

Planning Report

For Development at Courtstown (Townland), Little
Island, County Cork

on behalf of Ruden Homes Ltd.

July 2024



McCutcheon Halley
CHARTERED PLANNING CONSULTANTS

Document Control Sheet

Client	Ruden Homes Ltd.	
Project Title	Courtstown, Little Island	
Document Title	Planning Report	
Document Comprises	Volumes	1
	Pages (Including Cover)	42
	Appendices	0
Prepared by	Michelle O'Shea	
Checked by	Orla O'Sullivan	
Office of Issue	Cork	
Document Information	Revision	1
	Status	Final
	Issue Date	July 2024

CORK

6 Joyce House
Barrack Square
Ballincollig
Cork
P31 YX97

T. +353 (0)21 420 8710

DUBLIN

Kreston House
Arran Court
Arran Quay
Dublin 7
D07 K271

T. +353 (0)1 804 4477

www.mhplanning.ie

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1. Introduction

This planning report has been prepared by McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants on behalf of Ruden Homes Ltd in support of a planning application to Cork County Council for a proposed Large Scale Residential Development (LRD) at Courtstown (Townland), Little Island, County Cork.

The development will consist of:

- (a). The construction of 172 no. residential units to include 146 no. dwelling houses (with 83 no. dwelling houses to include the option for constructing a ground floor extension to the rear); 6 no. duplex units; and 20 no. apartments.
- (b). Provision of 1 no. creche and 4 no. commercial units.
- (c). Upgrading of the existing vehicular access to the site and the creation of a signalised junction on Ballytrasna Park Road (L-2985-0), including footpaths, cycle lanes and pedestrian/bicycle crossing points, to facilitate access into the site.
- (d). The provision of a new distributor road, including footpaths and cycle lanes, connecting the proposed residential development with Ballytrasna Park Road.
- (e). All associated infrastructure and ancillary development works to include the provision of roads, footpaths and cycle lanes as well as the provision of vehicular connections to adjoining lands with pedestrian/cycle facilities; Proposed diversion and undergrounding of the existing 10KV overhead electricity line and associated poles traversing the site; landscaping & amenity areas, lighting, drainage and services connections; bicycle and car parking; bin storage; and boundary treatments including fencing and landscape buffer of mixed native hedge planting along the eastern boundary of the site.

A design team with extensive experience in residential applications has been appointed by the applicant including McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants, Engenuiti Consulting Engineers, Brady Shipman Martin, Limosa Environmental, Lane Purcell Archaeologists, Arbor Care, MHL Consulting Engineers, MMOS Consulting Engineers, Horizon Engineering Consultants, H3D and Pedersen Focus to ensure a high-quality design and a robust and comprehensive application submission is made to Cork County Council.

The proposed development will see the sustainable expansion of Little Island, in line with dwelling targets set out in the Cork County Development Plan and the Compact Settlement Guidelines. The design and development of the proposed scheme has been informed by detailed pre-planning discussions with Cork County Council's Planning, Architectural and Engineering Departments, as well as feedback from their subsequent Notice of Pre-Application Consultation Opinion. Key design aspects have been shaped directly by feedback and comments received from Cork County Council throughout the pre-planning process, with the design and in particular the layout having been amended and altered throughout the design process.

This report is primarily aimed at providing the planning context to the proposed LRD application and is structured under the following headings:

- Introduction
- Site Context
- Description of Proposed Development
- Planning History
- Planning Policy Context
- Planning Assessment
- Conclusion

This report is part of an overall planning application package and should be read in conjunction with the other supporting technical reports and drawings. A schedule of all attachments is provided in the cover letter accompanying this application.

2. Site Context

The application site has a gross area of 6.55 hectares and is located towards the eastern end of Little Island in Courtstown, approximately 10 km to the east of Cork City Centre and approximately 3.5km to the east of the Dunkettle Interchange and Jack Lynch Tunnel. The site is bounded to the north-east by local road L-2985-0 (Ballytrasna Park Road) and is separated from the public road along the northern-western boundary by detached houses. The site is characterised by arable land and slopes in a southerly direction, with a fall of approximately 2 metres across the site. The site is well served by the national N25 road and is situated within approximately 2 km of the Little Island train station. It is located approximately 1km southeast of East Gate Village which is the designated neighbourhood centre for Little Island.

The area surrounding the site is characterised by a mix of uses including residential, industrial, recreational/leisure and agricultural. The land immediately adjoining the site to the east is arable land and zoned for residential. This adjoins the Harbour Point and Courtstown Business Parks with uses comprising light industry, warehousing and distribution. To the south and west is the former Harbour Point Golf Club. Further west are existing residential houses.



Figure 1: Site Context and Location (site indicatively shown by red star)

3. Description of Proposed Development

The proposed scheme has been designed to provide high quality units which respond to the local character while also complying with local and national policies. The development provides a large mix of housing, duplex and apartment typologies which respond to market demand. The overall net density for the site is 39.5 units per hectare which complies with the Cork County Development Plan and the Compact Settlement Guidelines.

The development will consist of:

- (a). The construction of 172 no. residential units to include 146 no. dwelling houses (with 83 no. dwelling houses to include the option for constructing a ground floor extension to the rear); 6 no. duplex units; and 20 no. apartments.
- (b). Provision of 1 no. creche and 4 no. commercial units.
- (c). Upgrading of the existing vehicular access to the site and the creation of a signalised junction on Ballytrasna Park Road (L-2985-0), including footpaths, cycle lanes and pedestrian/bicycle crossing points, to facilitate access into the site.
- (d). The provision of a new distributor road, including footpaths and cycle lanes, connecting the proposed residential development with Ballytrasna Park Road.
- (e). All associated infrastructure and ancillary development works to include the provision of roads, footpaths and cycle lanes as well as the provision of vehicular connections to adjoining lands with pedestrian/cycle facilities; Proposed diversion and undergrounding of the existing 10KV overhead electricity line and associated poles traversing the site; landscaping & amenity areas, lighting, drainage and services connections; bicycle and car parking; bin storage; and boundary treatments including fencing and landscape buffer of mixed native hedge planting along the eastern boundary of the site.

In summary, the proposal comprises the construction of 172 residential units, a creche, 4 commercial units and all associated ancillary site development works including access, roads, parking, footpaths, drainage, boundary treatments, landscaping and amenity areas at Courtstown (Townland), Little Island, Co. Cork. The proposed residential development is located on land zoned for residential development under Special Policy Area Objective LI-X-01 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028.

A creche of 256 m² with capacity for 49 childcare spaces will be constructed on the ground floor of the building in the central character area and will include provision for a secure play area.

Four commercial units are also proposed on the ground floor of the northern element of the same building, each with floor areas ranging from 60 m² to 109 m². These uses are provided in line with Policy LI-X-01 and together with

the creche and open space amenity area will create a small-scale local neighbourhood centre at the heart of the proposed scheme.

The development will be accessed via the existing entrance onto Ballytrasna Park Road and includes the creation of a new distributor road in line with Policy Objective LI-U-05. The distributor road is located to the east of the residential development and runs in a general north-south axis, with connections provided along the western boundary of the distributor road to facilitate three separate vehicular access points into the residential development. Connections have also been included for land to the immediate east of the distributor road to allow the development to integrate with the future phase 2 residential development.



Figure 2: Proposed Site Layout, Source: BG Architecture

The application site boundary also includes works to the public road (Ballytrasna Park Road) to facilitate the creation of a signalised junction including footpath and cycle lane. The existing entrance will be upgraded to

facilitate the distributor road and will include footpaths and cycle lanes, which will connect with existing infrastructure services on Ballytrasna Park Road.

Landscaping and amenity areas to include a multi-use games area (MUGA) and local play areas are proposed and a fence and mixed native hedge planting are proposed along the far eastern boundary of the overall LI-X-01 lands in order to act as a buffer with adjoining industrial uses to the east.

The ancillary site development works consist of the diversion and undergrounding of the existing 10KV ESB electrical cable traversing the site.



Figure 3: CGI of Proposed Development, Source: Pedersen Focus

4. Planning History

This section provides an overview of the key planning applications which are relevant to the proposed LRD application site.

4.1 Application Site

An application (18/06021) was submitted to Cork County Council in August 2018 in respect of part of the application site for:

'A residential development comprising the construction of 75 dwelling houses (at a density of 20 units per hectare), a creche and all associated ancillary site development works including access, parking, footpaths, drainage, landscaping and amenity areas. The development also included the creation of a new vehicular access road along the site's eastern boundary via Ballytrasna Park to service the site; and the ancillary site development works consisted of the diversion and undergrounding of the existing MV(10KV/20KV) ESB electrical cables.'

This application was refused by Cork County Council on 29th March 2019 for the following reason:

"The site is located in Little Island, which is identified in the 2014 Cork County Development Plan as a strategic employment location. Under the site's zoning, (LI-X-02) in the 2017 Cobh MD Local Area Plan, the objective seeks to accommodate up to a maximum of 250 dwellings within these lands. The proposed development seeks to construct 75 no. dwellings on a portion of the X-02 lands. Based on the documentation submitted with the application and the lack of an overall satisfactory masterplan for the IX-02 lands which would address key issues such as overall densities, wider access and connectivity issues, and the relationship with the distributor road objective and adjoining zoning objectives in the LAP, it is considered that the proposed development does not achieve a satisfactory solution for the delivery of housing on the site and represents piecemeal development. Accordingly, the proposed development, if permitted would jeopardise the long term development of these lands and thus materially contravene objective I-X-01 of the Cobh Municipal District Local Area Plan 2017. The proposal is therefore contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area."

At the time of this application, the Cork County Development Plan 2014 (CCDP 2014) was the operative policy document. Medium B density was defined in the CCDP 2014 as having a minimum net density of 12 and a maximum net density of 25, with the maximum being extended to 35 dwellings per hectare in smaller towns outside Metropolitan Cork. Little Island is within the Metropolitan Cork area and therefore the lower density housing provision applied. The planning application sought permission for a density of less than 20 dwellings per hectare. The Planning Authority noted that translating a cap of 250 houses across the residentially zoned lands gives a gross density of 13 units per hectare. It was submitted by the Council that

the inclusion of Medium B density is subservient to the cap of 250 and that it guarantees a certain house typology and prevents a proposal for significantly less than 250 units, which could be at a very low density.

This refusal was appealed to the Board (ABP-304271-19) in April 2019. The Board refused the appeal for the following reason:

“The site of the proposed development is on serviceable lands within the development boundary of Little Island and is in close proximity to social and community services. It is an objective under the Cork County Development Plan, 2014 to ensure that all new development within the County supports the achievement of sustainable residential communities and that the Council will have regard to the provisions of the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in May, 2009 and the accompanying Urban Design Manual, in assessing applications for development through the development management process (Objective HOU 3-1: Sustainable Residential Communities). Having regard to the proposed density of the development, at less than 20 dwelling units per hectare, it is considered that the proposed development would not be developed at a sufficiently high density to provide for an acceptable efficiency in serviceable land usage given the proximity of the site to the built-up area of Little island and to established social and community services in the immediate vicinity. Furthermore, it is considered that such a low density would be contrary to the Ministerial Guidelines, which indicate that net densities less than 30 dwellings per hectare should generally be discouraged in the interest of land efficiency. The proposed development would, therefore, be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area”.

The Inspector’s Report considered the principal planning issues to be density, the need for a masterplan and impact on residential amenity. The Inspector’s assessment in respect of each of these issues is summarised as follows:

- **Density:** The Board refused the residential proposal for 75 houses at a density of approximately 20 units per hectare. The Board considered that the proposed development would not be developed at a sufficiently high density to provide for an acceptable efficiency in serviceable land usage given the proximity of the site to the built-up area of Little Island to established social and community services in the immediate vicinity. Furthermore, the Board considered that such low densities would be contrary to the Ministerial Guidelines, which indicate that net densities of less than 30 dwellings per hectare should generally be discouraged in the interest of land efficiency. The Board therefore concluded that the proposal would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

In assessing the key issues associated with the site, the Inspector's Report found the lower density to be completely at odds with national policy and guidance on housing density and completely contrary to the promotion of sustainable development. The Inspector emphasised that Little Island is an important employment location which is 10km from Cork City Centre, is served well by the N25 national road network and is on a suburban rail corridor with its own rail station. The Inspector also noted that Little Island has adequate water supply with no capacity concerns, the area is served by the wastewater treatment plant at Carrigrennan and that the extant LAP states that its modular design allows for expansion if required. On this basis, the Inspector concluded that lower densities would promote the sub-utilisation of serviceable lands in a 'Main Town' that is a 'Strategic Employment Area', with no known infrastructure constraints and being served well by road and rail.

- Masterplan: The Inspector stated that the 2017 LAP makes no reference to the requirement for a masterplan for these lands and that the achievement of Objective LI-X-02 is not premised upon the landowners preparing and agreeing a master plan with the planning authority. The Inspector submitted that, if there is no obligation on the developers of this land designated for residential purposes to prepare a master plan, then, if the planning authority wished for a masterplan to be prepared to give indicative guidance to the development of the lands, the planning authority itself should be preparing such guidance. The Inspector considered it very clear that the developers of these lands were working in isolation and that there is no overall plan that forms a guide or gives direction on how development should proceed on this plot. The Inspector considered that the Applicant had done all that was reasonably possible at this stage, i.e. to demonstrate what is proposed for the plot, indicate what could be intended for the remainder of the landowner's holding and to provide details of indicative linkages to adjoining lands. The Inspector concluded that it is evident that the planning authority cannot use the lack of a masterplan as an excuse to support a refusal of permission.
- Residential Amenity: The Inspector considered that the proposed development was designed and laid out with more than adequate separation distances between established residential properties and the proposed new housing. The Inspector had no concerns arising from the development of this land in this urban location for established housing in terms of any adverse impact by way of overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing impact or any other effect that could be termed 'adverse' on established residential amenities.

4.2 Adjoining Site

The site to the immediate east of the application site is zoned LI-X-01 for Medium A Density residential development under the extant Development Plan and is also located within our client's landholding. As part of the previous local area plan, the site was zoned for industrial use. Permission (07/6541) was granted for this site on 30th November 2007 for site development works incorporating roads, services and ancillary works to facilitate future industrial and/or warehouse and distribution development. An extension of duration (12/6311) was subsequently granted by the Council, and the permission expired on 29th November 2017.

4.3 Pre-Planning Consultations

A Section 247-pre-planning meeting was held with Cork County Council on 5th September 2022 (Council Reference PPC.21.221) and a subsequent Section 32B meeting was held on 13th December 2023. A Pre-Planning LRD Opinion was issued by Cork County Council on 18th January 2024.

The design of the scheme has been informed by these detailed pre-planning consultations along with follow up discussions with relevant Council departments including architecture, archaeology and traffic. Key design aspects have been shaped directly by feedback and comments received from the Council, with the design and in particular the layout and unit typology having been amended and altered throughout the design process.

A detailed response to each of the items raised in the Council's Opinion is provided in the accompanying 'Response to Opinion' Report prepared by McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants.

Please also refer to the additional supporting technical reports and drawings that accompany this application and which have been prepared having regard to the Council's pre-planning feedback and opinion.

5. Planning Policy Context

5.1 Overview and Statement of Consistency

The application is accompanied by a Statement of Consistency, setting out the principal planning policy objectives relevant to the proposed development at national, regional and local level and assesses compliance with the relevant objectives in a matrix format.

This section of the Planning Report provides a summary of the planning policy framework of most relevance to the proposed development. Compliance with the principles and criteria of the policy framework is provided in section 7 of this report on Planning Assessment.

5.2 National and Regional Planning Policy

5.2.1 Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (NPF)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) makes provision for population growth of an additional 340,000 - 380,000 people in the Southern Region. The majority of the region's growth has been allocated to Cork City and County which equates to an additional 226,620 people or 60% of the Region's growth.

The NPF places a focus on achieving compact growth and sustainable mobility and targets a greater proportion (40%) of future housing development to be within and close to the existing 'footprint' of built-up areas.

The promotion of development that supports sustainable mobility including public transport, walking and cycling is a key objective of the NPF and identified as a core requirement to address urban population and responding to climate change policies.

5.2.2 Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region 2020 (RSES) translates the NPF objectives to the regional level.

It is a principle of the RSES to inform the integration of land use and transport planning by *"ensuring that future developments are planned and designed to maximise their accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling"*.

The RSES states that transport investment will be identified and prioritised through the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy and sets out that it is an objective to optimise use of the intercity and commuter rail network, connecting Cork at a metropolitan, regional and national level, in order to cater for the movement of people and goods through upgrading existing and new commuter rail stations on a network in Metropolitan Cork including Little Island.

Regional Policy Objective RPO 10 sets out that the RSES seeks to achieve compact growth by prioritising housing and employment development in

locations within and contiguous to existing city footprints where it can be served by public transport, walking and cycling.

Section 3.4 of the RSES states that sustainable regeneration and growth (particularly compact growth) will be achieved through effective sustainable transport and spatial land use planning. It emphasises that the distribution of growth must follow a spatial hierarchy that underpins delivery of the CMATS.

Section 6 of the RSES states that *“the distribution of growth must be infrastructure led, phased and provided at an appropriate higher density at strategic nodal points on the transport network to underpin the viability and successful implementation of transport networks under the CMATS.”* It further notes that *“where practicable, development within the metropolitan area should be carried out sequentially, and lands which are, or will be, most accessible by walking, cycling and public transport”*

5.3 Planning Guidelines

5.3.1 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2024

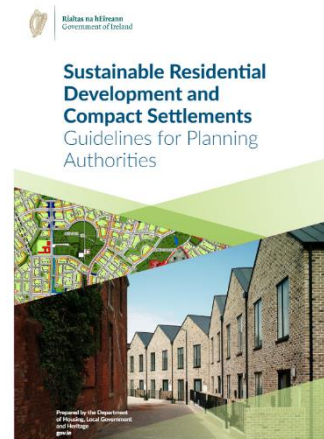
The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines, 2024, set out detailed guidelines in relation to the planning and development of settlements and housing. The guidelines expand on the higher-level policies of the National Planning Framework (NPF) in relation to the creation of settlements that are compact, attractive, liveable and well designed. There is a focus on the renewal of settlements and on the interaction between residential density, housing standards and placemaking to support the sustainable and compact growth of settlements.

The guidelines support the application of densities that respond to settlement size and to different place contexts within each settlement, recognising in particular the differences between cities, large and medium-sized towns and smaller towns and villages. They will also allow greater flexibility in residential design standards, setting national standards for the first time that support innovation in housing design and a greater range of house types.

Section 3.3 focuses on ‘Cities and Metropolitan Areas’ and notes that:

“The NPF sets ambitious growth targets for cities and metropolitan areas to 2040. The strategy for all cities is to support consolidation and intensification within and close to the existing built-up footprint of the city and suburbs area and metropolitan towns; and to support sustainable urban extension at locations served by public transport”.

Table 3.3 provides density ranges of 35dph to 50dph for the suburban and edge locations of Metropolitan Towns with a population greater than 1,500.

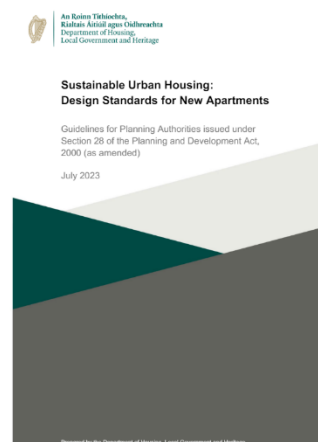


5.3.2 Design Standards for New Apartments 2023

The Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2023 are centred on the NPF's focus for compact growth and the recognition that, to sustainably meet the number of new homes required in Ireland up to 2040 will necessitate a significant and sustained increase in housing output and apartment type development.

Appendix 1 of the 2023 Apartment Guidelines set out the required minimum floor areas and standards for apartment units.

In section 4.7 of the guidelines, it is noted that one-bedroom units, should not generally be considered to contribute to a requirement for any childcare provision and, subject to location, this may also apply in part or whole, to units with 2 or more bedrooms.

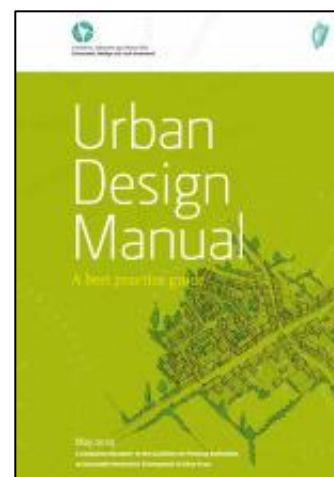


5.3.3 Urban Design Manual 2009

The Urban Design Manual is a key document of the guidelines published under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act and has informed the design of the proposed scheme.

The core of the documents are the 12 criteria which have been both a helpful guidance and checklist since their publication, its structure leading from the wider context referring to the neighbourhood, towards site specific matters and detailed design represent master planning principles.

Therefore, the Statement of Consistency and Architectural Design Statement refer to these 12 criteria and demonstrate how the proposed scheme has been designed with regard to these criteria.



The guidelines also set out principles to ensure that developments are sustainable in terms of their density; capacity of available services; proximity to a range of community; support facilities and public transport; accessibility; use of energy and that they provide a safe and attractive environment. In terms of individual housing units, the guidelines provide principles to ensure a quality living environment, including consideration of levels of daylight and sunlight, privacy, and storage space.



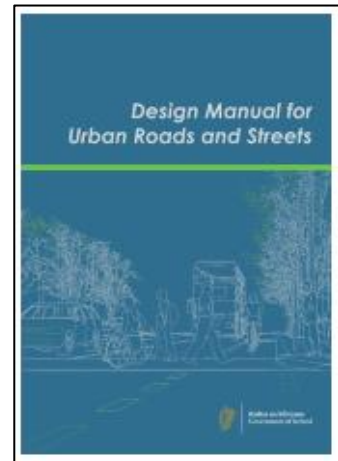
5.3.4 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

The holistic approach of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets to understand and design the streets as part of the open space network was applied to the proposed development with the intention to promote sustainable transport and encourage social activities and active neighbourhoods.

The four design principles of DMURS are:

- Connected Networks
- Multi-Functional Streets
- Pedestrian Focus
- Multidisciplinary Approach

These design principles have been used as the pillars of the design of the proposed scheme.



5.4 Local Planning Policy

The extant policy document relevant to the application site is the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 (CCDP 2022). The CCDP 2022 was adopted at the Full Council Meeting held on Monday 25th April 2022 and it came into effect on Monday 6th June 2022.

5.4.1 Cork County Development Plan 2022 (CCDP 2022)

The CCDP 2022 identifies Little Island as a strategic employment location suitable for large scale employment development. The main vision for the area is to promote a high quality workplace environment for the existing and future workforce population along with an expansion of the residential offering and supporting facilities.

In terms of the approach to residential densities, Paragraph 4.8.7 of the CCDP 2022 acknowledges that the Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS) sets out a series of strategic transport enablers to accommodate the uplift in the Cork Metropolitan Area's population to 2040 and facilitate a greater modal shift to sustainable travel modes. Within the County Metropolitan Area this will mean higher frequency inter-urban rail services of 10 mins for Cobh, Carrigtwohill, Midleton, Little Island and Glounthaune. The CMATS acknowledges that in increasing residential density levels, a balanced mix of uses and compact settlements through Public Transport Orientated Development is required to support the viability of the proposed future transport investment across the Cork Metropolitan Area. The CCDP 2022 will therefore support increased densities in appropriate locations as identified by the Guidelines to facilitate the Council's commitment to integrated land-use planning and the greater efficiency of land use.

Policy CS 2-3(a) states that it is an objective to:

"recognise the importance of the role to be played by the Cork Metropolitan Area in the development of the Cork 'MASP' as identified in the RSES for the Southern Region, in tandem with the development of Cork City, to promote its development as an integrated planning unit to function as a single market area for homes and jobs where there is equality of access for all, through an integrated transport system, to the educational and cultural facilities worthy of a modern and vibrant European City".

Policy Objective HOU 4-6 on 'Housing Mix' states that it is an objective to:

"Secure the development of a mix of house types and sizes throughout the County as a whole to meet the needs of the likely future population across all age groups in accordance with the guidance set out in the Joint Housing Strategy and the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas".

As part of the CCDP 2022, the application site is zoned for medium A density residential development under Special Policy Area Objective LI-X-01, whereby it is a policy objective to provide for:

"Medium A density residential development, small scale, local neighbourhood centre, high quality public open space (including buffer between development and adjoining industrial use) and public realm. To provide for future high-quality pedestrian and cycle connectivity with LI-RR-01. Development of this area will be subject to an approved framework plan for its overall development. This zone is located in close proximity to the Cork Harbour SPA. Areas within this zone may be used by Special Conservation Interest bird species for which the Cork Harbour SPA is designated. Account will be taken of same when considering new development proposals in this area".

Policy Objective HOU 4-7 of the CCDP 2022 sets out that Medium A density ranges from minimum 30 to maximum 50 units per hectare, and notes that, this category would be the highest density category applicable to the smaller towns (< 5,000 in population) and would generally apply to edge of

centre/inner suburban sites within such settlements, unless otherwise stated. It further notes that in towns with an existing/ planned high quality public transport service a minimum density of 35 units/ ha is recommended. It also sets out medium, density A provisions must include a broad range of unit typologies and normally involves a combination of unit formats including a higher proportion of terraced units and/or apartment type units.

The LI-X-01 zoned land comprises of the site, the subject of this application, land to the east which is within our client's landholding and also land to the west (which is owned by a third party).

There is provision for a distributor road to be provided within the site under Policy Objective LI-U-05, which will facilitate connections to lands to the south. This road is located within our client's landholding and has been provided to the east of the residential development, the subject of this application, to align with the policy objectives for the overall LI-X-01 lands.

General Policy Objective LI-GO-02 states the following in respect of all development proposals for Little Island:

“Secure the development of new dwellings, neighbourhood centre, school and high quality public open space and public realm at LI-X-01 in Little Island over the lifetime of the plan, subject to preparation of a framework plan, to enable Little Island to achieve its target population of 2,769 persons to provide a balance between the provision of housing and employment uses in the town, to support Little Island's development as an integrated live/work destination”.

The strategy for Little Island in terms of population growth, as set out in the development plan, provides for the population of the town to grow to 2,515, from the 2016 population of 1,461. In order to accommodate this level of population growth, an additional 500 housing units will be required. It is anticipated that this growth will largely be accommodated within a special policy area (LI-X-01), which will be subject to a framework plan, on part of the former Harbour Point golf course and adjoining land to the east. The framework plan will provide for a neighbourhood centre and high quality public open space, public realm and connectivity. In addition, there may be potential for a small amount of infill growth within the areas which are predominantly existing residential.

This plan also makes provision for residential reserve land on the remainder of the former golf course, located to the south of the application site and which is zoned under Policy Objective LI-RR-01 for medium A density residential development combined with business development and a substantial area of high quality, public open space for recreation. LI-RR-01 also notes that it will be important that high quality pedestrian and cycle connectivity between this land and the LI-X-01 site be provided. The Development Plan also sets out that such residential reserve land will not generally be required for development in the plan period to 2028.

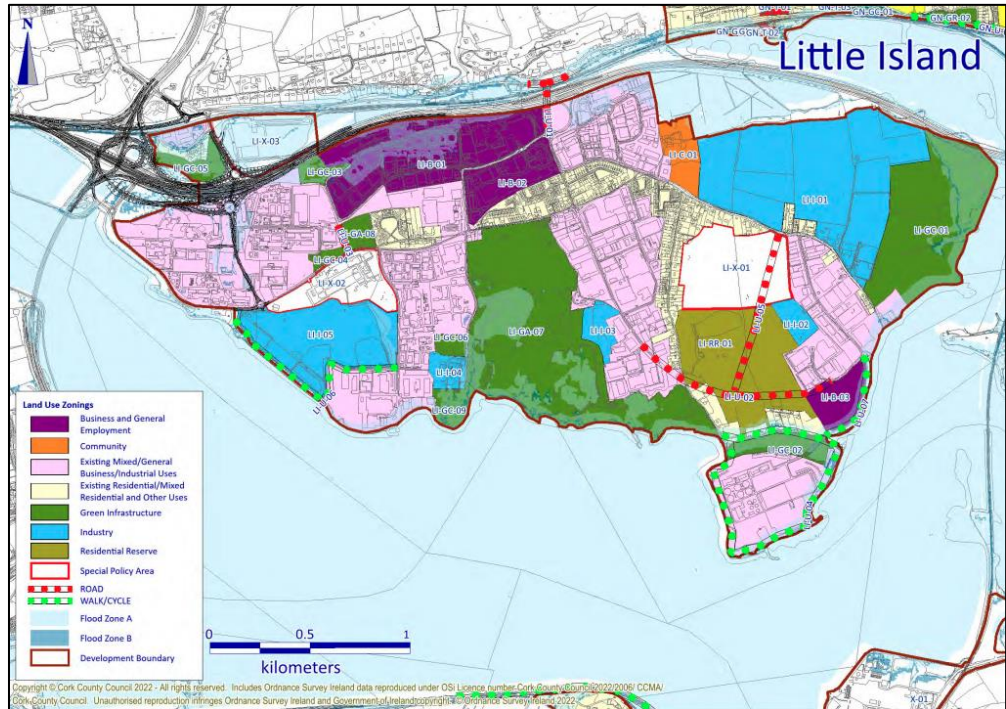


Figure 4: Zoning Map

5.4.2 Cork Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (CMATS)

The CMATS recognises that Cork City is reasonably well connected on the Irish Rail Network offering connections within the metropolitan area to Cobh, Rushbrooke, Carrigaloe, Fota Island, Midleton, Carrigtwohill, Glounthaune and Little Island.

The CMATS supports the growth of strategic employment growth areas located along the Mallow and Midleton/ Cobh rail lines at Blackpool, Tivoli, Little Island, Carrigtwohill, Midleton and Cobh and notes that Little Island is identified as a key strategic employment area with significant capacity potential.

The CMATS states that *“outside of Cork City, the Strategy fully supports the strategic direction of Cork County Council’s adopted planning frameworks to significantly intensify and consolidate future housing, employment and educational development within the immediate catchment area of Cobh, Midleton, and Carrigtwohill stations. More modest housing growth is anticipated at Glounthaune and Little Island.”* The CMATS also emphasises that consolidation will further support the viability of the railway corridor.

6. Planning Assessment

The proposed development has been assessed against the following criteria, in accordance with local and national policy context.

- Principle of Proposed Development
- Density
- Appropriate Scale of Development
- Mix of Units
- Design and Layout
- Residential Amenity
- Part V Provision
- Social Infrastructure
- Childcare Provision
- Ecology
- Appropriate Assessment
- Archaeology
- Landscape, Recreational Amenity and Open Space
- Visual Impact
- Access, Connectivity, Traffic & Transportation; and
- Flood Risk
- Infrastructure & Services

6.1 Principle of Proposed Development

Special Policy Area LI-X-01 of the CCDP 2022 sets out the following development objective for the site, the subject of this planning application.

“Medium A density residential development, small scale, local neighbourhood centre, high quality public open space (including buffer between development and adjoining industrial use) and public realm. To provide for future high quality pedestrian and cycle connectivity with LI-RR-01. Development of this area will be subject to an approved framework plan for its overall development. This zone is located in close proximity to the Cork Harbour SPA. Areas within this zone may be used by Special Conservation Interest bird species for which the Cork Harbour SPA is designated. Account will be taken of same when considering new development proposals in this area”.

6.1.1 Principle of Development for Residential Use

The application site forms part of lands designated under Policy Objective LI-X-01, which are zoned for Medium A density residential development. Having regard to the current zoning context, the proposed residential development is located on the X-01 land and is consistent with the development plan and residential zoning objective. It is therefore an appropriate use for the application site. The CMATS supports the strategic direction of Cork County Council’s adopted planning frameworks to significantly intensify and consolidate future housing, employment and educational development within the metropolitan area of Cork. The subject site will play a significant role in delivering consolidated and compact growth that benefits from close proximity to key infrastructure, local amenity and strategic employment services and will promote sustainable movement of people.

6.1.2 Zoning Objectives

In addition to residential development, Special Policy Area LI-X-01 requires the following to be provided:

- Small scale local neighbourhood centre.
- High quality public open space.
- Buffer between development and adjoining industrial.
- High quality pedestrian and cycle connectivity with LI-RR-01.
- Framework plan for overall development of LI-X-01 lands.

There is also provision for a distributor road to be provided within the site under Policy Objective LI-U-05, which will facilitate connections to lands to the south.

Small Scale Local Neighbourhood Centre

It is proposed to provide four commercial units, ranging in size from 60 m² to 109 m², as well as a creche of 256 m², on the ground floor of the apartment building. The creche and commercial units, with overhead apartments, will be located in the central character area and will form the heart of the overall scheme. They will also be complemented by an open space area to the west including a multi-use games area and local play area and will be highly accessible for pedestrians.

As demonstrated at Section 6.8 of this report, Little Island and the wider metropolitan area have a generous offering in terms of social and physical infrastructure and the proposed creche and commercial units will therefore complement these services.

Having regard to the existing range of services in Little Island as well as the projected population growth for Little Island of 1,461 persons, the proposed creche and commercial units more than meet the need for a new neighbourhood centre for the X-01 lands.

High Quality Open Space

High quality open space areas have also been provided as part of the proposal and the overriding design intention is to create an inclusive and coherent new community. The proposed landscaping strategy has been designed with consideration for all users, including both adults and children, and has been designed to facilitate the use of the spaces for both.

The open spaces are proposed in locations that are equally distributed across the development, which ensures that all residents have open space within easy walking distance of their home. The open spaces are connected by a network of footpaths and pedestrian friendly streets to enhance inclusive access, permeability and movement between them. The open spaces are designed to have a level green area for passive and active recreation defined by planting and landscape features such as bioswales, tree, shrub planting and low mounding.

Buffer

In line with LI-X-01, it is proposed to provide a 2.4 metre high paladin fencing and landscape buffer of mixed native hedge planting along the far eastern boundary of the overall X-01 lands. This will act as a buffer between residential development on the lands and the adjoining industrial uses to the east. The eastern boundary already benefits from existing mature hedgerow, which will be retained.

The current residential proposal is located at a significant distance from the existing Harbour Point Business Park, ranging from approx. 90 metres at its closest and over 200 metres at its furthest point. The buffer proposed as part of this application together with the distance of the application site is considered more than appropriate to protect the 172 residential units. It should also be noted that the landscape buffer will be extended as part of the future phase 2 residential planning application and has already been accounted for in the indicative layout (Drawing no. 10277-PL-005) as well as the framework plan.

Distributor Road and High-Quality Pedestrian and Cycle Connectivity

The development will be accessed via the existing entrance onto Ballytrasna Park Road and includes the creation of a new distributor road to the east of the proposed built development in line with Policy Objective LI-U-05. This will run in a general north-south axis with connections provided along the western boundary of the distributor road to facilitate three separate vehicular access points into the residential development. The distributor road will include footpaths and cycle lanes on both sides and will also facilitate future connections to lands to the east and south (in order to provide high quality pedestrian and cycle connectivity with LI-RR-01 zoned land).

Having regard to the development of the overall lands, the layout has been designed to comprise a hierarchy of internal roads. Within the scheme each area has multiple options of connectivity for each of the different modes of travel, maximising accessibility to the various amenities provided as part of the scheme. The quality of these routes has been carefully considered to ensure their viability in terms of desire lines and to ensure users will feel comfortable and safe when availing of these facilities.

The application site boundary also includes works to the public road (Ballytrasna Park Road) to facilitate the creation of a signalised junction on Ballytrasna Park Road. The existing entrance will be upgraded to facilitate the distributor road and will include footpaths and cycle lanes, which will connect with existing infrastructure services on Ballytrasna Park Road.

Framework Plan

Policy Objective LI-X-01 states that the development of this special policy area will be subject to an approved framework plan for its overall development.

In accordance with this objective, a 'High Level Development Framework Plan' and a 'High Level Development Framework Linkages Plan' has been prepared by Brady Shipman Martin. These plans have been prepared having regard to

the overall LI-X-01 including the subject site and lands to the east and west of the site.

It is important to note that the designated X-01 lands consist of two parcels of land which are within different ownerships. Figure 4.1 shows the extent of the X-01 lands that are within our client's ownership (indicatively demarcated by dashed black line). The land to the west is within separate ownership.

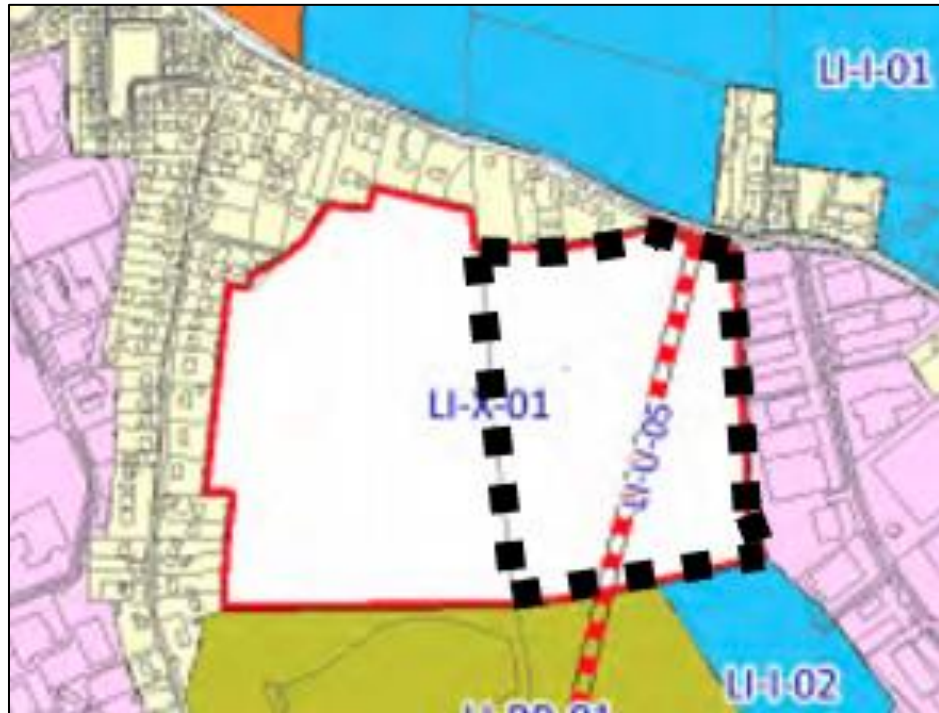


Figure 5: Extent of Client's ownership of X-01 lands indicatively outlined in black.

In order to provide a plan that had regard to the overall X-01 lands, Ruden Homes Ltd. and their planning agent McCutcheon Halley had a meeting with the adjoining landowner (along with their planning agent and traffic consultant) on 29th February 2024. During the meeting, details were provided to the adjoining landowner on the approximate number of units proposed, the location of the creche and neighbourhood centre, location of distributor road and main roads providing connections to adjoining lands. It was noted that the open space areas were being reconsidered following the Opinion received from the Council.

The adjoining owner indicated that they are at an early stage of development, however, they had regard to and took account of the Applicant's proposals. The need to provide a framework plan for the overall lands in response to the Council's Opinion was discussed and it was considered between the two parties that the framework plan would provide details on connectivity, indication of location of non-residential uses and the treatment of the shared boundary through the centre of the overall X-01 lands so that the two landholdings could dovetail in respect of the residential development of these lands. Although the adjoining landowner is at an earlier stage, they

indicated they would have regard to the Applicant's proposals and did not challenge it at the time of discussions. Following the meeting, further details of the proposal were provided to the adjoining landowner so they could have regard to the Applicant's proposals when designing and progressing the development of their lands.

Having regard to initial discussions with the adjoining landowner, the framework plan was prepared with a focus on the key principles of connectivity and movement, location of a small scale neighbourhood centre and the shared boundary running through the centre of the LI-X-01 lands. Regard was also given to site constraints, topography, archaeology and existing trees and hedgerows. For the lands within our client's landholding, the proposed layout the subject of this application, has been integrated into the framework plan and shows details regarding location of houses, non-residential buildings, roads and open space. For the land to the east (and which is also within our client's ownership), an indicative layout has been provided showing similar details and to demonstrate how it will integrate with the development the subject of this application. This land to the east will be submitted as part of a separate phase 2 development of the site.

For the adjoining landowner's lands, general assumptions were made on movement routes throughout the site and were designed to link with our site. Regard was also had to existing trees and a landscape green corridor was provided along the western boundary. Non-residential elements were provided at the connection points with our site to along a natural for linkage with the non residential element of the proposed scheme, the subject of this application.

It should be noted that the framework plan which covers the adjoining land to the west was prepared in the absence of any site investigations or surveys undertaken for the western part of the X-01 lands. For this reason, general assumptions were made and while we appreciate this may not perfectly align with the adjoining landowners design layout, this framework plan has been prepared to indicate high level spatial arrangements of development that enhances connectivity and permeability.

The Framework Plan should only act as a development guide to the implementation of the Cork County Development Plan 2022 and other relevant statutory documents to illustrate the overall spatial layout of the X-01 lands and how they will link in with the wider Little Island area.

Summary

The proposed residential development satisfies all the policy objectives for the overall X-01 lands and therefore complies with the CCDP 2022.

6.2 Density

As part of the CCDP 2022, the application site is zoned for medium A density residential development under Special Policy Area Objective LI-X-01.

Policy Objective HOU 4-7 of the CCDP 2022 sets out that Medium A density ranges from minimum 30 to maximum 50 units per hectare, and notes that,

this category would be the highest density category applicable to the smaller towns (< 5,000 in population) and would generally apply to edge of centre/inner suburban sites within such settlements, unless otherwise stated. It further notes that in towns with an existing/ planned high quality public transport service a minimum density of 35 units/ ha is recommended.

The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines, 2024 support the application of densities that respond to settlement size and to different place contexts within each settlement, recognising in particular the differences between cities, large and medium-sized towns and smaller towns and villages. They will also allow greater flexibility in residential design standards, setting national standards for the first time that support innovation in housing design and a greater range of house types.

Section 3.3 focuses on 'Cities and Metropolitan Areas' and notes that:

"The NPF sets ambitious growth targets for cities and metropolitan areas to 2040. The strategy for all cities is to support consolidation and intensification within and close to the existing built-up footprint of the city and suburbs area and metropolitan towns; and to support sustainable urban extension at locations served by public transport".

Table 3.3 provides density ranges of 35dph to 50dph for the suburban and edge locations of Metropolitan Towns with a population greater than 1,500.

Having regard to the CCDP and the Compact Settlement Guidelines, the proposed development proposes a net density of 39.5 units per hectare and therefore complies with both the CCDP 2022 and the Compact Settlement Guidelines.

In our opinion, the proposed density of 39.5 units per hectare is consistent with local policies and national guidelines and is appropriate to the existing pattern of development in Little Island. The layout respects the existing character of the area and also provides a sustainable transport led development. This will ensure that a balance in housing provision is achieved within the existing built form of Little Island which will meet market demand and integrate the development with its surrounding environment.

6.3 Appropriate Scale of Development

Paragraph 2.6.10 of Volume 4 of the CCDP 2022 sets out that it is an objective to secure the development of 500 new dwellings in Little Island over the lifetime of the plan and that these dwellings will be located primarily within the LI-X-01 lands within the development boundary. It is proposed to provide 172 residential units as part of this application, which represents approximately 34.4% of the overall figure of units envisaged to be delivered on the LI-X-01 zoned lands during the lifetime of the CCDP. It is therefore considered that the proposed development is consistent with the CCDP 2022 in terms of the overall scale of development and forms part of the principal area for the sustainable expansion of Little Island within the defined settlement boundary.

6.4 Mix of Units

Existing housing stock in Little Island is predominantly characterised by low to medium density detached and semi-detached houses, with a number of mature residential units located along Ballytrasna Park Road. This would indicate that there is a lack of mix of housing types with very few smaller units available.

The proposal is for the construction of 172 no. residential units to include 146 no. dwelling houses (with 83 no. dwelling houses to include the option for constructing a ground floor extension to the rear); 6 no. duplex units; and 20 no. apartments.

The application site comprises of 2, 3 & 4 bed detached, semi-detached and terraced houses; 2 bed duplex units; as well as a mix of 1, 2 & 3 bed apartment units. The proposed mix is set out at Figures 8.1 and 8.2 and also noted below:

- 5 no. large 4 bedroom detached family homes
- 35 no. large 4 bedroom semi-detached family homes
- 58 no. 3 bedroom semi-detached /end of terrace family homes
- 7 no. 3 bedroom mid terrace family homes
- 41 no. 2 bedroom semi-detached /mid terrace/end of terrace homes
- 6 no. 2 bedroom duplex type apartments
- 3 no. 3 bedroom apartments
- 5 no. 2 bedroom apartments
- 12 no. 1 bedroom apartments

The proposed mix of unit types and sizes has been designed to respond to market demand; to complement the built character of the area; and to provide for a mix of dwelling and apartment types and sizes to provide opportunities for people at all stages of the life cycle. The units are well designed and are close to existing services and facilities and are supported by universal design and improved urban amenities. It should also be noted that the number of 2-bedroom units has been increased throughout the scheme to take on board the comments received at the Section 247 and Section 32B pre-planning meetings. 12 no. 1 bed units have also been provided in response to feedback from the Council. This will provide a greater mix of units as well as provide the opportunity for older people to downsize from larger houses within their community. It should also be noted that the application site forms part of the overall X-01 lands and that our client owns the land to the immediate east. It is our client's intention to develop this site also for residential development as indicatively illustrated in drawing 10277-PL-005. The mix of units proposed as part of this future development site will enhance and increase the unit offer for the area and strengthen the mix proposed as part of this planning application.

This proposal will introduce a mix of units and housing choice for a wide range of households and also cater to those that work in the nearby employment centres. Furthermore, the design of the layout and location of units together with pedestrian and cycle facilities will promote more sustainable modes of transport.

A Market Report has also been prepared by Irish & European and concludes that the fact that the geographically wider market is predominately providing 2, 3, and 4 bedroom homes for the private market rather than apartments is also indicative of where the strongest demand is in the marketplace. This report states that the proposed development is reflective of the current market with the design and layouts in line with what is currently selling actively and well.

In terms of small unit types, the Market Report does not consider that 1 and 2 bed apartment units are viable. Notwithstanding this, the Applicant has included and increased the number of 1 and 2 bed units within the scheme to satisfy the Council's request to increase the diversity of units throughout the development.

Table 8.1: Housing Units Type & Mix

Type	No. of Units	Description	No. of Storeys	No. of Beds.	Overall Floor Area	Overall Floor Area with Extension Type 1
A1	3	4 Bedroom (7P) Detached	2	4	152.5	-
B1	21	4 Bedroom (5P) Semi/End of Terrace with Side Entrance	2	4	129	-
B2	2	4 Bedroom (7P) Detached with Side Entrance	2	4	145.4	-
C1	41	2 Bedroom (4P) Mid Terrace	2	2	90	100
C2	7	3 Bedroom (5P) Mid-Terrace	2	3	90	100
C5	42	3 Bedroom (5P) Semi-detached/End of Terrace	2	3	90	100
C8A	14	4 Bedroom (5P) Semi-detached/End of Terrace	3	4	127.5	-
D1	16	3 Bedroom (5P) Semi-detached/End of Terrace	2	3	118	-

Table 8.2: Apartment and Duplex Units Type & Mix

No. of Units	Type	Description	No. of Beds.	Overall Floor Area
3	Apt 1	3 Bedroom (5p)	3	108
10	Apt 2	1 Bedroom (2p)	1	61
5	Apt 3	2 Bedroom (4 p)	2	88
2	Apt 4	1 Bedroom (2p)	1	55
3	E1	1 Storey-2 Bedroom	2	81
3	E2	2 Storey-2 Bedroom	2	109

6.5 Design and Layout

The proposed layout has been designed to provide a development that responds to policy provisions specific to the site whilst also achieving an efficient mix of house and apartment types and sizes. This is balanced by a network of open space and amenity areas, cycle lanes and footpaths, commercial units and a childcare facility to accommodate future residents and ensure a range of amenities are available. The site is currently accessed in the north-east section via Ballytrasna Park Road. This will remain as the vehicular ingress and egress point with improvements made to facilitate the residential development, the distributor road and a signalised junction proposed on Ballytrasna Park Road. The distributor road is being provided in line with policy objective LI-U-05 and runs in a general north-east to south-west axis, to the immediate east of the residential development. Connections are being provided along the western boundary of the distributor road to

facilitate three separate access points into the development. Along its eastern boundary, the distributor road has been designed to allow for future potential connections into the residential zoned lands to the immediate east as well as land to the south.

The distributor road benefits from off road cycle lanes and footpaths and is lined with suitable street trees and a grass verge on both sides of the road. This will soften the appearance of the main access road, while creating a safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians. A clipped hedge will create a soft boundary between the avenue and the rest of the proposed development, increasing the privacy of nearby public open spaces, whilst still allowing passive surveillance. The eastern boundary of the application site with the existing commercial development will consist of a secure 2.4m high fence with a landscape buffer of mixed native hedge planting.

The development comprises a hierarchical system of internal roads. These will allow for balanced dispersal of traffic and pedestrian connections into street and courtyard spaces as well as homezones that will be easily identifiable through traffic calming measures and change in surface materials. The overall movement hierarchy will maximise permeability throughout the site for pedestrians and enhance accessibility to amenity spaces. The proposed road layout has been designed to comply with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) in order to provide safe, attractive and vibrant streets that promote a well-connected and sustainable residential development.

The development comprises of three character areas, as illustrated in the accompanying character areas plan, which will create a distinct sense of space in terms of scale, density, height, materiality, mix of unit types and open space and will place a focus on prioritising pedestrian movement. The houses and apartments have been designed to provide active frontages and ensure passive surveillance and safety of all open spaces. The landscape strategy for the site enhances the sense of character for each area by providing distinct planting, which is further enhanced by the use of materials surrounding the public open spaces.

6.6 Residential Amenity

The proposed development has been designed to protect both the residential amenity of future residents of the development and existing houses within the area. The units have been carefully orientated to maximise solar exposure and located to provide appropriate separation distances between units. The proposal benefits from a network of open spaces linked throughout the site that have been designed to maximise permeability and accessibility and ensure passive surveillance. It is considered that an appropriate balance is achieved in terms of the overall design, movement of traffic and pedestrians, boundary treatments, provision of open space and passive surveillance.

The proposed development has been designed with regard to the 12 criteria set out in the Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide, May 2009 and which include context, connections, inclusivity, variety, efficiency,

distinctiveness, layout, public realm, adaptability, privacy & amenity, parking, and detailed design. This is addressed in greater detail in the accompanying Architectural Design Statement and Statement of Consistency.

A plan showing separation distances (10277-PL-012) between the development to existing adjacent properties to the north has been provided with this application and annotates key distances to adjacent residential properties to the north. The landscape boundary detail (6835_305) by Brady Shipman Martin for the northern boundary further illustrates the relationship between proposed dwellings within the site and adjacent existing dwellings to the north.

The adjacent houses to the north are detached properties on large sites that back onto the northern site boundary of the site and are set back at minimum distances of approximately 22 metres which is more than adequate. A 2-metre concrete post and timber effect panel fence is provided along the northern boundary with tree planting. The existing hedge to the rear of the back gardens will be retained and protected. This is illustrated in Landscape Section drawing 6835-305.

As part of the 2019 appeal (ABP-304271-19), the Inspector considered that the proposed development was designed and laid out with more than adequate separation distances between established residential properties and the proposed new housing. The Inspector had no concerns arising from development of this land in this urban location for established housing in terms of any adverse impact by way of overlooking, overshadowing, overbearing impact or any other effect that could be termed 'adverse' on established residential amenities.

Furthermore, a Daylight Analysis and Overshadowing Report has been prepared by H3D. This included an analysis of the existing properties to the north of the application site and concluded that all windows analysed on the rear of the properties to the north complied with the BRE guideline level for Vertical Sky Component.

6.7 Part V Provision

It is an objective of the CCDP 2022 (HOU 4-2) to make a percentage of all new residential development available under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The applicant proposes to transfer 40 no. units, comprising of 18 dwellings, 6 duplex units and 10 apartment units, in compliance with the requirement to provide 20% of the development to meet the Part V obligation. In line with local policy, these units are dispersed throughout the proposed development and have been agreed in principle with the Council's Housing Department on 30th May 2024. A Part V proposal has been prepared for the proposed development and accompanies this planning application. This proposal includes an assessment of the 'Part V Costs Methodology', based on industry cost standards, for each unit type.

6.8 Social Infrastructure

The site is strategically located in close proximity to a wide range of existing social infrastructure and services that are enhanced by connectivity to road infrastructure and public transport. Figure 6 illustrates the site's proximity to a wide range of local services, amenities, leisure, recreational facilities, employment zones and transport links within proximity to the site. There are two childcare facilities within the wider area of Little Island, a national school, medical and healthcare providers, sporting facilities, local shops and the Eastgate retail park. It is considered that the site is currently supported by a strong network of local services and amenities.

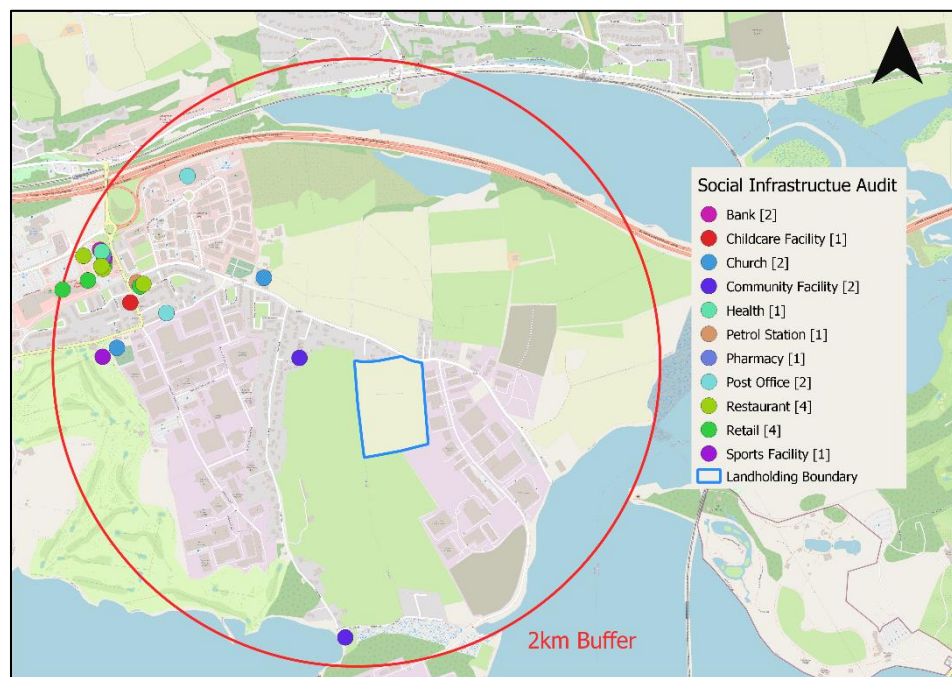


Figure 6: Map showing range of facilities within 2km walking distance from the site.

The LI-X-01 lands are within walking distance and approximately 1 kilometre from the neighbourhood centre (East Gate Village Centre) to the west and the lands benefit from full connectivity via Ballytrasna Park Road for both pedestrians and vehicular traffic. This centre includes a Spar supermarket with delicatessen and hot food counter; hair salon; pharmacy; dental clinic; bank; solicitor’s practise as well as other businesses operating on the first floor. Beside this are numerous warehouse type furniture/household stores as well as a Costa Coffee and KFC.

Within the wider area, these are the following services:

Local Service	Address	Distance from Site	Approx. Drive Time	Approx. Walk Time
Post Office	Island Cross	1.1 km	2 mins	13 mins

Local Service	Address	Distance from Site	Approx. Drive Time	Approx. Walk Time
Circle K Filling Station including centre convenience store and chipper take away	Corner of Ballytrasna Park Road and R623 Road	1.2 km	3 mins	15 mins
GP Surgery	Ballytrasna Park Road	700 metres	1 min	8 mins
Little Island Dental Surgery	4 Island Cross	1.1 km	2 mins	14 mins
Time of Wonder Montessori School	1 Castlewood, Castlevew	1.3 km	2 mins	15 mins
Gate Childcare Centre	3 Eastgate Way, Castlevew	1.9 km	4 mins	23 mins
Catholic Church of Saint Joseph	Ballytrasna Park Road	650 metres	1 min	7 mins
Little Island National School	Castlevew	2 km	4 mins	25 mins

The Architectural Design Statement, prepared by BG Architecture, also provides an overview of the existing transport links and social infrastructure including amenities, leisure, recreational facilities, and employment zones within proximity to the site. The site connectivity plan at page 13 of the Architectural Design Statement, illustrates how well connected the site is in line with the Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide.

The subject site is well connected to places, facilities and amenities which will help to support a good quality of life for future inhabitants. The site allows for easy access to high quality open space, leisure opportunities, shops – both for convenience and comparison goods, schools, places of worship, health centres and places of employment. The site is considered to be supported by

a strong network of local services and amenities that are conveniently located and easy to reach.

Having regard to pre-planning feedback from the Council, 4 commercial units have been integrated into the development and have been located on the ground floor of the Apartment building within the central character area. A creche is also proposed. To protect existing services in Little Island and to ensure this is balanced with anticipated population growth and satisfactorily meets associated demand, the Applicant would be agreeable to a condition being imposed on the development that should the population within the catchment of approximately 10 minutes not generate sufficient demand for small scale, local neighbourhood services, that a change of use application can be submitted to the Planning Authority to convert the ground floor commercial units to residential and that this would be supported by an assessment.

This would be in keeping with Paragraph 9.9.1 of the CCDP 2022 which states the following:

“The requirement for additional floorspace is predicated on a number of factors including population growth, economic buoyancy and rising consumer demand. The Plan recognises and reflects prevailing circumstances underpinning floorspace projections and shall adopt a pragmatic approach where it is evident that changes have occurred. In relation to Convenience floorspace within the Metropolitan Area, the distribution will be in accordance with planned population growth. In relation to floorspace projections, Cork County Council will continue to take into account the floorspace potential figures agreed in the 2013 Joint Retail Strategy and included within the 2014 Cork County Development Plan until such time as a new Joint Retail Strategy is finalised”.

6.9 Childcare Provision

As the proposal is for 172 residential units, provision has been made within the development for a creche to satisfy the national guidelines on childcare facilities which recommend the provision of at least one childcare facility per 75 dwellings. The creche has been located in the central section of the application site and is accessed via the central vehicular entrance point from the proposed distributor road. It has a gross floor area of approximately 256 m² and has been designed to accommodate 49 childcare places, with rooms allocated to cater for various age ranges as well as that associated with the operation and management of the facility. The creche building has been designed to ensure an appropriate setback from the surrounding residential units, with set down and parking areas being incorporated into the proposal to provide sufficient parking to satisfy policy requirements.

A Childcare Provision Assessment has been prepared by McCutcheon Halley in support of this application. This examines the existing childcare facilities located in the vicinity of the development site, their capacity and the resultant need to incorporate any on-site crèche facilities as part of the development proposal. The report analyses CSO data on the demographic profile of the

area and identifies the existing geographical distribution of childcare facilities within the area, in order to assess the current and emerging childcare demands of the area.

An analysis of CSO data for the Caherlag ED area outlines that 32% of the population aged over 5 travels between 0 to 15 minutes each day for work, school or college and a further 35% of the same age category between 15 to 30 minutes. The report has identified 13 existing creche facilities within a 10-minute drive time of the application site, with a total of 43 spaces currently available. Having regard to the site's location within close proximity to employment services, local amenities and transport infrastructure, the report also places a focus on identifying creches within walking distance of the site to align with sustainable travel and national policy provisions. Two of the thirteen creches are within walking distance of the site, however, currently do not have any available childcare spaces.

This report has identified that the development of 172 units on the Courtstown site would likely result in 28-30 children of pre-school age living in the completed development. Taking into account the existing provision within the 10-minute catchment area of 43 available childcare spaces, it is considered that there are enough places available to meet the short to medium term childcare requirements of the area.

Notwithstanding this, there are only two creches within walking distance of the site in Little Island, with 0 childcare spaces available. The capacity of Little Island's employment base to grow will also attract more people and create a greater demand for employees to live close to work. Having regard to policy provision to promote more consolidated growth, the predicted growth for metropolitan Cork, and the long-term development of residential lands to the south / south-west, the proposed development makes provision for a creche of 256 m² providing for 49 no. childcare places.

6.10 Ecology

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) has been prepared by Greenleaf Ecology in order to establish the baseline ecological data for the development site; to determine the ecological value of the identified ecological features; to identify, describe and assess the likely significant effects of the proposed development on biodiversity; to propose effective mitigation measures to avoid, prevent or reduce and, if possible, offset adverse effects on biodiversity; and to identify any residual effects predicted to arise after mitigation.

The EclA concludes that provided that the mitigation measures provided in Section 5 of this report are effectively implemented, it is not anticipated that there will be any significant adverse effects on ecological features as a result of the proposed Large Scale Residential Development at Courtstown, Little Island. In respect of lighting mitigation measures recommended for construction operations during the hours of darkness, please note that site construction activities are generally undertaken in brightness so there will be no impacts as a result.

It also concludes that with the successful implementation of the proposed landscaping plan, there will be a net gain in native species of broadleaved trees, species rich grassland and a pollinator supporting biofiltration bed. It is anticipated that the proposed development will result in biodiversity net gain in the medium to long term.

A winter water bird survey has also been prepared by Limosa Environmental and is appended to the EclA and the Appropriate Assessment Screening Report. This report states that the subject site is considered unsuitable for use by the majority of species listed for Cork Harbour SPA. For those species that are known to utilise terrestrial habitats, the report concludes that it is highly unlikely that the subject site at Courtstown, Little Island is used by wintering waterbird species listed for Cork Harbour SPA to an extent that would lead to adverse negative impacts upon the species and impacts upon their conservation objectives.

6.11 Appropriate Assessment

Article 6, paragraphs 3 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC requires that an Appropriate Assessment (AA) must be undertaken for any plan or project that is likely to have a significant effect, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, on the conservation objectives of a Natura 2000 site.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has been prepared by Greenleaf Ecology and concludes that the proposed development at Courtstown, either alone or in combination with other plans and/or projects, does not have the potential to significantly affect any European site, in light of their conservation objectives. Therefore, a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is deemed not to be required.

6.12 Archaeology

Please refer to Archaeological Impact Assessment prepared by Lane Purcell Archaeology. A Geophysical Survey Report has also been prepared by Target Archaeological Geophysics Ltd. and is appended to Archaeological Impact Assessment.

The Archaeological Impact Assessment has been prepared having regard to the information requested in the Opinion and confirms that there are no recorded archaeological sites within the proposed development site. A geophysical survey was undertaken on the entire field in April 2024. No responses of definite archaeological character were noted in the survey, however, responses of potential significance were identified, most notably a curvilinear anomaly (referred to as Anomaly A in the accompanying report) at the southern end of the field. This anomaly lies at the southeastern edge of the proposed development site.

Following completion of the geophysical survey, an extensive program of archaeological testing has also been agreed with Cork County Archaeologist, Annette Quinn – a copy of the test trenching layout is provided at Figure 12 of the accompanying report. A licence application for archaeological testing

has been submitted to the National Monuments Service (NMS), Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

It should be noted that the layout of the proposed distributor road, accessing the adjoining land to the south, was moved to the west to accommodate the preservation in situ of the anomaly. The anomaly, as identified in the geophysical survey, will be preserved in situ within a buffer zone (minimum radius 5m from the nearest element of the development).

Section 6 of the Archaeological Impact Assessment also provides mitigation measures to mitigate impact on any subsurface archaeological deposits that may exist on the proposed development site and will be subject to the approval of Cork County Council and the NMS.

6.13 Landscape, Recreational Amenity & Open Space

Brady Shipman Martin have prepared a Landscape Development Report and drawings in support of this application. The landscape report outlines the existing landscape context for the site, the proposed landscape strategy including connectivity, open space treatment and proposed detailed landscaping design for the scheme in line with an appraisal of the existing landscape context, thereby informing appropriate design solutions which respond to the characteristics and constraints of the receiving environment.

The layout has been designed to create an inclusive and coherent new community based on best practice urban planning principles, giving residents a sense of place, ownership and identity. The landscape strategy seeks to create a number of high quality public open spaces and accessible play areas linked by good quality pedestrian paths creating a green network within the scheme and connecting with existing local infrastructure to the north; to retain and protect existing vegetation and reinforce with new tree planting; to support and strengthen the character areas of the development with planting and boundary treatments; and to increase site biodiversity. The proposed landscape strategy has also had regard to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report that has been prepared by Arbor-Care.

A distributor road is being provided as part of this proposal to the immediate east of the proposed housing development, with three access points to direct traffic into the development site. This formal main avenue will be lined with suitable street trees which will create a sense of space when entering the proposed development. A grass verge on both sides of the road will soften the appearance of the main access road, whilst creating a safe environment for cyclists and pedestrians. A clipped hedge will create a soft boundary between the avenue and the rest of the proposed development, increasing the privacy of nearby public open spaces, whilst still allowing passive surveillance.

In line with LI-X-01, it is proposed to provide a 2.4 metre paladin fencing and landscape buffer of mixed native hedge planting along the far eastern boundary of the overall X-01 lands. This will act as a buffer between residential development on the lands and the adjoining industrial uses to the

east. The eastern boundary already benefits from existing hedgerow, which will be retained.

In terms of the future phase 2 residential development of the lands to the east of the distributor road, it is the Applicant's intention to add on to and extend the current proposed landscape buffer boundary by including an approximate additional 6 metre green corridor. This is shown in Drawing no. 10277-PL-005, prepared by Engenuiti Consulting Engineers, which shows an indicative layout for the future phase 2 residential development. The future green corridor has also been included in the accompanying Framework Plan, prepared by Brady Shipman Martin.

Further information regarding the landscaping details is addressed in the accompanying Landscape Development Report and drawings.

6.14 Visual Impact

The site is identified as being located within a high value landscape area, where careful consideration is needed to successfully locate large scale developments. The Landscape Development Report, prepared by Brady Shipman Martin, states that views to and from the site are largely limited due to the mature tree lines and hedgerows surrounding its perimeter and the relatively minor level change in the area. There will likely be some partial views of the proposed development from the Ballytrasna Park Road, where it will appear as a continuation of the residential character in the nearby vicinity. Existing and proposed screen planting and trees will reduce the number of proposed dwellings in view from existing residential developments. There will be filtered views of the proposed development through trees along the eastern, western and southern boundary and from the neighbouring lands, which consist of the business park to the east, agricultural lands to the south and a disused golf course to the west.

As noted in the Landscape Development Report, Scenic route (S41) runs c.1.4km to the north of the site through Glounthaune from Priest's Hill to Caherlag, continuing to Glanmire. Views towards the site from this route are restricted due to topography, tree lines and housing. Scenic route (S42) runs c.2.1km north of the site and provides a mixture of open panoramic views of the harbour (due to its elevation close to the ridgeline at Windsor Hill) and closed views due to high levels of vegetation screening in places. The nature of the topography means the site is not visible due to its position on the lower land beneath a relatively steep elevation.

Photomontages have also been prepared of the proposed development from a number of viewpoints to demonstrate how the proposal will be viewed from different locations. The photomontages illustrate how the proposal will successfully integrate with and complement the character of the area and show that the scale of the buildings is appropriate for its setting. Due to the topography and relatively flat terrain of the site and surrounding lands, and its distance from the identified scenic routes, it is considered that the application site will not have a significant visual impact. The proposal will form a continuation of the existing residential character of the area and the existing and proposed planting, and trees, will reduce the amount of

proposed dwellings in view, thereby creating an attractive environment and enabling the site to absorb the new development.

6.15 Access, Connectivity, Traffic and Transportation

The site is directly accessed to the north-east from Ballytrasna Park Road. As part of the development, it is proposed to provide a signalised junction on Ballytrasna Park Road along with cycle lanes and footpaths. The junction has been designed to tie in with Local Authority infrastructure works planned for the area and has been discussed with the Sustainable Transport Unit of Cork County Council.

It is a policy objective (LI-U-05) of the LAP to provide a new distributor road within the application site to service the proposed scheme and future lands to the south. Off road cycle and pedestrian facilities are proposed on both sides of the distributor road and will link to the signalised junction.

A Traffic and Transport Assessment has been undertaken, by MHL Consulting Engineers in consultation with Cork County Council's Traffic and Transportation Department. The TTA has assessed how the proposed development will impact the surrounding roads network. It has considered appropriate access arrangements and the transport choices available to future users of the application site and how the existing/proposed transport infrastructure surrounding the site will influence that choice. The impact of traffic demand generated by the proposal has been considered and quantified. The TTA concludes that the proposed development is acceptable with regard to traffic and transportation and that there are no traffic and transportation reasons that should prevent planning permission being granted.

The TTA demonstrates the following:

- (i). The proposed residential development is in accordance with the Development Plan and forms an important continuation in the delivery of planned growth in the area and has been previously assessed as part of the Little Island Transport Assessment (LITS).
- (ii). A review of the existing roads network and collision data in the vicinity of the site indicates that there are no significant problems in relation to the current safety of the existing roads network.
- (iii). Junction 2: R623/ Ballytrasna Park Road is shown to currently operate within capacity during morning & evening peaks with some delay occurring. The modelling results indicate that during AM Peak the junction will reach capacity in the design year 2031 and degrade both with and without development traffic up to design year 2041.
- (iv). The junction is shown to continue operating within capacity with/without development traffic for the PM peak up to design year 2041.
- (v). Junction 3: Island Cross Junction will not be impacted by development traffic.
- (vi). The proposed site layout is permeable to the roads network and is well connected to existing pedestrian linkages.

- (vii). The proposed new access arrangements are safe and suitable and are in accordance with the Design Manual for Roads & Bridges (DMRB) and the Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (DMURS).

Please refer to Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA), prepared by MHL Consulting Engineers, for further information.

6.16 EIA Screening

Please refer to EIA Screening Report prepared by McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants. The proposed project does not meet the thresholds as prescribed within the category 'Infrastructure Project' set out in Schedule 5, Part 2, (10) (b) of the 2001 Regulations, and therefore the project does not require a mandatory EIA as set out in Schedule 5. With proposed mitigation measures in place, it is not anticipated that the construction or operational phases of the proposed development, whether considered on its own or together with in-combination projects or plans, will give rise to likely significant environmental effects. Having regard to the nature, extent, and characteristics of the likely impacts identified for the construction and operational phases, it is considered that the proposed development will not give rise to a likely significant environmental effect and accordingly a sub-threshold EIA is not required.

6.17 Flood Risk

A Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared by MMOS Consulting Engineers. The flood risk assessment has been carried out in accordance with the OPW Publication "The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines for Planning Authorities" and concludes the following:

- The site-specific flood risk assessment for the construction of the development was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities", and other relevant documents and publications.
- The proposed type of development for this site is to be primarily residential use, which is categorized by the guidelines as highly vulnerable development. As the proposed development is in Flood Zone C, the development is deemed as 'appropriate', and a justification test is not required.
- The development's drainage design includes for a 20% climate change allowance.
- There is no risk of flooding affecting the site area from tidal or fluvial sources.
- The proposed development will not increase the stormwater runoff rate when compared to the existing site and satisfies the requirement of the SFRA (Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) to reduce flooding and improve water quality.

- Any known flood events have not caused flooding of the proposed site, and the proposed development does not increase flood risk elsewhere.
- Thus, the residual risks of flooding can be managed by incorporation of good building practice in design and construction of ground floor level and associated drainage systems, and by maintenance and management of the property.

6.18 Infrastructure & Services

6.18.1 Engineering

A Civil Engineering Report and drawings has been prepared by MMOS Consulting Engineers in support of this application and assesses a number of engineering elements including surface water, wastewater, and water supply.

In terms of water supply, it is proposed to connect to the existing 300 mm diameter watermain located at Ballytrasna Park Road to the north with a 150mm diameter ring water main to supply the application site. Consultation has been undertaken with Irish Water and a Confirmation of Feasibility and has been received from Irish Water and is appended to the Civil Engineering Report.

The surface water proposal for the site comprises of a new dedicated surface water drainage system to collect generated runoff from roof and hardstanding areas with runoff to discharge by gravity to suds features proposed within the scheme and the below ground gravity surface water sewers. The runoff for both areas will combine into the local drainage and the surface water will flow into online storm water attenuation tanks.

In terms of wastewater, a new 150/225 mm diameter UPVC pipe will be located within the site to collect foul drainage and will outfall to the existing foul sewer network located on Harbour Point Business Park Road.

6.18.2 Public Lighting & Utilities

Horizon Engineering Consultants Ltd have prepared a public lighting design report and layout in support of this proposal.

There is an existing overhead 10kV ESB line located through the centre of the site – travelling from east to west. The accompanying Summary on Utilities Report notes that as part of the site enabling works, an application shall be made to the ESB for detailed investigation and subsequent removal of two poles with diversion and undergrounding of the existing overhead line. The proposed development has been designed with regard to the proposed cable route and to ensure appropriate standards and setbacks are adhered to.

7. Conclusion

This Planning Report has been prepared by McCutcheon Halley Planning Consultants on behalf of Ruden Homes Ltd. to support the proposed Large Scale Residential Development consisting of 172 residential units, 4 commercial units, 1 creche and all associated infrastructure and ancillary site development works at Courtstown (Townland), Little Island, Co. Cork.

The Planning Statement provides an overview of the description of the proposed development and notes the relevant planning history. The statement also provides a summary of the relevant planning policy framework and provides a planning assessment of the proposed development.

The planning assessment finds that the proposed development is compliant with the national and regional planning policy framework and delivers on the specific zoning objectives for the site to deliver residential units, small scale neighbourhood centre and a new distributor road. The proposal provides compact and sustainable growth that promotes pedestrian and cyclists and enhances the public realm, while also providing connections to lands to the south, east and west and therefore resulting in a natural sequential development of residential lands.

The application site is strategically located in terms of its location to public transport services; key infrastructure routes; access to a strong employment base; and local services. It is fully serviceable and will promote compact and sustainable development in line with national guidance. The proposed development will result in the creation of a sustainable residential community which benefits from a high-quality landscape design and maximises pedestrian and cyclist permeability. The proposed scheme provides for a much-needed range of housing options and will contribute to the sustainable growth of Little Island.