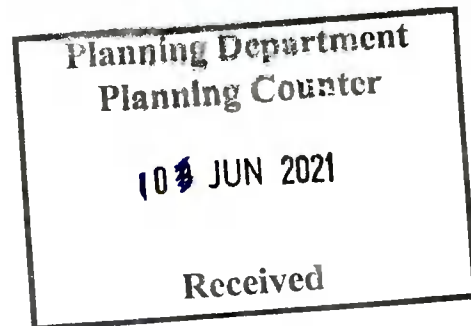


**Planning Department  
South Dublin County Council  
County Hall  
Town Centre  
Tallaght  
Dublin 24  
D24 A3XC**



9 June 2021

**Re: Permission to replace an existing 12m decommissioned chimney flue with a 20m multi-user telecommunications support structure to include antennas and dishes and all enclosed within a shroud to match the existing decommissioned chimney flue and 2No outdoor cabinets and associated site works and a proposed new flue to replace an existing flue on an existing permitted building and accessed via the existing permitted access at Existing Yard at Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre, Marian Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14**

A Chara,

4Site on behalf of Ontower Ireland Limited are applying to South Dublin County Council for permission to replace an existing 12m decommissioned chimney flue with a 20m multi-user telecommunications support structure to include antennas and dishes and all enclosed within a shroud to match the existing decommissioned chimney flue and 2No outdoor cabinets and associated site works and a proposed new flue to replace an existing flue on an existing permitted building and accessed via the existing permitted access at Existing Yard at Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre, Marian Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.

The development will form part of planned upgrade and capacity improvement of Three Ireland communications networks as well as providing space for future broadband providers for the area.

The proposed development is submitting having regard to stated strategies, objectives and policies contained in the following documents:

- **The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region- Southern Regional Assembly.**
- **Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued by the Department of the Environment (1996).**
- **Ministerial Circular PL07/12 – Revision to Guidelines (October 2012).**
- **Development Contributions Guidelines for Planning Authorities (January 2013).**
- **South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022.**

Ontower Ireland Limited is a subsidiary company of Cellnex, which is a European Telecommunications infrastructure provider, providing telecommunications infrastructure services to support Irish mobile and other telecommunications service providers. Ontower Ireland Limited was established following the purchase CK Hutchison Networks (Ireland) Limited portfolio by Cellnex in November 2020 and has been set up to manage the portfolio.

Three Ireland are in the process of upgrading their networks so as to increase the capacity of existing sites and to increase geographic coverage for its customers. This is in line with their commitment to invest in the mobile and wireless network and to enable more efficient infrastructure roll-out in the future.

The operator's existing deployment in the wider area do not meet current coverage objectives for the Ballyroan/Ballyboden area. With this application therefore, the proposed telecommunications installation will improve the local coverage to the aforementioned area.

Additional infrastructure capacity is always required for mobile phone and broadband providers due the continuous improvements in mobile technology and mobile computing requiring the delivery of high-speed data connections. More recently, there has been steep increase in the use of mobile wireless networks and the electronic communications services in general as a result of people working from home in recent months. This situation has changed normal traffic levels at local sites particularly in rural areas to such an extent that the Commission for Communications Regulation (Comreg) released additional radio spectrum under a Temporary Licence to the rapidly evolving needs of the telecom industry amid the outbreak of COVID-19. ComReg has further signalled that it is open to further measures, noting that it "will continue to accommodate efforts designed to help businesses survive and end users avail of telecommunications services in this Coronavirus health emergency.

The proposed new telecommunications apparatus will therefore extend Three Ireland's voice and data service over a wider coverage footprint and will also provide viable co-location space for planned future technology upgrades. This will improve mobile and broadband coverage in the surrounding area as well as providing competition for such services for the local businesses and community in the wider Ballyroan/Ballyboden area.

The proposed development has been designed to meet the aims and objectives of national, regional, and local planning policy as detailed in the accompanying report.

We respectfully request that South Dublin County Council grant permission for this development.

Yours faithfully,



Kevin Gillespie

Agent on behalf of Ontower Ireland Limited.

**Documents included in the Planning Application.**

- Application form
- Newspaper notice
- Site notice
- Cover Letter
- Technical Justification
- Planning Drawings
- Letter of Consent from Landowner
- Photomontage of proposed installed structure
- ICNIRP statement of Compliance

**Schedule of Drawings:**

- 6 copies of OS Site Location Map with photographs (Scale 1:10560)
- 6 copies of Site Location Map (scale 1:2500)
- 6 copies of Site Location Map (scale 1:1000)
- 6 copies of Site Location Map (scale 1:500)
- 6 copies of Site Layout Plan (Existing and Proposed) (scale 1:100)
- 6 copies of Elevations (NW, NE, SE, SW) (scale 1:100)
- 6 copies of Tower Structure Elevations and Other Equipment (scale 1:125, 1:50, 1:20)



An Indigo  
Telecom  
Group  
Company

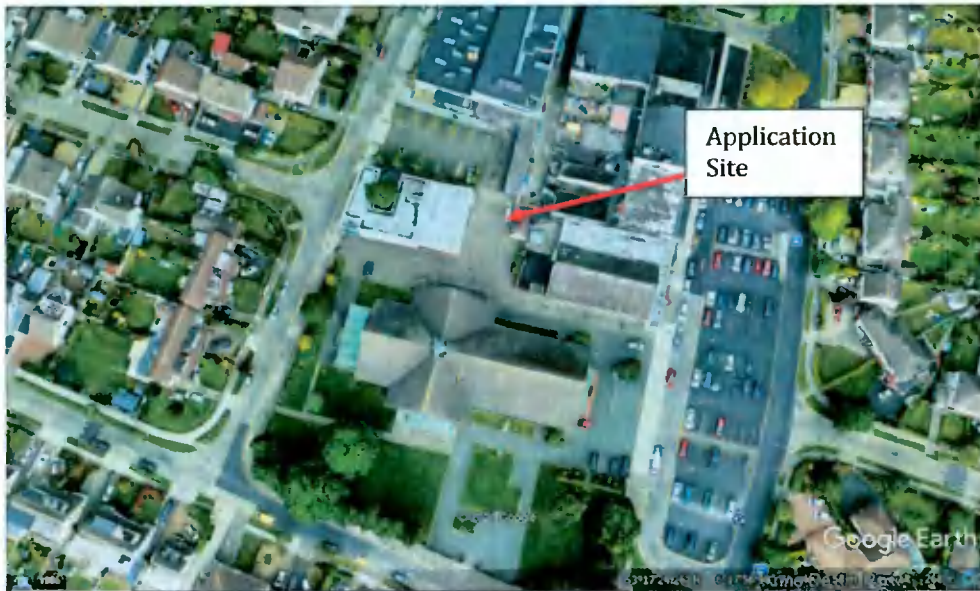
Acquisition · Planning · Design · Build · Management

Planning Application at Existing Yard at Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre,  
Marian Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.  
On Behalf of Ontower Ireland Limited

innovation engineered



**DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:** Permission to replace an existing 12m decommissioned chimney flue with a 20m multi-user telecommunications support structure to include antennas and dishes and all enclosed within a shroud to match the existing decommissioned chimney flue and 2No outdoor cabinets and associated site works and a proposed new flue to replace an existing flue on an existing permitted building and accessed via the existing permitted access at Existing Yard at Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre, Marian Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.



**APPLICANT**

**Ontower Ireland Limited**

**PREPARED BY THE AGENT**



**FOR THE OPERATOR:  
Three Ireland Limited**



## Introduction to Ontower Ireland Limited

Ontower Ireland Limited is a company of Cellnex, which is a European Telecommunications infrastructure provider, providing telecommunications infrastructure services and support to Irish mobile and other telecommunications service providers.

Ontower Ireland Limited was established following the purchase CK Hutchison Networks (Ireland) Limited portfolio by Cellnex in November 2020. Ontower is the legal entity or trading name for the organisation in Ireland. The organisation has significant commercial relationships with each mobile network operator in the State namely Three, Vodafone and Meteor/eir in addition to radio, broadband and emergency communication service providers. The local management of Ontower brings together a wealth of experienced telecommunications infrastructure professionals with expertise spanning engineering, site acquisition, estates management and planning.

Whilst managing their existing portfolio of 1,150 sites in Ireland, the applicant plans to add new developments to support the ongoing infrastructural requirements of the telecommunications industry and to facilitate the provision of broadband in current “black spot” areas and to also facilitate higher data transmission speeds in both urban and rural areas through various initiatives. It is submitted that the involvement of private sector firms such as Ontower Ltd. (and its parent company Cellnex), in the roll-out of telecommunications infrastructure, is a significant and fundamental pillar in the Governments telecommunications policy.

This planning application represents an investment commitment by Ontower and Three to operate the telecommunications site at Existing Yard at Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre, Marian Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14 which forms part of their telecommunications network in this area. Ontower will offer other operators’ space to co-locate services on this site thereby providing a choice of good quality wireless mobile and broadband telecommunications infrastructure to the local community.

## 1. The Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the replacement of an existing 12m decommissioned chimney flue with a 20m multi-user telecommunications support structure to include antennas and dishes and all enclosed within a shroud to match the existing decommissioned chimney flue and 2No outdoor cabinets and associated site works and a proposed new flue to replace an existing flue on an existing permitted building and accessed via the existing permitted access at Existing Yard at Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre, Marian Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14 and all required in the provision of localised mobile and broadband services to support the operational and technical requirements of Three Ireland.

Access to the site is directly from Orchardstown Villas and then via the in-curtilage access to the rear of Ballyroan Parish Church which leads to the existing yard area adjacent to the Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre whereat it is proposed to site the telecommunications installation. Post construction, the site will be accessed approximately twice in any one year for maintenance/operator works. A letter of consent from Ballyroan Parish Church is attached at Appendix 8.

The structure height at which the equipment is erected within the shroud i.e. 17m - 20m AGL (approx.), is necessary in this location to ensure functionality for transmission and future requirements for Three Ireland and importantly alignment by line of sight with their existing telecommunications structures in the wider Co. Dublin area.

As detailed above, the antennas and dishes will be enclosed within a shroud to match the existing decommissioned chimney flue to ensure the proposal as far as practicable blends into its surroundings. In addition, the proposed 2No. outdoor cabinets will be sited in a gated area adjacent to the existing building in the yard which ensures that this element of the proposal as far as practicable is wholly screened from any direct views which will assist to reduce some of the impact of the development in its local setting. This approach contributes to reducing the impact of the development which is in line with the proper planning and development of the area.

A technical justification for the proposed development has been included in the documents submitted with the application. This confirms that at present the Ballyroan/Ballyboden area and its immediate environs is currently experiencing deficiencies in its 3G indoor coverage in particular and this site will assist to provide sufficient overlap of the coverage footprint to adequately serve the town and surrounding environs. In particular the overlap will counteract the reduced cell shrinkage affect that occurs during high customer data usage at peak times as the bandwidth reduces and contention rate increases. Keeping a good dominant cell serving the area means continuous service to the residential and business customers.

In addition, supplementary infrastructure capacity is also required for mobile phone and broadband providers due the continuous improvement in mobile technology and mobile computing requiring the delivery of high-speed data connections. More recently, there has been steep increase in the use of mobile wireless networks and the electronic communications services in general as a result of people working from home in recent months. This situation has changed normal traffic levels at local sites particularly in to such an extent that the Commission for Communications Regulation (Comreg)

released additional radio spectrum under a Temporary Licence to the rapidly evolving needs of the telecom industry amid the outbreak of COVID-19.

The proposed structure is designed to extend Three Ireland's voice and data services over a wider coverage footprint and will also provide viable co-location space for planned future technology upgrades. This will improve mobile and broadband coverage in the surrounding area as well as providing competition for such services for the local businesses and community in this part of County Dublin.

The proposed development has been designed to meet the aims and objectives of national, regional, and local planning policy as detailed in the accompanying report.

### **1.1 The Planning Context**

The proposed site is located at the Existing Yard at Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre, Marian Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14. The site is identified on Use Zoning Map 10 of the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022 as being within Objective LC – *"To protect, improve and provide for the future development of Local Centres"*.

### **2. Planning History of Site**

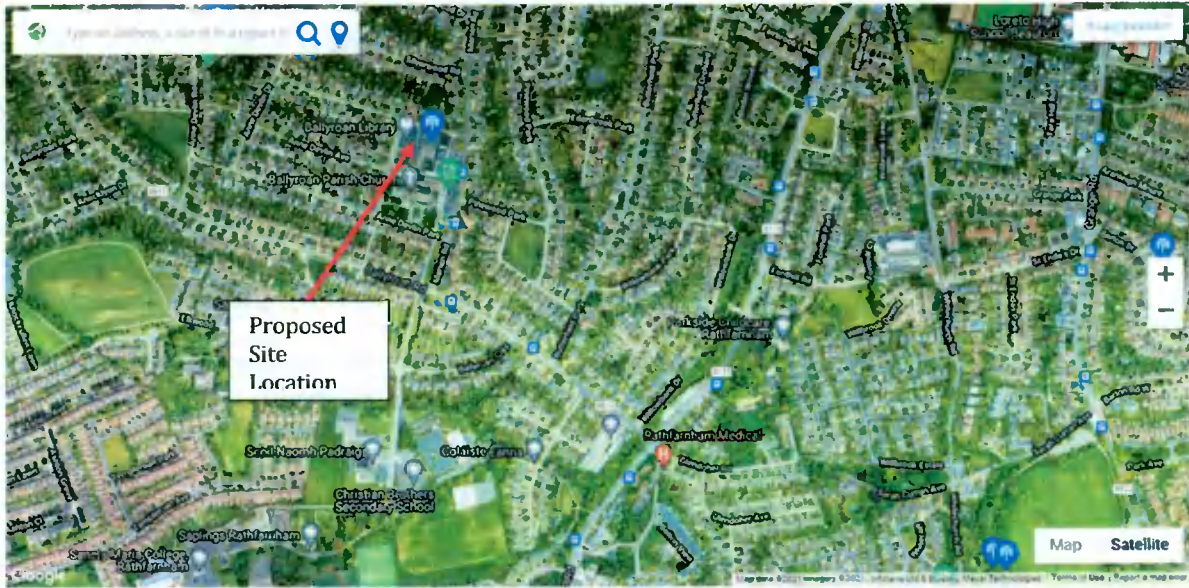
There is no planning history of any permission for telecommunications development on this site.

### **3. Existing Telecoms Structures**

There are 4No. Telecoms sites within 1.22km (approx.) of the proposed site at Existing Yard at Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre, Marian Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.

Site ID: 3310 – Meteor is a rooftop installation above the parade of shops fronting Marian Road but it is not at an operating height/line of sight which will align with Three Ireland's other installations in the wider area and in any event does not provide for co-location opportunities for Three Ireland's proposed antennas and dishes; Site ID: DU0631 – Three Ireland and Site ID: DN128 – Vodafone Ireland which is a rooftop installation above the parade of units at Orchardstown Park and where Three Ireland already have an installation. However, this site is over 0.7km away from coverage objective and therefore is unable to cover the specific target area with acceptable voice and data requirements and is also low in height such that coverage from this site is limited; Site ID: DN384 – Vodafone Ireland which is a rooftop installation above the parade of units at Barton Drive. However, this site is 1.22km (approx.) from coverage objective and therefore is unable to cover the specific target area with acceptable voice and data requirements and in any event does not provide for co-location opportunities for Three Ireland's proposed antennas; and Site ID: 1356 – Meteor and Site ID: DU0344 – Three Ireland which is a fake tree and where Three Ireland already have an installation. However, this site is 1.13km (approx.) from coverage objective and therefore is unable to cover the specific target area with acceptable voice and data requirements (See Map 1 Below).





(Map 1: Existing Telecommunications sites – Source: Siteviewer.comreg.ie)

**4. Designated Areas**

The subject site is not located within any designated areas – Special Protection Area; Special Area of Conservation; Proposed Natural Heritage Area or Area of Architectural Potential as defined by Index Map of the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022.

There are no defined Prospects in the vicinity of the subject site as also defined by the Index Map of the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022.

**5. Heritage**

The Architectural Heritage in the immediate area is detailed in Table 1 below:

Record Number	Class	Distance to Structure
11216039	Church of the Holy Spirit	30m south of application site

Table 1: Record of Architectural Heritage

Map Ref	RPS Ref	Distance to Structure
264	264	Church of the Holy Spirit - 30m south of application site

Schedule 2: Record of Protected Structures



Map1: Record of Architectural Heritage

## 6. Visual Impact Appraisal

As part of the design process a visual impact assessment was undertaken at the site to assess the changes that would arise from the development on available views in the area. The assessment considers baseline information about the local landscape characteristics of the area including topography, built forms, settlement patterns, land-use, scenic views, local streetscape as well as screening provided from trees and vegetation in the environment. The impact considers a number of factors, such as scale, setting and the nature of the viewing experience from public viewpoints as well as an anticipated impact from private viewpoints from residences in the area. The result or impact is then assessed against the sensitivity of the area against the magnitude or degree of change which would result from the proposed development if constructed. The impact assessment considered development policy contained in the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022.

### 6.1. Zone of Visual Influence

It was considered that 7 viewpoints taken at eye level from public viewpoints within the wider local area would be sufficient to illustrate the visual impact of the development in the local area. A photomontage with associated viewpoint map is included at Appendix 7. Impacts are based on a site visit as well as an assessment of the photomontage provided.

### 6.2. Landscape / Impact Sensitivity

The site is located in an urban area outwith as defined by the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022. The site is not within proximity to any Architectural Conservation Area or Candidate Architectural Conservation Area nor is it in proximity to any Area of Architectural Potential as defined by the Index Map of the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022. A Protected Structure - Church of the Holy Spirit – is sited within 30m south of application site. Finally, there is an existing 12m chimney flue which is currently in the local visual resource. (This is proposed to be decommissioned if the current application is granted permission). Considering all of the above, it is considered to have a medium to high sensitivity to change in respect of any telecommunications installations at the subject site.

### 6.3. Viewpoint Analysis: Assessment of Viewpoints and description of effects

Viewpoints 1-7 listed in the following page outline the likely visual effects that can be predicted using the photomontage imagery as an indicator as well as taking into account the sensitivity of the site as already described. Terms used in the impacts are described using accepted terminology guidance in visual impact assessments as below.

### 6.4. Methodology

Images have been produced using the following methodology. Photographs were taken on 25 February 2021 in clear and dry weather conditions.

1.0 Photography		
1.1	Make and model of camera, and its sensor format (assumed 35mm FFS)	Sony A7III (FF Mirrorless) paired with a Sigma 50mm f1.4 prime lens
1.2	Method to establish the camera location (e.g., handheld GPS/GNSS, PS/RTK GPS, survey point, visual reference)	Handheld GPS (Garmin E-trex) +/- 3m accuracy level. Double checked in GIS software to verify. Pre-survey study of proposed VP locations manually worked out (Bearing from VP to proposed site location and distance) and any potential LOS blockages noted. Landmarks and north bearing identifiers also identified at this stage to help with survey stage. Bearings checked on site using an analog SUUNTO TANDEM/360PC/360R G Clino/Compass away from magnetic interference.
1.3	Level of Accuracy of location (m, cm)	+/-3m
1.4	Geographic Co-Ordinate system used (e.g., WGS-84)	WGS-84. (Decimal Degrees)
2.0 3D Modelling		
2.0	3D Modelling and Rendering Software	Sketchup/Blender(Modelling/Virtual Camera) and Adobe Photoshop(Photo editing)
2.1	Source of topographic height data and its resolution	SRTM. 3 arc second intervals in latitude & longitude (about every 90m)
2.2	How have the model and camera locations been placed in the software	Virtual camera placed in 3D model environment by cross referencing recorded coordinates at each viewpoint (straight line azimuth and distance from proposed site coordinate in GIS environment) Then using this data to plot the actual location of the Virtual camera in the X,Y and Z axis. The focal length and diagonal FOV of the camera sensor/lens have been modelled in the 3D model environment and these settings are calibrated at each survey using known heights at differing distances. Proxy geometry is also used (recorded heights of existing trees/buildings) to ensure accuracy (this proxy geometry is only used to verify the calibrated formula and is masked out in the edit stage.
3.0 General		
	Limitations or Methodology for preparations of photomontage and visualisations	The nature of the methodology is approximate using known datums, use of proxy geometry and access to/cross check of aerial imagery from the proposed structure height looking towards each viewpoint to verify LOS paths. Photomontage using the above methodology to an accuracy of +/-1m. Atmospheric conditions are represented when editing. As such if there is haze/fog present, this will be incorporated into the composite to be as true to reality as possible. Each model is specifically modelled on to present an accurate representation of the proposal.

**TABLE 1. VIEWPOINT ANALYSIS: REFER TO PHOTOMONTAGE IMAGES PROVIDED IN APPLICATION DOCUMENTATION**

**Duration of Impact:** Impact is considered to be permanent on the basis that structure will have a lifetime of c.20 years

**Sensitivity of Location:** The sensitivity of the site is considered to be medium to high given the scale of development and the context of its urban setting.

Quality of the impact is described as

- Neutral - neither enhance or detract from the visual or landscape character.
- Positive - improve or enhance the visual or landscape character.
- Negative - reduce or have an adverse effect on the visual or landscape character.

Significance of impacts are described as

- Imperceptible – an impact without noticeable consequences.
- Slight – causing noticeable changes in the visual or landscape character without affecting its sensitivities.
- Moderate – alters the visual or landscape character in a manner that is consistent with emerging trends or where an important element is affected.
- Significant – an impact which by its magnitude, duration or intensity alters sensitive aspects of the visual or landscape character.
- Profound – an impact which obliterates sensitive characteristics

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Heading degrees</u>	<u>Distance from site</u>	<u>Viewpoint location</u>	<u>Impact</u>	<u>Sensitivity of Viewpoint</u>	<u>Impact Quality</u>	<u>Impact Significance</u>
1	328°	117m	View from Marian Road opposite 115 Marian Road to the south east of the site	Existing 12m chimney flue visible. Proposed structure visible. Highly prominent	High	Negative	Significant
2	288°	82m	View from public car park at front of Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre to the east of the site	Existing 12m chimney flue visible. Proposed structure visible. Highly prominent	High	Negative	Significant
3	14°	95m	View from Anne Devlin Avenue opposite 63-65 Anne Devlin Avenue to the south of the site	Existing 12m chimney flue not visible. Proposed structure visible. Limited prominence	Medium	Negative	Slight
4	51°	85m	View from Orchardstown Villas opposite 13 Orchardstown Villas to the south west of the site	Existing 12m chimney flue visible. Proposed structure visible. Highly prominent	High	Negative	Significant
5	95°	77m	View from Anne Devlin Avenue opposite 37 Anne Devlin Avenue to the west of the site	Existing 12m chimney flue visible. Proposed structure visible. Highly prominent	High	Negative	Significant

6	197°	75m	View from Orchardstown Avenue opposite 48-50 Orchardstown Avenue to the north of the site	Existing 12m chimney flue visible. Proposed structure visible. Highly prominent	High	Negative	Significant
7	230°	112m	View from Marian Road opposite 97 Marian Road to the north east of the site	Existing 12m chimney flue not visible. Proposed structure visible. Highly prominent	High	Negative	Significant

## 7. Impact Mitigation

The proposed telecommunications development is designed to meet the coverage objectives for the area and ensure maximum signal propagation over any physical obstructions in the local area. Following a review of available sites and the topography of the area it was determined that a location in this particular part of the urban environment and context would be the most appropriate practical and operational solution to balance the coverage requirements of Three Ireland and the required operating height against the visual impact on the surrounding amenities of the local area. To that end, the application has incorporated and screened significant parts of the ground-based and lower parts of the proposed development into this urban landscape where its impact can be absorbed into its setting without significant impacts on the amenities of the area. It is accepted that the middle to upper parts of the proposed development will be highly visible in the urban setting and that this will impact upon the visual amenity of the area.

## 8. Conclusion / Summary of Visual Impact

The proposed development when viewed within the immediate local area is expected to create a high negative additional visual impact over that which already exists on site as shown in the photomontage images 1-7. By reason of its proposed height, it will be visible from a number of viewpoints. As such, it is considered that any impacts will be significant notwithstanding that the existing 12m high chimney flue generates an existing negative visual impact on the local visual resource. Wider and more distant public and private views from the surrounding area are restricted by the existing built development in the local area and so any significant impacts are considered to be only localised.

## 9. Planning Policy

### 9.1. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region- Southern Regional Assembly.

The RSES primarily aims to support the delivery of the programme for change set out in Project Ireland 2040, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan 2018-27 (NDP). As the regional tier of the national planning process, it will ensure coordination between the City and County Development Plans (CCDP) and Local Enterprise and Community Plans (LECP) of the ten local

authorities in the Region<sup>1</sup>. As outlined in the document, investment in telecommunications infrastructure is a will improve international connectivity and is a strategic priority for the region stating that; High-Quality International Connectivity is crucial to the Region for overall international competitiveness, in addressing opportunities and challenges from Brexit through to investment in our ports and airports. National Ports Policy and National Aviation Policy coupled with high-speed broadband are the chief instruments in consolidating and improving on our Region's international connectivity.

**REGIONAL POLICY OBJECTIVES. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES)**

**RPO 137 (Mobile Infrastructure)** It is an objective to strengthen the continued delivery of high-speed, high-capacity digital and mobile infrastructure investment in our region and strengthen cross regional integration of digital infrastructures and sharing of networks.

**RPO 138 (Digital Strategies)** It is an objective to promote the preparation and support the implementation of digital strategies by each local authority, seek investment for actions identified, and support the role and initiatives of the Mobile and Broadband Taskforce in addressing digital and mobile coverage blackspots and rural communications connectivity.

**RPO 192** Cultural Policies and Objectives Local authority Development Plans, Local Enterprise Community Plans and Local Area Plans should include cultural policies and objectives supporting the sustainable development of enabling infrastructure including:

- Delivery and optimisation of high-speed broadband to support the digital media and remote working;

Having regard to key statements and policy objectives in the RSES with regard to telecommunications services in this urban area and in particular the present and future roll-out of next generation technologies, it is submitted that the proposed development will improve the capacity of wireless telecommunications services to this area which is in line with the broad objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) guidelines as outlined above.

**9.2. Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce. Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and The Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs 2016**

The Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce, established in July 2016, is an initiative of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and the Department of Rural and Community Development.

The terms of reference of the Taskforce were to.

- To identify and recommend practical actions that can be taken in the short-term to improve mobile reception and broadband access in Ireland, in consultation with Government

<sup>1</sup> Southern Regional Assembly | RSES

Departments, Local Authorities, ComReg, State agencies, industry and other key stakeholders; and,

- To report to Government by the end of 2016 with a set of recommendations and actions to improve mobile reception and broadband access. The report will set out proposed timelines, and the legislative, budgetary, or other implications for the prompt delivery of the recommendations and actions.

<b>TASKFORCE MEMBERS (CURRENT)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)</li> <li>• Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCA)</li> <li>• Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS)</li> <li>• Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG)</li> <li>• Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)</li> <li>• Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)</li> <li>• County and City Management Association (CCMA)</li> <li>• Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg)</li> <li>• Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland (ASAI)</li> <li>• ESB Networks</li> <li>• Office of Public Works (OPW)</li> </ul>
The Taskforce is also supported in its work by Ibec, representing the Telecommunications Industry.

The Taskforce published its final report titled Report of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce in December 2016. The Taskforce report addresses a wide range of issues impacting on broadband and mobile services. The report contains 40 actions aimed at accelerating the delivery of telecoms infrastructure by commercial operators and also to facilitate the rollout of the State led Intervention under the NBP. Actions relevant to Planning legislation, policy and guidelines include.

- Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2018 has amended Part 1 (Exempted Development — General) of Schedule 2 to the Principal Regulations by amending aspects of Class 31 relating to exemptions from the requirement to obtain planning permission for certain works undertaken by a statutory undertaker authorised to provide a telecommunications service. The amendment has successfully enabled a broader range of telecommunications equipment to be installed under the provisions of exempted development.
- Review the statutory planning guidelines (Telecommunications and Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines (1996) – updated October 2012), in conjunction with telecoms industry representatives and other relevant stakeholders. Currently under way and expected to provide consistency in interpretation and implementation of guidelines by local authorities to keep a pace with newer forms of technology.

In line with the Taskforce actions and recommendations the application is required to facilitate the position of Operator’s equipment above existing obstructions in the area to improve coverage and capacity of the network. By placing the proposed development at the proposed location and providing co-location space within the proposed shroud, the Operators will be in a position to improve existing services in the area and extend the services in the future thereby future proofing the installation for any future upgrades which are inevitable as wireless technology continues to advance. Network improvement is of fundamental importance to the level and quality of service provided by the operators to consumers now and into the future. Optimising performance to take account of changing demands, weather conditions, line problems and available relevant data are key factors in ensuring

that the ongoing increase in demand on the networks can continue to be met. It is imperative that operators actively manage their networks through constant evaluation and optimisation and to have in place regulatory conditions to deploy newer technologies coming on-stream. This will ultimately enable enhanced coverage for the delivery of telecommunication services, while still respecting the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

## **10. Development in relation to the National Policy on Telecommunications Infrastructure.**

Both Local and Government Policy on Telecommunications Infrastructure supports continued investment in the infrastructure that is required to compete in a Digital Economy. Widespread and deep social and economic changes have been enabled by investments in telecommunications networks, devices and new software and other services. The adoption of data connectivity across consumer devices and business processes has fundamentally changed how we consume, purchase, and communicate. It has transformed production and supply processes making economies more efficient<sup>2</sup>. Investment by the telecommunications industry in technology and interoperability has underpinned an immense shift in information and capital flows through the global economy. Total mobile data traffic has grown 4,000 times over the past 10 years and 400 million times over the past 15 years. This has contributed to an unprecedented level of economic activity: global flows of goods, services, and finance, which grew 1.5 times to \$26 trillion in the two decades between 1990 and 2012, could triple from to more than \$80 trillion in 2025.<sup>3</sup>

The need for rapid innovation, greater convergence and new services will require telecommunications companies to fill key capability gaps with new innovation models and revamped talent strategies for a 'digital workforce'. The globalization of markets and businesses relies upon intensive communication and extensive telecommunications capabilities. This is because telecommunications services have become much broader than purely a means to communicate; they also support economic activity across the whole economy. Amongst other things, investments in telecommunications have transformed how we communicate, work, and consume.

The EU Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2018 report saw Ireland move up three places – to 6th from 9th – compared to 2017. This reflects Ireland's continued position as a European leader in the digital sphere. 2018 also saw improvements in Ireland's performance in the EU DESI across various categories including digital public services, use of internet, and advanced skills and development<sup>4</sup>.

Project Ireland 2040 (National Planning Framework and National Development Plan 2018-2027). The National Planning Framework provide a basis for long-term co-ordination on infrastructure development, including transport, energy and communications and social and community infrastructure. In the Communication Section on Investment in Infrastructure it is recognised that in the information age, telecommunications networks play a crucial role in enabling social and economic

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<sup>2</sup> ComReg 18/103b Meeting Consumers' Connectivity Needs a report from Frontier Economics.

<sup>3</sup> Cisco Annual Internet Report (2018–2023) The Cisco Annual Internet Report is a global forecast/analysis that assesses digital transformation across various business segments (enterprise, small-to-medium business, public sector, and service provider).

<sup>4</sup> National Competitiveness Council (NCC) Ireland's Competitiveness Challenge 2018



activity in tandem with other transnational communications infrastructure links.<sup>5</sup> The advent of next generation wireless technology will accelerate the infiltration of mobile wireless networks into everyday life and is a strategic priority for operators and government alike. This requires investment in infrastructure to support these networks which is continuing at a rapid pace and so the importance of tower infrastructure is growing, and wireless mobile communications will not be possible without them.

The increase in data traffic expected in the coming years has compelled mobile and broadband operators to find new ways to significantly boost their network capacity, provide better coverage, and reduce network congestion to meet customer expectations. This proposal has been designed for co-location and so this will enable future co-location of equipment in the local area where mobile and data coverage needs to be improved.

More recently, there has been steep increase in the use of mobile wireless networks and the electronic communications services in general as a result of people working from home in recent months. This situation has changed normal traffic levels at local sites to such an extent that the Commission for Communications Regulation (Comreg) released additional radio spectrum under a Temporary Licence to the rapidly evolving needs of the telecom industry amid the outbreak of COVID-19. ComReg has further signalled that it is open to further measures, noting that it “will continue to accommodate efforts designed to help businesses survive and end users avail of telecommunications services in this Coronavirus health emergency<sup>6</sup>. This demand is expected to continue for the foreseeable future and so the expansion of services is necessary to maintain and improve expected service provisions.

### 10.1. Ministerial Guidance

In July 1996, the Department of the Environment and Local Government issued “Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures - Guidelines for Planning Authorities” and in October 2012 the Department issued updated guidance for local authorities in relation to telecommunication infrastructure in the form of Circular PL07/12.

### 10.2. Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures, 1996

When considering proposals for new telecommunications facilities the Council will have regard to the “Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures - Guidelines for Planning Authorities”. Accordingly, this section will address the relevant issues raised by these guidelines. It is stated in the guidelines that the design and siting of antennae support structures will to a large extent be dictated by radio and engineering parameters (Section 4.2).

The Guidelines acknowledge that there is “limited flexibility as regards location, given the constraints arising from radio planning parameters” (Section 4.3) and that ‘some masts will remain quite noticeable in spite of the best precautions. The following considerations may need to be considered:

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<sup>5</sup> Project Ireland 2040 | Building Ireland’s Future | National Planning Framework

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.comreg.ie/industry/radio-spectrum/spectrum-awards/covid-19-temporary-spectrum-management-measures/>

In relation to views the Guidelines advise as follows.

- Along major roads or tourist routes, or viewed from traditional walking routes, masts may be visible but yet are not terminating views. In such cases it might be decided that the impact is not seriously detrimental.
- Similarly, along such routes, views of the mast may be intermittent and incidental, in that for most of the time viewers may not be facing the mast. In these circumstances, while the mast may be visible or noticeable, it may not intrude overly on the general view of prospect.
- There will be local factors which have to be taken into account in determining the extent to which an object is noticeable or intrusive – intermediate objects (buildings or trees), topography, the scale of the object in the wider landscape, the multiplicity of other objects in the wider panorama, the position of the object with respect to the skyline, weather, and lighting conditions, etc.

As outlined in the technical justification in the application documentation, there are known coverage deficiencies for Three Ireland in this area. A new higher antenna support structure is necessary in this area to provide for existing and future wireless communications services for the area. The coverage objectives of the operator are demonstrated in the technical justification and illustrate that any existing antenna support structures currently in use by the operators in the wider area is not providing adequate local coverage requirements to the Ballyroan/Ballyboden area.

It should be noted that while there has been significant improvement in the technologies to providing advanced broadband services, the advances in the design of antennas and the supporting fixtures are limited. The requirement to position telecommunications transmission and receiving equipment above obstructions remains unchanged, in fact given the sensitivity of 3G, 4G technology there is less tolerance to obstructions so that even tree foliage has a degrading effect on the signal. It is important that the support structures are also rigid so that movement is prevented to within > 0.5 of a degree otherwise it is likely that there will be signal loss in transmission and would be unacceptable to network operations.

In relation to health impacts the applicant, Three Ireland wish to advise South Dublin County Council that the proposed equipment and installation, as detailed in the attached planning application, is designed to be in full compliance with the limits set by the Guidelines of the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) (Refer to Appendix 4). The proposed development/site will meet the radiation standards as set by ComReg and the associated licence conditions applied to Operators Mobile communications and who will use the site as part of its Network deployment. The site will be available for monitoring to ensure compliance with these standards.

### **11. Ministerial Circular PL07/12 – Revision to Guidelines**

Against a background of the next generation broadband (4G) licences the Department has issued updated guidance for local authorities in relation to telecommunication infrastructure in the form of Circular PL07/12.

Section 2.2 of this Circular advises planning authorities to cease attaching time-limited conditions to telecommunication masts as such structures will continue to play a vital role in delivering economic growth to the areas they service into the future.

In relation to reinstatement bonds the Circular advises that future permissions should simply include a condition stating that when the structure is no longer required it should be demolished, removed and the site re-instated at the operators' expense.

With many developments of this nature, there may be concerns from local residents about the perceived implications of the development, primarily in relation to the adverse health effects of the installation. Planning authorities are urged to concern themselves with design and siting issues only and should defer any health and safety issues and their monitoring to the relevant authorities, in this instance ComReg. The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) is the licensing authority for the use of radio frequency in Ireland. As the licensing authority for radio communications in Ireland, ComReg is responsible for ensuring that communication operators comply with their license conditions relating to non-ionising radiation. In 2001 ComReg began the process of randomly testing communication sites to ensure compliance with the adopted ICNIRP and ComReg Standards.

## **12. Development Contributions Guidelines for Planning Authorities (January 2013)**

The 2013 Development Contribution Guidelines for Planning Authorities states that "subject to the overriding principles of proper planning and sustainable development, adopted development contribution schemes should contribute to the promotion of sustainable development patterns, economic activity and to securing investment in capital infrastructure and economic activity" (Ch. 2, pg.10).

The vital services provided to the area by telecommunication infrastructure is often overlooked with developments of this nature vastly improving commercial prospects in the area and assisting in implementing Council policy for social inclusion. The Guidelines explicitly state that "planning authorities are required to include waivers for broadband infrastructure (masts and antennae)" (Chapter 2, pg.11).

In addition, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment published a Report of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce in December 2016 which states in its key messages on page 6 of the report that "the application of development contributions to telecommunications infrastructure will cease in every local authority area from early 2017". Page 21 of the report details how "the Taskforce is of the view that development contributions should be waived by all local authorities to allow for appropriate placement of telecommunications infrastructure to address rural mobile coverage and welcomes the intention of the remaining five local authorities to apply the waiver. This approach is fully in line with the 2013 Guidelines. The Taskforce is of the view that all remaining local authorities should immediately bring themselves into full compliance with the 2013 Guidelines in relation to development contributions". It further reiterates on page 64 that "no development contributions will be charged for the placement of telecommunications infrastructure. This frees up capital, enabling further investment in infrastructure".

The South Dublin County Council Development Contribution Scheme 2016 – 2020 details at Section 10 (xxi) - Power Lines, Antennae Structures, Sewer / Drainage / Road Construction / Provision of infrastructural facilities shall be exempt from the requirement to pay development contributions under the Scheme.

## 13. South Dublin County Development Plan 2016 - 2022

### Section 7 – Infrastructure and Environmental Quality

#### Sub-Section 7.4.0 – Information and Communications Technology

**Policy 4 Information and Communications Technology (ICT)** - It is the policy of the Council to promote and facilitate the sustainable development of a high-quality ICT network throughout the County in order to achieve balanced social and economic development, whilst protecting the amenities of urban and rural areas.

**IE4 Objective 1:** To promote and facilitate the provision of appropriate telecommunications infrastructure, including broadband connectivity and other innovative and advancing technologies within the County.

**IE4 Objective 2:** To co-operate with the relevant agencies to facilitate the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables in urban areas wherever possible, in the interests of visual amenity and public health.

**IE4 Objective 3:** To permit telecommunications antennae and support infrastructure throughout the County, subject to high quality design, the protection of sensitive landscapes and visual amenity.

**IE4 Objective 4:** To discourage a proliferation of telecommunication masts in the County and promote and facilitate the sharing of facilities.

**IE4 Objective 5:** To actively discourage the proliferation of above ground utility boxes throughout the County and to promote soft planting around existing ones and any new ones that cannot be installed below the surface to mitigate the impact on the area.

**IE4 Objective 6:** To require the identification of adjacent Public Rights of Way and established walking routes by applicants prior to any new telecommunication developments (including associated processes) and to prohibit telecommunications developments that impinge thereon or on recreational amenities, public access to the countryside or the natural environment.

### Section 9 – Heritage, Conservation and Landscapes

#### Sub-Section 9.1.2 – Protected Structures

**Policy 3 Protected Structures** - It is the policy of the Council to conserve and protect buildings, structures and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures and to carefully consider any proposals for development that would affect the special character or appearance of a Protected Structure including its historic curtilage, both directly and indirectly.

Having regard to all of the foregoing and when read in association with the supporting information as detailed in the accompanying Appendices, we confirm the following in respect to the proposed development at Existing Yard at Ballyroan Community and Youth Centre, Marian Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14:

**IE4 Objective 1** is satisfied as the proposed development will facilitate the delivery of a high-quality telecommunications infrastructure including broadband connectivity and other innovative and advancing technologies to the Ballyroan/Ballyboden area which will assist to promote economic growth and competitiveness and contribute to sustainable movement by reducing the need to travel through enabling e-working, e-commerce and distance learning County.

**IE4 Objective 2** is not a relevant consideration in respect of the particular circumstances of the proposed development.

**IE4 Objective 3** – It is accepted that the proposed development when viewed within the immediate local area is expected to create a high negative additional visual impact over that which already exists on site and it is considered that any impacts will be significant notwithstanding that the existing 12m high chimney flue generates an existing negative visual impact on the local visual resource. However, wider and more distant public and private views from the surrounding area are restricted by the existing built development in the local area and so any significant impacts are considered to be only localised.

**IE4 Objective 4** is satisfied. As detailed above and in the supporting technical justification (Refer to Appendix 5, the existing 4No. Telecoms sites within 1.22km (approx.) of the proposed site either do not provide for co-location opportunities or because of their distance cannot cover the specific target area with acceptable voice and data requirements or they are low in height such that coverage from this site is limited and could not cover the specific target area with acceptable voice and data requirements. As such, a site at the proposed location is required to meet Three Ireland's operational and coverage requirements for the Ballyroan/Ballyboden area and their customers therein. In addition, it is confirmed that the proposed structure is capable of providing site sharing opportunities for co-location of other operators' telecommunication apparatus.

**IE4 Objective 5** is satisfied. As detailed above, the proposed 2No. outdoor cabinets will be sited in a gated area adjacent to the existing building in the yard which ensures that this element of the proposal as far as practicable is wholly screened from any direct views which will assist to reduce some of the impact of the development in its local setting. The planting of soft landscaping in proximity to the cabinets will not be required.

**IE4 Objective 6** is satisfied. The application site is not located on any Right of Way. As such, the proposed development will not impinge thereon or on recreational amenities, public access to the countryside or the natural environment.

Having regard to all the foregoing, we contend that the proposed development complies with the telecommunication policies, objectives and guidelines of South Dublin County Council as defined by the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022.

#### **14. Summary**

As outlined in this cover letter and the attached Technical Justification, the proposed installation will allow Three Ireland to bring a significant improvement in voice and broadband services (indoor and outdoor) to the area. The proposed structure will allow multiple network operators to deploy 3G and high speed 4G broadband services and future 5G services. In addition to general coverage

enhancement in these areas, customers will also benefit from more choice of network operators for high-speed broadband and mobile data services leading to greater competition between the network operators and better options for the people in the area. The proposed development has been designed to meet the aims and objectives of national, regional, and local planning policy as detailed in the accompanying cover letter. It is submitted that the new structure can be accommodated into the urban setting but that there will be a localised impact on the visual resource over and above that which exists from the existing 12m high chimney flue. However, it is proposed to reduce any unacceptable visual impact by enclosing the telecommunications apparatus within a shroud to match the existing chimney flue. The installation therefore has been designed to meet the development plan objectives and policies and will assist in the delivery of improved telecommunications services this area.

In summary, it is submitted that the development is in accordance with the policies & objectives of the development plan in line with the government guidelines on siting telecommunications infrastructure.

Your Sincerely,

4Site.