amenity

Due to the site's location within Tallaght Town Centre, it is not considered that the development will lead to any detrimental loss of daylight/sunlight to surrounding properties. The Innovation Centre building has been designed to a very high standard to ensure that it fits in with the surrounding area, and therefore it is considered that the visual impact of this development within its surroundings will be neutral.

#### 5.2.3 Biodiversity

##### 5.2.3.1 Habitat Survey

A walkover survey of the lands was undertaken by Lorna Gill of Scott Cawley on the 6th March 2020. All habitats were classified using *A Guide to Habitats in Ireland*, recording dominant species, indicator species and/or species of conservation interest; with the Fossitt category codes given in parentheses. Vascular plant nomenclature generally follows the *BSBI's Shortlist of Accepted Plant Names*. The habitat survey included checks for the presence of invasive species listed on the Third Schedule of the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011*. The survey also included an assessment of whether any habitats in the lands corresponded to habitats listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, as they are described in the *Interpretation Manual of European Union Habitats* (European Commission, 2013).

##### 5.2.3.2 Protected/Priority Fauna

Signs of fauna were recorded by Scott Cawley concurrent with the completion of the site walkover survey on the 6th March 2020, and involved the identification of tracks, prints, droppings and/or carcasses (if present). The Table below provides a summary of all ecological features identified on the site, including their valuation and legal / conservation status.

Ecological feature	Valuation	Legal status	Important feature?
Spoil and bare ground	Negligible	-	No
Artificial Surfaces	Negligible	-	No
Dry meadows and grassy verges	Local Importance (low value)	-	No
Scrub	Local Importance (low value)	-	No

FIGURE 3 SUMMARY OF ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

There are no Annex I habitats present within the proposed development site or immediate environs. Overall, the habitats found onsite have limited ecological value.

#### 5.2.4 Land & Soil

Development of the proposed development site will necessitate the stripping of concrete bays and service areas left over from the sites use as traveller accommodation, topsoil and excavation of the underlying subsoils. However, given the location of the site, within an existing built-up area, the loss of both land-use and soils is appropriate. The effect is neutral and not significant.

Results from the site investigation programme carried identifies the soil strata as Made Ground. This is a vacant brownfield site, as such it is expected that the risk of contamination is low to moderate, and this will be confirmed through environmental analysis.

Prior to removal from the site, the soils and subsoils will be assessed to determine if they can be reused as a by-product. The process under Article 27 of the European Communities (Waste Directive) Regulations 2011 will be followed. Article 27 requires that certain conditions are met and that by-product decisions are made to the EPA via their online notification form.

The next option (beneficial reuse) may be appropriate for the excavated material pending environmental testing to classify the material as hazardous or non-hazardous in accordance with the EPA Waste Classification – List of Waste & Determining if Waste is Hazardous or Non-Hazardous publication. Clean material may be used as fill material in other construction projects or engineering fill for waste licensed sites. Beneficial reuse of surplus excavation material as engineering fill may be subject to further testing to determine if materials meet the specific engineering standards for their proposed end-use.

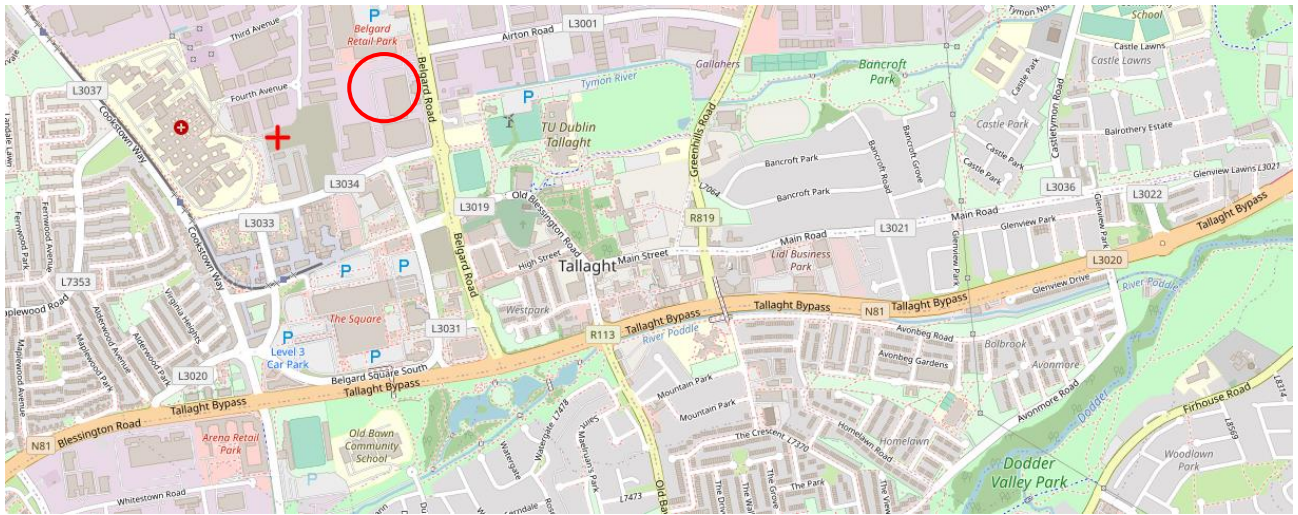
Any nearby sites requiring clean fill/capping material will be contacted to investigate reuse opportunities for clean and inert material. If any of the material is to be reused on another site as a by-product (and not as a waste), this will be done in accordance with Article 27. Similarly, if any soils/stones are imported onto the site from another construction site as a by-product, this will also be done in accordance with Article 27.

Reuse of excavated soils as outlined above would represent a neutral effect with respect to the loss of soils from the proposed development site.

#### 5.2.5 Water Environment

##### 5.2.5.1 Surface Water

The closest surface water feature to the proposed development site is the Tymon River, approx. 0.5km west of the application site. It flows north west and reaches the River Poddle approx. 1.7 km downstream. The Poddle discharges to the River Liffey via Ushers Quay. The freshwater sections of the River Poddle are of At Risk status, and the estuarine section (Liffey Estuary) is of an Unpolluted status (Water Framework Directive Status Assessments 2013-2018).



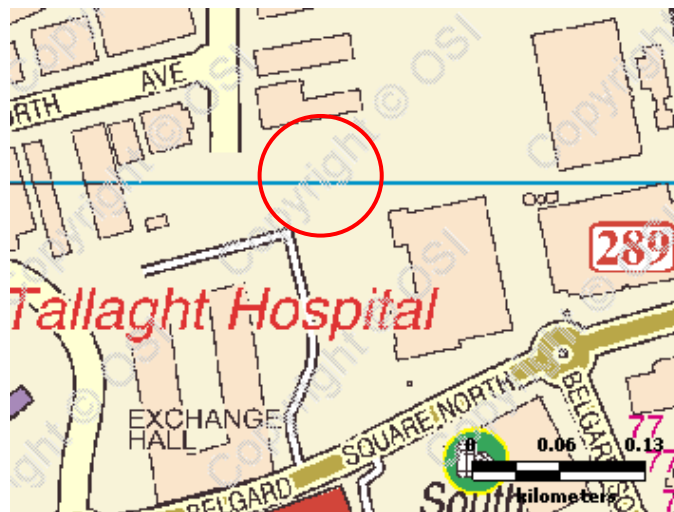
**FIGURE 4 TYMON RIVER (EPA MAPS)**

### 5.2.5.2 Groundwater

The proposed development site is within the Dublin Urban Groundwater Body. Its overall status is Good and the objective is to protect this status. According to the Geological Survey of Ireland, subsoil permeability is Low and the site is underlain by a Locally Important Aquifer i.e. bedrock which is moderately productive only in local zoned. Groundwater vulnerability is Moderate.

### 5.2.6 Flood Risk

The Office of Public Works (OPW) Flood Maps identifies that the site has not flooded in the past.



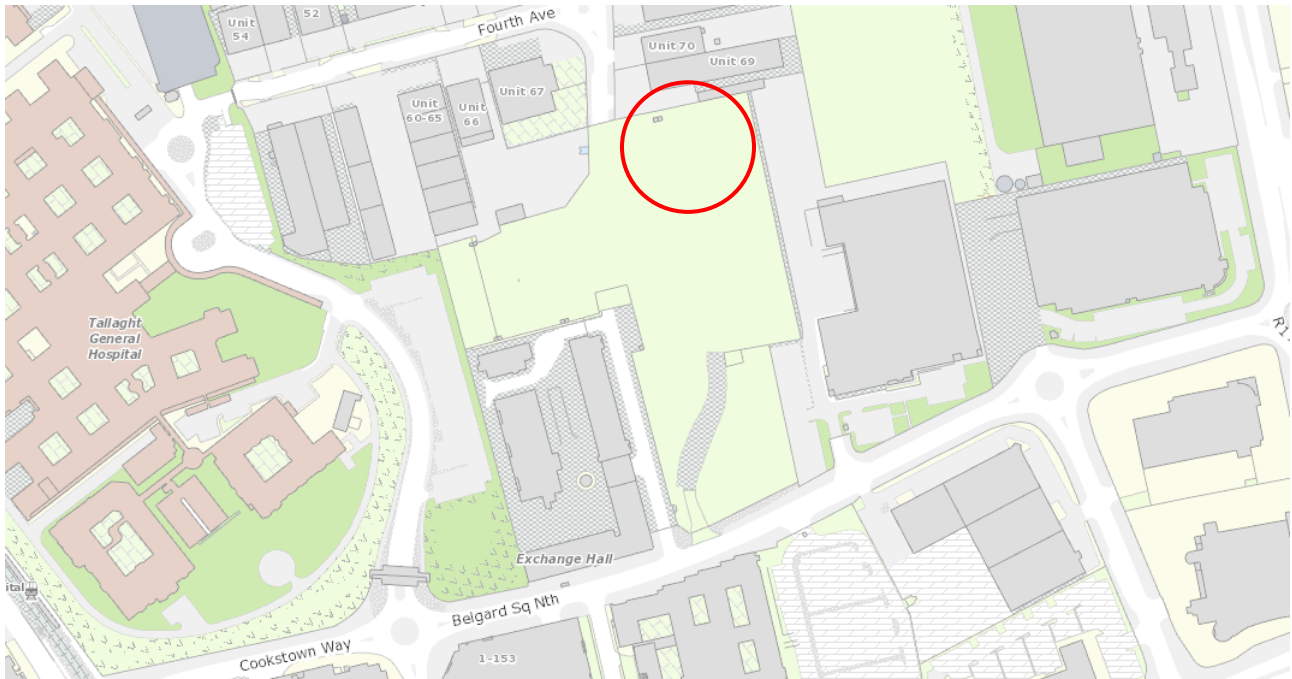
**FIGURE 5 OPW NATIONAL FLOOD HAZARD MAPPING**

A site-specific flood risk assessment has not been prepared for this application. The Drainage department in South Dublin County Council confirmed that this assessment not required as the site is located in a Flood Risk Zone C.

## 5.2.7 Cultural Heritage

There are no Protected Structures within the proposed development site, and it is not located within an Architectural Conservation Area.

A search of the Historic Environment Viewer did not record any buildings or monuments listed on the National Monument Service on the site or surrounding area.



**FIGURE 6 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT VIEWER**

## 6 Type & Characteristics of Potential Impacts

This section of the report focusses on those effects that are likely to occur during both the construction and operational stages, post the application of mitigation measures.

The characteristics of the likely effects arising from the proposed development are rated using the descriptive terminology presented in the EPA (2017) *Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports – Draft*.

We note the criteria of paragraph 3 of Schedule 7, *Characteristics of Potential Impacts*; *The potential significant effects of proposed development in relation to criteria set out under paragraphs 1 and 2 above, and having regard in particular to:*

- *the extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population),*
- *the transfrontier nature of the impact,*
- *the magnitude and complexity of the impact,*
- *the probability of the impact,*
- *the duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.*

It should be noted that given the nature and scale of the proposed development, there is no likelihood of trans frontier impacts arising from either the construction or operational phases.

The likely significant environmental impacts from the construction and operation are presented below.

### 6.1 Population & Human Health

#### 6.1.1 Potential Construction Impacts

During construction, there is the potential for temporary minor impacts related to traffic inconvenience, dust and noise to occur. There is a potential that dust, noise and vibration during construction, could impact the local population due to the proximity of the site to Tallaght Hospital. However, the works will be short-term in duration. Standard best practice construction methodologies will limit disturbance to people in the area.

The National Roads Authority's *Guidelines for the Treatment of Air Quality During the Planning and Construction of National Road Schemes* sets out 3 no. scales for construction sites, (i) major, (ii) moderate and (iii) minor. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development it is considered to be minor. The distance from the source for significant effects from dust for minor sites is 10m. The proposed development site fronts onto a public road and is in a primarily commercial area.

A dust management plan will be implemented prior to the commencement of construction. Mitigating measures will include;

- Enclosing the site with hoarding
- Covering of stockpiles to prevent windblow
- Covering of delivery/removal vehicles using tarpaulin
- Switching off of vehicles when not in use
- The site will be regularly dampened during prolonged periods of dry weather
- Access onto the public road will be regularly cleaned

Construction noise will be kept to a minimum in accordance with BS5228: Noise and Vibration Control on Construction Sites. Demolition works are confined to the removal of the concrete bays and servicing areas present on site and piling is not required for the proposed development.

Overall, subject to the proper implementation of standard proven construction measures, the residual impact of the construction stage would be neutral, confined to the local area, of short-term duration and not significant.

## 6.1.2 Potential Operational Impacts

It is proposed to develop an Innovation Centre of 2,980 sq.m. The effect would be moderate to positive and the impact would extend to a town level and would have a permanent duration.

## 6.1.3 Potential Cumulative Impact

It is anticipated that subject to a positive decision from the planning authority, construction of the proposed development site will commence as soon as is practical. An application for permission for development of the wider Masterplan lands are in the process of being submitted to the Council.

Should the construction phase of the proposed development overlap with any other development within the Masterplan lands this could lead to an increased intensity in the construction related impacts outlined above.

A holistic approach to construction phase mitigation would be applied. Details of construction phase traffic movements and timing would be shared and a coordinated approach would be employed to limit any short term impacts.

Development in the wider area would be subject to the same standard construction phase mitigation with respect to noise and dust nuisance. These measures are proven as effective.

Overall, subject to the proper implementation of standard proven construction measures, the residual cumulative impact would be neutral, confined to the local area, of short-term duration and not significant.

Development of the wider Masterplan area together with the proposed Innovation Centre would create a vibrant town centre with significant amenities that would be accessible to all. These town centre lands would benefit from enhanced permeability, with walking and cycling prioritised, in addition to a new public square. The potential cumulative impact on population on human health would be significantly positive for the local area and would have a permanent duration.

## 6.2 Landscape & Visual

The **photomontages** submitted under separate cover should be referenced for this section.

### 6.2.1 Potential Construction Impacts

#### 6.2.1.1 Potential Impact on Trees

There are no trees present on site, therefore no trees will be impacted by the construction of the proposed Innovation Centre building.

#### 6.2.1.2 Emergence of Plant, Machinery & Structure

The proposed development site abuts the new Cookstown Road to Belgard Square link road along its eastern boundary. During the construction phase, plant and machinery will be required and there will be short-term visual impacts. Prior to commencement of construction, the site will be secured with boundary hoarding to screen the works from the public road. Notwithstanding, taller plant such as cranes and the emergence of the development will be visible locally and within the wider Tallaght area. This is standard for all construction projects and the effect is neutral, not significant and short-term to temporary.

#### 6.2.1.3 Potential Cumulative Impact

It is not anticipated that there will be any significant overlap between the construction of the proposed development and the construction phase(s) of the wider Masterplan area. Should they coincide then there would be a greater concentration of tall plant on site that would be visible from the local and wider area. This would read as a large-scale construction site, a common sight in a regeneration areas.

As noted previously, a development was approved by An Bord Pleanála east of the subject site for 438 residential units in the form of apartments, 403 student beds and 7,000 sq.ft of retail space (ABP Ref: 303306-18). An EIAR was prepared as part of this application, therefore any impacts on the environment as a result of the construction of this development would have been assessed and mitigated against as part of the EIAR prepared. The potential impact would be short-term, not significant and neutral.

### **6.2.2 Potential Operational Impacts**

With any new buildings, there is the risk that the new structures may be designed in largely functional terms with little regard for distinctive aesthetics and local urban landscape character.

On its own, the proposed development appears as a modest contemporary urban intervention set in a town centre environment. The proposed development will be of increased scale and height and will exhibit rich elevational detailing. The proposed height of approx. 19.17m is consistent with the Development Plan's height strategy.

A pragmatic approach has been taken to building height, incorporating similar building heights as built in the surrounding area. The proposed Innovation Centre building is 4-storeys in height.

Varied building heights are used to create a dynamic built environment with rich character, variety and structure. Sympathetic palettes of materials incorporate traditional brick with complementary modern materials.

The proposed design will make a strong positive contribution to the urban fabric and character of the local area.

### **6.2.3 Potential Cumulative Impact**

The cumulative impact of the proposed development, the development to the east of the subject site and the Masterplan has the potential to be a significant influence upon urban landscape character and visual amenity in the wider area.

As part of the wider Masterplan development, the proposed residential development will contribute to the regeneration of this part of Tallaght town centre.

Developments proposed in the Masterplan include buildings of similar or larger scale with complementary character to the proposed development and will integrate closely in terms of building relationships, street networks and open spaces.

The proposed development will build upon the existing and emerging high-density urban landscape by establishing a comprehensive cluster of contemporary development with Tallaght town centre that complements those changes already happening nearby. The impact of this upon landscape character and visual amenity is likely to be positive in the medium term as consented developments get built.

## 6.3 Material Assets: Traffic & Transport

The **Traffic and Transport Report** submitted under separate cover should be referenced for this section.

### 6.3.1 Potential Construction Impacts

During the construction phase, appropriate traffic management and signage will be in place to ensure safe access and egress from the site, and the safety of other road users.

### 6.3.2 Potential Operational Impacts

There will be no significant long-term impact on local traffic movements due to the scale of the proposed development, the and the new access proposed off the new Cookstown Road to Belgard Square North link road which is currently under construction.

### 6.3.3 Potential Cumulative Impact

The long-term effects of the development on the surrounding road network has been assessed by South Dublin County Council's Transport Department and it is not considered to have an impact on traffic in the area due to its town centre location, and reduced car parking provision.

## 6.4 Material Assets: Built Services

### 6.4.1 Potential Construction Impacts

There is a risk of the following occurring during the construction stage;

- Mobilisation of sediments and harmful substances during the construction phase, due to exposed soil and earth movement, which may be flushed into the local drainage system during rainfall events.

Due to the natural topography of the site and location of municipal sewers, natural gravity flows of sediments of harmful substances spills affecting the public surface water network are unlikely, not significant and temporary in duration.

During the construction phase potable water will be required to serve the workforce and for dust control (if necessary). The site due to its vacant nature, has no demand for water supply. The water demand during construction will be significantly less than that required for the development in operational phase. The effect of increased water demand over existing demand during construction, while likely, will be neutral, imperceptible and short term.

### 6.4.2 Potential Operational Impacts

Surface water and foul water will be generated from the proposed development. A comprehensive drainage strategy (see section 3) is included with the application that separates foul and surface water on site.

The peak runoff discharge is restricted to 2 litres/second/hectare in line with the GSDS. The attenuation is sized to accommodate storm events up to and including the 1:100 year event with an additional 20% for climate change. The proposed SuDS measures will reduce the quantity and improve the quality of water discharging into the receiving municipal network. The potential operational phase impact on the local surface water drainage network is long term, imperceptible and neutral.

There is no existing foul drainage connection to the site. Foul water will discharge from the proposed development will be via a proposed new 150mm foul sewer off the new Cookstown Road to Belgard Square link road. It is calculated that during the operational phase of the proposed development, the Innovation Centre will generate a total hydraulic loading of 15m<sup>3</sup> per day. This equates to an average flow of 0.174 litres/second and a peak flow of 1.04 litres/second. A pre-connection enquiry has been submitted to Irish Water and a letter confirming feasibility has been received. However, given the volume of the proposed discharge a positive



response is anticipated. The potential operational phase impact on the local surface water drainage network is long term, imperceptible and neutral.

Regarding water supply, the peak flow demand generated by the proposed development is calculated as 1.09 litres/second, with an average water demand of 0.174 litres per second. It is proposed to install low flow fittings for the development which will reduce the demand on the existing water supply network. The potential operational phase impact on the water supply is long term, imperceptible and neutral.

### **6.4.3 Potential Cumulative Impacts**

The non-statutory Masterplan lands as referenced within this report are not sufficiently developed to quantify the cumulative impact. However, it is expected that the forthcoming design will comply with all relevant standards and would incorporate SuDS measures. These standards are to ensure the protection of built services and to prevent adverse effects arising.

## **6.5 Land & Soils**

### **6.5.1 Potential Construction Impacts**

Development of the proposed scheme will necessitate the stripping of concrete bays and service areas, topsoil and excavation of subsoils. It is anticipated that the majority of subsoils excavated will be removed off site as there is limited opportunity for reuse within the proposed development. While the removal of soils will result in a negative permanent effect, the significance is considered to be slight, given that the proposed development constitutes urban infill and its development is consistent with existing and emerging policy.

### **6.5.1 Potential Operational Impacts**

There will be no change in land use as the current vacant site was previously used as traveller accommodation and its use for residential development is consistent with the site's zoning designation.

During the operational phase the development will have a positive, moderate, permanent effect on the soil and geology at the site and local area scale. This will be as a result of the construction of buildings and hard paved surfaces over a large portion of the site. The soils will be protected against infiltration by contaminated surface water, for example caused by oil leaks from cars or delivery vehicles.

### **6.5.2 Potential Cumulative Impacts**

Development of the wider Masterplan lands will give rise to further change in land use across the overall lands. However, the proposed uses (residential, open space, innovation centre, school etc) are all permissible in principle.

The combined developments will result in further loss of soils in the local area. It is considered that the potential cumulative effect on soils will be negative, insignificant, and permanent at the local area scale.

## **6.6 Water & Hydrology**

### **6.6.1 Potential Construction Impacts**

Concrete will be used to form foundations, buildings and hard paved areas on the site. This has the potential to have a negative, slight, temporary effect on the groundwater quality immediately beneath the site.

A detailed site investigation was undertaken in 2017 as part of the design work for the adjacent Belgard Gardens residential development by Atlas Developments. The proposed development should not breach the ground water table. It is not considered that the construction stage would pose a significant risk to the local surface water environment, subject to standard proven construction mitigation measures being implemented.

## 6.6.2 Potential Operational Impacts

During the operational phase the development will have a positive, moderate, permanent effect on the groundwater at the site. This will be as a result of the construction of buildings and hard paved surfaces over a large portion of the site. The groundwater will be protected against infiltration by contaminated surface water, for example caused by oil leaks from cars or delivery vehicles.

The development has been designed in accordance with the Greater Dublin Regional Code of Practice for Drainage Works guidelines for planning applications, the recommendations of the Greater Dublin Regional Drainage Study (GDSDS) and Ciria Guide C753 – The SUDS Manual, to incorporate best practice Sustainable Drainage Systems. Sustainable Drainage Systems are a collection of water management practices that aim to align modern drainage systems with natural water processes. Integration of SuDS make urban drainage systems more compatible with components of the natural water cycle such as storm surge overflows, soil percolation, and bio-filtration, mitigating the effect human development may have on the natural water cycle, particularly surface runoff and water pollution trends.

A comprehensive surface water drainage system is proposed including on site attenuation and controlled discharge to the municipal sewer via a hydro brake manhole limiting the outfall rate to 7.1 litres/second. The surface water philosophy will ensure that the runoff response to rainfall will not be increased with respect to pre-development conditions and ensures that flood risk to the catchment is not increased.

The effect of the proposed development is determined to be neutral and not significant.

During the operational stage generated foul effluent will be discharged to a municipal sewer and surface water will be attenuated and discharged at greenfield rates to the public sewer. This proposed managed drainage strategy will ensure that the development does not impact on the local surface or groundwater environment.

## 6.6.3 Potential Cumulative Impacts

In the context of the Masterplan area, it is assumed that sustainable drainage systems and attenuation storage devices to limit peak discharge rates to the public surface water sewer to pre-development flows would be provided and will result in a significant improvement on the public drainage system, from existing conditions. This will constitute a positive, imperceptible and permanent impact.

## 6.7 Biodiversity

This section should be read in conjunction with the **Appropriate Assessment Screening Report** submitted under separate cover.

### 6.7.1 Potential Construction Impacts

The proposed development will result in the loss of a vacant site which was previously used as traveler accommodation.

No trees are present on the site, however, we note that all site clearance will be in accordance with Section 40 of the Wildlife Act 1976, as amended by Section 46 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000.

No bats are present on the site, and due to the absence of trees which have the potential for use as a habitat, there will be no significant impact on roosting bats, and no legal offence under the Habitats Regulations 2011.

Subject to the successful implementation of these measures, it can be concluded that the proposed development will not cause any significant negative impacts on designated sites, habitats, legally protected species, or any other features of ecological importance.

## 6.7.2 Potential Operational Impacts

The proposed development site is not within or adjacent to any Natura 2000 sites. A **Screening for Appropriate Assessment** prepared by Scott Cawley accompanies this application and concludes that the proposed development will not, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects, have any significant effect on identified European Sites.

## 6.7.3 Potential Cumulative Effects

It is not possible to ascertain at this early stage of the design development what the impact on biodiversity within the wider Masterplan lands would be. However, the proposed arrangement of buildings on site is cognisant of the local ecology and parcels identified for development are identified as least sensitive.

## 6.8 Noise & Vibration

### 6.8.1 Potential Construction Impacts

A variety of items of plant will be in use for the purposes of site clearance and construction. There will be vehicular movements to and from the site that will make use of existing roads. Due to the nature of these activities, there is potential for generation of noise.

Construction noise will be kept to a minimum in accordance with BS5228: Noise and Vibration Control on Construction Sites. The greatest source of noise from construction activities is associated with the demolition of structures and deep excavations. Neither of these activities are necessary to facilitate the proposed development. The effect will be locally moderate and short-term.

### 6.8.2 Potential Operational Impacts

Noise levels associated with operational plant are expected to be well within day and night-time noise limits at the nearest noise sensitive properties once the design criteria are adopted. Assuming the operational noise levels do not exceed the adopted design goals, the resultant residual noise effects from this source will be of neutral, not significant, permanent impact.

### 6.8.3 Potential Cumulative Impacts

It is not expected the construction phase of the development and wider masterplan would overlap. Nevertheless, best practice principles will be applied across all phases of the development to minimise noise nuisance.

## 6.9 Air Quality and Climate

### 6.9.1 Potential Construction Impacts

The National Roads Authority's *Guidelines for the Treatment of Air Quality During the Planning and Construction of National Road Schemes* sets out 3 no. scales for construction sites, (i) major, (ii) moderate and (iii) minor. Given the nature and scale of the proposed development it is considered to be minor. The distance from the source for significant effects from dust for minor sites is 10m. The proposed development site fronts onto a public road and is in a primarily Town Centre location.

A dust management plan will be implemented prior to the commencement of construction. Mitigating measures will include;

- Enclosing the site with hoarding
- Covering of stockpiles to prevent windblow
- Covering of delivery/removal vehicles using tarpaulin
- Switching off of vehicles when not in use
- The site will be regularly dampened during prolonged periods of dry weather

- Access onto the public road will be regularly cleaned

With the implementation of best practice measures, dust impacts from construction will be localised, slight, negative and short-term but will not pose a nuisance at nearby receptors.

## **6.9.2 Potential Operational Impacts**

The design incorporates energy efficiency measures to meet the standards of the recently introduced NZEB Part L Regulations and will thus positively contribute to a reduction in fossil fuel use and associated greenhouse gas emissions.

## **6.9.3 Potential Cumulative Impacts**

It is not anticipated that the development together with the wider development of the Masterplan lands would give rise to likely significant negative effects on local air quality or climate. All of the proposed development sites will integrate the highest standards in terms of design to ensure that buildings are sustainable and minimise the need for energy derived from fossil fuels.

The Masterplan promotes a modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport and in combination the developments would have a positive effect on climate change.

## **6.10 Cultural Heritage - Archaeology**

### **6.10.1 Potential Construction Impacts**

The site development works will necessitate the stripping of topsoil and subsoil.

All ground disturbances associated with the proposed development, will be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist under licence from the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Following the implementation of the above mitigation measure, there would be no residual impacts on the archaeological or cultural heritage resource as should any archaeological remains be identified they will be subject to full resolution (i.e. archaeological excavation), thereby being preserved by record.

### **6.10.2 Potential Operational Impacts**

No upstanding archaeological sites have been identified within the proposed development site. Therefore, there will be no direct or indirect impacts on any known archaeological sites or monuments during the construction phase of the proposed development.

### **6.10.3 Potential Cumulative Impacts**

There are no predicted cumulative impacts to the archaeological or cultural heritage resource.

## **6.11 Cultural Heritage – Built Heritage**

### **6.11.1 Potential Impacts**

The application site relates to an existing Town Centre urban environment and there are no Sites or Monuments or Protected Structures within or adjoining the site. The proposed development will not give rise to any significant impacts on cultural heritage.

## 7 Conclusion

The proposed development does not trigger the threshold for mandatory EIA. This report provides the information required under Schedule 7A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) to assist the planning authority to screen the proposed development for Environmental Impact Assessment.

This Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report has determined that the characteristics of the proposed development are considered not significant due to the scale and nature of the proposed development, the characteristics and sensitivities of the receiving environment and design and mitigation measures that will be implemented as part of the construction and operation phase of the proposed development.

The risk of accidents associated with the development would not cause unusual, significant or adverse effects. Standard health and safety precautions will be required at construction and operation stages. The implementation of best practice construction methodology will manage any risks such that the effect will not be significant. These mitigation measures are representative of standard industry environmental management that are implemented to minimise the impact of projects to the environment.

Having regard to the characteristics and location of the project and to the type and characteristics of the potential impact, significant adverse effects on the existing built heritage are not considered likely.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared and concludes that the proposed development will not either alone or in combination with other plans or projects adversely effect identified Natura 2000 sites.

Having regard to the scale and nature of the project and based on a considered assessment taking account of all available information including the Masterplan for the wider lands, the proposed mitigation measures outlined in the various detailed technical documents which are routine and known to work, the overall probability of impacts on the receiving environment arising from the proposed development (during the construction or operational phases) is considered to be low.

The overall conclusion of this screening exercise is that there is no requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed project.

## References

Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects Guidance on Screening (Directive 2011/92/EU as amended by 2014/52/EU). European Commission 2017

Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment August 2018 Prepared Dept of Housing, Planning and Local Government