



Planning Statement

Proposed Strategic Housing Development at Cartrontroy,
Kilnafaddoge, Lissywollen and Ardnaglug (townlands), Athlone,
Co. Westmeath

Client: Avenir Homes Limited

December 2021

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Connecting places.

Contents

- 01. Development Context 1**
 - 1.1 Site Context 1
 - 1.2 Planning History 2
 - 1.3 Proposed Development 3

- 02. Pre-Application Consultation Opinion 6**
 - 2.2 Specific Submission Requirements 11

- 03. Planning Assessment 17**
 - 3.1 Principle of Development 17
 - 3.1.1 Lissywollen Framework Plan 17
 - 3.1.2 Density of Development..... 18
 - 3.2 Residential Amenity 18
 - 3.2.1 Future Residents..... 19
 - 3.2.2 Residential Amenity of Existing Dwellings..... 20
 - 3.3 Compliance with Height Guidelines 20
 - 3.4 Transport & Connectivity 25
 - 3.4.1 Smart Travel Strategy 25
 - 3.4.2 Traffic and Transport Assessment..... 25
 - 3.5 Archaeology 26
 - 3.6 Services Infrastructure 26

- 04. Conclusions 27**
 - Appendices*

01. Development Context

1.1 Site Context



Figure 1.1 Site Context

Avenir Homes Limited, who are the majority owners¹ of identified lands at Cartrontrou, Kilnafaddoge, and Lissywollen (townlands), Athlone, Co. Westmeath, are seeking planning permission from An Bord Pleanála for a proposed Strategic Housing Development consisting of the construction of 122 no. residential units (dwelling houses and apartments) and 46 no. student apartments consisting of 283 bed spaces and ancillary development works.

The subject site, which is approximately 4.1 hectares in area, is located approximately 3 km east of Athlone Town Centre, south of the N6 and accessed via Junction 9 from the R916 at Garrycastle. The site comprises three separate fields with the collective lands bounded to the south by the Old Rail Trail Greenway, the east by zoned mixed use lands, a local Spar, and an ESB Depot. Blackberry Lane abuts the site to the west, north and east. This will be replaced to the north and east by a new east-west distributor road (Lissywollen Avenue), which has planning permission as well as secured funding under the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF). The wider lands to the north and east are zoned for development and form part of the Lissywollen South Framework Development Plan area.

¹ The Housing Agency own the southwestern parcel of the site, as per submitted letter of consent.

The site is located a short distance from a significant amount of social and community infrastructure including schools, sports clubs and facilities, as well as Athlone Institute of Technology (now The Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest), and some large employment areas to the west and north of the N6.

1.2 Planning History

The following represents a summary of planning history.



Figure 1.2 Site Planning History

Westmeath County Council Reference 0281166

On the 30th November 2002, Marie Campbell was granted planning permission for construction of a new agricultural entrance on lands to the east of the subject site.

Westmeath County Council Reference 043090

On the 25th July 2004, Arcane Ltd. were refused planning permission for 6 no. detached houses, 28 no. 3 bed semi detached houses, 22 no. 4 bed semi detached houses, 6 no. townhouses, 16 no. 2 bed apartments in 4 blocks of 4, 4 No bed apartments and 4 no townhouses in duplex style block.

Relevant Adjoining History

Under ABP-309513-21, Alanna Roadbridge Developments Ltd. obtained planning permission for a strategic housing development on a site of 17.64 hectares to the west and north comprising 576 no. residential units, 2 no. creches, community hub building and east-west access road through the development site, extending from the Ballymahon roundabout (on the R915 - to the west) to the Garrycastle roundabout (on the R916 - to the

east) and all associated road development works. These lands are in the ownership of Westmeath County Council.

The phasing of the development provides for the upfront delivery of the above referenced Lissywollen Avenue road through the Lissywollen South Framework Plan area.

1.3 Proposed Development

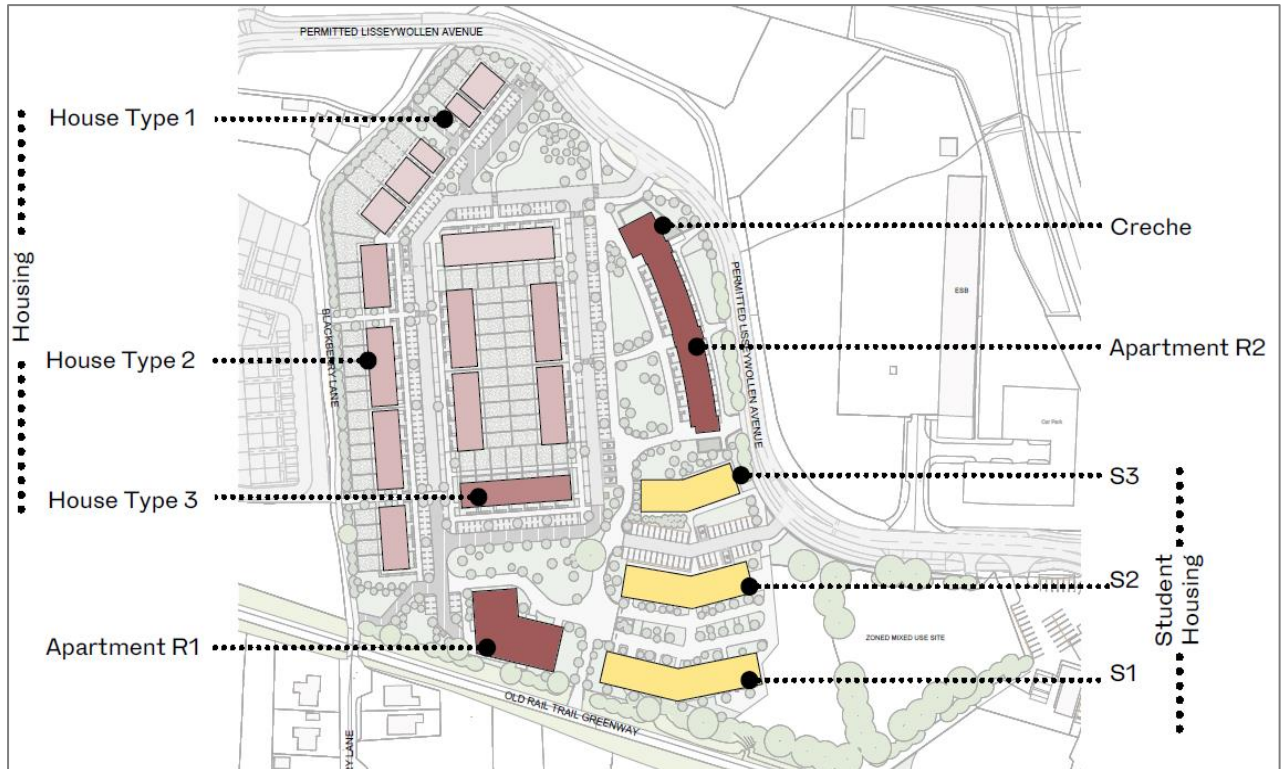


Figure 1.3 Proposed Site Layout

The applicant seeks permission for the construction of a mixed use residential development of 122 no. residential units with ancillary creche, 46 no. student apartments consisting of 283 bed spaces, and all associated site development works. The proposed development makes provision for 60 no. dwelling houses comprising 38 no. 2-storey 3-bed townhouses, 7 no. 2-storey 4-bed townhouses, 7 no. 3-storey 4-bed townhouses, 6 no. 2 storey 4-bed semi-detached and 2 no. 2 storey 4-bed detached. The proposed development includes 62 no. apartments / duplexes to be provided as follows: Block R1 containing 38 no. apartments (16 no. 1 bed units and 22 no. 2 bed units) in a 3-6 storey building, and Block R2 containing 20 no. duplex units (10 no. 2 bed units and 10 no. 3 bed units) over 4 storeys with 4 no. apartments (4 no. 2 bed units) in one 5th storey feature area. The proposed student accommodation makes provision for 283 no. bed spaces in 3 no. blocks to be provided as follows: Block S1 containing 18 apartments with 117 bed spaces over 5-6 storeys, Block S2 containing 16 apartments with 107 bed spaces over 6-7 storeys, and Block S3 containing 12 apartments with 59 bed spaces over 4-5 storeys.

The proposed development will provide for two new vehicular accesses as well as pedestrian entrances onto Lissywollen Avenue east-west access road (as permitted under An Bord Pleanála Reference ABP-309513-21). Minor modifications to ABP-309513-21 are proposed to cater for these access points, alterations to cycle/pedestrian paths, the removal of a central island to facilitate the south-eastern entrance, and provision of bus stop infrastructure. Ancillary site works include public and communal open spaces, hard

and soft landscaping, pedestrian / cycleways, car parking, cycle parking, bin storage, public lighting, roof mounted solar panels, ESB substation and supporting distribution kiosks, and all other ancillary works above and below ground. The proposal includes pedestrian and cycle linkages onto the Old Rail Trail Greenway to the south and Blackberry Lane (L40061) to the west.

Other Works

In addition to the above specified works within the red-line boundary, Westmeath County Council are facilitating some offsite works to support the project for which the applicant has confirmed written consent. These include:

- Resurfacing Blackberry Lane along the western extent of the site. A special development contribution has been agreed with the applicant for such purposes.
- Facilitating works to complete connections to the Old Rail Trail Greenway, including
 - » Completion of pedestrian/cycle path between Blocks R1 and S1 to the surfaced area of the greenway to the south, and;
 - » Replacement of existing gated access between the greenway and Blackberry Lane (southwest of the site) with a revised arrangement with dedicated cycle/pedestrian access. Final works to be agreed with Westmeath County Council.

The working title for the project is 'The Green Quarter' reflecting the green credentials of the site and policy objectives to establish a new urban quarter in this part of Athlone.

Table 1.1. Summary of Housing Units

Total Residential Units	122
Dwelling Houses	60 Units
3-bed	38
4-bed	22
Apartments	62 Units
1-bed	16
2-bed	36
3-bed	10

Table 1.2. Summary Site Statistics

Item	Statistic
Total Site Area	4.1 Ha
Residential Development	
Residential Site Area	3.05 Ha
Proposed Residential Units	122 (60 dwellings, 62 apartments)
Residential Density	40 units per Ha
Housing Mix (dwellings and apartments)	16 no. 1-beds (13%) 36 no. 2-beds (30%) 48 no. 3-beds (39%) 22 no. 4-beds (18%)
Car Parking	157 spaces (ratio of 1.3 per residential unit, inclusive of visitor parking)
Student Accommodation	
Student Site Area	0.7 Ha
Student Bed Spaces	283
Combined Residential / Student Accommodation Density Plot Ratio	70 units per Ha (2 student bed spaces assumed to be 1 residential unit) 0.644
Car Parking	39 spaces (ratio of 0.2 per bedroom)
Public Open Space	
Residential / Student Accommodation Open Space Area	7,410 m ² (20% of total site area)

02. Pre-Application Consultation Opinion

On the 29th October 2021, An Bord Pleanála issued their Notice of Pre-application Consultation Opinion which confirmed that the documents submitted with the request to enter into consultations required some further consideration. Specifically, this related to three matters:

1. Further consideration/justification of the documents as they relate to the public realm, in particular along Blackberry Lane, pedestrian/cyclist access points onto Blackberry Lane, pedestrian/cyclist connections onto the Old Rail Trail, and urban form along Lissywollen Avenue to the north.

Blackberry Lane

The design rationale for the approach to Blackberry Lane was discussed in some detail at the Tripartite meeting. The development concept has been further refined to make the most of this amenity which will function as a key node on the Old Rail Trail Greenway. This is explored in a number of the submitted documentation, including the Architectural Design Statement by Henry J Lyons and Landscape Package by Forestbird Design. The key justification for the approach is as follows:

- As noted in the Lissywollen South Framework Plan, Blackberry Lane has historical importance in the local area. It was a main thoroughfare through the area in the 1800s, which has declined over time, and was ultimately made redundant by the construction of the N6 which severed its path northwards.
- A conscious design effort has been made as part of the scheme to give this lane renewed purpose and contribute positively to placemaking. From discussions, it is clear that Westmeath County Council do not see the lane as a functioning road. To front housing onto the lane in a conventional sense would conflict with this and destroy its historic character. It represents something of an exceptions case in terms of design approach. The site strategy of back gardens of the 2 storey dwellings facing the laneway protects the lanes purpose - if the situation was reversed the lane would be transformed into a road and all existing character and potential would be lost.
- There are strong biodiversity references in the local framework plan, and it is proposed to establish a foraging corridor along the western boundary complete with interpretative signage and seating which will act as a public amenity and complement the larger food culture of Athlone. It will become an active and recognisable node off the Old Rail Trail where people will stop off to forage for natural foods, rest and picnic. In tandem with this, it will serve as biodiversity corridor, with a long pollinator and food season for bird and terrestrial fauna.

- The scheme proposes four new laneway connections between the internal development and the existing Blackberry Lane route. Following discussions at the tripartite meeting, the number and size of these areas has been increased with the connections themselves functioning as unique amenity spaces. The dwellings at these locations address the new network of lanes with front doors and windows which allow for passive and active supervision of same.
- Blackberry Lane itself is bounded on its western side by permitted reference ABP-309513-21. This development on Council-owned land includes public open space next to the laneway, with the relationship in cross section shown on drawing no. L207 by Forestbird Design. Alongside the focused design measures in the subject development, it confirms that the reimagined Blackberry Lane will benefit from passive surveillance. As part of discussions with the Council, the applicant has also agreed a special development contribution of €29,078 for the resurfacing of Blackberry Lane². As outlined in the submitted application, this will be complemented by a new scheme of public lighting.



Figure 2.1 CGI of Proposed Blackberry Lane Amenity

Connections to Old Rail Trail Greenway

The approach to the provision of greenway connections has been shaped directly by what's achievable within landownership and/or the consent of others, as well as realising key policy objectives.

During the design of the proposed development, the design team engaged with Iarnród Éireann and Westmeath County Council to see what level of consent could be obtained to undertake works on and attendant to the greenway lands to facilitate connections

² Refer to confirmation of agreement in Appendix A.

envisaged under the Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2014-2024. The applicant's landownership stops short of the surfaced greenway to the south and under the terms of Westmeath County Council's licence agreement with Iarnrod Eireann, they are precluded from providing the applicant with direct consent for works associated with the Old Rail Trail. Importantly, the Council have confirmed that under the terms of the licence, they can facilitate the completion of some works themselves to achieve the identified connections.³ The scope of these work at two points was discussed with the Council and is described in the application documentation, the final detail of which will be agreed with them prior to construction. Importantly, the specified approach is consistent with that under permitted reference ABP-309513-21.

The application includes two points of connections to the greenway as discussed with the Council:

- **Pedestrian and Cycle Link between R1 and S1 Blocks:** This provides direct access to the Old Rail Trail from the primary north-south access artery through the site from Lissywollen Avenue. The proposed detail is identified on drawing no. L210 by Forestbird Design and comprises the removal of a 6 m wide portion of ditch with the ends clad with flared stone walls to provide a high-quality treatment with visual interaction between the site and greenway.

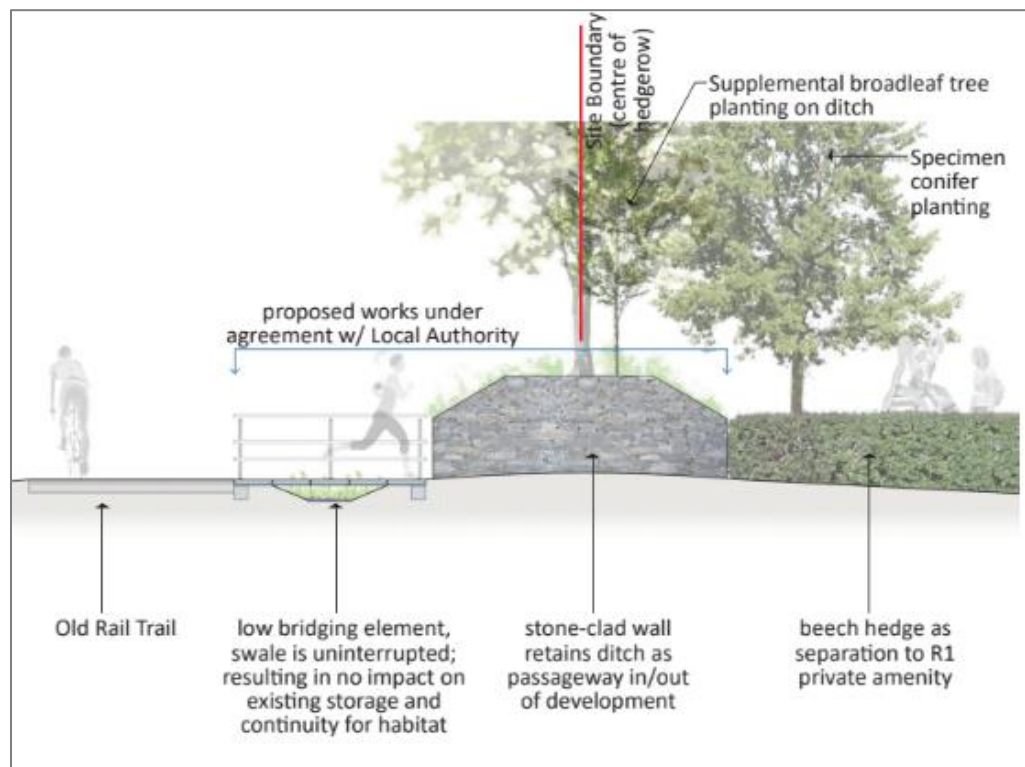


Figure 2.2 Extract from Landscape Section on Southern Connection to Greenway

- **Pedestrian and Cycle Link from Blackberry Lane to Old Rail Trail:** At present an agricultural gate blocks free movement for cyclists and pedestrians between Blackberry Lane and the greenway (to south). As Blackberry Lane becomes a vibrant new corridor, this southwest corner of the site will be opened up the greenway with a wildflower meadow and orchard with amenity seating to complement the foraging

³ Refer to letter in Appendix B from Westmeath County Council dated 24th November 2021.

use of the historical lane. A vehicular gate⁴ will be provided at the interface between Blackberry Lane and the greenway, with a new proposed smaller permanent opening for pedestrian and cyclists fostering animation and interaction between the design spaces. The proposed detail is identified on drawing no. L209 by Forestbird Design. As outlined, all final works will be agreed with the Council prior to commencement of construction.

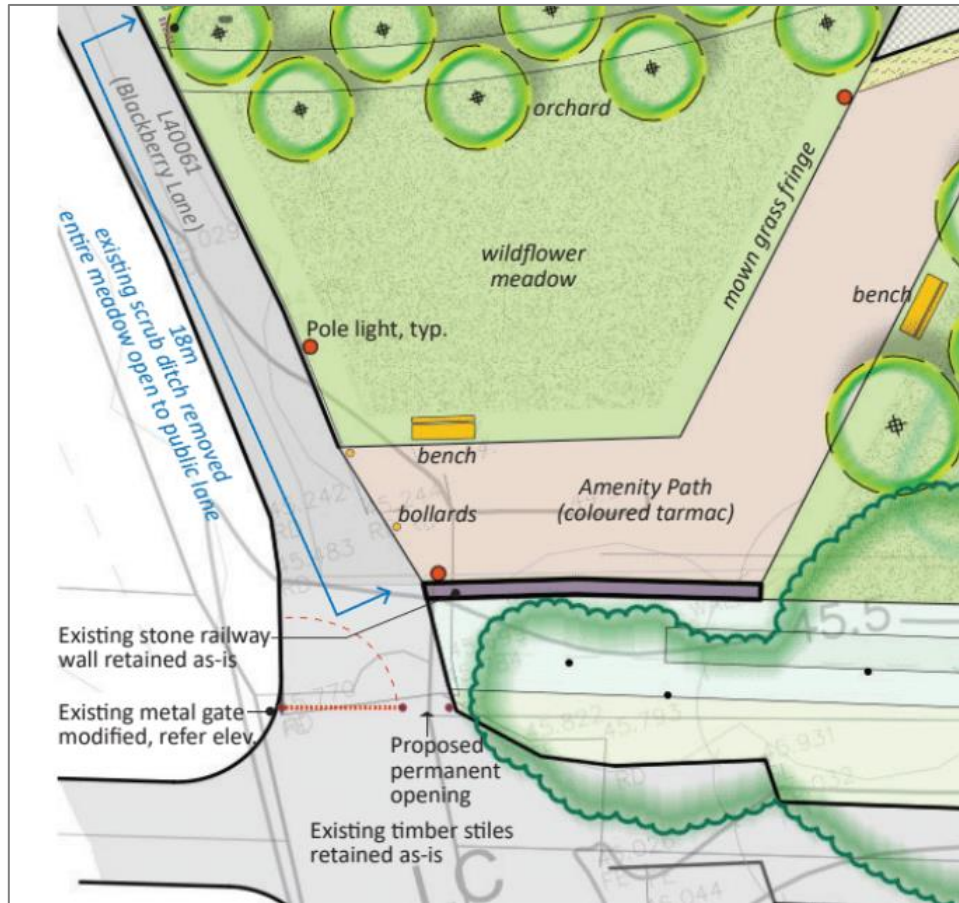


Figure 2.3 Extract from Landscape Plan on Proposed Arrangement to Southwest

Under Objective O-LUF1, it the policy of the Council to protect and supplement existing landscape features of amenity and biodiversity value such as established field boundaries and significant hedgerows. The proposed approach provides for this, having regard to the findings of the submitted tree survey and Ecological Impact Assessment, while ensuring an appropriate level of direct access onto the greenway as well as passive surveillance in accordance with objective O-LUF7. While Figure 8 of the Lissywollen South Framework Masterplan is suggestive of open interactive public realm interface with the Old Rail Trail Greenway, it should be noted that this sketch corresponds to a piece of land that lies outside of Parcel 4. The actual location does not contain a boundary hedgerow and does not reflect the actual site conditions of Parcel 4. Notwithstanding this, site topography to the southeast of the site as well as the above referenced landownership considerations militates against this approach in practical terms.

⁴ Periodic vehicular access will be maintained to serve the polytunnels on third party lands to the southwest of Blackberry Lane.

Urban Form on Lissywollen Avenue

It is the policy of the Lissywollen South Framework Plan to retain key landscape features and incorporate them into the urban structure of the area. The proposed retention of trees on the eastern/north-eastern part of the site along Lissywollen Avenue has been influenced by this, the need to provide a treatment to the public road and direct visibility into the ESB Depot on the other side of this. As per the submitted proposals, the trees will be managed with hard and soft landscaping increasing visual integration between the road and secondary supervision of the public realm. This coupled with pedestrian and cycle path, bus stop infrastructure as well as architectural form will provide for a strong edge along the avenue and distinct urban character.



Figure 2.4 CGI of Western Boundary Treatment on Lissywollen Avenue

2. Further consideration/justification of the documents as they relate to the internal north-south street alignment and associated parking arrangement, having regard to the Design Manual for Urban Road and Streets 2013 (as updated).

At the tripartite meeting, Westmeath County Council queried whether the parking arrangement in the north south street alignment could be revised in line with the Design Manual for Urban Road and Streets (DMURS). These comments were taken on board by the team, with the layout revised accordingly. The proposed layout will not provide perpendicular parking on opposite sides of any of the internal roads. Where parking is proposed on both sides of the internal access road, it has been designed in accordance with figure 4.76 from DMURS. This and all other compliances with DMURS is evidenced in the submitted DMURS Compliance Statement by ORS Consulting Engineers. All associated items were discussed and agreed with the Planning Authority prior to submission of this application.

3. Further consideration of the documents in relation to the design and management of the student quarter distinct from the proposed apartments and housing.

The Lissywollen South Framework Plan identifies the need to create cohesive communities in Area 4 having regard to different tenure types, which we also interpret to mean the purpose built student accommodation (Objective O-LUF10). Other key objectives include the delivery of a coherent network of public and socially interactive open spaces and a sustainable movement strategy with direct linkages to the Old Rail Trail Greenway.

As set out in the submitted landscape package by Forestbird Design, the student quarter has its own distinct character, facilitating outdoor use and interaction. It contains a central plaza open to the public, feeling more like a town centre space rather than a segregated entity. This openness facilitates community interaction and acceptance as part of a unified functioning neighbourhood, while the inclusion of a defined 0.6 metre brick walls on the western edge of the student accommodation creates an element of distinct containment for management purposes. This is underpinned by a dedicated Student Accommodation Management Plan which is enclosed with the application. The operational development will be run in a proactive manner which works with the local community to develop strong and constructive relationships with its nearest neighbours including residential, commercial, and local community representatives. Dedicated community liaison officers will be appointed as part of the management structure responsible for engagement with local authorities, including local ambulance emergency, gardai, and fire support services, and also with the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest, Athlone Campus and student bodies themselves. This ensures a direct and clear line of contact. The operational development will be responsive to and place a huge emphasis on building strong community support and relationships and will use a mix of both formal and informal liaison and communication with neighbours to ensure a harmonious and positive experience both during the construction works, and also with our residents who will form an important part of the local community.

4. Further consideration/justification of the documents in relation to surface water management and SUDS measures.

Further to discussions with Westmeath County Council, the approach to surface water management on the site has been further refined to include additional sustainable drainage systems of environmental benefit. The particulars of this are detailed in Section 5 of the submitted Civil Engineering Report by ORS Consulting Engineers and includes green roofs, permeable paving, rain gardens and catchpit manholes. It incorporates latest technical advice and adaptable processes to assist in the planning, design, construction, management, and maintenance of high quality SuDS.

2.2 Specific Submission Requirements

The Notice of Pre-Application Consultation Opinion also directed the applicant to submit 16 no. items of additional specific information with the application.

1. Elaboration on funding, timing and delivery of Lissywollen Avenue and consideration of red line boundary of the development in the context of works proposed to Lissywollen Avenue.

The delivery of the permitted Lissywollen Avenue is being coordinated by Westmeath County Council, in consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage. Please refer to the enclosed letter by the relevant Director of Service in

Westmeath County Council providing clarity on the funding and timing for its construction⁵. The provision of the road will be front-loaded as part of the permitted SHD on the Council-owned lands to be delivered this year. Further to this letter, and referencing correspondence with the Council, local reporting in the Westmeath Independent on the 1st January 2022 indicated works are to begin within the first three months of 2022⁶. As such, the road will be well established in advance of any planned construction of the subject proposal.

The proposed amendment works to the permitted Lissywollen Avenue are very minor in nature and comprise the omission of a traffic island, signing and lining for provision of two bus stops⁷, tie-ins to pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and a footpath extension. These works have been agreed with Westmeath County Council. They relate to the subject proposal only and will be delivered commensurate with construction works for The Green Quarter SHD. They do not prejudice the construction of the road as originally permitted under ABP-309513-21.

2. Further consideration of the location and number of connections to neighbouring lands to the west, and to the Old Rail Trail to the south, specifically addressing any obstacles to permeable connections between the Student Quarter and AIT via the Old Rail Trail.

At pre-consultation stage, the site layout plan made provision for 2 no. connections between the subject site and Blackberry Lane/neighboring lands to the west. The potential to increase the number of connections was discussed at the tripartite meeting. The proposed site layout plan makes provision for 4 no. connections to increase permeability across and between the area. As outlined above, the size of these connection areas has been increased with the connections themselves functioning as unique amenity spaces, which are passively overlooked and open up the foraging corridor along the western boundary. The southwestern most connection point has been designed as an inviting orchard space with seating to entice people off the greenway and complement the foraging corridor (complete with interpretative signage) which will function as a distinct node on the Old Rail Trail greenway network.

As per the submitted plans and the supporting letter of support from Westmeath County Council, all obstacles to allow permeable connections between the subject site have been addressed. The pedestrian/cycle link to the south of Blackberry Lane will be modified in agreement with the local authority, with the associated works to be undertaken under license. This approach is consistent with permitted proposals under ABP-309513-21.

At the tripartite meeting, some views were expressed that pedestrian/cycle passage via the greenway represented the most direct route from the subject site to the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest Athlone Campus. This was further discussed with the Council and it was acknowledged that this is not the case⁸ at this point, and that access via Lissywollen Avenue and the R916 is the most direct and safe route for students. This route benefits from dedicated pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and will be the first choice for future students travelling to and from the campus.

⁵ Refer to Appendix C.

⁶ This article is attached to the end of Appendix C for information.

⁷ As discussed with Westmeath County Council and National Transport Authority.

⁸ Refer to Section 2.1.2 of the submitted Mobility Management Plan by ORS Consulting Engineers.

3. *Appropriate consents for pedestrian/cyclist access points onto the Old Rail Trail from the development and for any improvement to the connection point from Blackberry Lane onto the Old Rail Trail.*

As outlined above, the necessary consents are in place for the proposed pedestrian and cycle access points onto both Blackberry Lane and the Old Rail Trail Greenway. This has been confirmed in writing by Westmeath County Council.

4. *A report, including CGIs, visualisations and cross sections as necessary, which further elaborates upon the topography of the site adjoining the Old Rail Trail, future connections (including consents for same), and further consideration of location of photomontages along the Old Rail Trail and from existing dwellings to the southwest, with additional photomontages to be submitted with trees not in leaf.*

The submitted Design Statement and supporting plans by Henry J Lyons Architects sets out in detail the relationship between the proposed development and adjoining areas. Detailed cross-sections and CGIs have been prepared which clearly establish relationship between proposed development and adjoining residential uses. Proximity to adjoining homes and the protection of their amenities has been a foremost consideration in design development and the design response will ensure there is no adverse impact on these properties.

At the request of the Board, 2 no. additional photomontages have been prepared along the Old Rail Trail to further illustrate the relationship between Greenway users and the proposed development (View Receptors 11 and 12). The images were taken 12th Nov to minimise the degree of leaf coverage and maximise visibility and are considered 'winter views'. The aim with the receptor locations was to find the 'worst case scenario' where gaps in the hedgerow were greatest and the full scale of development could be ascertained. Hedgerows on both sides of the greenway are robust, resulting in heavily filtered views when looking through in tandem. These will be supplemented with additional planting in focused areas as set out in the submitted landscape plan. This, alongside the considered architectural approach provides for a robust response to local context.

5. *Detailed open space strategy, identifying the hierarchy, function and usability of open space across the site and how this is managed for students and for families, and detailed calculations in relation to open space areas.*

The submitted Landscape Design Strategy Report by Forestbird Design establishes a clear open space strategy for the site, sets out the genesis for same having regard to key landscape policy references and the existing landscape context, and provides an area-by-area breakdown of proposed landscape amenity components supported by sections and visualization. As set out, the strategy has been developed to cater for the distinct needs of residents, students and the local business district and with the aim of creating high quality, durable and place-focused areas that foster community, whilst being manageable in practical terms from an operational perspective.

The submitted Landscape Masterplan (drawing no. L206) provides detailed calculations in relation to proposed open space areas. Proposed public open space is 20% of the site area which is well in excess of policy standards. The proposed mix of green areas, children's playground, family and student zones as well as biodiversity areas will complement the existing strong network of amenity spaces in the area.

- 6. Sunlight, daylight and overshadowing analysis, having regard to the requirements of BRE209/BS2011, showing an acceptable level of residential amenity for neighbours of the proposed development as well as future occupiers, which includes details on the standards achieved within adjacent properties and their gardens, and within the proposed residential units, and in private and shared open space.**

In response to this request, separate daylight reception and sunlight/shadow analysis reports have been prepared by DK Partnership. They confirm that acceptable levels of residential amenity are achieved for future occupiers of the proposed development, both within the proposed residential units and in private and shared open spaces.

The potential impact of the development on neighbouring properties has also been assessed in detail. It demonstrates that there is no significant impact from the development on the adjacent homes in respect of daylight and shadow impacts.

- 7. Childcare Audit, having regard to number of units permitted to the west and capacity of permitted childcare facilities taking account of proposed number of 2+ bed units in the proposed development.**

A Childcare Needs Assessment has been prepared by HW Planning. This report has appropriately considered the adjoining permitted development to the west, reference ABP-309513-21 refers, which included an element of additional places on projected demand arising from that development. The Lissywollen South Framework Plan identifies the specific need for two childcare facilities in the study area which were provided for under ABP-309513-21⁹. Alongside the two new permitted creches, there will be four facilities within a c.750 metres area between Scoil na gCeithre Máistrí and the Spar at Garrycastle Roundabout. A review of pre-school inspection reports for existing childcare in the area confirms there is available capacity locally to cater for any demand arising from the proposed development. Notwithstanding this, and in the absence of feedback from Westmeath County Childcare Committee on the need for additional child places at this location, provision has been made for a 20-childcare creche as part of the proposed development in compliance with the Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001.

- 8. Details of the proposed materials and finishes to the scheme. Particular regard should be had to the requirement to provide high quality and sustainable finishes.**

Details of proposed materials and finishes are contained in the architectural and landscape plans and particulars submitted with the application. The specified materials are well considered and will provide for a high-quality living environment. The units on site have been designed with particular focus on elevational treatment and the use of durable materials. The submitted design statement includes focused commentary on the materials and finishes proposed and is supported by a Building Lifecycle Report.

- 9. Details of all boundaries proposed.**

The application includes detailed information on all site boundaries as presented in the site boundaries drawing, site section drawings and individual house type/elevation and section drawings by Henry J Lyons Architects. Further information is also provided on the

⁹ The rationale for including two creches in that scheme was to specifically address the two separate policy requirements of P1-KS06 and P2-KS05.

section enlargement plans contained in the Landscape Development Package by Forestbird Design.

10. Detailed tree and hedgerow survey which clearly identifies all trees/hedgerows proposed for removal, and measures to protect those to be retained.

The design of the development has been informed by a detailed Arboricultural Tree and Hedgerow Survey and Report by Arbor Care. All trees and hedgerow to be removed are clearly identified in the submitted plans. An Arboricultural Method Statement has been included to protect trees marked for retention during the construction phase.

11. Phasing plan in relation to delivery of residential development, student accommodation and Lissywollen Avenue.

A phasing plan for the development, as prepared by Henry J Lyons Architecture, is enclosed in Section 1.4 of the submitted Design Statement. The development will be constructed in two phases related to the residential housing, apartments and creche (Phase 1) and the student housing (Phase 2). Further, Section 4 of the submitted Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) addresses the planned phased approach to development.

With the permitted Lissywollen Avenue programmed for completion in 2022, it is not envisaged that any construction works will take place on site until the road is in place. Subject to a favorable grant of planning permission, the formal entrances to the subject site will be created in the first instance from this road. All matters will be agreed with the Council prior to commencement by means of a final pre-commencement CEMP.

12. A building life cycle report shall be submitted in accordance with section 6.3 of the Sustainable Urban housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2020). The report should have regard to the long term management and maintenance of the proposed development.

A Building Lifecycle Report as prepared by Aramark is enclosed with the application. This has been prepared in full accordance with section 6.3 of the Sustainable Urban housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2020). The report provides an initial assessment of long-term running and maintenance costs as they would apply on a per residential unit basis at the time of application, as well as demonstrating what measures have been specifically considered to effectively manage and reduce costs for the benefit of the future residents.

13. A detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan.

The application includes a detailed site-specific Construction Environmental Management Plan as prepared by ORS Consulting Engineers.

14. A detailed schedule of accommodation which shall indicate compliance with relevant standards in the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2018, including its specific planning policy requirements and also consideration of existing guidance in relation to Student Accommodation.

The accompanying Architectural Design Statement prepared by Henry J Lyons Architects includes a Quality Housing Assessment, which provides a detailed breakdown of compliance with all standards contained in the Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

It also confirms that the student housing Blocks designed in compliance with Design standards set out in the 1999 Guidelines for Residential Developments for Students. The scheme has been designed in accordance with that planned, permitted and constructed by Henry J Lyons Architects elsewhere, such as Cork Street Student Housing, Dublin.

15. The information referred to in article 299B(1)(b)(ii)(II) and article 299B(1)(c) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018 unless it is proposed to submit an EIAR at application stage.

The information referred to in article 299B (1)(b)(ii)(II) and article 299B(1)(c) of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2018 accompanies this application in a standalone document and separate EIA Screening Report prepared by HW Planning.

16. Where the applicant considers that the proposed strategic housing development would materially contravene the relevant development plan or local area plan, other than in relation to the zoning of the land, a statement indicating the plan objective(s) concerned and why permission should, nonetheless, be granted for the proposed development, having regard to a consideration specified in section 37(2)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Notices published pursuant to Section 8(1)(a) of the Act of 2016 and Article 292 (1) of the Regulations of 2017, shall refer to any such statement in the prescribed format.

A Statement of Material Contravention as prepared by HW Planning is enclosed with the application. The above referenced statutory provisions have been met as part of the formal application notification process.

03. Planning Assessment

3.1 Principle of Development

3.1.1 LISSYWOLLEN FRAMEWORK PLAN

This application includes a separate Statement of Consistency Report by HW Planning. The National Planning Framework assigns Athlone an important role as a regional growth centre, recognising that its influence extends to parts of all three regional assembles in the country. The Eastern and Midland Assembly Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) establishes a population growth target of 30,000 people in Athlone by 2031, an additional 8,851 persons. Section 4.5 of the RSES states that the delivery of this ambitious target will be contingent on the development of zoned land within the footprint of the town. Within this, Lissywollen South is identified as an area with significant potential to contribute to the realisation of planned growth:

In particular, the development of the strategic landbank at Lissywollen South, also offers the opportunity to develop a new urban quarter extending from the town centre.

The subject site is zoned for residential use under the Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2018- 2024. This framework was adopted by way of a variation to the Athlone Town Development Plan 2014-2020 where zoning objective Residential O-LZ1 provides for “residential development, associated services and to protect and improve residential amenity”. At the pre-consultation stage, Westmeath County Council confirmed their opinion that:

The development proposed is consistent with the zoning objective associated with the subject lands in terms of land use.

The Lissywollen South Framework Plan earmarks Parcel 4 for the provision of a new student quarter with dedicated accommodation to support Athlone IT (now the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest Athlone Campus). The proposed student housing element is being brought forward consistent with this, and with the strong support of the university¹⁰. The Board will note that the indicative boundaries of Parcel 4 in the framework are somewhat irregular in shape. In pre-planning discussions, as well as their opinion at pre-consultation stage, the Council confirmed that the framework is flexible and advisory in nature. As such, some buildings encroach on the indicative lines of neighboring zoning at this location. This was seen as preferable in the context of creating a coherent and strong architectural masterplan which complies in principle with the zoning.

The quantum of student bed spaces proposed has been directly informed by market intelligence¹¹. At the start of the design process, the team were advised that demand existed for 250-300 student bed spaces in the local area. The boundary in the south-

¹⁰ Refer to enclosed letter of support contained in Appendix D.

¹¹ Refer to enclosed letter by Lisney Auctioneers in Appendix E.

western corner of the site has been drawn to reflect what is needed to accommodate the proposed design and address this demand at this point in time. Overall, it is considered that the proposal will contribute positively to addressing the specific housing need for purpose-built student accommodation at this location.

3.1.2 DENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development provides for a density of 70 residential units per hectare across the entirety of the subject site based on 122 dwellings and apartments and 284 student bedspaces¹². Within this, the proposed density of development on the residential component only is 40 dwellings per hectare¹³. This represents a nominal reduction in density on this element from 41 dwellings per hectare at pre-consultation stage, having regard to the feedback obtained from Westmeath County Council and An Bord Pleanála.

The application site is an 'Outer Suburban / Greenfield Site' as it complies with Section 5.11 of the Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities which define such sites as "as open lands on the periphery of cities or larger towns". The guidelines state that "the greatest efficiency in land usage on such lands will be achieved by providing net residential densities in the general range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare and such densities (involving a variety of housing types where possible) should be encouraged generally". The conventional residential component complies with this and delivers on the referenced provision of a variety of housing typologies.

The Lissywollen South Framework Plan advises that the student quarter lands in Parcel 4 represent a unique opportunity to provide high quality and innovative development with potential for landmark building befitting the regional importance of Athlone, whilst functioning as entry point/gateway on the National Cycle Network approach to the town. The sentiment is towards higher density buildings of larger scale, which in addition to the landmark/gateway requirement, also naturally lends itself to student housing building typologies. The design approach delivers on this by means of contemporary high quality design reflecting key guiding principles in the framework plan, including a demonstratable transition from adjacent 2-3 storey housing in the study area. The proposed density of the student accommodation is a product of the design rationale, as well as a desire to cater for the identified local demand in student bed spaces. At pre-consultation stage, the Council confirmed their happiness with the approach to same:

The proposal also provides a proportionate and tailored approach to a density required in providing residential development and purpose-built student housing on designated development lands which are suitable in terms of the proposed use, scale, design and layout and also that is appropriate to the character, scale, setting and overall vision for the area.

3.2 Residential Amenity

The applicant wants to build an attractive and viable development, and as such, has undertaken a number of specialist studies to ensure prospective future residents will enjoy

¹² For the purposes of the density calculation, 2 no. student accommodation spaces have been calculated as 1 no. unit.

¹³ Based on a residential site area of 3.05 hectares. Refer to Section 1.2 of the Architectural Design Statement by Henry J Lyons. This density has been calculated in accordance with the Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities. As per Appendix A criteria, it excludes the distributor road and landscaped buffer edge of Blackberry Lane which is an amenity serving a wider area.

good quality amenity, and secondly, ensure that the development will not discommode any adjoining residents.

3.2.1 FUTURE RESIDENTS

Noise

An External Noise Impact Report has been prepared by DK Partnership to examine the effects of existing background noise on the perceived noise levels within the habitable rooms of the new proposed development. The basis for undertaking the report is the EPA generated traffic noise maps. The proposed development site is subject to traffic noise from the N6 to the North and to a slightly lesser degree the R916 to the East. The final resultant external noise exposure at the facades and internal ambient predicted noise levels (table 5.3 and 5.5) however are all comfortably within the maximum guidelines of the WHO/CIBSE/BS8233 and indeed the relevant internal ambient day time and night time noise levels according to the WHO category table 4.2 is deemed to be "Very Good / Good".

The receiving facades environment of all houses and student apartments for the majority fall under category A in the Noise impact assessment criterion table 4.1 except for the most northern units and although this would be acceptable in a country / suburban environment it is recommend that some noise impact measures be considered as outlined in section 5.8 of the report to ensure the internal ambient noise levels to be "Very Good / Good".

For the amenity spaces, and when comparing the calculated noise exposure without any noise reduction measures only the most northern (closest to the N6) amenity space 10 is marginally outside the EPA NG4 recommendations. However, this is mitigated through the introduction of the proposed berm/vegetation on the landscape plan ensuring that all amenity space fall within the maximum recommended guidelines of the WHO/CIBSE/BS8233/EPA.

It is noted generally that permitted reference ABP-309513-21 includes new dwellings in closer proximity to the N6, this being the primary source of local noise. Notwithstanding this, the completed assessment confirms that that the noise exposure both internally within the residential units and student apartment block and externally in the dedicated amenity spaces are within the guidelines as set out under the WHO/CIBSE/BS8233/EPA.

Daylight Reception and Sunlight

A daylight reception report has been prepared in accordance with BRE, European and British day lighting standards. The BRE report 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight' recommends as a methodology, that the calculated Average Daylight Factor (ADF) of a habitable room to be in excess of the BRE benchmarks of a kitchen at 2%, a living room at 1.5%, a bedroom at 1% and a living room/bedroom at 1.5%. Analysis has been carried out on all proposed units on each floor until it has been demonstrated that all units on a floor meet recommended targets, at which point it can be logically assumed units above will also pass. From the modelled calculations, all rooms have an ADF which exceeds the guidelines of the BRE.

A sunlight reception analysis of proposed amenity spaces was also undertaken by DK Partnership. Based on the BRE guidelines at least 50% of the amenity space should receive at least two hours of sunlight on the 21st March. Completed analysis confirms that all the

amenity spaces receive more than 2 hours, with this standard significantly exceeded in a number of cases.

Based on the above analysis, the design of the proposed development has been rigorously tested against a number of key assessments and the proposal will provide future occupants with high quality amenity.

3.2.2 RESIDENTIAL AMENITY OF EXISTING DWELLINGS

The design of the proposed development has also actively considered the amenity of existing residential properties in the area. The form, massing and height of the proposed scheme have been carefully modulated to maximise access to natural daylight and minimising overshadowing/loss of light. This is presented in a number of sections and CGIs contained in the submitted Architectural Design Statement.

- The proposal steps up the height from the western boundary from conventional 2 storey dwellings having regard to the form of development permitted under ABP-309513-21.
- Development is omitted from the southwestern corner of the site which is adjacent to the nearest existing homes to the development at Ashgrove (south of the Old Rail Trail Greenway). There is an existing intervening bank of vegetation which restricts any views into the private gardens of these dwellings from the R1 Apartment Block. The design approach includes a louvered system on the west and east facing balconies of this block to ensure no residual risk in this regard.
- In relation to the residence's due south, and in addition to the significant setback distances from these dwelling houses, there is an existing robust network of intervening hedgerows along the greenway. As set out in the landscape plans, it is proposed to supplement this in ownership with new conifer and native broadleaf trees where the need for additional planting has been identified. Views from the top floor will be long range and not result in any undue overbearance. Again, the eastern facing balconies are louvred at the end of the R1 block at the point at which the hedgerow on the southern side of the greenway is maintained to a lower level. A similar louvered system is also proposed as part of the S1 student housing block.
- The interrelationship between the proposal and existing properties has also been assessed as part of the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The setback distances and apron of intervening landscape buffers and the greenway network itself offset the increased height, which is further softened by the proposed tree planting negating any issue of perceived overbearance.
- Separate Daylight and Shadow Impact reports have been prepared by DK Partnership which verify that the scale, massing and orientation of the apartment blocks will not have an adverse impact on existing residents in the area.

3.3 Compliance with Height Guidelines

The proposed development complies with the Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2018. The ministerial guidelines emphasis that it is Government policy that building heights must be generally increased in appropriate urban areas. Section 3 of the guidelines stipulate that in making an application, the applicant shall demonstrate that the proposal satisfies the following criteria:

At the scale of the relevant city/town

- *The site is well served by public transport with high capacity, frequent service and good links to other modes of public transport.*
- *Development proposals incorporating increased building height, including proposals within architecturally sensitive areas, should successfully integrate into/ enhance the character and public realm of the area, having regard to topography, its cultural context, setting of key landmarks, protection of key views. Such development proposals shall undertake a landscape and visual assessment, by a suitably qualified practitioner such as a chartered landscape architect.*
- *On larger urban redevelopment sites, proposed developments should make a positive contribution to place-making, incorporating new streets and public spaces, using massing and height to achieve the required densities but with sufficient variety in scale and form to respond to the scale of adjoining developments and create visual interest in the streetscape.*

The subject site is located in an emerging and accessible location on the edge of Athlone Urban Area. The building height guidelines state that newer housing developments at the suburban edges of towns and cities “typically now include town-houses (2-3 storeys), duplexes (3-4 storeys) and apartments (4 storeys upwards). Such developments deliver medium densities, in the range of 35-50 dwellings per hectare net. Such developments also address the need for more 1- and 2-bedroom units in line with wider demographic and household formation trends, while at the same time providing for the larger 3, 4 or more bedroom homes across a variety of building typology and tenure options, enabling households to meet changing accommodation requirements over longer periods of time without necessitating relocation.”. The proposed development complies with this achieving a residential density of 40 dwellings per hectare on the residential component, with higher density blocks for the student element reflecting the need to make the most efficient use of lands zoned for student accommodation in Athlone.

The increase in building height on the site has been considered in detail having regard to its immediate context. As per the submitted design rationale, the development form and building typologies will contribute positively to the creation of new character and a network of high quality interlinked open spaces, public realm and play areas. Policy Objective P4-KS08 provides for the provision of a landmark building in Parcel 4 to signify entry into the Regional Centre of Athlone for users of the National Greenway. The gradual scaling up of height toward the greenway is intentional and effective in compliance with this objective.

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment for the project has been undertaken by a chartered landscape architect which concludes that the proposed development is an appropriate contribution to both the existing and likely future built fabric of this urban area and it will not result in any significant townscape or visual impacts.

At the scale of district/ neighbourhood/ street

- *The proposal responds to its overall natural and built environment and makes a positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood and streetscape.*
- *The proposal is not monolithic and avoids long, uninterrupted walls of building in the form of slab blocks with materials / building fabric well considered.*

- *The proposal enhances the urban design context for public spaces and key thoroughfares and inland waterway/ marine frontage, thereby enabling additional height in development form to be favourably considered in terms of enhancing a sense of scale and enclosure while being in line with the requirements of “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (2009).*
- *The proposal makes a positive contribution to the improvement of legibility through the site or wider urban area within which the development is situated and integrates in a cohesive manner.*
- *The proposal positively contributes to the mix of uses and/ or building/ dwelling typologies available in the neighbourhood.*

The proposal will make an extremely positive contribution to the urban neighbourhood addressing presently unused zoned land and introducing much needed residential accommodation to address housing needs and support the critical mass of existing services in the nearby local area.

The proposal enhances the urban design context on a strategically important development landbank in Athlone. It has also been designed to integrate with existing and permitted development and amenities and will facilitate future development on the east of the site.

A prominent site, the proposal will improve legibility in the local area creating new urban identify at the eastern end of the Lissywollen South Framework area by introducing high-quality contemporary elevations and treatments. The development will function as a key visual node on the greenway and attendant areas providing passive surveillance and improving nighttime safety. The local housing market in the area is presently typified by traditional dwelling housing stock. The subject development will contribute positively to available dwelling typologies in the area through the provision of smaller unit types and bespoke accommodation for students.

At the scale of the site/building

- *The form, massing and height of proposed developments should be carefully modulated so as to maximise access to natural daylight, ventilation and views and minimise overshadowing and loss of light.*
- *Appropriate and reasonable regard should be taken of quantitative performance approaches to daylight provision outlined in guides like the Building Research Establishment’s ‘Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight’ (2nd edition) or BS 8206-2: 2008 – ‘Lighting for Buildings – Part 2: Code of Practice for Daylighting’.*
- *Where a proposal may not be able to fully meet all the requirements of the daylight provisions above, this must be clearly identified and a rationale for any alternative, compensatory design solutions must be set out, in respect of which the planning authority or An Bord Pleanála should apply their discretion, having regard to local factors including specific site constraints and the balancing of that assessment against the desirability of achieving wider planning objectives. Such objectives might include securing comprehensive urban regeneration and or an effective urban design and streetscape solution.*

As illustrated in the submitted Design Statement by Henry J Lyons Architects, the form, massing and height of the proposed development has been considered in detail relative to future occupier requirements and the avoidance of impacts in the local environment.

The design approach has been tested by means of daylight reception and shadow analysis. The proposal affords access to natural daylight and ventilation and appropriately mitigates the potential for any impacts on adjoining amenities.

As outlined, it has been demonstrated by means of a number of technical assessments that the proposed development meets all quantitative performance standards set out in the BRE document 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight' (2nd edition) or BS 8206-2: 2008 – 'Lighting for Buildings – Part 2: Code of Practice for Daylighting'.

Specific Assessments

- *Specific impact assessment of the micro-climatic effects such as downdraft. Such assessments shall include measures to avoid/ mitigate such micro-climatic effects and, where appropriate, shall include an assessment of the cumulative micro-climatic effects where taller buildings are clustered.*
- *In development locations in proximity to sensitive bird and / or bat areas, proposed developments need to consider the potential interaction of the building location, building materials and artificial lighting to impact flight lines and / or collision.*
- *An assessment that the proposal allows for the retention of important telecommunication channels, such as microwave links.*
- *An assessment that the proposal maintains safe air navigation.*
- *An urban design statement including, as appropriate, impact on the historic built environment.*
- *Relevant environmental assessment requirements, including SEA, EIA, AA and Ecological Impact Assessment, as appropriate*

Ranging in heights between 2-7 storeys, the subject buildings are not of a scale or height that would warrant downdraft micro-climatic effects.

As outlined, specialist reports on daylight reception in the proposed development, effects on daylight reception at neighbouring buildings and sunlight and shadow analysis have been undertaken which confirms that the proposed development will not have any adverse impacts on the amenity of existing or future residents.

A noise assessment has also been undertaken which confirms that the proposed development will not have any adverse impacts on the amenity of existing or future residents. The application also includes a specialist study confirming that the proposal will not impede telecommunication channels in the local area.

The site has been subject to ecological survey by Ecology Ireland. The policy objectives of the Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2018 – 2024 requires that badger and bat investigations be undertaken. Site walkovers were supplemented by the deployment of digital wildlife cameras. No evidence of the presence of Badger, *Meles meles*, was recorded anywhere on site. The field boundaries provide some potential attractive foraging and commuting habitat for bats. The mature trees were visually inspected to record potential roost features but overall limited roosting opportunities are present. Two passive detectors were deployed at locations on field boundaries on the lands from July 8th to July 15th 2021. The pattern of activity noted was not indicative of the presence of a local roost of any of the species identified – i.e. no bimodal activity pattern and an inconsistent pattern of records relative to the dawn and dusk at this location. No watercourses are located within the site boundary and no impact on aquatic habitats in the vicinity of the site is predicted. No adverse impact on designated sites or their conservation objectives will occur.

The application is accompanied by a detailed urban design statement. The site is not located near any protected structures or architectural conservation areas and the project will not have an impact on any buildings of heritage value.

Collectively, we consider that these assessments demonstrate that the overall scale and massing of the proposal is well judged, carefully composed and an appropriate response to local context.

Westmeath County Council's Opinion (dated 09/07/2021) supports this view and states that:

"...it is considered that the design approach and typologies proposed will provide a distinct identity which will assimilate effectively into the subject lands and will not be detrimental to the character or amenities of the surrounding area".

"The proposed building heights which range from 2 storeys to 7 storeys are consistent with national guidelines 'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines' (2018) and the provisions of the Lissywollen South Framework Plan and are therefore acceptable in principle to the Planning Authority".

3.4 Transport & Connectivity

The submitted pack includes a Traffic Impact Assessment Report and Mobility Management Plan which establish the local context in respect of public transport and connectivity.

The subject site is an emerging suburban edge of town location, but it benefits from strong existing and permitted pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, which includes direct access onto the Old Rail Trail Greenway and direct routes to key local social and community infrastructure, employment areas, services and AIT. This is illustrated in the submitted walking and cycling accessibility maps contained in Appendix F.

3.4.1 SMART TRAVEL STRATEGY

The submitted Mobility Management Plan outlines key measures as part of the Smarter Travel Strategy for the development, which includes:

- Locating the development an attractive distance to and between key locations encouraging behavioral change and consequently reducing car dependency. The aforementioned proximity to the greenway and direct access to cycle and pedestrian routes are foremost in this.
- Providing alternative means of travel including new dedicated cycle link through the site connecting Lissywollen Avenue and the Old Rail Trail Greenway and provision of a dedicated bus stops on Lissywollen Avenue to complement that permitted under the adjacent Alannah Roadbridge development.
- Provision of reduced car parking ratio of 1.3 spaces per residential unit as per discussions with Westmeath County Council and consistent with the adjacent Alannah Roadbridge development.
- Actions aimed at improving alternative technologies and fuel efficiency of motorized transport such as the provision of dedicated e-charging facilities for the development.
- Introduction of incentives for the operational development as set out in the mobility management plan including cycle training, car sharing and other hard (infrastructural) and soft (behavioral) measures.

The submitted Mobility Management Plan includes an Action Plan with targeted modal shift objectives.

3.4.2 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT

The enclosed Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA), prepared by ORS Consulting Engineers, reviewed the potential for traffic impacts on the local road network. The assessment calculated the traffic impact on 11 no. junctions in the vicinity of the proposed development in order to calculate the traffic impact that the development will have in the neighbouring junctions. The analysis found that the TII threshold of 5% of additional traffic where congestion exists was not met by any other junction apart from the R916/Moydrum Road roundabout, therefore, this was the only junction assessed. The junction was subject to capacity analyses. It was determined that the proposed development will not adversely affect the functionality of the R916/Moydrum Road roundabout, as the Ratio of Flow to Capacity (RFC) on arm D – Blackberry Lane increases only from 0.25 to 0.36 in the morning period in the design year 2039. The introduction of a flare on the Blackberry Lane

approach (as permitted under ABP-309513-21) to the junction improves the RFC by 85% when comparing Analysis A and B. The report concludes that the junction arrangements to access the application site can operate satisfactorily in accommodating the levels and types of traffic likely to be generated by the development in terms of traffic capacity.

The proposed development provides for a total of 200 car parking spaces disaggregated across the residential (157 spaces), creche (4 spaces) and student accommodation (39 spaces) uses. The ratio of 157 car parking spaces per 122 residential units is marginally below the maximum standards set out in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and that permitted under adjoining reference ABP-309513-21. The proposed parking provision is more than sufficient to serve the application and will promote the adoption of sustainable travel modes. The TIA confirms the scheme is also in line with the principles of DMURS and is supported by a separate Statement on DMURS Compliance.

3.5 Archaeology

The subject lands contain no recorded archaeological monuments listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP). The closest recorded archaeological sites to the proposed development are located south of the old railway line. They comprise of a small ringfort also used as burial ground (WM029-023) and a military camp (WM029-022). Both of these areas are now surrounded by housing estate development. There is a National Inventory of Architectural Heritage listed house (Jabla House) south of the military camp. It was established under the adjoining Alannah Roadridge development that the subject area is not a landscape of historic heritage value. Field walking and archaeological testing was undertaken on these adjoining lands. A series of 17 test trenches were excavated across those lands to the natural boulder clay. No features or finds indicative of archaeological remains were recorded.

The application is accompanied by an Archaeological Assessment Report by John Cronin and Associates, which following consultation with all available and relevant datasets and historic documentary and cartographic sources, confirms that the proposed scheme will have no impact on the recorded archaeological heritage resource. The assessment also concludes that the site possesses moderate archaeological potential. It is recommended that a programme of archaeological monitoring be undertaken during topsoil stripping of the site.

3.6 Services Infrastructure

An Engineering Services Report by ORS Consulting Engineers accompanies the application addressing matters related to surface water, sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) measures, foul sewer discharge, water supply and flood risk for the site.

A statement of design acceptance from Irish Water is enclosed with the submission confirming that a connection to Irish Water networks can be facilitated.

04. Conclusions

The proposed development represents a natural and positive evolution of an important site in the strategic landbank of Lissywollen which has been identified as a key enabler for Athlone's development as a regional growth centre. The principle of developing the site for residential and student use is supported by land use zoning as well as other key policy objectives contained in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027 and the Lissywollen South Framework Plan 2018-2024. The project will also deliver directly on key objectives contained in the National Planning Framework including the express need to create a more compact urban form in places such as Athlone to ensure they can compete internationally and be drivers of regional growth, investment and prosperity.

The design of the proposed development has been considered in detail and the project will contribute towards the achievement of a highly sustainable and integrated new urban quarter which extends along the greenway to/from the town centre of Athlone. It is a location where increased heights and densities of development should be supported having regard to ministerial guidelines, as well as national, regional and local policy objectives. The design of the proposal fully respects existing context which has been advanced on the basis of sound, well considered best-practice architectural principles and it has been demonstrated that the proposed development will not give rise to any adverse local impacts.

Appendices

HW Planning
5 Joyce House,
Barrack Square,
Ballincollig, Co. Cork

www.hwplanning.ie
info@hwplanning.ie
+353 (0)21 487 3250



Appendix A:

Correspondence from Westmeath County Council in respect of upgrade works to Blackberry Lane

Mark Cunningham

From: Patrick Nally <pnally@westmeathcoco.ie>
Sent: 18 November 2021 20:06
To: Mark Cunningham
Cc: Paula Hanlon
Subject: RE: Resurfacing Of The Blackberry Lane At Cartronroy, Kilnafaddoge and Lissywollen (townlands), Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

Mark

The proposal is acceptable to Westmeath County Council.

Please indicate your willingness in this regard when making your submission & we will reflect it in our reports also.

Regards



Patrick Nally | Senior Executive Engineer (District Engineer) | Municipal District of Athlone Moate, Westmeath County Council, Civic Centre, Church Street, Athlone, Co. Westmeath, N37 P2T5 | 📞 Office 090 6442150 | 📠 090 6479020 |

✉️ pnally@westmeathcoco.ie | www.westmeathcoco.ie

From: Mark Cunningham <Mark@cunninghamdp.ie>
Sent: Friday 12 November 2021 11:30
To: Patrick Nally <pnally@westmeathcoco.ie>
Cc: Mark Cunningham <Mark@cunninghamdp.ie>
Subject: Re: Resurfacing Of The Blackberry Lane At Cartronroy, Kilnafaddoge and Lissywollen (townlands), Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

⚠️ CAUTION: This email originated from outside Westmeath County Councils email system. **DO NOT CLICK** links, or open attachments, unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Pat

I refer to the above and to our telephone conversation of this morning and I now attach a costing report for the proposed resurfacing of The Black Berry Lane for your consideration.

Please note that I hereby confirm that I am prepared to accept the stated amount of €29,078 as a condition of planning in the form of a special development contribution for the resurfacing of The Black Berry Lane in the event of a successful grant of planning permission.

Please let me know if this is acceptable amount is acceptable to The Local Authority at your convenience.

Kind regards.

Mark Cunningham

From: Mark Cunningham
Sent: 12 November 2021 11:30
To: Patrick Nally
Cc: Mark Cunningham
Subject: Re: Resurfacing Of The Blackberry Lane At Cartrontrouy, Kilnafaddoge and Lissywollen (townlands), Athlone, Co. Westmeath.
Attachments: Blackberry Lane, Athlone, Co Westmeath - Resurfacing Works.pdf

Dear Pat

I refer to the above and to our telephone conversation of this morning and I now attach a costing report for the proposed resurfacing of The Black Berry Lane for your consideration.

Please note that I hereby confirm that I am prepared to accept the stated amount of €29,078 as a condition of planning in the form of a special development contribution for the resurfacing of The Black Berry Lane in the event of a successful grant of planning permission.

Please let me know if this is acceptable amount is acceptable to The Local Authority at your convenience.

Kind regards.

Mark Cunningham

Mark Cunningham BEng, MSc, CEng, MIEI.

Chartered Engineer & Assigned Certifier



CUNNINGHAM DESIGN & PLANNING

Block C

N4 Axis Centre

Longford

Mr. Mark Cunningham
CUNNINGHAM DESIGN & PLANNING
Block C
N4 Axis Centre
Longford
Co. Longford.

11th November 2021

Dear Mark,

Re: Resurfacing Works to Blackberry Lane at Cartrontroty, Kilnafaddoge and Lissywollen (Townlands), Athlone, Co Westmeath

We refer to the above project and the requirement for the resurfacing of the existing road surface to Blackberry Lane.

In this regard we outline below the budget costs involved in the resurfacing exercise.

Scope of Works

Extent of works to Blackberry Lane as per attached site plan in Appendix 1 and the shaded in 'orange'; the overall length measures 264m; the finished road surface width is to be 4m wide, meaning the overall surface area is 1,056m²

The proposed works are to include the planing out of the existing road surfaces (the current road surface condition is as shown in the photo's contained within Appendix 1).

Proposed Specification

Plane out existing road surface to achieve required levels		Item		€3,500.00
Suction sweep		Item		€750.00
Granular material; clause 804 to carriageway; 150mm thick	264	m2	€4.00	€1,056.00
Regulating macadam (approximate quantity - to be confirmed)	50	t	€90.00	€4,500.00
Apply cationic tack coat (between courses)	528	m2	€1.50	€792.00
Supply & lay dense bitumen macadam 170mm base course	264	m2	€26.00	€6,864.00
Supply & lay dense bitumen macadam 60mm binder course	264	m2	€30.00	€7,920.00
Supply & lay dense bitumen macadam (40mm wearing course)	264	m2	€14.00	€3,696.00
			Total	€29,078.00

Note: the above costs do not take into account any Traffic management, removal of existing shrubs, hedges, roots and the like. All surfacing materials to be laid by machine i.e. hand lay costs are excluded.

Your Sincerely,

KEVIN CAMPBELL
QUANTITY SURVEYOR

McKenna
Construction Consultants

T:+353(043)3341311

W:

www.mckennaconsultancy.ie





APPENDIX 1

RESURFACING OF BLACKBERRY LANE AT CARTRONTROY,
KILNAFADDOGE AND LISSYWOLLEN (TOWNLANDS),
ATHLONE, CO WESTMEATH







Our Ref: PN/SK

Mark Cunningham
Cunningham Design & Planning
Block C
N4 Axis Centre
Longford
Co Longford

24th November, 2021

Re: Roads & Services in Charge
Your Client: Avenir Homes, Lissywoollen
Laneway at: Blackberry Lane, Cartrontroiy/Kilnafaddoge/Lissywoollen townlands,
Athlone, Co Westmeath

A Chara,

Your email received on 15th November, 2021 refers.

I wish to advise that the Road (L40061) highlighted in green and shown as **A-B** on the attached map and the surface water sewer at the north end are in the charge of The Local Authority. There are no footpaths locally.

Please be advised that Westmeath County Council is responsible for the taking in charge of the roads, footpaths and surface water sewer only. Any road identified as taken in charge is, by definition, connected to the wider public road network for which Westmeath County Council has responsibility.

All other services, including water, sewerage, ESB, broadband connections etc are the responsibility of the relevant departments/agencies and/or service providers i.e. Irish Water, ESB etc.

You are further advised that Westmeath County Council is not in a position to clarify the taking in charge of services outside the remit of roads, footpaths and surface water. Any queries outside the remit of the County Council should therefore be directed to the agency responsible.

The information contained in this letter is correct as of the date shown. You should note that the Council may subsequently take in charge additional roads or abandon roads currently shown as in charge in accordance with the Roads Act 1993 as amended.

Please find attached receipt for €70 as submitted.

Mise le Meas



PLANNING

Appendix B:

Letter from Westmeath County Council in respect of Old Rail Trail Greenway Connections

24 November 2021

Conor Frehill
Director, HW Planning
5 Joyce House
Barrack Square
Ballincollig
Co. Cork

By email: cfrehill@hwplanning.ie

Reference: Avenir Homes Limited - Old Rail Trail Greenway connections in association with proposed Strategic Housing Development at Lissywollen, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

Dear Conor,

Please see below clarification on foot of tripartite consultation meeting of 14 October 2021 in relation to a proposed Strategic Housing Development (SHD) application for 127 no. residential units (65 no. houses, 62 no. apartments), 283 no. student bedspace accommodation, creche and associated site works at Cartrontrouy, Kilnafaddoge, Lissywollen (townlands), Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

With regard to the provision of pedestrian and cycle connections to the Old Rail Trail Greenway in association with the above development, you are advised that having regard to the nature of the Licence Agreement in place between Westmeath County Council (WCC) and Iarnród Éireann - Irish Rail, WCC do not have authority under said agreement to provide consent to third parties for works associated with the Old Rail Trail.

Notwithstanding, and consistent with the approach taken under SHD application ABP-309513-21, for development on the adjoining lands to this development, WCC are fully supportive of the proposed connections to the Old Rail Trail and, in the event that permission is granted for the proposed development, WCC will engage with the landowners in question with a view to facilitating any works necessary to provide access requirements for members of the public to the greenway in association with your permission and in accordance with the Licence Agreement.

I trust this this clarifies this matter, however, should you wish to discuss the matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,



Barry Kehoe

Director of Services, Transportation, Planning and Economic Development
Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act

Appendix C:

Letter from Westmeath County Council in respect of funding time and delivery of Lissywollen Avenue / Article from Westmeath Independent on 1st January 2022

Conor Frehill
Director, HW Planning
5 Joyce House
Barrack Square
Ballincollig
Co. Cork

26 November 2021

By email: cfrehill@hwplanning.ie

Reference: Avenir Homes Limited - Elaboration on funding, timing and delivery of Lissywollen Avenue at Lissywollen, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

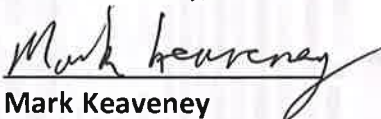
Dear Conor,

Please see below clarification on foot of tripartite consultation meeting of 14 October 2021 in relation to a proposed Strategic Housing Development (SHD) application for 127 no. residential units (65 no. houses, 62 no. apartments), 283 no. student bedspace accommodation, creche and associated site works at Cartronroy, Kilnafaddoge, Lissywollen (townlands), Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

Funding for the provision of an access road connecting the access road at Brawny to the roundabout at Garrycastle was approved by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in 2017 under the Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund. Westmeath County Council included the provision of this access road as part of a Competitive Dialogue Procurement Process for the delivery of approx. 600 houses on Council owned lands at Lissywollen. The preferred Economic Operator was identified and has received planning approval under the SHD process for the development of 574 housing units and associated infrastructure including the access road, now known as Lissywollen Avenue. The Council, in consultation with the DHLGH, is in discussions with the preferred Economic Operator to finalise the contract award and commence construction. Westmeath County Council remains committed to the delivery of the access road and the proposed housing, including social housing, at this location. Exact timeframes cannot be established until the contract is awarded, however, it is anticipated that construction would commence in 2022. The tender documents provide for the construction of the access road in its entirety at the start of the development.

I trust this this clarifies this matter, however, should you wish to discuss the matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,



Mark Keaveney

Director of Service for Housing, Community Development, Culture inc Library & the Arts, ICT, Corporate Performance & Development inc. HR
Designated Public Official under the Regulation of Lobbying Act

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January 1, 2022

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Skydiving over the pyramids
PAGES 6/7



Christmas cards from Horseleap NS
PAGES 21-23



Work on 576-home project to begin in early 2022

Link road to Garrycastle will be first part of huge Lissywollen development

ADRIAN CUSACK

THE start of work on the 576-unit Lissywollen housing development in Athlone has been slightly delayed, but construction is now expected to begin within the first three months of the new year.

The Alanna Roadbridge development, in conjunction with Westmeath County Council, is set to cost in the region of €182 million and, when complete, is due to deliver 400 private homes and 176 social housing units.

Planning permission for it was granted by An Bord Pleanála just over six months ago, and at that stage it was anticipated that work on site would be underway before the end of this year.

Council Director of Services Mark Keaveney last week indicated that the process



A design image showing what one part of the 'Lissywollen Avenue' road is expected to look like. The road would link the Ballymahon Road to Garrycastle.

had been slightly delayed by complex discussions to finalise the contract for the project between the local authority and Alanna Roadbridge.

"Westmeath County Council, in consultation with the Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage,

is in the process of finalising the development agreement and completing the contract award with the Economic Operator," said Mr Keaveney, in a statement.

"This is a complex legalistic process and is taking longer than expected. We hope to

have the process concluded in early 2022 and that the Economic Operator would be in a position to move to site immediately thereafter."

The first phase of the housing would be located at the Garrycastle end of the 17.6-hectare development

site which sits alongside the Old Rail Trail greenway and between the Scoil na gCeithre Maistri Gaeilscoil and Garrycastle.

According to planning documents, this first residential phase would consist of 72 houses and 47 duplex or

apartment units.

But before any homes are built, a controversial link road known as 'Lissywollen Avenue' must first be constructed between the Brawny area and Garrycastle.

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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Appendix D:

Letter of support from Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest

**TUS**

Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest
Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

TUS Midlands Midwest**Athlone Campus**

University Road
Athlone
Co. Westmeath
N37 HD68
Ireland

+353 90 646 8000

www.tus.ie

To: An Bord Pleanála
c/o
Mr. Conor Frehill
HW Planning
No. 5 Joyce House
Barrack Square
Ballincollig
Co. Cork
P31 KP84

Subject: Student Accommodation (The Green Quarter)

Issued by: Softcopy to cfrehill@hwplanning.ie

Date: 15 November 2021

A Dhaoine Uaisle

The Technological University of the Shannon (formerly Athlone Institute of Technology) sets out in its Master Plan for the Athlone Campus the key strategic development of the provision of student accommodation. This strategic objective aims to provide, in part, the capacity needed for the projected growth in the years ahead in students entering higher education. The University is not in a position in the short term to provide purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) directly for two reasons, as outlined in the Master Plan;

- 1) Space – the Athlone Campus does not have suitable space available to develop PBSA and the acquisition of new lands will be required in advance for the University to undertake a development
- 2) Funding – A major challenge is funding availability for higher education institutes to develop PBSA directly. The Higher Education Authority (HEA) are currently working towards developing funding models and mechanisms for the development, although the timelines for same are yet to be determined

The student numbers are growing and increased accommodation capacity remains a strategic objective for TUS. It is projected that the student numbers attending TUS Athlone Campus will increase by up to 11% by 2024.

It is in this context that TUS welcomes and supports the proposed Green Quarter development at Cartrontrou, Kilnafaddoge and Lissywollen in Athlone. The proposed development is in close proximity to the TUS



TUS

**Technological University of the Shannon:
Midlands Midwest**
Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:
Lár Tíre Iarthar Láir

TUS Midlands Midwest

Athlone Campus

University Road

Athlone

Co. Westmeath

N37 HD68

Ireland

+353 90 646 8000

www.tus.ie

Athlone Campus and will provide a modern, high quality and safe accommodation for students attending TUS, and will play an important part in providing the increased students accommodation capacity required to enable the University to continue meeting its objectives in higher education.

Subject to the proposed development meeting all necessary statutory, regulatory and other applicable guidelines and standards, TUS welcomes and supports the planning application process.

Is mise, le meas

Signed

Mr Cormac Cloonan

Estates Manager, TUS Athlone Campus

Appendix E:

Letter on Student Housing Demand by Lisney



CHARTERED SURVEYORS
Dublin ■ Belfast ■ Cork

Tuesday, 23 November 2021

St. Stephen's Green House,
Earlsfort Terrace,
Dublin 2, D02 PH42,
Ireland
Telephone: 353 1 638 2700
Email: dublin@lisney.com
Website: www.lisney.com

RE: STUDENT ACCOMMODATION, ATHLONE CO. WESTMEATH.

To whom it may concern,

Lisney were retained by Avenir Homes Limited to review demand for student accommodation in Athlone and advise on key outline design considerations for this component of the proposed Strategic Housing Development in the Lissywollen South Framework Area, Athlone.

The student accommodation market in Athlone is currently characterised by a mix of focused student housing, digs accommodation and those renting in the private market. They are also a key demographic of day commuters to college in Athlone who do not reside overnight in the area. There is demand for new dedicated student accommodation in Athlone, which is reflected in Westmeath County Council's decision to zone the subject lands for such purposes. We are of the view that there is demand for 250-300 bed spaces, based on a review of local market information. The need to address this demand is of critical importance to the functioning local housing market, with reports of students staying in hotel rooms commonplace in recent months. It is considered that the provision of dedicated student accommodation will also free up homes for families and young professionals in the private rental market.

If there are any questions on the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Martin O'Halloran

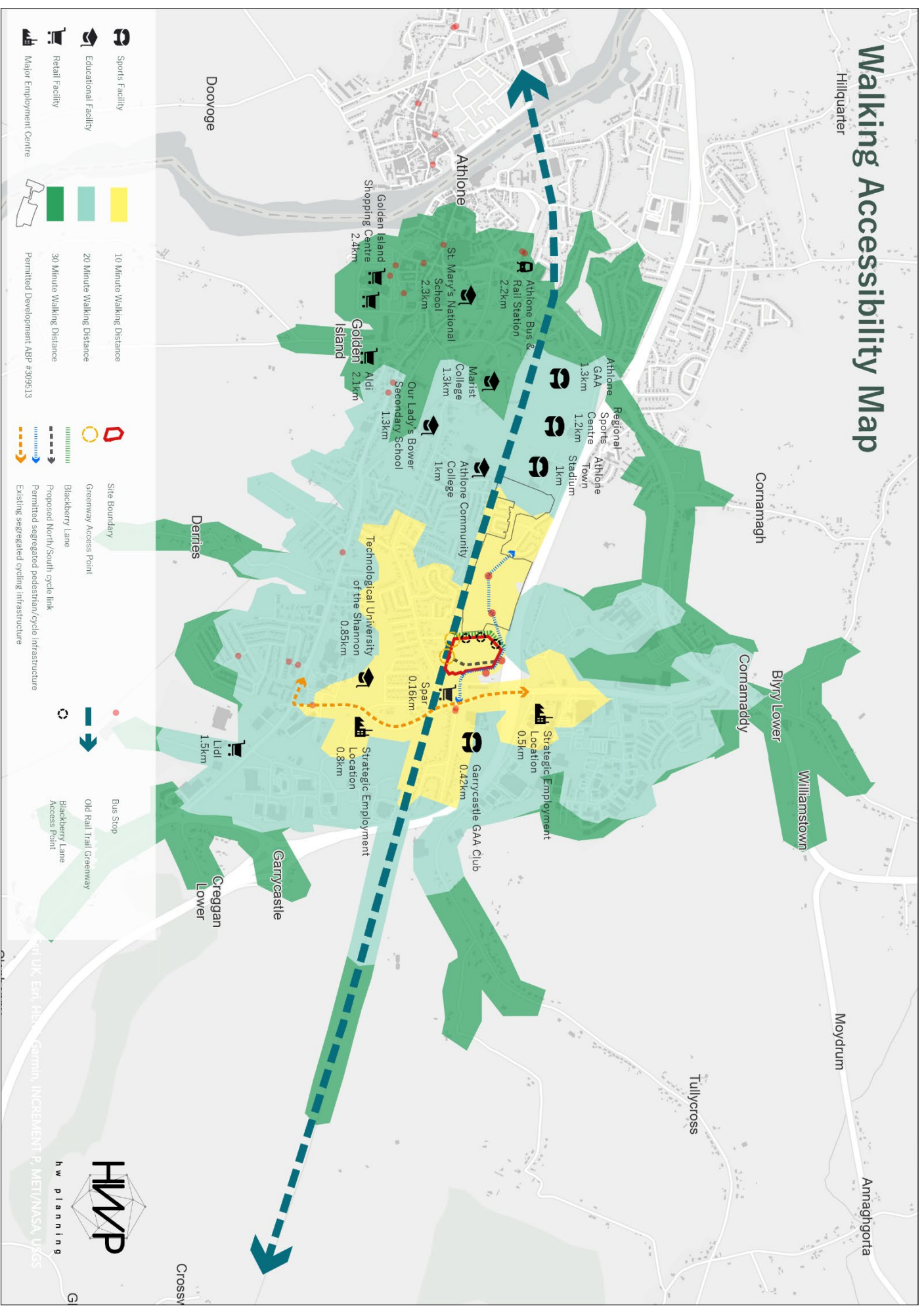
Martin O'Halloran

Divisional Director

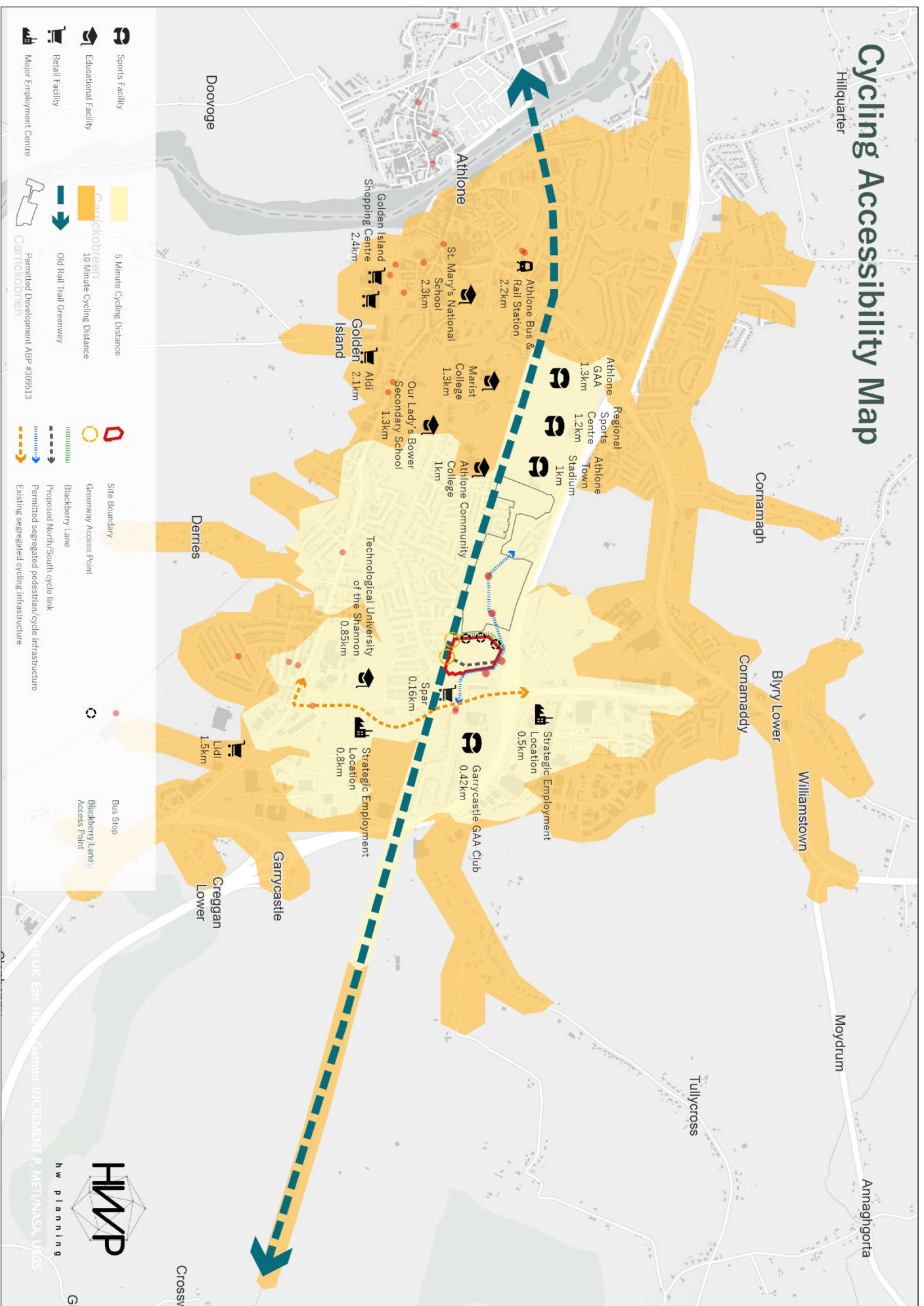
Appendix F:

Pedestrian and Cycle Connectivity Mapping

Walking Accessibility Map



Cycling Accessibility Map



- Sports Facility
- Educational Facility
- Retail Facility
- Major Employment Centre
- 5 Minute Cycling Distance
- 10 Minute Cycling Distance
- Old Rail Trail Greenway
- Permitted Development ABP #309513

- Site Boundary
- Greenway Access Point
- Blackberry Lane
- Proposed North/South cycle link
- Permitted segregated pedestrian/cycle infrastructure
- Existing segregated cycling infrastructure

- Bus Stop
- Blackberry lane / Access Point



h w planning

100 UK, Est. HB, Garmin, INCREMENT P, MET/NASA, USGS

Public Transport Map

