

Planning Statement

For Development at

on behalf of Cork County Council

March 2024



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CHARTERED PLANNING CONSULTANTS

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1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Cork County Council in relation to a proposed social residential development, which is proposed in accordance with Section 179A of the Planning and Development Act (as amended) at Clontead More, Coachford, County Cork.

The proposed development consists of:

- 26 Residential Units consisting of:
 - 6 three-bed, five-person two storey houses
 - 10 two-bed, four-person two storey houses
 - 10 one-bed, two-person own door apartments
- 46 car parking spaces including visitor parking and designated parking spaces for reduced mobility access.
- The construction of a new footpath connecting the site with Coachford village.
- Soft landscaping including green spaces, planting, trees and amenity areas.
- Connection to public utilities
- All other associated ancillary development and works including footpaths, communal bin and bike stores and drainage.

The proposed development, Ceann Scríbe, will provide 26 much needed new homes to meet a mixture of housing requirements with regards to size and typology on an under-utilised site within the existing built footprint of Coachford. It will deliver a high-quality social residential scheme that is sympathetic to the existing urban environment and sensitive to the natural environment of the immediate surrounds and will help address the current housing shortages in a highly desirable village in County Cork.

This report is submitted in support of the proposed scheme and is presented under the following headings:

- Site Context & Proposed Development
- Planning Policy Context
- Planning History
- Assessment of Proposed Development
- Appropriate Assessment
- Environmental Assessment
- Conclusion

2. Site context & Proposed Development

2.1 Site Context

The site of the proposed development has a total area of 2.11ha and is located off the R619, approximately 125m north of Coachford village centre. The proposed development comprises phase one of the development on a site area of 1.01ha. There are no immediate plans regarding phase two development.

The site is located within the development boundary of Coachford adjoining the existing built realm, representing sequential development. The subject site is located within walking distance of the village centre, however at present there is no footpath linking the site to the village centre. The proposed development seeks to enhance the connectivity of the development with the services and amenities, through the provision of a new footpath and public lighting linking the internal pedestrian infrastructure of the proposed scheme to the village centre.

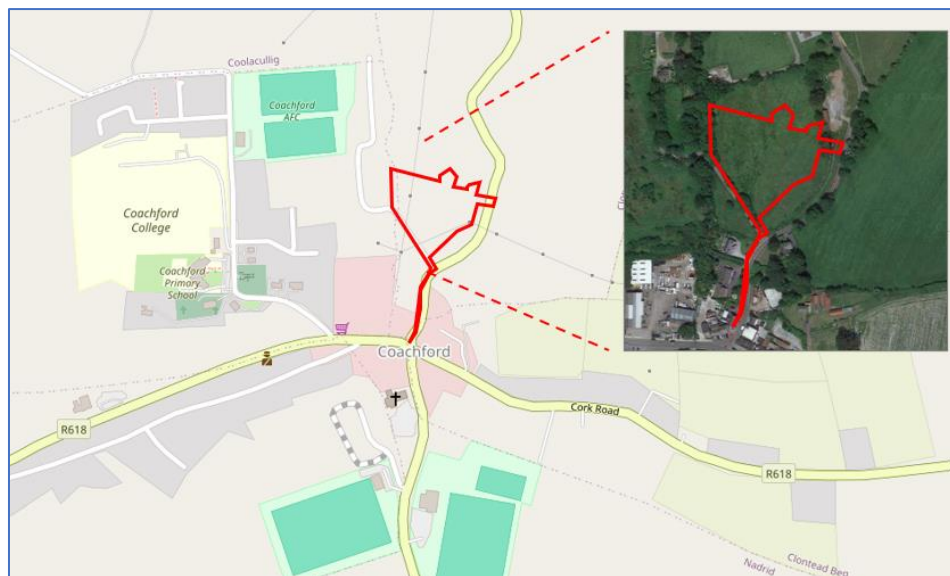


Figure 1: Site location in context of Coachford Village (approximate boundary in red).

The approach to the site from the Coachford comprises linear roadside development of one-off houses. A housing development is currently being constructed on lands to the immediate west (see Fig. 2, in purple). Lands to the north and east comprise agricultural uses and are rural in character. Lands owned by Cork County Council adjoin the north-eastern site corner (see Fig. 2, in amber), used for the storage of road surfacing materials and contains a former agricultural shed.

The site of approximately 1.01 ha is bound by existing mature hedgerows and treelines, with scrub developing within the site. A stream runs north-south alongside the western boundary.

The site is located within walking distance of the village which provides various services and facilities, including one primary and one post-primary school, sports and recreation amenities, with Farren Forest Park 4km to the southeast of the village. The River Lee lies approximately 1.5km south of the village.



Figure 2: Aerial view of existing site (approximate redline boundary in red) with new development under construction (purple), and Council yard (amber).

2.2 Proposed Development

The proposal seeks to develop 26 residential dwellings (see Fig. 3) with a mixed typology on an underutilised green field site adjoining existing (and currently under construction) residential areas (see Fig. 2). The proposed residential development is consistent with the zoning objectives for the site, providing much needed social housing options in Coachford, a designated 'Key Village'. All units comply with the standards set out in the CDP, and guidance provided set out in the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHPLG, 2024) and Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (DHPLG, 2022).

The site is currently underutilised, comprising an open field of agricultural land of low ecological value sequentially adjoining existing and under construction residential development. The proposed development will require some removal of scrub and pioneer species that have taken over the site. However, the proposal seeks the retention of mature trees, existing boundary hedgerows and communal open green spaces included as part of the overall proposal that support habitats, local biodiversity and the existing ecological corridors. An Environmental Impact Assessment screening report prepared by McCutcheon Halley and an Appropriate Assessment Screening Report (AA) and Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) have been prepared by Dixon Brosnan in support of this proposed development.



Figure 3: Extract of proposed site layout.

The overall approach of the proposed residential development at Clontead More, to be named Ceann Scribe, will secure the delivery of new social homes close to the centre of Coachford, contributing positively to creating liveable communities and reducing carbon footprint. The proposed residential development will benefit from excellent new walking connectivity to the village centre (see Fig. 4) with links to public transport, employment areas, recreation, community facilities, and schools. The public bus route 233 runs a service from Cork City Centre to Macroom (6 services a day). The bus stop is located approximately 125m from the site entrance.

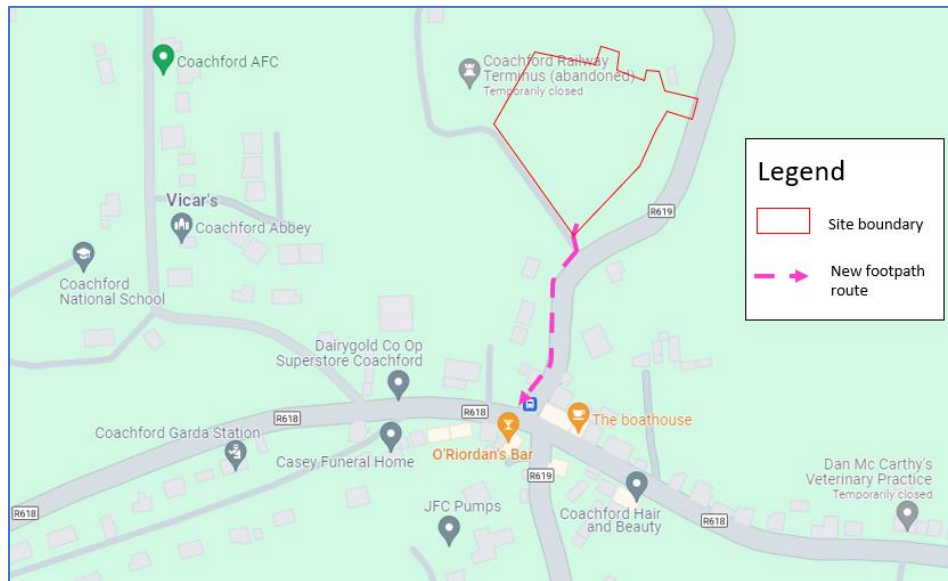


Figure 4: Proposed pedestrian footpath providing enhanced connectivity with village centre (Approx site boundary in red)

The building heights, comprising two-storey units, are sensitive to the immediate residential environment and are comparable to the prevailing characteristics of the surrounding established housing.

The proposal is for 26 residential units within a developable area of 1.04ha, resulting in a density of 26 units per ha, falling in line with the Medium Density C category, which is consistent with the population thresholds set out in the CDP and the growth targets set for Coachford. A usable open space of 0.18 ha, equal to 18% of the developable area, has been set aside as open amenity space. An area to the east of the site (see Fig. 3) is not included within the developable area and is set aside for possible future development including the provision of realignment of the R619.

The proposed site layout is developed along a single internal spine road, accessed directly from the R619. Footpaths throughout the development, including a separate access route and internal navigation provide a pedestrian focused residential area. Sightlines of 49m to the north and south are achieved at the site vehicular entrance.

Car parking is allocated in line with the maximum standards set out in table 12.6 of the CDP. All parking spaces will be capable of accommodating future charging points. The proposed development provides 17 covered bike parking spaces within a secure bin and bike storage area for use by residents of apartments and house units without rear access. A further 9 bike spaces are provided for use by visitors.

The retention of the existing mature hedgerow and tree line with additional areas to the eastern edge of the site will result in minimal impact on the existing ecology, whilst the inclusion of nature-based solutions to urban drainage such as bio-swales will deliver an overall biodiversity net gain.

3. Planning Policy Context

3.1 Cork County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

The Village of Coachford is designated as a Key Village within the Macroom Municipal District and is located within the CASP Ring Strategic Planning Area approximately 3.5km to the west of Dripsey. Volume 4 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 (CDP) recognises it as a primary focus for development for the surrounding rural area for the provision of services by encouraging and facilitating population growth. The CDP notes a population decline between 2011-2016 from 431 to 408. The recent 2022 CSO figures show an increase to 450, in line with the overall trend of population growth in Co. Cork. Housing unit growth has stagnated since 2020 with only 18 units provided between 2010 and 2020. The CDP notes two planning permissions will provide an additional 95, however, these are private developments with limited social housing options.

General Objective DB-01 provides for the development of up to 95 additional dwelling units within the development boundary during the plan period.

There is currently no zoning within the development boundary of Coachford other than three areas set aside for Green Infrastructure (GI) and one further area for Business and General Employment (see Fig. 5). The site is within the development boundary of Coachford and represents sequential development.



Figure 5: Extract from Cork County Online Planning Viewer

A review of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-28 identifies a number of relevant Policy Objectives, which include the following:

Objective PL 3-1: Building Design, Movement and Quality of the Public Realm:

Support measures to improve building design quality, accessibility and movement including investment in quality public realm across the settlement network of the County.

Objective PL 3-3: Delivering Quality and Inclusive Places:

In assessing future development proposals the Plan will implement and promote a series of aims outlined in the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and accompanying Urban Design Manual and the Design Standards for New Apartments, which seek to create high quality inclusive places.

Objective HOU 4-6: Housing Mix:

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

b) Require the submission of a Statement of Housing Mix with all applications for multi-unit residential development in order to facilitate the proper evaluation of the proposal relative to this objective. The Statement of Housing Mix should include proposals for the provision of suitable housing for older people and the disabled in the area.

Objective HOU 4-7: Housing Density on Residentially Zoned Land (Fig 6):

Sets out the new density categories in the Plan and Table 4.1 (Fig. 7) sets out the new tiered density approach recommended to respond to the diverse settlement scales within the County's hierarchy:

County Development Plan Objective			
HOU 4-7: Housing Density on Residentially Zoned Land			
	Min Net Density	Max Net Density	Comment
Medium C	5	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited number of sites at the edges of the smaller towns (<5,000 population) as an alternative to one off housing in the countryside. The layout needs to include a strong urban edge, where appropriate. A lower standard of public open space provision will be considered where larger private gardens are provided. Broad housing mix normally required including detached/ serviced sites. This category cannot exceed 20% of new housing requirements.

Figure 6: Extract from Cork County Development Plan 2022-28

Settlement Type	Settlement	High (50 units/ha+)	Medium A (30-50 units/ha)	Medium B (20-35 units/ha)	Medium C (5-20 units/ha)
Key Villages <1,500 & Villages	All others.				Generally applicable for future development on edge of centre sites. Densities up to 30 units/ha will be considered in Key Villages. Within Key Village and Village Centres higher densities will be considered.

Figure 7: Extract from Cork County Development Plan 2022-28

Objective WM 11-10: Surface Water, SuDS and Water Sensitive Urban Design:

a) Require that all new developments incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Efforts should be taken to limit the extent of hard surfacing and impermeable paving.

b) Encourage the application of a Water Sensitive Urban Design approach in the design of new development or other urban interventions. Opportunities to contribute to, protect or re-enforce existing green infrastructure corridors or assets should be maximised.

c) Optimise and maximise the application of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to mitigate flood risk, enhance biodiversity, protect and enhance visual and recreational amenity; all in the most innovative and creative manner appropriate and in accordance with best practices. Proposals should demonstrate that due consideration has been given to nature-based solutions in the first instance in arriving at the preferred SuDS solution for any development.

Objective TM 12-9: Parking:

Secure the appropriate delivery of car parking and bicycle spaces and facilities in line with the Standards set out in Section 12.24 of this document:

Table 12.6 of the CDP (Fig. 8) outlines the maximum provision for car parking in residential developments as 2 spaces per dwelling unit and 1.25 spaces per apartment.

Development Type	Parking Provision Requirement
Residential: Dwelling houses	2 spaces per dwelling unit
Residential: Apartments	1.25 spaces per apartment unit

Figure 8: Extract from Cork County Development Plan

Table 12.8 of the CDP (Fig. 9) outlines the minimum cycle parking provision for residential development as 1 space per bedroom for apartments with an addition space per 2 units for short stay (visitor) parking and 1.2 spaces per house.

Table 12.8: Cycle parking for residential development (Minimum)		
Residential Development type	1 long stay parking space per:	1 short stay (visitor) parking space per:
Apartments	1 bedroom	2 units
Houses	1 unit	5 units

Figure 9: Extract from Cork County Development Plan

Objective TM 12-12: EV Charging:

All residential development should be constructed to be capable of accommodating future charging points as required within the curtilage of the dwelling where possible.

Objective GI 14-3: Green Infrastructure and Development:

a) Require new development and redevelopment proposals, to contribute to the protection, management and enhancement of the existing green and blue infrastructure of the local area in terms of the design, layout and landscaping of development proposals.

b) Require all development to submit a green infrastructure statement outlining how the proposal contributes to green and blue infrastructure both within its environs as well as within the wider settlement or rural area. Larger developments (multiple residential developments including Part 8 applications, retail, industrial, mineral extraction, etc) will be expected to prepare a Landscape/ Green (and Blue) Infrastructure Plan including a Landscape Design Rationale. This Plan should identify environmental assets and include proposals which protect, manage and develop green infrastructure resources in a sustainable manner.

Objective GI 14-6: Public/Private Open Space Provision:

a) Public Open Space within Residential Development shall be provided in accordance with the standards contained in Cork County Council's Interim Recreation & Amenity Policy (2019) and any successor policy, the "Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas" and "Making Places: a design guide for residential estate development. Cork

County Council Planning Guidance and Standards Series Number 2”.

b) Promote the provision of high quality, accessible and suitably proportioned areas of public open space and promote linking of new open spaces with existing spaces to form a green infrastructure network.

c) Apply the standards for private open space provision contained in the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and the Urban Design Manual (DoEHLG 2009) and Cork County Council’s Design Guidelines for Residential Estate Development. With regard to apartment developments, the guidelines on Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments will apply.

Objective BE 15-6: Biodiversity and New Development:

Provide for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in the development management process and when licensing or permitting other activities by:

b) Encouraging the retention and integration of existing trees, hedgerows and other features of high natural value within new developments;

c) Requiring the incorporation of primarily native tree and other plant species, particularly pollinator friendly species in the landscaping of new developments;

d) Fulfilling Appropriate Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment obligations and carrying out Ecological Impact Assessment in relation to development and activities, as appropriate;

3.2 Design Standards for New Apartments 2022

The Design Standards for New Apartments 2022 notes that apartments continue to be an increasingly common form of housing in Ireland’s urban areas. The Guidelines note that the average national household size is decreasing and that apartments can provide appropriate housing for smaller households.

Section 2.4 identifies three different locations which are considered suitable for apartment development. Peripheral and/or Less Accessible Urban Locations, such as the subject site, are considered generally suitable for residential developments that will include a minority of apartments at low-medium densities.

The Guidelines outline Specific Planning Policy Requirements to guide the development of apartments. SPPR 3 sets out the minimum floor area for one-bed apartments as 45m² and 73m² for two-bed apartments. SPPR 4 requires a minimum of 50% dual aspect units in suburban or intermediate locations.

SPPR 5 stipulates a minimum of 2.7m floor to ceiling heights in ground floor apartments.

Section 4 outlines guidance concerning communal facilities in apartments, with access, refuse storage, bike and car parking and communal amenity space having relevance to the subject proposal.

Appendix 1 of the Guidelines sets out minimum floor areas and standards for apartment development.

3.3 Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

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

The four design principles of DMURS are:

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

These design principles have been integrated into the design of the proposed scheme.

3.4 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines

The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities were published in January 2024.

The Guidelines set out policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of urban and rural settlements, with a focus on sustainable residential development and the creation of compact settlements. They are accompanied by a companion non-statutory Design Manual that illustrates best practice examples of how the policies and objectives of the Guidelines can be applied.

The standards set out in the Guidelines have been incorporated into the design of the proposed scheme, including:

- Medium Density B has been revised to 25-35dph from 25-40dph.
- Minimum separation distance reduced from 22 m to 16m at rear and side elevations of units.
- Bicycle parking quantity standards require a minimum of 1 space per bedroom where housing units do not have ground level open space, or that have smaller terraces.

4. Planning History

The site is located in the townland of Clontead More, north of Coachford Village Centre, Co. Cork. There are no previous planning applications related to the site, as shown in Fig. 10, which was extracted from the Cork County Online Planning Viewer, with the approximate location of the site marked in red. The majority of planning applications in the areas of Coachford relate to one-off houses, extensions, renovations, with works to the local schools, including the demolition of existing buildings and construction of a new secondary school and sports grounds. However, there are residential developments that are relevant, provided in Fig. 11.

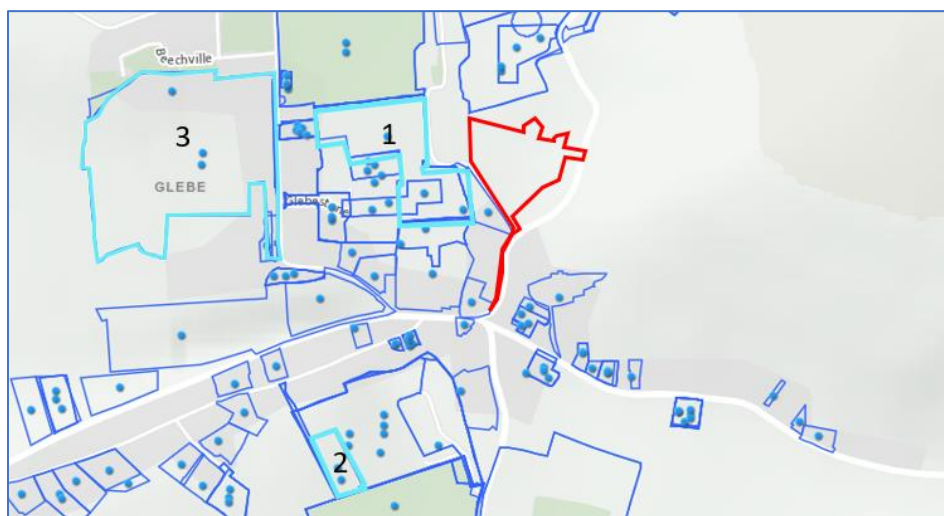


Figure 10: Extract from Cork County Online Planning Viewer, approximate site boundary in red with other applications marked in various colours.

No.	Planning Ref.	Description	Location	Status
1	22/4349	Construction of 45 houses comprising 36 3-bed and 9 4-bed units.	Glebe	Granted
2	22/5397	Construction of 9 houses comprising 8 4-bed semi-detached units and 1 detached unit (change to previously permitted under 21/4055)	Knockaneowen	Granted
3	23/4312	Demolition of existing school buildings and construction of new 1000 pupil secondary school.	Glebe	Granted

Figure 11: Table showing relevant residential planning applications in proximity to the subject site.

There are a total of 54 units currently permitted in Coachford, with a further 39 units recently constructed and occupied, totalling 93 housing units being provided, not including this application.

5. Assessment of Proposal

The proposed development is considered in compliance with all relevant planning policies at national, regional and local levels.

5.1 Planning Policy

The proposed development provides for a range of housing options within the development boundary of Coachford. The CDP has not supplied land use zoning within the village and a principle of sequential development has been applied.

The CDP provides for the development of 95 units within the lifetime of the development plan. There is currently permission for 54 units in Coachford, with 39 units constructed pertaining to permissions granted under the previous CDP. The proposed development would increase the number of new units under the current CDP to 80.

The proposed development comprises a range of social housing, with housing typologies catering for a variety of needs that will create a diverse and inclusive community not available within the existing permissions.

Notwithstanding the policy set out in the CDP, Coachford village has capacity in infrastructure and services to accommodate the additional housing. An assessment of primary and post-primary schools is set out in section 5.2 of this report.

5.2 Education Facilities

There are a total of three primary schools and one secondary school located within a 5km radius from the site (see Fig. 12). There are currently 346 students enrolled within the three primary schools with an estimated capacity of 30 students and one post-primary school 840 students enrolled with an estimated capacity of 10 additional students (Fig. 13). Further, Planning Ref. 23/4312 is for the construction of a new 1000 pupil secondary school to replace the existing school.

The Department of Education anticipates that both enrolment figures at a primary level and post-primary level will start to decline in the year 2025 in their report 'Projections of Full-Time Enrolments – Primary and Second Level, 2021 – 2036'.

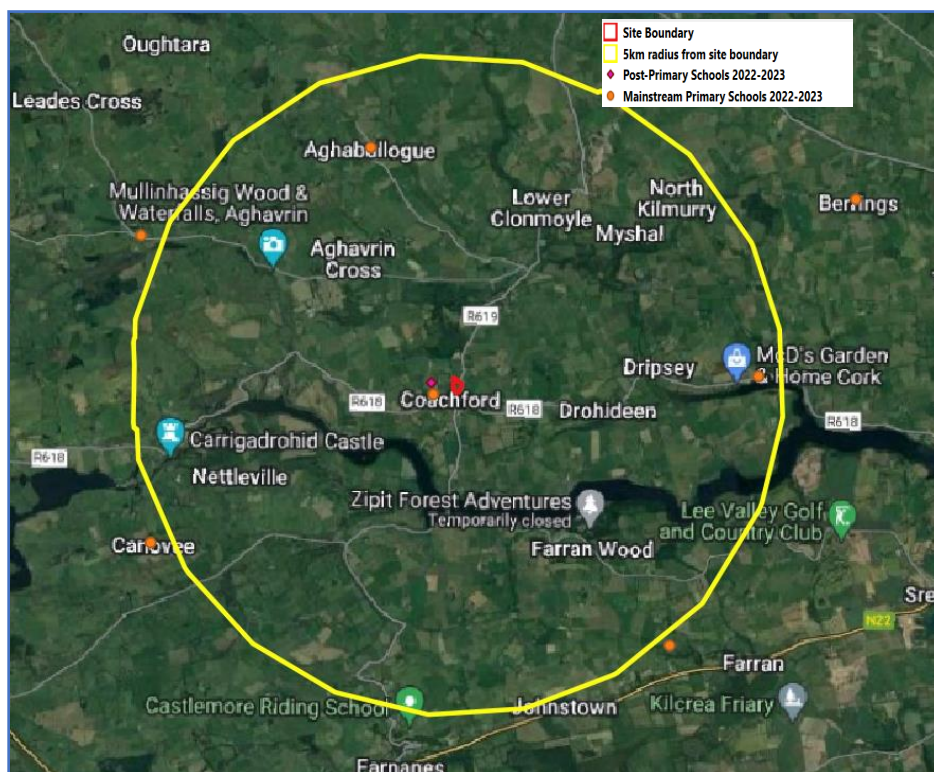


Figure 12: Education facilities in 5km radius of site

Type of school	Name	Distance from site	Current Enrolment 2023/24	Capacity
Primary School	Coachford	900m	147	Maximum Capacity is 155
Primary School	SN Achadh Bog	4.5km	105	Maximum Capacity is 115
Primary School	Dripsey	4.9km	93	Maximum Capacity is 105
Post-Primary School	Coachford	1.0km	840	Maximum Capacity 850

Figure 13: Education facility capacity

5.3 Layout & Design

The overall approach of the proposed housing development at Ceann Scribe will be an aesthetically pleasing and highly efficient new residential scheme that will provide social homes in a location close to the centre of Coachford, contributing positively to creating liveable communities and reducing carbon footprint. The proposed development will benefit from new walking connectivity as part of the proposed development to the village centre (see Fig. 4) with further links to public transport, employment, recreation, community facilities and schools.



Figure 14: Extract of Landscaping Plan

The proposed layout makes the most efficient use of the subject site, that is roughly rectangular in shape, sloping to the south with levels ranging from approximately 76m OD in the north to 70.5m OD in the south. The layout is based on a central street that acts as the main route through the development and provides access from the entrance on the east boundary. A range of densities have been incorporated into the scheme that is arranged in two parcels (see Fig. 14). The eastern parcel comprises 2- and 3-bed two-storey houses arranged in a square looking outwards to provide passive surveillance over the open spaces. The western parcel comprises two blocks of own-door 1-bed apartments with two 2- and 3-bed two-storey houses to form a 3-sided rectangle looking inwards over the parking area and first floor apartments looking outwards to provide further surveillance over the open spaces. The two 2-bed two-storey houses are set slightly further west and provide further passive surveillance over the open space. The built edge of the development fronts onto the central L-shaped street, with units to the

north fronting onto the pedestrian infrastructure and open space. The layout provides permeability throughout and with the green amenity spaces.

The proposed development will be set back from the public road within landscaped public and private amenity space. This will include passive open space evenly distributed through the scheme, active spaces including natural play elements and seating furniture to provide age-inclusive amenity space. Nature-based sustainable urban drainage systems will be employed throughout the scheme, incorporated within the landscaped amenity areas that will help reduce the reliance on the surface water drainage systems and provide opportunity for biodiversity net gain. The Landscaping Plan is supported by a SUDs plan and a Green Infrastructure Statement, prepared by Dave Ryan Landscape Architects.

5.3.2 Housing Design

The proposed dwellings offer a broad range of accommodation choice, in terms of both unit size and configuration, which reflects the current trends for smaller sized 1- and 2 – bed units. Open spaces are designed to provide facilities for all age groups and support outdoor activities. The housing mix will comprise 2- and 3-bed two-storey houses and 1-bed apartments (Fig. 15 & 16). It is proposed to introduce through this application a wider range of dwelling types and sizes to encourage a more diverse population and permit a greater level of mobility within the local area which encourage aging in place. Universal design ground floor apartments are provided for mobility restricted residents. Residential units meet or exceed the standards set out the County Development Plan and the relevant Guidelines. Compliance with these standards is demonstrated in the Housing Quality Assessment that accompanies this application.

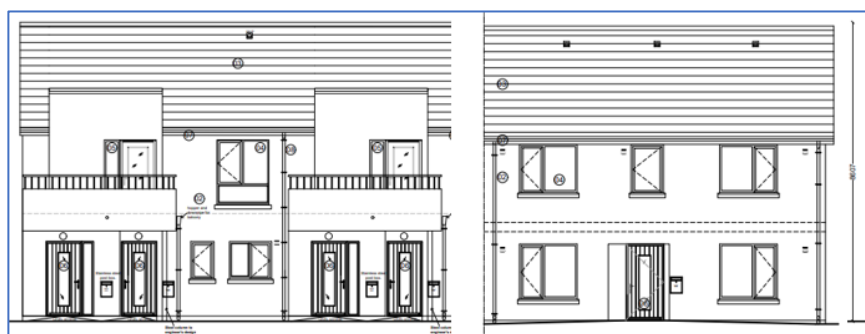


Figure 15: Front elevation of Type A (left) apartments and Type C (right) semi-detached.

All apartments will be provided with a private outdoor amenity space of either a garden or balcony space. First floor balconies will provide a recessed porch and entrance lobby area for both the own-door ground floor and first floor entrances. The design and layout of the proposed development will meet the requirements of all relevant documents, in particular Part M of the Technical Guidance Documents which deal with accessibility and inclusivity. In this regard, the design of the proposed development is also guided by the principles of universal design. The proposed Type C 3-bed dwellings have further been designed to be adaptable and to respond to the potential

changing needs over their lifetime. The units are strategically designed to allow the owner to extend into the attic and/or to the rear if the so require.

Unit Type	Quantity	Description	Bed Spaces
A	10	Apartment (ground and first floor)	2
B	10	2-storey Townhouses	4
C	6	2 Storey Semi-detached house	5

Figure 16: Proposed housing mix.

A restrained palette and selection of material finishes have been selected to ensure a cohesive, understated and robust aesthetic. The proposed facades will consist of wet dash render. Roofs will be finished with a blue/black fibre cement tile. Front doors will be composite engineered with a hardwood finish and windows and rear doors will be of uPVC. The rainwater goods will also be of dark uPVC. First floor apartment balconies will include painted galvanised steel railings.

All buildings are designed and sited to provide passive surveillance of the public realm, including streets, paths and open spaces. The residential units have been orientated to ensure sufficient daylight into the rooms whilst also minimising overlooking between parcels.

5.3.3 Boundary Treatments

A Boundary Treatment Plan prepared by Cork County Council accompanies this application.

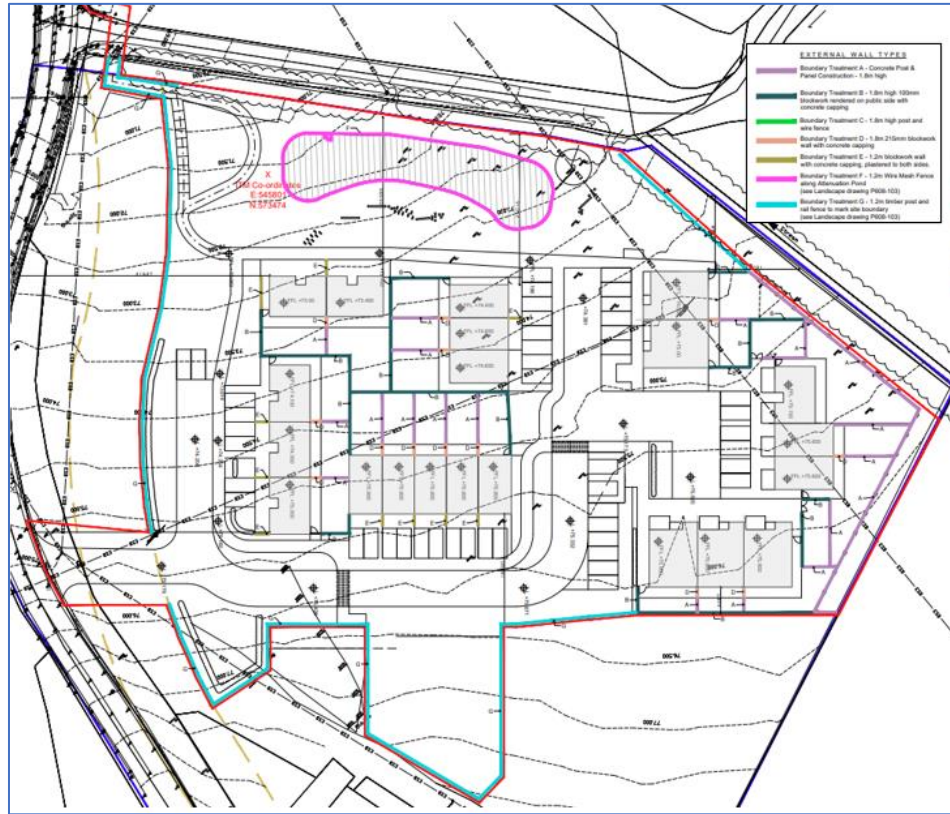


Figure 17: Boundary Treatments

The boundary treatment for the proposed development comprises a mixture of soft and hard landscaping features, including the establishment of a double-row mixed native species hedgerow to the southern, eastern and northeastern boundaries, interplanted with solitary semi-mature native trees. A timber post and rail fence will accompany the hedgerow to define the site boundary clearly.

The existing hedgerow will remain in place along the western and northern most boundaries along the roadside, with a 1.8m post and wire fence to the northwest and northern sections of the boundary that are in proximity to the stream and to create a more formal boundary the rear gardens of the units backing onto the hedgerow and stream. A 1.8m concrete post and panel wall will be constructed to the rear of the apartment units with rear gardens backing onto the northeastern boundary.

Internally (see Fig. 17), 1.8m high walls comprising a mixture of concrete post and panel and rendered and capped blockwork construction will provide privacy between adjoining private rear open space, with 1.2m high rendered and capped blockwork walls will provide definition to open spaces to the front of units whilst maintaining visibility over public open spaces.

5.4 Bike and Bin Storage

Where direct access to rear gardens is provided, bike and bin storage can be provided by future residents to the rear of each housing unit. On site bin stores will be provided for mid-terrace units. Communal bin and bike stores will be provided for apartments, which will also provide bike storage for mid-terrace units where there is no rear access (Fig. 18).



Figure 18: Communal Bin and Bike storage areas (yellow) and visitor bike parking (magenta)

A total of 31 bike parking spaces have been provided within the development, including 22 secure spaces for the use by residents without rear access or sufficient private space for the onsite storage of bikes. The proposed quantum of bike parking spaces (Fig. 19) includes one space for 1-bed apartments and 2-bed mid-terrace townhouses and two spaces for one mid-terrace 3-bed house. An additional 9 parking spaces are provided for visitor parking. The quantum of bike parking spaces has considered both the minimum standards set out in the CDP and the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines as well as the peripheral location of the settlement of Coachford. Given the rural location of the village and limited cycling infrastructure, we consider the quantum of bike parking appropriate.

Unit Type	Secure parking	Visitor parking
1-bed apartments	15	5
Mid terrace 2-bed townhouse/3-bed house without rear access	7	4
Total secure parking		22
Total bike parking (inc. visitor spaces)		31

Figure 19: Proposed bike parking allocation

The bike parking will comprise covered Sheffield-style racks located within the secure bin store areas. Visitor bike parking spaces will comprise unobtrusive steel and timber stands.

The storage areas located to the north of the site will also provide storage space for bins. Communal bin storage has been calculated to provide 1000l for the one-bed apartments and 1,700l for the two-bed apartments. The calculations are based on the British Standard (5906:2005). The bin and bike stores are located within the layout to benefit from passive surveillance, aesthetic considerations and to ensure that they do not impede on any traffic sightlines.

5.5 Recreation, Amenity, Open Space & Biodiversity

The site is currently in agricultural use with the boundary defined by mature hedgerows, trees and hedgerows. The landscape design has, where possible been guided and influenced by the topography and the ecological appraisal of the lands and surrounding environment.

Native plant material shall be considered for the scheme, in part, to improve the overall biodiversity of the site. the inclusion of pollinator plants, wild meadow flowers, flower bulbs and floral grass lawns as part of the species mix will be a focused element of the planting palette.

A natural attenuation area will provide a nature-based landscaped SUDs measure to hold surface water during rain events and enhance biodiversity net gain attracting a range of fauna species including insects, birds and bats (Fig. 20). The attenuation area will comprise a shallow sloped depression of c 0.3m and planted with reeds to provide a natural fencing, whilst also benefiting from passive surveillance from the overlooking units.

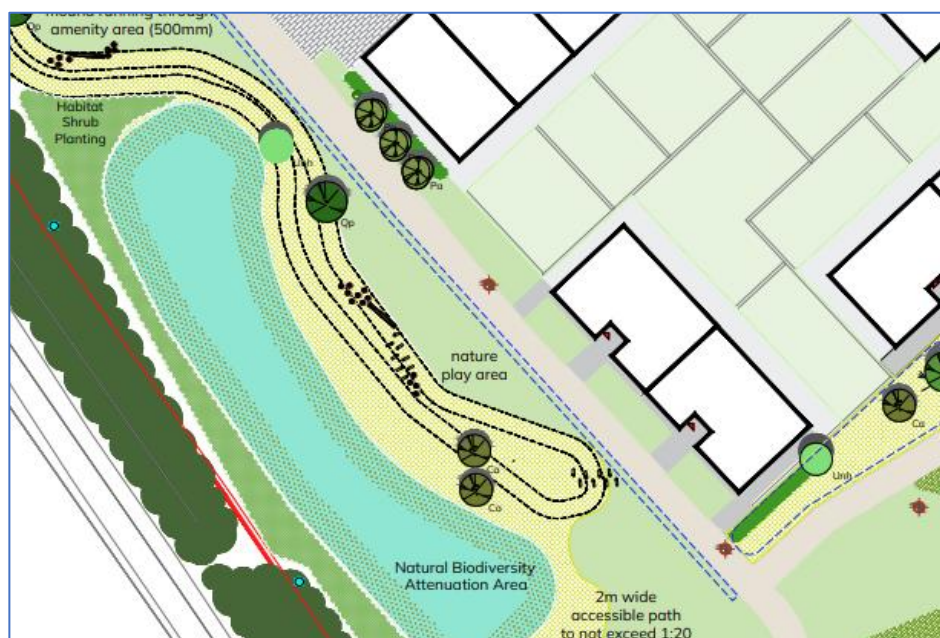


Figure 20: Extract from Landscaping Plan.

The provision of permeability and improved overall pedestrian movement is one of the core principles of the site layout design. This core principle is coupled with the design objective to provide designed landscape amenity areas which offer comfort, passive supervision, ease of access in terms of the varying age groups and levels of mobility and a safe amenity space for all end users. A bench seat with backrest and armrests is provided for active aging and enhanced walkability of the amenity open space. Natural play elements such as timber logs, stone boulders and a balancing beam are included to promote inclusive and explorative play yet also suitable as hangout elements for teenagers. A variety of trees are placed along the path to make for a diverse and engaging play environment.

5.5.4 Biodiversity, Recreation & Amenity Approach

Objective BE 15-6(b) and (c) of the County Development Plan relates to Biodiversity and New Development and encourages the retention and integration of existing trees, hedgerows and other features of high natural value within new developments and the use of native trees and particularly pollinator friendly species in the landscaping of new developments.

In accordance with this objective and as shown on the Landscape Plan provided by Dave Ryan Landscape Architects, the existing hedgerows along the site boundaries will be retained and protected as far as possible. Where trees/hedgerows have been removed, hedgerows will be reinstated with new native trees so that there is a net gain and so that any existing biodiversity corridors are maintained. Please refer to the Landscaping package for further details.

The Landscape Plan includes a number of biodiversity features to enhance the open space and which incorporate a number of Sustainable Urban Drainage solutions (SUDs). These include features such as rain garden areas adjacent to paved areas, an attenuation pond, floral lawn areas, wild meadow areas, pollinator friendly planting and solitary native trees (Fig. 21). Planting beds will be provided to the front of dwelling units that will consist of pollinator-friendly shrubs and perennial planting. The beds will be planted in accordance with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan guidelines and will be modified depending on orientation and exposure. The attenuation pond will comprise two shallow slopes and two landings, allowing for different species of flora and fauna.



Figure 21: Proposed nature-based SUDs

A Green Infrastructure Statement by Dave Ryan Landscape Architects and an Appropriate Assessment and Ecological Impact Assessment has been prepared by Dixon Brosnan Environmental Services which assessed any existing habitats and includes the implementation of appropriate mitigation to ensure that there is an overall net biodiversity gain. These reports have been used to inform the landscape and amenity strategy for the development.

5.5.5 Amenity/Open Space

In total, 0.18ha of public open space is provided within the development, equating to 18% useable open space. As part of the amenity provision, it is proposed to provide a series of open spaces, a 3m wide pedestrian trail and a biodiversity reservation area.

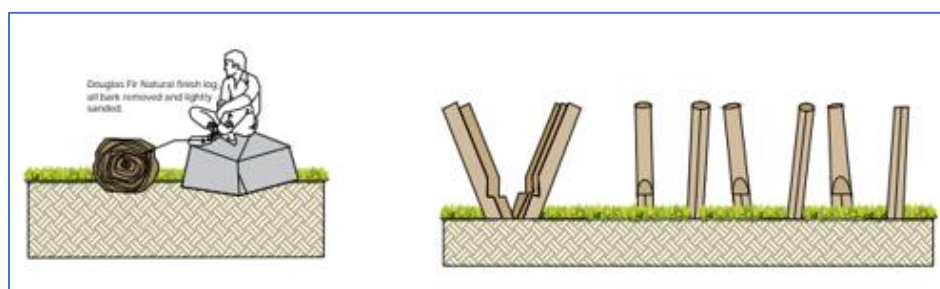


Figure 22: Examples of informal/natural play features

In addition to the biodiversity considerations, the Landscaping Plan also sets out the proposed strategy to the public amenity spaces that include natural play areas and a level grass area for more structured sports play. The open spaces area designed as inclusive spaces that cater for a range of activities and age groups. A bench seat with backrest and armrests is provided for active aging and enhanced walkability of the amenity open space. Natural play elements such as timber logs, stone boulders and a balancing beam are included to promote inclusive and explorative play yet also suitable as hangout elements for teenagers (Fig. 22). Open spaces are enhanced with the integration of tree planting and flowering pollinator planting.

It is envisioned that the current provision of open space will be increased with the rollout of phase 2 development, which will include a public playground.

5.5.6 Entrance Treatment

The arrival space of the housing scheme comprises an entrance road and separate footpath through an open space that will provide possible future realignment of the R619. The open space, which is not included in the development boundary or as part of the provision of usable open space, will be allowed to naturalise utilising the existing seed bank, with minimal maintenance to provide a biodiversity measure in the interim period until such a time that development takes place.

The housing scheme entrance will be denoted by a mixed native species hedgerow inter-planted with solitary trees and a wooden post and rail fence (Fig. 23, left). Inside the boundary treatment will include rain garden bio swales (Fig. 23, right) along the access road as it moves through the

development. To the southwest of the site, a separate pedestrian access will pass the existing native hedgerow into the area noted for future road alignment winding through the open amenity space dominated by pollinator-friendly shrubs, wildflower meadow and floral grass lawns.



Figure 23: Proposed example entrance treatment features

5.6 Traffic and Access

The proposed development is accessed via a single vehicular access point at the eastern boundary directly from the R619 north of Coachford Village. An area to the east and southeast of the site is provided for the possible future realignment of the R619 at the entrance to the proposed scheme. A new footpath is proposed to run alongside the R619 from a separate pedestrian access on the southern boundary linking the scheme to the village centre.



Figure 24: Extract from Civil Engineering Report

Vehicular routes through the site will be calmed through various design measures including alignment, to reduce traffic speeds, with horizontal and vertical deflections introduced as required. A design speed limit of 30 km/hour has been applied throughout the development in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets. The existing speed limit for the R916 is 50km/h, with Stopping Sight Distances (SSD) standards for a 50km/h restricted area as 45m sightlines, as set out in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets. The Engineers Report Provided by Walsh Design Group notes that sightlines of 49m can be achieved to the north and south of the entrance to the proposed scheme when exiting onto the R916 (Fig. 24). The vehicular exit will be supplemented with a standard RUS 027: Stop sign. The pedestrian access to the southwest of the site will include an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing in accordance with Traffic Management

Guidelines comprising tactile blister paving (buff in colour) and dropped kerbing with a maximum up-stand of 6mm.

5.7 Parking Requirements

In line with the standards set out in the CDP and revised within the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines, a total of 46 car parking spaces are provided, including two designated for limited mobility use. The allocation of parking spaces for housing and apartment units are outlined in Fig. 25.

Vehicle Parking Spaces			
Unit Type	No. of Units	Parking per Unit	Total Parking
3-bed 2-storey House	6	2	12
2-bed 2-storey House	10	2	20
1-bed apartment	10	1.25	12.5
Total Private parking spaces	26		44.5
Visitor Spaces			1.5

Figure 25: Proposed parking allocations

5.8 Water & Wastewater

Pre-connection enquiries were submitted to Uisce Éireann (UE) to assess the feasibility of providing water supply and wastewater connections to the site. UE have issued a confirmation of feasibility for both without any upgrade. Confirmation of feasibility letters are included in Appendix C of the Engineering Report.

A number of SUDs have been incorporated into the design of the housing scheme to address surface water run-off. The SUDs measures comply with the guidance set out in the CIRIA C753 SuDS Manual. SUDs measures include the installation of 300l water butts within the private open space of each unit that has a rear garden. Water butts will collect run-off from the downpipes and will be fitted with a tap for domestic non-potable water uses. Rain garden planters are also proposed for rear gardens that will reduce the velocity of surface water run-off in rain events.

Further SUDs measures will be incorporated into the public realm of the development. These include the provision of permeable paving for all car parking spaces, allowing surface water to soak into the subsoil and ground water, rather than leaving the site via the sewer network.

In addition, it is proposed that rain garden bio swales and tree pits are located alongside areas of hard surfacing where rainwater can be diverted. The bio swales will be located above perforated drainage pipes, allowing water penetration deep into the soil. The bioretention tree pits offer run-off

interception, filtration and water storage as well as other benefits including the promotion of biodiversity and evapotranspiration. An attenuation pond within the open green amenity space provides additional storage capacity to hold rainwater run-off during and following rain events until it can naturally percolate to ground.

The overall strategy to green and blue infrastructure, including SUDs measures are outlined in the Green Infrastructure Statement and should be read in conjunction with the Landscape Plan, both prepared by Dave Ryan Landscape Architects.

6. Appropriate Assessment

According to the EU Birds Directive (79/409/EC) and Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), member states are required to designate areas in order to protect priority habitats and species. These sites are known as Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) respectively. Collectively, these sites are known as Natura 2000 sites. An “Appropriate Assessment” (AA), means an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge of the potential impacts of a plan, on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site and the development where necessary of measures to preclude negative effects. The impact assessment must include indirect and cumulative impacts of approving the plan considered, with any current or proposed activities, development or policies impacting on the site. All plans and projects should aim to identify any possible impacts early in the plan making process and then either alter the plan to avoid them or introduce mitigation measures to the point where no adverse impacts remain.

An Appropriate Assessment is an assessment carried out under Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon either individually or in combination with other plans or projects shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implication of the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provision of paragraph 4, the competent National Authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.

Article 6(4) states;

If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons or overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all

compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

The AA screening report prepared by Dixon Brosnan concludes that the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans and/or projects, either directly or indirectly, does not have the potential to significantly affect any European Site, in light of their conservation objectives. The report further notes that a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is deemed not to be required.

7. Environmental Assessment

In accordance with the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, and current government and EU guidance, the Planning Authority must screen the proposed development for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and decide whether the planning application for the proposed development does or does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

Having regard to the nature, extent, and the characteristics of the likely impacts we consider that when screened in accordance with EU Screening Guidelines that the proposed development is not a project defined by Part 1 and Part 2 Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as requiring an EIAR and would not warrant a sub threshold EIAR in accordance with Article 10 of the Regulations.

With regard to EIA requirements, the proposal is well below the mandatory EIAR threshold for residential developments of 500 units (which is the statutory test in this regard) and is also below the 10ha EIAR threshold for development within a built-up area. Any potential impact on the environment is likely to be confined to the immediate site area, is likely to be limited in magnitude and the site is not one of special environmental sensitivity.

A formal EIA screening has been carried out by McCutcheon Halley Chartered Planning Consultants and is submitted as part of this application. Based on the findings of the EIA screening assessment, the proposed development does not require a mandatory EIA. With regards to the nature, extent and characteristics of the likely impacts for the construction and operational phase of the proposed development, the EIA screening considers that the proposed development will not give rise to any likely significant environmental effects and accordingly a sub-threshold EIA is not required.

8. Conclusion

The proposed Part 8 exempted development, Ceann Scribe, at Clontead More, Coachford, will provide 26 much needed new residential dwellings to meet a mixture of housing requirements with regards to size and typology on an under-utilised site within the development boundary of Coachford and represents sequential development. The scheme has been carefully designed by a multidisciplinary team to ensure a high-quality development that is in line with all the relevant national, regional and local policies. It will deliver a high-quality social residential scheme that is sympathetic to the existing village and sensitive to the natural environment of the immediate surrounds, achieving a medium-high density housing that will help address the current housing shortages in a highly desirable key village in County Cork in an accessible location with all amenities, facilities and services within a short walking distance of the development.