

**Monaghan County
Council**

**Dublin Street North
Regeneration, Monaghan**

Planning Statement

Ref. 131-01

Final | 11 April 2025



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1 Introduction and Background

CARLIN Planning on behalf of Monaghan County Council is pleased to submit this planning application to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) for the proposed regeneration of Dublin Street North within Monaghan Town Centre as envisaged within the Monaghan County Development Plan (Variation No. 3). The proposals are located on lands at Dublin Street, the 'backlands' to the rear of properties fronting Dublin Street and to the north and north-east of Dublin Street, the Diamond Centre Car Park and Old Cross Square, Monaghan.

The planning application prepared on behalf of Monaghan County Council has been submitted to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) under Section 175 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2023 (As amended) and is accompanied by Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Statement (NIS)).

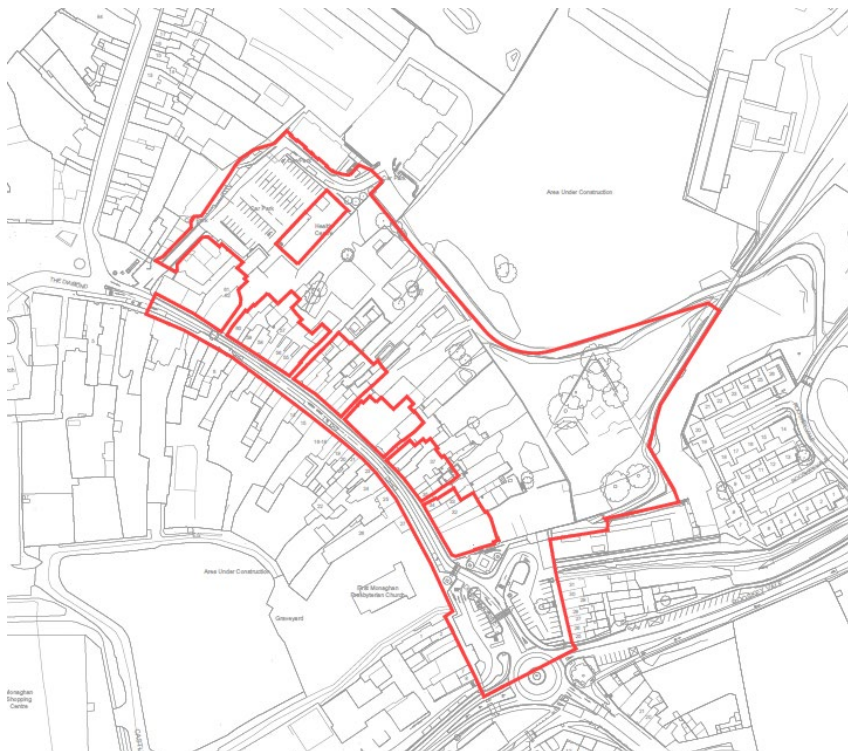


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

1.1 Project Background

The project site (Figure 1) relates to approximately 2.51ha of land within Monaghan Town. Monaghan is strategically located on the N2 National Primary Route from

Dublin-Derry/ Letterkenny and marks the start of the N54 National Secondary Route which connects Monaghan with Cavan Town, and onwards to the Midlands. The town is also located on a key east-west corridor which links Dundalk with Sligo. Monaghan resides in the Northwestern Regional Assembly Sub Region and has been identified as a Key Town in the Regional and Economic Strategy for this area. Monaghan Town plays a primary role in supporting the economic needs of its large rural hinterland in regard to performing employment, retailing and administrative functions.

The proposed development will assist the regeneration of Dublin Street and back lands to the north, the Diamond Centre Car Park and Old Cross Square. The site is located within the town centre boundary as defined in the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019 – 2025 (CDP). Surrounding land uses include retail, business and commercial, residential and community / ecclesiastical uses.

The proposed development is consistent with the Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan (DSN Regeneration Plan), that was adopted on the 4th April 2022 as Variation No. 3 of the CDP. The variation includes a new objective within the Settlement Plan for Monaghan Town. Objective MPO 15 seeks to *“Ensure that all development proposals within the Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan area **have regard to** the regeneration strategy and development objectives of the Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan.”*

The proposed development includes the essential enabling works, infrastructure and high-quality public realm that will act as a catalyst to promote future development and investment within Monaghan Town Centre. This will benefit existing and future residents and businesses and ultimately the vitality and viability of the Town Centre.

The proposed development complements and integrates with wider regeneration plans for the town centre. Most notably, the first phase of the Dublin Street South Regeneration Plan (Variation 2 of the CDP) has been approved by ABP (Ref. JA18.314501) and will create a new urban structure with new streetscape, pedestrian, and cycle network with aim of attracting new town centre development. The proposed development also complements MCC’s proposed civic office development which has been granted Part 8 planning approval.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) accompanies this planning submission and includes a comprehensive description of the proposed

development within Chapter 4 and summarised within Section 2 of this report. This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the EIAR.

Consistent with the DSN Regeneration Plan, the names ‘Russell Row’ and ‘St Davnet’s Row’ are used to describe, respectively, the proposed new street between Diamond Centre Car Park and Old Cross Square, and the new pedestrian / cycle path to the east of the site, connecting Old Cross Square, the proposed Community Garden, and MCC’s proposed civic offices. The names Russell Row and St Davnet’s Row are used for consistency and ease of reference, however, it should be noted that MCC has not yet confirmed the proposed new street names.

1.2 Project Need

The regeneration of the Dublin Street North area is essential to enhance Monaghan Town Centre as a place to live, work and visit. The need for this development is outlined with the CDP and the DSN Regeneration Plan, which emphasises the need to revitalise the town centre, support economic growth and improve quality of life.

Key objectives of the DSN Regeneration Plan are to increase footfall and support local businesses, provide additional housing opportunities and creating high-quality public spaces. In addition, the DSN Regeneration Plan aims to promote active travel and create a walkable town centre.

Further detail on the strategic and local planning policy context for the site is set out at Section 4 below.

1.3 EIA Development

Article 172 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended (“the Act”) states that an environmental impact assessment shall be carried out by the planning authority or ABP in respect of an application for consent for proposed development where the thresholds as set out at Part 1 and 2 of Schedule 5 of the Regulations are exceeded.

The proposed development falls within Category 10(b)(Vi) of Part 2, Schedule 5 of the Regulations:

“10. Infrastructure Project

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

In this context “business district” means a district within a city or town in which the predominant land use is retail or commercial use.

The proposals are located within Monaghan Town Centre where the predominant land uses are retail and commercial. As such, the site is located within a ‘business district’ and the site area exceeds 2ha, therefore an EIAR has been submitted with the planning application. As the project is being proposed by MCC, the planning application has been submitted to ABP under Section 175(3) of the Act.

The EIAR provides a detailed overview of the environmental context of the site and potential impacts of the proposed development. Mitigation measures have then been identified to address any potential significant environmental impacts. A detailed planning history search was undertaken to identify other developments that may need to be considered cumulatively alongside the proposed development. The details are provided in the EIAR and not replicated here.

2 Proposed Development

The proposal development has regard to the key design principles and objectives set out in the DSN Regeneration Plan. The proposed development seeks to provide the initial infrastructure and public realm improvements envisaged in the DSN Regeneration Plan. The proposed development comprises the following components:

- 1. Creation of new central street to the rear of properties fronting Dublin Street (connecting Diamond Centre Car Park with Old Cross Square), provision of car park/temporary event space and regrading of land to accommodate future development.***
- 2. Creation of new public park with associated pedestrian paths, landscaping and lighting.***
- 3. Public realm improvements along Dublin Street (within Dublin Street Architectural Conservation Area) to include resurfacing, new pedestrian pavements (including widening) and relocation of on-street car parking spaces.***

- 4. Public realm improvements to Old Cross Square to include the creation of urban civic spaces, pedestrian pavements, cycle routes, street furniture. Relocation of Old Cross Monument (Scheduled Monument Record and Protected Structure)**
- 5. Public realm enhancements at Diamond Centre Car Park to include reconfiguration of car parking, resurfacing, cycle infrastructure and associate street furniture.**
- 6. Reinforcement of existing vegetation and new soft landscaping throughout, new boundary treatments, street lighting, sustainable urban drainage systems (raingardens and permeable surfacing).**
- 7. Upgrading and installation of new utility services and CCTV.**
- 8. Demolition of buildings and structures located at Unit 1 & Unit 2 Old Cross Square and to the rear (north-east) of No. 32-62 Dublin Street including a structure within the curtilage of No. 57 Dublin Street (Protected Structure) and No. 4 The Diamond Centre. Reconstruction of building elevations where required.**
- 9. All other associated site and developments works.**

The images below visualise some of the key aspects of the proposed development.



Figure 2: Image of the proposed Russell Row car park and events space



Figure 3: Image of the proposed Russell Row (view towards Russell Row Car Park)



Figure 4: Image of the proposed Russell Row car park and events space

3 Planning Policy Context

3.1 Introduction

The proposals have been developed in line with the relevant operational planning policy at a strategic and local level. Key planning policy considerations are set out within the following documents:

- Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework
 - Climate Action Plan 2024
 - Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for Northern Ireland & Western Regional Assembly 2019-2040
- Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025:
 - Local Area Action Plan (LAAP) for lands to the Northeast of Dublin Street.
 - Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan (Variation No. 3 to the Monaghan County Development Plan)

The following Ministerial Guidelines & other policy are also relevant to the proposed development the receiving environment:

- Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)
- ‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management’ (2009)
- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (2018)
- Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities
- Cycle Design Manual (2023)
- ‘Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets’ (DMURS)
- Places for People: National Policy on Architecture (2022).

3.2 National Planning Policy Context

3.2.1 Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (NPF)

Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework (NPF) is the high-level framework plan of the future development of Ireland, with a particular focus on strategic growth. It is designed to improve the effectiveness of public investment in

infrastructure and other relevant services around the country, and to deliver more balanced social, economic and physical development and population growth across Ireland. The NPF contains 10 National Strategic Outcomes, several of which are relevant to the proposed development. These include:

1. Compact Growth:

“Carefully managing the sustainable growth of compact cities, towns and villages will add value and create more attractive places in which people can live and work. All our urban settlements contain many potential development areas, centrally located and frequently publicly owned that are suitable and capable of re-use to provide housing, jobs, amenities and services, but which need a streamlined and co-ordinated approach to their development, with investment in enabling infrastructure and supporting amenities, to realise their potential. Activating these strategic areas and achieving effective density and consolidation, rather than more sprawl of urban development, is a top priority.”

2. A Strong Economy, supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills:

“This will depend on creating places that can foster enterprise and innovation and attract investment and talent. It can be achieved by building regional economic drivers and by supporting opportunities to diversify and strengthen the rural economy, to leverage the potential of places. Delivering this outcome will require the coordination of growth and place making with investment in world class infrastructure, including digital connectivity, and in skills and talent to support economic competitiveness and enterprise growth.”

3. Enhanced Amenities and Heritage:

“This will ensure that our cities, towns and villages are attractive and can offer a good quality of life. It will require investment in well-designed public realm, which includes public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure. It also includes amenities in rural areas, such as national and forest parks, activity-based tourism and trails such as greenways, blueways and peatways. This is linked to and must integrate with our built, cultural and natural heritage, which has intrinsic value in defining the character of urban and rural areas and adding to their attractiveness and sense of place.”

The National Planning Framework (NPF) recognises that County Monaghan, as part of the Northern and Western Region, is strategically positioned in proximity to County Louth and the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor. Monaghan has an easterly

focus, with a focus on enhancing connectivity and fostering economic resilience within the broader North-Eastern region. Key strategic priorities within the NPF include maintaining cross-border movement and enhancing digital and physical infrastructure. These enhancements aim to leverage new employment opportunities and foster sustainable population growth within the Northern and Western Region, including Monaghan Town.

Under the heading of '**Securing Compact & Sustainable Growth**', the NPF emphasises the importance of:

- The 'liveability' or quality of life of urban places – how people experience living in cities, towns and villages. This includes the quality of the built environment, including the public realm, traffic and parking issues, access to amenities and public transport and a sense of personal safety and well-being.
- Making the continuous regeneration and development of existing built-up areas as attractive and as viable as greenfield development.
- Tackling legacies such as concentrations of disadvantage in central urban areas through holistic social as well as physical regeneration and by encouraging more mixed tenure and integrated communities
- Well-designed public realm including public spaces, parks and streets, as well as recreational infrastructure are important in ensuring that our cities, towns and villages are attractive and can offer a good quality of life.

The NPF identifies that addressing economic resilience and connectivity will be strategy priorities, particularly for Monaghan. The proposals will be influenced by the following National Policy Objectives:

National Policy Objective 4	<i>“Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being”.</i>
National Policy Objective 6	<i>“Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets, that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area”</i>

National Policy Objective 7	<i>“Apply a tailored approach to urban development, that will be linked to the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, with a particular focus on strengthening Ireland’s overall urban structure, particularly in the Northern and Western and Midland Regions...; Reversing the stagnation or decline of many smaller urban centres, by identifying and establishing new roles and functions and enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities”</i>
National Policy Objective 11	<i>“In meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth”.</i>
National Policy Objective 12	<i>“The Government will establish a National Regeneration and Development Agency to work with local authorities, other public bodies and capital spending departments and agencies to co-ordinate and secure the best use of public lands, investment required within the capital envelopes provided in the National Development Plan and to drive the renewal of strategic areas not being utilised to their full potential.”</i>
National Policy Objective 27	<i>“Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages”.</i>

3.2.2 Climate Action Plan 2024

The Climate Action Plan 2024 emphasises the importance local authorities to lead implementation of the Government’s Town Centre First with a focus on tackling vacancy, promoting compact growth and urban regeneration, in line with the principles of sustainable development. The role of local authorities in reducing car dependency and car parking is recognised. Road space reallocation and a sustainable approach to parking policy are considered to form key measures to both reduce unsustainable private car demand and enhance placemaking, supporting improvements in the accessibility and air quality of our urban spaces. The provision of safe and accessible walking and cycling infrastructure is key to encouraging modal shift away from private car use and towards walking and cycling. It is stated that quality walking and cycling infrastructure will be incorporated in all public infrastructure projects.

3.2.3 Town Centre First Policy

In February 2022, the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, in collaboration with the Department of Rural & Community Development, published A Policy Approach for Irish Towns. The Town Centre First initiative promotes a more strategic and coordinated approach to revitalising town centres across Ireland. The policy emphasises the need to address vacancy and dereliction, foster vibrant and sustainable communities through increased residential occupancy, and encourage greater business activity and footfall. It outlines 33 specific actions aimed at advancing regeneration. The Dublin Street Regeneration Plan (Variation 2 of the LDP) is referenced as a case study and promotes the aspiration regenerate underutilised back lands as well as upgrading public spaces, streets, footpaths and car parking, while enabling a range of development types.

The DSN Regeneration Plan has similar aspirations and objectives which complement the Town Centre First Policy.

3.2.4 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) is a strategic plan which identifies regional assets, opportunities and pressures and provides appropriate policy responses in the form of Regional Policy Objectives (RPO). It provides a framework for investment to better manage spatial planning and economic development throughout the region. The RSES aims to plan for compact growth, prioritise strategic infrastructure, and attract, build and retain talent and business capability. Specifically with regard to Monaghan, RSES identifies the town as seeing a 6% increase in population. The Strategy recognises that Monaghan alongside Cavan have an easterly focus and the NPF recognises that the towns comprise part of the Eastern Functional area where the key driver is the Dublin – Belfast cross-border network, that influences both these counties. The Cavan/Monaghan sub-region also provides an important connection between the remainder of the Northern and Western region of the greater Dublin area. Furthermore, Monaghan is one of four counties that share an international land border which brings its specific challenges and opportunities for communities which is evidenced at Section 1.6 of the Plan which shows that the economic downturn has taken its toll on rural regions more so than urban.

The Plan identifies Monaghan town as a strategic border location along to Dublin to Letterkenny/Derry corridor and the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor. The Plan

also highlights the key future priorities for Monaghan Town, which include the development of industry, enterprise, and employment lands in the northeast and west of the town, the development of the Ulster Canal Greenway and achieving 20% of projected growth through the regeneration and renewal of key areas within the town centre.

3.2.5 Local and Economic Community Plans (LECPs)

LECPs are part of the overarching policy framework of Project Ireland 2040 which includes the above national strategies and frameworks (3.1.1 - 3.1.2). The LECPs are one of the primary mechanisms (at a local level) to bring forward relevant actions arising from national and regional strategies and policies. The LECP (2023 – 2029) identifies the following key high-level goals for the council area that are relevant to the proposal:

- **Goal 4:** Prioritise the targeted regeneration of the County's towns and villages to address;
- **Goal 5:** Grow and diversify the economy and attract and create high value sustainable employment.
- **Goal 6:** Foster, develop and invest in arts, culture, and the creative sector and unlock Monaghan's tourism potential to support economic growth and sustainable development.

The LECP has also identified specific goals for Monaghan Town, such as enhancing the public realm by improving streets, footpaths, and open space; addressing dereliction and vacancy with targeted regeneration initiatives, improving public transport for better connectivity; promoting community integration through inclusive events and recreational facilities for all ages and supporting local businesses to strengthen the evening and night-time economy.

3.3 Local Planning Policy Context

3.3.1 Monaghan County Development Plan 2019 - 2025

The Monaghan CDP was adopted on the 1st April 2019 and sets out the strategic vision for future growth. The CDP seeks to *“facilitate sustainable development and to build on the strengths of County Monaghan by supporting the provision of employment opportunities and residential developments within quality urban and*

rural environments that provides a high standard of physical and social infrastructure necessary for their respective communities”.

Monaghan is considered a Tier 1 Settlement and is the only ‘Principal Town’ within the County. Policy MTSO 1 is to facilitate the development of Monaghan to maintain its position as the principal town in the County at the top of the settlement hierarchy and to ensure that its expansion takes place in an orderly and sustainable fashion that will not detract from the vitality and viability of its town centre.

The CDP reiterates that the RSES and recognises the importance of Monaghan town as an economic driver in the Central Border Region. The proposed development will enhance the accessibility and legibility of the existing town centre and create opportunities for future development. This will bolster the vitality and viability of the town centre through the introduction of further complementary town centre uses, therefore support this strategic aim for the town.

3.3.1.1 Town Centre

The site is located in the Monaghan Town Centre (Figure 6) where the principal permitted land use will be town centre related uses including retail, residential, commercial, social uses, cultural uses, medical/health uses, hotels, pubs, restaurants and other similar type uses.

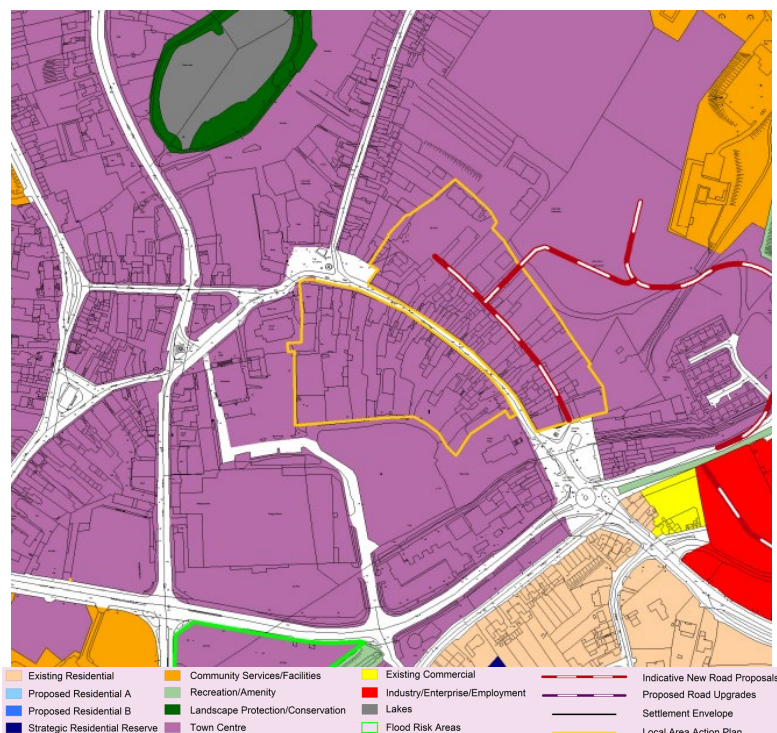


Figure 5: Monaghan County Development Plan 2019 Extract

The key objectives for the town centre include:

- TCO 1: Promote and develop the town centres as the principal location for retail, office, leisure, entertainment, cultural and service uses and to encourage the refurbishment, renewal and re-use of existing buildings and derelict sites within it.
- TCO 2: Protect the vitality and viability of the town centres by promoting a diversity of uses, with a presumption in favour of development that would make a positive contribution to ensuring that the town centres continue to provide a focus for shopping.
- TCO 3: Promote the vitality and viability of the town centres by prohibiting, except in exceptional circumstances, the location of town centre uses such as financial institutions, offices etc outside the designated town centres.
- TCO 4: Use statutory legislation to discourage and prevent dereliction and encourage regeneration and development in the town.
- TCO 5: Ensure that sufficient parking is available for town centre uses.
- TCO 6: Continue to provide public investment directly and in partnership with the voluntary and private sector to support the vibrancy of the town.
- TCO 7: Encourage the principal of living over the shop within the town centres.
- TCO 8: Encourage and facilitate the undergrounding of utility cables in the town centres.
- TCO 9: Continue to encourage and accommodate the regeneration of back lands in the towns where appropriate, including the construction of new urban streets to provide access to inaccessible lands.

The site is also subject of a 'Local Area Action Plan' (LAAP), the objective of which is *"to establish strategic planning principles for each area including land use, infrastructure provision, layout, open spaces, linkages and design"*. The LAAP identifies land uses are acceptable or unacceptable (Table 9.1 of the CDP).

LAAPs establish strategic planning principles for each area including land use, infrastructure provision, layout, open spaces, linkages and design. Existing residential amenities must be given strong consideration as well as potential to create linkages to surrounding lands. A LAAP for lands to the Northeast of Dublin Street was adopted as part of the CDP 2007 - 2013. The implementation of this plan remains an objective of the Monaghan Town Settlement Plan, and included at Appendix 19 of the CDP 2019-2025.

The LAAP (Figure 7) proposes a new street to the rear of Dublin Street, with infill and new mixed-use development. A new interim 0.5ha surface car parking area and amenity and recreational areas are also included. It also proposes improved pedestrian links and local access from The Diamond to Old Cross Square via the new street. It should be noted that the line of the “Indicative New Road Proposal” on **Figure 5** is not a feature of the LAAP or the DSN Regeneration Plan.



Figure 6: LAAP 2011 - Proposed Land Uses

3.3.1.2 Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan (Variation No. 3)

The DSN Regeneration Plan was adopted on the 4th April 2022 as Variation No. 3 of CDP. The variation seeks to “*ensure that all development proposals within the Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan area **have regard** to the regeneration strategy and development objectives of the Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan*” (MPO 15)

The illustration of the DSN Regeneration Plan (Figure 8) is a concept strategy and for indicative purposes only. This is in recognition that the regeneration of Dublin Street North will be subject to detailed design, having regard to the policies and objectives of the DSN Regeneration Plan.



Figure 7: Dublin Street North Regeneration Plan

The key design principles of the DSN Regeneration Plan have been summarised below.

- **Perimeter Block:** The concept of a perimeter urban block is used to define the new urban quarter. This includes reuse, adaption and infilling of existing structures, and new development areas.
- **Access Streets and Spaces:**
 - New central street/mews lane, Russell Row with perimeter access, and pedestrian routes through from Dublin Street to Davnet's Row at Roosky to the north.
 - New landscaped internal urban spaces, overlooked by existing and new developments, activated by own door dwellings and small commercial uses.

- Public realm improvements to Dublin Street, Old Cross Square and the existing Diamond Apartment Car Parking area (see **Figure 8**).
- **Reuse, Adapt, Infill and New Development Areas:**
 - Reuse, adaptation and infill of existing structures on Dublin Street and Old Cross Square, as residential/mixed use (shaded Blue on **Figure 9**).
 - New development areas comprising own door dwellings/apartments and ground floor retail/commercial/business hubs (shaded Yellow on **Figure 9**).
- **Streets and Spaces:**
 - A new street, Russell Row is proposed to the rear of the existing structures on Dublin Street north. This is envisaged as a shared surface with pedestrian priority and the ambiance of a mews lane.
 - Dublin Street, Old Cross Square and a new access road to the north adjoin the Roosky Master Plan lands and will provide perimeter access around the block.
 - Pedestrian access links are proposed from Dublin Street, through existing entries to the new perimeter road to the north.
 - The internal zone will be overlooked by future mews developments to the rear of the existing structures on Dublin Street, and the future perimeter blocks.
 - Development of a central multi-functional space (see **Figure 10**). The primary use is a temporary car park and to create accessibility between the proposed Russell Row and future St. Davnet's Row. The space will also provide an opportunity for temporary events.
 - Improved pedestrian environment and public realm of Diamond Place through the realignment of car parking, and delineation of parking, pedestrian areas, and introduction of landscaping features to enhance the visual amenity of the space, and ease and safety of pedestrian movement.
 - Public Realm improvements along Dublin Street to include footpath widening / narrowed carriageway, introduction of tablespots to facilitate priority pedestrian movement across the street, and use of high-quality materials to set the standard for the new regeneration plan area north and south.
 - Improved pedestrian environment and public realm of Old Cross Square, through the rationalised carriageway, identification of appropriate location for the existing monument/Cross and signage to

mark the historic entrance to the town as approached from the southeast.

- The creation of new and enhanced pedestrian links between Dublin Street, the Regeneration Plan area, and the proposed Roosky Master Plan Area.
- **Phasing:** The Regeneration Plan identifies three key phases of development (see **Figure 11**):
 - **Phase 1:** Implementation of new street/mews lane to facilitate existing property owners to develop collaboratively/ individually with infill mews developments overlooking the new street.
 - **Phase 2a:** New development areas developing incrementally, northwest and south western blocks. Central space to provide surface parking/event space.
 - **Phase 2b:** Long term objective to provide additional development to complete the proposed perimeter block.



Figure 8: Streets and Spaces (extract from DSN Regeneration Plan)

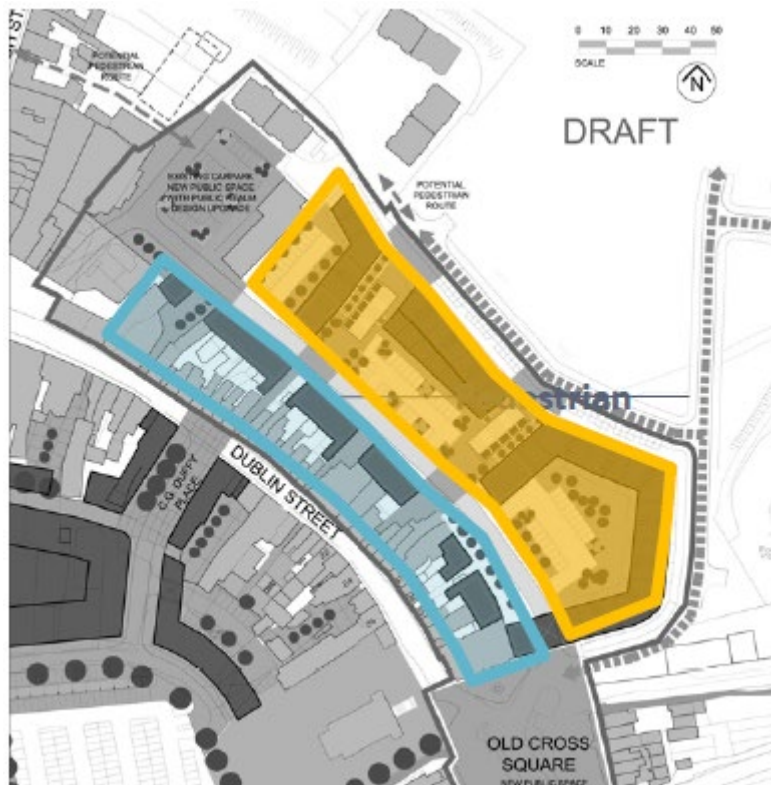


Figure 9: Reuse, Adapt, Infill and New Development Areas (extract from DSN Regeneration Plan)



Figure 10: Multi-functional space (indicative image from Regeneration Plan)

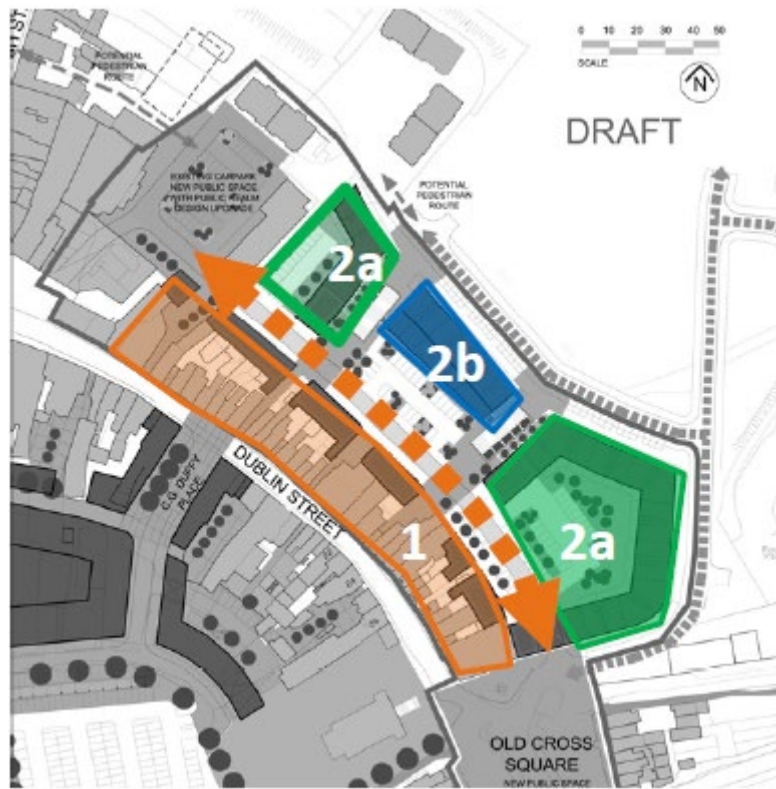


Figure 11: Development Plots and Phasing

4 Planning Assessment

4.1 Proper planning of the area

4.1.1 National and Regional Policy

At a strategic level, the National Planning Framework recognises that urban places offer a range of opportunities for community and social interaction but must become more liveable to improve quality of life. The proposal can be viewed as enabling the development of backlands immediately north of Dublin Street whilst connecting Diamond Centre Car Park with Old Cross Square.

The proposal will also contribute to the overarching aims of the NPF to promote compact and sustainable growth, sustainable mobility and enhanced amenity and heritage. NPO's 4, 6 and 11 are relevant in this regard and are set out in section 3.2.1 above.

The regeneration strategy complements that of Dublin Street Regeneration Plan which is referenced as a case study in national policy 'Town Centre First – A Policy Approach for Irish Towns' which supports a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to the regeneration of Ireland's town centres and in recognition of the funding Monaghan County Council has secured under the Urban and Rural regeneration Fund (URDF).

The Climate Action Plan 2024 supports the implementation of the Government's Town Centre First and urban regeneration; road space reallocation and the provision of safe and accessible walking and cycling infrastructure is key to encouraging modal shift away from private car use and towards walking and cycling.

RPO 3.1 of the RSES seeks to deliver compact growth and develop derelict and underutilised sites, with an initial focus within town cores. RPO 7.20 seeks to increase population living within settlements, through a range of measures including re-use of existing buildings, infill development schemes, area or site-based regeneration and service site provision, while RPO 6.29, 6.30 and 6.31 in particular focus on walking, cycling, public transport accessibility and permeability

in town centres. The proposed development will contribute to delivering compact growth, increased opportunities for walking, cycling and permeability.

The proposal will further the objectives of national and regional policy.

4.1.2 Local Policy

the site is zoned 'town centre' in the CDP 2019-2025, the stated objective of which is to provide, protect and enhance town centre facilities and promote town centre strengthening. According to the CDP, the principle permitted land use will be town centre related uses including retail, residential, commercial, social uses, cultural uses, medical/health uses, hotels, pubs, restaurants and other similar type uses. A 'Car Park' and 'Public Infrastructure Project' are 'open for consideration' on 'Town Centre' zoned lands according to the Development Zoning Matrix. The proposed development will strengthen the town centre and should, upon delivery of the project in the whole, enhance the town centre.

The objectives for Monaghan Town Centre (Objectives TCO 1-9) support development that that will both protect and enhance town centre facilities, particularly those uses which are supported in land use terms such as retail, residential, commercial and community uses. In addition, TCO 9 seeks to *"Continue to encourage and accommodate the regeneration of back lands in the towns were appropriate, including the construction of new urban streets to provide access to inaccessible lands"*.

4.1.3 Local Area Action Plan

Appendix 19 of the CDP includes the Local Area Action Plan which is relevant to the area of the proposed development. Although the regeneration strategy for the area has evolved with the adoption of the DSN Regeneration Plan. The LAAP remains relevant. The proposal clearly complies with the strategy and key design principles set out in the LAAP (outlined above at Section 3.3.1.1). Indeed, the proposal to retain an area of open space at Infirmary Hill as a Community Park aligns more with the LAAP than the DSN Regeneration Plan.

4.1.4 DSN Regeneration Plan

The proposals represent the first phase of the DSN Regeneration Plan, which will act as a catalyst for further town centre development. **Figure 12** illustrates how the proposal interacts with the proposed Civic Hub and future development plots (shown indicatively), to create a new urban quarter.



Figure 12: 3D visualisation illustrating how the proposed development acts as the canvas for future development



Figure 13: 3D visualisation illustrating how the proposed development acts as the canvas for future development

It is clear that the proposal has had regard to the DSN Regeneration Plan in accordance with MPO15. There are no fundamental deviations from the DSN Regeneration Plan. The design led approach has identified opportunities to improve upon the DSN Regeneration Plan, most notably through the creation of the Community Park at Infirmary Hill.

4.2 Built & Natural Heritage

Natural heritage is addressed within Chapter 9 of the EIAR and built heritage within Chapter 15.

The CDP seeks to protect the natural and built heritage from inappropriate development.

The proposal seeks to promote the value of Monaghan's Natural and Built Heritage resources as an asset for the local economy and a key benefit to the amenity of the area and the well-being of the community in line with SNO 1. This is achieved at Old Cross Square where the Old Cross Monument will be relocated and enhanced with the provision of high quality hard and soft landscaping, with high quality public realm.

The Community Park will enable the retention and protection of mature trees in accordance with SNO 3 and preserve the undesignated built heritage of the Old Infirmary site. This will greatly contribute to the amenity of the new urban quarter.

The proposal will not negatively impact upon any buildings within the Dublin Street Architectural Conservation Area and therefore complies with SNO 4 & 7. The streetscape character of Dublin Street will be enhanced in line with SNO9 and the alleyways preserved and enhanced in line with SNO 12.

Great care has been taken during the design process to identify buildings within the back lands that could be retained and refurbished by the owners (SNO10).

4.2.1 Archaeology

Objective PMP 3 sets out to protect archaeological sites and monuments which are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places and to require their preservation in situ (or at a minimum preservation by record) through the planning process. The following heritage assets are relevant to the proposals:

- Historic town of Monaghan (SMR MO009-060---) & Monaghan Town Area of Archaeological Importance (at Dublin Street North and Old Cross Square)
- Historic (levelled) town defences (SMR MO009-060004-) (at backland plots to Dublin Street North)
- Market Cross (SMR MO009-060006---) (in Old Cross Square)

- Ruins of undesignated built heritage Old Infirmary site, (formally Ward 12/Old 12 of St Davnet's Campus, greenfield area, east of Old Cross Square)

The Market Cross will remain in Old Cross Square and be relocated slightly (c. 3m) in line with the DSN Regeneration Plan (Objective 32) and to accommodate improvements to the public realm and permeability through Old Cross Square and proposed Russell Row. As discussed in detail within Chapters 15 (Cultural Heritage) and 14 (Townscape and Visual Impact) within the EIAR, the proposed location will improve the setting and enhance the prominence of the Old Cross. Crucially, a detailed condition survey has been undertaken to ensure that the monument can be physically moved without causing any adverse impact. This will inform the methodology employed when moving the monument.

The site is located within the Zone of Archaeological Importance for Monaghan Town as defined in the CDP and the Zone of Notification for the Historic Town of Monaghan (SMR MO009-060---). The EIAR proposes that the construction works around the potential upstanding remains of the Old Infirmary will be subject to archaeological monitoring under licence by the National Monuments Service.

The proposal complies with objective BHP 2, which seeks the protection and sympathetic enhancement of archaeological heritage.

4.2.2 Protected Structures

Consideration has also been given to the potential impacts on protected structures, including impacts upon the character and appearance of the structure. There are 5 protected structures adjoining the site and one that is recorded by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), as detailed in the EIAR.

BHP 1 of the CDP seeks to protect and conserve all structures included in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and encourage their sympathetic re-use and long-term viability without detracting from their special interest and character. BHP 5 states that planning permission for the demolition of any protected structure shall not be granted except in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with Section 57(10)(b) of the Planning and Development Act 2000.

Chapter 14 of the EIAR identifies the protected structures and assesses all potential impacts. Detailed Heritage Impact Assessments of each individual

structure have also been prepared (see Vol. III of the EIAR). Table 15.12 of the EIAR identifies the protected structures.

The protected structures that are specifically listed on the RPS / NIAH are currently outside of the site boundary and would not be directly affected. A number of structures in the back lands have been identified for removal as they encroach upon the creation of Russell Row, which is a fundamental element of the DSN Regeneration Plan. Number 57c (*note that this is our reference for the purposes of identification, rather than the actual address*) is not referenced in the RPS however the baseline analysis in the EIAR concludes that it is within the curtilage of No. 57 Dublin Street, which is listed in the RPS.



Figure 14: Building to the rear of No. 57 Dublin Street



Figure 15: Side gable of No. 57c Dublin Street

There is no conflict with Policy BHP 5 as the Protected Structure is not being demolished and exceptional circumstances do not need to be demonstrated¹. However, as the building to be demolished is within the curtilage of the Protected Structure, it is important to consider the significance of the building and the potential for its sympathetic reuse

As set out in the alternatives section (Chapter 4 of the EIAR) consideration was given at the outset of this project to the retention and reuse of all outbuildings, including number 57c as required by Policy BHP 1. However, 57c is in an extremely poor condition, has mature vegetation growing through it and is classified as having low architectural significance in the heritage assessment and subsequently Chapter 13 of the EIAR. The poor condition of the structure is evidenced in the Structural Report provided at Appendix 4.3 of the EIAR.

There is no visual link between No. 57 and No. 57c and the EIAR concludes that its removal will not have a significant impact upon No. 57, nor will it detract from its special interest or character. It is not possible to sympathetically re-use this

¹ Sherwin v An Bord Pleanála (Supreme court Record. 2023/74, [2024] IESC 13)

structure due to its position on the footprint of the proposed Russell Row, which is the foundation of the DSN Regeneration Plan and proposed development. The alignment of Russell Row is restricted due to the location of the Primary, Community and Continuing Care Services property within Diamond Place. As such, to facilitate a new road that meets the required design standards, as envisioned by the DSN Regeneration Plan, No.57c must be demolished.

BHP 6 of the CDP seeks to ensure that any new development proposed to or in the vicinity of a Protected Structure complements and is sympathetic to the structure and its setting in terms of design, scale, height, massing, and use of materials, resisting any development likely to impact the building's special interest and views. The proposal consists of public realm improvements along Dublin Street and care has been taken to ensure that the materials selected will complement the protected structures.

4.2.3 Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)

The site is also located within the Dublin Street ACA and bounds The Diamond ACA.

Objective CMO 13 seeks to protect and enhance the character of the ACA's. ACP 1 requests the preparation of character appraisals for each of the designated ACA's, however these have not yet been developed for Dublin Street or the Diamond ACA's. ACP 2 resists development that would adversely affect the character and appearance of an ACA.

The back lands will become more visible and accessible with views through alleyways being enhanced. While some back land structures are proposed for demolition, none of these will affect the character of either ACA. No physical alterations are proposed for structures along Dublin Street, and the proposed hard and soft landscaping will enhance the Dublin Street ACA.

4.2.4 European Designated Sites

A key measure to protect nature and biodiversity in the EU is the establishment of a network of natural protection areas under the Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. These sites are known as Special Protected Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Objective HCLO2 of the CDP seeks to contribute as appropriate to the protection of designated sites in compliance with the relevant

EU Directives and applicable national legislation. Objective HCLP1 seeks to ensure that no project gives rise to any significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on designated sites.

The site is not located within any designated sites. An Appropriate Assessment Screening was undertaken and confirmed that an Natura Impact Statement (NIS) should be prepared and submitted with the planning application.

A series of mitigation measures have been detailed in the NIS and relevant EIAR Chapters. This mitigation has also been incorporated into the Outline Construction Environment Management Plan (oCEMP). As such, the objectives of the Development Plan CDP are met.

4.2.5 Biodiversity & Trees

In addition to Objective SNO 3 which seeks to protect groups of trees and woodland due to their nature conservation value, Objectives GIO 1 - 4 protect and enhance biodiversity and ecological connectivity, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows and other landscape features. In addition, Objectives TWP 1 - 2 seek to minimise the loss of trees and hedgerows associated with any development proposals and encourage the retention of existing trees and woodlands into new developments, particularly those considered to have significant amenity value.

This proposed layout has been influenced by the existing trees and woodland to the extent that a Community Park has been proposed towards the north-eastern boundary of the site. We believe that this is a positive design led deviation from the DSN Regeneration Plan. This enabled the retention of several mature trees which contribute to the character and biodiversity of the area. Biodiversity impacts and proposed mitigation measures are set out in Chapter 9 of the EIAR and concludes that no significant impacts are likely. The proposal provides additional community and green infrastructure, furthering Objective GIP 1. Therefore, the proposal complies with the biodiversity objectives of the CDP.

4.3 Transportation and Parking

4.3.1 Transportation

Section 7 of the CDP (Transport and Infrastructure) sets out that the provision and maintenance of an efficient, safe and sustainable transportation system is essential

to delivering the county's economic competitiveness, an improved quality of life and improved social inclusion.

Objective TISO 1 in the CDP seeks to enhance the existing transport infrastructure (road, cycling and pedestrian facilities) and promote more compact urban forms close to existing facilities to encourage more sustainable movement patterns.

The following objectives of the CDP are relevant to the proposals:

- **TP 1:** To implement government policy as set out in Transport 21, A Sustainable Transport Future - A new transport policy for Ireland 2009-2020, Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012, National Cycle Policy Framework 2009, Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2014, Smarter Travel and any other National Policy which is adopted during the lifetime of this development plan.
- **TP 2:** Support the creation of an integrated and sustainable transport system to promote a choice of transport modes, including public transport, cycling, and walking facilities.
- **TP 3:** Capitalise on the County's existing transport infrastructure by implementing appropriate traffic management measures to reduce congestion and minimise travel times.
- **TP 4:** Plan for future traffic and transportation needs in County Monaghan, ensuring that new development does not prejudice the expansion of road and cycling corridors. Proposed road routes, realignment schemes, and future cycle route corridors shall be kept free from development that would compromise their delivery.
- **TP 5:** Ensure all new developments and extensions to existing developments provide adequate car parking.
- **TP 7:** Support the provision of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles to meet the objectives set out in the National Renewable Energy Action Plan for 10% electric vehicles by 2020 or any other related target adopted during the lifetime of this plan.
- **TP 8:** Require the submission of a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA), Road Safety Audit (RSA), and/or Road Safety Impact Assessment (RSIA)

as deemed necessary for significant development proposals, in accordance with Appendix 13 (Road Safety Audit) and Appendix 14 (Traffic and Transport Assessment).

Chapter 10 (Material Assets) of the EIAR includes an assessment of potential impacts on the transport infrastructure within and adjoining the site. A Transport Assessment and Road Safety Audit have also been undertaken in line with TP 8. The proposed development, in traffic terms, will have a minimal impact on the transport network as it is not a traffic generator. The proposal will benefit the movement patterns around the town centre, enabling access to future development lands and removing pressure on Dublin Street.

The proposal aligns with relevant transport policies in the CDP, ensuring minimal traffic impact and supporting sustainable transportation goals.

4.3.2 Public Transport

Monaghan Town benefits from reliable public transport links that support its growth and accessibility. The proximity of the town to the N2 enables connections to Dublin, Letterkenny, and Derry. The central location of the proposal further supports sustainable travel options. Public transport initiatives have been adopted in alignment with the following objectives in the CDP:

- **PTP 1:** To support, where possible, an integrated public transport service linking the villages and main towns in Monaghan that will assist in promoting the sustainable development of the county and service the needs of communities and businesses
- **PTP 2:** To support and co-operate, where possible, with the National Transport Authority and Cavan Monaghan Transport Co-ordination Unit to further the continued operation and expansion of the Local Link bus service and facilitate the planning, delivery and implementation of improvements to the transport network of the County.

The proposal supports these objectives by encouraging compact urban form in close proximity to key public transport services, including key Bus Éireann routes connecting Monaghan Town to regional hubs such as Dublin, Cavan, Dundalk, and Letterkenny, as well as the TFI Local Link services, which provide regular connections to surrounding rural communities. The proposal also includes a Local Link Bus Stop in Russell Row.

4.3.3 Car Parking

All developments are required to provide suitable provision for servicing, parking and manoeuvring of vehicles associated with the proposal. The minimum car parking requirement shall be calculated in accordance with the standards as laid out within the CDP.

- **CP 1:** To require car parking to be provided in compliance with Table 15.9 Car Parking Standards of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025
- **CP 2:** To require developments that comprise more than one land use to comply with the combined standards applicable. Where a mixed-use development is proposed, flexibility may apply in the calculation of the parking standards where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of planning authority that complementary parking takes places.
- **CP 3:** To require car parking provision to be located within or immediately adjacent to the site of the proposed development.
- **CP 4:** To require the provision of car parking spaces for persons with impaired mobility at a rate of one space in twenty-five.
- **CP 5:** To provide for a reduction of up to 50% of the standards as required in Table 15.9 of the Monaghan County Development Plan 2019-2025 for developments or redevelopment of infill/brownfield/derelict sites located within the designated town centres, where appropriate.
- **CP 6:** To permit a reduction in the car parking standards set out where the developer cannot provide the required car parking spaces and to accept a financial contribution in lieu of the provision of car parking, where appropriate.

The proposal relocates existing car parking within the site boundaries and includes a modest net increase of 9 spaces. Key features include the new Russell Row car park, which includes 44 parking spaces, offsetting reductions in other areas such as Dublin Street, Old Cross Square, and The Diamond Car Park. 125 spaces are provided within the boundaries of the site, which ensures that overall parking provision is maintained for both current and future town centre uses. The location of the proposed car park at Russell Row will be easily accessible for visitors to the town centre and those using shops and services on Dublin Street and

complements the Diamond Centre car park. The larger future development plots will accommodate their parking requirements within the respective plot. Furthermore, the inclusion of EV charging infrastructure in line with the National Renewable Energy Action Plan, will benefit the town centre. Air quality is not likely to be affected, as discussed in Chapter 11 of the EIAR.

4.3.4 Walking and Cycling

The urban location of the proposals supports sustainable travel and alternatives modes of transport. Walking and cycling initiatives have been adopted in support of the Objectives CFP 11 & 12 of the CDP. Russell Row has been designed as a pedestrian / cycle friendly street that will be an alternative to using Dublin Street. Proximity to the Ulster Canal Greenway as well as enhanced access to the Greenway from Old Cross Square, and integration with urban cycle networks promotes safe, accessible routes for both leisure and commuting, in alignment with the objectives of the CDP.

4.3.5 Electric Vehicles

The CDP recognises that the number of car owners purchasing electric vehicles is expected to increase throughout the plan period and will continue in the coming decades. As a result, the inclusion of charging facilities is considered a key factor in any development. Objectives EVP 2 states that new non-residential development should accommodate at least one car parking space equipped with an EV charging points for every ten car parking spaces being provided for the associated development and that these should be clearly demarcated with appropriate signage (EVP 3).

The proposal results in a net increase of 9 car parking spaces with 4 of these dedicated with EV charging points which are clearly demarcated.

4.4 Drainage

The CDP sets out in relation to surface water drainage that new development and its associated roads, yards and parking areas increase impervious surfaces which results in an increase in surface water runoff. This has the potential to cause localised flooding and pollution from contaminated surface waters. Objectives SDP 1 to SPD 5 of the CDP relate to surface water drainage. SDP 1 & 2 promotes the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS). **SDP 3** requires that planning

applications are accompanied by a comprehensive SUDs assessment that addresses run-off quantity, run-off quality and its impact on the existing habitat and water quality. This has been addressed in the Drainage Assessment (Vol. 3 Appendix 8.3) and assessed in Chapter 8 (Hydrology) and 10 (Material Assets) of the EIAR.

The Drainage Assessment also addresses SDP 4 & 5 that requires all storm water discharges to be restricted to the pre-development levels (green field) by storm water attenuation on site and use of SUDs.

The proposal incorporates a mix of hardstanding surfaces (vehicular pavements, car park, footpaths, access areas) and soft landscaping, which will increase impermeable areas and surface water runoff. However, the design of the site, including layout, levels, and storm drainage systems, addresses these challenges in alignment with the objectives of the CDP. The storm drainage includes a new sewer network, restricted runoff rates, and attenuation measures to ensure that surface water runoff is managed effectively. The system is designed to accommodate surcharge conditions without flooding, with a freeboard of 300mm and a 10% Climate Change allowance for 1 in 1-year and 1 in 30-year storm events and flooding would only be anticipated in extreme conditions, such as a 1 in 100-year storm event. As such, the proposed drainage infrastructure will not increase flood risk within or beyond the site boundary, ensuring that the development is in alignment with the policies set out in the CDP.

4.5 Lighting

The CDP highlights that light pollution from development is a material consideration, in the interests of nature conservation, residential amenity and energy efficiency. Objectives LP 1 to LP3 of the CDP relate to lighting.

- **LP 1:** To control lighting in urban and rural areas and in sensitive locations, in order to minimise impacts on residential amenity and habitats and species of importance.
- **LP2:** To require the use of energy efficient public lighting in all new development proposals.
- **LP 3:** To require that lighting fixtures should provide only the amount of light necessary for personal safety and should be designed to avoid creating glare or emitting light above a horizontal plane. Lighting fixtures

should also have minimum environmental impact and protect light sensitive species such as bats.

Given that the objective of the proposal is to act as a catalyst for a new urban quarter within Monaghan town centre, it is crucial to include an appropriate level of lighting to make the area safe for users. This is particularly important for the proposed Russell Road, car park and Community Park which is currently back land in nature.

The area currently does not accommodate much residential use, however increasing town centre living is a key objective of the DSN Regeneration Plan. Given the urban nature of the proposal, it is not considered that lighting will have a significant impact on residential amenity.

Chapter 9 of the EIAR (Biodiversity) assesses the potential impact of proposed lighting on habitats and species of importance. Lighting in the Community Park area has been designed to allow biodiversity to flourish whilst providing sufficient lighting for public safety.

4.6 Noise and Vibration

Objective NP1 Of the CDP promotes the implementation of the Noise Directive 2002/49/EC and associated Environmental Noise Regulations 2006.

Chapter 6 of the EIAR (Noise and Vibration) assesses the potential impacts. The proposals are situated in an urban area already characterised by relatively high background noise levels, primarily due to dominant road traffic and mix of daytime and nighttime uses. Noise modelling indicates that the proposal will have a negligible impact, even when considering the cumulative effects of other committed developments in the wider Monaghan town centre.

4.7 Air Quality

Objective AP1 and AP2 specifically relates to air quality:

- **AQP 1:** Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents). Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality

compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air.

- **AQP 2:** To contribute towards compliance with air quality legislation; greenhouse gas emission targets; management of noise levels; and reductions in energy usage.

Chapter 11 of the EIAR (Air Quality, Emissions & Climate) and assesses the potential impacts on air quality within and adjoining the site. The proposal will have minimal impact on air quality, with emissions remaining low and no additional mitigation measures are required. In addition, design measures, such as tree planting, are incorporated to enhance local air quality in the area.

5 Conclusions

This Planning Statement has been prepared in order to demonstrate that the proposal is fully compliant with national, regional and local planning policy. The Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the full suite of drawings, EIAR, NIS, Transport Assessment and other reports.

The Dublin Street North Regeneration Project is a transformative initiative and exemplar in proactive and positive urban design. The proposal emphasises sustainable urban growth, enhanced public realm, and integrated infrastructure, all designed to bolster economic activity, improve the quality of life, and strengthen the town's role as a strategic hub in the Northern and Western Region.

The plan led approach will ensure the proper planning of the area. Stemming from the DSN Regeneration Plan, the proposal has delivered the key components of the regeneration strategy whilst adapting where necessary to protect the environment and enhance the overall plan.

We trust that this Planning Statement is helpful in the determination of this planning application.