

Social Infrastructure Audit

Hill Street, Dundalk, Co.Louth



Prepared on behalf of
Zirbac DLK Ltd

The logo features a teal background with a faint architectural floor plan and topographic contour lines. A black horizontal bar is positioned across the middle, containing the name 'Stephen Ward' in white, bold, sans-serif font. Below this bar, the text 'Town Planning & Development Consultants Ltd.' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

Stephen Ward
Town Planning & Development
Consultants Ltd.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This social infrastructure audit has been prepared in support of a proposed large scale residential development consisting of 194no. residential units and a childcare facility. In keeping with Policy Objective SC11, this report considers access to day-to-day needs including education, health, recreation and leisure facilities to determine if facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for the needs of the future residents of the proposed LRD.

Policy Objective	
SC 11	To require that all new residential development applications on lands greater than 1ha or for 100 units or more are accompanied by a Social Infrastructure Assessment to determine if community facilities in the area are sufficient to provide for all future residents. Where deficiencies are identified proposals will be required to accompany the planning application to address the deficiency, either through direct provision on site or such other means, and in a manner acceptable to the Council.

2.0 SITE LOCATION

The application site is located on Hill Street (R132) in Dundalk, Co.Louth less than 1km from the traditional town core and Dundalk (Clarke) Train Station. Dundalk is recognised as a regional growth centre and is the County Town. According to the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2017 (as amended), *“It is a multi-modal settlement that benefits from its strategic location along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and excellent connectivity with Dublin and Belfast. With over 14,000 jobs in the town, it is the primary employment centre in the County.”*

Dundalk sits at the highest level of the County’s retail hierarchy. As recognised by the Louth Retail Strategy (Appendix 4), retail within the town centre is predominantly driven by independent comparison outlets and cafes. The Marshes Shopping Centre is very much the main shopping destination within the town and lies c.650m from the application site.

In terms of amenity, Dundalk is a gateway to a number of areas of outstanding natural beauty, namely the Cooley Peninsula, Mourne Mountains and Ring of Gullion, while also offering a wealth of recreational facilities such as the Táin Theatre and the Louth County Museum and Dundalk Stadium, an all-weather horse racing track and two cinemas. Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is a major asset. Dundalk is a proven business location. According the continued expansion of the business and enterprise parks in the town is supported the Development Plan.

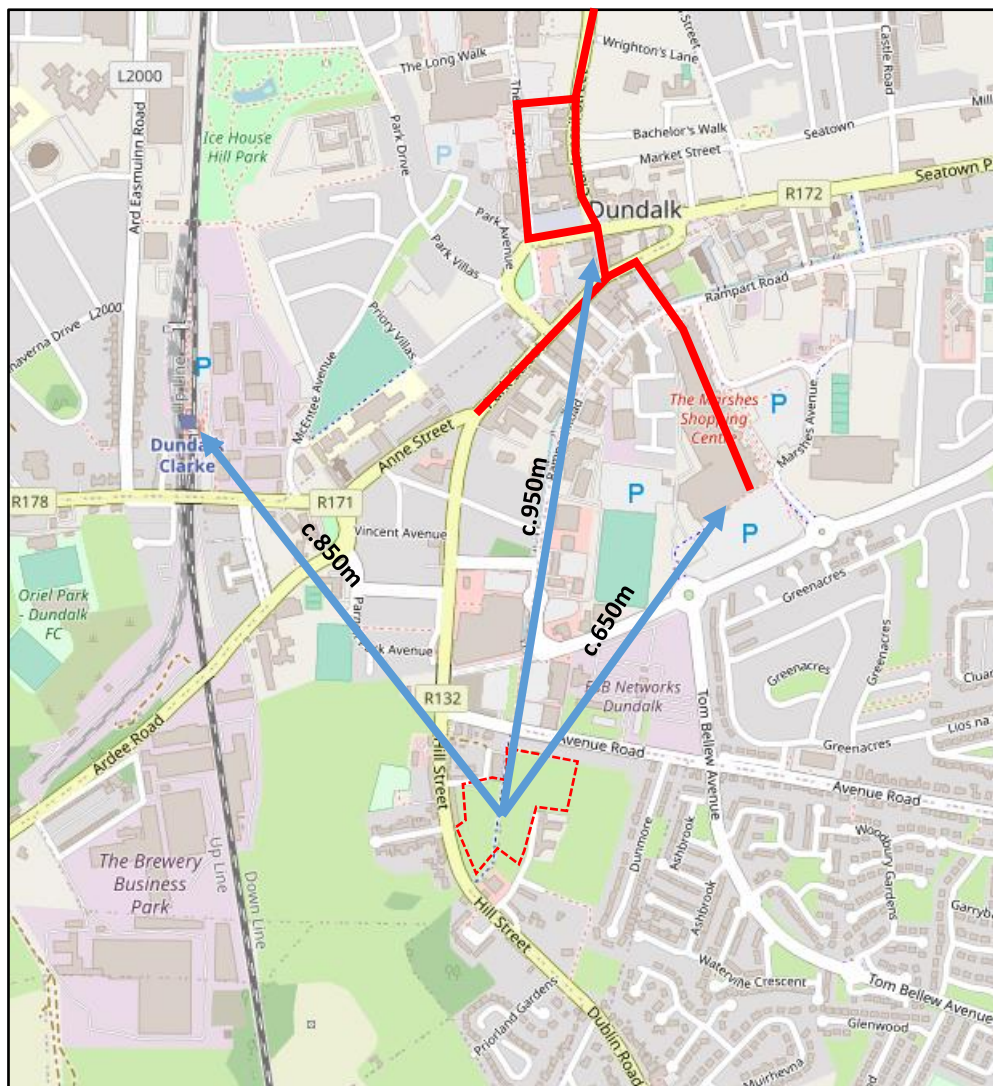


Figure 1: Site location map

3.0 STUDY AREA

According to the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (2024), “The term ‘15 minute city’ has been used in recent years to describe compact neighbourhoods that have a range of **local services and amenities** and **access to public transport** all within a short walk or cycle of homes. This should be the overarching objective when planning for sustainable and compact settlements.” (Section 1.3.2). This approach will also assist in the achieving targets set out in the National Sustainable Mobility Policy 2022. According to the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2023), a walking distance of 15minutes relates to a 1,000m-1,500m distance. The study area falls within 1,000m of the application site as illustrated by figure 2. The core retail area is not broken down in terms of uses but can be described as predominantly driven by independent comparison outlets, cafes and restaurants. A health check of the Dundalk Town Centre undertaken in 2019 is included at Appendix A. This survey found the town centre scored well under 20 key aspects including café/restaurant choice, quality of shops and the range of events.

4.0 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT

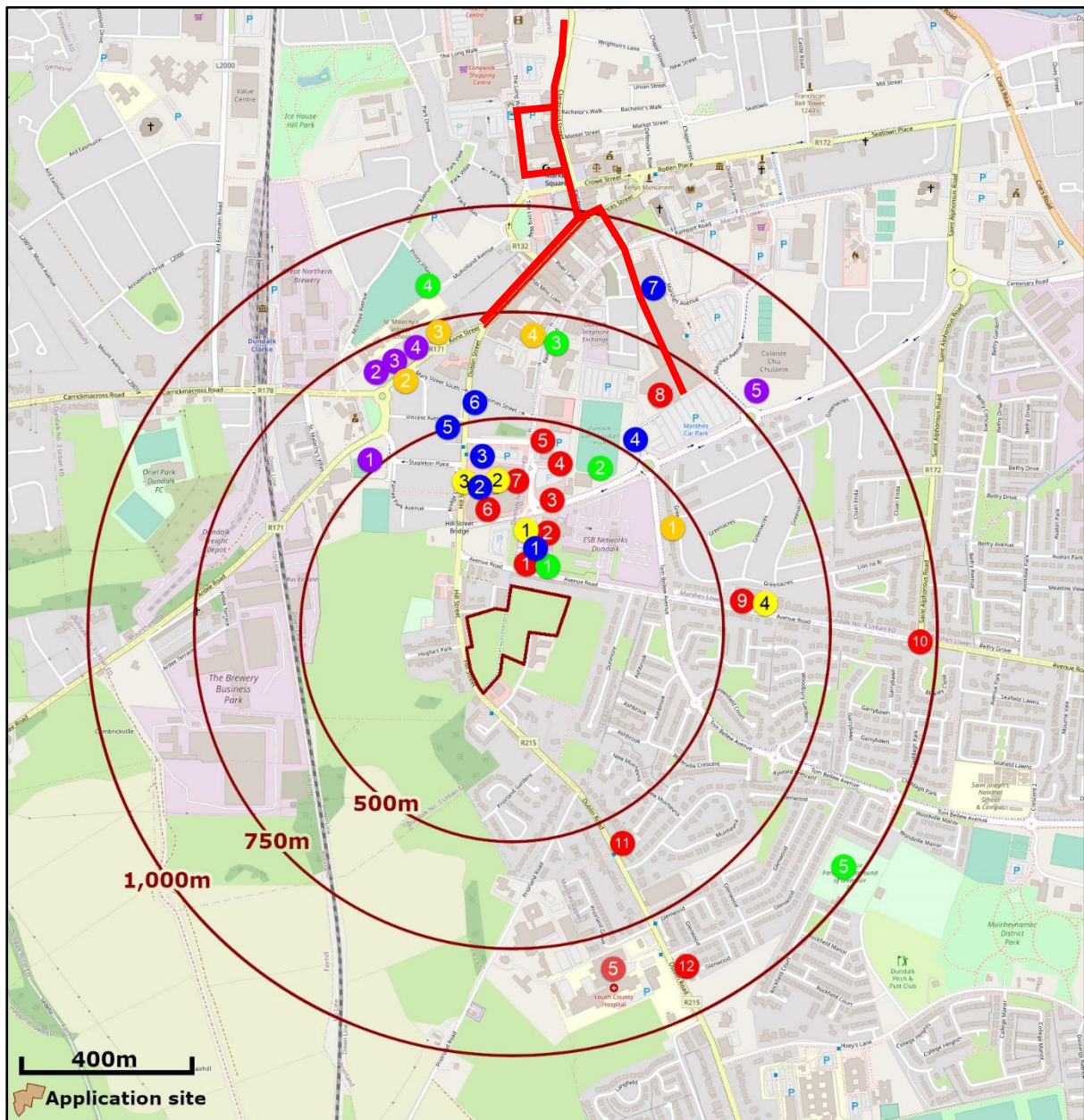


Figure 2

The Audit is broken down into six categories indicated by coloured circles. The uses in each category are listed in Table 1.

Key:

- Retail
- Community Services
- Sports and Recreation
- Schools
- Childcare
- Restaurant/Café

Retail Core

Table 1			
Retail			
1	Local supermarket	7	Butchers
2	Lidl Supermarket	8	Marshes Shopping Centre
3	Tesco Fuel Station	9	Avenue Neighbourhood Centre - Centra
4	Dry Cleans/Printers	10	Newsagent
5	Stapleton Court – Various Shops & Take Away	11	Mace
6	Tesco Superstore	12	Circle K Fuel Station
Community Services			
1	Dentist – Avenue Road Centre	4	Pharmacy
2	Hickeys Pharmacy	5	Louth Hospital and minor injuries clinic
3	Doctor and Pharmacy Dublin Street		
Schools			
1	Dundalk Grammar	3	St.Malachy's Boys School
2	St.Malachy's Girls School	4	St.Malachy's Infant School
Childcare			
1	Kidz Akademy	3	St.Malachy's Pre-school
2	Stepping Stones	4	Little Partners Creche
Sports and Recreation			
1	Gym	4	St.Dominics FC
2	Dundalk Gaels GFC	5	Glenmuir United FC &
3	Gym		Dundalk Young Ireland GAA Club
Restaurant/Cafe			
1	The Home Bakery	5	The Windsor
2	Costa and Bowes Ryan Cafe	6	Coffee Corner
3	McDonalds	7	Marshes SC Food Court and Costa
4	Starbucks Cafe		

Policy Objective SC11 requires the applicant for a planning application of 100 or more units to determine if the community facilities in the area are sufficient to cater for the future residents of the proposed development and identify if any deficiencies exist. It is considered the application site is well served by a variety of local services and amenities within walking distance. As illustrated by figure 2, many of the day-to-day needs of residents are within 500m of the site. In addition, a childcare facility will be provided to support the new residential community as part of the proposed development. No deficiencies have been identified as part of the audit. For further details please refer to the Childcare Demand Assessment by Stephen Ward Town Planning Consultants Ltd under separate cover.

6.0 ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bus stops within a 500m walk of the proposed development site are served by frequent intercity buses to Dublin, Drogheda, and Dublin Airport (100, 100x, 168), and urban bus routes to Muirhevnamuir, DkIT, Louth Hospital and Dundalk town centre (174, 917). Additionally, intercity buses to UCD, Carrickmacross, and Ardee (904, 166, 167); urban bus routes to the Carrickmacross Road and Blackrock (918, 169); and Commuter and Enterprise train services to Dublin and Belfast are available within c.1km of the proposed development site.

In 2022, some Route 167 Dundalk-Ardee services were extended to Kells and Mullingar under the National Transportation Authority's "Connecting Ireland" scheme. Routes 170 and 171 (Dundalk to Cavan / Shercock via Carrickmacross) are anticipated to begin operations in 2023 per *Connecting Ireland insights: Issue 2*, and will be within a 750m walk from the application site.

Key	Stop	Route #	From	Towards	Via
A	138931, 100521 Dublin Road	100X	Long Walk	Dublin	Drogheda, Airport
		100	Long Walk	Drogheda	Castlebellingham, Dunleer
		168	Long Walk	Drogheda	Dromiskin, Castlebellingham, Clogherhead, Termonfeckin
		174, 917	Muirhevnamuir Loop		DkIT, Louth Hospital
		174B, 916	Bay Estate Loop		Toward terminus
B	Greenacres	917	Muirhevnamuir Loop		DkIT, Louth Hospital
C	109521, 109551 Grammar School	167	Long Walk	Ardee	Knockbridge
				Mullingar	Knockbridge, Ardee, Kells
D	Anne Street	918	Patrick's Cathedral	Carrickmacross Rd.	
E	139921, 139911 Clarke Station	166	Long Walk	Carrickmacross	Inniskeen
		918	Patrick's Cathedral	Carrickmacross Rd.	
F	Marshes S.C.	900	Marshes S.C.	Dublin	
		901	Marshes S.C.	Dublin	Drogheda
		904	Marshes S.C.	UCD	Drogheda, IFSC
G	138941, 131211 Louth Hospital	100X	Long Walk	Dublin	Drogheda, Airport
		100	Long Walk	Drogheda	Castlebellingham, Dunleer
		168	Long Walk	Drogheda	Dromiskin, Castlebellingham, Clogherhead, Termonfeckin
		900	Marshes S.C.	Dublin	
		901	Marshes S.C.	Dublin	Drogheda
		904	Marshes S.C.	UCD	Drogheda, IFSC
		174, 917	Muirhevnamuir Loop		Toward terminus
174B, 916	Bay Estate Loop		Toward terminus		
H	Avenue Road	169	Patrick's Cathedral	Blackrock	
R	Dundalk Clarke Train Station	Commuter	Dundalk	Dublin Connolly	Drogheda, Balbriggan, Skerries, Rush & Lusk, Donabate, Malahide
				Dublin Pearse	
		Enterprise	Belfast Lanyon Place	Dublin Connolly	Portadown, Newry, Drogheda

Table 2: Public transportation services available in the locale of the application site. Source: Transport for Ireland Live Departures service.

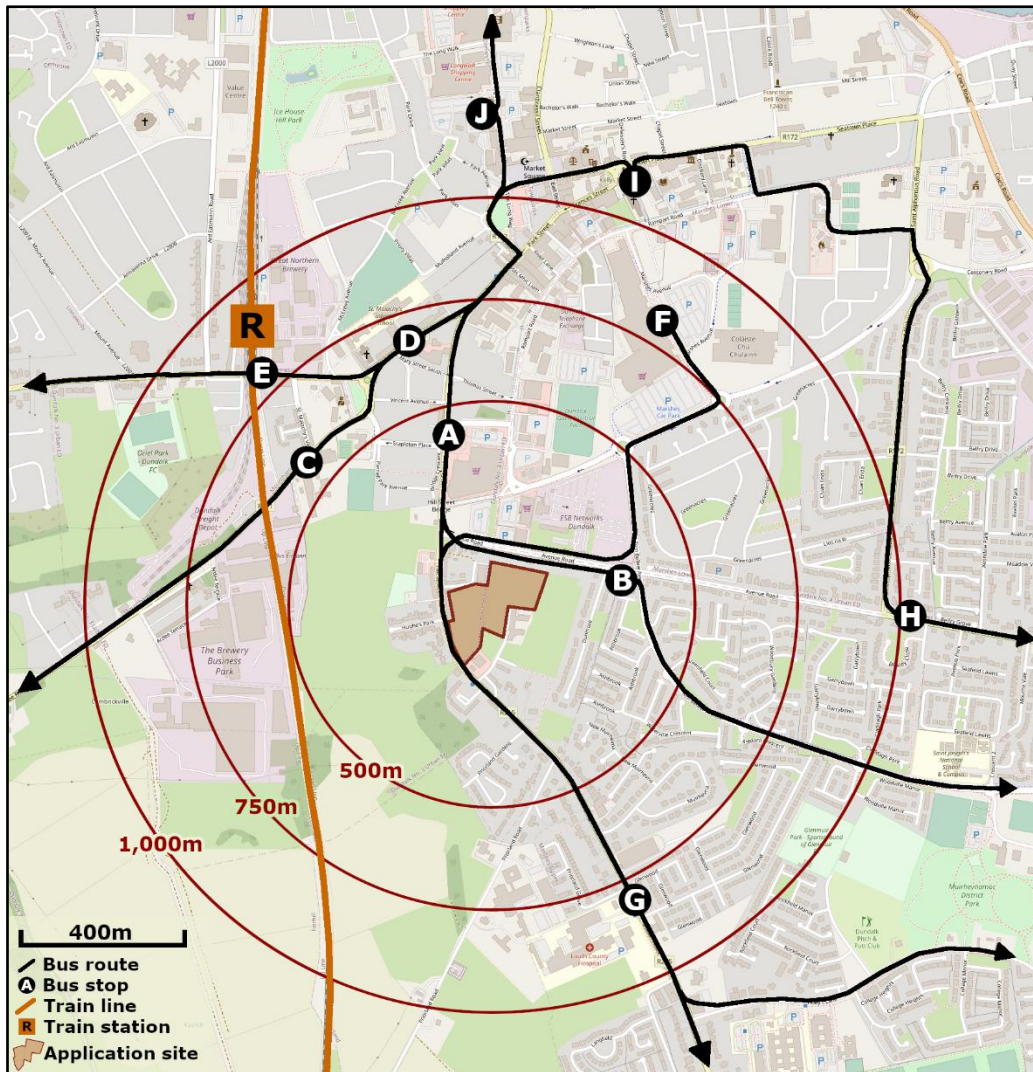


Figure 3: Bus Routes and Bus Stops

7.0 ACTIVE TRAVEL

The proposed development site is bisected by the recently constructed Riverside Walk greenway between the Dublin Road/Hill Street and Avenue Road. A robust network of cycle paths and footpaths links the application site to key trip generators such as Louth County Hospital, Dundalk Institute of Technology, O’Fiaich College, Coláiste Cú Chulainn, Dundalk Shopping Centre, the Marshes Shopping Centre, and the town centre. The site also has full footpath connectivity to Dundalk Garda Station, Dundalk Clarke Train Station, Oriel Park, and Muirhevnamuir Sports Centre.

Louth County Council is planning to implement the Dundalk Active Travel Project along the R132 Dublin Road linking the existing public greenway across the site with Dundalk IT campus located ca. 2km south of the site. This will improve the pedestrian and cycle network in the immediate vicinity of the site. Other improvements to the local active travel network being progressed by Louth County Council and the National Transportation Authority, as detailed in Figure 4 include a link the proposed development site to Dundalk Clarke Train Station (LH/22/0004)

Key	Project Code	Project Name	Status
	LH/22/0004	Hill St Bridge (Marshes Lower) to Train Station	Part 8 completion 2024
	LCC/22/xxxx	R178 Carrickmacross Road	Funding received 2022
	LH/21/0011	Ard Easmuinn Rd to Train Station/Friary School & Dundalk Bus Station to Rail Station	Proposed Part 8 display due early Q2 2023
	LCC/22/xxxx	New Ped / Cycle Link between College Heights and Tom Bellew Ave.	Funding received 2022
	LH/22/0002	Hoey's Lane (Dublin Road junction to Naughton Close junction)	Part 8 completion 2024
	LH/21/0010	Dundalk: Inner relief road to Riverside walk Dublin Road R215	Proposed Part 8 display due mid Q2 2023
	LH/21/0009	Active Travel Pathfinder Dundalk: R132 inner Relief Rd	Proposed Part 8 display due early Q3 2023

Table 3: Proposed active travel projects. Sources: Louth County Council (2023) *Monthly management report - March 2023*; NTA (2022) *Active travel investment grants - 2022 allocations*.

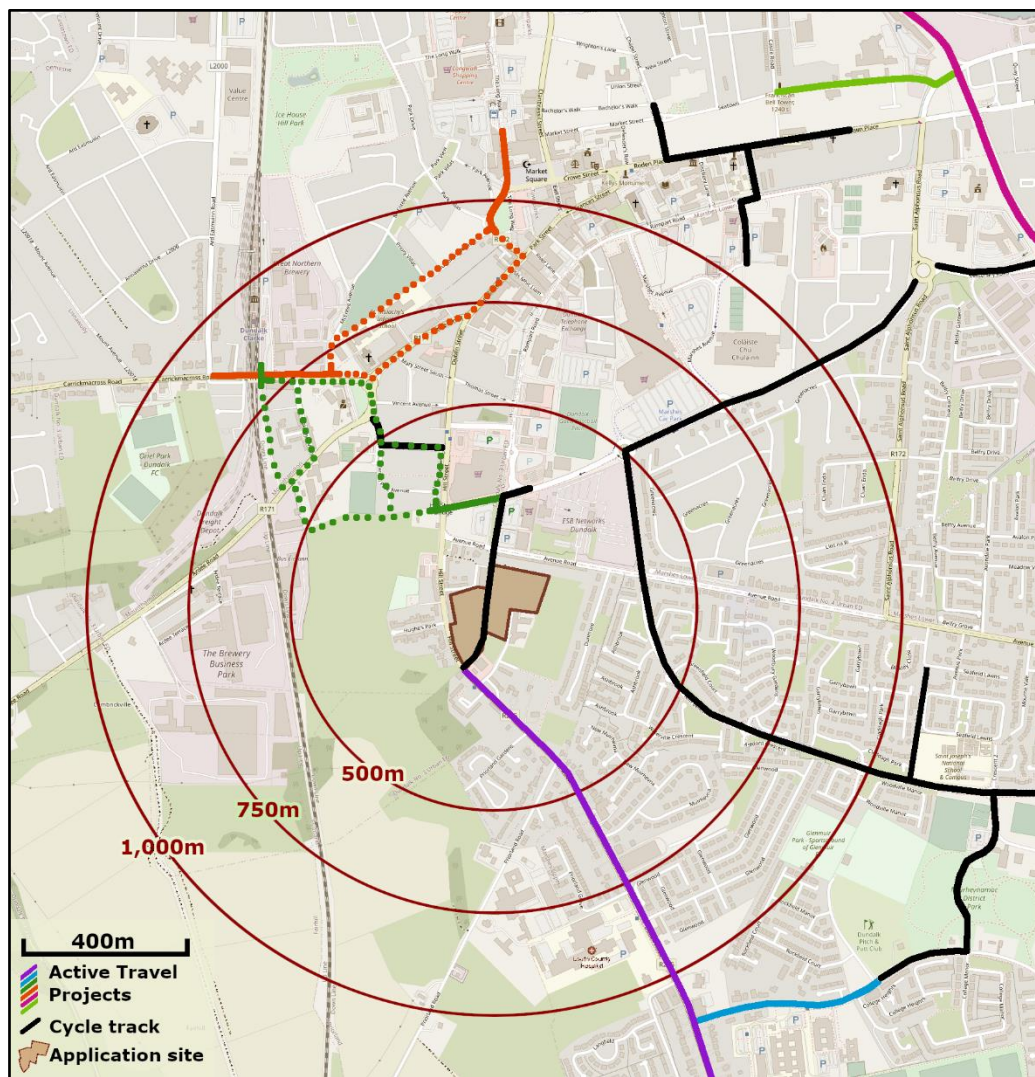


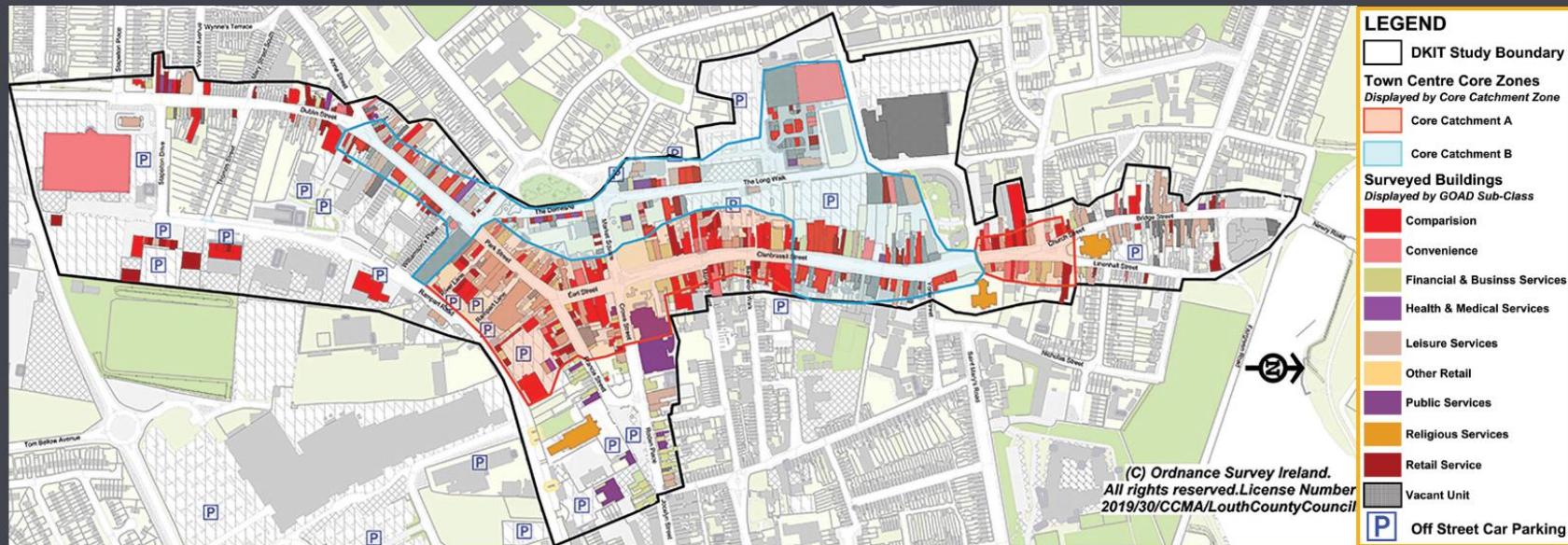
Figure 4: Active Travel Projects

8.0 CONCLUSION

The development of the application site will support the '15 minute' settlement concept, whereby a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycling timeframes from homes or accessible by public transport.

APPENDIX A

Survey of Land Use in Dundalk Town Centre



24%
COMPLETE
VACANCY RATE¹

76%
OCCUPANCY RATE
IN TOWN CENTRE

57%
UNITS SURVEYED
CLASSIFIED AS RETAIL

Retail	57%
Leisure Service	24%
Financial & Business Service	12.5%
Vacant ²	5%
Public Service	1%
Health & Medical Service	0.5%

¹ Taken from Study Area outlined in black in map above

² Taken from combined study areas in red and blue