

**Westmeath County  
Council**

**Clonmellon Village Plan  
2004-2010**

**Adopted April 2005**

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## INTRODUCTION

### **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This Plan has been prepared as a Local Area Plan in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and subsequent amendments. The plan was adopted on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2005.
- 1.2 The Plan takes the form of a Written Statement, and accompanying Zoning Plan and Townscape Proposals Map. If any conflict or ambiguity arises between what is contained in the written statement and the supporting plans, the written statement will take precedence.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Plan is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies and set out a framework for the future development of the village over the plan period 2004-2010.
- 1.4 The need for this Plan has arisen because of the unprecedented demand for residential development land in the Clonmellon area and the need to properly plan for future expansion of the village in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner. Clonmellon has been identified as a priority settlement for growth in the County Development Plan 2002.
- 1.5 This Plan has been prepared within the context of Agenda 21 and the need for sustainable development to protect the environment for future generations.

### **NATIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY CONTEXT**

- 1.6 In preparing this plan regard has been given to national and regional trends. In particular, consideration has been given to the recently published National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020. The purpose for this 20-year strategy is to provide a sustainable policy framework for balanced social and economic development and population growth for the island of Ireland. The National Spatial Strategy is adopted government policy and as such is a principal material planning consideration for local planning authorities. County Development Plans, Local Area Plans and Village Plans are to be made fully consistent with the Strategy.
- 1.7 In relation to County Westmeath, the towns of Athlone and Mullingar have been identified as hubs and form part of a Midlands Gateway along with Tullamore in County Offaly. These designated hubs are to accommodate the bulk of services for the area, while particular emphasis is placed on strengthening and sustaining existing settlements of the smaller towns and villages in the county. The role of

towns and villages such as Clonmellon is to take pressure off development in the open countryside and channel it into more sustainable and compact forms. The Strategy advocates that such settlements grow in an orderly and planned fashion with particular emphasis on avoiding features such as urban sprawl, creating a high standard of urban design, promoting compact, public transport friendly, sustainable urban/village areas.

#### **REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDELINES**

- 1.8 Consideration has also been given to the recently adopted Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines, which identified Clonmellon as a “local service town” within the Central Development Area of the Midlands Region. The purpose of such local service towns is to act as a focus for development within the midland region to assist in the consolidation of the region’s growth, whilst providing for sustainable and viable rural communities.

#### **COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTENT**

- 1.9 The County Development Plan is the statutory development plan for the County of Westmeath in the years 2002 – 2008. It supersedes the 1994 County Development Plan.
- 1.10 The Plan identifies a framework for the sustainable physical development of the County, while ensuring the conservation and protection of the built environment.
- 1.11 The development strategy for the County is largely consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and seeks to direct growth to the County’s largest settlements, those being Mullingar and Athlone, as well as to towns and serviced villages with the capacity to absorb further development. A number of priority towns and villages have been identified in the Development Plan. Priority settlements have been selected on the basis of:
- (i) the size of the centre and the range of services available;
  - (ii) the availability of water and sewerage facilities;
  - (iii) the level of residential demand; and
  - (iv) the availability of suitable building land.
- 1.12 Clonmellon has been identified as a priority settlement for development where development pressure can be channelled in a sustainable manner.

#### **STRATEGIC AIM OF THE VILLAGE PLAN**

*TO SET OUT A CLEAR FRAMEWORK FOR THE NEXT SIX YEARS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF CLONMELLON IDENTIFYING SUFFICIENT SUITABLE LANDS FOR FUTURE HOUSING, INDUSTRY, COMMERCE, OPEN SPACE USES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES WHILST PROTECTING AND PRESERVING THE VILLAGE'S INTRINSIC CHARACTER, HERITAGE AND AMENITY AND MAKING A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN QUALITY OF LIFE.*

- 1.13 The Village Plan sets out policy statements and objectives that respond to specific development issues affecting Clonmellon. The zoning provisions are indicated on the Zoning Plan, see Map 1. A flexible zoning policy is considered appropriate for Clonmellon, given the size and function of the village. It is the intention of the Planning Authority that the zoning of particular areas for a particular use shall not in itself exclude other uses in that area provided they are compatible with the dominant use.
- 1.14 The zoning objectives, matrix content and development control standards are included in the County Development Plan.
- 1.15 The Village Plan addresses the existing townscape quality of the central core of Clonmellon and identifies opportunities for environmental enhancement of the commercial area. Environmental Improvement Proposals are indicated on the Townscape Appraisal Plan, see Map 2.
- 1.16 In general the Village Plan for Clonmellon is designed to promote certainty and focus and direct development to appropriate locations. It is within the framework of the plan that public services will be provided and investment decisions made. This Plan should be read in conjunction with relevant policies and objectives of the County Development Plan.
- 1.17 Under the provisions of Section 1.2 (V) of the County Development Plan, Westmeath County Development Board has produced the County Development Strategy. The Strategy outlines the economic, social and cultural development of Westmeath over the next 10 years, between 2002-2012. Westmeath County Council is committed to ensuring that the visions, goals and objectives of the Strategy are implemented through the Council's policy statements and documents including this Village Plan.

#### **GOALS OF THE PLAN**

- 1.18 The overall strategic goals of the Plan are as follows:
  - To implement the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan.

- To sustain and enhance the role of Clonmellon as a community and commercial service centre to the surrounding rural hinterland.
- To sustain Clonmellon's role within county Westmeath, within context of role identified in Regional Planning Guidelines.
- To provide for the orderly expansion of the village.
- To ensure that sufficient and suitably located land is identified to meet the land use needs of the various functions of the village over the plan period.
- To facilitate the provision of employment generating land to afford the opportunity to live and work within the village.
- To ensure that the necessary road infrastructure, public utilities and services, recreational and community facilities are available to satisfy the development needs of the village whether provided by the developer, by way of joint venture with the Local Authority or by the Local Authority itself.
- To facilitate the provision of improved amenities within the village, and to secure the redevelopment and renewal of obsolete areas.
- To secure safe and convenient movement corridors within the area, including pedestrian and cycle paths.

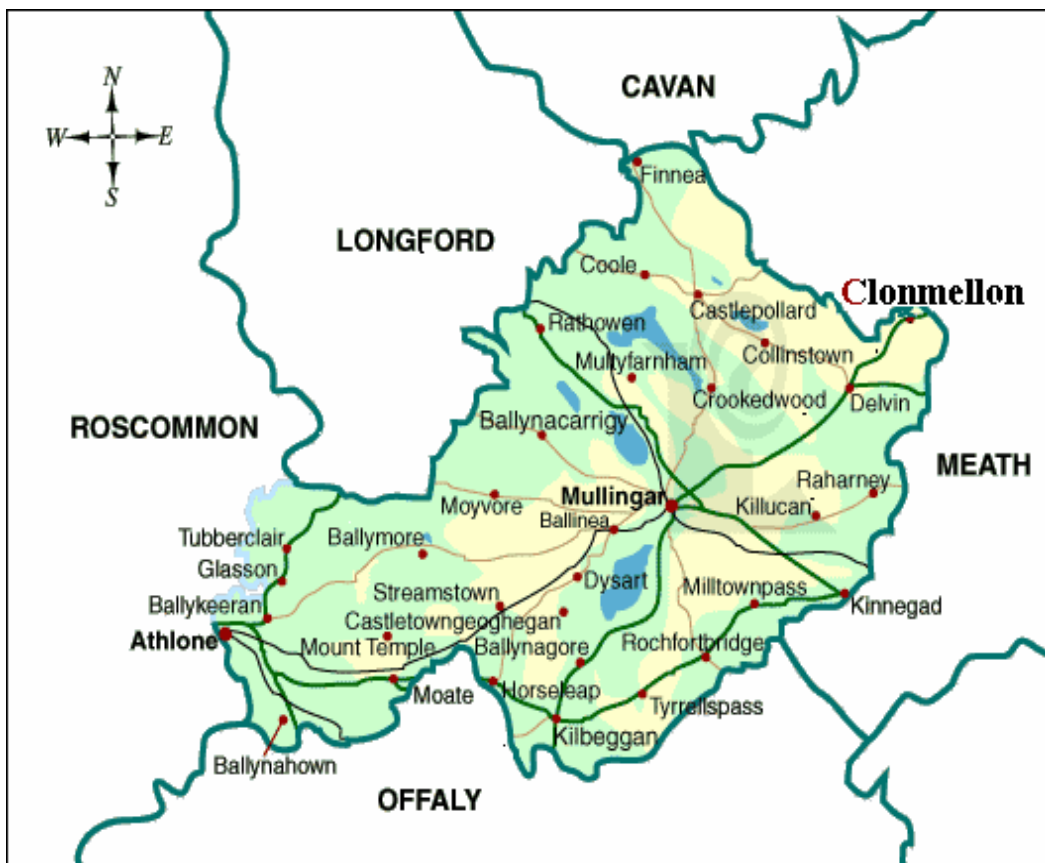
## 2. PROFILE AND RESOURCE BASE

### CONTEXT

- 2.1 This plan covers the settlements Clonmellon is located to the north east of the county. It is bisected by the N52. Clonmellon is located approximately 18 mile/ 29 kilometres northeast of Mullingar on the N52, 4 miles/ 6.5 kilometres from Athboy and 8 miles/ 13 kilometres from Kells, Co Meath. The village occupies a pleasant site amongst undulating hills, and there is an abundance of good mature vegetation around the settlement

### CHARACTER & DESCRIPTION

- 2.2 Clonmellon is a picturesque rural village with wide streets and a charming street frontage. The village is historically a market town, the wide street through the village, which is currently part of the N52 is consistent with the design of market towns and villages throughout the country.
- 2.3 The village has a distinctive broad main street, which up to its demise as a market town focused activity on the Market Square. The market was held on the Tuesday of each week and was complimented by four seasonal fairs in January, May, July



and September.

- 2.4 Clonmellon takes its name from a nearby moat, Cruckmullen. Situated in the demesne of Killua and part of the ancient barony of Delvin, Clonmellon was built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by Sir Benjamin Chapman and abuts the Killua Castle estate where he resided. By 1837 Clonmellon was established as a market and post town. It is located in the parish of Killua barony of Delvin. The Church of Saints Peter and Paul was built in 1808 on land offered by the Chapman family on condition that the church lands would not open onto the main street. The church itself is a plain building with a detached belfry, a reminder of the penal law prohibiting the use of bells for catholic worship.

### **Killua Castle and Parklands**

- 2.5 Killua castle was built in 1780 by Sir Benjamin Chapman, 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet. The castle is a handsome castellated building standing on the eastern outskirts of Clonmellon on the site of what was once a preceptory of Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. The castle was improved and enlarged in 1820 and was one of the most outstanding mansions in Westmeath. It has had its roof removed and was a ruin until recently until permission was given for its refurbishment. The house has extensive grounds, an interesting feature of which is an obelisk to Sir Walter Raleigh, a cousin of the founder of the Chapman family of Ireland. The castle is also associated with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century character Lawrence of Arabia. Many objects of antiquarian and historic interest were formerly housed in Killua castle.

### **Ballinlough Castle**

- 2.6 Ballinlough Castle is a picturesquely situated baronial residence, which is situated about two miles/3.2 kilometres south of Clonmellon. The castle was property of the O'Reilly family for four generations, who were descendants of the princely house of east Breffini. A golf club now exists on the grounds of the castle.

### **POPULATION**

<b>1986</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>Percentage Increase 1996-2002</b>	<b>Projected Population for year 2004/5</b>
334	295	272	403	48.2	691

- 2.7 During the period 1986 to 1996 there was a considerable decrease in population, which totalled –19%. During the period 1996-2002 the village experienced an actual increase of 131 persons or a percentage increase of 48.2%. This is a significant increase for a village of its size and is largely due to a surge of people coming from the Greater Dublin Area settling in Clonmellon while commuting to Dublin.

## **VILLAGE FUNCTIONS**

- 2.8 Over much of their history towns and villages of the Irish countryside such as Clonmellon have been vital economic and cultural hubs, profoundly influencing, as well as being influenced by their rural hinterlands. The challenge into the future is to sustain and enhance the viability and diversity of such settlements by pursuing their appropriate development and growth.
- 2.9 Clonmellon is a service centre for the rural hinterland. It provides educational, religious, commercial, employment, financial and administrative functions for the village and the rural hinterland.
- 2.10 Clonmellon has three grocers (Leonard's, which is also a newsagent and hardware provider, Fitzsimon's and Londis). St. Scire's credit union provides financial services to the community and is open for business every Tuesday, Friday and on Saturday half day. The Post office provides administrative and financial services to the village. There are three pubs in the village; Mulvaney's Public House and B&B, Clonmellon Bar, and Fitzsimon's. Friery's provide auto services to the locality. The Old Market Square Coffee Shop and the Burger Hut provide a restaurant facility to the locality.
- 2.11 There are a number of churches located within the village; these include St Peter's & Paul's RC, and St John's CoI, which has been deconsecrated. Permission has been given for extension for a residence to St John's. The graveyard surrounding this church is still a 'public' area. The catholic graveyard is also nearby on the opposite side to St Peter's & Paul's.
- 2.12 There is currently one National school in Clonmellon, Cluain Maolain attended by some 214 pupils. There is no secondary school in the village. Second Level students attend schools in Mullingar, Kells and Athboy. It is envisaged that as Clonmellon will experience further growth, provision should be made for the availability of land for the future expansion and development of such educational facilities.

- 2.13 A small clinic is located on the Archerstown Road and will need a larger site to expand to meet needs of the community. Currently it is manned on alternative days with Delvin.
- 2.14 There is one registered pre-school centre at Market Square, however no crèche has been developed as part of the recent housing developments as they were sub-threshold (based on 1 crèche for 20 children for every 75 dwelling units).

## **BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

- 2.15 The topography around the settlement is relatively planar with mildly contoured agricultural landscape with an abundance of archaeological sites, monuments and quarries. This rural landscape is well enclosed by heavily matured native species field boundaries. This all helps screen Clonmellon from most of its approaches and the village is not even ‘announced’ by church steeples from distance as with other settlements.
- 2.16 The entrances into the town are quite pleasant, obviously future development if badly designed could prove deleterious to the village’s external view. Any future N52 realignment to the village would significantly open up views to backlands and rear boundaries. The village itself with its wide street and extended street vista is broken to a degree by the vertical alignment of the road going through the town.
- 2.17 There is no open space that would provide a significant visual break and attractive landscape feature within the core of the village. Open space, trees and other such landscape features such as stonewalls play an important role in adding to the character and townscape of the village. The area fronting the Fair Green area is an attractive and well maintained area and the only available area for a street frontage town green or park for the benefit of existing and future residents, as well as visitors to Clonmellon.
- 2.18 Clonmellon has developed as around a single street to the west of Killua. It is typical of Irish villages with frontage depth only, little backland consolidation, skeletal development radiating out of the village. It has however two focus points the main one being around the western cross-roads, and the other on the Killua approach around the Fair Green.
- 2.19 The street elevations are strong and unfussy in character mainly in the petty Georgian idiom, which as a whole gives many Irish towns their particular sense of character. On any streetscape one finds later period insertions that have added

value to the settlement. The sense of place and quality of the streetscape are clear strengths for Clonmellon to be protected and used to its advantage in marketing itself. The quality of the older structures varies with some in good repair while others have been given less care and attention.

- 2.20 Clonmellon's streetscape has not suffered on the whole from poor design and use of inappropriate materials as with other towns and villages. It is considered that due to the high quality and largely unspoilt nature of the primary streetscape that the core area be designated an Architectural Conservation Area. This would minimise the listing of buildings to a necessary minimum.
- 2.21 The following table 2.1 refers to Protected Structures identified in the 2002-2008 County Development Plan.

<b>TABLE 2.1</b>	
<b>EXISTING PROTECTED STRUCTURES</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
North side from east end – Row of four houses	Clonmellon
Catholic Prebystery	Clonmellon
Catholic Church	Clonmellon
Next to school is house	Clonmellon
St. Scire's Credit Union	Clonmellon
House to the east of the Oasis	Clonmellon
Market Yard – South Side	Clonmellon
To west is an early 19 <sup>th</sup> century house	Clonmellon
Two storey dwelling west end of main street – shop unit to ground floor.	Clonmellon

- 2.22 The following structure is considered worthy of addition to the Council's Record of Protected Structures and further investigations as to its architectural/heritage merits will be carried out.

<b>TABLE 2.2</b>	
<b>STRUCTURES WORTHY OF PROTECTION</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>

An end of terrace two-storey, three-bay building with external stair running along left gable. Windows diminish in height; all are 2/2 sliding sashes with a pair of larger sashes to ground floor right.	Clonmellon
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2.23 The following table, 2.3, lists the archaeological monuments and sites, which are situated close to the village boundaries.

<b>TABLE 2.3</b>	
<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS AND SITES</b>	
<b>MONUMENT REFERENCE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
WM008-033	Ringfort (Rath/Cashel)
WM009-007	Earthwork

2.24 Backland areas consist of rear gardens, walled yards and lanes with the minimum access. Typically there is no consistency in depth to them. They are developed as they were meant to be i.e. ancillary to the street frontage use. There is a degree of dereliction and probably under use in these areas. Overall they are intrinsic to the urban grain of the village, but have in places the potential to be developed, while preserving their role in the morphology of the settlement.

2.25 One of the greatest transformations of Clonmellon, which has occurred in the past 4 to 5 years, has been the surge in the development of suburban-type housing randomly around of the village. Rarely is there any meaningful continuity with typical suburban developments. This urban generated car-based development has paid little attention to the original settlement pattern of the village and threatens the consolidated development of the settlement in the future.

2.26 Clonmellon cannot ever compete with service and function level of Mullingar, Kells or Navan, but a threshold population can help maintain local functions and services for the village and the wider community, and make it more than just a dormitory settlement. However it will be competing directly with Delvin as both settlements grow with overlapping catchments.

### **3. PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICING**

#### **Water Supply**

- 3.1 Clonmellon is part of the Northwest Water Scheme. Lough Lene provides water to Clonmellon and capacity is adequate to cater for future development. It is proposed that a new treatment system will be developed at an approximate cost of €1.4 million

#### **Foul Drainage**

- 3.2 The existing wastewater treatment plant was constructed in 1989 to serve a 500 population equivalent (P.E.). It is proposed to upgrade the original design capacity of 500 P.E to the projected future design capacity of 1,500 P.E in order to achieve a design lifecycle of 20 years for the plant.
- 3.3 Developers will be required to take cognisance of the Planning Authority drainage plans and requirements in the preparation of planning submissions. Temporary arrangements for dealing with foul sewerage will not generally be considered.

#### **Surface Water Drainage**

- 3.4 Developers will be required to provide surface water outfalls, constructed to the County Councils standards and will need to demonstrate that sufficient capacity exists in receptor watercourses. Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and other attenuation measures will be considered in all new greenfield developments. Existing watercourses will be kept as open as much as possible and can be incorporated into the landscaping of developments.

## **Transportation & Movement**

- 3.5 Clonmellon experiences heavy goods vehicle traffic due to its location on the N52. The Westmeath County Development Plan provides for the complete design and improvement of sections of the N52 between Mullingar and the Meath county boundary including the bypass of Clonmellon and Delvin. This is a long-term objective. The line of the bypass has yet to be decided. Last year a controlled pedestrian crossing was installed opposite the Credit Union.
- 3.6 Footpath coverage of the area is confined to limits to the village, but dissipates and terminates where the settlement reaches its rural edge. Residents cannot safely use the external road network for walking outside of the village area. A detailed survey of existing footpath coverage in terms of mobility is required to be undertaken.
- 3.7 There are no cycle paths linking residential areas to the school or recreational areas or generally serving the village. The area is on the Tain Trail Route, but no local recreational/tourist network exists as yet for the area.
- 3.8 An infrequent Bus Eireann route exists between Clonmellon and Dublin, which also stops at Athboy, Trim, Scurroughstown, Pike Cross, Kilmessan Cross, Batterjohn Cross, Warrenstown, Crosskeys and Dublin. A bus route also exists between Clonmellon and Granard which also stops in Delvin, Drumcree, Castlepollard, Coole, Abbeylara and finally Granard. The frequencies of these buses are poor. Mullingar is the nearest rail station, which is 18 miles/ 29 kilometres from Clonmellon. It is safe to assume that the commuting are mostly reliant on their cars.
- 3.9 There is no off-street parking in Clonmellon. There does not appear to be a problem with on -street all day parking by commuters or car-poolers as experienced by Moate. Rear parking areas and service areas will be necessary in some larger village centre commercial developments.
- 3.10 The National Spatial Strategy 2000-2020 and the Midland Regions 2004 – 2024 recognises the regional importance of the N52. It as been described as the country’s number one national secondary road. It is also regarded as an important transport arc serving the Greater Dublin Area.

## **Electricity**

- 3.11 The Planning Authority will co-operate with and facilitate the ESB in providing additional sub-stations and power lines in the area as the need for increased electrical power arises. Care will be taken to ensure that all overhead power lines do not unduly detract from the visual amenities of the area. In certain circumstances, particularly in residential areas, the under grounding of wires and cables may be required to protect the visual and residential amenities of an area.

### **Development History**

- 3.12 Clonmellon has been subject to a number of housing developments in recent years. 96 units have been granted in Clonmellon, which were not included in the 2002 census, which has a population equivalent of 288 P.E. When added to the 2002 population of 403 persons it totals a projected population of 691P.E. This figure does not include any zoning in Clonmellon. A number of developments have been recently turned down for reasons of prematurity in the absence of a local area plan.

### **Employment and Enterprise**

- 3.13 The following table is based on figures extracted from the 2002 CSO. Clonmellon is located within the DED of Killua where these figures are taken from and which give a rough estimate of trends in Clonmellon.

**2002 Census Killua DED Table 5.1**

<b>Total Labour Force</b>	<b>Male Labour Force</b>	<b>Female Labour Force</b>	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>Not in Labour Force</b>
278	172	106	8	204

**Table 5.2 – Provides a percentage breakdown of sectors of employment for Killua DED.**

<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>Building and Construction</b>	<b>Manufacturing and Industrial</b>	<b>Commerce</b>	<b>Transport</b>	<b>Public admin</b>	<b>Prof. Services</b>	<b>Other</b>
8%	11%	18%	27%	5%	5%	12%	14%

- 3.14 Statistics show that the numbers of people employed in agriculture in the area are minimal. Employment is centered around Commerce and Manufacturing/Industrial as well as professional services.

**Table 5.3 – Provides a breakdown of the percentage of people’s distance travelled to work (one way only).**

<b>0 Miles</b>	<b>1 Mile</b>	<b>2 Miles</b>	<b>3-4 Miles</b>	<b>5-9 Miles</b>	<b>10-14 Miles</b>	<b>15 – 29 Miles</b>	<b>30+ Miles</b>	<b>Not Stated</b>
3%	18%	3%	9%	20%	10%	10%	17%	10%

**Table 5.4 – Provides a breakdown of Journey times of a percentage of People of Killua DED to their Place of work or education.**

	<b>&lt;15 Minutes</b>	<b>15-&lt;30 Mins</b>	<b>30-&lt;45 Mins</b>	<b>45-&lt;60 Mins</b>	<b>60-&lt;90 Mins</b>	<b>90 + Mins</b>
No. of People	44%	24%	12%	4%	8%	8%

- 3.15 Statistics show that there are a considerable number of people in the area travelling 1 mile to their place of work/ education and a considerable number travelling between 5 and 9 miles. It can be assumed that a large amount of these people are school-goers as there is not enough employment in the locality to account for these numbers. The third largest percentage are travelling over 30 miles to their place of employment, namely Dublin as Mullingar, Kells and Athboy are less than 30 miles away from the area. 20 percent of people in this area are travelling between 45 mins and over 90 minutes to work everyday, which in total return time is between 90 minutes and over 180 minutes everyday.

**Social Housing.**

- 3.16 All residential zoned developments will be subject to the Part V (social and affordable housing) as in the [Planning and Development \(Amendment\) Act, 2002](#).

## **DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

### **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

- 3.17 The future development of Clonmellon in the proposed plan period 2004 – 2010 is based on the neighbourhood concept. The basic principles of the neighbourhood concept are underpinned by the aim of securing more sustainable patterns of development. Access to employment, shopping, education, health, leisure and social facilities are all important criterion in determining where future housing growth should be directed. Accessibility to such facilities is also a key element, and housing should be directed to locations where walking and cycling to shops, the local primary school and areas of open space are easily achieved.

### **HOUSING**

- 3.18 Clonmellon has experienced considerable pressure for residential development in recent years owing primarily to its close proximity and accessibility to the Greater Dublin Area. Much of this suburban-type development has affected the character of the existing village. The Planning Authority considers Clonmellon to be suitable for some further sensitive greenfield residential development owing to its accessibility and its range of social and community services. Consequently it has been designated in the Westmeath County Development Plan as a priority settlement for growth over the period 2002-2008. Significant potential also exists to incorporate infill development within the pre-existing village cores and to this end it would be expected that any new developments would be of a density, character and architectural quality that would contribute to the consolidation of the villages streetscape, and not purely a replication of more ‘anywhere’ suburban styles of development appropriate to major urban areas. Clonmellon is a particularly visually pleasing settlement and development in the village can offer an opportunity to conserve and enhance the settlement.
- 3.19 The development potential based on the planned upgrading of the sewage treatment system to an aggregate carrying capacity 1500 p.e., less existing and committed developments would leave a potential of 809 p.e for 20 year period. For the 6-year plan this would be equivalent to an increase of 243 persons or a 60% increase on the 2002 Census population for Clonmellon. At an average household rate of 3 persons per household this would amount to on average 81 residential units over 6 years or 13.5 residential units per year. This assumes that the sewage treatment would not be upgraded within the 20-year period.

- 3.20 For this plan the total amount of additional undeveloped land, which has been zoned for residential purposes in the plan is approximately 43 acres. Allowing for public open space requirements of at least 10%, using a minimum housing density of dwellings 10 per acre and the national household number average of 3.0 persons, the acres potentially yields a future additional population of some 1161 persons. This projected increase accounts for only the proposed zoned land. It does not account for existing population and industrial population. The proposed increase in population will account for 77% of the capacity of the sewage plant. The residential development will have to be carefully monitored to ensure that development does not exceed the capacity of the treatment plant during the plan period.
- 3.21 In addition to this projected increase it is envisaged that potential population increases from additional mixed use/ backland, 'living over the shop' developments within the village centre and expanded village centre will generate a potential population in the region of 100 – 300 persons. This assuming that these lands can be accessed and aggregated to allow for meaningful schemes. As the zoning suggests these lands are also planned to cater for village commercial and retail uses.
- 3.22 It is the intention of the plan to ensure that the village develops with a distinct urban design quality, building upon its background as a village, and that the scale and density of such development is appropriate to its character. It is also intended to avail of every opportunity to improve the physical fabric of the village. The character would be further enhanced by improvements to the street finishes, footpaths and public domain generally, and by the redevelopment of key neglected sites and obsolete areas.
- 3.23 Residential developments will be about enhancing community rather than just be about 'buildings'. A good design process can assess the potential relationship between and functions of new and the existing developments. This understanding can be used to connect developments to the village both physically and psychologically.
- 3.24 Too often internal standards of private developments are below minimum accepted in the Social Housing Design Guidelines, issued by the DOELG. The Planning Authority will therefore insist fully upon the minimum standards required.

## **Strategic Objectives**

- To secure the provision of high quality, social and affordable and sustainable residential accommodation in sufficient supply to meet the demand for new houses in Clonmellon for the next 6 years.
- To secure a high standard of residential design and encourage the ‘creation of places’ with a sense of local distinctiveness and legibility. Including imaginative and interesting layout with a range of house types/styles and a range of densities. Continuity can be achieved if reference is made to the qualitative aspects of the existing village fabric.
- All residential developments shall meet minimum standards set out in the Social Housing Design Guidelines.
- To ensure that new developments are linked to community and social infrastructure such as the school, open spaces and recreational space.
- To prevent ribbon development and suburbanisation as it militates against the organised development of towns and villages. It is the objective of the council to ensure that this does not occur particularly on radial routes from the village.
- To secure a high standard of landscaping in residential developments, with the provision of adequate public and private open space, amenity areas and pedestrian links.
- To secure high quality residential uses as part of mixed-use development on backlands as part of an expanded village core.
- To secure adequate childcare facilities within new residential developments.
- It is an objective of the council to facilitate the provision of serviced sites for residential development.

## **Policy**

Having regard to the above strategic objectives it is the Planning Authority’s policy, that:

- H1** In accordance with the Guidelines on Residential Density issued by the Department of the Environment and Local Government:
- In appropriate locations, those being backlands and lands adjacent to the village centre, that a guiding density of 14 – 20 dwellings per acre be considered.
  - For lands close to the village centre, that a guiding density of 10 – 14 dwellings per acre be considered.
  - For residential developments located on the approaches into the villages, that a guiding density of 8 – 10 dwellings per acre be considered.
  - Only in exceptional circumstances will developments of less than 8 dwellings per acre be considered.
- H2** To require developers to finance the full costs of piped services, public lighting and other infrastructure which facilitate all new residential developments, including roads, footpaths, piped services and other facilities, whether within or outside the site.
- H3** To require developers of new housing developments to provide open space sufficient to accommodate informal play areas and areas of amenity open space.
- H4** To protect and improve residential amenities in existing residential areas.
- H5** To ensure that all housing developments on sites in excess of 1.0 hectare have a variety of dwelling types, styles and sizes and are complimentary to each other in terms of design, height and use of materials.
- H6** To ensure that the character of the village is maintained by ensuring that boundary treatments to all new developments within the village are consistent and utilise materials indigenous to the area. The Council aim to ensure that existing boundaries of character and value are retained where appropriate within new developments.

- H7 To ensure that all new housing developments on sites in excess of 0.1 hectare or more than 4 dwelling units respect the requirements for social and affordable housing as set out in the Council's Housing Strategy.**
- H8 To ensure all new residential development caters for childcare facilities at a rate of one facility per 75 dwellings.**
- H9 To ensure that open space is linked through new and existing developments, which will provide for the incorporation of amenity/ecological, corridors and alternative secure pedestrian accesses to community amenities and facilities.**
- H10 To ensure the provision of social housing in the village by the housing authority.**

#### **RETAIL/COMMERCIAL**

- 3.25 While Clonmellon's residents would do their main shopping in Kells, Navan or Mullingar, the village is still a locally important retail and commercial centre with a number of shops, pubs and community facilities. The Planning Authority considers it important to protect the existing retail/commercial function of the village to meet the needs of the existing population and to expand the range of services to sustain the proposed population.
- 3.26 The Planning Authority will facilitate the development of Clonmellon as a service centre for its rural hinterland. Proposals for commercial and retail development wishing to locate to the area of the settlement shall be directed to the confines of the areas designated for village centre activities, in order to consolidate the functional heart of Clonmellon.
- 3.27 Any applications for retail development in Clonmellon will need to be consistent with the policies in this plan and those of the County Development Plan. Cognisance needs to be taken of The Retail Strategy for Westmeath. In smaller villages and towns such as Clonmellon it is important that the existing provision of retail development is maintained and enhanced in the interests of sustainability and in the interests of ensuring that all residents of the county have easy access to basic convenience goods.

#### **Strategic Objectives**

- To maintain and consolidate the role of Clonmellon as a local retail and commercial centre.
- To ensure that as the population of the area expands there are a sufficient retail outlets to meet the needs of residents of the area.
- To encourage retail development schemes to provide a variety of unit sizes compatible with the character of the area in which they are situated.

### **Policy**

- RC1 To permit the provision of new small scale retail development and commercial outlets of a range and type consistent with the growth of the village and located in an expanded mixed-use village core.**
- RC2 To require that provision be made for adequate car and cycle parking in respect of new retail and commercial development in accordance with the Planning Authority's standards for retail/commercial uses.**
- RC3 To ensure that the scale, layout, form and design of all new retail development is appropriate and respects and enhances its townscape setting.**

### **EMPLOYMENT & ENTERPRISE**

**3.28 Clonmellon has historically been a service centre for the surrounding hinterland. While the village has itself never been an industrial centre, a number of enterprises exist within and near the town. There are currently limited employment opportunities locally and consideration needs to be given to the requirements of a future resident population.**

**3.29 It is Council policy to provide for employment generating uses in Clonmellon, and take advantage of its**

**position on the N52 and attract inward investment. Employment opportunities should be provided locally to offer greater opportunity for residents to find work locally and to reduce the need to travel to work.**

- 3.30 A total of 11 acres of land has been zoned for Light Industrial Technological uses on the Mullingar road approaching the settlement. These lands should accommodate employment expansion in the village beyond the time period of the current plan. At a future date other lands may be identified on completion of a future N52 realignment. Such locations will provide suitable sites for incubator units, the expansion units and possibly larger manufacturing operations.
- 3.31 There may be scope within the town centre and expanded village centre zoning for employment and enterprise opportunities.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- To identify sufficient land for light industrial/technological developments with prominent road frontage.

### **Policy**

- E1 To encourage opportunities for rural diversification locally and to zone land where appropriate for light industrial/technological related activities.**
- E2 To require developers to pay the full cost of all infrastructure, which facilitates development, including roads, piped services, footpaths and other utilities.**
- E3 To ensure landscaping of employment generating uses is to a high standard including hard and soft landscaping and appropriate boundary treatment/ planting.**

- E4 It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the continuity and encourage the expansion of enterprises having regard to the protection of the amenity and economic value of neighbouring properties.**
- E5. It is the policy of the council to ensure that the area of zoned public openspace is landscaped and planted and made available for public use prior to the development of any buildings on the adjoining industrial/ technological site**

## **TOURISM**

- 3.32 To date tourism has been relatively underdeveloped within the village area. However it is recognised that there are other settlements, which are in a more advantageous position to exploit the county's varied tourist resource. Clonmellon will probably have to wait until as such times as the quality tourist product is developed in these areas, from which the settlement can get a vicarious benefit. It should be remembered that it is the first village on the N52 northern approach into the county.

### **Strategic Objectives:**

- To promote the development of tourism in the village and surrounding area in a sustainable way and in partnership with the Midlands East Regional Tourism Authority through the conservation, enhancement and promotion of the town's built and natural environment.
- To encourage, improve and expand the Region's special interest tourism product base, which will appeal to a range of special-interest groups.
- To promote the architectural, historical and heritage features within the village as part of the overall encouragement of Clonmellon as a tourist destination.

### **Policy:**

**TM1 To encourage sustainable market led tourism developments of an appropriate scale while at the same time maintaining the quality of the environment.**

**TM2 To consider the potential for the possible development of a tourist information centre within the village area.**

#### **TRANSPORTATION & MOVEMENT**

3.33 Although strategically located on the N52 the settlement at the moment is not troubled by on street all day parking from commuters and car-poolers. Bus Éireann operates services to and from Mullingar and Dublin, with a further connection to Longford on Saturdays, however these services are poor. There is a limited local bus service in the village area, run on a community initiative. The poor parking arrangement for the community hall with the shop opposite, and also around the small health centre requires examination.

#### **Strategic Objectives**

- To provide and facilitate greater access to modes of transport other than the private car, such as bus, coach, rail, etc.
- To monitor the nature of parking on the street
- To promote walking and cycling by maintaining and enhancing existing facilities to provide a convenient, safe and pleasant environment.

- To develop a ‘greenway’ and ‘quiet lane’ network for the settlement to serve the settlement and surrounding area in consultation with the local community. To link this network into a future county network and regional networks such as the Tain Trail Cycling Route.
- To reserve access points to undeveloped zoned lands and require developers of land to contribute to the development of any proposed access roads.
- To encourage and facilitate community initiatives to provide bus-based local transport for the community.
- To encourage provision of bus halting/set down points outside schools or other community uses to facilitate safety and access.
- To reserve study corridor for future N52 bypass of the village.

## **Policy**

- T1 To investigate the provision of off-street car parking and cycle parking areas within the village core.**
- T2 To enhance pedestrian and cycle permeability from the centre of the village to the development boundary on all access roads, in association with further development in the village.**
- T3 To link new residential areas with community and social infrastructure.**
- T4 To require developers, in conjunction with the Planning Authority, to provide accesses to the rear of existing commercial properties in Clonmellon, in order to promote the development of backlands and also to aid the provision of off-street car parking facilities.**
- T5 To require developers, in conjunction with the Planning Authority, to provide an access to facilitate development of backlands to the north of the village, as in Map 1.**

**T6 To require developers to provide for an alternative access to the GAA grounds, existing industrial area , community facilities and car parking, as in Map 1.**

#### **RECREATION, AMENITY AND OPEN SPACE**

- 3.34 The Planning Authority recognises the role open space plays in creating quality healthy environments and providing facilities for the youth of the community and it shall seek to ensure a hierarchy of well linked and integrated open spaces, both passive and active, that will benefit the community as a whole. While there is a GAA ground close to the centre of the settlement, it has no public park or playgrounds.
- 3.35 The ratio in the County Development Plan requires 3.5 acres of major recreational open space per 1000 population, and 3 acres of major amenity open space per 1000 population. The amount zoned should take account of 20 year time frame not just 6 years, as once land is zoned for alternative uses it will be unlikely be reclaimed later for the greater benefit of the Clonmellon area's present and future residents.
- 3.36 An area of amenity open space, which totals approximately 1.5 acres, has been zoned. The area lacks street frontage and accessibility.
- 3.37 A specific area, just over 4.3Ha, is located around the GAA pitch has been identified for community sports provision. It is envisaged that this identified area provide for the community and sporting needs of the villages. The site area identified would be large enough to provide for pitch sports, changing facilities, a community building and car parking.

#### **Strategic Objectives**

- To provide for, protect and improve the provision, attractiveness and accessibility of public open space, and most especially the village parks, intended for use for recreational or amenity purposes.
- To locate such passive and active spaces within the settlement and accessible to as many people as possible.
- To preserve and enhance areas of recognised character, historic landscapes, protected structures, townscapes, streetscapes, stone walls, fine views, open land, canals and other recognised heritage and amenity assets along with their attendant settings, for purposes of amenity, recreation and tourism.

- To have the preservation of trees as a prime consideration in the determination of applications for sites containing trees of amenity value.
- To provide a children's play area in the proposed village park, community sports area or in committed new housing development areas.
- To zone appropriate lands for a community sports facility including a pitch, changing facilities, associated built community facilities and car parking.
- To request, where appropriate, the submission of a comprehensive tree survey with any application on landscape where mature trees are a feature and to consider the making of Tree Preservation Orders for the trees of special amenity value.

## **Policy**

- OS1 To impose a development levy on residential developments for the provision of recreational, sporting and amenity services as a contribution towards the cost of the provision of a community sports facility within the village.**
- OS2 To require developers to retain existing stone walls, trees, shrubs and hedges and protect these from damage during construction. Where it is agreed with the Planning Authority that tree/hedge removal is necessary for example, for access purposes, these shall be replaced within the site with appropriate species as agreed with the Planning authority.**
- OS3 To protect and enhance the open nature of lands between urban areas and guard against over development.**
- OS4 To preserve existing public rights of way and develop new pedestrian ways connecting development areas to the village centres**
- OS5 To protect views, prospects and settings of amenity value through appropriate land-use zoning.**
- OS6 To reserve an area for a playground in proposed park as indicated on Map 1.**

**OS7 To provide planted buffer zones to ameliorate the visual impact of new development on external views or approaches to the settlement.**

**OS8 It is the policy of the council, in consultation with the local community, to work towards the development of a walking/cycling circuit around the settlement in order to provide a safe route for walking and cycling which is separated from traffic and to facilitate walking/cycling safely linked to facilities in the town such as school, shops, church etc.**

### **VILLAGE CENTRE -URBAN RENEWAL & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS**

3.38 The built environment and the manner in which buildings, structures and spaces relate to one another influences the quality of the environment and are important in creating a sense of place. It is an environment that constantly evolves to meet our changing needs. The Planning Authority recognises the importance of new development and urban renewal in maintaining an attractive and vibrant village centre in Clonmellon. The Planning Authority also recognises and welcomes efforts by local businesses and property owners in enhancing the appearance of their premises, which can make important contributions to the overall quality of the townscape.

3.39 Westmeath County Council is currently waiting on confirmation of an environmental improvement project, which was submitted to the DOEHLG as a proposal for the Urban & Village Renewal Programme 2000-2006. This will potentially be a €15,000 Scheme of environmental improvements for the village of Clonmellon.

3.40 Environmental improvement within the village core is vital to the future success of the village, and will assist in attracting further investment. Tree avenue planting, footpath widening, provision for bus shelters, cycle parking, paving and street furniture will assist in enhancing the character of the village. This will be carried out following development and assessment of the success of the proposed Clonmellon Urban & Village Renewal Programme

3.41 New developments or environmental improvements will be assessed to determine their affect on the setting and appearance of the established streetscape.

## **Strategic Objectives**

- To sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of the village centre through the strengthening of the mix of uses and the refurbishment or appropriate redevelopment of existing buildings and sites.
- To secure the development of backlands and vacant lands on the edge of the village centre for appropriate mixed-use development, in line with the growth of the village.
- To secure re-use of vacant first floor premises within the village centre.
- To secure the redevelopment and/or refurbishment of derelict or rundown properties
- To secure the enhancement of the streetscape of Clonmellon village through the appropriate design of buildings and alterations at development and redevelopment stage.
- To progress the Clonmellon Urban & Village Renewal Programme environmental improvement project if approved by the DOEHLG
- To prepare a Village Design Statement for Clonmellon.

## **Policy**

**VC1 In considering mixed-use developments within the areas designated as mixed-use village centre and mixed use expanded village centre upon Map 1 the following mechanism will be applied:**

- **no less than two separate planning uses will normally be allowed (i.e. retail/residential or retail/offices etc.);**
- **where two separate planning uses are proposed, no one singular use will prevail in terms of >70% of the total gross floor space;**
- **Where more than two separate uses are proposed, no one singular use will prevail in terms of >50% of the total gross floor space.**

3.42 Without such a mechanism it is recognised that one predominant use may prevail on such designated lands. Mixed-use developments in town/village centres are appropriate in attaining sustainable development objectives, creating opportunities to live, work, shop etc. within urban environments and rural settlement centres and reduce the propensity to travel by the private car.

3.43 The Planning Authority wishes to ensure that such development is sensitively carried out and consistent with the design principles outlined in the County Development Plan.

## **Commercial Core Proposals**

3.44 A number of sites have been identified for redevelopment/refurbishment in the village centre. It is proposed to strengthen the commercial base of the village centre by encouraging appropriate re-development of these sites.

## **CC1 Village Centre**

An important focus area is the primary crossroads at the western end of the village. It is proposed at a future date, if and when the N52 is realigned and heavy thru-traffic is reduced, that a 'square' can be developed around the wide setbacks.

Any study would have to look at methods of traffic calming, landscaping and possible public art, which can add to the focus (Map 2).

### **CC2 Corner Site**

This site showed on Map 2 is an ideal site for retail/ commercial development.

### **PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION**

- 3.45 The built environment forms an important part of our cultural heritage. The physical survivals of our past are to be valued and protected as a central part of our common heritage. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness, which is an important aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside.
- 3.46 The Planning Authority considers it desirable that buildings and features of historic and architectural importance are protected for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations. In particular the Planning Authority recognises the wealth of such buildings and features that exist in Clonmellon and the quality and importance of their settings. Recorded Protected Structures are listed in paragraph 2.1.
- 3.47 Clonmellon has unique character and attractive streetscape of a broad main street lined with mature trees and rows of architecturally and historically important buildings. Westmeath County Council have designated Clonmellon an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). The Planning and Development Act 2000 provides legislation for the protection of the Country's built heritage under Section 52 (1) (b). Most works to the outside of a building or structure in an ACA will require planning permission. The designation of an ACA provides for a potentially more flexible system of preservation, it that it will lessen need to 'list' structures as part of a streetscape.
- 3.48 The Planning Authority recognises the value of mature trees and hedgerows in Clonmellon, not only as habitats for wildlife but also for their contribution to the character of the settlement. Development should take place in such a way as to incorporate the amenities offered by existing trees and hedgerows, and also crosses, pumps and stone walls which are common in the area.

## Strategic Objectives

- To compile and maintain a Record of Protected Structures to afford statutory protection of the architectural heritage, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.
- To protect from damage archaeological sites and monuments identified in the Plan area in consultation with the DOEHLG.
- To secure the preservation of archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 and of sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally.
- To protect and preserve stone walls, existing hedgerows and healthy mature and developing trees by incorporating them into the site layout of any new developments and to encourage new planting and the replacement of lost hedgerows and trees using native species.
- To designate an area around the central village area and where it meets the setting of the Killua park lands as an Architectural Conservation Area

## Policy

- PC1 Prohibit any development, alterations or modifications to the buildings and other listed features that would detract from or destroy the essential character of the building or features listed.**
- PC2 To identify structures of local character and distinctiveness as part of the townscape appraisal (map 2).**
- PC3 Refer all planning applications for development that would impinge upon any known or recorded structures, monument or archaeological sites to Dúchas, and, where considered necessary on the advice of the DOEHLG, to prohibit any development that would irreplaceably damage any such structure, monument or site.**

- PC4 Refer all planning applications for development that would have a constructional impact upon riverine, lacustrine, intertidal and sub-tidal environments to the DOEHLG. These environments may contain underwater archaeological monuments and sites that are unknown and therefore not recorded. The Planning Authority, where considered necessary on the advice of the DOEHLG, shall prohibit any development that would irreparably damage any such monument or site.**
- PC5 Refer all planning applications for development in a certain location or of a certain size or nature that would have implications for the archaeological heritage to the DOEHLG, and where considered necessary on the advice of the DOEHLG, shall be made subject to an archaeological assessment. Such developments include those located at or close to archaeological monuments or sites, those that are extensive in terms of area (1/2 hectare or more) or length (1 kilometre or more) and developments that require an Environmental Impact Assessment.**
- PC7 To protect groups of trees and woodland and to consider the making of Tree Preservation Orders for the trees as necessary.**

#### **EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

- 3.49 As the population of Clonmellon expands, the need for additional educational, childcare and community facilities will arise. The Plan zoning has identified extended zonings for Cluain Maolian National School to additional 3 acres. Additional lands for the school's expansion may also need to be safeguarded when reviewing the plan.
- 3.50 Local community facilities such as the hall and health centre will be provided for in zoning objectives in terms of future redevelopment or expansion. Approximately .5 acres of land has been zoned for the expansion of the health centre.
- 3.51 The long-term expansion of the graveyard will also be provided for in zoning objectives in terms of future redevelopment or expansion. Approximately 2 acres has been zoned for expansion of the Graveyard. Access to the Church of Ireland graveyard will be maintained



## **Strategic Objectives**

- To ensure that there are sufficient and appropriate educational and community facilities available to meet the needs of residents of the area.
- To ensure that enough land is zoned within the six-year plan to facilitate their longer-term role in the village.
- To promote childcare facilities within appropriate locations, such as: residential areas, places of employment, or educational establishments and where possible convenient to public transport and safe pedestrian routes.
- To promote the efficient use of all community buildings by supporting effective management and shared use proposals.

## **Policy**

- EC1 To co-operate with and assist statutory and voluntary bodies in the provision of new educational and community facilities in Clonmellon as the need arises.**
- EC2 To consider the imposition of conditions on all new residential development within the area for the purposes of facilitating the provision of additional educational/community facilities.**
- EC3 To identify new or existing locations for childcare facilities and consider favourably applications for such facilities based on need, accessibility, public road safety and other Plan policies.**



