AtkinsRéalis

Ecology RFI Response

Clockstrike Ltd.

July 2026

5208317DG0036

Phase 2 Ringwood LRD

AtkinsRéalis - Sensitive / Sensible [FR]

Phase 2 Development at Ringwood, Station Road, Blarney

Ecology RFI Response

Cork City Council RFI dated 18th February 2026

RFI Item – Infrastructure Section

d. External Connections

i. The main desire line for pedestrians and cyclists of the phase 2 development will be via station road. To enhance the pedestrian and cycling connectivity of the development provision of Active Travel Facilities on Station Road from the development entrance on Station Road to the Junction of Station Road and the R617 should be provided by the development. The red line Boundary of the development needs to be extended to cover this in the event that Phase 2 commences in advance of Phase 2. This infrastructure should be delivered in advance of the development becoming operational. Details to be agreed with Cork City Council.

Response:

A technical note has been prepared by AtkinsRéalis in response to the extension of the red line boundary to the junction of the R617 and Station Road, which accompanies this submission. An arboricultural survey of this area was undertaken; details of which are contained within the arborist's report which accompanies this submission. The R617 and adjacent lands were subject to an ecological walkover and habitat survey in June 2026. The survey identified that the dominant habitat by area within roadside site is WD4 (conifer plantation) and notes the low-quality classification of it, contained in the arborist's report. A high-level of human disturbance and litter was noted within the conifer plantation habitat. At the eastern end of the site there is a small pocket of mixed broadleaved woodland (WD1) along with a treeline (WL2) and hedgerow (WL1) which will be unaffected by the works with the exception of the removal of 2 no. trees. At the western end of the site there are some scattered trees (WD5) which will be very lightly affected, and an area of scrub (WS1). The report states that the site has not been surveyed for the activity and/or presence of bats. The habitat with the greatest potential for the presence of bats is within the small pocket of broadleaved woodland at the eastern extent of the site, which will not be impacted with the exception of the removal of the 2 no. trees mentioned above. The report notes that if the coniferous plantation were to be replaced with native deciduous planting, the habitat in this area would increase in suitability to support bats in the medium to long term. Mammal paths and a single potential burrow feature were identified within the conifer plantation however given the high levels of anthropological disturbance in this area (bounded by the R617 and playing pitches/coursing ground, evidence of dumping and anti-social activity) and lack of mammal evidence; it is noted that there is little potential for breeding, resting or foraging mammals apart from rabbit and mice/rats.

Please also refer to response by CSR.

RFI Item - Appropriate Assessment

Please submit an updated Appropriate Assessment Screening report to take account of the above amendment and modifications to the proposed development required on foot of this request for Further Information.

Response:

An updated Appropriate Assessment Screening report has been prepared by AtkinsRéalis based on the amendments and modifications to the proposed development as required by the RFI submission.

Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage dated 28th January 2026

RFI Item – Nature Conservation

The woodland area and length of hedgerows to be lost, the area of both habitats removed should be minimised as far as possible and the area of compensatory planting maximised (as new planting is not equivalent to old hedgerows or woodland)

Response:

As per the response from CSR, hedgerow removal has been kept to a minimum and is demonstrated on the BNG drawing accompanying this submission. Compensatory planting has been maximised. A total of 313 linear metres of hedgerow, 2185m² woodland and 156 no. existing trees will be removed with compensatory planting to include 1065 linear metres of hedgerow, 303 no. street trees, 342 no. trees in SuDS Amenity / Biodiversity areas, 86 no. trees for loss of wet woodland, 100 no. trees for the loss of R617 trees, 141 no. garden trees and 106 no. screening trees. The approach to compensatory planting will ensure connectivity with the wider landscape (including the Ringwood and wet woodland) in conjunction with planting scheme for Phase 1 to maintain existing commuting corridors for bats and other species. In the long term, the proposed compensatory planting of native species will enhance habitat quality for commuting mammals and other fauna, while also providing indirect benefits to invertebrate populations that serve as an important food source for birds and bats. In terms of the R617 Junction, as outlined in the Technical Note prepared by AtkinsRéalis and the arboricultural report accompanying this submission, the roadside treeline proposed for removal is of low ecological value, being predominantly composed of non-native Sitka spruce. Similarly, the existing hedgerows are largely dominated by common species including bindweed, bramble, fuchsia and traveller's joy.

Clarification of model expected light spill onto the hedgerow/woodland foraging area for bats should be submitted. In addition to baseline lighting survey by suitable qualified competent person. As well as reading taken at ground level on the horizontal plane, data should be provided in at least one direction on the vertical plane. The orientation should be perpendicular to the dominant light sources or perpendicular to the surface/edge o the feature in question in order to produce worst case reading.

Response:

A lighting design report in which a baseline lighting survey and lighting impact assessment and modelling, are contained, has been prepared by MHL and is included as part of this submission. The lighting design includes modelling of the proposed lighting scheme demonstrating the predicted lux levels of adjacent areas where hedgerows and treelines occur. Light spill calculations are based on luminaires at full output and do not consider physical obstructions, thus providing a ‘worst-case scenario’ with regards to light spill at ground level and to adjacent hedgerow and treelines. Lighting has been designed with regard to guidelines set out in the BCT

Lighting Guidelines (2023) to mitigate impacts to bats by ensuring the light is contained within the site boundaries, reducing spillage into neighbouring areas and reducing light pollution. The lighting plan has been designed with mitigation, in particular to protect the wet woodland to the north east of the site. Bat surveys of Phase 2 lands from 2022 to 2025 (note that the corridor of the R617 has not been subject to targeted bat surveys; see R617 Ecology Technical Note as prepared by AtkinsRéalis) found that the most common species encountered were common and soprano pipistrelles; these two species accounted for on average >70% and >20% of records across all passive monitoring sites within Phase 2 lands. Leisler's bat accounted for on average ca. 3%. Photophobic bats (such as *Myotis* species) did not account for significant numbers within the surveyed area, with activity dominated by pipistrelles; pipistrelle species are generally considered more tolerant of modified and illuminated environments. Localised effects associated with operational lighting may occur; however given the limited presence of photophobic species, the minimisation of vegetation removal and maximisation of compensatory planting, as well as the retention of dark refuges; landscape connectivity will be maintained and will provide suitable unlit commuting corridors for bats moving through the wider area.

Hedgerows proposed to be retained, to allow the most successful retention possible the detailed methodology during construction should be clarified which will be used to protect and retain the hedgerows (e.g. root protection and buffer between hedgerows and development)

Response*:*

The arborist's report accompanying this submission provides details of protective measures for hedgerows during construction. Please refer to full response by CSR.

A pre-survey for mammal species should take place immediately prior to works commencing as there is a lot of mammal activity in the hedgerows/woodland. TII Guidelines should be followed regarding badger setts. Fencing should be mammal friendly to avoid fragmentation regarding the Ringwood and peripheral woodlands.

Response:

The requirement for pre-construction surveys are included within the Biodiversity Chapter of the EIAR. Further, mitigation measures for the protection of mammals during the construction stage is provided within the CEMP prepared by MHL accompanying this submission.

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