

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Former home of Smithwicks Brewery set to become a vibrant new urban quarter in the heart of Kilkenny City**

Acquired by Kilkenny County Council in 2016, the 10 acre site that until 2013 housed Diageo's Smithwicks Brewery is set to become a vibrant urban quarter in the heart of Kilkenny city. Taking its name from the remains of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Franciscan Abbey, which will form a central feature of the development, Abbey Quarter will be a living and working destination for the local community as well as international and national businesses.

The vision of the detailed masterplan and design guidelines adopted by Kilkenny County Council to guide the development of the site is for Abbey Quarter to seamlessly complement the medieval city as an inclusive place for an inter-generational community to work, live and play.

The masterplan for the entirety of the development includes:

- 14 new blocks creating a new urban quarter to complement the existing city centre.
- Capacity for almost 60,000m<sup>2</sup> (645,000ft<sup>2</sup>) of mixed use residential, commercial, retail, education and civic space.
- New public, landscaped spaces including a new 2.5 acre public plaza/urban park at St. Francis Abbey
- Refurbishment of the old Brewhouse to provide almost 4,450m<sup>2</sup> (47,850ft<sup>2</sup>) of unique, grade A office space.
- A new linear park running along the banks of the River Nore.
- Conservation of historic buildings on the site including St. Francis Abbey

In advance of launching the Abbey Quarter scheme, the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Heather Humphreys, TD, said *"I am delighted to announce that €12.3m in development loan finance has been allocated through the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF) to regenerate the old brewery site into top-class office accommodation. Without a doubt, this will be hugely attractive to indigenous and foreign investors alike. The city's local economy has come on in leaps and bounds in recent times, and this initiative is an opportunity to build on all that has been achieved to the benefit of the entire region. I am confident that Kilkenny has the talented workforce, connectivity and cultural offering needed to attract new investments from near and far."*

*"This is an exceptional opportunity for Kilkenny,"* says Chief Executive, Colette Byrne. *"Kilkenny has so much to offer the international, national and local business. Abbey Quarter is a unique city centre site beside the River Nore, nestled between the imposing Kilkenny Castle and the 12<sup>th</sup> century St. Canices Cathedral. The redevelopment of the Brewhouse and Mayfair will be complemented by investment in high quality public realm by Kilkenny County Council. The new public spaces will become the backdrop to the many renowned Kilkenny Festivals."* According to Ms Byrne, *"today's announcement will see a total investment of over €17million on the site in the next 18-24 months. This, coupled with investment of over €11million in infrastructure to open up a new neighbourhood for up to 3000 housing units, schools along with parks and other local amenities, only 10 minutes from Abbey Quarter, make this a really positive time for Kilkenny city."*

Eugene O'Callaghan, Director of the ISIF stated that *"ISIF's unique mandate has enabled it to partner with Kilkenny County Council on the development of the Kilkenny Abbey Quarter site. ISIF is very pleased to have agreed commercial terms on the construction finance for the delivery of modern offices in the Brewhouse and Mayfair buildings which will kick start the redevelopment of this site in the centre of*

*Kilkenny City. Following execution of legal documentation we expect construction to commence in Q4 2018."*

With interest in the development already strong, Aoife O'Neill of Lisney, agent for the development remarked, *"Abbey Quarter is attracting businesses looking to provide their employees with something more than just a place to work, this is an exceptional location for companies seeking outstanding global connectivity and the capacity to attract high calibre talent."*

Chairperson of the Partnership, Billy Murphy (former Deputy Managing Director of Glanbia PLC) stated that partnering with the ISIF is a vote of national confidence in this project. According to Murphy, *"Abbey Quarter will be completed on a phased basis, commencing with Brewhouse and The Mayfair which together will provide almost 6,000sq.m of Grade A lettable space."*

*Brewhouse* will be the first building to be developed and will provide a range of flexible grade A office options. The building can be let in its entirety, as 3 separate floors (average 1,480m<sup>2</sup> – 15,940ft<sup>2</sup>) or up to 12 office suites varying from 302m<sup>2</sup> (3,250ft<sup>2</sup>) to 480m<sup>2</sup> (5,170ft<sup>2</sup>). The new building is designed to achieve LEED gold standard. Originally the centre of brewing operations, it is located beside the old abbey and has frontage on to Horse Barrack Lane which is being completely re-landscaped to provide high quality public space, all within a few minutes walk from High St. in the centre of the city.

The *Mayfair*, originally built as a ballroom is steeped in local heritage and once refurbished will offer almost 1,540m<sup>2</sup> (16,576ft<sup>2</sup>) of naturally ventilated, well-lit and flexible office space and form a gateway to the Abbey Quarter. The north side of the building is close to the old city walls which followed the river Breagagh. The renovation works will be sympathetic to its location at the "Watergate" which connected the old city centred on the castle and the less prosperous Irishtown centred on St Canice's Cathedral.

The Abbey Quarter development will be launched to the Media by the Minister for Business, Enterprise, and Innovation, Heather Humphreys, TD, on Wednesday, July 4<sup>th</sup> 2018 at 9:00am.

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