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**Proposed North City Operations Depot (NCOD):  
Approval of Borrowing under Section 106 of the Local Government Act, 2001**

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The June 2018 City Council meeting noted the intention to proceed with the construction of the North City Operations Depot (NCOD) in Ballymun (Report No. 161/2018).

The rationale for the NCOD is set out in Appendix 1 to this report and details of the proposed development are given in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

The June 2018 report estimated the construction cost of the new depot at up to €35m. (excl. vat) with an 'all in' cost of €54m. The external Design Team had prepared this estimate in early 2018. Following a difficult tender process and a protracted value engineering negotiation process with the firms that submitted tenders, the construction cost has risen to approximately €51.5m. When allowance is made for vat, fit out costs, contingency provision, third party costs, statutory fees, utility fees etc. the total 'all in' cost of the NCOD is now estimated at €74m.

It was always intended that the cost of the NCOD would be covered by the proceeds of the disposal of existing depot sites, with any shortfall being funded from revenue sources. Brendan Kenny, Deputy Chief Executive, is working with the Housing Strategic Policy Committee to develop a proposal whereby certain depot sites will be made available on long leases to Approved Housing Bodies for the development of social housing units, in respect of which the City Council will have 100% tenant nominations rights. Proposals in relation to nine depot sites with the potential to yield 745 social housing units were presented to a recent Housing SPC meeting. (See Appendix 4 for a list of these sites).

Eight depot sites are being retained for City Council use. (See Report No. 161/2018). Proposals for the balance of the existing depot sites will be brought to the City Council in due course.

At this stage, it seems prudent to make provision for circa €40m to be raised towards the cost of the NCOD primarily from the transfer of existing depot sites. On this basis, I am recommending that the balance of the required €74m funding (i.e. €34m) be borrowed.

30 year funding is currently available from the HFA at a fixed interest rate of 1.75%. Borrowing €34m at this rate over 30 years will generate a requirement for an annual loan repayment of approximately €1.5m. This will be charged to various Departments, based on their share of total employment in the NCOD as follows:

<b>Department</b>	<b>Share of NCOD Employment</b>	<b>Annual Charge to Revenue Account</b>
Housing & Community	36%	€0.540
Envir. & Trans - Waste Management	35%	€0.525
Envir. & Trans - Other	29%	€0.435
		€1.500

The detailed cost benefit analysis indicated that the move to the NCOD would yield depot related operational savings (mainly energy consumption, and general depot cost savings) for participating Departments of circa €0.9m per annum. Given the potential savings, I am satisfied that these loan repayments can be met by the revenue budgets of the Housing & Community and Environment & Transportation Departments without any significant adverse impact on service delivery.

A decision by a local authority to borrow is a reserved function under Section 106 of the Local Government Act, 2001. Any borrowing also requires the sanction of the Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government.

### **Recommendation**

Notwithstanding the increased cost, I remain of the view that there is a very strong case for proceeding with the NCOD development for the following reasons:

- it will facilitate improved service delivery,
- it will provide improved facilities for operational staff,
- it will ensure better compliance with health and safety requirements,
- it will help the City Council to meet its climate action targets,
- it will yield savings from reduced duplication and increased efficiency and
- it will release depot sites for more appropriate development including the provision of circa 745 social housing units, based on the first nine sites,

The City Council has always supported the provision of services through direct labour. This commitment to direct labour must be matched by a willingness to provide quality facilities that will enable the Council's direct labour to operate efficiently and effectively.

It is also important to appreciate that existing depot sites will only become available for alternative uses, including the provision of 745 social housing units in phase 1 if the proposed NCOD project goes ahead.

I recommend that the City Council adopts the following motion:

*'This City Council notes Report No 122/2020 and approves borrowing of €34m to fund the proposed NCOD, subject to the sanction of the Minister for Housing, Planning & Local Government.'*

A final decision on this project and on the award the construction contract will be not be made until the COVID-19 crisis has passed and a further detailed assessment has been undertaken.

**Owen P. Keegan**  
**Chief Executive**  
**25<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

## **Appendix 1 Proposed North City Operations Depot (NCOD)**

### **1. Background to the Depot Consolidation Project**

The City Council depot network comprises 33 depot sites spread across the city, providing operational facilities for 1,400 staff and over 600 vehicles for the following service areas<sup>1</sup>:

- Housing
- Waste Management
- Road Maintenance
- Water & Drainage (SLA & Non SLA)
- Traffic
- Public Lighting & Electrical Services

The depot network has evolved over time, rather than being a strategically planned location of operations. As a result, a number of sites are inappropriately located in the context of surrounding development and the Council's strategic planning policies. Facilities for staff are of varying quality and operational efficiencies, which could be achieved through the provision of shared facilities and exploiting advances in transport and technology, cannot be realised.

Recognising the critical role played by Direct Labour operations in the delivery of City Council services, and the haphazard nature of the existing depot network, the Depot Consolidation Project was established with a remit to:

*"...review DCC's existing depot network with a view to improving the working conditions of the operational staff, while also achieving a major rationalisation with resulting operational efficiencies and savings"*

The review of the existing depot network included background research; surveys of Departmental requirements; site visits and interviews with depot staff to understand day-to-day operational requirements; assessment of site zonings and an assessment of the potential for expansion/consolidation of operations on existing sites. Different models were explored through visits to consolidated depots in Fingal County Council, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and a private sector depot/logistics operation.

A Workshop with a wider group of stakeholders from each of the City Council's operational areas was held in 2014. The Workshop identified benefits and concerns in relation to a consolidated model and brainstormed how this model could be adapted to best respond to City Council operations.

The conclusions of the Review were as follows:

- Existing depot operations should be consolidated into 2 newly constructed, large scale centres of operations - one serving the North City at St Margaret's Road, Ballymun and one serving the South City/City Centre at Marrowbone Lane.
- 2 small waste management depots should be maintained in the City Centre to facilitate street cleaning in the core business district.
- The Joinery Workshop should be maintained at its current location in Ballyfermot, as this is a fabrication facility rather than a day-to-day operational depot.
- Subject to the agreement of the Elected Members, existing depot sites should be released for reuse and redevelopment consistent with their land use zonings and location in order to fund part of the cost of the new consolidated depots.

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<sup>1</sup> The Parks depot network was not included in this project due to the nature of parks operations, which have different operational requirements involving on-site facilities and storage within parklands.

## **2 Project Drivers & Benefits**

The project drivers and key benefits of the proposed depot consolidation are as follows:

### **2.1 Organisational & Staff Benefits**

#### ***Improved Facilities for Outdoor Staff***

Over 1,400 operational staff members use our depot facilities. Even allowing for the fact that the majority of these staff work outside depots, it is considered that the same quality of workplace should be provided for those staff as for staff based in the Civic Offices and in other Council work locations. A number of existing Council depots are in poor or very poor condition. To address the deficiencies in staff facilities and in building energy management, would require very significant investment.

New facilities designed specifically for our operations and requirements and that take the needs of staff into account, will create a working environment that is fit for purpose and that facilitates efficient work practices.

New facilities will provide a high quality training environment for existing and new staff. Training rooms, as well as purpose designed corporate workshops with the appropriate range of tools and equipment will facilitate trades and apprenticeship development.

#### ***Reduction in duplication and improved efficiency***

Running operations from 33 individual locations does not achieve best value for money for the City Council. In the current arrangement there are multiple stores, multiple workshops providing similar services, additional administrative costs associated with record keeping etc. and increased building management costs. Consolidating our depots means that we can reduce duplication in these areas, become more effective and efficient and, as a result, more competitive in providing operational services. Savings can be used for additional front line services.

#### ***Improved compliance with health and safety requirements***

Depot consolidation will facilitate improved health and safety management of facilities for staff. The existing depot network involves staff working in buildings of different types and age, with varying external layouts and associated risks. Purpose built facilities in a consolidated depot campus will enable comprehensive health and safety risk management, contributing to a safer working environment for our staff.

### **2.2 Service Improvement & Societal Benefits**

#### ***Improved service delivery***

The location and configuration of a number of our existing depots hampers efficient operations and use of the facilities. In some instances, where sites are located to the rear of other development, access and egress are constrained and sub-optimal from a safety perspective. In other locations, where depots are surrounded by and accessed through residential development, operating hours have been restricted. A purpose built depot campus will overcome these existing constraints.

Inter-Departmental co-operation and better co-ordination of services and staff, for instance in emergency situations, can be facilitated through depot consolidation. Where staff, fleet and materials are located together, they can be more easily shared and closer working relationships can develop.

The consolidation of depots means that the implementation of technology solutions is made easier through economies of scale and there will be less complexity in the roll out of new technology infrastructure.

All of these factors will combine to improve service delivery for the public and make our operational services more efficient, providing citizens with greater value for money.

***Release of depot sites for more appropriate development***

Many of our depots are located in residential areas and/or do not conform to the adopted planning policy in the City Development Plan and Local Area Plans. In terms of operations, this restricts the potential to expand or intensify activity on existing sites and, in some instances, restricts current depot activity. In planning terms, many existing depots are in inappropriate locations, in conflict with neighbouring uses and are not contributing to the best use of land.

The estimated total area of the sites to be vacated through the Depot Consolidation Project is 8ha<sup>2</sup>. The release of these sites for more appropriate uses will make an important contribution to the proper planning and sustainable development of the City both in terms of consistency with our own adopted policy and in securing the appropriate use of scarce city lands, particularly for much needed housing in the City.

The City Council has always supported the provision of services through direct labour. This commitment to direct labour must be matched by a willingness to provide quality facilities that will enable the Council’s direct labour to operate efficiently and effectively.

**3. Proposed Relocation of Depots**

Operations from the following depot sites are to be consolidated at the proposed North City Operations Depot in Ballymun:

<b>Operations</b>	<b>Existing Depot Location</b>
Waste Management	Collins Avenue Cromcastle Court (closed & relocated to Collins Avenue) Slaney Road Aldborough Parade
Housing	Portland Row Unit 5 /E 1 Ballymun Industrial Estate Unit M5, North Ring Business Park Santry Unit M4, North Ring Business Park Santry Unit N4, North Ring Business Park Santry Unit F2 Newtown Industrial Estate, Coolock Broombridge Road, Cabra Coleraine Street Kylemore Park South
<b>Operations</b>	<b>Existing Depot Location</b>
Surface Water Drainage & Flooding	Bannow Road
Road Maintenance	Orchard Road Collins Avenue
Traffic	Unit 29, Cherry Orchard Industrial Estate
Public Lighting & Electrical Services	Marrowbone Lane

<sup>2</sup> This figure is to be confirmed as sites are surveyed as part of the development of proposals

Operations from the following depot sites are to be consolidated into the proposed South City/City Centre Operations Depot:

<b>Operations</b>	<b>Existing Depot Location</b>
Waste Management	Gulistan Terrace Sweeneys Terrace Kylemore Road North Davitt Road
Housing	Garryowen Road Marks Lane Sundrive Road
Surface Water Drainage & Flooding	Marrowbone Lane Marrowbone Lane
Road Maintenance	Marrowbone Lane/Forbes St

#### **4. Proposed North City Operations Depot (NCOD)**

Following a review of potential sites, the City Council-owned site on St Margaret's Road Ballymun was selected as the ideal site for the proposed consolidated North City Operations Depot. This site (which is within Fingal County Council's administrative area) is an integral part of the Ballymun Regeneration Masterplan, is of sufficient size and capacity for consolidation of operations and has excellent accessibility with almost immediate access to the M50.

An Integrated Design Team was appointed in April 2017 and the design of the depot campus was developed with input from the operational staff as well as other stakeholders. Final planning permission was granted by Fingal County Council in February 2018.

The proposed NCOD campus will consist of the following:

- 4 storey staff welfare and office building,
- a central stores warehouse building,
- a series of corporate workshops, including workshops for welding, painting, electrical services, carpentry, signage and vehicle maintenance,
- a salt barn,
- a multi-storey car park with 132 spaces for fleet vehicles and 200 spaces for staff private vehicles plus 220 bicycle spaces,
- covered parking for 15 no. fleet vehicles,
- open areas for fleet parking of 189 vehicles of various types,
- waste collection and compaction facilities, fleet vehicle wash bays, external material and equipment storage and
- a new Ballymun Recycling Centre, replacing the bring centre at Collins Avenue, will be provided adjacent to the new depot campus. This Centre will consist of a purpose built office and facility for the collection, recycling and transfer of domestic waste.

The entire site area is 4.76 hectares. See Appendix 2 for the site layout plan and visual images of the proposed NCOD development.

### ***Planning Policy Objectives***

While the depot campus itself is outside of the City Council's administrative area it contributes to the achievement of a range of strategic policies of the City Development Plan. The development supports the Core Strategy by bringing economic activity to Ballymun (SDRA 2), developing a long-vacant site (policy SC29) and incorporating energy efficiency and sustainability features into the design (policies CC3 and CC4).

The development also delivers on the key principles and objectives of the Ballymun Local Area Plan. The consolidated depot is specifically referenced in the LAP. It will act as a catalyst for other economic activity on the City Council owned M50 lands (KP3), develop lands earmarked for employment generation (EO7) and develop vacant lands in Ballymun in line with the LAP (KP1/LU1).

The project will also deliver a new civic amenity centre to the area offering improved recycling facilities to the local residents.

### ***Consultation with Stakeholders***

Presentations on the depot consolidation strategy and on the proposed North City Operations Depot were given to the following groups prior to the planning application being submitted:

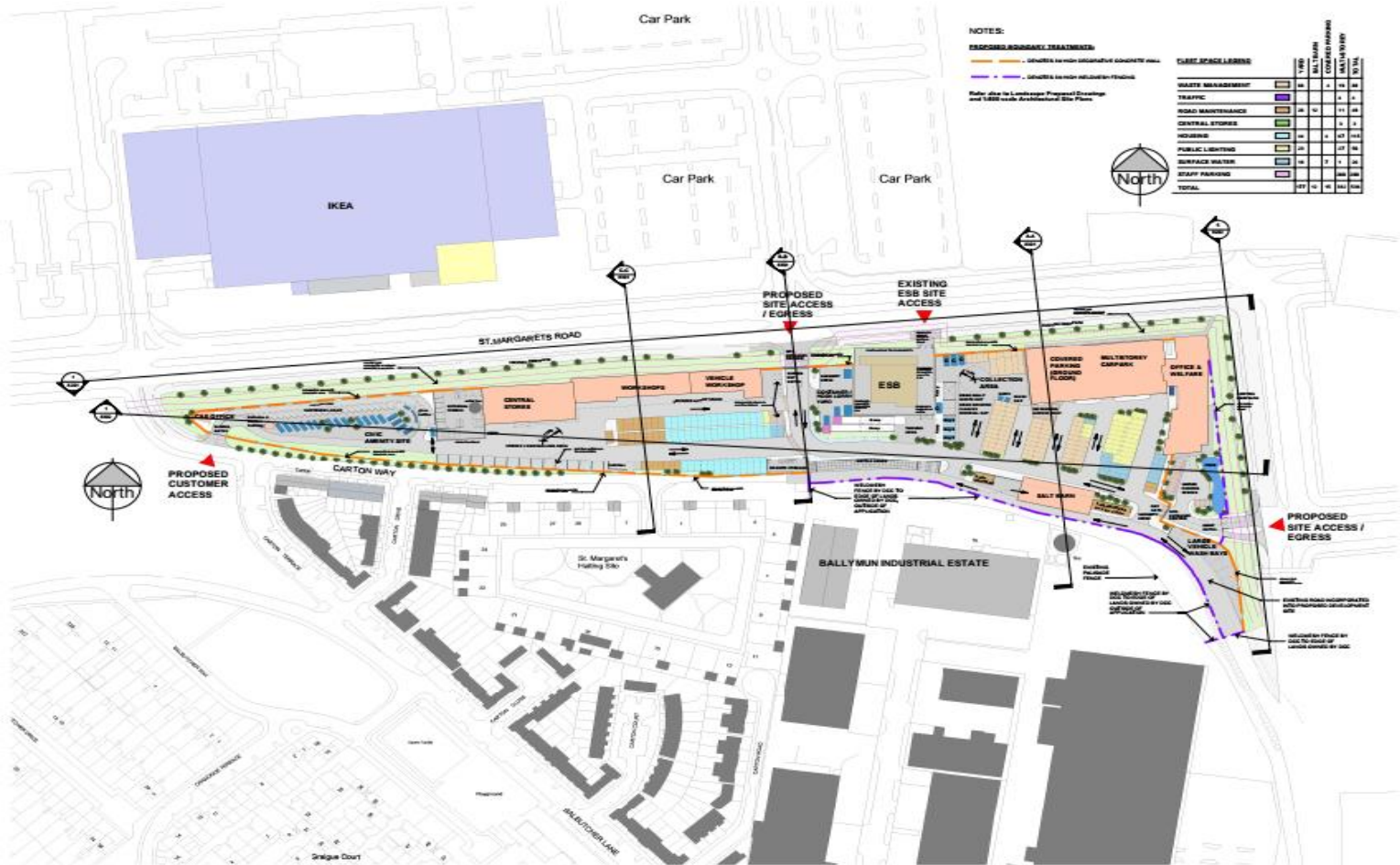
Corporate Policy Group	December 2015
North West Area Committee	July 2016 & July 2017
Environment SPC	November 2016
Ballymun Civic Alliance	December 2016
St. Margaret's Residents	March 2016
Carton Residents	March 2016
IKEA	August 2017
Ballymun Industrial Estate tenants	August 2017

Presentations have also been given to the Corporate Partnership Forum and the Trade Unions. A Sub-Group has been established between management and unions so that any concerns that staff may have can be dealt with appropriately.

Over 160 meetings and workshops have been held with operations staff in developing the design of the North City Operations Depot in order to ensure that it meets operational requirements.

Appendix 2

Proposed North City Operations Depot – Site Layout



NOTES:  
**PROPOSED LANDSCAPE TREATMENTS:**  
 - Green lines indicate proposed landscape treatments.  
 - Blue lines indicate proposed site access/egress.  
 - Red lines indicate proposed site access/egress.  
 Refer also to Landscape Proposed Drawings and ESB site Architectural Site Plans.

CATEGORY	SCHEDULE			
	YR1	YR2	YR3	TOTAL
WASTE MANAGEMENT	14	4	4	22
TRAFFIC	14	4	4	22
ROAD MAINTENANCE	14	4	4	22
CENTRAL STORAGE	14	4	4	22
HOUSING	14	4	4	22
PUBLIC LIGHTING	14	4	4	22
WASTE WATER	14	4	4	22
STAFF PARKING	14	4	4	22
TOTAL	14	4	4	22

1 PROPOSED SITE PLAN  
 1:1000  
 NOTE: REFER ALSO TO SEPARATE 1:500 SCALE SITE PLANS

PROJECT INFORMATION	
PROJECT NAME	NORTH CITY OPERATIONS DEPOT
CLIENT	BLISS
DATE	2023
SCALE	1:1000
PLANNING	
BLISS CITY COUNCIL	PLANNING
PROJECT NO.	2023/001
DATE	2023/01/01
ARCHITECTS - PLANNERS - PROJECT MANAGERS BLISS ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS 100, BALLYMUN INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, BALLYMUN, DUBLIN 11 TEL: 01 454 4000 WWW.BLISSARCHITECTS.COM	
DATE	2023/01/01
BY	BLISS
SCALE	1:1000
PROJECT NO.	2023/001





Appendix 4

**Proposed Social Housing Use of Existing Depot Sites**

Depot Site	Address	Committee Area	Zoning	Site size (ha)	Development proposals	Est. No of units
Cromcastle Court	Coolock, D5	North Central	Z4	0.117	Site and adjacent land to be incorporated into the DCC Cromcastle Court Regeneration Plan	50
Broombridge Road	Cabra, D7	North West	Z1	0.085	Social housing development of one bed-roomed units suited to Older Persons.	15
Portland Row	Dublin 1	Central	Z1	0.327	Social housing development to be integrated into plans for the Regeneration of Dunne Street Flats	35
Marrowbone Lane/Forbes Lane	Dublin 8	South Central	Z1	0.512	Social housing development of mainly one bed-roomed apartments suitable for single and some older persons.	120
Orchard Road	Ballybough, D3	Central	Z1	0.264	Social housing development for the accommodation of Older Persons and 20% of them will ring-fenced for the DCC Financial Contribution Scheme (Down-sizing)	32
Collins Avenue (Opp. DCU)	Dublin 9	North West	Z1	1.546	Social housing development, this will consist of a mix of two and one bed-roomed units. Some of the one bed-roomed units will be ring-fenced for older persons including some under the DCC Financial Contribution Scheme (Down-sizing)	115
Sweeney's Terrace	Dublin 8	South Central	Z1	0.077	Small social housing development for Older Persons.	3
Stanley Street	Dublin 7	Central	Z5	1.154	Mixed tenure residential development, with mix to be determined. Commercial component to be provided in accordance with land use zoning.	275
Gulistan Terrace	Rathmines, D6	South East	Z4	1.17	Mixed use development including residential use. Residential component to be social housing and mainly one bed-roomed units suitable for Older persons and the Financial Contribution Scheme.	100
					<b>Total number of potential units</b>	<b>745</b>