5 Planning and Policy

5.1 Introduction

This section of the EIS sets out the planning policy context under which the Proposed Project is proposed. This review ranges from high level strategic statements regarding the role of Dublin and the City Centre, down to detailed planning policy statements which specifically provide for the scheme and consider its implementation a key policy objective for the City.

5.2 National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020

The strategic vision for the spatial development of Ireland for the period from 2002 to 2020 is outlined in the 'National Spatial Strategy' (NSS). The NSS aims to achieve balanced regional development over the country of Ireland within the period up to 2020, in a way that is internationally competitive, socially cohesive and environmentally sustainable. The NSS envisages the establishment of a national spatial structure based around a series of 'gateways' and 'hubs', which will act as growth engines. Dublin is included in the 'Dublin and Mid-East Region' (the Greater Dublin Area). The strategy sets out the following role for the region:

"Enhancing the competitiveness of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), so that it continues to perform at the international level as a driver of national development, means physically consolidating the growth of the metropolitan area i.e. Dublin City and suburbs. At the same time, development in the hinterland of the metropolitan area is to be concentrated in strategically placed, strong and dynamic urban centres, i.e. the 'Primary Development Centres' identified in the Strategic Planning Guidelines. These development centres have a unique role in Irish terms, given the scale of the Dublin City region and the need for internal balance between the city and its surrounding counties."

Dublin City is defined as a 'Gateway'. Gateways have a strategic location, nationally and relative to their surrounding areas, and provide national scale social, economic infrastructure and support services. Further development of the five existing gateways at Dublin, Cork, Limerick/Shannon, Galway and Waterford is a key component of the NSS.

At section 5.4.2, the NSS refers to Larger Urban Areas as follows:

"Internationally mobile labour with 'in-demand' skills has particular preferences. People in this category are often attracted to cities and larger towns, where there is a vibrant social and cultural life, coupled with broad employment opportunities and a wide range of services including education, healthcare and childcare facilities, transport systems and ready access to entertainment and amenity facilities. In Ireland, certain cities and towns have developed strong economies around their power. The elements that contribute to the attractiveness of such places include

– a thriving, human–scale, cultural and social environment, concentrated around distinctive street patterns, mixes of restaurants, cafés, bars and attractive shops

– a high quality physical setting in terms of sensitive conservation of heritage buildings, contemporary architecture, street paving, formal and high quality public spaces and parks

– pedestrian friendly zones.

If balanced regional development is to work, the spatial structure outlined in Section 3 must be supported by policies aimed at enhancing the attractiveness of areas for people. Physical and cultural liveliness will be required to ensure that there is a combination of attractive social and cultural facilities for both people and business."

5.3 Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010-2022

At a regional level, the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) (Dublin Regional Authority and Mid-East Regional Authority, 2010) provide for the implementation of the NSS in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). The principal objective of these RPGs is to develop a broad, spatially-oriented planning framework comprising of the administrative areas of Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, South Dublin, Fingal, Kildare, Meath and Wicklow. Within the GDA, a distinction is made in the guidelines between the existing built up area of Dublin and its immediate environs (the Metropolitan Area) and the remaining extensive areas of countryside containing a range of designated development centres specifically located on transportation corridors (the Hinterland Area).

The overall vision at section 2.2. of the Guidelines supports:

"*an economically vibrant, active and sustainable international Gateway Region, with strong connectivity across the GDA Region, nationally and worldwide; a region which fosters communities living in attractive, accessible places well supported by community infrastructure and enjoying high quality leisure facilities."*

Core principles from this strategic vision for these RPGs, drawing on the 2004 RPGs are:

- *"Dublin as the capital city of Ireland and a major European centre shall grow and progress, competing with other cities in the EU, and serving a wide range of international, national, regional and local needs.*
- *The Dublin and Mid-East Regions will be attractive, vibrant locations for industry, commerce, recreation and tourism and will be a major focus for economic growth within the Country.*
- *The GDA, through its ports and airport connections will continue to be the most important entry/exit point for the country as a whole, and as a Gateway between the European Union and the rest of the World. Access to and through the GDA will continue to be a matter of national importance.*
- *Development in the GDA shall be directly related to investment in integrated high quality public transport services and focused on compact urban form.*
- *Development within the existing urban footprint of the Metropolitan Area will be consolidated to achieve a more compact urban form, allowing for the accommodation of a greater population than at present, with much-enhanced*

public transport system, with the expansion of the built up areas providing for well-designed urban environments linked to high quality public transport networks, enhancing the quality of life for residents and workers alike."

5.4 Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2016 – 2035

The Greater Dublin Area Transport Strategy 2016 – 2035 (National Transport Authority, 2016) sets out a framework for the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure and services in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) as required under section 12 of the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008.

The relationship between the city centre and suburban areas is examined in detail in the strategy given the importance of origin and destinations for various modes and purposes of trips. This has regard to land use characteristics, trends and changes.

In relation to Dublin City Centre, the strategy notes that the city centre has maintained its position as the pre-eminent location for employment in the region. It also highlights that the intensity of employment (the share of employment in the city centre) has been maintained on the basis that between 2006 and 2011 the share of employment in the city centre grew from 26% of the GDA's jobs to 28%. In other words, while regional centres and commercial centres in the suburbs and periphery are attracting employment, the city centre continues to maintain its pre-eminent position. The Transport Strategy attributes this to a higher rate of employment reduction on the periphery, during the economic downturn, rather than any major upswing in the number of people employed in the city centre.

The strategy considers the retail sector also displays the suburbanisation trend very clearly where major regional-scale shopping centres have challenged Dublin City Centre as the primary destination for shopping trips. It highlights the Pavilions in Swords, IKEA, Blanchardstown Town Centre, Liffey Valley Shopping Centre, the Square Tallaght and Dundrum Town Centre as strong retail centres that function as a counter balance to the city centre.

The strategy focuses on the transport network rather than place specific measures for the city centre. Dublin city centre is the key nodal point for the region with a multiple modes of access, stations, stops and transport corridor, in effect making it the point of maximum accessibility for the region.

5.5 Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2016

The Retail Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area 2008-2016 (Dublin and Mid-East Regional Authorities, 2008) adopted in July 2008, provides guidance and policies for retail development at a strategic level in the Greater Dublin Area.

Dublin city centre is identified as a-Level 1 Centre (Section 6.15). As the centre at the highest grade in the hierarchy, Dublin city centre is considered:

"*unique in the range and mix of retail and associated linked services provided, the levels of connectivity it offers and the wide hinterland and tourist trade it serves. As the primary centre for retail, located at the terminus of almost all public transport connections in the GDA."*

The Strategy states that:

"*it is essential that the City continues to re-invent itself to provide a modern attractive retail environment that can compete both with the modern level 2 centres but also with other international cities in both attracting trade and new retail formats.*"

For Dublin City Council centre the 'Council Specific' Policy Recommendation at section 6.33 is:

"Maintaining the role of the city centre as the main retail centre for comparison goods in the Country through continuing to develop the retail environment, urban design of centres, range of retail uses and quality of the public realm to the highest quality to ensure that the City retail core competes on a national and international scale. As part of this, to continue to facilitate complementary uses to retail, where relevant and suitable, to form mixed use development in highly accessible locations."

5.6 Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future (2009)

Smarter Travel was published in 2009 by the Department of Transport which outlines a broad vision for the future and establishes objectives and targets for transport. The document examines past trends in population and economic growth and transport concluding that these trends are unsustainable into the future.

This document sets out ambitious national-level targets for the period 2009-2020 which included a reduction in the total share of car commuting from 65% to 45%, and a related increase in walking, cycling and public transport modes to 55% of total commuter journeys to work.

Actions to encourage Smarter Travel include:

"Action 2: Ensure better integration of land use planning and transport policies in the relevant planning guidelines as part of their ongoing review and we will avail of policy directives to give effect to specific measures needed to meet the vision for sustainable travel.

Action 4: The delivery of public transport, cycling and promotion of more sustainable travel patterns generally in many existing urban centres can only be achieved through retrofitting. We will require local authorities to prepare plans to retrofit areas towards creating sustainable neighbourhoods so that walking and cycling can be the best options for local trips, for example to reach local facilities such as shops and schools.

Action 15: To create a strong cycling culture in Ireland and ensure that all cities, towns, villages and rural areas will be cycling-friendly. Cycling will be a normal way to get about, especially for short trips. Next to walking, cycling will be the most popular means of getting to school, both for primary and secondary school. Our universities and colleges will be bursting with bicycles. Businesspeople will see the bicycle as the best way to travel for part or all of their daily commute. Shopping by bike will be as normal as it is in many of the Northern European cycling-friendly countries. The bicycle will be the transport mode of choice for all ages and will both improve the health, and reduce obesity levels, of the general population and build social capital.

Action 16: creating a culture of walking in Ireland. In that context, there is strong convergence between walking as a tourism asset and walking as recreational activity for local residents. This in turn complements a culture of walking as a mode of everyday transport, by encouraging people to walk as a matter of routine. We will ensure that urban walking networks are strengthened by increasing opportunities for walking and removing constraints as part of planning for more attractive public realms."

5.7 Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012

The Retail Planning Guidelines (DoECLG, 2012) provide a framework for local authorities in the preparation of development plans and the assessment of planning applications as well as providing guidance to developers, regional authorities and An Bord Pleanála.

The guidelines establish five clear policy objectives:

- Ensuring that retail development is plan-led;
- Promoting city/town centre vitality through a sequential approach to development;
- Securing competitiveness in the retail sector by actively enabling good quality development proposals to come forward in suitable locations;
- Facilitating a shift towards increased access to retailing by public transport, cycling and walking in accordance with the Smarter Travel strategy; and
- Delivering quality urban design outcomes.

It notes at section 2.2.1 that:

"Metropolitan Dublin City supplies retail functions of a specialist nature not found elsewhere in the State, as well as providing the broadest range of comparison goods shopping."

Enhancing the vitality and viability of city and town centres in all their functions through sequential development is an overarching objective in retail planning.

Section 2.3 highlights that "*City and town centres provide a broad range of facilities and services and act as a focus for their wider regions, including rural areas."*

The guidelines emphasise that:

"*City and town centres have evolved over a considerable period of time as the focus for a range of commercial and community activities, resulting in a mix of often interdependent land uses which contribute to a sense of place and identity. City and town centres derive their strength from a combination of natural and other features: historic buildings, cultural, civic and governmental buildings, as well as public spaces.*

...This character can be further enhanced by introducing appropriate new uses into historic buildings. The city and town centres also have a high level of accessibility to employment, services, and facilities for all the community as such centres are key destinations for public transport systems.

The development of major shopping centres within city and town centre areas has contributed very positively to the vitality of these areas and has been a major success of previous planning policy."

5.8 Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022

The Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 (Dublin City Council, 2016) was adopted by the Council in October 2016 and is the local authority's primary planning statutory plan. There is a consistent trend throughout the Development Plan that promotes the improvement of public spaces and civic areas. The proposals for College Green complement a dynamic and progressive planning policy agenda in the City Plan which are summarised below. College Green is very much viewed as an integral part of the Grand Civic Spine under policy SC01:

"SCO1: To implement a programme of environmental improvements along the Grand Civic Spine from Parnell Square to Christchurch Place, including College Green and Dame Street, arising from the opportunities provided by the introduction of the College Green Bus Priority System, the Luas Cross City and the 'Dubline' initiative."

The Proposed Project is specifically incorporated as an objective of the City Development Plan under SC08 "*To prioritise the redevelopment of College Green as a pedestrian friendly civic space, including the pedestrianisation of Foster Place."*

The overall objective of the proposed traffic management measures and civic plaza at College Green is consistent with, and follows-on from the objective SCO15 of the previous Dublin City Development Plan 2011–2017:

"To examine the possibility of, and promote the creation of a new public realm improvement space in the area fronting onto Trinity College and the Bank of Ireland at College Green."

The Vision and Core Strategy of the Plan set out at Chapter 2. An extract from Dublin City Development Plan 2016-22 Map E illustrates the zoning objectives and other policy objectives for the area at **Figure 5.2**. At a strategic level it is important to highlight the following policy objectives:

"Settlement Strategy (2.2.3) –
For the inner city, the plan seeks to strengthen and consolidate the robust city-centre mixed use zoning (Z5), with active promotion of the inner city as an attractive place for urban living, working and visiting; the delivery of housing regeneration projects, the emergence of spatial clusters of economic specialism's, public realm improvements and the strengthening of the retail core, all supported by multiple levels of public transport accessibility in the city centre.

Shaping the City – Urban Form and Structure (2.3.2):
It is a central aim of the core strategy to consolidate and enhance the inner city in order to augment its crucial role at the heart of the capital city and the city region. The inner city of Dublin is the most connected destination in the country and at international level, and supports a dynamic range of economic, educational and cultural clusters, together with a growing residential population. It is a central part

of the core strategy to enhance the links between the existing and emerging clusters in the city as depicted on the core strategy map.

Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Recreation –
Dublin is shaped by its major landscape features – the Phoenix Park, the River Liffey, Dublin Bay, and also the river valleys of the Tolka and Dodder. These features are complemented by the man-made amenities and green spaces of the city squares and historic gardens, the canals and waterfront promenades. All of these features contribute to the city's high-quality environment."

The City Plan addresses the *Shape and Structure of the City* at Section 4.5.1.1 and sets out a number of policy objectives including the following relevant items:

"SC2: To develop the city's character by cherishing and enhancing Dublin's renowned streets, civic spaces and squares; to create further new streets as part of the public realm when the opportunities arise; to protect the grain, scale and vitality of city streets; to revitalise the north and south Georgian squares and their environs, and to upgrade Dame Street/College Green as part of the Grand Civic Spine.

SC3: To develop a sustainable network of safe, clean, attractive pedestrian routes, lanes and cycleways in order to make the city more coherent and navigable.

SC4: To promote a variety of recreational and cultural events in the city's civic spaces.

SC19: To promote the development of a network of active, attractive and safe streets and public spaces which are memorable, and include, where appropriate, seating, and which encourage walking as the preferred means of movement between buildings and activities in the city. In the case of pedestrian movement within major developments, the creation of a public street is preferable to an enclosed arcade or other passageway.

SC20: To promote the development of high-quality streets and public spaces which are accessible and inclusive, and which deliver vibrant, attractive, accessible and safe places and meet the needs of the city's diverse communities.

SC21: To promote the development of a built environment and public spaces which are designed to deter crime and anti-social behaviour, which promote safety and which accord with the principles of universal design, as set out in the Dublin City Public Realm Strategy.

SC28: To promote understanding of the city's historical architectural character to facilitate new development which is in harmony with the city's historical spaces and structures."

Zoning

Figure 5.2 comprises an Extract from Map E of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-22 indicating the location of College Green within Conservation Area (red hatch), ACA (Green hatch) and bounded by protected structures (red

asterisk). The map also shows the location of the principles zoning objectives for College Green and surrounds. The dominant zoning is Z5 highlighted in blue with the objective *"To consolidate and facilitate the development of the central area, and to identify, reinforce, strengthen and protect its civic design character and dignity"*. The orange zoning reflects the designation of important institutional uses as Z8 *"To protect the existing architectural and civic design character, and to allow only for limited expansion consistent with the conservation objective"*. The green designation Z9 *"To preserve, provide and improve recreational amenity and open space and green networks"* is also noted.

5.8.1 City Economy and Enterprise

Chapter 6 of the City Plan addresses Economy and Enterprise, which highlights that the quality of the city environment is an important elements of its competitiveness and economic well-being. It notes:
"*Significant improvements in the urban environment such as new spaces and parks, cleaner streets, improved apartment housing, new arts and cultural facilities, and an increasingly open and multi-cultural city at ease with its diversity, have made the city more attractive and competitive."*

The following relevant Policy Objectives are noted:

"CEE5: (iii) To recognise the need to improve linkages between the key economic areas of the city such as Docklands, the central business district, Heuston, Newmarket and the Digital Hub area by improving facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, facilitating public transport, improving the public domain and tackling vacant sites/dilapidated buildings.

CEE7: To recognise that 'quality of place', 'clean, safe', is crucial to the economic success of the city, in attracting foreign and domestic investment, and in attracting and retaining key scarce talent, tourists, and residents.

CEE12: (i) To promote and facilitate tourism as one of the key economic pillars of the city's economy and a major generator of employment and to support the provision of necessary significant increase in facilities such as hotels, apart hotels, tourist hostels, cafes, and restaurants, visitor attractions, including those for children (ii) To promote and enhance Dublin as a world class tourist destination for leisure, culture, business and student visitors
(iii) To promote and facilitate the optimum benefits (including the international marketing benefits) to the city of the Convention Centre Dublin, as well as all other major existing and future visitor attractions

CEE14: To recognise that many of our key tourist attractions are in regeneration areas with challenges of dilapidated buildings, vacant sites, and public domain in need of improvement; and to develop projects such as Dubline that will address these challenges."