

# Physical Overview And Analysis

Extracts  
for  
Southill









## 4. Physical Overview and Analysis

### 4.4 Southill

Southill is located in the southern fringe of Limerick City centre. The Masterplan aims to 'redefine the south city as a distinctive and popular neighbourhood. This new image and identity will transform Limerick's Southside into a place where people will aspire to live and feel that they belong, and help secure long term regeneration in the area'. Despite a distance of less than 1.5 km from the Roxboro roundabout to the city centre, the area is poorly connected to the city with one principal access road (R511) due to the severance effect of the railway line. This key route is in need of improvement and upgrade.

#### 4.4.1 Existing Physical Context

##### Land Use

The predominant land use in the regeneration area of Southill is residential. As stated in the baseline analysis, the houses in this area generally consist of low density, council developed estates dating from the 1960s.

The estates incorporate four residential areas, namely Carew Park, Kincora Park, Keyes Park and O'Malley Park, with a hotel, commercial and retail outlets, the Limerick Enterprise Development Park (LEDP) complex, Roxboro Shopping Centre, Galvone Industrial Estate, Southill House (Community and Enterprise Campus), schools and community buildings, Rathbane Golf Club, football clubs and areas of open space.

There is significant vacancy within the Galvone Industrial Estate as is detailed from Figure 1.30 Existing Land Uses. As older manufacturing units became obsolete and closed within the Galvone Industrial Estate, new industrial opportunities were provided elsewhere. What remains, in general, are smaller industrial enterprises and storage/distribution facilities. Antisocial behaviour, may be amongst the causes which has prevented any serious re-investment in the estate.

##### Housing Size and Conditions

Southill was constructed in various phases from 1966 to 1989. Today, the condition of the building stock varies significantly, with a number of areas containing well maintained houses and other areas displaying high levels of dereliction.

A significant amount of demolition work has occurred within O'Malley and Keyes Parks, which contained a significant amount of dereliction and burnt out



Figure 1.29: Southill in Context



Figure 1.30: Existing Land Use



houses. The image of this area needs to be radically altered to ensure successful regeneration. In terms of design, the majority of houses are two-storey, two bay structures with small front gardens or paved parking areas entered via individual gates, with linear gardens to the rear.

A typical house layout (approx 78m<sup>2</sup>) in Southill consists of a ground floor layout of a kitchen/dining area and a living area. The upper floor consists of 3 bedrooms and a bathroom.

These houses are typically red brick cavity wall-terraced or end-terraced houses with replacement double glazed windows, a gas boiler and open fire for heating. Further information on the works required to

achieve an acceptable energy rating are described as part of the refurbishment strategies for each of the regeneration areas in Volume 2.

#### Public Realm

In terms of public realm, Southill is characterised by the following physical features:

- Poor accessibility with adjacent neighbourhoods which has resulted in Southill becoming physically, economically and socially isolated
- The Radburn<sup>2</sup> layouts that characterise Southill create a place that is difficult to navigate
- Poorly observed rear courts (as part of the Radburn layouts)
- Poorly observed and confusing pedestrian routes
- Over-provision of underutilised public open space
- Previous demolition activity in O' Malley Park has left significant areas of open space without a clear role or function, which have become hotspots for dumping and grazing of horses
- The quality of the public realm is compromised by the tethering of horses
- Several under-used and vacant infill housing sites, which currently detract from the overall appearance of the estate
- Due to the demolition of some blocks to date, the layout of the houses provide exposed boundaries which provide little in the way of natural surveillance. This undermines the safety and security of the area



Figure 1.31: Existing Land Use

<sup>2</sup> Radburn layout are layouts designed to separate housing from the roads and footpaths and therefore the housing appears front-to-back with a lack of through-routes and clear movement for both pedestrians and car users. This creates a neighbourhood which can be difficult to police and to manage successfully.



## 4. Physical Overview and Analysis

### 4.4.2 Existing Movement

Southill, as identified by the Masterplan, is bounded by the railway line to the west. John Carew Road runs in a north/south direction and forms a T-Junction with Childers Road. There is a single access point from John Carew Road into Carew Park and Kincora Park estates. However this is only accessible to traffic travelling out of the city. A further access point from John Carew Road accesses the hotel and commercial area located at the corner site of the junction with the Childers Road. Childers Road runs in an east/west direction, to the north of it lies the Roxboro Shopping Centre and further residential dwellings of Janesboro, to the south the LEDP offices. Roxboro roundabout forms the four-way intersection between the Roxboro Road and the Childers Road, which continues on in an east/west direction.

The Roxboro Road runs in a north/south direction from the Roxboro Roundabout and gives access to the Galvone Industrial Estate, Keyes Park and O'Malley Park on the east and Kincora Park and Southill House on the west. The Roxboro roundabout, in its current condition, is design predominantly for the movement of the vehicle.

The Rosbrien Interchange (M7) in the southwest corner adjacent to the site, in its current design, only allows for vehicular traffic coming from the west to access the Southill area.

Inbound access from the south (M20) or east (M7) to Southill is a crucial element of the regeneration process. This could severely restrict the viability and vitality of the Southill area. Local movement, as is highlighted on Figure 1.30, is restricted due to the cul-de-sac nature of existing developments. Three existing bus routes currently serve the area. Limerick City Council has also carried out a comprehensive Corridor Selection Study and has identified three Green Route Corridors linking the outskirts of Limerick City with the City Centre. The eastern corridor runs along the M7 connecting to the Childers Road, which runs in a north-south direction connecting to the Kilmallock Road Roundabout and continuing on into town. The Kilmallock Roundabout skirts the north-eastern point of the Southill area therefore connections and pedestrian routes need to be made available from Southill to this junction in order to avail of and utilise the proposed green routes infrastructure. Another future option in promoting a direct strategic transport

connection would be to connect the proposed Eastern and Southern Corridors, continuing along the Childers Road, servicing the entire Southill area and connecting to the Ballinacurra Road at the western end of the Childers Road. This will have a positive effect on the economic potential<sup>3</sup> (faster and more reliable work journeys, productivity gains, increased potential for clustering of activities) of strategic sites within Southill at the Galvone Industrial Estate.

The Roxborough Road and the Roxboro roundabout are predominantly designed for the movement of vehicles which isolates Southill from its wider physical context. It is a key objective of the LRFIP to create a traffic-calmed street where the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users are prioritised. The existing Childers Road contains, to its southern edge, a large isolated industrial area with no direct connections. The future image of the Childers Road needs to be carefully considered through new uses and development typologies with active frontage, increased permeability and landscaping improvements. This will assist in de-isolating Southill from its wider physical context.



Figure 1.32: Existing Movement

Larkin Drive, O'Malley Park, Southill



3 Department for Transport (UK) (2005), Transport, Wider Economic Benefits, and Impacts on GDP, Technical Paper.



Public Transport

Section 3.1.7 Transport of Section 3.0 Baseline Conditions and Analysis highlights that in common with other regeneration areas, Southill exhibits low levels of car usage with a high percentage of private households having no car (43%) and a very high use of public transport (14%) which is higher than the city average (7%). Therefore, the continuing provision of a good quality public transport system will be essential for the regeneration of the area given the high usage.

4.4.3 Topography

The topographical area consists of undulating lands. The most elevated part of the Southill regeneration area is O'Malley Park to the east, including lands in the vicinity of St. Enda's Community College. From Southill House and O'Malley Park the gradients fall towards Rathbane Golf Course, and Barry's Field where low lying lands exist. The gradient within the Galvone Industrial Estate rises to the east.

4.4.4 Geology

Based on the available information from the Geological Survey of Ireland. Southill is shown to be underlain by Dinantian Pure Bedded Limestones which is defined as a dark fine limestone and calcareous shale.

4.4.5 Soils

The GSI (Geological Survey of Ireland) Teagasc Sub- Soil database demonstrates that soil types found within the study area range from Marine/Estuarine Silts and Clays, Till derived from Limestone, Made Ground and Bedrock.

An old limestone quarry is located within Southill, south of Keyes Park and east of Roxboro Road and was previously used as a landfill for domestic waste. It was closed in 1987. A preliminary investigation was carried out for leachate and gas emissions and the landfill has been registered on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) database in compliance with legislation. A thorough investigation has never been carried out as funding is not available and the council has no plans to do this. The landfill would need to go through this process in order to be certified by the EPA. The outcome of which would probably require a more substantial cap.

The groundwater map for Southill indicates that vulnerability within the study area to be mainly "High

to Low." "Extreme" small pockets where rock is near the surface exists to the north and northeast of the study area.

4.4.6 Flooding & Drainage

A desktop study was carried out to determine the flooding risks involved within the study area. Information from the Office of Public Works' National Flood Hazard Mapping indicates that a couple of small areas can be prone to some localised flooding as indicated in figure 1.32. The issue of localised flooding will be adequately dealt with during redevelopment through the incorporation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs). The Limerick City Development Plan 2010-2016, does not indicate any areas within Southill that are at risk from flooding. Surface water run-off from any proposed development will be subject to pollution control and attenuation before it is discharged to the receiving water.

4.4.7 Water, Sewerage and Drainage Infrastructure

All main services such as water, sewage, gas, Eircom and electricity are available in the area. An infrastructural survey was carried out by Tobin Consulting Engineers to ascertain the extent and location of existing services in Southill and this information is contained within Appendix 7 of this document. All services are available adjacent to the site in the footpaths along the surrounding roadways. However, some services such as surface water sewers traverse sites scheduled for proposed replacement housing in the short term. The cost of redirecting these services have been accounted for at the planning and cost appraisal stage.

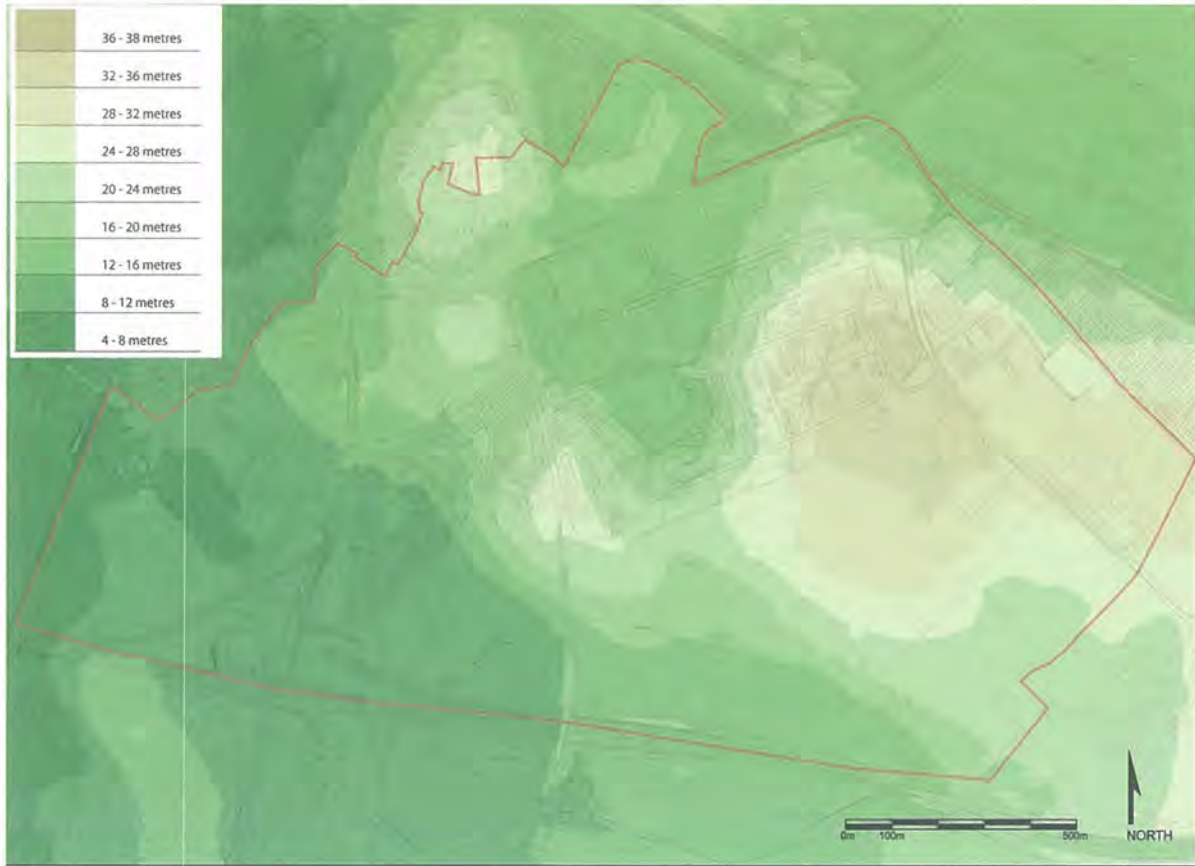


Figure 1.33: Existing Contours



## 4. Physical Overview and Analysis

### 4.4.8 Environmental Parameters

Southill is an urban edge location, leading from an area characterised by suburban residential development towards open countryside with the M7 route acting as the boundary to this division. Figure 1.33 sets out the overall environmental parameters in Southill including trees and hedgerows, wetlands, drains and ditches, architectural and archaeological heritage features. There are no identified statutory environmental designations.

Southill House demesne located along the Roxboro Road contains significant mature tree groups consisting of Holm's Oak, elm trees, sycamore, yew and some hawthorn and holly with evidence of a rookery creating a scenic landscape. Smaller clusters or bands of trees are noted at other locations within Southill. They are located at:

- at the primary school by O'Malley Park,
- the boundary of the Golf Course,
- St. Enda's School,
- the eastern end of the Galvone Industrial Estate.

### 4.4.9 Architectural Heritage

Southill House is listed on the NIAH survey, providing a range of services to the community, small enterprise development including businesses based on cooperative/social economy projects. It would be important to retain the setting and curtilage of the house.

### 4.4.10 Archaeological Heritage

There are a number of local sites of archaeological heritage within Southill most of which are located along the southern boundary by the M7 route and have been dealt with in the M7 Environmental Impact Statement report. One other site of archaeological heritage is located to the northeast of the existing golf course. It should be noted that all monuments recorded have to some degree been encroached on by existing built interventions.



Figure 1.34: Environmental Parameters

Valley View Green Area not accessible by car, O'Malley Park, Southill

Valley View Green Area, O'Malley Park, Southill





#### 4.4.10 Existing Open Space

Figure 1.34 outlines the passive and active open space within Southill. Current passive/parkland open space quality is poor within Southill. The open spaces have little or no amenity function, being disjointed and suffering from a perceived lack of safety. A number of spaces have been boarded up and closed off for access and in general the area is bereft of facilities such as seating, playgrounds etc. There is a need for a considered inclusive open space strategy for the regeneration areas.

There are a number of sports pitches within Southill that have varying degrees of auxiliary facilities such as changing rooms, gyms, etc. There is a pitch on lands south of the Maldron Hotel with no facilities and Kennedy Park to the north provides pitches and walkways offering good links to the school. St. Enda's School in the east provides sporting facilities by way of playing fields, there is also a gym and swimming pool which closed in 2010. Rathbane Public Golf Club provides a strong, positive amenity for the area.

Carew Football Club have their facilities within Barry's Field and Hogan Park to the west is a currently under utilised stadium, with a local club operating out of the stadium.



Figure 1.35: Existing Open Space



## 4. Physical Overview and Analysis

### 4.4.11 Planning Context

The following are the local objectives set out in the Limerick City Development Plan 2010-2016 that the Southill Framework Plan shall address:

- The re-establishment of the N7/N20 Rosbrien interchange into Southill to establish Southill as a gateway to the city centre.
- To develop the Roxboro Shopping Centre and adjacent lands as a mixed use district centre in accordance with the Retail Strategy
- To develop the existing commercial and industrial lands along the south boundary of the Childers Road for mixed use employment related development.
- To develop a mobility strategy for the area connecting the residential zones to the district centre and employment zones and amenity area.
- To develop a new educational campus to serve the needs of the entire area.
- To develop an amenity strategy for the area.
- To establish the need for additional local shopping facilities throughout the area.
- To identify strategic sites for the construction of landmark/gateway buildings.
- The framework plans shall be approved by the City Council and they shall form the basis of a variation to the zoning proposals contained in this plan.

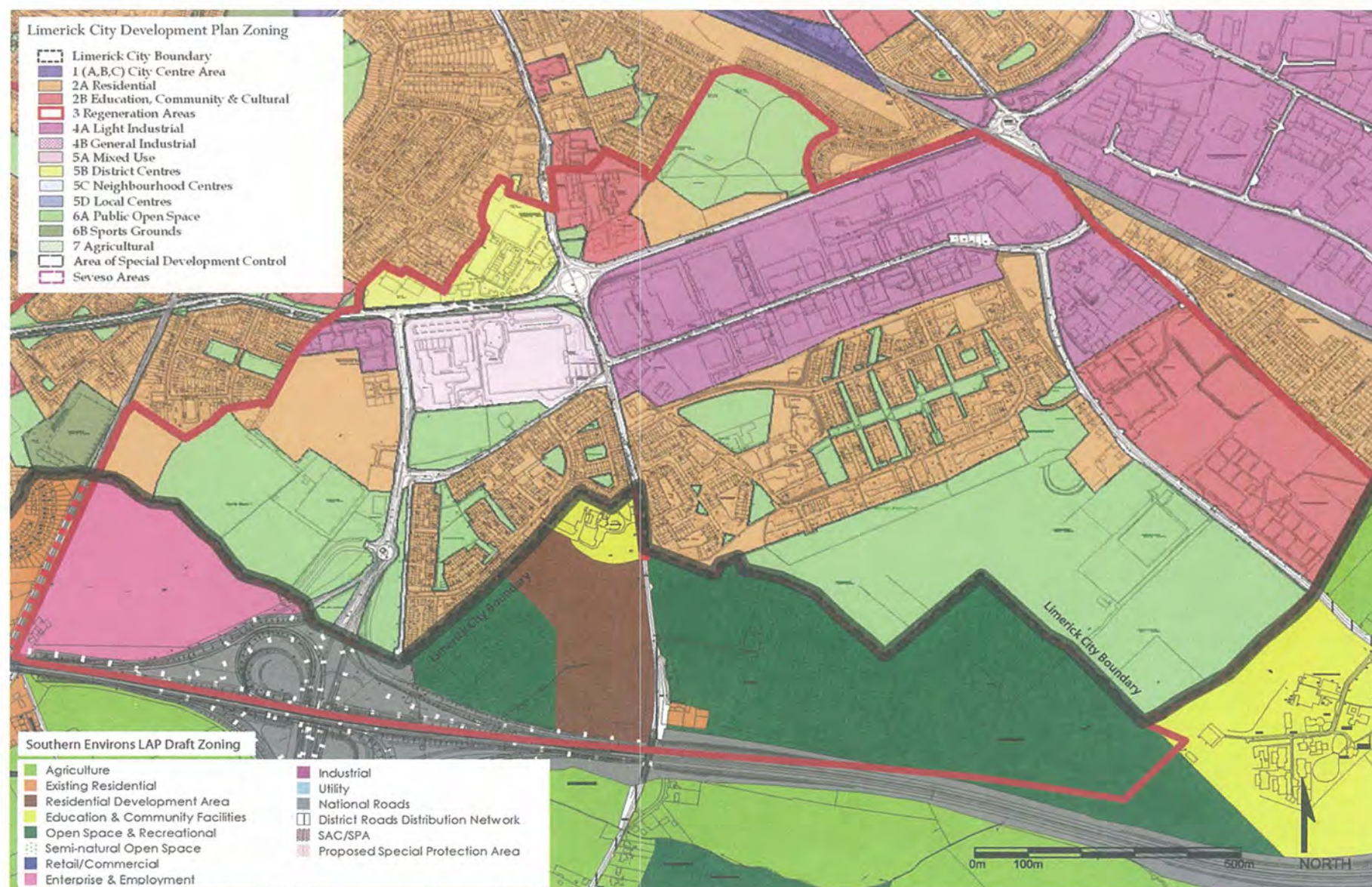


Figure 1.36: Land Use Zoning Map extracted from the Limerick City Development Plan 2010-2016



#### 4.4.12 Key Challenges and Opportunities

##### Key Challenges

###### Land Use

The following key challenges in relation to land use exist within Southill:

- How to encourage development of the fallow areas in O'Malley and Keyes Park that once contained housing in the short-medium term.
- How to promote the revitalisation of the Galvone Industrial Estate, especially to the eastern end and which consists of lands outside public ownership.

###### Movement

The following key challenges in relation to movement and permeability exist within Southill:

- The lack of strategic access into Southill from the M7 motorway. This greatly limits possible opportunities to attract employment into the area and acts as a barrier to permeability.
- Roxboro roundabout represents a key challenge to pedestrian and cycle movement.
- The existing cul-de-sac layout of the estates and limited ingress and egress points presents a key challenge to internal permeability.
- The lack of connectivity to the wider area, including the University of Limerick to the northeast, presents a key challenge

###### Open Space

The following key challenges in relation to open space exist within Southill:

- Routes and open spaces faced by rear gardens, which provide no 'eyes on the street' thus facilitating anti-social behaviour.
- The perceived lack of safety within existing public open spaces.
- The lack of active play facilities for children under 15 years old within each of the estates.

###### Soils

The following key challenge in relation to soils exist within Southill:

- The landfill located south of Keyes Park presents a key challenge to future development, even low intervention development. Certification from the EPA is required prior to any development taking place.

##### Physical Character

The following key challenges exist in Southill in relation to the physical realm:

- Poor accessibility with adjacent neighbourhoods which has resulted in Southill becoming physically, economically and socially isolated
- The Radburn layouts that characterise Southill create a place that is difficult to navigate
- Poorly observed rear courts (as part of the Radburn layouts)
- Poorly observed and confusing pedestrian routes
- Over-provision of underutilised public open space \*
- Previous demolition activity in O' Malley Park has left significant areas of open space without a clear role or function, which have become hotspots for dumping and grazing of horses
- The quality of the public realm is compromised by the tethering of horses
- Several under-used and vacant infill housing sites, which currently detract from the overall appearance of the estate
- Due to the demolition of some blocks to date, the layout of the houses provide exposed boundaries which provide little in the way of natural surveillance. This undermines the safety and security of the area

##### Key Opportunities

###### Movement

There is an opportunity to increase permeability between Southill and the wider district at the following locations:

- From Keyes/O Malley Park to the Childers Road
- From the existing M7 motorway to Southill (a number of options will need to be tested for viability in consultation with the Roads Office and NRA)
- From Bawnmore Road eastwards to the University of Limerick

There is an opportunity to increase permeability within Southill at the following locations:

- Through Carew Park
- From Collins Avenue to Kincora Park
- South of Southill House connecting Collins Avenue to Maigue Way
- Connecting Collins Avenue to Southill Area Centre south of Keyes Park

##### Open Space

There is an opportunity to:

- Exploit significant views across the city from Southill House and lands in the vicinity that command an elevated position.
- Retain existing treestands for screening purposes at:
  - Southill House
  - the primary school by O'Malley Park,
  - the boundary of the Golf Course,
  - St. Enda's School,
  - the eastern end of the Galvone Industrial Estate.
- There is also an opportunity to develop a comprehensive assessment of recreational facilities within the district leading to a consolidation of facilities.
- There is an opportunity to develop options to design new buildings to front open space and maximise the potential for overlooking, thus ensuring the area's safety and security.

##### Topography

There is a key opportunity to exploit existing viewpoints and topography at key locations within Southill.

##### Historic Character

There is an opportunity to:

- Retain and protect the setting and curtilage of Southill House.

##### Physical Character

There is an opportunity to:

- Restructure the existing layout to address gap sites
- Develop existing poor quality frontage sites and vacant land to improve visual quality
- Consider intensive interventions to remove units to improve legibility and permeability
- Address existing poor housing conditions
- Address the lack of integration between areas of new and existing housing
- Remove environmental black spots to the rear of blocks
- Develop streetscape improvements to enhance the public realm and create pedestrian friendly environments
- Provide additional soft landscaping to soften the existing hardness of the public realm
- Introduce new frontage development to non-overlooked routes