



1 March 2023

Our reference: 603572

Council Ref: SD22A/0424

Bluebell Business Centre  
Old Naas Road  
Bluebell  
Dublin 12  
Ireland

Telephone: 01 244 4511  
[www.rskgroup.com](http://www.rskgroup.com)

Patricia Thornton  
Thornton O'Connor Town Planning  
1, Kilmacud Road Upper  
Dundrum  
Dublin 14  
Ireland

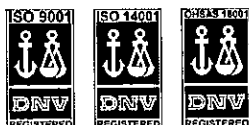
**RE: NATIONAL AMBULANCE BASE, GLEN ABBEY COMPLEX, BELGARD ROAD, DUBLIN 24.  
RFI RESPONSE NO.1, RELATING TO NOISE**

Dear Patricia,

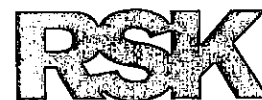
Please see below the RSK response to the South Dublin County Council (SDCC) Additional Information (AI) Request, Item 1. Which relates to the potential noise from Emergency Vehicle Sirens in the vicinity of the proposed National Ambulance Base site at Glen Abbey Complex, Belgard Road, Dublin 24.

**SDCC AI REQUEST:**

- 1. The Planning Authority is not satisfied with the applicants conclusion that the nature of the proposed use precludes any requirement for an assessment of potential noise impact from the ambulance sirens. In the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of any area it is critical to ensure that uses are not permitted that might conflict with existing and permitted uses in any given area. In this regard, the applicant is requested to submit a noise impact assessment for the operation of the facility, specifically assessing the likely noise associated with traffic movements throughout the day and night at the site. It should be clarified at what point/location will sirens be switched on when existing the site.*



RSK (Ireland) Ltd  
Registered office  
Spring Lodge • 172 Chester Road • Helsby • Cheshire • WA6 0AR • UK  
Registered in England No. 5857689  
[www.rskgroup.com](http://www.rskgroup.com)



## **RSK RESPONSE:**

Section 6.5 of the RSK Noise Impact Assessment Report (Ref. 603572 (01) dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2022) currently provides the following statement in relation to the potential sound from emergency vehicle sirens:

*"During the operation phase of the development, up to 30 ambulance movements per day are expected at peak level. The sound of ambulance emergency sirens can be expected to be audible as the emergency vehicles enter the R113 Belgard Road to the north of the site, when the road network is sufficiently busy such that the emergency sirens are required. Thus, it is anticipated that the sirens should not need to be turned on as frequently after peak evening traffic or overnight when the traffic levels will be much lower than the peak daytime periods. Thus, based on the HSE's experience of ambulance movements, sirens are much more likely to be required between the hours of 8am and 7pm, where they are less likely to disturb nearby properties.*

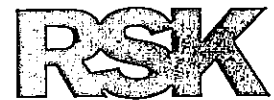
*The sound of emergency sirens is a requirement both in terms of reducing the Health and Safety risk to other road users, and to allow for a fast response and arrival of paramedics to the destination site. Therefore, due to the critical nature of the services offered by emergency vehicles that exit from this development, conducting a noise impact assessment of siren noise is not appropriate".*

Additional enquiries have been made to the National Ambulance Service Office of the Director of Operations, who have provided the following additional information (received via email of 2<sup>nd</sup> February) from William Merriman (Director of Operations):

*"We would not expect to see an increase on Siren usage from this location than what is already happening on the Belgard Road. Any Emergency Ambulance operated by NAS now has a pre-shift check at the beginning of each shift and this operates in silent mode where sirens are checked prior to going on duty, this allows they staff to check that sirens are working but can only be heard within the vehicle, so no noise from crews carrying out pre shift checks. It is also expected that the majority of crews would be relocated from this location during their shift to deployment points around Dublin which will not require vehicles at all times exiting the premises on Blue lights and sirens".*

Additional comments received from the Chief Assistant Technical Services Officer at the HSE Capital & Estates Office (received via email of 2<sup>nd</sup> February), as follows:

*"...the new Glen Abbey Ambulance Station would be a 'Hub' Location for 'Dynamic Deployment'. Essentially NAs have a number of smaller deployment points based throughout South Dublin Co Co and Dublin City (such as Ballyboden Primary Care) and at the start of a shift the ambulance crew would drive from Glen Abbey (the Hub) to the Dynamic Deployment location wait there to receive an emergency call and respond to the call from the dynamic deployment location. This is a different model to say Dublin Fire Brigade which deploy from the Fire Station. So the vehicle generally only returns back to the hub location at the end of their shift so there would in fact be very little 'blue light' response calls deployed from the Glen Abbey station itself".*



It is confirmed that the dynamic deployment locations are as follows:

- Coolock;
- Summerhill;
- Ballinteer;
- Cherryorchard, and;
- Finglas.

It is also noted that there are Regulations that permit the use of emergency sirens, *under necessary circumstances*, i.e. S.I. No. 694/2011 - Road Traffic (Requirement to have Audible Warning Devices on Vehicles) Regulations 2011, which state:

**A vehicle may be fitted with a bell, gong, siren or other strident-toned device where the vehicle is to be used—**

(a) by a member of the Garda Síochána in the performance of his or her duties,

(b) as a fire brigade vehicle,

**(c) by persons providing an ambulance service,**

(d) by the Irish Prison Service,

(e) as an Irish Coast Guard vehicle, with or without a trailer, or,

(f) for the delivery or collection of human transplant organs, human blood or human blood products,

(g) as a Marked Military Police Vehicle

**(4) When a vehicle referred to in sub-article (3) is being used for one of the purposes specified in that sub-article the bell, gong, siren or other strident toned device may be sounded only—**

**(a) if necessary in the circumstances**

[emphasis added]

In summary therefore, it is the RSK opinion that, due to the critical nature of the services offered by emergency vehicles, assessing the potential noise impact of necessary siren use is not appropriate. However, additional correspondence and information received from the National Ambulance Service Office and the HSE Capital & Estates Office has confirmed the following:

- An increase in siren usage, in comparison to the current site operation at the Glen Abbey National Ambulance Base, is not expected;
- All pre-shift siren checks will operate in silent mode (i.e. where sirens can only be heard within the vehicle) prior to vehicles going on duty;



- The new Glen Abbey National Ambulance Base will act as a 'Hub' Location for 'Dynamic Deployment'. The majority of ambulance crews will therefore be relocated from the 'Hub' to smaller deployment points around Dublin.
- These deployments will not require ambulance vehicles exiting the premises with sirens operational.
- Ambulance vehicles generally only return back to the 'Hub' at the end of their shift. Therefore, there will be limited 'blue light' response calls deployed from the Glen Abbey National Ambulance Base station.

I trust the above information is of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned should you require any additional information.

Yours sincerely,  
**For RSK Ireland Limited**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Mangan".

James Mangan  
**Associate Director (Acoustics)**