5 Planning and Policy

5.1 Introduction

This section of the EIAR 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,
In accordance with the Regulations, a “Project Supervisor Construction Stage” will be appointed as appropriate. The Project Supervisor Construction Stage will assemble the Safety File as the project progresses.

**Emergency Response Provision**

The Contractor will maintain an emergency response action plan which will cover all foreseeable risks, i.e. fire, spill, flood, etc. Appropriate site personnel will be trained as first aiders and fire marshals. In addition, appropriate staff will be trained in environmental issues and spill response procedures.

Equipment and vehicles will be locked, have keys removed and be stored securely in the works area.

**Site Management and Security**

A construction management team will be established for the duration of the construction phase. The team will manage the construction of the Works including monitoring the Contractor’s performance to ensure that the proposed construction phase mitigation measures are implemented and that construction impacts and nuisance are minimised.

A Construction Management Plan for the works will be prepared and submitted to DCC in advance of any works commencing. This will be updated at each stage of the development as it progresses and will deal with health and safety, security, access to and within the site, entrance and fencing treatment and parking.

The primary function of site security will be to ensure that no unauthorised entry to site occurs. There will be hoarding around the construction sites to minimise the risk of vandalism and unauthorised access.

**Environmental Management**

Environmental impacts during construction will be mitigated or reduced where possible (refer to the individual chapters in this EIAR for specific mitigation measures).

In this regard, the appointed Contractor will be required to produce a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for DCC approval prior to commencing any works on site. The Contractor’s CEMP will be a development of the outline CEMP contained in Appendix 4.1.

This plan will deal with issues such as noise and dust mitigation measures, hours of operation, traffic management, waste management, environmental management, demolition, protection of trees and monuments, etc.

**Resource and Waste Management**

Resource and waste generation during construction will be mitigated and managed where possible. In this regard, the appointed Contractor will be required to produce a Construction and Demolition Waste Management Plan (CDWMP) for DCC approval prior to commencing any works on site.
– 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 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


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:

“SC01: 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 element 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.”
Chapter 7 of the City Plan focuses on retailing, having regard to its importance for the city. It is highlighted that “a healthy retail sector is central to a city’s success. It can contribute to the city’s continuing economic recovery and qualitative improvement by upgrading the existing retail offer and strengthening mixed-use linkages within the city.”

The City Plan includes the following relevant retail policies and objectives:

“RD6: To promote and facilitate the major contribution of retail and other services to the vitality and success of the city, as a significant source of employment, a focus of tourism, as an important recreational activity and as a link with other cultural and recreational activities.

RD13: To affirm and maintain the status of the city centre retail core as the premier shopping area in the State, affording a variety of shopping, cultural and leisure attractions and having regard to relevant objectives set out in the Retail Core Framework Plan (2007).

RD17: To promote active uses at street level on the principal shopping streets in the city centre retail core and in Z4 district centres and having regard to the criteria for Category 1 and Category 2 streets and Special Areas of Planning Control.

RD22: To encourage environmental and streetscape improvement works conducive with the improvement of the pedestrian environment and the creation of better linkages within and between shopping areas in the city centre retail core in line with the objectives of ‘Your City, Your Space - Dublin City Public Realm Strategy, 2012’.”
Figure 5.1: Extract from Dublin City Development Plan 2016-22 Figure 7 ‘City Retail Core – Principal Shopping Streets’
5.8.3 Movement and Transport

At a strategic level, the City Plan highlights (section 8.2) that changing the mode share of commuters towards sustainable options is a key requirement, and during the period 2006-2014 use of the private car decreased by 17% and the proportion of cyclists entering the city increased by 114%. Incremental improvements to strategic cycleways have much improved the cycling environment and further enhancements are planned. The walking share target of 10% was exceeded over the period of the last development plan.

Map J of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-22 illustrates Strategic Transport and Parking areas. This indicates the alignment of the light railway line currently under construction and a potential alignment for Metro. The following relevant strategic policy objectives are noted:

“MT2: Whilst having regard to the necessity for private car usage and the economic benefit to the city centre retail core as well as the city and national economy to continue to promote modal shift from private car use towards increased use of more sustainable forms of transport such as cycling, walking and public transport, and to co-operate with the NTA, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and other transport agencies in progressing an integrated set of transport objectives. Initiatives contained in the Government’s ‘Smarter Travel’ document and in the NTA’s Draft Transport Strategy are key elements of this approach.

MT5: To work with the relevant transport providers, agencies and stakeholders to facilitate the integration of active travel (walking, cycling etc.) with public transport, thereby making it easier for people to access and use the public transport system.

MT7: To improve the city’s environment for walking and cycling through the implementation of improvements to thoroughfares and junctions and also through the development of new and safe routes, including the provision of foot and cycle bridges.

MT12: To improve the pedestrian environment and promote the development of a network of pedestrian routes which link residential areas with recreational, educational and employment destinations to create a pedestrian environment that is safe and accessible to all.

MT13: To promote best practice mobility management and travel planning to balance car use to capacity and provide for necessary mobility via sustainable transport modes.

MT20: To increase capacity of public transport, cycling and walking, where required, in order to achieve sustainable transportation policy objectives. Any works undertaken will include as an objective, enhanced provision for safety, public transportation, cyclists and pedestrians, and will be subject to environmental and conservation considerations.”

5.8.4 Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Recreation

The Proposed Project forms part of a wider network of green infrastructure in the city. This is further articulated under the heading of heart of the City, Public Realm Masterplan below. Relevant policy references include:
“GI5: To promote permeability through our green infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.

GI6: To support and implement the objectives of the National Landscape Strategy.

GI7: To continue to protect and enhance landscape, including existing green spaces through sustainable planning and design for both existing community and for future generations in accordance with the principles of the European Landscape Convention.

GI11: To seek the provision of additional spaces in areas deficient in public open spaces – by way of pocket parks or the development of institutional lands.

GI30: To encourage and promote tree planting in the planning and development of urban spaces, streets, roads and infrastructure projects.”

5.8.5 Built Heritage and Culture

College Green is located at the heart of the historic city in an iconic setting surrounded by buildings of national cultural, social and architectural significance, protected structures, and included within a Conservation Area. The site is located within the South City Retail Quarter Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), the Grafton Street and Environs ACA and a zone of archaeological interest.

The receiving environment and potential impacts are assessed in detail in Chapter 10, ‘Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage’ of this EIAR. In terms of planning policy, the City Plan sets out a comprehensive policy agenda to protect and sustain the built heritage of the city. The Plan highlights seeks to ensure that:

“new investment, regeneration and intervention acknowledges and respects the significant archaeological and architectural heritage of the city is a key challenge that can be pursued through appropriate objectives for the protection, enhancement and management of the built heritage, while encouraging regeneration and change.”

The inherent relationship between the city’s economy and its heritage is also highlighted noting: “Dublin’s tourism industry relies largely on the city’s built heritage, with its unique character and identity as a city of neighbouring but distinct quarters.”
The following strategic policy objectives relating to Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation areas are noted:

“CHC1: To seek the preservation of the built heritage of the city that makes a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of local streetscapes and the sustainable development of the city.

CHC2: To ensure that the special interest of protected structures is protected. Development will conserve and enhance Protected Structures and their curtilage and will: (a) Protect or, where appropriate, restore form, features and fabric which contribute to the special interest.

CHC4: To protect the special interest and character of all Dublin’s Conservation Areas (11.1.5.4). Development within or affecting all conservation areas will contribute positively to the character and distinctiveness; and take opportunities to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the area and its setting, wherever possible.

CHC5: To protect Protected Structures and preserve the character and the setting of Architectural Conservation Areas. The City Council will resist the total or substantial loss of:

- Protected structures in all but exceptional circumstances (and will require the strongest justification, including professional input with specialist knowledge so that all options receive serious consideration).
• Non-protected structures, which are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of an Architectural Conservation Area unless it can be demonstrated that the public benefits of the proposals outweigh the case for retention of the building.

CHC12: To promote tourism in the medieval city and suburbs.

CHC13: To support and pursue a World Heritage nomination for the Historic City of Dublin, in partnership with the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and other stakeholders.

CHC23: To lead and support the development of a shared vision for culture in the city in collaboration with cultural institutions and other cultural bodies in recognition of their key role in the cultural and economic success of the capital city.

CHC24: To ensure the continued development of Dublin as a culturally vibrant, creative and diverse city with a broad range of cultural activities provided throughout the city, underpinned by quality cultural infrastructure.”

Part of the subject site at College Green is included in the Grafton Street ACA and the Plan includes the objective to incorporate parts of College Green and Dame Street within an ACA as a Phase 1 priority area. In this context the following policy is also highlighted:

“CHC02: To designate further Architectural Conservation Areas within the identified phase 1 priority areas (as set out in section 11.1.4 The Strategic Approach) of special historic and architectural interest.”

5.9 Dublin City Centre Transport Study (2016)

The future movement strategy for the city core and the resultant impact on its public realm is largely affected by the proposals contained within the City Centre Transport Study 2016 (Dublin City Council, 2016).

It sets out the vision for Dublin City Centre with guiding principles to facilitate increased access to the city centre, to protect the investment in public transport, and to develop a safer city centre for all transport modes and users. The study proposes several strategic interventions in the transport network within the city which prioritise public transport, walking and cycling. The stated aim is to:

“set down a framework for how Dublin City’s transport network can be redefined to cater for this increased usage, by better utilising the existing infrastructure available, and by moving towards a more sustainable and efficient use of the public realm within the city centre. The Study will facilitate Dublin with an opportunity to grow as a city both physically and economically, whilst also creating a better public realm which can be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.”

A comprehensive range of integrated measures across all sectors of the public transport system are detailed within the Transport Plan. The implementation of these multimodal initiatives provides the opportunity to address the constraints of the existing pedestrian environment and further enhance the public realm and pedestrian areas across the city centre.
It also acknowledges that public transport users all require a high quality pedestrian environment for the initial and/or final leg of all public transport journeys taken on foot.

The Transport Study includes six key Principles:

“Principle 1: To protect the investment that already has been, and continues to be, made in public transport in the city.

Principle 2: To increase the capacity for the movement of people and goods into and within the City Centre, and facilitate efficient and effective goods delivery.

Principle 3: To develop a safer City Centre for all transport modes and users.

Principle 4: To improve accessibility and permeability to, and within, the City Centre for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, while also maintaining an appropriate level of access for vehicular traffic for commercial and retail purposes.

Principle 5: To make it easier for people to use the transport networks.

Principle 6: To provide opportunities to enhance the Public Realm through transport interventions in the City Centre.”

Section 5.3.2 of the Transport Study notes the following in respect of public transport movement in the city core area:

“The current issue with rising levels of congestion for all modes in the City Centre (North and South Quays as an example), together with the traffic network changes brought about by Luas Cross City, and the need to cater for a growth in travel demand, will require the reallocation of road space on certain streets from general traffic to sustainable transport modes. This will safeguard the critical role of public transport, and will ensure that it is possible to transport more people in and out of the City Centre.”

The vision for a pedestrian-friendly city core complements the objectives of the Dublin City Centre Transport Study. A key recommendation of the plan is to advocate for and support a transport strategy that delivers excellent transport infrastructure while achieving the key objective of this plan to create a single integrated pedestrian-friendly zone through the entire study area.

The creation of a civic space at College Green is part of the vision set out in the Dublin City Centre Transport Study. As part of that Study, the development of a major civic space at College Green in conjunction with an extension of the Grafton Street pedestrian arrangements to Suffolk Street is considered a priority.

College Green is addressed in detail at section 10.2.2 of the study as follows:
“The reconfiguration of College Green from its current format as a traffic through-route to a new public transport and civic space will require a reconsideration of the allocation of road traffic space, and its reduction to one traffic lane in each direction. To ensure that this space is utilised most efficiently it is proposed that only public transport vehicles will have access to College Green. The exclusion of all other vehicles will mean that taxis are precluded from using the road space as a through route or as a taxi rank. The existing taxi rank on College Green will be relocated.”

It is noted that this was a concept which included a through route for buses. This iteration of the plaza design, up to the final design considered for assessment in this EIAR is addressed in the Chapter 2, ‘Background to the Proposed Project and Alternatives Considered’.

The study considers the purpose of the design was to provide an attractive pedestrian route for Dubliners and tourists to move from the north of the city from O’Connell Street through the College Green area to St. Stephen’s Green in a pleasant, safe and pedestrian friendly environment.

The study considered that the introduction of the proposed transport changes facilitating an improved public realm, would:

“allow people to enjoy some of the best of Dublin’s architectural heritage in comfort and space, and will significantly raise the profile and attractiveness of the large retail premises facing onto College Green. The new open space will provide opportunities to anchor the ‘Civic Spine’ of the City at the front of Trinity College, creating a natural people gathering location.”

5.10 Dublin City Local Economic and Community Plan

The Dublin City Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-21 (LECP) (Dublin City Council, 2016) is a statutory plan prepared under the Local Government Reform Act of 2014. It sets out high level goals, objectives and actions needed to promote and support economic development and local and community development over the six-year period of the LECP. The focus of the LECP is on the social and economic issues and goals that can be addressed by Dublin City Council, local businesses and community and voluntary organisations and state bodies.

It includes the following relevant High Level Goals:

“4. To put in place the infrastructure that positions Dublin as a safe, environmentally sustainable, vibrant, diverse and attractive place to live, work, visit and invest in by planning and providing for balanced and sustainable social and economic development, catering for a growing population.

5. Provide and protect a range of public, safe and affordable amenities, activities and facilities that are relevant and accessible to people of all ages and abilities and that contribute to the health and well-being of all.”
5.11 The Heart of Dublin City Centre Public Realm Masterplan (June 2016)

The focus of the Public Realm Masterplan (Dublin City Council, 2016) is on the historic, cultural and commercial core of the city. This area has been prioritised because it represents the most important and historic part of Dublin city, and is also the key area for pedestrian movement by visitors and commuters alike.

The agreed vision for the Masterplan is for a Pedestrian-Friendly Core, where there is greater balance between pedestrians and vehicles, an expanded pedestrian space and more opportunities for pedestrians to move through the city core. The vast majority of people visiting the city are pedestrians for some part of their journey. Whether cycling to the city, driving to a car park or catching a bus, at some point we all experience the city as a pedestrian.

The plan considers the comfort of pedestrians as they move through the city is a key component in the overall experience of the city. Developing a single unified pedestrian friendly area allows the core city to become increasingly accessible and comfortable, while exploiting the value that improved place-making can bring to the city through the reallocation of space.

Essentially, the Masterplan identifies the gaps that need to be filled in order to deliver a unified pedestrian-friendly core, and sets out a list of projects that are realised to deliver this A specific and detailed street-by-street list of public realm projects emerges through the analysis and consultation process. Collectively, these projects, in line with the guiding principles, make up this Masterplan. These projects will be delivered over an 18-20 year period. It specifically refers to the redesign of College Green as a civic space of national and city importance has long been an objective of Dublin City Council.

The Masterplan includes the following recommendations under specific topic headings:

- **“Legible Pedestrian Network:**
  - To improve and expand the existing pedestrian network within the city core

- **The Importance of Respite:**
  - To devise a programme of seating and respite improvements for the city core.

- **Space for Pedestrians:**
  - To protect existing pavement widths from reduction. To reallocate space at identified locations to provide adequate provision for pedestrian comfort. To apply Pedestrian Space Calculator for Dublin in the planning and design of all city centre projects.

- **The Importance of Permeability:**
  - To pursue increased permeability through historic blocks in partnership with stakeholders.
  - To identify and improve underperforming pedestrian routes to relieve pressure on pinch points in the city core.
  - To conduct a pedestrian audit on a sample area.
• **Lingering in the City:**
  o To integrate opportunities for lingering in public realm plans for the city core.

• **Greening the City:**
  o To identify, locate and promote suitable opportunities to develop and expand the urban tree canopy and greening throughout the city core.

• **Standards \ Visual Quality:**
  o To develop suitable off street options to facilitate decluttering the urban environment.

• **Maintenance**
  o To continually review and develop service provision and maintenance standards that ensure the public realm is presented to its best advantage at all times.

• **Services and Utilities:**
  o To investigate the possibility of shared service tunnels in key streets to facilitate the continued and sustainable use of the public realm for utility companies. To investigate the possibility of sub-surface mini-pillars with our partners to promote visual quality and decluttering of the public realm.

• **Removal of Vehicular Traffic from College Green**
  o To develop a transport strategy that facilitates the longer-term ambition to create a pedestrian friendly core by reorganising bus routes to minimise traversing of the city centre.
  o To undertake a pedestrian audit for the city core.

• **Cycle-Friendly City Core**
  o To improve the cycle network by developing a fully permeable network of cycle lanes along main connecting routes through the city centre, with two-way cycle access through College Green east-west and north-south, and additional routes through green spaces, institutional and historic areas.
  o To improve the cycle network by creating off-street high density cycle parking facilities in the city centre. On street cycle storage should be provided using integrated streetscape designs to reduce visual clutter or pedestrian barriers.
  o To improve the cycle network by creating traffic-calmed cells within the City Centre where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicular traffic can co-exist.”

It is noted that the previous City Development Plan (2016) included a specific objective to: “examine the possibility of, and promote the creation of a new public realm improvement space in the area fronting onto Trinity and the Bank of Ireland at College Green.”
It recognises College Green’s historic and architectural importance and its pivotal setting within the Civic Spine (the route running from Parnell Square through O’Connell Street, College Green and Dame Street to Christchurch Place).

College Green was identified as potentially the city’s most important civic space in Your City, Your Space, Public Realm Strategy 2012. The strategy acknowledges that College Green has the potential to be a great civic space, but is at present dominated by its movement functions. College Green is identified as a Phase 1 Public Realm Project (2016-22).

Figure 5.3: Extract from The Heart of Dublin city Centre Public Realm Masterplan (June 2016) – Pedestrian Strategy Map

5.12 Conclusions

The foregoing review of strategic, statutory and non-statutory plans clearly demonstrates that there is an extremely supportive and consistent policy framework. At a national level the NSS advocates the provision of pedestrian friendly zones as a component of encouraging cities to develop thriving, human-scale, cultural and social environments.

In other words, pedestrianisation is a valuable policy tool to achieve attractive liveable city centres, where the creation of space for people over cars, supports the status of city centres as high quality destinations with robust economies.
The Regional Planning Guidelines and Retail Guidelines reinforce this policy theme, correlating high-quality city centre public realm, with footfall growth providing customers for city centre businesses.

The Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022 supports the proposal for College Green as part of a dynamic and progressive planning policy agenda to improve the public realm and experience of the city, complement the protection and appreciation of the architectural and historic heritage, reposition College Green as the hub of Dublin’s Civic spine, and give the city a public realm that is befitting of a European city tourist destination. The proposed civic plaza is supported in policy as an important tool to enhance and increase footfall in the city centre, thereby supporting commercial and retail businesses. The College Green Plaza is directly proposed in accordance with objective SCO8 of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016–2022: “To prioritise the redevelopment of College Green as a pedestrian friendly civic space, including the pedestrianisation of Foster Place.”

The redevelopment of College Green as a plaza is further supported in the Dublin City Centre Transport Study and The Heart of Dublin City Centre Public Realm Masterplan, completing a comprehensive supportive policy environment for the Proposed Project.

5.13 References

Dublin City Council (2016) Dublin City Development Plan 2016-22
Dublin City Council (2011) Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017
Dublin City Council (2016) The Heart of Dublin City Centre Public Realm Masterplan, June 2016
Dublin City Council (2012) Your City, Your Space; Dublin City Public Realm Strategy,
Dublin City Council and National Transport Authority (2016) Dublin City Centre Transport Study
Dublin City Council (2016) Dublin City Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-21
Department of Transport Tourism and Sport and Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (2013) Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets,