



Mullingar

Local Area Plan 2014 - 2020

Volume 1 Written Statement

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An Muileann gCearr

Bunaíodh baile an Mhuilinn Chearr ag na Normánaigh níos mó ná 800 bliain ó shin. Daonra tosaigh Mhainéar an Mhuilinn Chearr ba mheascán é de Ghaeil agus de inimirceoirí Francacha, Breatnachacha is Pléimeannacha. Chónaigh said seo, d'oibrigh is d'adhair siad ina gCaisleán is ina dTeach Pobail Paróiste féin agus chomh maith i mainistir Aibhistíneach is i gceann Doiminiceánach. Bhí Ospidéal – Spidéal – agus Saortheach nó Óstán dá gcuid féin acu freisin.

I 1542, faoi réimeas Rí Énri VIII, rinneadh Príomhbhaile Contae den Mhuileann gCearr. I 1575 rinne plá scríosa olltubaisteach ar an daonra; agus i 1597 dhóigh Clanna Uí Néill an baile uilig go léireach.

Trí na céadta d'fhás an Muileann gCearr mar bhaile margaidh agus é ag brath go mórmhór ar thalmhaíocht na cúldúiche. Níor bunaíodh an tráchtáil is cúrsaí gnótha ar an mbaile i gceart go dtí teacht na Canálach Ríoga i 1802, rud a cheangail an baile le Baile Átha Cliath agus le hAbhainn na Sionainne; agus treisíodh iad le teacht an bhóthair iarainn caoga bliain ina dhiaidh sin.

I rith chuid dheireannach na fichiú haoise cuireadh, diadh ar ndiaidh, bun tionsclaíoch teicneolaíoch den chéad uair faoi shaol an bhaile. Tógadh scoileanna, eaglaisí agus gnóthaí nua agus tháinig fás millteach mear ar an mbaile i ngach treo.

Tríd an dá scór bliain deireannacha den 20ú haois is beag nár méadaíodh daonra an bhaile faoi thrí agus nach ndearna na nascanna nua taistil beagnach bruachbhaile de chuid Bhaile Átha Cliath.

Chapter 1 *Introduction*



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT

This Local Area Plan (LAP) sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the administrative area of Mullingar Town Council and immediate environs of Mullingar Town for the period 2014 to 2020, together with the provision of policies and objectives for the future development of the town and environs. The plan will provide for and manage the physical, economic and social development of the town in a sustainable manner, in the interests of the overall common good, whilst protecting and enhancing the cultural and environmental assets of Mullingar. The plan also provides an opportunity to reaffirm and realise the role of Mullingar as a driver of growth at local, regional and national level, commensurate with the status of the town as a “Linked Gateway” town. The Local Area Plan for Mullingar includes both the functional area of Mullingar Town Council and the environs of the town. The LAP comprises of an area of approximately 1,548 hectares (ha).

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL AREA PLAN

This plan builds on the strategies, policies and objectives of the Mullingar Town Plan 2008-2014, which was previously contained within the Westmeath County Development Plan 2008-2014. In the preparation of this Local Area Plan, regard has been had to recent development trends and national, regional and local policy developments, in particular the need to support economic recovery and development. In addition, issues of climate change, housing, community services, including providing for education and recreational needs, pedestrian and cycle connectivity, town centre regeneration and a greater awareness of the importance of safeguarding the town’s natural amenities and built heritage, form the basis of the plan. The plan has given due prominence to the issue of flooding.

In summary, the plan will provide:

- A spatial framework to support the economic recovery and growth founded on an Economic Regeneration Strategy for Mullingar.
- A sustainable spatial development strategy to guide the location of development.
- A framework for future investment in physical, social and community infrastructure.
- A process for the preservation, protection and enhancement of the town’s natural and built heritage and social assets.
- A mechanism for the creation of safe and socially inclusive sustainable communities with a renewed emphasis on improving the quality of life for all.

The Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 builds on the policy and aspirations of the previous plan and advances policy and objectives in new areas of importance such as climate change and flood risk, quality of life, education, recreation, green infrastructure, sustainable communities and a range of issues identified during the phases of public consultation such as community development and environment protection.

1.3 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MULLINGAR TOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2008-2014

The 2008-2014 Mullingar Town Plan was drafted at a time of economic prosperity and growth. However, the preparation of the current plan coincides with a national and global economic recession and as such, levels of economic activity and population growth envisaged for the plan period have not been realised. The economic downturn has also created several challenges affecting the implementation of the 2008-2014 plan namely:

- Increased economic uncertainty and subsequent falling levels of investment.
- Increase in levels of unemployment.
- Reduced retail activity.
- Increased rates of commercial vacancy.
- Emergence of a small number of unfinished developments

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the 2008-2014 plan sets a framework for the sustainable physical, economic and environmental development of Mullingar Town including its social and cultural assets.

The plan continued the practice of preparing Framework Plans for distinct neighbourhood areas in Mullingar, which were the subject of significant development or likely to undergo comprehensive development, to ensure more integrated development forms and coordinated delivery. In this regard, a Local Area Plan was adopted for Ardmore Marlinstown in 2009, which provides for a residential quarter to the east of the town, with a number of distinctive character areas set within a unifying urban and landscape structure.

The Mullingar South Local Area Plan adopted in 2010 also provides for sustainable residential communities served by social, community and recreation infrastructure.

The plan gave prominence to the importance of urban design and quality public realm in the town centre. A Building Heights Policy document was also adopted to provide a policy context for the assessment of taller buildings proposals, in designated areas in the town.

Central to the existing plan is the ethos of integrating land-use and transportation as a basis for achieving more sustainable development patterns. This philosophy is embedded in the Government's Smarter Travel Policy. The plan has promoted and

facilitated the development of a network of walking and cycling routes within Mullingar. Aligned to the furtherance of Smarter Travel, the existing plan has influenced transport management within the town centre, by advocating modal shift to sustainable modes of transport and facilitating the installation of cycling and walking infrastructure.

Finally, the plan gave prominence to the critical role of the town centre, as highlighted in the Retail Strategy, in relation to the economic, social and cultural life of Mullingar and emphasised the importance of achieving development patterns, which reinforced and supported this role. In this regard, the Council has introduced reduced car parking requirements in the town centre area for new small-scale developments, thus promoting the regeneration of the town core.

1.4 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

The Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended. It is also informed by Ministerial Guidelines published pursuant to Section 28 of the aforesaid Act, together with EU requirements regarding Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment.

Sections 18-20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended provide that a Local Area Plan (LAP) may be prepared in respect of any area which a Planning Authority considers suitable, in particular for areas which require economic, physical and social renewal and for areas likely to be the subject of large-scale development within the lifetime of the plan.

A Local Area Plan shall be made in respect of an area which:

- Is designated as a town in the most recent census of population, other than a town designated as a suburb or environs in that census,

- Has a population in excess of 5,000 and
- Is situated within the functional area of a Planning Authority which is a County Council.

The 2011 census indicated that Mullingar Town and Environs had a total population of 21,103 persons. Having regard to the foregoing and the Gateway Status of the town, a Local Area Plan (LAP) is therefore required to be undertaken for Mullingar. The statutory time frame for the LAP process is as set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended and commences upon the date of public display of the Draft Local Area Plan.

The plan shall have effect four weeks from the date of adoption by the Members of Westmeath County Council and shall cease to have effect at the expiration of 6 years from that date unless this period is extended by resolution in accordance with Section 19 (1) (d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

1.5 LOCAL AREA PLAN PROCESS

The Act provides for the Planning Authority to take whatever steps it considers necessary to consult the public. The intention to prepare a Local Area Plan for Mullingar was advertised in the local press. Written submissions on the pre-draft consultation phase were invited from Members of the Public between February 1st and March 13th 2013. A Strategic Issues Paper which set out the main development issues facing the town was launched on the Council website and issued to sectoral interests. In accordance with Section 4.1 of the Local Area Plans - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013), the statutory agencies and bodies were consulted. The Council also consulted with community, voluntary, and sporting groups operating in the town.

In order to gauge the views of children, or groups of people or associations representing children, all Primary and Secondary Schools

within the plan area were written to with regard to seeking submissions on the Local Area Plan. In addition, an Open Day was held in the County Buildings where members of the public were invited to make submissions on the content of the plan.

1.6 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MULLINGAR

The Irish placename for Mullingar is *An Muileann gCearr*, which is translated as “the left-handed mill” and is associated with a miracle that occurred at the mill. The story relates to how a local miller refused to grind barley for St. Colman as he was already grinding wheat for the Crown. Colman intervened, miraculously resulting in the mill grinding both forwards and backwards thus grinding both grains simultaneously.

The town of Mullingar was founded by the Normans 800 years ago. The Norman settlement comprised a Manor and Borough with a Castle, a Parish Church, Augustinian and Dominican monasteries, a hospital and a Frankhouse. In 1575, the Plague decimated the population and in 1597, the town was burned by the O’Neills. In 1806, a transport revolution was brought to the town with the completion of the Royal Canal, followed by the railway in 1848. Nineteenth century Mullingar was an important military centre and many British army regiments were stationed in the town. In 1858, Lord Greville purchased the town and his family remained landlords until the 1920’s. During the First World War, the town was a major military training depot.

A number of historically significant buildings were erected in Mullingar during the first half of the twentieth century. Most notable was the Cathedral of Christ the King, built between 1932 and 1936 which now dominates the Mullingar skyline. The County Hall (now Arts Centre) and County Council buildings were built between 1910 and 1913 on the site of the old jail. St. Finian’s College opened in 1908 and the County Hospital in 1936.

The second half of the century witnessed Mullingar's increasing prosperity. The town remained an important market town, but it also acquired a strong industrial and technology base for the first time. New schools, churches and businesses were built and the town expanded dramatically in all directions. The last two decades of the twentieth century saw Mullingar's population almost treble and improved transport links made it almost a suburb of greater Dublin.

Today Mullingar is a thriving business, administrative and industrial centre.

1.7 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

With regard to a Local Area Plan, an SEA is mandatory where the population or target population of the town is over 5,000 persons, or where the Local Area Plan is being prepared for a town and its wider environs. The SEA is being prepared in tandem with this plan, informing the plan-making process of the likely environmental impacts of alternative actions and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into the plan making process. The findings of the SEA are set out in the Environmental Report, which, while constituting part of the plan documentation, is presented as a separate document in Volume 3.

1.8 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

In accordance with Article 6(3) and (4) of the European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC, this Local Area Plan is subject to Appropriate Assessment to determine the impact of the implementation of the plan on Natura 2000 sites. This assessment is contained in Volume 4.

1.9 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) require Planning Authorities to introduce Flood Risk Assessment as an integral and leading

element of the plan making process. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken of the plan and is contained in Appendix 4.

1.10 FORMAT OF THE PLAN

In accordance with Section 18-20 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended, this Local Area Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Mullingar Town. This plan takes account of relevant policies in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 and in this regard, there is a legal requirement that this Local Area Plan shall be consistent with the County Development Plan.

The plan is set out as follows:

Volume 1 Written Statement

This constitutes the main body of the document outlining the vision, policies and objectives of the plan. It comprises of 10 Chapters.

Where conflicting objectives arise between the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 and this Local Area Plan, the objectives of the County Development Plan shall take precedence.

Volume 2 Book of Maps

The written statement is accompanied by a set of maps which give visual representation to the policies and objectives in the plan. Should any conflict arise between the Written Statement and the Maps, the Written Statement shall prevail. Should any conflict arise between the print and electronic version, the print version shall take precedence.

Volume 3 SEA Environmental Report

The SEA Environmental Report is contained in Volume 3. This report identifies, evaluates and describes the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the plan and identifies appropriate mitigation measures.

Volume 4

Volume 4 contains the SEA Statement which summarises how environmental considerations were factored into the plan, and the reasons for choosing the plan as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives considered.

Volume 5 Appropriate Assessment Screening & Conclusion Statement

The Appropriate Assessment Screening and Conclusion Statement is contained in Volume 5. This report contains the evaluation of the potential impacts of the plan on the conservation objectives of Natura 2000 sites. It summarises how the findings of the AA were factored into the plan and the reasons for choosing the plan as adopted, in light of other reasonable alternatives considered as part of the AA process.

1.11 MONITORING, REVIEW & IMPLEMENTATION

The Council is obliged to monitor and review the operation and implementation of the plan. The Council will seek to implement the aims, policies and objectives of the plan in a proactive manner. The Council will engage with all relevant stakeholders, both statutory and non-statutory agencies and organisations in seeking to achieve the objectives of the plan.

Delivery of the objectives of the Local Area Plan is dependent on the creation of a strong overall development strategy and buy-in from key stakeholders. The Council will seek to implement the objectives of the Local Area Plan in a pro-active manner harnessing funding avenues to provide infrastructure and services for the successful delivery of development and facilities.

In order to support the implementation of the Local Area Plan, the Council will apply Section 48 and 49 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended of the Development Contribution Scheme to enable funding for public infrastructure benefiting development in the area of the plan.

In addition, in newly developing areas the Council will, where relevant, require the implementation of a phasing programme, whereby housing development is linked with any necessary investment in water services and transportation infrastructure, community facilities and schools.

A Monitoring Strategy shall be established to evaluate progress in achieving the objectives of this Local Area Plan including the establishment of key milestones required for delivery. This strategy will involve the presentation of a report to the Council on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the plan.

Chapter 2 *Development Strategy*



2 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY,
DEMOGRAPHICS & HOUSING

2.2 MULLINGAR IN A REGIONAL
CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 exists within a hierarchy of plans emanating from the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2022 at national level, to the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 at regional level, to the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020, at county level. It is through the County Development Plan that these higher order strategies, as well as other national and regional policies (e.g. relating to transportation and the environment) are translated to a ‘local level’.

The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) 2010-2022 promote the accelerated development of Mullingar, along with the Linked Gateway towns of Athlone and Tullamore, and thus act as a key driver of growth in the region. It is envisaged that Mullingar along with Athlone will be the focus of the bulk of the Midlands Regions target population up to 2022. This concentration is essential in order to generate the critical mass necessary to sustain the services and infrastructure required to enable the “Linked Gateway” to perform and compete in a national context. Map 2.1 highlights the position of Mullingar in the Settlement Hierarchy, prescribed in the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) 2010-2022.

The Regional Planning Guideline’s Development Area policies affecting the Mullingar Local Area Plan entail policy protection to ensure that sufficient and appropriate development is channelled and concentrated towards the Linked Gateway. The Guidelines set a target population to be met for the Gateway Towns, as indicated in Graph. 2.1.

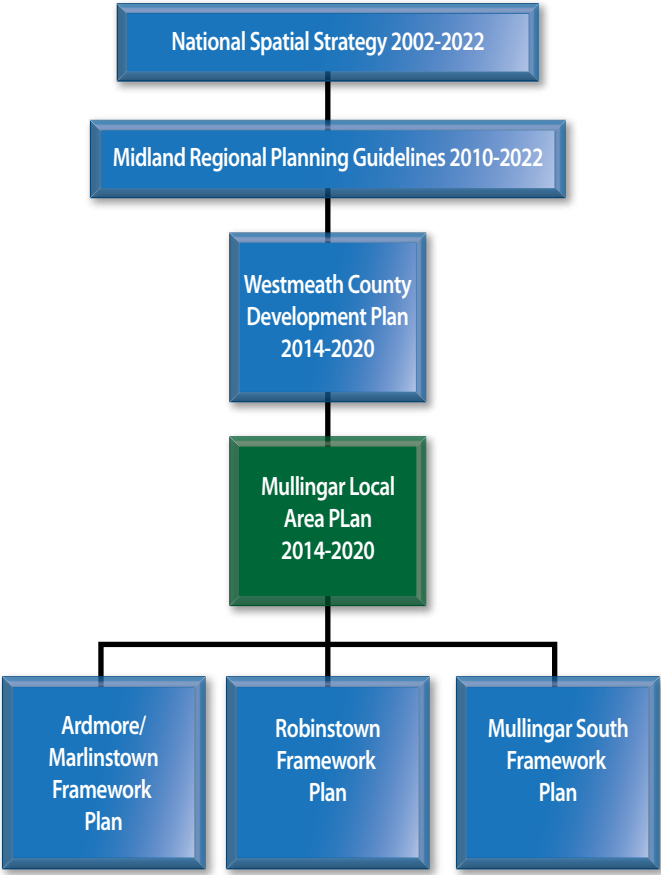
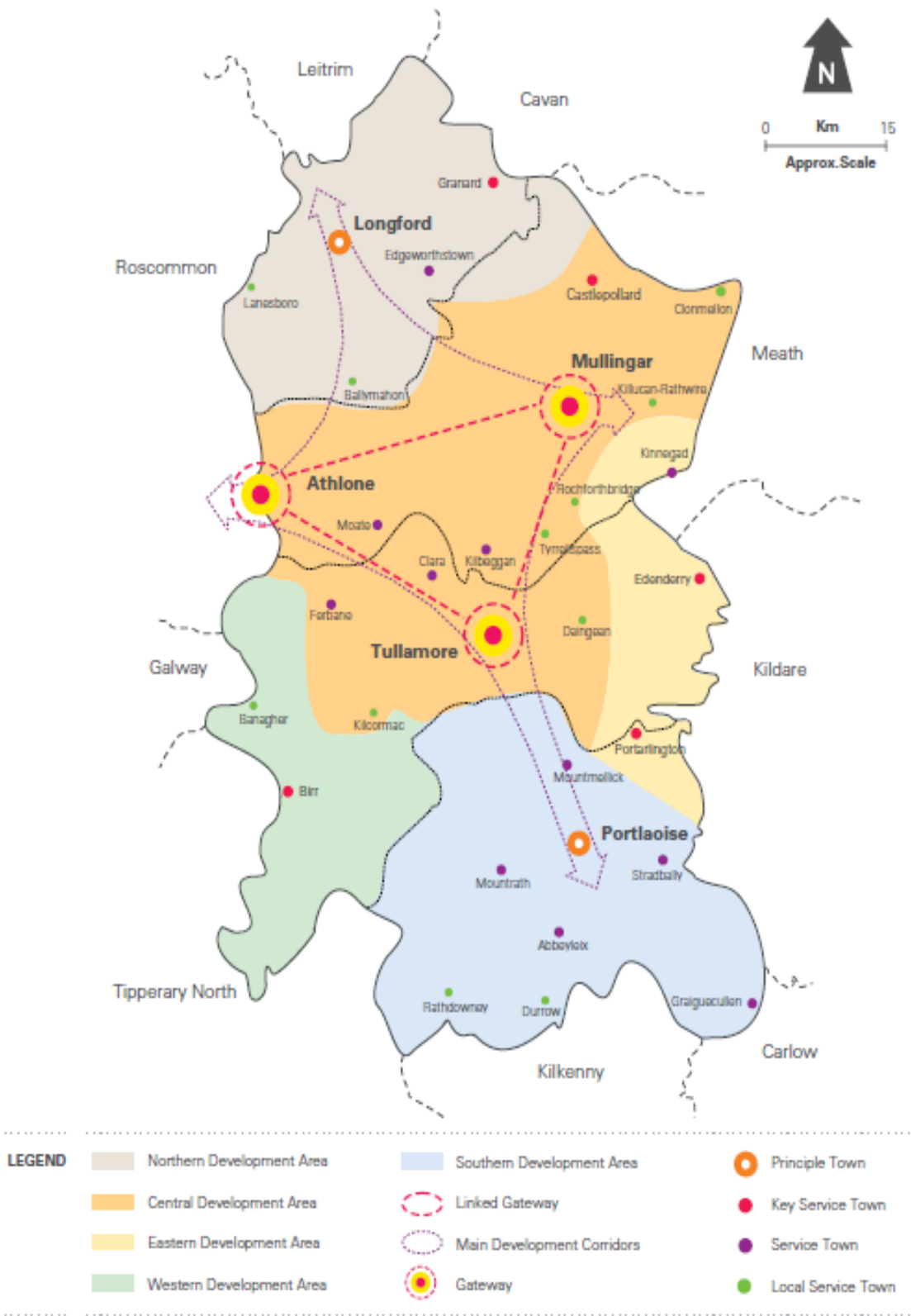


Fig. 2.1 Status of the Mullingar Local Area Plan within the National, Regional and County Planning Context



Map 2.1 Settlement Hierarchy, Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022

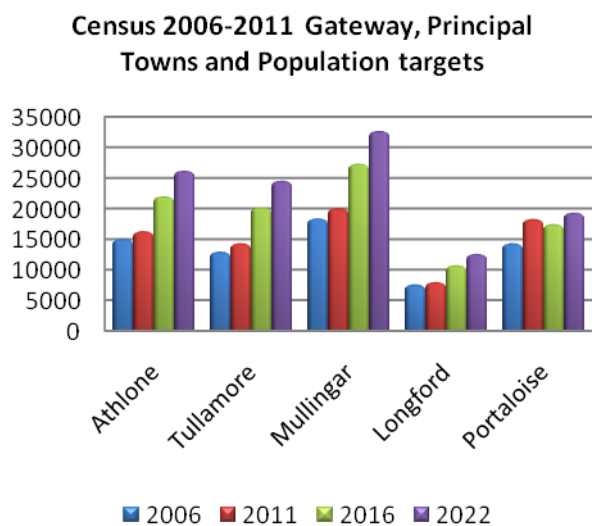


Fig 2.2 Population Growth 2006-2011 and RPG Targets by Gateway and Principal Town

	2006	2011	2016	2022
Athlone	15055	16327	22022	26203
Tullamore	12927	14361	20207	24575
Mullingar	18416	20103	27357	32722
Longford	7622	8002	10747	12622
Portlaoise	14356	18315	17481	19356

Source: Midland Regional Authority

Table 2.1 Gateway Principal Towns and Population Targets

The population target for Mullingar derived from the RPGs for 2020 is 30,934, representing an increase for the period 2011-2020 of 10,831 persons. Mullingar has experienced 9.2% growth since 2006. Significant progress is required to achieve 2016 targets. These targets set the framework for planning policy at local level. On the basis of these targets, it is estimated that 193 hectares of residential zoned land including mixed use lands where residential development is also appropriate, will be required to accommodate the population growth envisaged for the Linked Gateway Town of Mullingar up until 2020, at an average density of 35 units per hectare.

2.3 MULLINGAR IN A COUNTY CONTEXT

The Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020, sets out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of County Westmeath over the period 2014-2020. Mullingar is designated as a Tier 1 Gateway Town in the Settlement Strategy for the county. The plan has a critical role to play in ensuring that the needs of future population growth are planned for. The plan aims to prioritise development within the Gateway Towns of Mullingar and Athlone. It supports continued public capital investment in enabling infrastructure and achieving economies of scale for services and infrastructure in Mullingar. It also promotes economic development and employment creation within defined economic clusters in established Business Parks. Finally, the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 facilitates and supports the development of the county as a premier location for outdoor recreational activities including walking, cycling, fishing, boating, eventing and athletics, centred upon a high quality environment and carefully managed landscape. In this regard, it also emphasises the need to protect the built heritage, unique landscape, natural heritage and biodiversity of the county for their intrinsic value and as a valuable resource for the tourist economy.

The Core Strategy, which forms part of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 sets out high level policy to direct the future development of Mullingar Town and its environs, taking account of adopted Regional and National policy, in order to strive towards coordinated sustainable development. The preferred Development Strategy for Mullingar, as advocated in the County Core Strategy is based upon strengthening the town centre, facilitating job creation and regeneration, supporting its rural hinterland and careful management of the town’s environment and natural assets. The focus is as follows:

- To promote and facilitate the development of critical mass, employment, enterprise

and economic activity in Mullingar, commensurate with its status as a Linked Gateway Town

- To advance the development of high quality Enterprise and Employment zones in accordance with a framework established for the Ardmore Marlinstown and Robinstown areas.
- To actively facilitate the establishment of e-working networks in Mullingar.
- To provide for the continued expansion of the tourism sector throughout Westmeath, with particular focus on the promotion of natural amenity areas such as the lakes, canals, bogs and wetlands of Westmeath as national and international tourist destinations.
- To enhance competitiveness and stimulate economic recovery and job creation across all sectors of the town's economy.
- To protect the town's key environmental assets, including the River Brosna and adjacent Natura 2000 sites such as Lough Owel and Lough Ennell
- To actively support and incentivise economic development and regeneration of the town centre.

In addition, the Core Strategy provides that all new significant development is carried out in accordance with the agreed development framework, in tandem with the provision of appropriate supporting infrastructure. In this regard, the Mullingar Local Area Plan will continue to progress the implementation of the Spatial Planning Framework established under the 2008-2014 Development Plan, namely the Robinstown, Ardmore/Marlinstown and Mullingar South Framework Plans.

2.4 VISION FOR MULLINGAR

The County Core Strategy sets out a vision for Mullingar town and environs and a Development Strategy to deliver this vision. The writing of this Local Area Plan coincides with a time of economic uncertainty, following a prolonged period of sustained economic growth and population increase. The adverse impacts of the current economic downturn on issues pertaining to spatial planning, dictates that the vision for Mullingar should focus on the need for sustainable economic regeneration and recovery and measures to create a sustainable community. This process can be greatly assisted by building on the town's inherent strengths and should provide for a more focused approach to planning for sustainable growth.

The vision for Mullingar is as follows:

“To provide for the development of Mullingar as a driver of sustainable economic growth, commensurate with the Linked Gateway status of the town, whilst balancing the need to safeguard the town's inherent environmental assets with the creation of appropriate development opportunities. To develop the town as a vibrant and dynamic town in which to live, work, do business and visit, offering high quality employment, educational opportunities together with recreation, amenity and tourism facilities, and the development of sustainable communities”

2.5 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF MULLINGAR

According to the 2011 census, there were 20,103 people living in Mullingar Town and environs, with 9,414 living within the legally defined town boundary and 10,689 comprised of people living in the remainder of the town. Mullingar comprises of 23% of the county's population. Table 2.2 details the growth of population in Mullingar Town since 1991. The town and its environs have increased in population by 9.2% since the previous census in 2006, which equates to half the percentage growth recorded in the town between 2002

and 2006. In contrast, the legally defined boundary of Mullingar Town has grown by 5.3% over the same period. Most notable is the disparity between the growth of the rural DEDs relative to the urban DEDs. The census records show that the growth in Mullingar Rural DEDs between 2002 and 2011 was 3364, far exceeding the growth of the two Mullingar Urban DEDs, which grew by 594 over the same period.

Table 2.2 Demographic Trends in Mullingar 1991-2011

	1991	1996	2002	2006	2011
Population (No.)	11867	12492	15621	18416	20103
Actual change since previous census (No.)	-	625	3129	2795	1687
Population change since previous Census (%)		5.3%	25%	17.9%	9.2%

The 2011 census highlights the diverse nature of the population of Mullingar. The 2011 census records show that 22% of the population of Mullingar Town and Environs were born outside Ireland. Graph 2.2 illustrates the countries of birth of such residents.

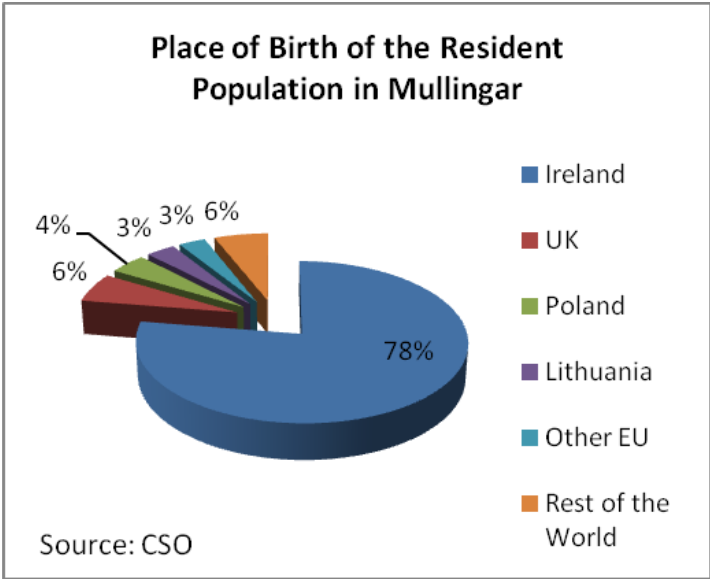


Fig 2.3 Place of Birth of the Resident Population in Mullingar

2.5.2 Age Profile

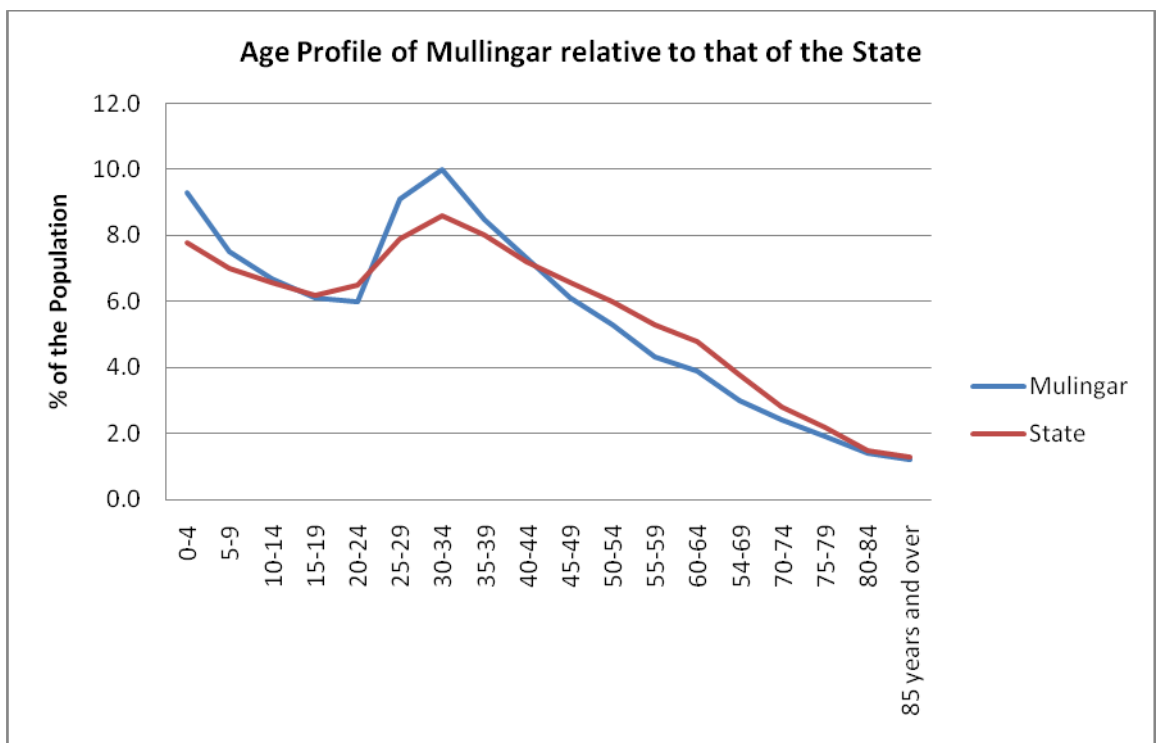


Fig 2.4 Age Profile of Mullingar relative to that of the State

Graph 2.4 indicates the age profile of Mullingar relative to that of the State. According to the 2011 census, the largest component of the population of Mullingar Town and Environs comprises people in the 30-34 age cohorts, which equates to 10% of the overall population. This compares to 8.6% for the corresponding age group for the State. In general, there are less middle aged and older people living in town compared to the State average. It is interesting to note that 9.3% of the population of Mullingar comprises of children aged 0-4, compared to the 7.8% average for the State. This upward trend in the quantum of 0-4 year olds will generate a demand for both Primary and Secondary Education provision to be met over the plan period and beyond. According to the census data, 38% of families in Mullingar have a child aged between 0-4 years old.

2.6 HOUSING

AIM:

To facilitate the provision of high quality residential development in sustainable communities and provide an appropriate mix of house sizes, types and tenures in order to meet the different household needs of the people of Mullingar.

2.6.1 Background

The Core Strategy in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 outlines population projections for the town, the amount of land required for residential purposes over the period 2014–2020 and the spatial framework for residential development in Mullingar. The majority of new residential development which will occur over the plan period will be provided in accordance with the development framework prescribed in the three Framework Plans in the town, namely Robinstown, Ardmore/Marlinstown and Mullingar South. Said plans are included in Chapter 8 of this Local Area Plan. Residential development is also

provided for along the C-link, to the west of the town.

2.6.2 Household Size & Profile

7,433 permanent private households were recorded in the 2011 census in Mullingar Town and Environs. When the households were analysed by accommodation type, 85% comprised of houses/bungalows, which equates to 6,353 units followed by 13% apartments or 942 units, as illustrated in Graph 2.4 below.

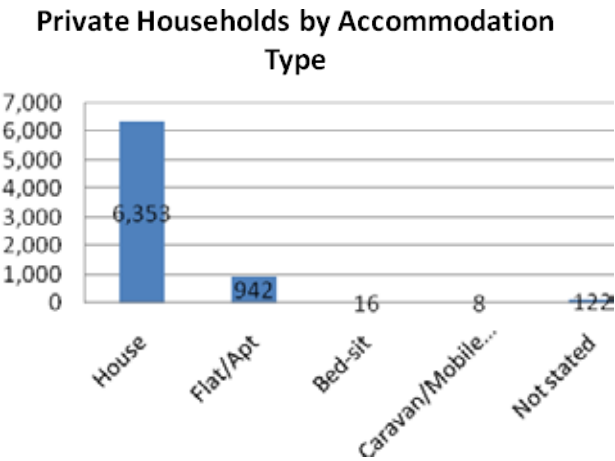


Fig 2.5 Private Households by Accommodation Type

27% of the housing stock in Mullingar was built in the ten years leading up to 2011 census, which is slightly greater than the state average at 25%. The highest rate of housing construction occurred in the town between 2001 and 2005, where 2,005 housing units were built.

The towns’ average household size of 2.64 persons is lower than the national average of 2.73 persons. An analysis of the Private Households by size reveals that 28% of homes in Mullingar comprises of two person households, which is consistent with the national average. 25% of households in the town are characterised by single occupancy, which is greater than the 23% state average.

With regard to the nature of occupancy of houses in Mullingar, Fig 2.6 illustrates that the majority of Private Households (61%) in Mullingar were owner occupied, whilst 27% were rented from Private Landlords. This figure is consistent with the national average. Only 10% of the private households in the town were rented from the Local Authority and Voluntary Bodies. It is anticipated that this figure will increase during the plan period.

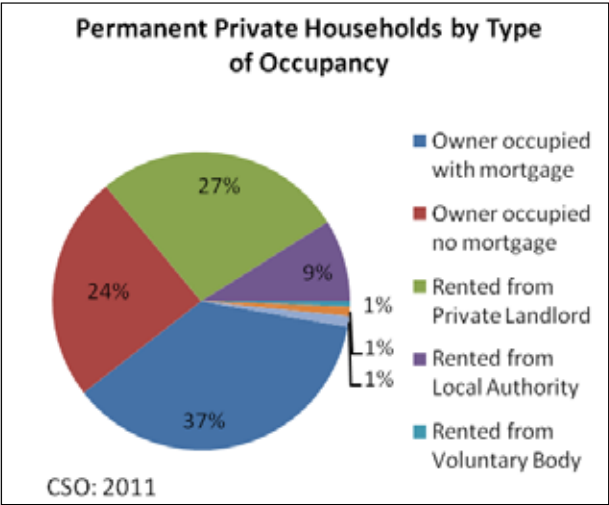


Fig 2.6 Permanent Private Households by Type of Occupancy

2.6.3 Residential Profile of Mullingar

Residential provision in Mullingar is largely concentrated to the east and west of the town. In recent years, there has been a significant volume of dwellings constructed along the C-Link, without the requisite supporting social infrastructure in that area. The plan aims to address this issue.

The residential profile of Mullingar varies from detached houses within established estates on the periphery of the town, to ribbon development on the approach roads, to a high density apartment complex adjacent to the Railway Station, to several residential schemes of various scale, designs and densities. There are a significant number of dwellings located within the Royal Canal loop

and the edge of centre area. These older estates and terraces represent good quality housing stock and are an important part of the fabric and identity of the town.

	2011 census	2020	Population Increase 2011- 2020
Population target	20,103	30,934	10,731
Housing Allocation	7,433 households		4,471 Additional Housing Units Required

Table 2.3 Regional Population Target and Housing Allocation for Mullingar 2011-2020 based on an average household size of 2.4.

In accordance with the Gateway Status of the Town, as prescribed in both the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and the County Settlement Strategy, the number of residential units required to meet projected population targets for Mullingar over the lifetime of this Local Area Plan is 4,471 units. This figure is a maximum target number. The majority of additional residential units required to meet the 2020 population maximum target will be provided for on residential zoned land on greenfield sites and Mixed Urban Core /General Urban Core areas within the three Framework Plan areas, together with some brownfield sites located close to and within the town centre. The total land area available for residential development within the plan has been calculated at 207 hectares (ha). The area required to meet maximum RPG targets is 193 ha, which includes allowance for 50% headroom.

Robinstown Framework Plan

- 632 Existing Housing Units
- Both the General Urban District (17.8 ha) and the Mixed Urban Core (30.5 ha) can accommodate residential development of up to 450-650 units
- Density 35-50 per hectare

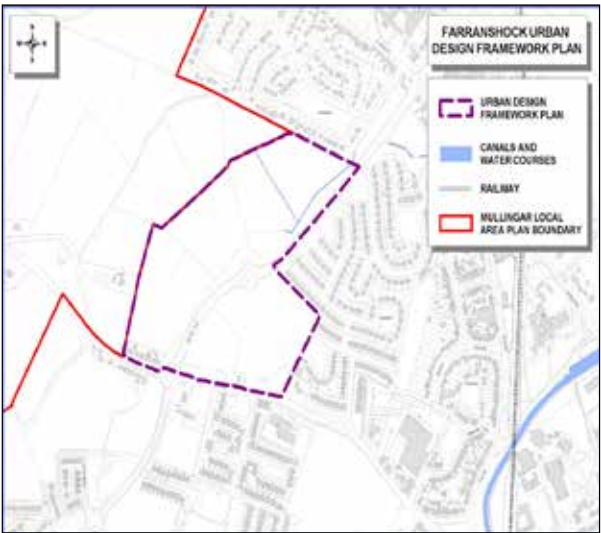
Ardmore Marlinstown Framework Plan

- 843 existing Housing Units
- 50.5ha of land available for residential development
- Can accommodate up to 1,750 units
- Average density 35 per hectare.

Mullingar South Framework Plan

- 22 Existing Housing Units
- 34.39ha of land available for residential development
- Can accommodate 800 units
- Average Density of 30 per hectare

The remaining undeveloped residential zoned land outside the above Framework Plans is primarily concentrated along the C-Link, together with isolated pockets to the east of the town. With regard to the residential zoned tract of land along the C-link, it is considered that an Urban Design Framework should be undertaken for a 19.75ha plot, as indicated in Map 2.2. The Council would support the preparation of such a plan in conjunction with the relevant landowners. The objective is to create sustainable communities at this location, characterised by high quality innovative design and permeable layouts, connectivity to adjoining residential areas and amenities, together with the provision of social, community and recreation facilities.



Map 2.2 Extent of the Urban Design Framework

The combined area available for residential development, outside the Framework Plans, including the aforesaid area along the C-Link is 45ha.

There are also a number of Brownfield / Town Centre Sites available for residential development. These sites are described in more detail in Section 4.21.

In addition to the lands identified above, the plan will also promote and encourage the provision of residential development in the town centre and brownfield sites and thus enhance the vitality and viability thereof.

2.6.4 Social Housing

The Council seeks to provide social housing to meet the needs identified in the Westmeath Housing Strategy 2014-2020. Westmeath County Council currently owns 510 housing units in the town and leases 104 units. The Council recently received funding to the sum of €512,000 to complete the Remedial Works in the Dalton Park area. Works funded under this programme included roads, footpaths public lighting, landscaping works, community gardens and works to the fabric of the dwellings in the area. The funding also allowed for the taking into stock by Westmeath County Council of five number houses which were in a derelict state and the refurbishment and reletting of same. The Council have also undertaken improvements to the existing housing stock at Ennell Court. It is anticipated that Ennell Court Housing Scheme will be further developed during the duration of the plan, as part of an overall regeneration scheme in that area.

Current policy dictates that the Private Rental Sector will be used to fulfil social housing need, rather than acquisition of units by the Council during the lifetime of the plan. It is also anticipated that Voluntary Housing Associations will have a greater role in this regard.

All relevant lands zoned for residential development or a mix of uses including residential will be subject to the requirements

of Part V of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended, in relation to the provision of Social and Affordable Housing. Planning applications should clearly outline how the requirements of Part V will apply.

2.7 HOUSING POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:	
P-H1	To facilitate residential development in Mullingar in line with its designation as a Linked Gateway Town, as prescribed in the Regional Planning Guidelines and the County Development Plan, and to ensure that this development reflects the character and setting of the existing built form, in terms of structure, pattern, scale, design and materials with adequate provision of open space, and which also protects the amenities of existing dwellings.
P-H2	To implement the provisions of the Robinstown, Ardmore /Marlinstown and Mullingar South Framework Plans in relation to housing provision.
P-H3	To provide sufficient land on a sequential basis to meet anticipated demand and to facilitate and implement the Housing Strategy and its policies.
P-H4	To secure the provision of social and affordable housing, to meet the needs of all households and the disadvantaged sectors in Mullingar, including the elderly, first time buyers, single person households on modest incomes, people with disabilities, and special needs etc.
P-H5	To ensure, in accordance with Part V of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 as amended that arrangements for the provision of Social and Affordable Housing are made in accordance with the current Housing Strategy.

P-H6	To support the right of every individual to own their own property, and to ensure a suitable range of tenure types, and engage with the Private Rented Sector to meet the needs of a more mobile population.
P-H7	To ensure the provision of a suitable range of house types and sizes to facilitate the demographic profile of the town.
P-H8	To have regard to the provisions of the <i>'Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas'(2009)</i> and the accompanying <i>'Urban Design Manual'</i> in assessing applications for housing development.
P-H9	To require diversity in the form, size and type of dwellings within residential schemes.
P-H10	To conserve the existing housing stock wherever possible, and to protect and improve residential amenities in existing residential areas and resist the encroachment of inappropriate commercial activity in established residential areas.
P-H11	To continue a programme of refurbishment and upgrading of the Council's existing housing stock.
P-H12	To ensure that the density and design of development respects the character of the existing and historic town in terms of structure, pattern, scale, design and materials with adequate provision of open space.

It is the objective of the Council:	
O-H1	To continue to monitor the extent and type of residential development in the town, to ensure sufficient housing type and land is zoned to meet housing demand.
O-H2	To continue to provide for the accommodation needs of single parent families, single homeless

	persons, people with disabilities, the elderly, etc. through the Council's Housing Programme as resources permit.
O-H3	To continue as a provider of accommodation including rental accommodation for households whose financial circumstances dictate that they cannot provide for their own housing needs.
O-H4	To co-operate with Voluntary Housing Associations and other providers of social and specialist needs housing.
O-H5	To promote the regeneration and upgrade of the Ennell Court area.
O-H6	To support the preparation of an Action Area Plan for the tract of residentially zoned land along the C-Link.

2.8 SPECIFIC HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

The Housing Strategy identified a decline in the average household size and an increase in the elderly, dependent and single parent household population. The census records indicate that 2,628 people in Mullingar town and environs have a disability. Of this number, 59% were aged between 45 - 65 and over. The demand for two bedroom accommodation is high among the elderly and people with disabilities, as they require additional rooms for carers. The greatest request need among people on the Council's waiting list is for two bedroom accommodation. The Local Area Plan advocates a mix of residential units, tenure mix, unit size and design to support the development of balanced communities.

2.8.1 Temporary Emergency Accommodation Mullingar (TEAM)

Temporary Emergency Accommodation Mullingar (TEAM) run a women and children emergency facility in Mullingar. However, homelessness is now dealt with on a regional basis, as per the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2009, so this facility services the homeless populace of the four counties that make up the Midlands Region (Longford, Westmeath, Laois and Offaly). There are also

a number of other facilities in the region that serve the needs of homeless men and women as well as a facility that caters for those affected by domestic violence.

2.8.2 HOUSING TYPE POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:		It is the objective of the Council:	
P-HT1	To ensure a mix and range of housing types and in particular two bedroom accommodation, to meet the diverse needs of residents of the town.	O-HT1	To identify sites in Mullingar for elderly accommodation close to public transport and community facilities, with a preference for brownfield sites.
P-HT2	To ensure all new residential schemes are designed so that units are easily adaptable in the future to accommodate housing for life.	O-HT2	To encourage and facilitate the provision of accommodation for the Homeless in the town.
P-HT3	To support independent living for people with disabilities and the elderly, and where possible, ensure that housing is integrated within proposed or existing residential developments and located close to existing community facilities.		
P-HT4	To facilitate the provision of purpose built dwellings for those with special needs, including provision for the needs of the elderly and persons with physical disabilities, in conjunction with other voluntary bodies and the Private Sector.		

Table 2.4. Criteria to determine the suitability of Housing in an Urban Area
(Source : National Spatial Strategy (NSS))

Housing Location in Urban Areas		Evaluation Considerations
Asset Test		Are there existing community resources, such as schools etc, with spare capacity?
Carrying Capacity Test		Is the environmental setting capable of absorbing development in terms of drainage etc?
Transport Test		Is there potential for reinforcing usage of public transport, walking and cycling?
Economic Test		Is there potential to ensure integration between the location of housing and employment?
Character Test		Will the proposal reinforce a sense of place and character?
Integration Test		Will the proposal aid an integrated approach to catering for the housing needs of all sections of society?

2.9 SUSTAINABLE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable neighbourhoods are areas where an efficient use of land, high quality urban design and effective integration in the provision of physical and social infrastructure combine to create places people want to live in. This plan seeks to promote high quality design and construction standards that result in a visually and functionally pleasing environment. A high quality living environment is vital for economic and social development and to the building of sustainable communities. The challenge is to design residential environments that impact positively on quality of life and comprise attractive safe areas with a mix of house types, sizes and design. Good permeability with pedestrian and cycle links to surrounding neighbourhoods, community facilities, open spaces and recreation areas are required for sustainable neighbourhoods.

The following criteria for new housing developments will be considered in the assessment of proposals:

- The capacity of the infrastructure to cater for future population.
- The adequacy of community facilities.
- Appropriate density, high standards of design and an appropriate mix of housing
- Adequate privacy for individual houses and apartments and the protection of existing residential amenity.
- The safety and permeability of proposed layouts.
- Appropriate provision is made for amenity and public open space as an integral part of new development proposals
- Design principles outlined in the Urban Design Manual published by the Department of Environment, Heritage

and Local Government, together with Urban Design and the Development Management Standards, set out in this plan should be referenced with regard to the development of residential areas in the town.

2.10 SUSTAINABLE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:	
P-SR1	To support the principle of sequential development in assessing all new residential development proposals, whereby areas closer to the centre of the town, including underutilised and brownfield sites, will be chosen for development in the first instance to promote a sustainable pattern of development.
P-SR2	To encourage and promote the development of underutilised infill and backland development in the town, subject to Development Management criteria being met.
P-SR3	To ensure all new residential development complies with the Evaluation Criteria for determining the suitability of housing in an urban area, as set out in the National Spatial Strategy. (Table 2.4)
P-SR4	To promote residential accommodation in the town centre as part of Mixed Use development schemes.
P-SR5	To resist the loss of existing housing stock in the town centre.
P-SR6	To ensure that new greenfield residential estate development should be in accordance with the Spatial Framework established in the relevant Framework Plan for the subject area, subject to infrastructural services being available.

P-SR7	To promote energy efficiency during both the construction phase and lifetime of residential development, by incorporating sensitive design and layout and having due regard to topography, orientation and the surrounding features of a site.
P-SR8	To promote social inclusion by encouraging the provision of community facilities in new and established residential areas.
P-SR9	To encourage improved energy efficiency of the existing building stock and to promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings, including Local Authority dwellings.
P-SR10	To ensure the development of sustainable residential communities through the promotion of innovative, high quality building design and layouts that prioritise non-car based movement and provide for a high level of permeability, accessibility and connectivity to the existing built environment, services and facilities.
P-SR11	To retain the residential character of streets and estates close to the town centre and resist the loss of residential units therein.
P-SR12	To require and co-operate in the provision of community facilities in tandem with residential development including, in particular, local services, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities.
P-SR13	To encourage appropriate densities for new housing development in different locations in the town, whilst recognising the need to protect existing residential communities and the established character of the area.

P-SR14	To facilitate working from home subject to relevant planning criteria and the protection of the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.
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It is the objective of the Council:	
O-SR1	To promote connectivity and linkages between open spaces and existing residential developments in the town.
O-SR2	To promote a high standard of architecture in the design of new housing developments and to encourage a variety of house types, sizes and tenure, to cater for the needs of the population and facilitate the creation of balanced communities.

2.11 RESIDENTIAL DENSITY

The Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government Guidelines on ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas’ (2009) outline sustainable approaches to the development of urban areas. The Guidelines promote increased densities in locations where there is appropriate infrastructure, compliance with open and private space requirements, would not give rise to undue impact on amenities and is in keeping with the character of the area. Densities and detailed residential layouts are prescribed in the Framework Plans contained in Chapter 8 of the plan.

One of the key aspirations of the Mullingar LAP is to support sustainable densities within the Framework Plans in the town, whilst facilitating the commencement of development in the short to medium term; responding to the unique conditions, opportunities and challenges in the Robinstown, Mullingar South and Ardmore/Marlinstown areas.

There are fundamental principles, demonstrated by the most admired and liveable urban areas, that should guide the design of all urban places and communities.

Table 2.5 outlines these principles. The form of the buildings, structures and spaces within the Framework Plans land shall be the physical expression of these Urban Design principles. The Urban Design guidance set out below will determine residential layouts within the Framework Plans. Each of the Framework Plans includes a road network with pedestrian and cycle linkages. It is anticipated that the building blocks, scale in terms of building height and massing; the appearance as expressed in architectural details and use of materials; the landscape structure including the public realm, and the built and natural green spaces of new development proposals will be determined using the criteria below. This approach will allow Developers some flexibility in the form and style of new communities within Robinstown, Mullingar South and Ardmore / Marlinstown areas.

Character & Identity	To promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, landscape and culture.
Continuity & Enclosure	To promote the continuity of street frontages and the enclosure of space by development which clearly defines private and public areas.
Quality of the public realm	To promote public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including people with disabilities and elderly people.
Ease of Movement	To promote accessibility and local permeability by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, putting people before traffic and integrating land uses and transport.
Legibility	To promote legibility through development that provides recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks to help people find their way around.
Adaptability	To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.

Table 2.5 Principles of Urban Design



Outside the Framework Plans in the town, the following densities will apply.

Location for new Residential Development	General Density Parameters
Town Centre & Brownfield Sites	Site Specific 35-50 per ha
At strategic locations including public transport nodes	35-50 units per ha
Inner suburban/Infill	Site Specific
Outer Suburban/Greenfield	30-35 per ha
Outer edge of Urban/Rural Transition	20-35 per ha

Table 2.6 Residential Densities for Mullingar

2.12 RESIDENTIAL DENSITY POLICIES

It is the policy of the Council:

P-RD1	To promote higher residential density development in the town centre and on brownfield and infill sites, subject to Development Management Standards being met, the Evaluation Considerations in the National Spatial Strategy being adhered to and existing residential amenity not being compromised.
P-RD2	To resist residential development on Institutional zoned lands, unless indicated by a Framework Plan for the area.
P-RD3	To require that new residential development proposals adhere to the urban design principles prescribed in Fig. 2.2.

2.13 RESIDENTIAL LAYOUT AND DESIGN

The Council's primary aim in relation to residential development is to deliver high quality sustainable living environments which are attractive, safe and vibrant and meet the needs of the residents and the community. The companion Design Manual to the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) sets out criteria that can be applied to the design and layout of new residential development at a variety of scales of development and in various settings. These principles will be applied to new residential schemes in the town.

In the past suburban sprawl and the road hierarchy has characterised housing estate layouts, with roads designed first and the houses fitted around them. This has led to the under utilisation of zoned lands, in particular urban lands, the over reliance on the car, with traffic calming being introduced after the development is occupied and little or no connectivity within or between sites. A good development creates a 'sense of place' and community belonging to the residents. This is created by providing a mixture of house types and tenure, an individual design, the use of a variety of materials for the context of the site

and area and connectivity of the site to other places. The concept of place making includes issues relating to the making of edges, buildings turning corners, landmark buildings in the form of community buildings, supervised play areas, public walkways and the safety and security of an area for residents and other users.

2.14 RESIDENTIAL LAYOUT AND DESIGN POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:

P-RLD1	To achieve attractive and sustainable development and create high standards of design, layout and landscaping for new housing development.
P-RLD2	To determine the layout of new development before or at the same time as the road layout with connections to social infrastructure identified.
P-RLD3	To require that appropriate provision is made for amenity, public open space and social infrastructure as an integral part of new residential or extensions to existing developments.
P-RLD4	To ensure that all new housing schemes shall be designed to reduce energy demand and shall comply with the Building Regulations Energy Performance standards.
P-RLD5	To ensure that all residential properties are designed with flexible and adaptable layouts to suit the home owner with regard to Lifetime Homes.
P-RLD6	To ensure that all new urban development especially in and around the town centre is of a high design and layout quality and supports the achievement of successful urban spaces and sustainable communities.
P-RLD7	To require applications for residential developments over 30 units to demonstrate the provision of an appropriate mix of

	<p>dwelling types having regard to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The nature of the existing housing stock and existing social mix in the area;- The desirability of providing for mixed communities;- The provision of a range of housing types and tenures;- The need to provide a choice of housing, suitable for all age groups and persons at different stages of the life cycle;- The need to cater for special needs groups
P-RLD8	To require applications for residential developments over 50 units, to demonstrate how the proposed increase in population will be accommodated in terms of education provision.
P-RLD9	To require permeable layouts within housing schemes and connectivity to adjoining areas and amenities.

It is the objective of the Council:	
O-RLD1	To ensure all Local Authority social and affordable housing schemes shall meet energy performance standards.
O-RLD2	To produce a supplementary Planning Guidance note on an integrated approach to the design, layout and landscaping of new residential development.
O-RLD3	To require all applications for residential schemes in excess of 10 units to be accompanied by a Design Statement.

2.15 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

Open space is one of the key elements in defining the quality of the residential environment. The provision of open space to serve new residential developments should be on a hierarchical basis varying in size from large regional parks to small children’s play

areas and passive recreation spaces close to peoples’ homes. Quality will take precedence over quantity in open space provision and details of the proposed landscaping, both hard and soft, should be provided at application stage.

In order to facilitate community interaction and create a sense of place, public open spaces must be designed and treated as important nodes that perform a specific function in the creation of sustainable communities, regardless of scale or type. They should be overlooked with if feasible a south facing aspect. The Council will not consider incidental spaces left over after site layout has been designed, as open space. The requirements for provision of private, semi private and communal open spaces for houses and apartments are outlined in the Development Management Standards chapter.

2.16 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE OPEN SPACE POLICIES

It is the policy of the Council:	
P-POS1	To ensure that the provision of public and private open space for new residential development is of a high standard, overlooked and integral to the overall development. Narrow tracts of land or ‘left over areas’ will not be included within open space provision.
P-POS2	To require a detailed landscaping plan with all new housing developments by a suitably qualified professional. The landscaping design shall include a survey of the existing natural features on the site.
P-POS3	To reserve the right to accept contributions from developers in lieu of provision of open space, in appropriate circumstances, where it would achieve a better distribution of open space and assist in the provision of amenities for the area.

2.17 APARTMENTS

Within Mullingar the provision of apartment schemes may be considered at appropriate locations and where a significant demand for smaller units of accommodation is evident. Generally apartments, or retail/commercial developments with apartments above, shall be located in the town centre area. Apartments may also be appropriate close to public transport nodes. Achieving a high quality design and layout will be paramount in the acceptability of planning applications for apartment schemes. All applications must demonstrate how the proposal contributes to place making and the identity of the area. Regard shall be had to the Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for Apartments, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, September 2007 in the overall design and layout of apartment developments. Higher density schemes will only be considered where they exhibit a high architectural design standard creating an attractive and sustainable living environment.

2.18 APARTMENT POLICIES

It is the Policy of the Council:	
P-APT1	To require the establishment of management companies for apartment developments as part of a grant of planning permission.
P-APT2	To ensure that all apartments provide adequate facilities for the storage, separation and collection of waste (organic, recyclable and landfill waste) and ensure the ongoing operation of these facilities.
P-APT3	To restrict apartment developments generally to town centre locations or suitably located sites adjoining public transport connections. Higher density schemes will only be considered where they exhibit a high quality architectural design standard and create an attractive and sustainable living environment.

P-APT4	To require standards for open space provision to be met in all Apartment Schemes in accordance with Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2007) or as may be amended.
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2.19 VACANT HOUSING AND UNFINISHED HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

The 2011 census recorded 14% of the permanent houses in Mullingar were vacant on census night, which would account for 1,264 dwellings. This level of vacancy (which may include unfinished housing in estates, and apartment schemes) is potentially a resource which could meet the needs of people in need of housing accommodation. The location and type of the vacant units within the town needs to be identified and monitored, in order to manage future housing need.

Vacant houses in unfinished estates detract from the character of an area and may encourage anti-social behaviour. For those dwellings which remain unused for housing purposes, a flexible approach for the reuse of the buildings needs to be considered. Potential uses such as community facilities educational, craft or commercial uses could be considered subject to development management standards being met.

The 2011 Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Survey of Unfinished Housing Developments identified six Unfinished Housing Developments in Mullingar. These include Belvedere Hills, Rathgowan, Gleann Petit, Cloon Lara, Coill Rua and Royal Canal. In the case of Belvedere Hills and Gleann Petit, the Council is in negotiations with the respective developers to bring a resolution to existing issues. With regard to the remaining estates, the Council shall undertake a Site Resolution Plan for each of these Unfinished Housing Schemes in conjunction with all relevant stakeholders.

2.20 VACANT HOUSING & UNFINISHED HOUSING DEVELOPMENT POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:	
P-VUH2	To promote the preparation of Site Resolution Plans (SRPs) for all Unfinished Housing Developments in the town, in cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders and in accordance with the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government Guidance Manual for Resolving Unfinished Housing Developments 2011.
P-VUH2	To ensure that all SRPs have regard to both the Core Strategy and Housing Strategy and comply with the policies and objectives as set out in this Plan.
P-VUH3	To prioritise and promote the occupation of vacant residential units within the town and to take account of this available housing supply in the overall assessment of future housing need.

It is the objective of the Council:	
O-VUH1	To establish and maintain a database of vacant residential units in the town to inform policy making.
O-VUH2	To ensure through the planning enforcement process, collection of bonds and development contributions, that housing developments are completed to a standard that is in accordance with the Council's Taking in Charge Policy for private housing developments.

2.21 TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

The 2011 Census identified 471 travellers present in Mullingar on census night. The Council recognises the distinct culture and lifestyle of the Travelling Community and it will endeavour to provide suitable accommodation for travellers who are indigenous to the area. St. Michael's Park Halting Site on the Castlepollard Road is the only designated halting site in Mullingar. The Council has upgraded and extended this facility in recent years.

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 outlines the Councils proposals to meet the accommodation needs of traveller families in the county as a whole, including Mullingar and sets out a strategy to achieve these proposals. The Council will consult with the Travelling Community, their representative organisations and local communities in relation to the siting, planning and design of traveller accommodation such as halting sites or group housing schemes, in order to promote social inclusion.

2.22 TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION POLICY & OBJECTIVE

It is the policy of the Council:	
P-TA1	To provide a good living environment for travelling people to recommended standards of accommodation and sanitary facilities.
P-TA2	To provide for the accommodation needs of the travelling community in Mullingar and to prohibit illegal parking in the vicinity of the established halting site.

It is the objective the Council:	
O-TA1	To secure the implementation of the County Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 and any revision thereof.

Chapter 3 *Economic Development*



3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

AIM:

To promote and facilitate the development of critical mass, employment and sustainable economic activity in Mullingar commensurate with the status of the town as a Linked Gateway Town. This is to be achieved by developing a business environment that is attractive to both indigenous and inward investment and supports the establishment of an innovation based economy.

3.1 CONTEXT

In order to maintain a vibrant and attractive town and a sustainable community, one of the key issues for any town is economic development. Employment opportunities are vital for a town to grow and prosper and, in an increasingly competitive market and changing economic climate, it is important for towns to take advantage of any unique assets or specialist expertise it may possess.

The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 require that priority should be given to targeting the development of activities which capitalise on existing and emerging strengths in the Linked Gateway town of Mullingar, in addition to promoting the development of all sectors within the town. In this regard, it specifies the development of the following sectors in Mullingar:

- Engineering and ICT
- Consumer Products
- Financial Services
- Shared Services (Multi-lingual)
- R&D

Employment policy shall seek to ensure that the potential of the town is maximised in terms of sustainable economic development and employment generation. Employment growth will be driven by the promotion of enterprise in export led projects, which will act as a catalyst for economic expansion and employment across the remainder of the town. Mullingar's natural and locational advantages should be utilised and marketed

to secure further Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and growth of the indigenous and tourism sectors. This shall be facilitated by the designation of an Innovation and Technology Zone at the IDA Park in Marlinstown and at a newly created business district in Robinstown.

3.2 STRATEGIC COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES OF MULLINGAR

In terms of potential for employment and enterprise generation, Mullingar has a number of key strengths as follows:

- Strategic location along the N4, with excellent inter-urban links to the capital and international airport by motorway and rail.
- Gateway Status and an attractive urban centre
- Highly Skilled Workforce.
- Proximity to Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT) and National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM) to support research and training programmes
- Advanced infrastructure network, in terms of both road and rail connections.
- Existing base of both indigenous and international companies at the forefront of their field, in sectors such as engineering and consumer goods and services
- Excellent broadband and telecommunications infrastructure.
- Availability of wastewater infrastructure.
- Lough Owel, Lough Ennell, Belvedere House and Gardens, the Royal Canal and a high quality natural environment.
- Availability of serviced lands reserved for employment generation purposes and opportunities for clustering of related enterprises.

3.3 ECONOMIC PROFILE OF MULLINGAR

Historically, Mullingar was a busy Market Town which has grown into a hub of enterprise, industry and commercial development. Manufacturing has been at the core of this evolution. From an industrial perspective, Mullingar is a proven location for multi-national and indigenous companies across a range of sectors such as Oakley Optical Ireland, Patterson Pumps, Imperial Tobacco and Taconic International. Mullingar also has a growing and significant services sector with companies operating within the commerce, finance, and business industry such as FBD Insurance. There is also an established tradition of retailing in the town.

Other important employers in Mullingar are the Public Services, including Westmeath County Council with 250 employees, the Health Services Executive and the Midland Regional Hospital (approx 800 employees).

According to the 2011 census, out of the 15,391 people available for work in Mullingar Town and Environs, 7,450 people recorded their principal economic status as being “at work”. This represents a total labour force participation rate of 48.4%, which is considerably less than the national average of 61%. Table 3.1 below illustrates the labour force breakdown in Mullingar Town and Environs in 2011. The records show that there is a high rate of unemployment in the town (15.1%), exceeding the current national unemployment rate which stands at 14%.

Table 3.2 illustrates the nature of employment of people at work in Mullingar Town and Environs relative to that of the state. The majority of workers in Mullingar (26.7%) work in professional services, followed closely by 26% of workers employed in the commerce and trade sector. A higher proportion of the labour force in the town is engaged in Public Administration (8%) than in the State (6%).

Table 3.2 Employment Types in Mullingar (Source: CSO 2011)

Employment Type	2011 No.	2011 %	National Average
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	93	1.2%	5%
Building & Construction	326	4.4%	5%
Manufacturing	830	11.1%	12%
Commerce & Trade	1934	26%	25%
Transport & Communications	465	6.2%	8%
Public Administration	595	8%	6%
Professional Services	1984	26.7%	24%
Other	1223	16.4%	15%

Table 3.1 Labour Force Breakdown in Mullingar Town and Environs (Source: CSO 2011)

Location	Total Labour Force	At Work	Looking for 1 st Regular Job	Unemployed	Student	Looking After Home / Family	Retired	Unable to work due to permanent sickness / disability	Other
Mullingar Town & Environs	15,391	7,450	198	2,326	1,433	1,434	1,772	730	48
%	100%	48.4%	1.2%	15.1%	9.3%	9.3%	11.5%	4.7%	0.5%

3.4 FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYMENT CREATION

A number of key land use factors influence the future economic potential of the town and comprise availability of zoned land, availability of infrastructure, such as water services, transportation and energy and quality of life considerations.

3.4.1 Availability of Zoned Land

173ha of land has been zoned for Enterprise and Employment uses within the plan area, comprising of 78ha of developed land and 95ha of undeveloped land. This is in addition to a further 78ha of greenfield lands which are zoned for Innovation Technology at Robinstown and Ardmore/Marlinstown. Employment generating uses are to be provided within a number of established Business Parks within the town together with the creation of newly designated Enterprise Zones. The Council's zoning strategy for the town identifies locations for particular types of employment land uses such as large-scale enterprise development, industrial development, commercial, retail and small to medium enterprises.

3.4.2 Infrastructure

Adequate infrastructure is essential to facilitate future economic activity in the town. This includes water and wastewater services, effective road and public transport networks, energy, telecommunications, waste management, education facilities etc. The town is adequately served by existing water and wastewater infrastructure, excellent road and rail linkages and high quality broadband.

3.4.3 Quality of Life

The importance of quality of life is a key component to facilitate future economic development. Making a town attractive for both firms and their employees forms part of a successful Economic Development Strategy. Specific actions to improve quality of life include:

- Providing high quality residential development with supporting social and community facilities
- Ensuring a vibrant Town Centre with a high quality public realm
- Creating an attractive urban environment
- Ensuring the appearance of development compliments existing environments and is of the highest quality
- Increasing and improving the range of recreational, amenity and cultural facilities.

3.5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Gateway Town of Mullingar will be promoted as an anchor of regional enterprise. Critical mass is a core objective to create more self-sustaining patterns of development. It is a priority of this plan to encourage and make provision for increased employment activity, including ensuring that sufficient land is zoned at optimum locations, the provision of necessary infrastructure, and to encourage measures to promote critical mass to allow for future economic development and employment generation. The Strategy centres on the following strategic principles:

- To promote and facilitate the development of critical mass, employment, enterprise and economic activity in Mullingar.
- To facilitate sustainable economic development and regeneration.
- To provide for the establishment of an innovation based economy
- To enhance competitiveness and stimulate economic recovery and job creation across all sectors of the economy.

- To improve the international competitiveness of businesses in Mullingar and enhance their capacity to attract inward investment from both foreign and indigenous sources.
- To promote a knowledge-based enterprise and innovation economy, capitalising on strong linkages between industry and adjacent Third Level Colleges and Research Institutes at NUI Maynooth and Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT).
- To provide for the continued expansion of established enterprise clusters in the town and the enhancement of linkages between these enterprise hubs and national enterprise development agencies such as Enterprise Ireland and the IDA.
- To support the role of retailing in Mullingar, in recognition of its key role in the provision of employment and economic activity and its contribution to the social dimension of the town.
- To attract, support and enhance rapidly growing industry sectors such as R&D and International Traded Services.
- To support the establishment and expansion of indigenous industry and micro-enterprise in the town.
- To develop and maximise the tourism potential of Mullingar including Lough Owel and Lough Ennell as a 'pillar of economic growth'.
- To promote and support the establishment of an e-working Centre in Mullingar

3.6 LOCATION OF ENTERPRISE / EMPLOYMENT LANDS IN MULLINGAR

The plan seeks to identify a range of optimum locations which can present opportunities for the location of specific / specialised enterprise and employment uses within the town. The plan also encourages the re-use and re-development of brownfield lands i.e. those lands formerly used for other uses and under-utilised lands.

3.6.1 Innovation Technology Zones

The aim is to strengthen the industrial base in the town. Emphasis shall be placed on attracting both foreign owned and indigenous companies into Mullingar, with particular emphasis given to encouraging higher value-added knowledge based industries and international traded activities. There is a need to support innovation in the town, in order to translate ideas into high value products and services and to align education provision with industry needs. Innovation is also essential in order to enhance entrepreneurship and develop the existing economic sectors within the town. In this regard, a new Enterprise and Employment land use zoning type has been introduced in Mullingar, to be known as "Innovation Technology", which will channel high value high tech knowledge, R&D and SMART industries into the IDA Park in Marlinstown and into the Enterprise Zone in Robinstown.

The IDA Park at Marlinstown is a 27ha park located off the N52 adjacent to the M4 motorway to Dublin. The site has been infrastructurally developed to include roadways, groundworks, water, sewerage and telecom ducting. The site boasts existing designs for advanced Technology Buildings and high specification office facilities to suit both manufacturing and internationally traded services clients.

The Innovation Technology Zone in the Robinstown Framework Plan which fronts the Castlepollard Road extends to 51ha in area. It is envisaged that this area will accommodate a range of major businesses and enterprises

such as the software industry, telecom providers, multi-media producers, in addition to research and development. This zone shall be subject to a detailed Master Plan.

The focus in these areas shall be on creating knowledge-based enterprise clusters. The delivery of such knowledge based quarters can be achievable, by harnessing the potential of linkages to adjoining Third Level Research Institutes such as AIT and NUI Maynooth. Both Institutions are within a 40 minute drive of the town. Such links are critical for the spin-off and synergy required to fulfil the vision to develop a centre of excellence for education, research, enterprise and innovation at these locations.

3.6.2 Forest Park Business Park

Forest Park Business Park offers a mix of office units and industrial space. It is considered that a range of general industrial types and services would be appropriate within this extensive Industrial Park, which has high quality road links with access to the C-Link/N52 and M4 road networks.

3.6.3 Clonmore Business Park

The Clonmore Business Park accommodates a large proportion of the indigenous industries in the town. It also contains the Mullingar Enterprise Technology and Innovation Centre which provides incubation units to the micro-enterprise sector. According to the Geodirectory, in the first quarter of 2013 out of the 82 commercial units in Clonmore, 10 were vacant.

3.6.4 Mullingar Business Park

The Mullingar Business Park offers a mix of industrial units of various sizes and types. According to the Geodirectory, in the first quarter of 2013 out of the 74 units in both Forest Park Business Park and Mullingar Business Park, 8 were vacant.

3.6.5 Lough Sheever Corporate Park

Lough Sheever Corporate Park is a 50 hectare established mixed use development providing high specification business units, commercial facilities together with warehousing and

distributions units. There is approximately 12ha of land available for enterprise use within Lough Sheever Corporate Park. According to the Geodirectory, in the first quarter of 2013, out of the 34 units in Lough Sheever, 5 were vacant.

3.6.6 Lakepoint Business Park

Lakepoint Business Park provides blocks of flexible office space finished to the highest standards both in terms of design and specification. The blocks benefit from extensive frontage onto the N4.

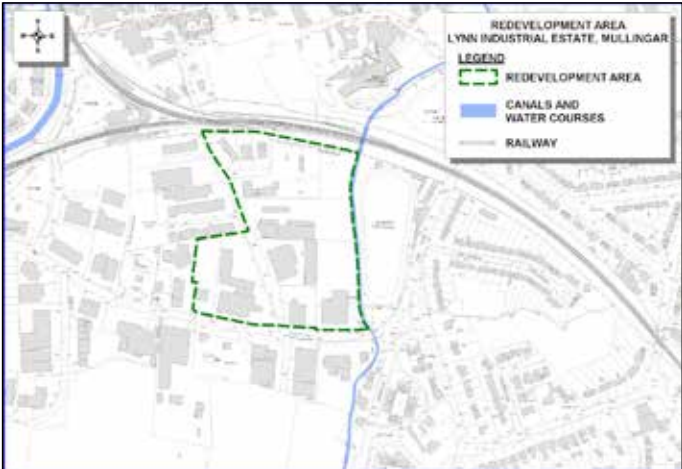
3.6.7 E-Working Scheme Mullingar

Westmeath County Council has initiated the establishment of an e-Working Centre in an existing building within the grounds of its headquarters at County Buildings, Mullingar. The proposal is aimed at implementing Irish Government policy as expressed in “Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future” which has set objectives for the provision of regional e-Working Centres in order to reduce work related travel.

The proposed project involves providing state of the art office facilities for use by people living in the Midlands area who currently travel to work in Dublin or other locations involving long travel distances. The proposed e-Working Centre will provide an opportunity to work closer to home, availing of working space with communications and IT systems in an office environment in Mullingar.

Patrons of the proposed e-Working Centre would have access to the Council’s ancillary facilities including existing car and bicycle parking facilities, meeting rooms and tele/video conferencing.

Using the proposed e-Working Centre would result in many benefits for individuals including substantial time and cost savings. Important community benefits would also result in reduced traffic congestion, energy conservation, and reduced environmental emissions from transport.



Map 3.1 Redevelopment Area, Mullingar Business Park

3.6.8 Redevelopment Area, Mullingar Business Park

In addition to the designated Business Parks within Mullingar, there is an area extending to 5.6ha immediately south of the Town Centre which is also designated as a redevelopment area for enterprise and employment generating uses. This area is bound to the north by the railway line, to the west by existing petrol station, to the south by the Clonmore Road and to the east by the Greyhound Racing Track. The site currently comprises of a mix of commercial units of varying quality and under-utilised lands. It offers potential for re-development, owing to its strategic location vis-à-vis the Town Centre and as the entry point into Mullingar Business Park. The Council will undertake a Master Plan for this area over the plan duration. It is envisaged that the site would accommodate a mix of employment and commercial uses which will act as a catalyst to introduce more urban forms and improved arrangement of buildings close to the town centre.

3.7 HOME WORKING

Home working can make a positive contribution towards reducing car travel. Whilst the plan supports the concept of home working, it is important that it does not result in disamenity in a residential area. In addition to home working, this plan supports the

concept of a live-work unit which can be defined as a single unit within a building that is both a place to live and a place of business or commerce. The development of live-work units can lead to a more sustainable land use pattern, by providing for a mix of uses, ensuring a balance between day and night time activity and reducing commuting, and is specifically provided for in the Mullingar South and Robinstown Framework Plans.

3.8 GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-EC1	To accelerate the sustainable development of the Linked Gateway town of Mullingar through sustainable employment creation, in a structured and cohesive way, recognising its importance as a key driver of economic growth for the region.
P-EC2	To facilitate development agencies such as IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland to promote development of foreign-owned and indigenous sector higher value-added, knowledge based industrial and internationally traded activities.
P-EC3	To foster and support industry and enterprise in Mullingar, including indigenous businesses.
P-EC4	To ensure the availability of lands for employment uses, allied to defined development needs and to develop same in conjunction with the relevant Development Agencies.
P-EC5	To promote innovative economic sectors and encourage clustering which positively exploits synergies between interconnected companies and to help forge synergies with AIT and NUI Maynooth.

P-EC6	To facilitate and encourage the development of the alternative energy sector and to recognise its potential in the creation of enterprise and employment opportunities including the building of research capacity.
P-EC7	To continue to support and facilitate the development of start-up enterprise units for local indigenous enterprises in Mullingar.
P-EC8	To facilitate innovative work practices such as 'live-work' units where they do not negatively impact on residential amenity.
P-EC9	To provide for childcare facilities in appropriate locations and in consultation with Westmeath Childcare Committee, thereby promoting labour market participation among parents and supporting parents in accessing employment, training and education.
P-EC10	To continue to improve access to major areas of employment through sustainable transport modes.
P-EC11	To actively encourage the redevelopment of brownfield sites and re-use of disused buildings for enterprise and employment creation, subject to meeting Development Management Criteria prescribed in Chapter 9 of the plan.
P-EC12	To encourage and facilitate at appropriate designated locations, small indigenous industries in recognition of their increasing importance in providing local employment and helping to stimulate economic activity.
P-EC13	To promote, protect, improve, encourage and facilitate the development of tourism in Mullingar as an important contributor to job creation in the town.
P-EC14	To support and facilitate continued Public Sector employment in the town.

P-EC15	To facilitate the development of high tech, Bio Tech, ICT, and finance sectors in Mullingar.
P-EC16	To promote cutting edge innovative design, permeable layouts, high quality public realm and landscaped settings in all proposals for enterprise developments, in accordance with relevant Framework Plans.

It is an objective of the Council:

O-EC1	<p>To promote and facilitate the development of an Innovation Technology Zone at Robinstown. This zone shall be subject to a detailed Master Plan to be prepared by the Planning Authority, in consultation with landowners and Development Agencies. The overall development shall integrate well with the existing and natural built form and deliver a high quality built environment. The Master Plan shall have regard to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visual Impact - Landscape and habitat considerations - Building Design and Sustainability - Sustainable Transport including pedestrian and cycle linkages - Ancillary uses such as crèche, pre-school, education and recreational etc <p>The Master Plan shall be subject to a Strategic Level Traffic and Transport Assessment, which shall assess an appropriate junction and access strategy for the lands, having regard to the proximity of the lands to the National Road mainline and the junction with the R394. In addition, the Master Plan shall be subject to a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.</p>
O-EC2	To continue to pursue State and Semi-State funding initiatives to support sustainable employment creation in Mullingar.
O-EC3	To develop and implement a Regional Brand and Brand Strategy for the Linked Gateway, in

	partnership with the Gateway Implementation Forum.
O-EC4	To support the work of the Local Enterprise Office, once established under the Local Government Reform Initiative, in the development of job creation initiatives for Mullingar.
O-EC5	To promote a programme of environmental enhancements at all existing Industrial Estates and Enterprise Zones within the Town.
O-EC6	To require workplaces and educational facilities to produce Mobility Management and Transportation Plans.
O-EC7	To prepare a Master Plan for the regeneration of a 5.6ha area within the Mullingar Business Park, promoting a mix of employment and commercial uses, to a high quality built form and permeable layout.
O-EC8	To facilitate the development of an e-working Centre in the town.

3.9 PREVENTION OF MAJOR ACCIDENTS

The EU Directive on the Control of Major Accidents Hazards (Seveso) seeks to reduce the risk and to limit the consequences of accidents involving dangerous substances that present a major accident hazard. The Directive requires Planning Authorities to have regard to the potential effects of relevant development of the risks or consequences of a major accident for public health and safety, and the need to maintain an appropriate safe distance of such establishments from residential areas, areas of public use, and areas of particular natural sensitivity.

Article 12 of the Directive (2003/105/EC) provides that appropriate consultation procedures must be put in place to ensure that before decisions are taken, technical advice is available to Planning Authorities in respect of relevant establishments. The Health and Safety Authority (or the National Authority for Occupational Health and Safety, (NAOSH)) provides such advice where appropriate in respect of planning

applications within a specified distance of the perimeter of these sites. Such technical advice will be taken into account in the consideration of applications for planning permission.

At present, there are no Seveso sites within Mullingar.

3.10 PREVENTION OF MAJOR ACCIDENTS POLICY

It is a policy of the Council:

P-MA1	To comply with the Seveso II Directive in reducing the risk and limiting the potential consequences of major industrial accidents in relation to spatial planning policy and Development Management, as necessary.
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3.11 TOURISM
AIM:

To promote the arts, literary, cultural and natural heritage of Mullingar, and build upon the Town’s local distinctiveness, thus harnessing the marketability and potential of the Gateway Town as a national tourist destination.

3.11.1 Context

It is recognised that tourism development can make an important contribution to the economy of the town. The Town’s setting on the Royal Canal and proximity to Lough Owel and Lough Ennell add to its’ attractiveness as a tourist location, and has ensured a consistent influx of fishing, boating and water enthusiasts. The town also hosts a number of annual festivals and cultural events. The important retailing role of Mullingar also adds to its profile.

There are many visitor attractions within the town and within reasonable proximity thereof. Belvedere House and Gardens is a 160 acre Parkland Estate on the shore of Lough Ennell approximately 4km south of the town. Currently attracting over 160,000 visitors a year, the estate is a multi faceted

tourism/leisure site and is one of the major tourist attractions in the region.



Although not always marketed as a destination in its own right, Mullingar has considerable potential to develop as an urban tourism destination. There are many opportunities for Mullingar to capitalise further on its tourism strengths and to seek to draw additional visitor numbers to the town and surrounding region. It is considered important however that any expansion and future provision of tourism within Mullingar should complement the overall character of the area.

The Council can contribute to the tourism potential of Mullingar through a variety of different synergistic measures including improved accessibility throughout the town, environmental regeneration of specific areas, the provision of recreation and amenity areas, facilitation of the development of visitor attractions and protection of the natural and built heritage and enhancement of public spaces. The retention of the Town Centre distinctiveness and vitality is a recognised factor in this regard.

The strategic emphasis will continue to be placed on increasing the numbers of visitors to Mullingar; but it will be the development of further quality and sustainable tourism products that will ultimately provide long-term returns. The development of Mullingar as a premier tourism destination, with a diverse and innovative range of tourism products; in a way that is environmentally,

socially and economically sustainable can only be achieved in co-operation and collaboration with relevant agencies including Fáilte Ireland, and Waterways Ireland.

The Town has several hotels including the Greville Arms Hotel, Annebrook House Hotel, Bloomfield House Hotel, Leisure Club & Spa, Newbury Hotel and the Mullingar Park Hotel which houses a conference centre. The provision of new tourist facilities will further strengthen the town's position as a Gateway and a main tourist destination in the Midland Region. These would include facilities for conferencing, wellness, recreation, sport and outdoor activities and should be provided having regard to the existing settlement pattern of the county and touring routes used by visitors. This will enable new and enhanced facilities to be provided where they can be best accessed and used by international and domestic visitors using independent or public transport.

The Council shall foster the development of all aspects of the tourist market by encouraging the provision of a wide range of types of accommodation for the tourist and home-based holidaymakers.

It is the policy of the Council to seek to improve the overall appearance and level of facilities and services of the town and its environs through the Derelict Sites Acts, Community Employment Schemes and through effective development management and enforcement. The Council will continue to work in partnership with other agencies to stimulate and coordinate projects in the Tourism Sector by identifying, influencing and bringing forward new products and initiatives.

3.12 WATER BASED TOURISM

The Royal Canal is fully navigable through the town. Boating enthusiasts can avail of a service block facility constructed by Waterways Ireland off Harbour Street. The Royal Canal and its feeder canal to Lough Owel is an important amenity for the town and has significant tourism potential which

should be capitalised upon. In this regard, the Council supports the development of a greenway along the extent of the Royal Canal through the town and to Lough Owel via the Feeder Supply. This greenway will connect with the National Cycle Network between Dublin and Galway, which is being developed by the National Roads Authority, thus enticing cyclists and walking enthusiasts to the town.

The Council have to date invested in developing approximately 20 km of cycle ways within the vicinity of the town, in furtherance of the delivery of the Greenway Concept for the town. In order to complement the aforementioned Greenway, it is Council policy to develop an amenity public pedestrian / cycle route from Mullingar Town Park along the bank of the River Brosna and terminating at ‘Butler’s Bridge’ shoreline of Lough Ennell.

3.13 CULTURAL TOURISM

Mullingar’s character, quality landscape and rich culture are vital assets that help the town compete as a tourism destination and a location of choice. The Cultural tourism sector is set to grow during the timeframe of the plan. The challenge is to unlock the tourism potential associated with the towns historical, archaeology, landscape, built heritage, literary, musical heritage and its festivals. The town is in a strong position to build on its unique cultural heritage, which is a key factor in developing Mullingar as a cultural tourist destination.

Mullingar has a rich cultural heritage, with links to many historical and literary figures and events such as James Joyce. There are also various monastic and religious sites of historic and archaeological interest in the town. The Council will protect the context of such places and support appropriate development of places with cultural association through its Arts programme.

3.14 TOURISM POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:

P-TRM1	To promote the Linked Gateway Town of Mullingar as an urban tourism destination in its own right and as an access point to a collection of wider county tourist attractions.
P-TRM2	To promote Mullingar as a national and international tourist destination in co-operation with other agencies, such as Fáilte Ireland and Waterways Ireland.
P-TRM3	To continue to encourage and promote the development of a range of high quality tourism facilities, attractions and accommodation within the town.
P-TRM4	To resist development that would detract from the town’s unique natural and built environment.
P-TRM5	To support the growth of cultural tourism in the town and it’s potential for niche tourism products by facilitating the development of cultural events, and support infrastructure and activities.
P-TRM6	To promote Mullingar’s cultural, literary, historical, archaeological and architectural heritage as tourism generating opportunities.
P-TRM7	To promote festivals and sporting events to increase the cultural and lifestyle profile of Mullingar, and where appropriate, to promote the development of new venues to host such events. Such events are to be consistent with the preservation of the Architectural and Archaeological heritage of the town and the protection of residential amenity.
P-TRM8	To facilitate the sustainable development of eco-tourist projects at appropriate locations in the town and its environs, whilst protecting areas of

	ecological value and ensuring that any development is in compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
P-TRM9	To reserve where feasible, land adjacent to canal banks for public access and to facilitate the creation of linear parks to accommodate walking/cycling routes, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
P-TRM10	To encourage the development of Mullingar as a National conference destination.
P-TRM11	To improve the visual appearance of the town and its environs, protect its inherent character and maximise its tourism potential, by the continuance of environmental schemes, design control and the removal or encouragement of re-use of derelict properties, subject to the protection of the architectural heritage of the town.
P-TRM12	To promote Mullingar as an attractive stop along the Royal Canal for pleasure boaters, walkers and cyclists.
P-TRM13	To improve the visitor experience of the town and to cooperate with all stakeholders and relevant agencies in promoting tourism and securing tourist based enterprises and facilities in the town.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-TRM1	To promote and facilitate the development of sustainable adventure tourism projects within the town and its environs, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
O-TRM2	To promote the development of Heritage Trails/walks within the

	town and its environs, subject to compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
O-TRM3	To develop and provide a programme of interpretative signage for important heritage features and principal tourism attractions in the town, in conjunction with relevant agencies including Fáilte Ireland and the NRA.
O-TRM4	To co-operate with and support Mullingar Tidy Towns and other community organisations in enhancing the Town's appearance and environmental quality.
O-TRM5	To promote and facilitate the development of a Greenway with walking and cycling infrastructure along the Royal Canal, as part of the National Cycle Network between Dublin and Galway. This shall be undertaken in conjunction with Waterways Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the National Roads Authority and other relevant agencies, and shall be subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
O-TRM6	To promote and facilitate the development of a Greenway from Mullingar Town Park along the River Brosna to Lough Ennell, and also along the Feeder Canal Link to Lough Owel, in conjunction with Waterways Ireland, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and other relevant agencies, subject to compliance with the Habitats Directive.
P-TRM7	To promote in conjunction with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, C.I.E and other interested parties, the establishment of a Railway History Museum in the town.

3.15 RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

AIM:

To continue to sustain and improve the retail profile and competitiveness of Mullingar as an important regional centre for retailing, and through support, consolidation and environmental enhancement of the town centre, improve the quality and choice of retail developments on offer.

3.15.1 Background

The Council recognises the important role of retailing in the social and economic life of the town centre. Mullingar acts as the primary retail centre in the north of the county and is a key focus for future retail development in the form of convenience and comparison floor space. The town boasts a considerable retail profile within the Midlands Region. It provides a broad range of both convenience and comparison goods, including major food stores and specialist shops.

The Retail Core Area in Mullingar comprises of Oliver Plunkett Street, Pearse Street, Dominick Street, Castle Street, Mount Street, Mary Street, Dominick Place and Church Avenue as depicted in Map 3.2 below. Major edge of centre retail sites are also located at Fairgreen and Harbour Place.

It is Council policy to encourage retail development, including new forms of shopping which encourages the regeneration of the existing Town Centre. The retention of the Main Street as a centre of retail activity is paramount in order for Mullingar to retain its unique vibrant character. Proposals which would undermine the vitality and viability of the Retail Core of Mullingar and which contravene the Retail Strategy will not normally be permitted.



Fairgreen Shopping Centre

Map 3.2 Retail Core Mullingar



3.15.2 Retail Profile

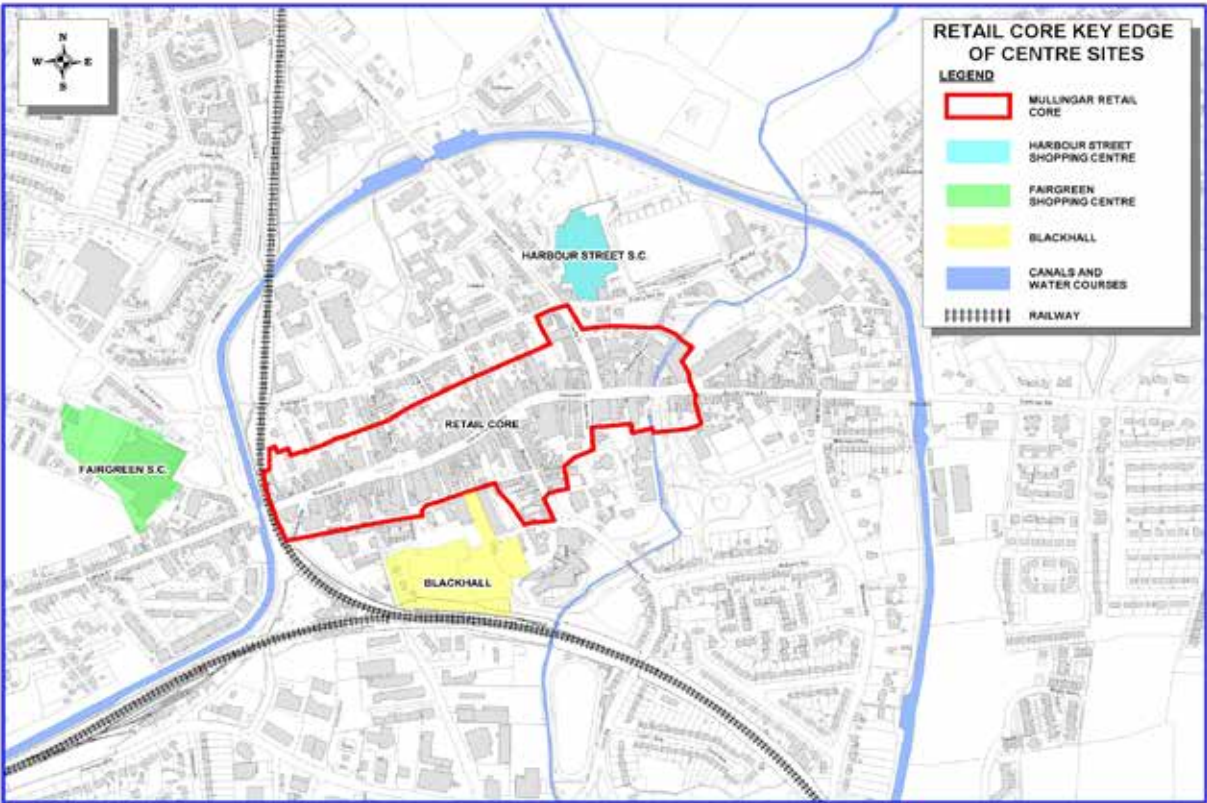
The town is served by two Shopping Centres. The Harbour Place Shopping Centre which extends to 9,104 sq m is located just off the town’s main shopping street. Fairgreen Shopping Centre currently comprises seven retail units anchored by Penneys, together with Lifestyle Sports and New Look and Dorothy Perkins. Planning permission has been granted for a 16,715 sqm, extension to the centre, comprising of 14 retail units, offices, fitness and medical centre and a cafe/restaurant.

The other major retail development proposed for Mullingar is the Blackhall Mixed Use Development which comprises of 22,000 sq m of retail space, office space, residential units, restaurants, and a cinema. The basis of the scheme is the creation of a new pedestrian street linking Dominic Place to the west and Mount Street to the east to the Main Street and the creation of a new Mixed Use Quarter. In addition, the town is also served by Lakepoint Retail Park and a number of retail warehousing units within Mullingar Business Park.

It is envisaged that retail development in Mullingar will be focused in the town centre and on edge-of-centre sites immediately adjoining the town centre. Map 3.3 illustrates the location of the three edge of centre sites in the town, namely Blackhall Mixed Use Development, Harbour Street Shopping Centre and Fairgreen Shopping Centre, which adjoin the Retail Core.

Redevelopment of the Blackhall Area also should be guided by a Framework Plan for the entire area, which should incorporate linkages to the town centre. The provision of and promotion of pedestrian links from these shopping centres to the Main Street will also help to retain this area as the retail heart of the town. In addition to the edge of centre sites, there are a number of vacant premises and under utilised plots in the town centre area where new retail floor space can also be facilitated.

Map 3.3 Retail Core and Key Edge of Centre Sites for Retail Development



3.16 RETAIL POLICY

The Retail Planning Guidelines 2012 require the preparation of a Joint Retail Strategy for the Midland Gateway with counties Roscommon, Offaly and Westmeath. It shall be a policy of this plan to prepare a Joint Retail Strategy for the Linked Gateway Towns. Retail development shall be carried out in accordance with the principles set out in the Retail Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government) (2012). Policies for retailing are currently set out in the Retail Strategy for County Westmeath 2007-2012. The Strategy and policy prescribed in this Retail Strategy shall remain in force pending the adoption of a Joint Retail Strategy for the Midlands Gateway Towns.

The Council will seek to safeguard predominantly residential areas on the edge of the Town Centre by prohibiting undue encroachment of commercial uses into established residential areas and streets, examples of which include Harbour Street, Bishopsgate Street, Millmount Road, Auburn Road, Sundays Well Road and Lynn Road. This is considered desirable in order to protect the residential amenity of existing properties, to retain residential character and to foster and protect a sense of community.

3.17 RETAIL WAREHOUSING

In terms of retail warehouse development, the town is well served with retail warehousing developments at Lakepoint Retail Park and within Mullingar Business Park. The extent of developed Retail Warehousing lands in the town extends to 6.1ha. Applications for new retail warehouse developments shall be supported by evidence of need for the development based on predicted demand and taking account of locational criteria and existing permissions. The subdivision of retail warehouse premises into smaller units shall not be permitted, as they may undermine existing retail provision in the Retail Core and thereby adversely impact upon the vitality and viability of the

Town Centre. The Retail Planning Guidelines 2012 require that individual retail warehouses should not be less than 700m² gross floor space (with no permission to subdivide), but yet no more than 6,000 sq.m in size. It is also important that all retail warehousing is restricted solely to the sale of bulky goods.

3.18 NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

Neighbourhood Centres provide a greater distribution of retail development which can be more readily accessed by foot or cycle. The essence of Neighbourhood Centres is that they serve quite localised catchment areas in a way which is convenient to the population served. The distribution of such facilities cannot be too widespread however, as this would negate the benefits of a local focus of provision and development could be unviable. Thus, there needs to be a reasonable quantum of scale to provide a good local range and provide a viable focus of shopping and service outlets.

In Mullingar, neighbourhood centres are provided for in both the Robinstown and Ardmore Marlinstown Framework Plans. There is a purpose-built large neighbourhood centre located to the west of Mullingar. Mullingar Shopping Centre is a traditional suburban shopping centre, with a number of small shop units offering a range of typically convenience services, and anchored by a food supermarket. In addition, an area extending to 2.5ha has also been designated as a Neighbourhood Centre along the C-link further to Variation No.7 to the Westmeath County Development Plan 2008-2014. This neighbourhood centre will act as a focal point along the C-link and complement existing community infrastructure at this location such as Mullingar Educate Together School, Mullingar Harriers running track and the Presbyterian Church. A Neighbourhood Centre may include an anchor store and number of units such as a newsagent, sub-post office, café, restaurant, hairdresser, laundrette dry cleaner or other such local services. Community/Recreational provision in the form of a Fitness centre, snooker hall,

children’s play centre, youth facility or some other form of community provision may also be facilitated at this location.

3.19 LOCAL SHOPS & PETROL FILLING STATIONS

Local shops play an important role in providing for daily top up shopping. They are also often easily accessible to the elderly and people with disabilities. The development of such local shops should be encouraged in residential areas in the suburbs of the town. Such developments should be easily accessible to all sections of society. Local shops attached to petrol filling stations are a growing sector of the retail market. As stated in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012 the net sales area of such units shall not exceed 100sq.m.

3.20 MARKETS

Markets are a popular form of traditional retailing which meet local shopping needs. Out of town markets are considered to have a negative impact on the vitality and viability of the Town Centre and therefore are not normally acceptable to the Planning Authority.

The Council will normally grant planning permission for new off-street, covered or street markets, or individual market stalls in the Town Centre subject to the following conditions being met:

- There should be no adverse effect on residential amenity, Conservation Areas, or the general environment.
- The existing road network should have sufficient capacity to take any additional traffic generated by the proposal.
- The proposal should include adequate arrangements for customers/traders parking, servicing, storage, disposal and recycling of refuse and storage of stalls.

Farmers Markets are an increasingly popular retail element of towns and villages, providing an outlet for locally sourced and grown produce. It is the Council policy to support the provision of Farmers Markets in the town subject to compliance with the conditions outlined above.

3.21 GENERAL RETAILING POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-RET1	To protect and strengthen the retail primacy of Mullingar within the region.
P-RET2	To encourage the development of the retail and service role of Mullingar as a self sustaining centre in accordance with the policies contained in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020, the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012 and the Retail Planning Strategy for the Gateways, when adopted.
P-RET3	To protect the retail function of the Core Shopping Area.
P-RET4	To secure the continued consolidation of Mullingar Town Centre through progressing the development of the Blackhall area and the regeneration of under-utilised, backland and brown field areas in the Town Centre area, subject to the protection of the architectural and archaeological heritage of the town.
P-RET5	To sustain the vitality and viability of the major shopping areas and to encourage measures to improve their attractiveness.
P-RET6	To adhere to the provisions of the Sequential Approach in the consideration of retail applications located outside of Core Retail Area.
P-RET7	To promote and facilitate the development of local markets devoted to the sale of local agricultural and craft produce and

	support their role as visitor attractions.
P-RET8	To prohibit the development of large retail centres located adjacent or close to existing, new or planned National Roads/ Motorways or on National Roads outside the speed limit zones of the town.
P-RET 9	To provide for an adequate and appropriate scale of retail and other services within the existing and proposed designated neighbourhood centres in the town.
P-RET10	To ensure that best quality of design is achieved in all proposed retail developments and that design respects and enhances the specific characteristics of the town.
P-RET11	To restrict the subdivision of retail warehouse premises into smaller units, as they may undermine existing retail provision in the Retail Core and thereby adversely impact upon the vitality and viability of the Town Centre.
P-RET12	To pursue all avenues of funding to secure resources for the continued enhancement, renewal and regeneration of the public realm of the Town Centre.
P-RET13	To discourage non retail and excessive lower grade retail uses, such as, take-aways and betting offices in the core retail area and other principal streets in the town centre, in the interests of maintaining and sustaining the retail attraction of the town centre.
P-RET14	To improve the public realm and support boutique style retailing in the town centre.
P-RET15	To secure the continued consolidation of Mullingar Town Centre through progressing the regeneration of backland and brown field areas in the town centre.

P-RET16	To encourage and facilitate the delivery of tourism related retail developments and initiatives in and around the Town Centre.
P-RET17	To retain active frontages within the Core Retail Area defined in the Retail Strategy. No more than two in every five high street units/outlets will be permitted a change in use to a non-retail use, within the Core Retail Area.

It is an objective of the Council:

O-RET1	To prepare and implement a Joint Retail Strategy for the Linked Gateway Towns of Athlone, Mullingar and Tullamore, in conjunction with Offaly and Roscommon County Councils.
O-RET2	To develop a GIS based system for retailing in Mullingar.
O-RET3	To resist the loss of retail units, to non-retail use, at pedestrian level, particularly in the Primary Shopping Streets in Mullingar which are defined as follows: Pearse Street, Mount Street, Castle Street, Oliver Plunkett Street, Dominic Street, and Church Avenue.
O-RET4	To align new retail development with existing and proposed public transport infrastructure and services and encourage access by foot and bicycle to reduce the dominance of the private car.
O-RET5	To provide off street car-parking and to manage on street car-parking, to further improve the Town Centre.
O-RET6	To encourage the retention of traditional shop fronts and pub fronts, and where relevant interiors of character and good design quality.

O-RET7	To promote the development of street furniture and Public Art in the Town Centre, in order to ameliorate the retail environment.
O-RET8	To reinforce the Retail Core Area of the town as the priority location for new retail development, with quality of design and integration within the existing urban form and layout being fundamental prerequisites.
O-RET 9	To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of derelict, under-utilised and brown field land and buildings for retail and other Town Centre uses, having regard to the Sequential Approach outlined in the Retail Planning Guidelines 2012.
O-RET10	To prepare a Framework Plan for Blackhall, to guide the future development of this strategic site. The Framework Plan shall be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Chapter 4 *Town Centre & Urban Design*



4 TOWN CENTRE AND URBAN DESIGN

AIM:

To make Mullingar Town Centre a more attractive destination where people will want to live, work, visit, shop and socialise with a diversity of uses and activities during the day and evening in a safe and inclusive environment.

4.1 TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

Town Centres are destinations to which people are drawn by the functions and activities carried out there. The Town Centre is also the focus of community life, where the community meets, where social interaction takes place and where a sense of belonging is fostered. Social interaction is facilitated by streets and public areas which are safe, busy, and offer varied and interesting retail and other activities.

Town Centres have traditionally comprised a broad mixture of activities, retailing and other services, manufacturing and residential; and this mixture gives variety and interest. Maintaining a range of daytime and evening uses in Town Centres create a viable and secure environment. Residential use is important in providing passive surveillance as an aspect of security.

Town Centres give us a sense of place and a sense of identity, their street patterns and built form are long established, have a familiarity and are of value for that reason alone. Any change to the built form must be carefully considered.

For the purposes of this Town Centre Strategy, the area referred to as the Town Centre includes the area bounded by the Canal loop and the railway line.

Core principles of the Town Centre Strategy are:

- To reinforce the heart of the town as the priority location for new retail development, with quality of design and integration/linkage within the existing

urban form/layout being guiding principles.

- To encourage and facilitate the re-use and regeneration of underutilised land and buildings for retail and other Town Centre uses.
- To facilitate the development of retail development of an appropriate scale.
- To achieve a sustainable high quality urban environment through accepted design principles in new development and to promote the enhancement of the existing streets and public spaces.
- To preserve the character of the area including the diversity of uses and the fine grain of holdings which exist within the town.
- To retain the existing residential character of the areas on periphery of the commercial core.
- To establish a clear hierarchy of road users, with pedestrians, and cyclists at the top of the hierarchy. As a general principle, these users should have their needs considered first in the planning of transport and movement.

4.2 A HISTORIC PLACE

A majority of the buildings in the centre of Mullingar date from the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the layout of the Town Centre is aligned along a east/west axis, formed by a number of streets and places with connected streets running north/south; a reflection of the historic importance of routes through the town. The streets and public spaces (notably with two market squares), and the buildings which define them are typical of Irish towns of the period; through their form, layout, scale and bulk contributing to the town's distinctive and appealing character. The limited extent of major intervention in the building stock on the principal and secondary streets has

helped to retain this character as the town continues to provide the functions of a vibrant market town.

4.3 PROGRESS IN THE TOWN CENTRE SINCE THE 2008 PLAN

In the period since the last Mullingar Plan was adopted the economy has experienced a severe downturn and the effects have been experienced in Mullingar as in all other parts of the country. In the face of these difficult economic conditions the Town Centre remains a place of vitality and vibrancy.

New Civic Offices at Mount Street, on the site of the existing Áras an Chontae, have secured the future of public administration on this strategic site, with a building of award winning contemporary design. The Arts Centre has been joined by Áras an Mhuilinn to provide a cultural and artistic focus in the Town Centre in this area. Close by, the Court House, one of the most historic and prominent buildings in the town awaits refurbishment and the provision of a major extension.

There have been many changes of user in individual premises but the variety of uses remains intact and most Town Centre premises remain in use. Dominic Street in particular has experienced revitalisation.

A large mixed use development at Blackhall, which was permitted in 2008, was not carried out. Much of this area is currently in use as a surface car park, supporting the Town Centre uses. A new link road has been constructed from the Gaol Hill into Blackhall Car Park to improve traffic circulation and accessibility to the car park and Town Centre.

A major refurbishment of the Town Park has taken place, including the creation of a Plaza at the Austin Friars Street entrance. Castle Street and the Fairgreen area was the subject of environmental improvement works including footpath widening on Castle Street improving pedestrian linkage between the

shopping centre at Harbour Place and the Retail Core.

4.4 THE TOWN CENTRE AND URBAN DESIGN

The Councils objectives in relation to an Urban Design based approach to the Town Centre are as follows:

- To provide public spaces and routes that are attractive, safe, uncluttered and work effectively for all in society, including people with disabilities and elderly people.
- To promote ease of movement: accessibility and local permeability; through the sharing of road space, creating pedestrian priority and integrating land uses and transport.
- To protect existing landmark buildings and their settings and to promote legibility through development that provides recognisable, intersections and to reinforce sense of place and identity.
- To promote adaptability through development that can respond to changing social, technological and economic conditions.
- To retain a residential population base whilst promoting diversity and choice through a mix of compatible developments and uses that work together to create viable places that respond to local needs
- To preserve the continuity of the streets and provide for appropriate infilling opportunities by development which clearly defines private and public areas.
- To preserve and enhance character in townscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, land use, culture and built form.

Well designed and managed Town Centres remain viable and attractive in their own right and support civic and economic activity, successful urban spaces and spatial qualities that contribute to their character and sustainability. In the case of Mullingar Town Centre, the form of buildings, structures and spaces generally represent the physical manifestation of good urban design.

4.5 TOWN CENTRE POLICIES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-TC1	To adopt a design led strategy in assessing the impact of development on the Town Centre, in accordance with Guidelines issued to Planning Authorities by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009.
P-TC2	To require new development to positively contribute to a network of streets and spaces, in terms of infill additions to the streetscape, or by creating links through sites where opportunity exists.
P-TC3	To require applications for significant development in the Town Centre to be accompanied by Design Statements, which should demonstrate how the proposal adheres to the design principles as specified in Development Management Standards chapter.
P-TC4	To apply Traffic Management measures to the Town Centre area which are in accordance with 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' (2013).

4.6 PHYSICAL CONTEXT OF THE TOWN CENTRE

4.6.1 Zone of Archaeological Potential

The zone of Archaeological Potential for Mullingar has been defined and examined in John Bradleys Urban Archaeological Survey 1993, wherein an area of Urban Archaeological Potential centred on the

medieval town core has been defined. This area is mapped in Volume 2 Map Book.

Mullingar was one of the Palatine Towns founded by the Norman's. In 1227 a Priory was founded by Canons Regular of St. Augustine, the Dominicans also started a foundation about the same time. No upstanding remains survive from these early origins. Within the boundary of Mullingar town, the Zone of Archaeological Potential, is protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. It will be necessary to safeguard the archaeological value of all lands within this area through the exercise of development management power. Significant archaeological excavations have been ongoing.

There are also a number of sites of historic and cultural interest throughout the town that are not recognised or safeguarded in the Record of Protected Structures or the Sites and Monuments Record, an example being the Famine Graveyard at Robinstown. It is important that the heritage value of such sites is recognised and not compromised by inappropriate development. The Planning Authority will utilise its development management powers/responsibilities to protect such sites.

4.6.2 Town Centre Architectural Conservation Areas

The Council has designated a total of four Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) within Mullingar Town Centre:

- (i) Town Centre,
- (ii) Millmount Road,
- (iii) Auburn Road (part of),
- (iv) Harbour Street.

These are mapped in Volume 2 of this plan. Where appropriate, the Council will designate new Architectural Conservation Areas and extend existing areas, where it is considered such areas are of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

4.6.3 Building Heights

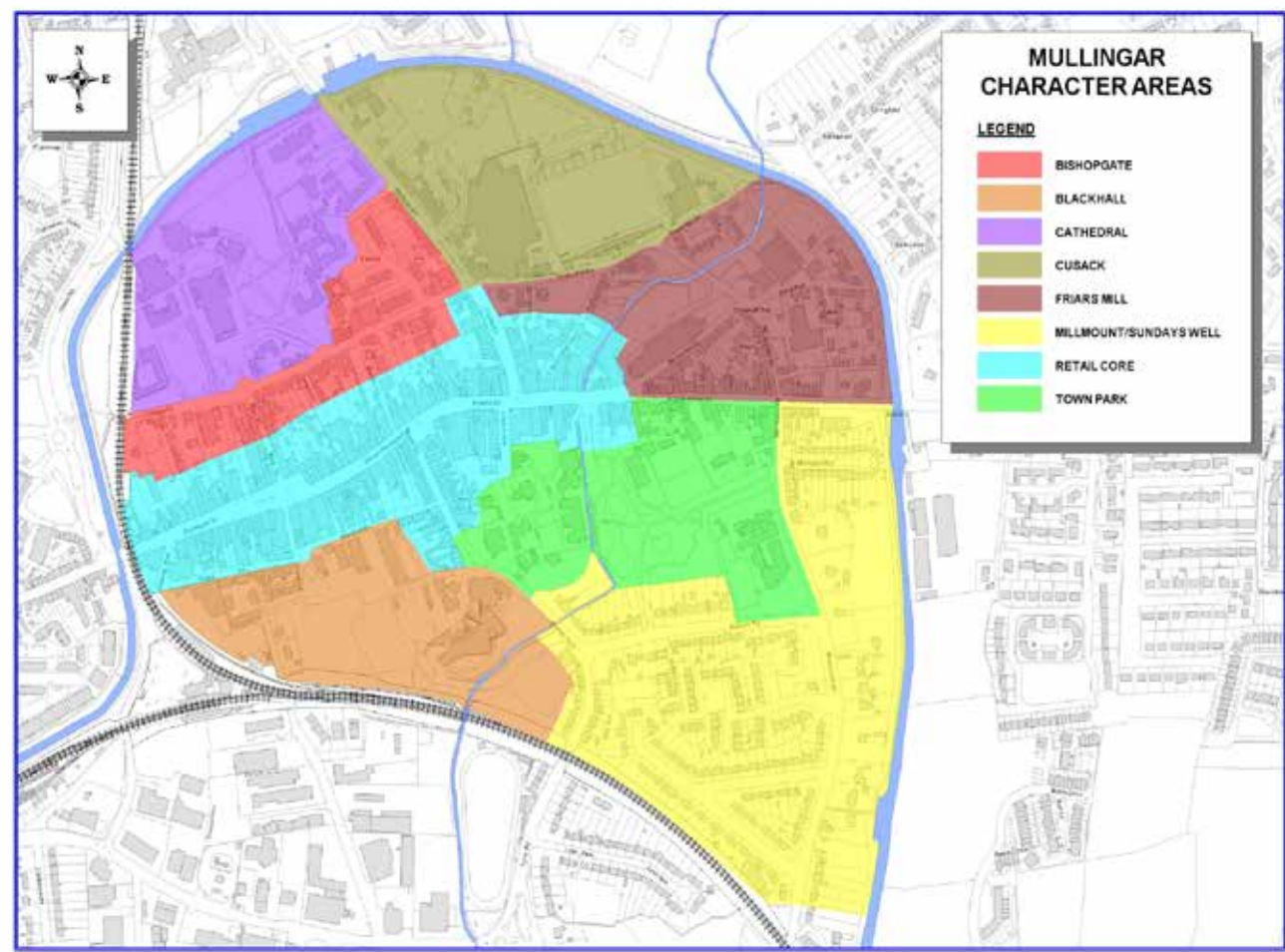
The Town Centre is characterised by buildings of two to three storeys in height. The primary shopping streets of Pearse Street and Oliver Plunkett Street are characterised by buildings of three storeys, with resultant townscape character. Views to important landmark buildings including the Cathedral of Christ the King and All Saints Church should be safeguarded and respected. New development proposals shall have regard to the predominant scale and character of adjoining built form in the Town Centre. Regard shall also be had to the criteria set out in Section 9.1.3 of the Plan in relation to building heights.

4.7 CHARACTER AREAS

Eight Character Areas have been identified within the Town Centre and for the purposes of this strategy are described as follows:

- 1. Retail Core
- 2. Friars Mill
- 3. Town Park
- 4. Millmount/ Sunday’s Well
- 5. Cusack
- 6. Cathedral
- 7. Blackhall
- 8. Bishopgate

Map 4.1 Character Area Map



4.7.1 Retail Core

The area identified as 'Retail Core' corresponds to the Retail Core identified in the Retail Strategy and encompasses the main spine of the town. It comprises of the main streets and an area to the north and south of these streets: Pearse Street, Oliver Plunkett Street and Dominic Street; with the streets leading from these streets: Castle Street, Mount Street and Church Avenue, Blackhall Street, Grove Street and part of Mary Street. It contains 92 residential units, 137 residential and commercial units and 269 commercial units. The Retail Core Area is characterised by family owned businesses and services and an array of boutique style retail units. The area contains the main Public Spaces, the Market House and vistas to other important public buildings. This area is the focus of retail activity and connects the Harbour Street Shopping Centre and the Fair Green Centre. It contains an Architectural Conservation Area and comprises the main part of the Urban Archaeological Zone. It is characterised by narrow plots, which can be replicated along Grove Street and Blackhall Street, where opportunities for infill exist.

4.7.2 Friars Mill

Friars Mill comprises an area east of the Retail Core bounded by Friars Mill Road to the north and Austin Friars Street to the south. The Royal Canal forms the eastern perimeter of this area. It contains car parking and retail areas, the Barrack Street regeneration area, industrial and warehousing areas and some underutilised land adjacent to the Canal. It contains 156 residential units (including a significant proportion of apartments), 46 residential and commercial units and 42 commercial units.

4.7.3 Town Park

Located to the east of the retail area, to the south of Austin Friars Street and to the west of Millmount Road, this area contains the Community College including all weather pitch, the Town Park and leisure facilities including the Tennis Court and the Swimming Pool, All Saints Church, and the Court House. The River Brosna flows through this area.

Frontage to Austin Friars Street comprises secondary street frontage uses, with a mixture of commercial and residential. It contains 32 residential units, 12 residential and commercial units and 29 commercial units.

4.7.4 Millmount/Sundays Well

This is a predominantly residential quarter extending from the Royal Canal to the east, to Bleach Yard and the Jail Hill to the west. It includes low density detached housing along the canal, an ACA; terraced housing including Lynnbury Terrace and Auburn Terrace, also an ACA; and more modern semi-detached and terraced housing at Millmount Avenue and Auburn Village. It contains 235 residential units, 22 residential and commercial units and 6 commercial units.

4.7.5 Cusack

This area is bounded by the Royal Canal to the north, Harbour Street to the west and by Friars Mill Road to the south. The area includes the GAA county grounds at Cusack Park, the Harbour Place Shopping Centre, terraced housing along Harbour Street, and significant areas of surface car parking. The junction of Harbour Street and Friars Mill Road is marked by an attractive grouping of two and three storey buildings, which give strong definition to this corner. It contains 29 residential units, 68 residential and commercial units and 44 commercial units.

4.7.6 Cathedral

This area is bounded by the Railway line to the west, the Royal Canal to the north, Harbour Street to the east and by Bishopgate Street to the south. It contains in the main Church, Educational and Administration buildings and uses, and associated parklands and trees. Individual buildings of architectural quality are located in this area namely the Heavey Institute, RC Cathedral, the Parochial House, and the former Presentation Convent. It contains 9 residential units, and 21 commercial units.

4.7.7 Blackhall

This area is to the south of the Retail Core, and is bounded at its southern end by the railway line and by the rear of Lynnbury Terrace. The mainline rail station on the Sligo/Dublin line is at the western end. A large part of the area currently comprises surface car parking. The River Brosna flows through the area. The historic Jail site, now occupied by the Civic Offices continues the tradition of public administration on this site. A County Library is now housed within the new Civic Offices Complex. The Arts Centre and the recently developed Áras an Mhuilinn adjoining along the eastern boundary, together provide a focus for culture, the arts, research and has potential for further development. A small local park which has been developed provides an attractive setting for these buildings.

The potential for redevelopment of large areas of underutilised lands in this area has been identified for some time and the large mixed use development permitted in 2008, referred to above, was to be located here.

Mullingar is an important commuter station. Land and buildings associated with its former goods transportation function have potential for new uses. It contains 48 residential units and 26 commercial units.

4.7.8 Bishopgate

This area is focused on Bishopgate Street and Harbour Street westside. Although close to the Town Centre it remains predominantly residential in character. Terraced buildings mostly fronting onto the footpath comprise the major building type, with railed front gardens along the more modern Central Park development in the former Presentation Convent grounds. The Garda Station is located within this area also. The area has undergone change and, due to its location, demands for further changes are likely. New uses should be compatible with the residential and institutional character of the area. There is an Opportunity Site in the area. The area contains 91 residential units, 45 residential

and commercial units and 69 commercial units.

4.8 CHARACTER AREAS POLICIES & OBJECTIVE

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-CA1	To protect and enhance the existing streetscape including the historic core of the Town, its built form, development pattern and laneways.
P-CA2	To promote high quality urban design which responds positively to the town’s historic character and architectural heritage.
P-CA3	To have regard to the qualities and established and distinctive Character Areas within the Town Centre in the assessment of development proposals within these areas.
P-CA4	To retain the residential base within the Town Centre and protect the residential amenities of existing property.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-CA1	To monitor and review patterns of land use change within the Character Areas, and to initiate appropriate policy responses to secure their proper planning and sustainable development.

4.9 VARIETY AND MIX OF USES

An appropriate balance and mix of uses is required in the Town Centre to maintain its character and vibrancy. A range of shops need to be present, including not only national and international retailers but local and independent retailers to provide choice, variety, distinctiveness and local identity. Mixed use developments within the Town Centre are required to attain sustainable development objectives, thereby creating opportunities to live, work, shop etc., within urban environments and reduce the propensity to travel by car. The significant

quantum of residential accommodation within the Town Centre area should be retained.

Development of infill and under-utilised back land sites will be encouraged in the Town Centre area in the interests of achieving the most efficient use of urban lands and to stimulate regeneration of the more disadvantaged areas of the town. The Council will encourage the provision of residential accommodation in all Town Centre regeneration schemes.



4.9.1 Residential

There are a significant number of residential properties which date from the nineteenth and early twentieth century such as those on Harbour Street, Bishopgate Street and Millmount. There are also a number of residential developments in the Town Centre such as Central Park and Auburn Village which are of recent origin. There remains a significant residential base within the Retail Core Character Area (which contains 219 residential units) and adjoining Character Areas within the Town Centre. It is important to retain a strong residential base as a key component in the sustainable mix of uses to be found in the Town Centre.

4.9.2 Commercial and Retail

The main commercial streets in the Town are Dominic Street, Oliver Plunkett Street, Pearse Street, Castle Street and Mount Street which lead off the central axis.

As an important and growing population centre and a major regional centre,

Mullingar's extensive range of retail and commercial services cater for a much larger population than is resident in the town and its environs. The designation of Mullingar as a 'Linked Gateway' places increased emphasis on the regional importance of the town as an economic driver and an important commercial centre. It is important to retain a strong retail and commercial base in the Town Centre to consolidate and realise Mullingar's regional role. The current Retail Strategy has supported the Town Centre and Retail Core and has directed development into that area. A number of large retail developments have taken place within or on the edge of the Retail Core. In addition, out of town retail development which would have detracted from the Town Centre has been avoided and the Retail Strategy has been important in this regard. Retention of family owned businesses and boutique style outlets is an objective of this plan.

The preferred locations for new general retailing in Mullingar in the short-term period up to 2020 are the Town Centre, and edge-of-centre sites immediately adjoining the Town Centre, including Blackhall development scheme, the Fairgreen, and Harbour Place Shopping Centre. It is important in the overall profile of retail and commercial activity in the Town Centre to ensure that the maximum number of active frontages are retained. Active frontages enliven the edge of the street and create a more interesting and engaging environment.

4.9.3 Community Uses

The Town Centre is unique in that it contains a significant number of community facilities and uses within its boundary, in particular Character Areas 1, 2 and 3, include five schools, community centre and sports hall, a parish hall, theatre and arts centre, youth services and youth café and community hall, theatres, Cathedral and church, Town Park and open spaces. A number of parish services are concentrated on Bishopgate Street. The community uses within the Town Centre generate activities in the evenings and weekends when the majority of retail uses have closed.

4.9.4 Employment

Employment within the Town Centre comprises in the main of financial services, commercial and retailing, Public Sector including Schools and Local Government, services, and tourist and visitor services including hotels and restaurants.

4.9.5 Vacancy within the Town Centre

This strategy seeks to reverse recent trends such as vacancy in the Town Centre and support a vibrant Retail Core with a mix of complementary uses.

4.10 DEVELOPMENT USES POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-DU1	To encourage a mixture of uses in new developments within the Town Centre. The following mechanism will be applied: (a) No less than two separate planning uses will normally be allowed (i.e. retail/residential or retail/offices etc.). (b) Where more than two separate uses are proposed, no one singular use will prevail in terms of >50% of the total gross floor space.
P-DU2	To limit the development of retail facilities outside of the Town Centre and on edge of centre to that required to serve local and neighbourhood needs.
P-DU3	To resist proposals for the change of use from a retail use to a non retail, where such a proposal would individually or cumulatively undermine the vibrancy of the Town Centre and result in the loss of active retail frontages at pedestrian level.
P-DU4	To promote the use of upper floors of Town Centre properties for residential use and the provision of residential accommodation in all Town Centre redevelopments on mixed use zonings.

P-DU5	To encourage culture and entertainment uses within the Town Centre and other uses that support the evening economy.
P-DU6	To protect existing residential amenity from the undue encroachment of commercial uses in the Town Centre.
P-DU7	To provide for consolidation of the Town Centre area by prioritising the development of underutilised/ brownfield sites and key infill sites.
P-DU8	To curtail the number of take aways and betting offices in the Town Centre.
P-DU9	To seek the renewal of derelict, underutilised and vacant properties within the Town Centre.
P-DU10	To support and strengthen the Retail Core by providing for a diversity of shops and businesses to ensure vitality of the Town Centre.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-DU1	To prepare a Town Centre Management Strategy in consultation with all relevant stakeholders within the Town Centre. The Strategy shall be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.
O-DU2	To monitor change of uses and ensure the vitality and variety is maintained.
O-DU3	To undertake a health check of the Town Centre, identifying occupancy levels, variety of uses and the vitality of the Town Centre, within two years of adoption of the plan.
O-DU4	To prepare and implement a Public Realm Strategy for the Town Centre area incorporating the creation of a network of interconnected civic spaces.

4.11 PUBLIC SPACE

Open space provision in the Town Centre is dominated by the Town Park, the Royal Canal and its corridor, the landscape setting of the Cathedral and other incidental areas. The harbour areas associated with the canal are significant features with potential for further tourist and recreational usage.

A further area of open space is located between the Royal Canal and the railway and which contains a stand of mature deciduous trees. The trees in this area are a very prominent feature in the skyline in views towards the Town Centre from adjacent approach roads. Public access is currently restricted and it would be an objective of the Council to make this area available for public enjoyment. Furthermore the Council have recently provided a public amenity in the area at Gaol Hill, which fronts the new Civic Offices and Public Library.

There are several urban spaces within the town which have significant potential for enhancement. These comprise primary Public Spaces located at Market Square, Dominic Street, Castle Street and Mount Street, which contribute to the distinctive townscape character of the town. Council policy will seek to create a network of civic spaces based on these areas.

Townscape character is further reinforced by views to important landmark buildings including the Cathedral, County Council Buildings and Áras an Mhuilinn, All Saints Church and other prominent buildings which define public spaces and/or close vistas along the street, and additionally provide important reference points in movement through the Town Centre. Important civic spaces and views in the Town Centre are identified in Volume 2 of this Plan.



4.12 PUBLIC SPACE POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-PS1	To support the organisation and operation of events and markets within the Town Centre core, utilising streets and public spaces.
P-PS2	To continue to enhance the environmental quality of the Town Centre and the creation of a network of civic spaces including places for civic gatherings and community activity.
It is an objective of the Council:	
O-PS1	To provide a network of interconnected pedestrian routes and alleyways through the Town Centre which link the town core, Cathedral, Town Park, Railway Station and primary public spaces.
O-PS2	To progressively upgrade and enhance primary public space areas in the Town Centre, applying Urban Design principles of shared space usage, subject to Architectural Heritage protection.
O-PS3	To examine the feasibility of enhancing the Public Space Area in front of the main Post Office and reconfiguration of existing pedestrian access arrangements.

O-PS4	To expand and enhance Civic Space provision along Church Avenue, All Saints Church and the former Parochial Hall, subject to architectural and archaeological heritage protection.
O-PS5	To provide enhanced public space areas for public events and markets.
O-PS6	To provide a public amenity area at Gaol Hill in the area adjacent to Áras an Mhuilinn and the County Library, subject to architectural and archaeological heritage protection.

4.13 ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY IN THE TOWN

The Government’s transport policy is seeking to reduce the need to travel, to encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling and reduce reliance on the private car, to facilitate multipurpose journeys and to ensure that everyone has access to a range of facilities. Successful Town Centres depend on good access to facilities with a safe pedestrian environment to encourage greater pedestrian use of the streets, which in turn has economic benefit for commercial properties.

The recently published “Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets” (2013), Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, prescribes an integrated approach to the design and management of the street environment, which recognises the importance of assigning higher priority to pedestrians and cyclists without unduly compromising vehicle movement in order to create secure connected places that work for all members of the community. The quality of the street is measured by the quality of the pedestrian environment and designers are required to place pedestrians at the top of the user hierarchy. Four characteristics are identified as representing the basic measures which need to be established in order to create people friendly streets:

- Connectivity
- Enclosure
- Active edges/frontages
- Pedestrian facilities and activities

Public car parking facilities in the Town Centre area comprise surface car parking areas including Blackhall (410), Buckleys (176), Cusack Terrace (102), Harbour Street (211) and Dunnes Stores (535). Extensive areas of surface car parking are regarded as an uneconomic use of limited urban land and policy in this area will seek the redevelopment of such lands and the incorporation of appropriate levels of parking accommodation. Reduced car parking requirements for new development shall apply in the Town Centre area in order to:

- Promote Town Centre development
- Reduce vehicular traffic
- Promote pedestrian and cycle movement
- Increase public transport use

Parking policy will seek to optimise the use and turnover of existing car parking spaces in the Town Centre.

4.14 ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-AC1	To adopt an integrated design approach to transportation management, street and public space design in the Town Centre area in accordance with “Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets”, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, (2013).
P-AC2	To create an environment in the Town Centre in which vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians can safely co-exist and share public space.

P-AC3	To minimise vehicular traffic volumes in the Town Centre through traffic management measures.
P-AC4	To secure the creation of a safe walking and cycling environment in the Town Centre and to limit the impact of vehicular traffic on the Town Centre environment.
P-AC5	To secure appropriate redevelopment of areas of surface car parking.
P-AC6	To maximise the use of available car parking accommodation to serve the Town Centre.
P-AC7	To provide for car parking requirements to serve the Town Centre area in accordance with County Development Plan standards for the area.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-AC1	To provide parking areas for bicycles within the Town Centre, subject to architectural and townscape character protection.
O-AC2	To maintain reduced car parking requirements for Town Centre areas in accordance with Development Management Standards contained in Chapter 9.
O-AC3	To provide enhanced pedestrian spaces and connectivity in the Town Centre including widened footpaths and well designed crossings and public spaces.

4.15 MAKING THE TOWN CENTRE A DISTINCTIVE PLACE

A quality built environment provides the basis for an attractive and distinctive town. The built environment includes the buildings that frame the streets and urban spaces. The urban spaces within the town include the streets, parks, trees, squares pedestrian and cycle ways, natural features and landmarks within the town. The quality of these urban spaces is important for those that visit and live in the Town Centre.

4.16 INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT

Generally, areas that have not experienced in depth development have retained a network of buildings with strong character and a quality of design that provide an attractive streetscape, that has not been diluted or degraded by inappropriate infill development. The Planning Authority will seek to retain buildings and streetscapes of character in the town and new development will be expected to enhance streetscapes and retain features of interest and vernacular detailing.

New development will be expected to create or positively contribute towards a connected network of streets and spaces, putting the requirements of pedestrians and cyclists as a priority, by creating direct routes that connect to the existing network. Good quality development that reinforces the existing urban form and makes effective use of centrally located land will be encouraged. The scale of new development should be in proportion to the pattern and grain of existing development. On large centrally located sites development will be required to contribute to the creation of a sense of place by strengthening the street pattern or creating new streets in a manner which successfully relates to local character and distinctiveness. Proposals involving new Town Centre development will be encouraged to make effective and efficient use of land, improve the range and diversity of uses and activities and drive economic development within the Town Centre. An appropriate mix of land uses is sought in each Opportunity Site so that they integrate with the existing character and function of the Town Centre and enhance the town’s identity and sustainability.

When considering a specific proposal or application on an Opportunity Site, the focus will be on the effects of a scheme as well as the site’s location. Considerations such as the degree of integration (either existing or proposed) and the current/future level of accessibility will be key determinants. Key considerations will include:

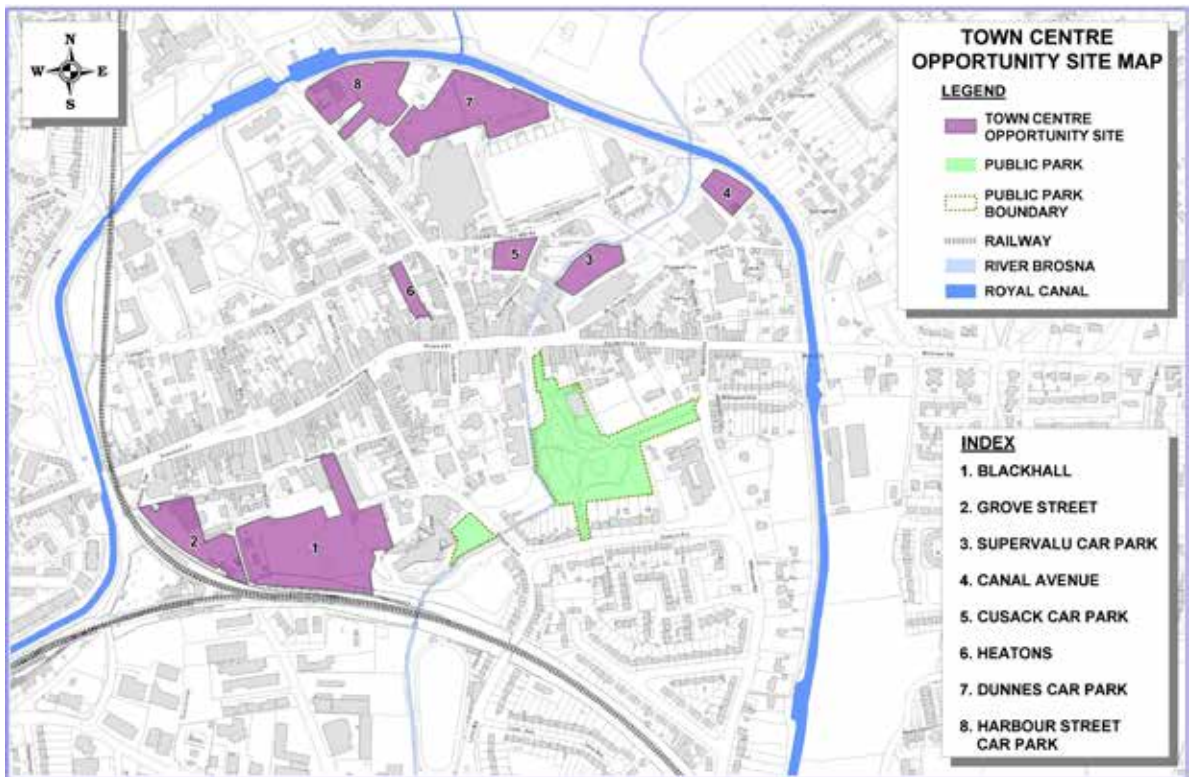
- The quality of linkages within the site.
- The way in which the development will operate as an integral part of the Town Centre, e.g. links with new or existing public transport routes and whether it will enhance the role of the Town Centre.
- The nature of the scheme.
- The extent to which it is complementary.

4.17 INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-IR1	To require all new development to draw on the intrinsic qualities of Mullingar’s urban environment and add to the local distinctiveness and sense of place that forms the basis of the town’s unique character and attractive urban form.
P-IR2	To ensure high quality open spaces are provided and maintained to create vibrant civic spaces for a wide range of active and passive activities.
P-IR3	To utilise the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act 1990 or where applicable, the provisions set out in Section IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended, where the structure is protected or located within an ACA, to encourage the refurbishment of derelict properties.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-IR1	To carry out a Townscape Appraisal of the Town.
O-IR2	To prepare an Audit of all infill and redevelopment Opportunity Sites in the Town Centre and to prepare design briefs for these areas.

Map 4.2 Map of Opportunity Sites, Mullingar



4.18 OPPORTUNITY SITES AS ECONOMIC DRIVERS WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE

Eight specific Opportunity Sites have been identified in this strategy for comprehensive redevelopment or refurbishment of existing brownfield lands over the lifetime of the plan. Their redevelopment will play a key role in the Town Centre's rejuvenation and revitalisation.

The eight sites are as follows:

1. Blackhall
2. Grove Street
3. Super Valu Car Park
4. Canal Avenue
5. Cusack Car Park
6. Heatons
7. Dunnes Stores Car Park
8. Harbour Street Car Park

4.19 OPPORTUNITY SITES POLICIES

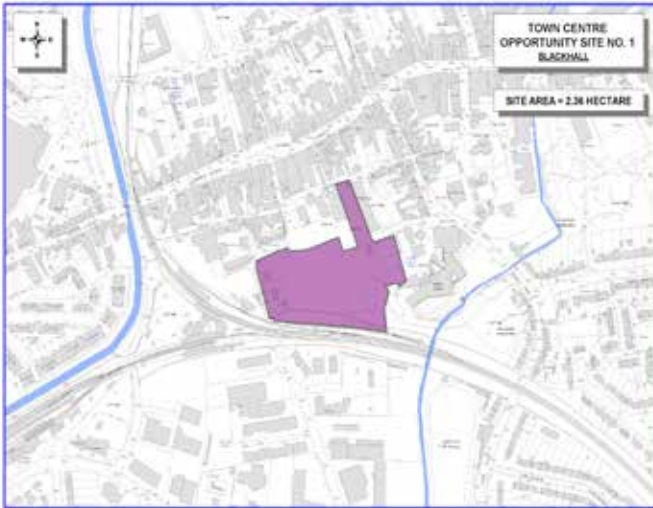
It is a policy of the Council:

P-OS1	To promote the redevelopment of identified Opportunity Sites in the town.
P-OS2	To encourage the development of infill and under-utilised sites in the Town Centre area, where the commercial or residential function of the town will be strengthened.
P-OS3	To retain buildings and streetscapes of character in the town and require that all new development enhances the streetscape and retains features of interest and vernacular detailing.

4.20 SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITY SITES

1. Blackhall

Site Area: 2.35ha



Map 4.3 Opportunity Site 1: Blackhall

This area is currently in use for surface car parking which is regarded as an uneconomic use of strategically located urban land. The site presents an opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment with an emphasis on capitalising on and extending the commercial and civic potential of the town. The Westmeath Retail Strategy has identified the Blackhall area as a location which provides potential for additional retail floor space. The site adjoins with the extended Civic Offices complex and linkage to this area should be provided for. Development of the area should be on foot of a Framework Plan approach and include uses such as retailing, commercial, residential, community, with supporting parking. The development scheme may include proposals for a cinema.

The area contains an important archaeological site and the creation of a civic space possibly associated therewith in an overall development scheme in this area should be included. The proper development of the area will rely upon an appropriate street network and the provision of access and circulation routes with connections to the Town Centre

and public transport links including the railway station.

Objective for the Site:

To secure the comprehensive redevelopment of the site for mixed use purposes in accordance with an urban design based Framework Plan. To resolve the archaeological potential of the site.

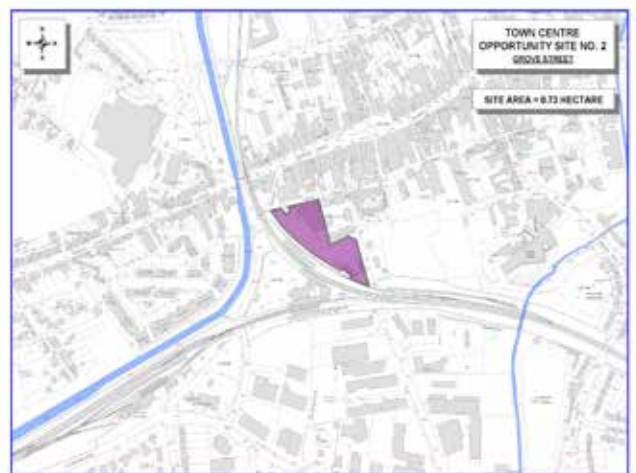
Uses:

The site is zoned for mixed use development.

Built Form:

Future redevelopment of the site should have regard to prevailing townscape character of the town and seek to create a network of connected streets and public spaces to the Town Centre within a permeable development form. Density and plot ratio should be maximised, consistent with respecting established patterns of development in the Town Centre.

2. Grove Street



Map 4.4 Opportunity Site 2: Grove Street

Site Area: 0.73ha

The site is currently in use for a recycling and car dismantling enterprises. The area is suitable for appropriate infill development incorporating a mix of uses including commercial including hotel/tourist facility and residential. The potential to provide for greater connectivity to the adjacent Railway Station and the development of a transport

hub within walking distance of the Town Centre should be optimised. A portion of the site lies within the Zone of Archaeological Potential. Redevelopment proposals shall be subject to a Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment.

Objective for the Site:

To secure the redevelopment of the site for a mixed use development scheme, subject to archaeological impact assessment.

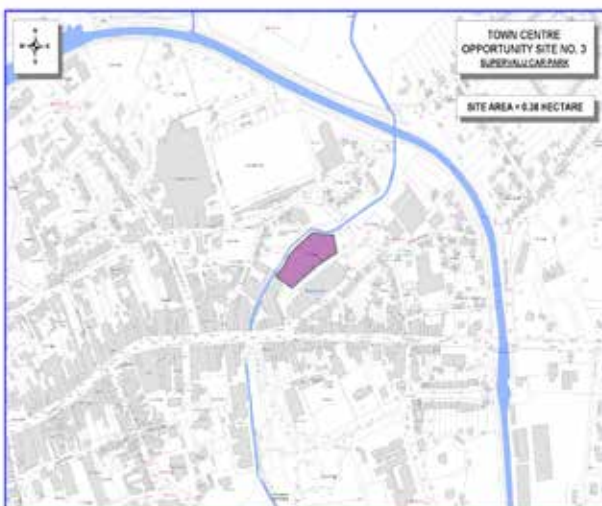
Uses:

The site is zoned for mixed use development.

Built Form:

Opportunities to create active street frontage onto Grove Street and the creation of continuity of built form should be availed of. Massing in views from the railway station area should be reduced through effective application of architectural treatment and use of materials and finishes. Building heights should reflect the pattern of development in the area.

3. Super Valu Car Park



Map 4.5 Opportunity Site 3: Buckleys Car Park

Site Area: 0.37ha

The site is currently in use as a surface car park served by connecting roads from Austin Friar Street and Friars Mill Road with accommodation for 176 cars. The area is suitable for a mixed use development

incorporating commercial, retailing, residential and community use. The layout should provide for appropriate levels of permeability and potential linkage westwards to Spout Well Lane via pedestrian bridge across the River Brosna. The scheme should provide for appropriate frontage and public access onto the River Brosna and include perimeter block development form onto a new street network. The greater proportion of the site lies within the Zone of Archaeological Potential. Redevelopment proposals shall be subject to a site specific flood risk assessment.

Objective for the Site:

To secure redevelopment of the site for a mixed use development scheme and to secure a permeable development form, subject to archaeological impact assessment.

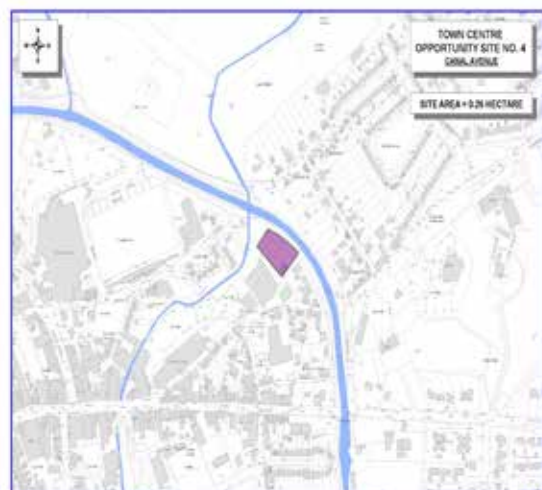
Uses:

The site is zoned for mixed use development.

Built Form:

The design and appearance of any new development within this site shall be of a high quality and respect the local distinctiveness of the Town Centre and provide for linkage to adjoining areas including river front access.

4. Canal Avenue



Map 4.6 Opportunity Site 4: Canal Avenue

Site Area: 0.26ha

This site comprises the garden area of two semi detached cottages at Canal View with

linear frontage onto the Royal Canal. The area is suitable for a medium density infill residential scheme. The form of development shall provide for frontage onto the canal of appropriate scale and massing to compliment existing development to the south. Building heights should be two storey.

Objective for the site:

To provide for appropriately scaled infill residential scheme.

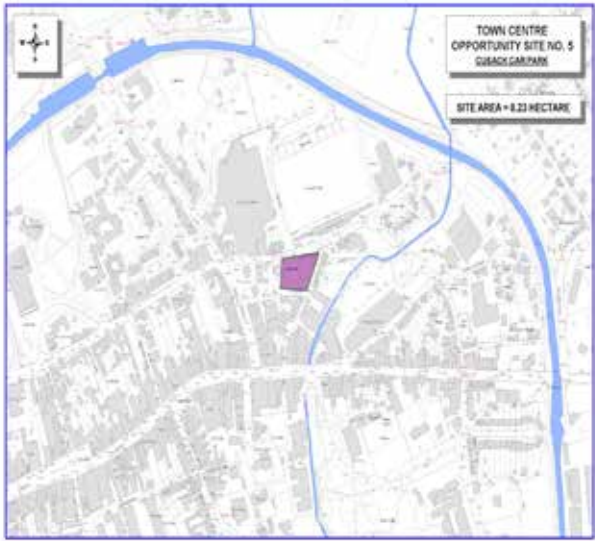
Uses:

The site is zoned residential.

Built Form:

Scale and massing shall replicate the established pattern of infill development in the area. An appropriate frontage onto the Royal Canal shall be provided.

5. Cusack Terrace



Map 4.7 Opportunity Site 5: Cusack Terrace

Site Area: 0.23ha

This area comprises surface car parking with accommodation for approximately 100 spaces, which is regarded as an inefficient land use in this location. The site is suitable for an infill development scheme incorporating a mix of uses including commercial, enterprise and residential. The scheme shall provide for the creation for active street frontages along Cusack

Terrace/Friars Mill Road and Spout Well Lane. Residential accommodation to be included provides opportunities for passive surveillance along the newly formed street. The site lies within the zone of archaeological potential. Redevelopment proposals shall be subject to a site specific flood risk assessment.

Objective for the site:

To provide for an appropriately scaled infill scheme and the creation of new street frontages, subject to archaeological impact assessment.

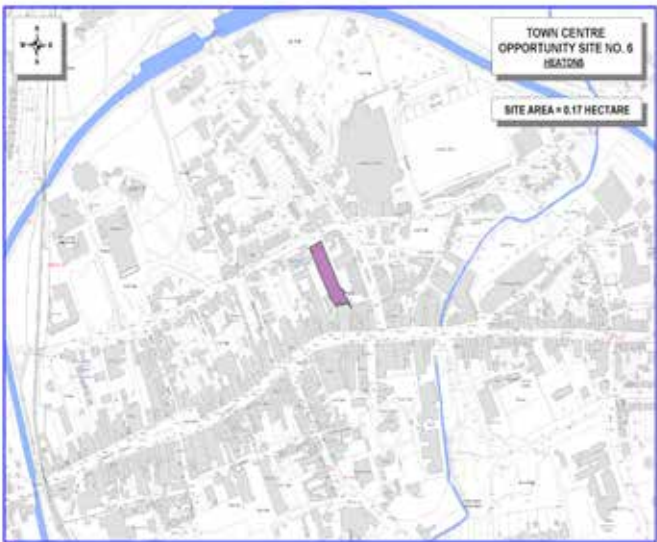
Uses:

The site is zoned for mixed use development.

Built Form:

Built form shall have regard to the established pattern and provide for the creation of new active street frontages. The standard of design and finish shall reflect the importance of the Town Centre location.

6. Heatons



Map 4.8 Opportunity Site 6: Heatons

Site area: 0.17ha

The site comprises a former car park associated with retail and commercial premises onto Pearse Street and has frontage onto Bishopgate Street. The relatively narrow plot width reflects the tighter urban grain

found on properties which front onto Pearse Street and Bishopgate Street. The site is suitable for an infill mixed use scheme with potential linkage onto Pearse Street. The design should provide for appropriate frontage development onto Bishopgate Street and avoid undue impact on neighbouring properties. The site lies within the zone of archaeological potential. Regard shall be had to the setting of existing protected structure which fronts onto Pearse Street.

Objective for the site:

To facilitate the development of a mixed use scheme including retail, commercial and residential use with active frontage onto Bishopgate Street, subject to archaeological impact assessment.

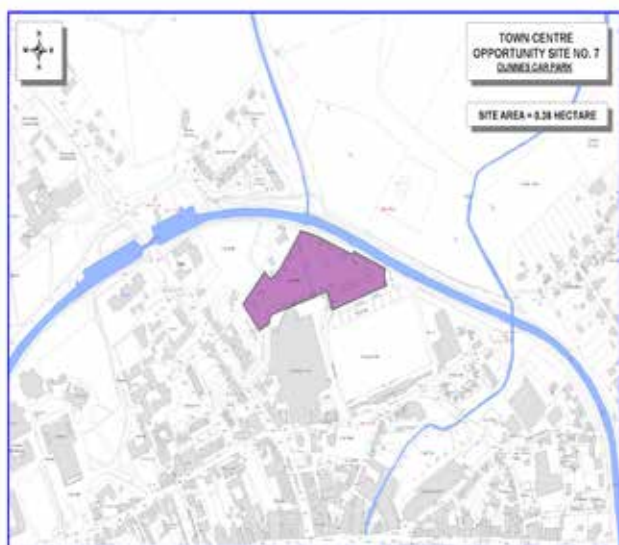
Uses:

The site is zoned for mixed use development.

Built Form:

Infill development should respect established pattern and grain in this area in the creation of new street frontage. Potential for pedestrian linkage onto Pearse Street should be developed.

7. Dunnes Stores Car Park



Map 4.9 Opportunity Site 7: Dunnes Stores Car Park

Site area: 1.36ha

The site is currently in use as a car park area serving Dunnes Stores retail development and contains 535 spaces. The extent of the area requires that its redevelopment should be undertaken on the basis of an urban designed Master Plan, providing for a permeable layout for a mixed use scheme, incorporating block format with new street frontage and access arrangements. Consideration should also be given to the need to provide for connectivity to adjoining potential development area to the west (Opportunity Site 8). The amenities of the Royal Canal shall be protected. Frontage onto the canal shall include appropriately scaled residential accommodation to provide passive surveillance of this area. Parking accommodation shall be provided within the site either underground or on screened multilevel format. Redevelopment proposals shall be subject to a site specific flood risk assessment.

Objective for the site:

To facilitate the development of a mixed use scheme including commercial and residential use with car parking accommodation within a permeable layout and to secure appropriate frontage development onto the Royal Canal including residential accommodation. The residential amenities of existing properties on Harbour Street and adjacent to the north western boundary shall be protected.

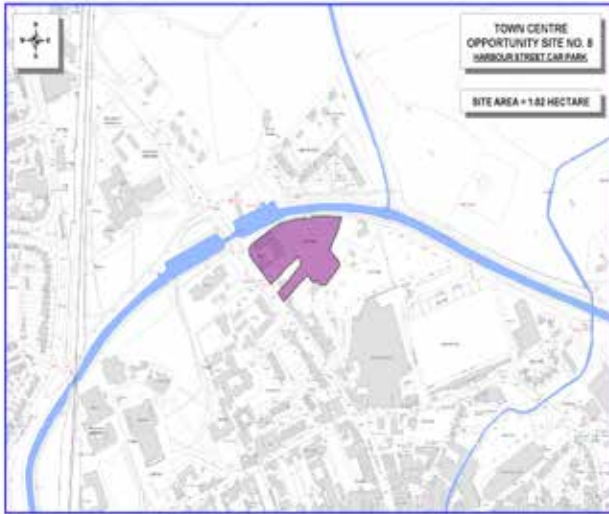
Uses:

The site is zoned for mixed use development.

Built Form:

Infill redevelopment scheme shall provide for the creation of new street frontage development in accordance with perimeter block format incorporating new streets with linkage to adjoining potential development area to the northwest. Active frontage development shall be provided onto the Royal Canal and be appropriately scaled.

8. Harbour Street Car Park



Map 4.10 Opportunity Site 8: Harbour Street

Site Area: 0.68ha

This site is currently predominantly in use as a public car park which is considered an uneconomic use of urban land. The site includes a commercial enterprise fronting onto Harbour Street. The development of this area should be considered in conjunction with potential development lands adjoining to the east (Opportunity site 7) in order to achieve a more integrated development format with high levels of connectivity. The area is suitable for mixed use development including commercial, enterprise and residential.

Objective for the site:

To secure appropriate redevelopment of the site in accordance with an integrated development scheme with connectivity to adjoining potential development area. The residential amenities of existing properties on Harbour Street and adjacent to the eastern boundary shall be protected. Said scheme shall be subject to detailed Environmental Assessment.

Uses:

This site is zoned for commercial use.

Built Form:

The quality of design and form shall reflect the strategic importance of this site and its prominence in views from the Canal Harbour area and the Harbour Bridge. The standard of design and finish shall reflect the importance of the landmark location within the Town Centre. Active frontage development shall be provided onto the Royal Canal to an appropriate scale.

Chapter 5 *Social Infrastructure*



5 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

AIM:

To support the development of inclusive sustainable communities in Mullingar, that have a sense of place and belonging, with equal access to the facilities and services residents need, including housing, community and recreation, education, health and childcare and to ensure that such facilities are sufficient to meet the needs of the current and future population of the town, as they lead to and support a high quality of life.

5.1 CONTEXT

A key objective of the Mullingar Local Area Plan is to strengthen community involvement and generate a shared vision and strategy for how the town should develop. The social and community requirements of the town's population are integral to the planning and sustainable development of Mullingar. The Council will seek to involve key groups including community and voluntary groups in the implementation of the plan. An expanding population generates increased demand for the provision of services, school places, community facilities and amenities. It is desirable that these essential facilities are provided in tandem with new development and as new communities emerge.

5.2 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Community facilities within Mullingar town range from schools, childcare provision, youth and elderly services, youth cafe, religious meeting places, cemeteries, health facilities, library, playgrounds, Town Park, playing fields, Arts Centre, walking routes and open spaces.

The Council is committed to providing accessible community facilities to serve the needs and expectations of a growing and diverse population.

It is considered that the provision of new community facilities should cluster with existing community infrastructure and should preferably be located in the town centre or within designated neighbourhood centres. Clustering such facilities together helps to improve viability as well as making them more convenient and accessible by public transport, walking and cycling. The Council will cooperate with the State, Semi-State and Voluntary Agencies in the provision of these essential facilities and services.

In providing new community related facilities, such as a community centre or meeting rooms, the space must be flexible in nature allowing for adaptability which can be delivered through the provision of multi-functional spaces with floor space that will accommodate a variety of uses. The ability to design buildings that will allow for the sharing of space and flexibility for change in use over time is necessary in the short term to ensure that as each stage of development is delivered sufficient spaces are provided to meet demand.

5.2.1 Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development (RAPID)

There are a number of estates in the RAPID area of Mullingar including Grange, Farran, Raithin, Dalton Park, Ennell and Michael's Park. In each local RAPID area, a Local Plan has been developed which defines a series of issues, objectives and actions that are key to the RAPID programme locally. RAPID Mullingar have undertaken a number of projects including facilitating return to work schemes, initiatives to improve the physical environment, such as and extension to the Community House in Grange and audit of existing playgrounds, together with facilitation of youth facilities and a drop in service for the elderly.

5.2.2 Religious Meeting Places

The Council recognises the importance of the provision of religious meeting places and places of worship for communities. There are places of

worship for the various religious denominations represented in the town; some are in established premises, while others occupy unsuitable temporary facilities. Ballyglass Cemetery located on the Old Longford Road is the principal burial grounds in the town. Lands have been zoned in this Local Area Plan for the future expansion of this facility.

In the interests of social inclusion, the Council will work with representative bodies both religious and secular, to realise the needs of the varied communities that now define Mullingar.

The Council will assist religious bodies in the identification of suitable sites and premises for meetings or worship.

5.2.3 Childcare

The provision of childcare facilities, in various forms, is recognised as key social infrastructure, enabling people to participate more fully in society, particularly in accessing employment, education and social networks. According to Westmeath Childcare Committee, there are a total of 31 Childcare services throughout Mullingar catering for full day care, after school and preschool care. The 0-4 year pre school population within Mullingar represents 9.3% of the total population of the town. Recently recorded increases in the 0-4 year old cohort will generate an increased demand for childcare provision over the plan period.

5.2.4 Facilities for Youth / Elderly

The 2011 census highlights the young nature of the population with 1,707 7-12 year olds residing in the town and environs. Over the plan duration these children will become teenagers and will require youth support services and facilities such as youth centre, skate park etc. Apart from existing sporting clubs, the only designated youth facility in town is the Youth Cafe on Spoutwell Lane, which opened in 2012. There is a need to provide community facilities including facilities for the youth to serve both established residential areas to the west of the town and recently constructed residential areas

to the east. In the case of the latter, the census has revealed that there are 970 0-12 year olds living in residential estates of Lakepoint, Petitswood and Gleann Petit. It is considered that there is a need to provide a youth facility to serve this large catchment.

The population of the town is ageing with 10% of residents aged 65 or over. In addition, life expectancy has increased nationally. Accordingly, here is a need to meet the needs of this cohort of the population with adequate services and facilities.

5.2.5 Healthcare

Responsibility for the provision of Health Care Facilities in Mullingar lies with the Health Service Executive (HSE). The Council will engage with the Health Service Executive (HSE) in planning for future health care needs of residents of the town.

The town of Mullingar is well served by health infrastructure. The Midland Regional Hospital is a 200-bed acute hospital serving the entire Longford-Westmeath area. In addition, there are several other hospitals in the town; namely St Loman's, which provides psychiatric services; St Mary's, a care centre for older people which was extended in 2010 to provide 100 additional beds; and St Francis Private Hospital and associated Ballinderry Clinic. The latter comprises of a sixteen unit consulting clinic providing outpatient services.

The Council recognises the significant importance of these services to the town and its hinterland and will continue to support the development and expansion of existing facilities, subject to normal development management criteria being met.

There is a growing trend for the provision of local health care services in Primary Health Care Centres, where a range of health services, including GPs and related services are grouped together in one location. In this regard, permission has been granted for a Primary Care

Centre within the Robinstown Framework Plan and within the former Library Headquarters premises on the Dublin Road.

The preference will be for these local health care centres to be located in the town centre or in Neighbourhood Centres, where they can link in with other local services, including pharmacies, shops and services, in order to reduce the need to travel. The Council will support such developments in appropriate locations, provided that they do not negatively impact upon residential amenity, and that they are in keeping with the character of the area and adequate car parking facilities can be provided.

The Council will resist the loss of healthcare facilities where it is considered that they are required; recognising that the community served by those facilities extends beyond the town and its suburbs. Any redevelopment or change of sites used for health facilities should not result in inadequate provision or poor accessibility of health facilities by the residents of the town.

5.3 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-CI1	To support and facilitate the provision of a wide range of community facilities and premises to meet the needs and demands of new and existing communities, especially in areas in the town where there are perceived deficiencies.
P-CI2	To ensure that applications for new residential developments make suitable provision for the social, community and recreational needs of the future residents of such schemes, unless it can be established that the needs of the new residential development can be adequately

	served by existing community facilities in the area
P-CI3	To facilitate the needs of the youth within the town, in terms of identifying suitable locations or buildings for youth services and facilities, and where appropriate, by supporting voluntary organisations to secure such sites.
P-CI4	To promote the use of long term vacant units for community facilities subject to building and site suitability.
P-CI5	To facilitate the provision of required burial grounds at appropriate locations in Mullingar in consultation with local communities and church bodies.
P-CI6	To encourage and support the provision of sufficient childcare facilities to support new and existing communities in Mullingar, in accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities (June 2001).
P-CI7	To encourage the establishment of high quality childcare facilities in suitable locations in Mullingar, such as neighbourhood centres, areas of concentrated employment, in the vicinity of schools, adjacent to public transport corridors and/or pedestrian areas, and in larger new housing estates.
P-CI8	To provide for facilities to serve the elderly in Mullingar, in conjunction with State, Semi-State and Voluntary Agencies.
P-CI9	To encourage the provision of new healthcare facilities which are well located in terms of their accessibility, serve a sufficient catchment population and are appropriately served by public

	transport and accessible on foot/cycle and are consistent with the size, scale and character of the area
P-CI10	To support and encourage the improvement and upgrade of existing Health Centres, local clinics and Nursing Homes in the town.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-CI1	To work with Westmeath Childcare Committee in the implementation of childcare facilities in the town.
O-CI2	To support the provision of community facilities on the west side of Mullingar.
O-CI3	To provide for a youth centre to serve the needs of youths residing in Mullingar.
O-CI4	To support the provision of facilities in Mullingar in conjunction with the RAPID Programme.
O-CI5	To carry out a Social Infrastructure Audit of Mullingar.
O-CI6	To identify a site within Mullingar Town for a skate park.
O-CI7	To ensure that the recommended standards in Building for Everyone –A Universal Design Approach (2012) are applied in internal and external public environments.
O-CI8	To work with the relevant voluntary organisations both locally and nationally including the Midlands Regional Drugs Task Force, the VEC Youth Plan, the Westmeath County Childcare Plan and the Leader Programme, to ensure proper provision of youth services and facilities for the town.

O-CI9	To encourage the provision of drop-in childcare facilities within large scale retail, leisure or tourism developments.
O-CI10	To ensure that the provision of in-community health services is compatible with the size and scale and character of the neighbourhood being served.
O-CI11	To co-operate with the HSE in the provision of Health and Social facilities, Nursing Homes and sheltered housing within the town.
O-CI12	To support the provision of permanent childcare facilities in the Grange Area.

	Name	Enrolment 2011-2012	Site Size
Primary Schools	Gaelscoil An Mhuilinn	246	1Ha
	Scoil Mhuire	273	1.86Ha
	Presentation Convent Junior	374	0.59Ha
	Scoil Na Maighdine Mhuire	237	0.78Ha
	Scoil Náisiúnta na Naomh Uile	100	0.15Ha
	St. Brigid's	80	0.71Ha
	Scoil Cholmain Naofa	469	1.22Ha
	Mullingar Educate Together	372	1.1Ha
Secondary Schools	Loreto College	709	3.47Ha
	Mullingar Community College	438	1.41Ha
	St. Finian's College	593	15.25Ha
	Coláiste Mhuire	708	2.24Ha

Table 5.1 Profile of Primary & Secondary Schools in Mullingar
(Source: Enrolment Figures obtained from the Department of Education & Skills Website)

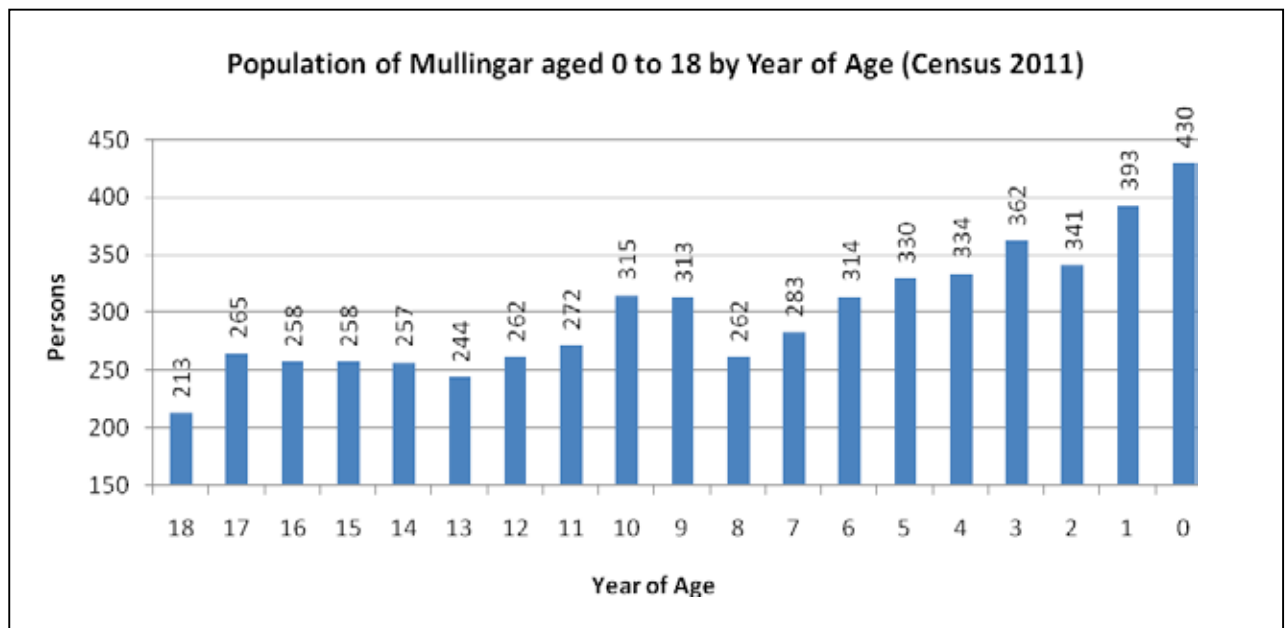


Fig.5.1 Population of Mullingar Town & Environs by Age Group (Source: Census 2011)

5.4 EDUCATION

The development of high quality educational facilities is vital in terms of both developing self-confident and vibrant communities in the town, together with preparing residents to participate fully in the life of Mullingar. The Council has a role in facilitating the provision of educational infrastructure through zoning lands for educational uses to meet the needs of new and existing communities in line with the pace of development. Where educational facilities are needed, the Council will ensure that land is reserved for these purposes. Table 5.1 outlines Primary and Post-Primary education providers in Mullingar including current enrolment figures and site area.

5.4.1 Primary Education

There are 8 Primary Schools in Mullingar urban area which had an enrolment in 2012 of 2,151. In addition, Saplings School provides education for autistic children. Figure 5.1 illustrates the population for 0-18 year old age group for Mullingar Town and Environs. The graph shows that 12% of the population of the town is of primary school going age (4-12 years) which would equate to 2,351 children. It would appear that the current deficit in Primary School places (200) in Mullingar is being met by a number of schools in the rural hinterland of the town namely Curraghmore National School, St. Kenny's National School, Kilpatrick, St. Colmcille's National School Gainstown and Gaelscoil An Choillín. The deficit in Primary School places in Mullingar is also compounded by the fact that many of the existing Primary Schools in town are limited in their capacity for further expansion.

According to the 2011 census, there were 1,860 children (0-4 year olds) recorded in Mullingar. This cohort represents the next primary school going age group for the lifetime of this 2014-2020 Plan. The recent rise in population in this cohort will generate a 19% increase in 5-12 year olds in Mullingar from 2011 to 2016, which in turn will place greater pressure on existing

schools and generate a need for additional school places.

The vast majority of the twice daily school trips to the outlying rural schools are car based. This pattern is unsustainable, damaging to the environment and contravenes the ethos of Smarter Travel policy document. This Local Area Plan seeks to reverse this trend by making provision for additional Primary Schools within the town. In this regard, a 1ha site has been designated for an urban school in the Mullingar South Framework Plan. The proposed school will cluster with a proposed public park. In addition, a 2.7ha site has also been designated for a Primary School adjacent to the proposed 7ha public park in the Ardmore / Marlinstown Framework Plan.

5.4.2 Secondary Education

There are 4 Post-Primary Schools in the town namely the Loreto Convent, St. Finian's College, Mullingar Community College and Coláiste Mhuire. The 2011-2012 combined enrolment for these schools was 2,448. Given the demographic profile of the town together with the fact that the catchment of a Secondary School extends beyond the urban area of the town, there is a demand for additional Secondary School places in Mullingar over the plan period.

This Local Area Plan seeks to address this demand by zoning a 4.3ha plot of land within the Robinstown Framework Plan area, for a multi-campus school development, which will include a Post Primary School. The school will cluster with the proposed Regional Sports Centre and associated playing fields on the Robinstown Link Road. Pedestrian and cycle links from the town centre will be provided to the site via a planned network of green links, in keeping with the objectives of the Smarter Travel policy document.

5.4.3 Third Level Education

Third Level education in the town is provided by Westmeath Vocational Educational Committee (V.E.C.), and a number of private providers who deliver certificate and diploma courses in a range of different subjects. The Community College offers an extensive range of Adult Education courses. Given the Gateway status of Mullingar and the potential to create links with nearby Research Institutes, such as NUI Maynooth and Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT), it is considered that the provision of a Third Level Institute would significantly benefit the town in terms of marketability, economy and profile.

5.4.4 Siting of Educational Facilities

New schools should be located close to existing community facilities and services and have access to open space areas. They should be accessible by safe walking routes and sited in proximity to areas of residential development in Mullingar. The clustering of schools with community facilities provides for a more economic use of resources. The Governments Smarter Travel Policy also advocates that every school and college in Ireland should have a School Travel Plan to encourage students to use alternatives to the private car.

The Government’s Guidelines on The Provision of Schools and the Planning System – A Code of Practice (2008) states that school provision should be an integral part of the evolution of compact sustainable urban development and the development of sustainable communities. Accordingly, it is Council policy that new schools shall be located within the existing catchment in a manner that aids ease of access from surrounding areas and encourages sustainable mobility by walking, cycling and public transport. It is Council policy that temporary structures will only be permitted for use as classrooms where projections indicate that there is a genuine temporary shortage of accommodation. Where projections indicate that the need will be for a period of more than five years, a more permanent solution must be

sought. Alterations and extensions to existing establishments should conform to Department of Education and Skills space standards and road safety design measures in the vicinity of schools.

5.5 EDUCATION POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-ED1	To integrate the provision of school facilities with new residential development in accordance with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)
P-ED2	To support the upgrading, modernisation and expansion of the existing educational building stock in the town, so as to ensure that these institutions can accommodate anticipated population growth, subject to townscape and architectural protection.
P-ED3	To ensure that provision for education facilities is made with regard to access arrangements, road safety, high quality design and efficiency in the use of resources.
P-ED4	To promote co-location of Primary and Post-Primary schools on selected sites subject to site suitability and access arrangements.
P-ED5	To promote the development of facilities connected with outreach programmes between businesses and the third-level institutions (e.g. Research Facilities at NUI Maynooth and AIT).
P-ED6	To facilitate the development of educational facilities together with sports, recreational and cultural facilities for schools.

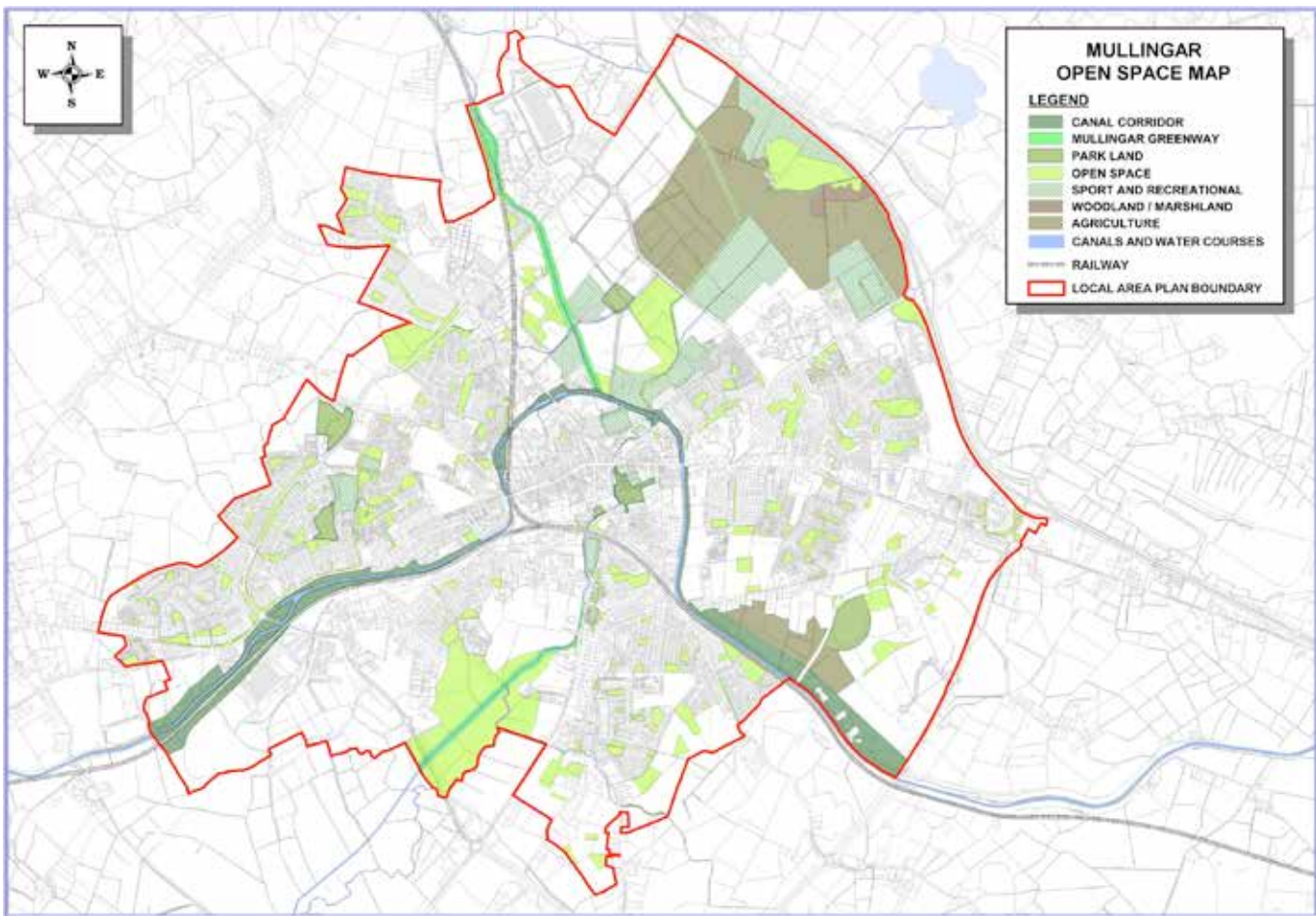
It is an objective of the Council:	
O-ED1	To consult with the Department of Education and Skills in planning for education and in determining the need for education facilities in Mullingar.
O-ED2	To facilitate the development of a multi-campus school development on the Robinstown Link Road.
O-ED3	To implement traffic calming measures and reduced speed limits in the vicinity of schools in the town.
O-ED4	To require applications for school developments to be accompanied by a Sustainable Travel Plan indicating how pupils will access the school and provide for sustainable modes of travel to school and thus encourage alternatives to the private car.
O-ED5	To encourage clustering of school, community and open space facilities and to consider dual use of School and Community facilities where appropriate.
O-ED6	To require applications for school extensions/temporary accommodation to identify a justification for such development at that location, having regard to the school catchment area and Sustainable Transport policies.
O-ED7	To investigate the potential of developing a Third Level Institution/Outreach Centre in the town, with links to NUI Maynooth and AIT.

O-ED8	To require that planning applications for 100+ dwelling units are accompanied by a report identifying the demand for school elaces likely to be generated by the proposal and the capacity of existing schools in the vicinity to cater for such demand.
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5.6 OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

Mullingar possesses a wide range of amenities and recreational facilities for the enjoyment of all members of the community and visitors alike. Established walkways such as the Táin Trail and the Westmeath Way in the vicinity of the town are important in terms of their cultural and heritage value. The provision of open space, recreation and amenity facilities, which are accessible by all sectors and age groups of the town’s population, is a central element in the delivery of sustainable communities. The Council considers that high quality open spaces, green linkages, such as walks, cycle ways and sports and recreational facilities should be provided in line with development and changing community needs. The Council shall seek to promote connectivity between existing open spaces in the town centre, urban fringe and the rural hinterland through the development of safe pedestrian and cycle routes.





Map 5.1 Distribution of Open Spaces in Mullingar

5.6.1 The value of Open Space and Recreation

Open spaces are a vital part of the urban environment. Open space amenities create benefits for the enhancement of the quality of life of residential areas and also provide opportunities for recreational activities and vital green infrastructure that enables us to deal with floods or mitigate and adapt to climate change while providing wildlife habitats, sporting facilities or parks. Furthermore, open space fosters a sense of place.

5.6.2 Audit of Open Space Provision in Mullingar

There are 211ha of land zoned for Open Space in the Mullingar Local Area Plan. Map 5.1 outlines the hierarchy and distribution of open space amenities in the town. Existing provision in the town ranges from pockets of land within housing estates to playing fields associated with sporting clubs, to linear tracts along the canal to the Town Park. In general, there is a balanced distribution of both passive and active open space throughout Mullingar, with the exception of the west side of town.

Apart from the uncoordinated areas of open space, the only existing functional area of open space serving the residential areas of Greenpark, Ardleigh, Grange, Woodlawns and

Abbeylands is the Mullingar Harriers sports ground. There are approximately 2,000 housing units in this area, and in order to meet the needs of this large residential catchment, it is proposed to develop a public park of 3.53ha fronting the C-link, on lands adjacent to the proposed neighbourhood centre. This park will provide passive open space for both the existing community and new development areas in the vicinity. The proposed park will occupy a prominent position, is suitably overlooked and will provide a visual break along this orbital route. It is also proposed to provide a neighbourhood park on existing open space associated with Ardleigh Vale residential estate. This park shall include a playground.

The Town Park is the only designated formal park in Mullingar. The Council upgraded this 2ha park in 2010 providing a new playground and comprehensive landscaping scheme at a cost of €750,000. The park provides an invaluable amenity to residents of the town and has excellent connectivity to both the town centre and surrounding streets.

In addition, new pocket parks are provided for within the Mullingar South and Robinstown Framework Plans. With regard to the Ardmore/Marlinstown Framework Plan, a new neighbourhood public park has been provided for adjacent to a new primary school, neighbourhood centre and other essential community facilities.

The Robinstown Framework Plan provides for a linear park along the River Brosna. Open space corridors have been reserved along the entirety of the River Brosna, through the Framework Plan, in order to protect its amenity and ecological value. The provision of green corridors along the extent of the river will also facilitate pedestrian and cycle movement through the plan area. The complete green network within Robinstown will include the canal, canal feeder and the Brosna, and will connect to such amenities as Lough Owel, Slevins Lake, Lough Sheever and Lough Drin.

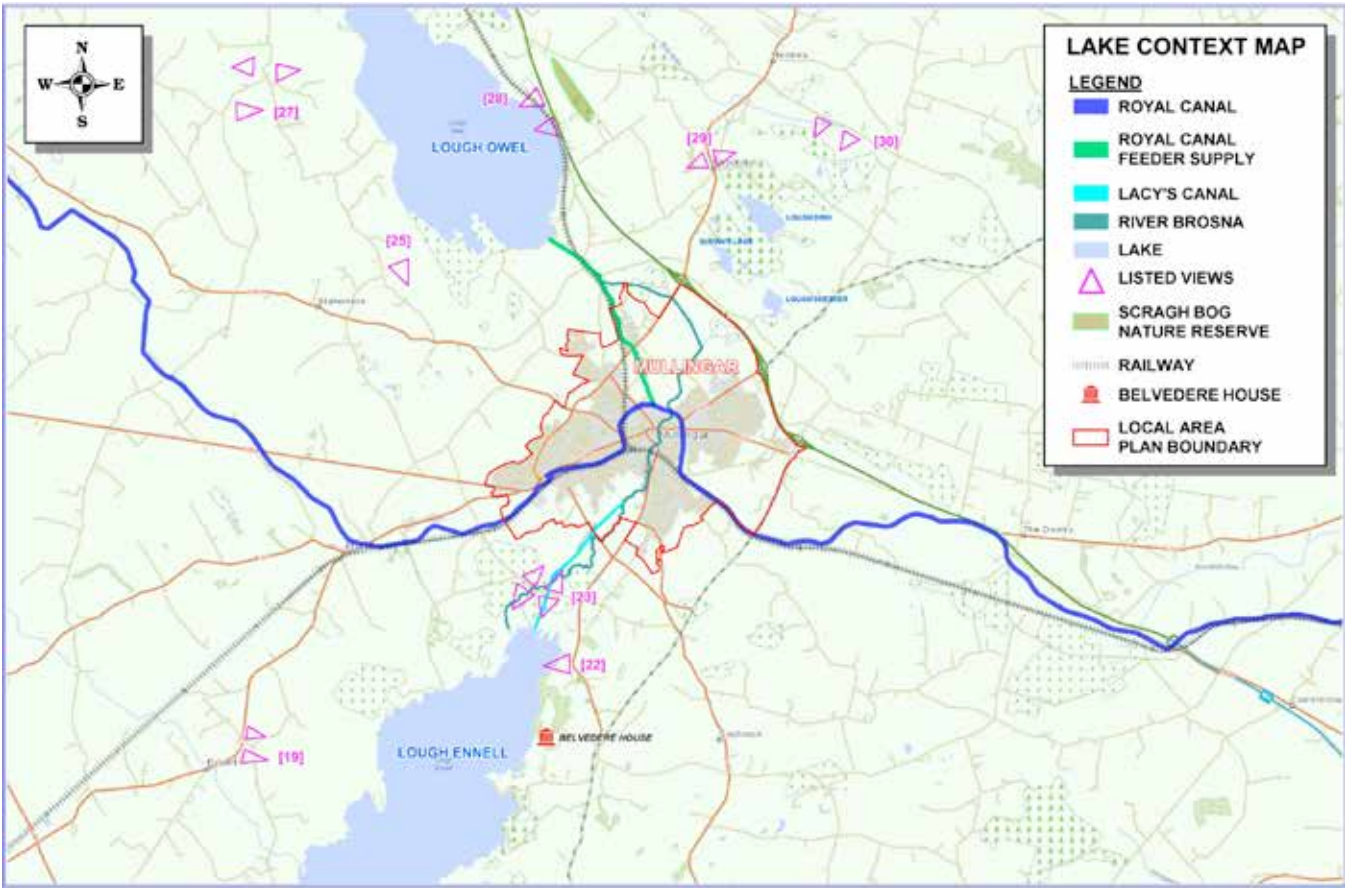
The Mullingar Local Area Plan provides for a large tract of land zoned for open space to the south of the town along the River Brosna. This area is of considerable biodiversity value in terms of its wetland habitats and ecology. This land also comprises in part the linear green corridor to Lough Owel, which forms a section of the Mullingar Greenway. Considerable potential exists in developing a wetlands parkland area, which would complement and act as a further tourist attraction along this route, would enhance the overall amenity of the area and the visual approach into the town.

5.6.3 National Cycle Network

A linear corridor along the entirety of Royal Canal, as it passes through the town has been reserved for open space, to facilitate a pedestrian and cycle greenway, which will form part of a National Cycleway from Dublin to Galway. It is proposed that the National Cycle Network will extend between Mullingar and Athlone along the disused Mullingar Athlone railway line. The National Greenway will complement existing and proposed cycle pathways along the Royal Canal and make the gateway town of Mullingar a premier cycling destination befitting its cycle hub designation.

5.6.4 Mullingar Greenway

It is the Council's intention to develop an amenity greenway incorporating a public pedestrian / cycle route from Mullingar town to Lough Ennell and Lough Owel via the River Brosna and Royal Canal Supply Line. This initiative will appeal to both locals and tourists by creating a fully integrated alternative off-road link from the town to both lakes. The greenway will allow urban dwellers to access and enjoy high quality natural environmental assets in the hinterland of the town and environs with possible future connections to Belvedere House and Gardens and provide opportunities for enhancement of quality of life and health.



Map 5.2 Lake Context Map

5.7 OPEN SPACE & RECREATION POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-OSR1	To ensure that sufficient and appropriate open space, recreation and amenity facilities; both passive and active are provided to meet the changing needs of new and existing communities in the town.
P-OSR2	To seek to safeguard the town's natural amenity assets and facilitate the improvement and enhancement of biodiversity in

	existing recreation facilities and open space, including town parks, riverside and canal walks, urban squares, walking and cycling routes, playing fields and playgrounds for the residents of and visitors to the town.
P-OSR3	To restrict development in areas of identified flood risk and to have regard to their potential multi-functional benefits as open spaces, including their visual, wildlife, climate change and informal recreation functions.
P-OSR4	To prohibit development that would prejudice the form, character or setting of any

	recreational amenity, open space, walk/cycle way, or other identifiable amenity asset.
P-OSR5	To integrate and link open space amenities within the town to the surrounding countryside, subject to environmental and habitats requirements.
P-OSR6	To seek to ensure the provision of sufficient and appropriate recreational facilities to meet the needs of the Towns population and which are of a scale and quality to attract and retain a critical mass of population in the Gateway town.
P-OSR7	To develop and facilitate the provision of public open spaces in accordance with standards depicted in the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009).
P-OSR8	To develop the Mullingar Greenway incorporating a pedestrian/cycle link connecting Mullingar to Lough Ennell and Lough Owel, the River Brosna and the Royal Canal. The Mullingar Greenway shall be subject to environmental and habitats requirements and consistent with Habitat Management Plan objectives for Lough Owel and Lough Ennell.

It is an objective of the Council:

O-OSR1	To require, through development management, the provision of high quality usable open space and amenity for new residential development, in tandem with the phasing of development.
O-OSR2	To secure the provision of recreational and amenity facilities and improvement of

	existing facilities, in line with new development through approved development contribution schemes and through the Development Management process.
O-OSR3	To seek a greater variety of recreation and amenity facilities to reflect the demands of the increasingly diverse population in the town.
O-OSR4	To safeguard the ecological importance of open spaces and river corridors.
O-OSR5	To ensure sufficient land is allocated to provide a variety of open spaces on a hierarchical basis throughout the town in order to achieve a choice of open space, recreational and amenity facilities.
O-OSR6	To improve and develop safe public access to the Royal Canal, the River Brosna and other features of amenity value.
O-OSR7	To have a coordinated approach to the provision of parks equipment, exercise areas, walks and spaces in the town, in conjunction with other agencies including the Westmeath Sports Partnership.
O-OSR8	To carry out amenity and environmental improvement schemes and any other works as appropriate and to improve open space, recreation and amenity facilities as resources allow, subject to the protection of biodiversity sites including Natura 2000 sites.
O-OSR9	To ensure that the town's flood plains, wetlands and water courses are retained for their biodiversity and flood protection values.

O-OSR10	To promote and develop a public park along the C-link.
O-OSR11	To support and promote the development of a Wetland Park area adjacent to the River Brosna to the south of the town.
O-OSR12	To provide a network of pedestrian linkages joining the new and improved green spaces within the town.
O-OSR13	To provide linkages to amenities within the town and environs including Lough Owel, Lough Sheever, Lough Drin, Slevins Lough, Lough Ennell and Belvedere, subject to environmental and habitats requirements.
O-OSR14	To enhance and link the Westmeath Way through Mullingar via the Royal Canal Feeder (and to continue further along the waterside via Tullaghan and to the north eastern side of the lake) consistent with Habitat Management Plan objectives for Lough Owel. Said trail shall be carried out in accordance with the protection of archaeological features in the area.
O-OSR15	To promote and facilitate the development of a Neighbourhood Park at Ardleigh Vale.
O-OSR16	To support and facilitate the development through Mullingar of the National Cycle Network between Dublin and Galway, including the provision of a walking/cycling route within the entirety of the Mullingar Athlone disused railway line, together with all related signage, way marking and all

associated site works and connections, subject to environmental and habitats requirements.

5.8 SPORTS, LEISURE AND PLAY

The Council recognises the importance of play in the development of children. The Council will support initiatives, which encourage play and raise awareness of the importance of play for the health, wellbeing and development of children. The provision of safe footpaths and walkways encourage walking as a form of recreation. The town is well served by sporting facilities, including Cusack Park, Town Swimming Pool, Greyhound Track, several playing pitches and a running track etc. There is also a full size all weather playing pitch at St. Loman's GAA grounds with associated community centre and changing rooms.

There are 56ha of land zoned for sporting and recreational use in Mullingar, the majority of which is located within the Robinstown Framework Plan. The plan makes provision for a Regional Sports Centre along the Robinstown Link Road with associated playing pitches.

5.9 SPORTS, LEISURE & PLAY POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:

P-SLP1	To maximise the range of public play opportunities available to children, particularly children who are marginalised or disadvantaged or who have a disability through the Council's Play for Children Policy and Action Plan in accordance with the National Children's Strategy.
P-SLP2	To promote, encourage and facilitate the increased participation in sports and physical activity by all age groups, including children, youth,

	parents, active age groups, school and community.
P-SLP3	To ensure the sufficient and appropriate provision for local sports and recreation and to seek more efficient usage of existing resources.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-SLP1	To implement the Council’s Play For Children Policy.
O-SLP2	To ensure that in public playgrounds or publicly funded playgrounds, surfaces and play equipment provided conform to the Irish standards for play equipment and surfacing.
O-SLP3	To consider, as part of provision, the quality of recreational environments that would promote play.
O-SLP4	To actively encourage and support the provision by private developers of additional recreational and amenity facilities across the county, including swimming pools, gyms, cinemas, play areas, playgrounds or other such amenities.
O-SLP5	To work with Local Sports Groups and Agencies in progressing and delivering quality and accessible facilities for sport, recreation and leisure, in conjunction with all key agencies involved.
O-SLP6	To support and assist in the effective marketing and promotion of the sporting and recreational opportunities that exist within the town.
O-SLP7	To support and facilitate the development of a Regional Sports Centre and associated playing fields within the Robinstown Framework Plan.

5.10 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

This Local Area Plan aims to utilise green infrastructure as a method of developing a strategy to contribute positively to biodiversity protection and enhancement and which will seek to achieve the following objectives:

- The provision of recreational open space and accessible parks;
- Linked open spaces and recreational facilities including green routes;
- The conservation and enhancement of natural habitats;
- Raising awareness of biodiversity and its importance to human wellbeing;
- The sustainable management of water & flood risk management;
- The protection and maintenance of sensitive landscapes and ecosystems.

5.10.1 What is Green Infrastructure?

Green Infrastructure is a network of green spaces, habitats and ecosystems within a defined geographic area. It can include wild, semi-natural and developed environments from wetlands to urban parks, rivers and canals. The Green Infrastructure concept involves the planning, management and engineering of green spaces and ecosystems in order to provide specific benefits to society. Green Infrastructure is about ‘joined up’ thinking. It is an integrated approach to planning and links land-use, landscape, services, ecology, heritage and transportation.

5.10.2 Value of Green Infrastructure

There is an overriding need to proactively develop Green Infrastructure in order to enhance the town’s biodiversity and to improve resilience and adaptation to climate change. Green Infrastructure emphasises management and not just protection of the environment,

therefore, Green Infrastructure planning is critical to assist in meeting the requirements of a range of European Directives (Habitats, Birds, Water Framework, Floods and Strategic Environmental Assessment).

One of the main challenges is how to effectively balance the development of the compact urban form of Mullingar, while protecting and enhancing the surrounding receiving environment. This will be achieved by adopting an overarching Green Infrastructure Strategy for Mullingar with an emphasis on interconnectivity to support long-term sustainability and development. An important part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy is the need to ensure that open space and recreation provision matches the needs of the existing and future communities of the town and also accords with the provisions of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020. It is also envisaged that Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) measures will be incorporated throughout the Local Area Plan lands in both the public and private realms, to reduce the risk of flooding on site and to help to improve the quality of the water being discharged to the River Brosna, thus helping to ensuring compliance with the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

5.10.3 Goals of a Green Infrastructure Strategy

- To identify existing areas and networks of green infrastructure in the town and to ensure the protection, management, development and enhancement of these areas, as they provide a range of environmental, social and economic benefits to the community.
- To develop a green infrastructure network to provide accessible and usable parks, open spaces and recreational facilities while conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the area, including the protection of Natura 2000 sites, together

with the sustainable management of water, the maintenance of landscape character and historic landscape character and the protection, conservation and enhancement of the Architectural and Archaeological Heritage of the town.

- To identify potential areas and linkages and develop same to create a robust green infrastructure linked network.

5.11 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-GF1	To develop a Green Infrastructure System both within the town and to the wider hinterland thereof, that serves as a multitude of connected meaningful and functional networks.
P-GF2	To ensure that Green Infrastructure contributes positively to the well-being of the towns inhabitants.
P-GF3	To resist development that would fragment or prejudice the Mullingar Town and environs strategic green infrastructure network.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-GF1	To require new development proposals to contribute to the protection and enhancement of existing green infrastructure in the town and the delivery of new green infrastructure.
O-GF2	To ensure the protection of streams, rivers, canals and watercourses and their corridors by maintaining an appropriate riparian strip, suitable for protection of their biodiversity function.

O-GF3	To incorporate Sustainable urban Drainage System (SUDS) measures to reduce the risk of flooding and to help to improve water quality in the plan area, in compliance with the Water Framework Directive (WFD).
O-GF4	To protect areas including designated areas preserved for open space along the Royal Canal and enhance the biodiversity of these areas to enrich the experience of leisure activities along the Royal Canal and wider Green Infrastructure network.
O-GF5	To adopt a proactive approach to raising awareness and educating communities and schools regarding the importance of Green Infrastructure networks and the need to protect and enhance these areas for the enjoyment and benefit of existing and future generations.

5.12 ALLOTMENT PROVISION

Allotments are an important asset particularly within urban areas as they provide benefits to local communities and the environment. The Council will facilitate the provision of allotments in Mullingar, subject to site suitability and impacts on residential amenity.

5.13 ALLOTMENT POLICY & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-ALL1	To actively promote the reservation of land for the use and cultivation of allotments and facilitate the provision of land for that use.
It is an objective of the Council:	
O-ALL1	To identify potential allotment sites in the town including suitable publicly owned lands.

O-ALL2	To cooperate with Residents Associations to establish allotments sites in large areas of under used open space lands.
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5.14 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Rights of Way provide a valuable link to some of the town’s natural assets such as the Royal Canal, River Brosna etc. There is currently public access to some of the amenities within the town. The residents of Mullingar would benefit from having improved access to the towns natural amenities. Appendix 8 of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 lists Public Rights of Way that have been identified within Mullingar town, which will be the subject of further investigation.

5.15 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY POLICY & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-PROW1	To preserve and protect existing public rights of way for the common good and undertake to create new public rights of way, where it is considered desirable and possible.
It is an objective of the Council:	
O-PROW1	To identify and map on an ongoing basis Public Rights of Way within Mullingar Town.
O-PROW2	To seek the re-opening of public access along the Royal Canal to the south of Market Point.
O-PROW3	To utilise the powers under the Planning & Development Acts 2000 as amended, to create new public rights of way as appropriate in the town.

Chapter 6 *Service Infrastructure*



6 SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE

AIM:

To achieve a sustainable, efficient and integrated transport system, high quality connectivity and ease of movement within Mullingar and to provide, improve and extend water, wastewater, surface water, flood alleviation and environmental services throughout the town. To seek the development of high capacity Information Communications Technology (ICT) Infrastructure, broadband connectivity and digital broadcasting in the interests of economic progress and the proper planning of Mullingar.

6.1 TRANSPORT & MOVEMENT

Mullingar is located on the main Dublin - Sligo road (N4), 80 km from Dublin and 117km from Sligo. Mullingar is a hub location in regard to the National Road network, although its north-south linkages are somewhat deficient in comparison with its east-west links. In addition to the National Primary N4/M4 and the National Secondary N52, the following regional roads radiate from the town:

R390 to Athlone
 R391 to Clara
 R392 to Ballymahon/Roscommon
 R393 to Ballinacarrigy/Longford
 R394 to Castlepollard
 R400 to Rochfortbridge
 and the R156 to Trim

6.2 LOCAL CONTEXT

Accessibility to Mullingar has been greatly enhanced by the completion of the M4 motorway from Dublin to Kinnegad and the dual carriageway extension from Kinnegad linking to the Mullingar By-pass. Accessibility has been further enhanced by the construction of Mullingar Orbital Road. The on-going improvement of the National road network will be of benefit to the economic development of the town, as will the improvement of more local transport links to local and regional centres.

Mullingar is served by approximately nine trains to Dublin daily, commuting time by train to the capital is approximately 70 minutes. The Town also has a regular bus service to Dublin and other regional links. The use of public transport to commute to the capital, and more generally, will become more attractive provided an efficient public transport network is in place which provides an attractive alternative to private car use.

The completion of the ring-road around Mullingar with the construction of the Joe Dolan Bridge presents the town with an opportunity to introduce radical and necessary traffic management measures. In particular, there is a need to reduce the dominance of the private car and the unnecessary presence of HGV's in the core of the town, in areas where people tend to walk and congregate. Historically, national road traffic using the N4 and N52 passed through the town centre and local traffic wishing to travel from one end of the town to the other faced a similar journey through the heart of the town. This traffic had a detrimental effect on the environment of the town centre and while the volume of through traffic has reduced, there is still extraneous traffic that has a similar impact. The focus of future Traffic Management policy should be to ensure that through traffic is minimised, that a maximum amount of road space is given over to pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable users and that the atmosphere in the town centre is as comfortable as possible for these users. This will contribute enormously to the vitality and viability of the Town Centre and the town as a whole.

6.3 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

To achieve these environmental improvements, provision must be made for car parking adjacent to the town centre with easy access from the orbital route. Traffic exiting these car parks should be incentivised to exit to the orbital route to continue their journeys, rather than through the town centre. Provision must be made for public transport, including taxis, to pass through the

Town Centre. It will also be necessary to introduce general traffic calming within the Town Centre, which may include special lower speed limits, to ensure that vehicular traffic, cyclists and pedestrians can safely use the road network. There may also be scope for full or partial pedestrianisation of certain streets in the town centre. However, such proposals would need to be carefully considered and the impact of traffic should be balanced against the need to ensure that all Public Spaces in the town are subject to adequate passive surveillance.

6.4 NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has decided that a long distance cycleway should be provided between Dublin and Galway as a pilot, which would eventually form part of a National Cycle Network. As part of this initiative, it is the Council’s intention, pending its reinstatement as a railway, to develop a Greenway incorporating a public pedestrian/cycle route along the entirety of the disused Mullingar Athlone Railway, within the rail corridor. It is anticipated that this initiative will appeal to both locals and tourists alike by creating an alternative off-road link across the county. The proposed Greenway will complement existing cycle pathways and infrastructure and will form part of an extensive cycle network in Westmeath.

6.5 MULLINGAR GREENWAY

Aligned to the above, it is the Council’s intention to develop an amenity Greenway incorporating a public pedestrian / cycle route from Mullingar Town to Lough Ennell and Lough Owel via the River Brosna and Royal Canal Supply Line. This initiative will appeal to both locals and tourists alike by creating a fully integrated alternative off-road link from the town to both lakes. The proposed Greenway will complement existing cycle pathways along the Royal Canal and make the Gateway Town of Mullingar a premier cycling destination befitting its Cycle hub designation.

6.6 TRANSPORT & MOVEMENT POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:	
P-TM1	To carry out all road works, insofar as this is possible and practicable, in the urban area in accordance with the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in 2013.
P-TM2	To facilitate the provision or improvement, where possible, of public transport by statutory and private operator services to serve and link Mullingar to other urban areas within the Midlands.
P-TM3	To make Mullingar more accessible to the needs of people with disabilities and to implement the programme of works required on streets, footpaths, etc. in accordance with the Council’s Disability Audit Implementation Plan.
P-TM4	To provide crossing points for the mobility impaired at locations defined throughout the town.
P-TM5	To promote the development of walking and cycling in the Mullingar area. Cycling and walking are environmentally friendly, fuel-efficient and healthy modes of transport, and their development is in line with the principles of sustainability.
P-TM6	To ensure that the safety of road users, including motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, will be a primary consideration In the design and/or improvement of roads and in the assessment of planning applications for new developments. Cyclists and pedestrians are especially vulnerable in road accidents and new design must pay particular attention to securing their safety.

P-TM7	To require that adequate covered facilities be provided for the secure parking of bicycles, in all major new developments, such as offices, apartments, retail and industrial schemes.
P-TM8	To continue the programme of improvement of footpaths throughout the town.
P-TM9	To explore measures where development consolidates the urban form, for off-street or rear servicing of retail and commercial premises.
P-TM10	To actively promote the re-opening of the Mullingar to Athlone rail line, thereby increasing connectivity between these Gateway Towns.
P-TM11	To provide for sustainable transport movement at the earliest design stage of development proposals to ensure accessibility by all modes of transport and all sections of society.
P-TM12	To further the development of an integrated cycle network in Mullingar.
P-TM13	To develop a Greenway, incorporating a walking/cycling route along the entirety of the Athlone Mullingar railway line, as part of the National Cycle Network.

It is an objective of the Council:

O-TM1	To prepare a Traffic Management Plan for the town, that will address the need to improve the environment in the Town Centre, to discourage extraneous traffic and to provide for road users such as pedestrians and cyclists.
O-TM2	To study the need for a safe and convenient coach set down location in or near the town centre.

O-TM3	To construct a Link Road from Harbour Road to the Robinstown Link Road.
O-TM4	To consider the provision of multi-level off street car parking, either on their own or preferably in conjunction with other developments at Blackhall Street, behind Heatons at Bishopsgate Street and at the public car-park area off Mac Curtain Street.
O-TM5	To provide loading bays at agreed locations throughout the Central Business Area of the town.
O-TM6	To provide Pay and Display Parking, with the fee structure being used to manage the use of spaces between all day parking and short stay.
O-TM7	To continue the programme of signage, marking, surfacing, public lighting and improvement of the general presentation of all car parks in the town.
O-TM8	To facilitate out of town centre all day parking and to promote local bus link services as part of an overall Traffic Management Scheme.
O-TM9	To identify car parks and other suitable locations for the provision of appropriate battery charging infrastructure for electrically powered cars/vehicles, as a means by which the Council can assist in achieving a reduction in carbon emissions within Mullingar.
O-TM10	To develop a network of interlinked pedestrian routeways throughout the town.
O-TM11	To continue a programme of urban landscaping including measures to improve pedestrian safety, convenience, and accessibility through the town centre.

O-TM12	To install secure cycle parking facilities at Public Buildings such as the Library, Swimming Pool, County Buildings and Market Square.
O-TM13	To complete the existing programme of footpath widening, dished crossing points and tactile paving throughout the town.
O-TM14	To implement works required on streets, footpaths in accordance with the Council's Disability Audit Implementation Plan.
O-TM15	To construct a pedestrian and cycle bridge across the canal and railway at Saunderson's Bridge on the Ardmore Road.
O-TM16	To improve pedestrian and cycle provision on the old Longford Road and Harbour Street from the junction with the Green Road to the entrance to the Harbour Centre Car Park. This will include a new pedestrian bridge over the Dublin Sligo Rail Line.
O-TM17	To examine the potential for full or partial pedestrianisation of some of the main shopping streets in the town centre.
O-TM18	To widen footpaths in the town centre to make streets more pedestrian friendly.
O-TM19	Where a development is not fully serviced by public car parking, a contribution shall be required towards the cost of providing such parking accommodation, as provided for by the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended. This charge will be related to the type of development proposed and the cost of the provision of the car park.
O-TM20	To apply car parking requirement standards to all new developments in Mullingar in accordance with Section 9.11 of this plan. It will also be policy to allow the relaxation of same

	where a proposed development warrants this relaxation, and it is in the best interests of the area concerned.
O-TM21	To examine the issue of off-street parking and to take ameliorative measures where problems exist regarding under-supply or incorrect use.
O-TM22	To complete the Bleach Yard Link, linking Bleach Yard and Grove Street.
O-TM23	To establish a widened building line on Grove Street, as development proposals provide opportunity.
O-TM24	To construct a road link from Lynn Road to Mullingar Business Park (near Mullingar Fire Station).
O-TM25	To construct a roundabout at Weldons Cross on the R-390 (Athlone/Ballymahon Road junction).
O-TM26	To upgrade and link traffic signals at Green Bridge, Mount Street, Nugents Corner and Dublin Road Bridge and others as they are provided.
O-TM27	To construct a high quality roadway linking Harbour Road with the Robinstown Link Road, subject to environmental and habitats requirements.
O-TM28	To facilitate a local Bus Service and agree terminus and location for Bus Stops.
O-TM29	To provide bus priority measures, including QBC's on existing and planned road infrastructure, where appropriate, in collaboration with the National Transport Authority, Bus Eireann and the National Roads Authority (NRA).
O-TM30	To develop and implement a HGV Management Strategy for the town.
O-TM31	To develop the Mullingar Greenway incorporating a pedestrian/cycle link connecting

	Mullingar to Lough Ennell and Lough Owel, the River Brosna and the Royal Canal subject to environmental and habitats requirements.
O-TM32	To provide a pedestrian crossing on the Royal Canal to the west of the town, subject to habitats and environmental requirements.

6.7 WATER, DRAINAGE & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The future development of Mullingar Town is dependent on the provision of a water supply and on the capacity of the wastewater system to accommodate development. In addition, the provision of environmental services such as waste management, together with ESB supply, broadband connectivity and ICT infrastructure are crucial in facilitating the proper planning and sustainable development of Mullingar. All of these services must be planned for so as to ensure that there is adequate availability to support development envisaged by this Local Area Plan, in a manner that is environmentally and ecologically appropriate, cost effective, efficient and protects public health.

6.8 WATER SUPPLY

The Mullingar water supply is sourced from Lough Owel. The abstraction limit is 22.7 million litres per day (MLD) and the water treatment plant has a treatment capacity of 22 MLD. The current demand on the plant is approximately 19 MLD.

The water treatment plant serves a large part of the county, through three regional watermain networks, including the Mullingar Town Independent Supply, which serves Mullingar and environs through some 120km of watermains. The average demand for Mullingar and environs is 8.2 MLD, comprising 3.5 MLD for domestic supply, 2 MLD for metered non-domestic supply, approximately 0.5 MLD known background losses, leaving 2.2 MLD unaccounted for water representing 27% losses. The current water supply demand for

Mullingar is being met and there is sufficient capacity in the system to meet the demand. Constraints in relation to abstraction of potable water supply from Lough Owel, taking account of conservation objectives of this European Site, have been identified. The Council intend to prepare a detailed report within 12 months of adoption of the plan with a particular focus on abstraction limits of Lough Owel.

In the longer term, it is proposed to supply large areas of the county, which were previously supplied by Lough Owel, from a new abstraction and water treatment plant at Killinure Lough, one of the inner lakes off Lough Ree. This will inevitably reduce the demand on Lough Owel and provide additional capacity to serve Mullingar over the duration of this Local Area Plan. In addition, permission has recently been approved for abstraction from Lough Ennell to supply the Royal Canal system, which is intended to replace existing draw from Lough Owel.

6.8.1 Conservation of the Water Supply

Conservation is an essential element in the Council’s Water Management Strategy even where adequate supplies exist, to ensure optimal use of natural resources. Conservation measures include not only the monitoring of usage of water and early detection of leaks but also an awareness programme for consumers.

Approximately 25km of watermain in Mullingar Town was replaced in 2013, which will reduce losses and bursts/leaks and will provide increased security of supply for the Town. The Council will continue to progress Water Conservation measures over the duration of this Local Area Plan.

In the furtherance of water conservation, new developments should, where feasible, install suitable water conservation measures. The use of rainwater harvesting, particularly in commercial developments, is to be encouraged.

6.9 TRANSFER TO IRISH WATER

In accordance with the Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013 (No. 50 of 2013), a range of statutory water services functions transferred from Local Authorities to Irish Water from 1st January 2014.

The Water Services (No.2) Act 2013 provides that strategic planning and investment in water services infrastructure will be provided for by the preparation by Irish Water of a Water Services Strategic Plan allied to rolling Capital Investment Plans.

The Act provides that such plans will be shaped by a number of wider policy requirements including spatial planning, particularly the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines and the Local Authority Development Plans.

For the purposes of policies and objectives cited in this plan in relation to water and wastewater, reference to the Local Authority or Westmeath County Council, shall be interpreted as applying to Irish Water.

6.10 WATER POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:

P-WT1	To provide water, sufficient in quantity and quality to serve the needs of the existing and future population and to promote the sustainable management of the Towns water supply.
P-WT2	To ensure that in the case of all developments where public mains are available or likely to be available, the development will be required to connect into them.
P-WT3	To promote water conservation measures within Mullingar by requiring, where appropriate, the installation of water meters in all new residential units and commercial development and in units where planning permission is required for an extension.

P-WT4	To ensure, through the implementation of the Shannon International River Basin Management Plan (SIRBMP) and its associated Programmes of Measures and any other associated legislation, the protection and improvement of all drinking water, surface water and ground waters.
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It is an objective of the Council:

O-WT1	To implement the Water Services Investment Programme 2010 - 2013 and all subsequent Water Services Investment Programmes (WSIP).
O-WT2	To continue the implementation of the Water Conservation Programme, including the commitment to water conservation and leakage reduction within Mullingar and its environs and promote awareness of water conservation measures and techniques.
O-WT3	To prepare a Water Conservation Strategy for Mullingar.
O-WT4	To apply water pricing in accordance with water pricing policies as adopted.
O-WT5	To require the adoption of water saving measures in new development proposals. Such measures shall include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water butts to collect rainwater• Low flush and dual flush toilets• Low water use appliances• Rainwater harvesting
O-WT6	To prepare a detailed report within 12 months of adoption of the plan with a particular focus on abstraction limits of Lough Owel, taking account of conservation objectives of this European Site.

6.11 WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

The development of the town's wastewater and surface water drainage system is essential to facilitate the continued growth of Mullingar. The Mullingar Sewerage Improvement Scheme was completed in 2010 and the waste water treatment plant has a treatment capacity of 55,000 population equivalent (pe). Current loading on the plant is 27,000pe. It is considered that the additional proposed loading in the plan can be accommodated within EPA Licence Consent Limits. The key features of the Mullingar Sewerage Improvement Scheme involved the upgrading and extension of the existing waste water treatment plant and the construction of a new main lift pumping station and storm storage (at a cost of €24.9 million), and the construction of a major interceptor sewer (at a cost of €13 million) to eliminate the discharge of untreated wastewater to the River Brosna during storm events. There are no further works planned for the period 2014 to 2020.

The 2011 census recorded that there were 222 septic tanks / treatment units within the legally defined boundary of Mullingar Town. It is Council policy to require these units to connect to the Town Sewer and thereby minimise the risk of groundwater pollution associated with the provision of individual waste water treatment units.

6.12 WASTEWATER POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:

P-WST1	To ensure that public wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure fully complies with the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004 and the EC Surface Water Regulations 2009. To promote, as appropriate, specific provisions for the implementation of the relevant recommendations set out in the recent Focus on Urban Waste
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	Water Discharges in Ireland Report (EPA, 2012).
P-WST2	To prevent zoned land being developed unless sufficient waste water treatment capacity is available to conform to the objectives of the Shannon River Basin Management Plan.
P-WST3	To ensure the changeover from septic tanks to mains connections in all cases where this is feasible, and that all new developments utilise and connect to the existing wastewater infrastructure. The provision of individual septic tanks and treatment plants within the Mullingar Town Plan boundary will be strongly discouraged to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution. Where such facilities are permitted, full compliance with the 2009 EPA Code of Practice - Code of Practice Wastewater treatment and Disposal Systems serving single houses (p.e.≤10), is required.
P-WST4	To ensure that the wastewater treatment plant is in compliance with the EPA Licence Consent Limits, in order to avoid any adverse impact on the River Brosna and Lough Ennell.

It is an objective of the Council:

O-WST1	To ensure that all new developments shall be provided with separate foul and surface water networks. In redevelopments, combined systems shall be separated where feasible.
O-WST2	To require the changeover from septic tanks to mains connections within the Mullingar Local Area Plan.

6.13 SURFACE WATER

The drainage network in the older part of the town centre is a combined system that accepts foul and surface water flows. Such systems are prone to overload during storm events and discharges to watercourses of untreated sewage diluted with rain water can result. The new interceptor sewer constructed as part of the Mullingar Sewerage Improvement Scheme has eliminated most of these overflows. During a storm event flows are now directed to a large storm storage tank beside the Lynn Road Pumping Station, where it collects and is pumped forward for treatment at the waste water treatment plant when the storm abates.

New development has the potential to add to flood risk in an area if it leads to an increase in surface water run-off. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) are effective technologies which aim to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and enhance biodiversity and amenity. The objective of SUDS in new developments is to replicate, as closely as possible, the surface water drainage regime of the predevelopment ‘greenfield’ situation. The surface water runoff rate from the developed site must be limited to the ‘greenfield’ runoff rate to reduce the risk of flooding. It is Council policy that all large-scale developments incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems as part of development proposals.

6.14 SURFACE WATER POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:

P-SW1	To incorporate and promote the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) within development proposals and infrastructural projects.
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It is an objective of the Council:

O-SW1	To provide for the control of surface and storm waters arising from new development within Mullingar.
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O-SW2	To remediate and enforce against unauthorised discharges to the surface water drainage system.
O-SW3	To ensure in newly developing neighbourhoods that all surface and storm water discharges shall be attenuated and sustainable urban drainage systems utilised. Attenuation schemes may be combined with the provision of public amenity areas through the provision of water features, wildlife refuges and other desirable elements.

6.15 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

Flooding is a natural phenomenon of the hydrological cycle. In Mullingar, the most common cause is the inadequacy of existing stormwater pipe networks to cope with extreme rainfall events. The frequency, pattern and severity of flooding are expected to increase as a result of climate change. Accordingly, it is more important than ever to take account of flood risk in spatial planning.

Flooding cannot be completely eliminated, but its impacts can be minimised with proactive and careful management of catchments and identified flood risk areas and by ensuring that any development does not individually or cumulatively give rise to new flood risk. In order to minimise the impact of an increased future flood risk, there are various steps that Local Authorities can take. These include flood protection works, stormwater attenuation and more significantly, avoidance of development in floodplains subject to flooding except in very limited circumstances.

6.15.1 Flooding in Mullingar

According to the OPW website, there have been nine floods events in Mullingar. The only dated events were in November of 1965 and 2008. The majority of past flood incidents involved the River Brosna. A number of studies have been commissioned by the Council with regard to the management of the flooding in the town. In particular, a detailed

flood study was undertaken by ARUP of the Robinstown area, as part of the Mullingar Sewerage Improvement Scheme.

Over the years, improvement works have been carried out on the River Brosna through Mullingar Town, to improve the channel and provide enhanced security against flooding of properties during storm events, by improving culverts, bank walls, defences, flap valves on surface water outfalls etc. There are no further works planned to the Brosna over the plan period.

The Council will ensure that only developments consistent with the overall policy and technical approaches of these Guidelines will be approved and permission may be refused where flood issues have not been, or cannot be, addressed successfully and where the presence of unacceptable residual flood risks to the development, its occupants or users and adjoining property remain.

In general, development in flood plains should be severely restricted. Areas adjacent to maintainable channels should be reserved for maintenance. The Council is mindful of the potential for increased incidences of flooding due to climate change and will seek to incorporate this into strategic land use decisions.

6.16 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT (SFRA)

In accordance with the 'Planning Systems and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009), the preparation of this Plan was the subject of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). An addendum to the SFRA has been prepared with regard to two sites in Robinstown which were identified as being subject to Pluvial Flood Risk and recommendations made with regard to the development of these lands. The SFRA Addendum includes Justification Tests for said lands.

6.17 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:	
P-FL1	To comply with the requirements of the "Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government/OPW, 2009) through the use of the sequential approach and application of the Justification Tests in Development Management.
P-FL2	To seek to alleviate flood risk in areas currently liable to flooding.
P-FL3	In relation to the development of lands at Robinstown, to ensure that the recommendations of the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government/OPW, 2009) and the SFRA recommendations are fully implemented.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-FL1	To fully integrate into the plan, relevant findings and recommendations of the Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study when finalised, as appropriate.
O-FL2	To closely monitor and record flood events in Mullingar in consultation with the OPW.

6.18 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Protection and enhancement of the physical environment is of primary importance to Mullingar. The Council seeks to ensure the provision of the highest standards of waste management facilities and collection and to prevent and control water, air and noise pollution.

6.19 WASTE MANAGEMENT

The management of waste in Mullingar is governed by the Waste Management Plan for the Midlands Region 2005-2014. This plan sets out a framework for the management of waste within the Midlands Region and follows the waste management hierarchy which promotes in order of priority the prevention, recycling and safe disposal of waste.

The Council will continue to promote waste prevention and minimisation initiatives to target all aspects of waste in Mullingar focusing on both commercial and domestic waste producers. It is considered that raising the awareness of citizens and businesses with regard to their responsibility as generators is essential.

6.19.1 Waste Disposal

Refuse collection in Mullingar is currently carried out by a number of private contractors using waste collection permits issued by Westmeath County Council. The Council has provided bring banks for the collection of glass, aluminium cans and textiles at Buckleys car park, Dunnes Stores car park, O’Driscoll’s Shop, Millmount, Blackhall car park and at St. Colmans National School car park in the town. In addition, the Civic Amenity Centre in Clonmore provides for a wide range of household recycling materials. In 2011, 789 tonnes of domestic waste was deposited at the Mullingar Civic Amenity Centre. The Council will continue to encourage recycling and the minimisation of waste through its environmental education programme and the Green-Schools programme.

Waste handling facilities will only be permitted if they are sensitively sited in relation to local communities and businesses and adhere to good siting principles as set out in the Waste Management Plan for the Midlands Region. Where large-scale development takes place land should be set aside for the duration of the construction period to facilitate the sorting and storing of waste inert material. The Council will permit the use of appropriate inert and non-

hazardous wastes such as construction and demolition waste for landscaping activities.

The Council will encourage the provision of recycling systems of an appropriate scale in all new developments and will investigate how best to achieve expansion to the network of public recycling facilities in the existing built-up area. Any residual waste material to be removed from sites must be carefully managed to ensure that any environmental damage is avoided and be transported and accommodated by authorised operators.

The Council will require Waste Management Plans to be prepared for construction and demolition projects of a particular scale in accordance with Best Practice Guidelines issued by the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government, July 2006.

6.20 LITTER MANAGEMENT

With regard to litter control, the Council adheres to the Litter Management Plan 2013-2018. It is a main objective of this plan to prevent and minimise litter in the town including incidence of illegal dumping. This is to be achieved through education and awareness, community involvement, litter prevention and control and enforcement. It is clear that the presence of litter detracts from the beauty of Mullingar both for residents and tourists alike. While the Council plays a very important role in terms of both prevention and reduction of litter in the town, this can only be achieved by the co-operation of local communities, the Mullingar Tidy Towns Group, the business community and the public in general.

6.21 WASTE & LITTER MANAGEMENT POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:	
P-WM1	To seek to ensure that Mullingar is served by adequate recycling facilities in the form of kerbside collection, civic site and bring bank-recycling facilities and to adequately maintain existing recycling facilities.

P-WM2	To encourage waste prevention, minimisation, reuse, recycling and recovery as methods of managing waste.
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It is an objective of the Council:	
O-WM1	To eliminate all unauthorised fly tipping and to regulate and control the disposal of all builders spoil and rubble.
O-WM2	To provide for additional recycling, including composting facilities both within Mullingar town and within newly developing neighbourhoods subject to Framework Plans.
O-WM3	To undertake a programme of street sweeping and environmental improvements in the town.

6.22 NOISE, AIR & LIGHT POLLUTION

The importance of a clean environment for the economic and social life of Mullingar is recognised. In this regard, continuous effective monitoring and enforcement in relation to pollution control measures is imperative and will continue over the period of this Local Area Plan.

6.22.1 Noise

Noise pollution has become an increasingly important issue as it affects the quality of life and also has health impacts. The Council will seek to negotiate reductions in noise and/or vibration at site boundaries or within adjacent sensitive areas, especially residential areas, by measures such as layout, design and/or attenuation mechanisms. The cost of such measures shall be borne by the developer.

The Council will require the submission of Noise Impact Assessments where it is proposed to introduce noise creating uses in proximity to noise sensitive uses, such as residential areas, and if permission is being granted may impose conditions mitigating impact. Similarly, where noise sensitive uses are proposed within proximity to a noise source, such as National roads, rail lines, etc., proposals shall include noise and/or vibration attenuation measures in any planning

application, for example where development proposals are brought forward within the zone of influence of existing national roads or of planned new National roads. Regard shall be had to the Strategic Noise Maps prepared by the NRA, which document the noise zones along principal roads in Mullingar, namely the N4, N52 and the R394 and the County Westmeath Noise Action Plan 2013-2018.

6.22.2 Air

The biggest threat facing air quality in Mullingar is emissions from road traffic. Air pollution can affect the health and well-being of sensitive population groups and ecosystems. The most sensitive areas in relation to air quality are built-up urban areas and major transport developments. The Council supports the Polluter Pays Principle (PPP) and will have regard to the EU Framework Directive on Air Quality Assessment relating to air quality standards. There has been a ban on the marketing, sale and distribution of bituminous fuel (or ‘smoky coal ban’) in Athlone since 2011. With effect from the 1st May 2013, a prohibition on the burning of bituminous or smoky coal was introduced in Mullingar to complement the existing ban on the marketing, sale and distribution of smoky coal.

6.22.3 Light

The Council will give a higher priority to the potential problems of light pollution relating to new development and the intensification or alteration of existing development. The limitation of light pollution is important in the interests of nature conservation, residential amenity and energy efficiency.

6.23 NOISE, AIR & LIGHT POLICIES

It is the policy of the Council:	
P-NAL1	To seek to preserve and maintain air and noise quality in Mullingar in accordance with best practice and relevant legislation.
P-NAL2	To promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development.

P-NAL3	To seek the control of lighting of development in particular sensitive locations.
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6.24 ENERGY

The Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020 seeks to encourage and facilitate the development of energy generation and infrastructure facilities in appropriate locations such as Industrial Zones in the town. Alongside energy production, the plan will address issues of demand and how to encourage domestic and industry wide energy saving measures on a project and strategic level.

Given the environmental sensitivities in Mullingar, the high quality landscape and existing natural heritage designations, it is considered that the town and its environs are unsuitable for the development of commercial or industrial scale wind-farms. Notwithstanding, the Council will encourage the development of appropriately scaled single turbines within industrial parks, provided that they do not negatively impact upon the environmental quality, landscape, wildlife and habitats of the area or residential amenity.

The Council will encourage home owners in appropriate locations to install micro wind energy units and small scale domestic turbines, in accordance with the planning exemptions scheduled in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2013. These regulations provide exemptions subject to certain conditions, for wind turbines, meteorological masts, combined heat and power plants, solar panels and biomass boiler units for industrial, commercial and public buildings.

The Council strongly supports all national and international incentives for limiting emissions of greenhouse gases and encourages the development of renewable energy resources. The national target commits 40% of electricity from renewable resources by 2020 under the Government’s publication Building Irelands’

Smart Economy–A Framework for Sustainable Economic Renewal (2008).

6.25 GENERAL ENERGY POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:	
P-EN1	To support local initiatives for limiting emissions of greenhouse gases through energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy sources which make use of the natural resources in an environmentally acceptable manner.
P-EN2	To support and facilitate the provision of improved energy supplies to the town in order to support economic and social development.
P-EN3	To favour the use of renewable energy as a contribution to the energy demand of all new buildings.
P-EN4	To improve the efficiency of existing building stock and require energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings in Mullingar.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-EN1	To ensure that energy conservation measures and the use of sustainable energy sources are used in Council activities and in the provision of services, and to encourage developers to adopt a similar approach.
O-EN2	To require proposals for new developments which will be significant energy users to submit Energy Statements.
O-EN3	To preserve significant landscape views in the town area from the visual intrusion of large-scale energy infrastructure.
O-EN4	To promote energy efficiency and conservation to Building Regulations standards in the design

	and development of all new buildings and in residential schemes in particular, and require designers to demonstrate that they have taken into account energy efficiency measures and the use of renewable energy in development proposals.
O-EN5	To require details of the requirements for alternative renewable energy systems, for buildings greater than 1000sq.m or residential schemes above 30 units, under SI 666 of 2006 European Communities (Energy Performance and Buildings) to be submitted at application stage for consideration. These should take the form of an Energy Statement or Feasibility Study carried out by qualified and accredited experts.

6.26 NON-RENEWABLE ENERGY

6.26.1 Natural Gas

Mullingar is serviced by the national Dublin-Galway gas pipeline, which serves both residential and commercial areas in the town.

6.26.2 Electricity

The development of secure and reliable electricity transmission infrastructure is a key factor for supporting economic development and attracting investment in Mullingar. There have been several upgrades and enhancements of the ESB network in the town in recent years. An Bord Pleanala recently approved an application by Eirgrid to construct a 110kV electricity circuit to connect the existing Mullingar 110kV transmission station at Irishtown, and the existing Kinnegad 110kV transmission station on the outskirts of Kinnegad.

The Council will continue to support the infrastructural renewal and development of electricity and gas networks. A balanced progressive approach will be adopted to minimise the impact on the environment while providing for the town's energy needs.

6.27 ELECTRICITY/GAS POLICIES

It is the policy of the Council:

P-ELE1	To continue to provide an electricity transmission network to the Linked Gateway of Mullingar that will provide for the medium to long-term future needs of the town.
P-ELE2	To support and promote the improvement and extension of gas infrastructure to serve Mullingar
P-ELE3	To co-operate and liaise with statutory and other energy providers in relation to power generation in order to ensure adequate power capacity for the existing and future needs of the town.

6.28 COMMUNICATIONS & ICT INFRASTRUCTURE

Telecommunications investment is essential for furthering the social and economic development of Mullingar. The provision of an efficient broadband service is critical in the development of a knowledge based economy. Major advancements have taken place within the telecommunications sector over the last two decades in the town, in particular the development of the Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) for broadband communication in Mullingar.

6.28.1 Broadband

The (MAN) in Mullingar covers 27.4 km. The MAN has enabled telecommunications companies to provide high-speed access to the internet and a range of telephony and data communications services which are vital tools for industry, business and government to be efficient and competitive. The MANs facilitates new entrants, new services and more competition for broadband users in the area. There are currently 10 telecoms/ISPs providing services to end users via the Mullingar MAN.

The MAN Infrastructure has been built using the latest fibre optic technology. It has been designed in interconnected fibre rings, reducing the risk of service interruption common to other networks. The Mullingar MAN Infrastructure is owned by Westmeath County Council and managed on its behalf by Enet. It is a vendor-independent open access service, ensuring increased competition on a world class robust resilient communications network. The MAN is available at Forest Park Business Park/Clonmore Industrial Park, Mullingar IDA Business Park, Lough Sheever Corporate Park and Lakepoint Business Park.

According to the 2011 census, 63.5% of households in Mullingar Town and Environs had a broadband connection, however, the town still lags behind the state in terms of broadband provision (65%).

6.29 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Intensive digitisation offers a competitive advantage in attracting economic development and investment. It also offers more flexible working arrangements, enabling people to work and communicate locally and internationally from their homes. The Council acknowledges the importance of the telecommunications sector, in particular the development of broadband telecommunications, in terms of capitalising on investment opportunities.

It is considered that the existing telecommunications infrastructure is suitable to cater for the needs of the town during the lifetime of the plan. With advances in technology and in particular satellite technology the need for telecommunication structures will diminish and this may provide an opportunity for removal and/or lowering of existing structures.

6.30 ICT POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of the Council:	
P-ICT1	To support the co-ordinated and focused development and extension of broadband infrastructure throughout Mullingar, to serve all residential, commercial and enterprise and employment areas.
P-ICT2	To protect areas of significant landscape, habitats and species importance from the visual and physical intrusion of large-scale telecommunications infrastructure.
P-ICT3	To promote the expansion of broadband, along with wi-fi and wireless technology. Ducting should be shared where possible and underground services should be placed where they create minimum disturbance to road users.
P-ICT4	To facilitate the provision of telecommunications infrastructure in Mullingar in accordance with Circular Letter PL07/12 and the requirements of the “Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures –Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (1996).

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-ICT1	To seek to provide public wi-fi zones in Mullingar.
O-ICT2	To liaise with the ESB to investigate and encourage where possible the ducting and underground routing of overhead powerlines in Mullingar in tandem with other work programmes, such as road resurfacing and footpath construction works.
O-ICT3	To maintain a register of approved telecommunications structures in Mullingar, in cooperation with operators.

Chapter 7 *Natural Heritage, Built Heritage & Archaeology*



7 NATURAL HERITAGE, BUILT HERITAGE & ARCHAEOLOGY

AIM: To protect, conserve, manage and enhance the natural and built heritage of Mullingar and its environs, including its biodiversity, geology and archaeology and achieve a balance between conservation and development for existing and future residents of and visitors to the town.

7.1 NATURAL HERITAGE IN MULLINGAR

Mullingar, whilst an urban settlement, supports a range of diverse and species rich habitats, including grasslands, hedgerows, urban streams, canals and gardens. In the urban landscape birds nest in trees, hedges and under the eaves of buildings. Bats roost in buildings, trees and underneath old bridges in towns. Hedgerows support mammals, insects and wild flowering plants. Waterways support otters, frogs, newts, insects, waterfowl and fish. The value of these habitats includes amenity and the provision of ecological corridors, allowing movement of wildlife through the area. The natural heritage and biodiversity of Mullingar provides a valued physical, social and economic asset for those living and visiting the area and is integral to the image of the town.

The most valuable wildlife habitats / corridors around Mullingar include the Royal Canal and canal corridors, the River Brosna, the railway corridors and the Town Park.

7.2 DESIGNATED NATURAL HERITAGE SITES

Although there are no sites protected under the Habitats and Birds Directive within the Mullingar Local Area Plan boundary, the peripheral zone outside the town is rich in natural heritage. Mullingar is located mid way between Lough Owel, to the north and Lough Ennell to the south. Both lakes are designated Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. With the exception of Lough Carra in County Mayo, Lough Owel is the best example of a large, spring-fed calcareous lake

in the country and is one of the most important Midland lakes for wintering waterfowl, such as the shoveler and the coot. Lough Ennell is of significance as a highly productive lake which supports a rich variety of lower plant and invertebrate species. Its lakeshore habitats, which include alkaline fen, a habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive, support a diverse flora. Regard shall be had to the policies set out in Chapter 5 and 6 of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 in relation to the above designated sites. Belvedere House and Gardens on Lough Ennell is also an important habitats site.

In addition to the foregoing, there is a cluster of smaller lakes located to the north-east of the town, namely Lough Sheever, Slevins Lough and Lough Drin. It is Council policy to improve connectivity and linkages between these lakes and the town centre. This is to be achieved through the creation of green corridors with pedestrian and cycle links.

7.3 NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS

Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are heritage sites that were designated for the protection of flora, fauna, habitats and geological sites of national importance. Management of NHAs is guided by planning policy and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000. Within the Mullingar Local Area Plan boundary, the Royal Canal is designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (Site Ref. 002103). The Royal Canal NHA comprises the central channel and the banks on either side of it. The main water supply is from Lough Owel (NHA) via a feeder channel into the canal at Mullingar. Waterways Ireland is responsible for the maintenance of the canal and towpaths. A number of different habitats are found within the canal boundaries - hedgerow, tall herbs, calcareous grassland, reed fringe, open water, scrub and woodland. The vegetation of the towpath is usually dominated by grass species. Policies in relation to the Royal Canal are listed in Section 6.10 of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020. Recently, walking and cycling routes have been

developed along the canal within the town and environs.

7.4 LOCAL SITES OF BIODIVERSITY VALUE AND NON DESIGNATED SITES

There are several important wildlife habitats in Mullingar that do not meet the criteria for designations as an NHA, but are important on a county or local basis and act as stepping stones in a wider ecological network. These include rivers and river banks, ponds, railway corridors, canal paths, small woods and hedgerows which are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species. Article 10 of the Habitats Directive states that Member States shall endeavour in their land use planning and development policies to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.

7.5 NATURAL HERITAGE POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-NH1	To protect the natural environment of Mullingar especially along the wildlife corridors of the Royal Canal, the Brosna River and the railway line, restricting development that will have a negative impact on the character and setting of these Natural Heritage Areas.
P-NH2	To promote increased understanding and awareness of the town’s natural heritage and local biodiversity.
P-NH3	To protect and conserve Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA).
P-NH4	To conserve the existing wide range of flora, fauna and wildlife habitats in Mullingar, through the preservation of ecological corridors and ecological networks, i.e. habitats that link the areas of high nature conservation value.
P-NH5	To promote the provision of green infrastructure in Mullingar, in the form of linear parks, nature trails,

	wildlife corridors and urban woodlands, which enhance linkages between areas of biodiversity value.
P-NH6	To conserve and protect all designated sites within and adjacent to the plan area including the Royal Canal, Natura 2000 sites, Natural Heritage Areas (NHA) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) and local biodiversity areas.
P-NH7	To identify, protect, conserve, and enhance, wherever possible, wildlife habitats and species of local importance, not otherwise protected by legislation. Such habitats may include woodland, river, grassland areas and field boundaries (hedgerows, stone walls and ditches). Such features form part of a network of habitats and corridors, which allow wildlife to exist and flourish. Once a locally important habitat has been identified it shall be surveyed to establish its significance and a site-specific Conservation Plan prepared to establish Development Guidelines for the area.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-NH1	To continue the programme of tree planting and environmental enhancement throughout the town.
O-NH2	To prepare a Local Biodiversity Plan for Mullingar.
O-NH3	To identify and map sites of local nature conservation interest in the town and environs.
O-NH4	To provide for a wildlife corridor along the existing railway lines in the town, and protect the ecological value of the existing trees and hedgerows located therein, including minimising the spread of invasive species.
O-NH5	To include a biodiversity area within the proposed amenity garden at Gaol Hill.

7.6 WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES

Wetlands are associated with rivers and streams and include areas of marsh, fen, or water, and comprise habitats for unusual communities of species that can survive in aquatic and semi-aquatic conditions. Wetlands reduce the flow of pollutants to both surface water and ground water and can reduce the impacts of flooding. Increased drainage or flooding can cause significant change in habitat value and species diversity.

The Water Framework Directive provides for the protection of wetlands. These elements also function as ecological corridors that connect related habitats and designated sites which enable species to move from place to place.

The River Brosna is the most important water course in the town. It flows from Lough Owel in a south-south-westerly direction through the town into Lough Ennell. The river is fed by a number of tributaries within the Robinstown area. A corridor has been designated along the river through this area, in order to protect its amenity and habitat value. The area adjoining the River Brosna to the south of the town, comprises of benefitting lands and is of particular importance by reason of its wetlands habitats.



Royal Canal Footpath

7.7 WETLANDS & WATERCOURSES
POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-WW1	To protect and enhance the visual, recreational, environmental (flora/fauna/biodiversity) flood protection and amenity value of the River Brosna, including its network of streams, drains and floodplain.
P-WW2	To maintain or enhance biodiversity richness by protecting rivers, stream corridors and valleys by reserving riparian zones/ecological corridors, maintaining them free from inappropriate development, discouraging culverting or realignment, and promoting natural flood functions.
P-WW3	To protect where practicable, existing streams and watercourses and wetlands located on land zoned for development and incorporate them within the overall design for the area, thereby contributing to and connecting into an overall green network for the town.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-WW1	To require that run off from proposed developments does not result in a deterioration of downstream watercourses or habitats.
O-WW2	To assess development proposals which involve lighting along water courses, rivers, streams and canal corridors, in order to mitigate impacts of lighting on bats and other species.

7.8 TREES, WOODLANDS AND
HEDGEROWS

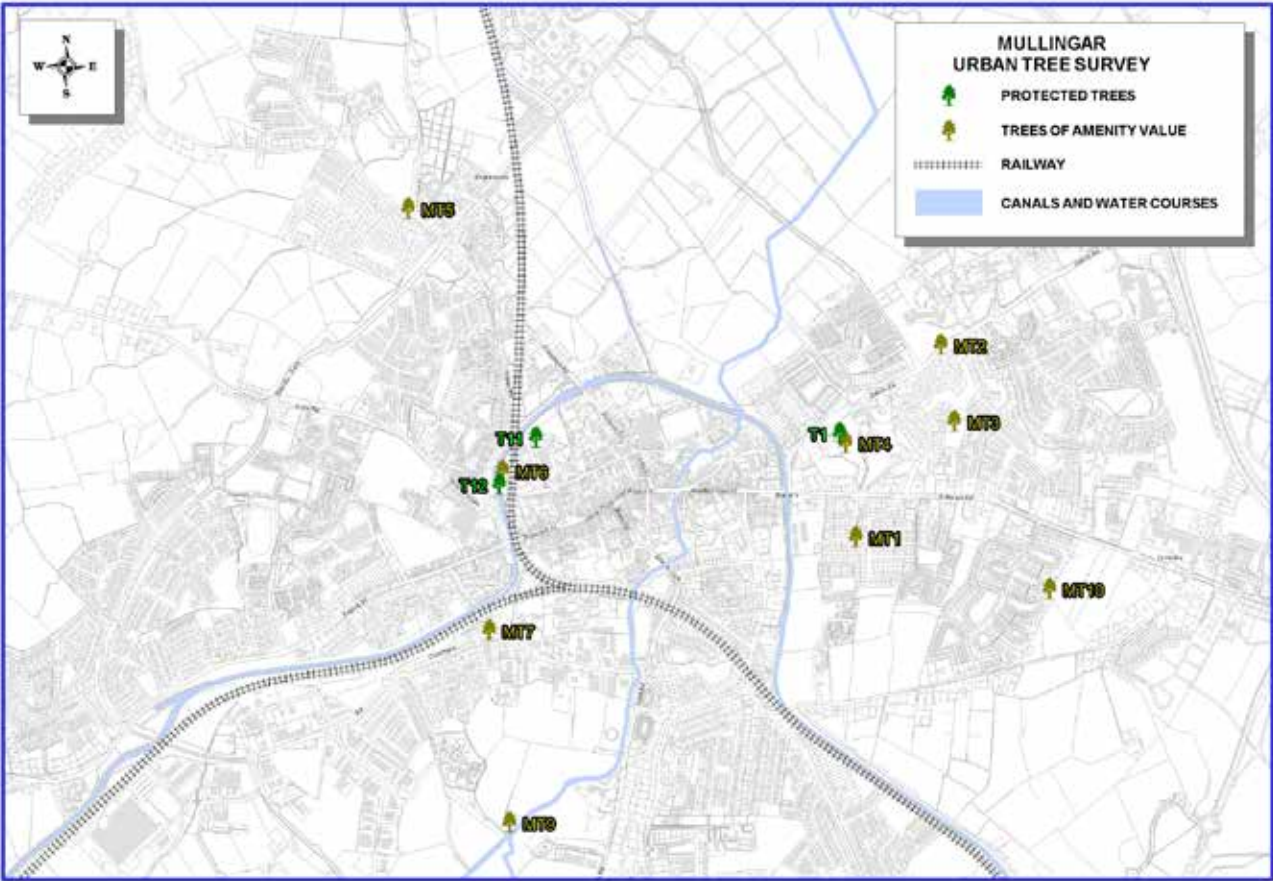
Trees and hedgerows constitute an important natural and historic resource, given their contribution to landscape quality, their ecological importance as wildlife habitats and historical significance as townland and field boundaries. In urban settings, trees and groups of trees can contribute significantly to

the local landscape/townscape and in the successful integration of new buildings into the landscape.

Mullingar contains some large trees and groups of trees of considerable heritage value, which enhance the urban fabric of the town, e.g. mature trees at Bellview. A survey of existing trees was undertaken in the town. Appendix 3 of the plan lists the significance and function of said trees.

Map 7.1 identifies the location of trees which are proposed to be subject to a Tree Preservation Order, in addition to trees deemed to be of special merit in the town. It is the Council’s intention to safeguard the aforementioned trees and identify further trees within the town worthy of a Tree Preservation Order. The Council also acknowledges the importance and value of tree planting particularly along the approach roads into town, and therefore will undertake a tree planting scheme along the principal roads, to create a visually appealing approach to the town befitting of its status as a Gateway Town. Individual Trees and lines of trees contained in kerbside margins contribute significantly to the amenity and biodiversity value of the town.

Map 7.1 Urban Tree Survey



7.9 TREES, WOODLANDS & HEDGEROWS
POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-TWH1	To protect, preserve and ensure the effective management of trees and groups of trees of merit in the town, including those considered to be of special amenity value listed in Appendix 3 of this plan.
P-TWH2	To prohibit development where it is likely that damage would be caused either to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order or, to those which have a particular local amenity or nature conservation value. Development that requires the felling of mature trees of amenity value, conservation value or special interest, notwithstanding the fact that they may not be listed in this plan will be discouraged.
P-TWH3	To provide continuity of tree cover and tree planting throughout the town, promoting the use of native species where possible, with varied species and age distribution.
P-TWH4	To preserve and enhance the amenity and biodiversity value of the Town by preserving as far as possible trees, woodlands and hedgerows.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-TR1	To continue the programme of tree planting and environmental enhancement throughout the Town.
O-TR2	To identify further trees within the Town worthy of a Tree Preservation Order.
O-TR3	To promote the Native Woodland and Neighbour Wood Schemes and other initiatives that aim to establish and enhance woodlands for recreational and wildlife benefits.

O-TR4	To adhere to the provisions of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 in prohibiting hedge cutting during the bird nesting season from March 1st to August 31st.
O-TR5	To protect existing trees and hedgerows along the approach roads into Mullingar and to prepare and implement a tree planting scheme, to include additional planting within kerbside margins, to visually enhance the approaches into the town, subject to resource availability.
O-TR6	To prepare and implement a planting scheme along the canal corridor to the west of the town, in consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and subject to habitats and environmental requirements.



Mullingar Railway Buildings

7.10 BUILT HERITAGE

The architectural heritage of Mullingar is a unique and irreplaceable expression of the richness and diversity of its past. At as early a stage as is possible in the process of designing

for change, emphasis should be put on identifying and holding on to the inherent contribution that a building, group of buildings and/or spaces between them make to the unique character of Mullingar.

7.10.1 Policy context

The statutory framework for the protection of built heritage centred on Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation areas is set out in Part IV of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended. Comprehensive statutory guidance was published in 2004 in the form of Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities which will form a critical element in the consideration of any proposal with the potential to impact on both the designated and undesignated architectural heritage of Mullingar.

7.10.2 Historical influences

A majority of the buildings in the centre of Mullingar date from the eighteenth and nineteenth century set in a typical Irish town layout which contributes significantly to the town's distinctive and appealing character by virtue of their form, layout and scale and bulk. The limited extent of major intervention to the building stock on the principal and secondary streets has helped to retain its vibrant market town character incorporating a significant residential component.

The following description of Mullingar from a 1993 publication remains substantially relevant and highlights the success of planning policy in the intervening 20 year period in protecting the irreplaceable asset which is our built heritage.

“...Mullingar has still the appearance of a mid-Victorian commercial centre, one long main shopping thoroughfare running eastward from Dominick Street on the west to, through Oliver Plunket Street to Pearse Street. Welcome breathing space is provided by the small Market Square at the junction of Plunket and Pearse Streets and also at the junction of Plunket and Dominic Streets, where the latter broadens out into a square of sorts, bounded by the towns

two principal nineteenth century banks. The main twentieth century addition to Mullingar and undoubtedly its most conspicuous landmark, is the Cathedral of Christ the King whose assertive twin-towered silhouette dominates the skyline for miles around.¹”

Section 1.6 of the introduction to the Mullingar Local Area Plan provides a summary of the historical development of Mullingar.

7.10.3 Urban Grain and Plot Character

The urban grain and plot character within the area of the Local Area Plan varies in Mullingar it falls into four distinct groups:

- (1) Traditional mixed commercial and residential street frontage development to the centre of town. This is a critical element of the core character of Mullingar. Further detail can be found in *Irish Historical Town Atlas No. 5 Mullingar* Royal Irish Academy 1992.
- (2) Social housing in Mullingar of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century provides another form of development substantially characterised by its urban grain and plot character. Further detail can be found in *The Allotments Used To Be Here - A History Of County Council Housing in Westmeath*. Tim Durham 2011
- (3) There are a number of large institutional land uses with large buildings and complexes on extensive sites such as the St. Loman's Hospital, Christ the King Cathedral, and Columb Military Barracks.
- (4) Modern housing developments characterised by detached and semi detached housing in standardised layouts have dominated recent development within the Local Area Plan boundary.

¹ Buildings of Ireland, North Leinster, Christine Casey and Alistar Rowan 1993.

7.10.4 Vernacular buildings and structures

The everyday vernacular structures of Mullingar in their scale, bulk and form which may often be overlooked, make a significant contribution to the character of Mullingar. Of particular note are housing on approaches to the town centre on Patrick Street, Springfield, and in the area of Fair Green. Policy and objectives relating to vernacular buildings and structures are set out in Chapter 8 of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020, which are fully applicable within the Mullingar Local Area Plan.

7.10.5 Townscape

Mullingar's townscape has evolved over a long period in reaction to the changing form and function of individual areas, structures, public and private spaces and the setting of the town within the wider landscape. Close and wider views within, into and out of Mullingar all contribute to the townscape and many are fundamental aspects of Mullingar's unique character.

The public domain contributes strongly to character including ground plane, wirescape, street furniture, public art, parking, trees and other planting. Each of these aspects of townscape have improved in recent years, however areas remain where coordinated concentrated inputs have the potential to yield substantial townscape improvements, making Mullingar an increasingly coherent attractive place to live work and visit.

7.10.6 Built Heritage Mullingar

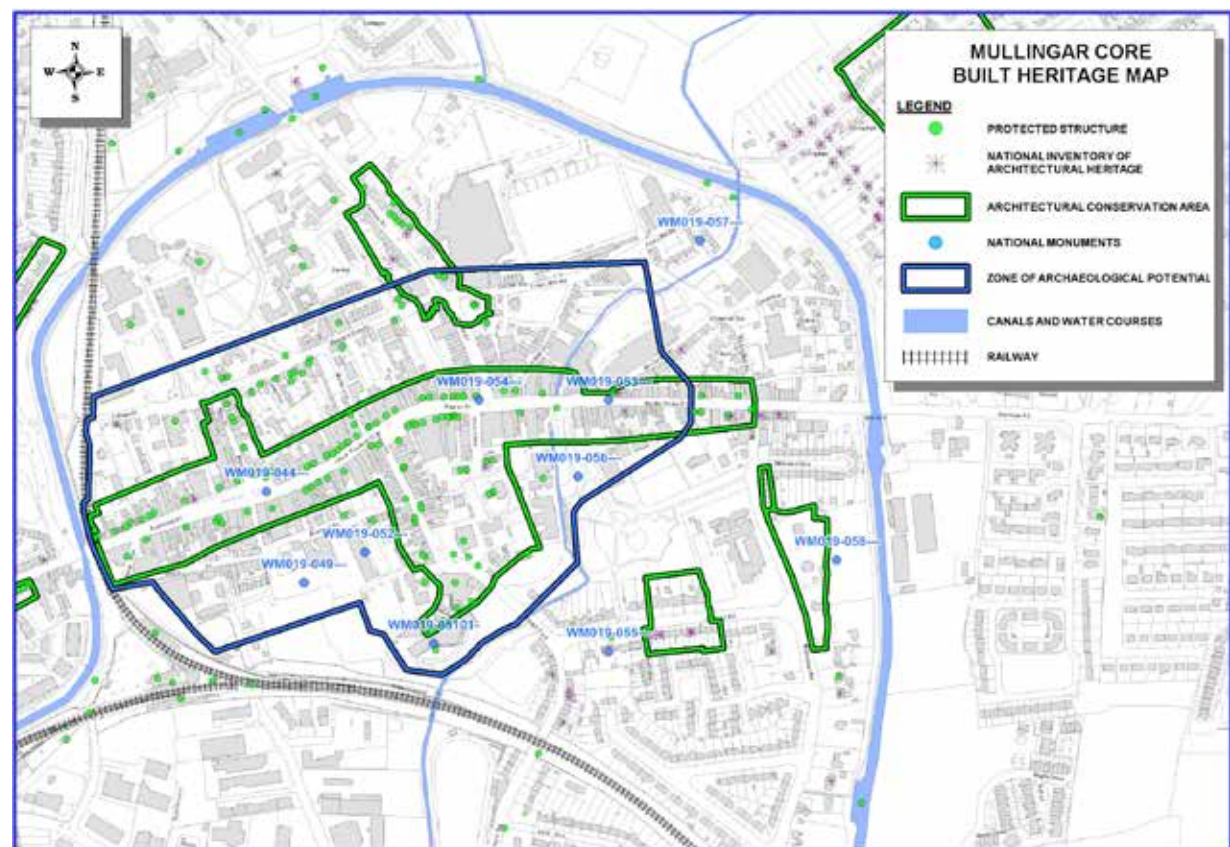
There are 56 Protected Structures set out in the Westmeath County Development Plan 2008-2014 within the Mullingar Local Area Plan boundary, 319 records on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), and six Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) located in the Town Centre as follows:

- Ginnell Terrace
- Millmount Road
- Fairview Terrace
- part of Auburn Road
- St. Brigid's Terrace
- Harbour Street.

Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas are dealt with comprehensively in Chapter 5 and Volume 5 of the County Development Plan 2014-2020.



Map 7.2 Built Heritage in the Town Centre



7.10.7 Specific Built Heritage issues relating to St. Loman's Hospital & Columb Barracks

The most significant issues relating to Mullingar's built heritage pertain to St. Loman's Hospital building and Columb Military Barracks. Both of these structures/complexes have been continuously used for the purposes for which they were built for 157 and 198 years ago respectively, and are now facing an uncertain future with no viable future uses immediately evident.

The prospect of such major elements of Mullingar's architectural, historical and social heritage, falling into disuse and the associated prospect of dereliction presents a significant challenge to all stakeholders.

The uncertain future of these structures present particular challenges for the owners of these important protected and proposed Protected Structures arising from the duties imposed under Section 58 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended, to protect structures from endangerment. In the case of St. Loman's Hospital Building and Columb Barracks, this shall also assist in the fulfilment of the requirement to maximise the use of State assets, in this case by endeavouring to ensure that these State assets are not allowed to deteriorate while an appropriate new use is being sought.

7.10.8 Building Conservation

In order to address the obligations imposed on the owners of Protected Structures and to the extensive and intricate nature of the building complexes in question, Westmeath County Council shall require the owners to take the following initial steps in identification of suitable future uses:

- assemble all available drawings and other archival material inventories
- carry out a basic condition survey in order to identify threats to the building fabric
- prepare a mothballing plan to address each of the risks to the fabric
- prepare a monitoring programme until such a time as a viable future use is identified
- maintain a secure perimeter of each site and buildings to ensure that no illegal trespass takes place.

Westmeath County Council will facilitate the owners in the above exercise.

7.10.9 Regeneration & Future Uses

The Council will cooperate with the relevant landowners, in conjunction with investors and government agencies, in the preparation of Regeneration Plans for both Columb Barracks and attendant lands and St. Loman’s Hospital and attendant grounds, in order to investigate future options with a view to securing viable alternative uses and the creation of sustainable employment opportunities. In this context, the areas concerned are being designated in this plan as Major Regeneration Opportunity Sites, with supporting policies and objectives to secure their appropriate re-use and regeneration. Regeneration/re-development proposals should be formulated in the context of an agreed overall framework, in order to guide and secure the integrated redevelopment of these areas. The potential for development or reuse within the spheres of education and research, training, culture, arts and music, enterprise, state services, tourism, sport and recreation should be further explored. Any potential alternative uses within these complexes shall have regard to the requirement to respect the

architectural and cultural heritage value and be compatible with uses in the area. Given the status, scale and heritage value of both sites, the potential for the establishment of a national institute or service centre also exists. In any redevelopment or regeneration proposal for either site, there should be a record of former use in a location which is accessible to the public.

With regard to St. Loman’s Hospital Opportunity Site, a small area of this site is subject to Pluvial Flood Risk, which has been addressed in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and addendum thereto. In the development of this area, due regard shall be had to the recommendations of the SFRA and addendum, insofar as development should be restricted to non-vulnerable uses.

7.11 BUILT HERITAGE POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-BH1	To protect and conserve buildings, structures and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures and to resist the demolition of such structures, in accordance with ‘Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2004).
P-BH2	To prevent forms of development that would be injurious to the town’s architectural and archaeological heritage.
P-BH3	To preserve and protect Mullingar’s built environment in terms of streetscapes, individual buildings and features of historical, architectural or artistic interest
P-BH4	To resist the demolition of vernacular architecture of historical, cultural and aesthetic merit, which make a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of the local streetscape.
P-BH5	To secure the protection of the architectural heritage value and

	historic built fabric of Columb Barracks and St. Loman’s Hospital, in accordance with the provisions of Part IV of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended.
P- BH6	To promote and facilitate the regeneration and redevelopment of Columb Barracks and St. Loman’s Hospital, in a manner consistent with an agreed framework for these strategic sites.
P- BH7	To protect the character of designated Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) including the public realm area associated therewith and to resist inappropriate development that would detract from the heritage value of these areas.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O- BH1	To cooperate in the preparation of a Regeneration Plan to secure appropriate viable alternative uses for Columb Barracks and St. Loman’s Hospital, in consultation with landowners, stakeholders and relevant Government Departments, in consultation with the Architectural Heritage Advisory Service.
O- BH2	To undertake a review of signage in the town centre, in order to visually enhance the quality of the local streetscape.

7.12 ARCHAEOLOGY

The Archaeological heritage of Mullingar is protected by the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 and includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, all recorded monuments and their contexts. The excavation or removal of an archaeological site or feature can only be carried out under licence by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht as outlined in the National Monuments legislation.

National monuments are deemed to be of national importance and therefore worthy of State protection. Mullingar boasts a unique archaeological heritage that provides the Town with resources of tremendous social, educational, recreational, and aesthetic value-urban archaeology zone, monastic sites, policies and objectives. The Urban Archaeological Survey for County Westmeath conducted in 1985 identifies a ‘Zone of Archaeological Potential’ within the Town. The extent of the Zone of Archaeological Potential is indicated in Map 7.2. There are 25 Recorded Monuments within the LAP boundary. Reputedly, there are five monastic sites within the town.

7.13 ARCHAEOLOGY POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P- ARC1-	To protect the archaeological heritage of the town in accordance with Departmental Guidelines.
P- ARC2	To strictly control development that may be detrimental to any feature or site of archaeological significance or that may seriously detract from the interpretation and setting of these sites.
P- ARC3	To protect and retain surviving medieval plots and street patterns in the town.
P- ARC4	To ensure that all sites of archaeological potential are protected from development that may injure any potentially important archaeological features or sites.

It is an objective of the Council:	
O-ARC1	To endeavour to ensure that all reports, excavation results and other information relating to archaeological heritage be made available for public viewing at libraries and create and maintain a database of same.
O-ARC2	To provide guidance to developers in relation to proposals for development that may potentially impact upon the archaeological heritage, drawing their attention to additional published government guidance available such as ‘Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage’ (1999)
O-ARC3	To require, where appropriate, that an Archaeological Assessment be carried out by a suitably qualified person prior to the commencement of any activity that may impact upon the archaeological heritage.
O-ARC4	To ensure that any development taking place either above or below ground which is within, adjacent to, or might affect sites and features of historical and archaeological interest shall respect the character of the archaeological site and its setting and shall be sited and designed with care for the character of the site and setting.
O-ARC5	To impose conditions on development that will affect sites of archaeological potential to ensure that appropriate measures are taken for the identification and mitigation of the archaeological impacts, including a licensed excavation and recording of remains prior to commencement of development where appropriate.

O-ARC6	To map existing monastic sites and to examine in consultation with the National Monuments Advisory Council, the potential for establishing a monastic trail in Mullingar.
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Chapter 8 *Framework Plans*



8. FRAMEWORK PLANS

This Chapter comprises detailed Framework Plans for three distinct areas in the town namely:

- Robinstown to the north,
- Ardmore/ Marlinstown to the south east and
- Mullingar South to the south.

These Framework Plans are based upon and informed by detailed Local Area Plans which were previously undertaken for each of the areas. Framework Plans seek to guide and secure the sustainable urban expansion of individual areas of the town. They provide a movement and open space structure around which more integrated patterns of development can take place. The intention of this plan-led approach is also to ensure that proper provision is made for community, recreational and employment needs, in order to support the range of residential typologies which are prescribed.

The Strategies and Guidelines in this section of the plan are generally area specific and should be read in conjunction with the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020 and other relevant policies and objectives contained in this Local Area Plan. Unless otherwise stated, the general Development Plan policies and Development Control objectives still apply to the area.

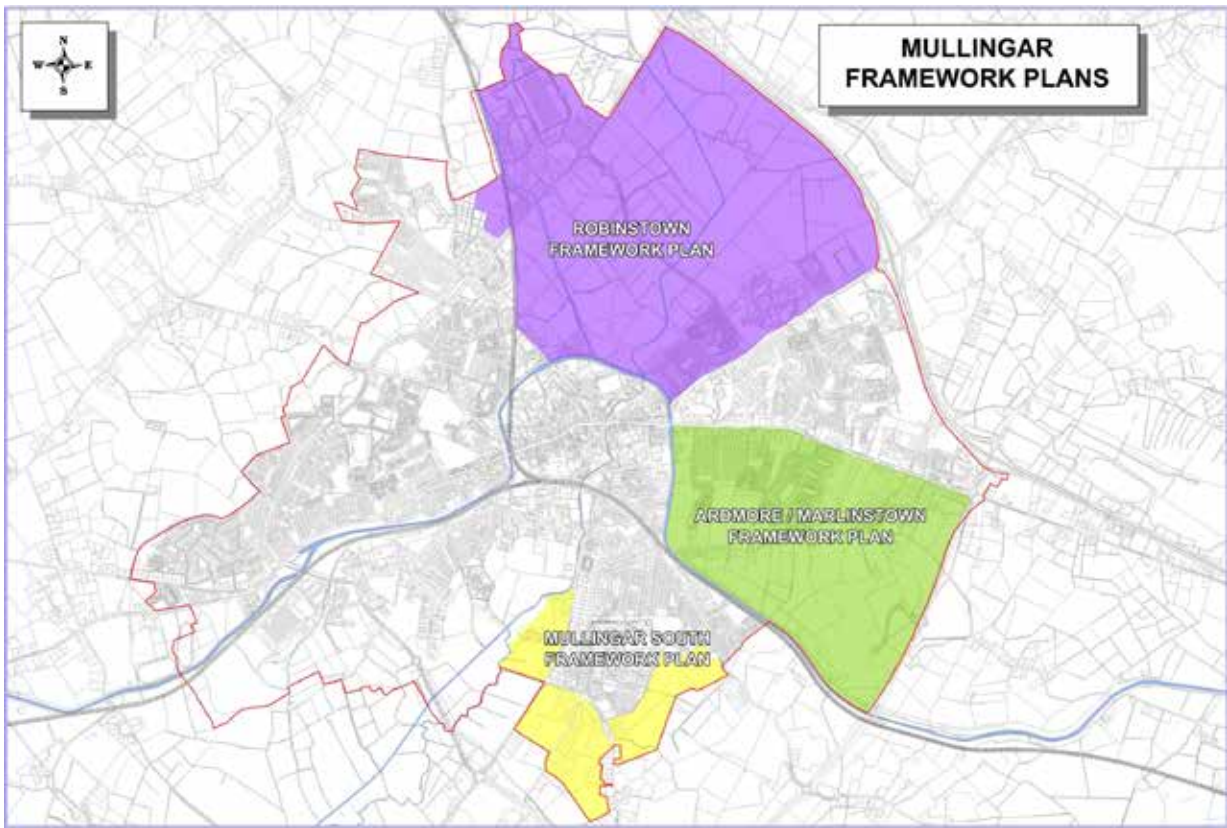
Because of the scale and nature of development envisaged in the Framework Plans, implementation will take place on a phased basis, which will extend beyond the life of this Local Area Plan. Phased implementation ensures that physical and social infrastructure is provided in tandem with residential and other development and also that sequential patterns of development are promoted to serve predicted levels of growth.

A core component of each of the Framework Plans is the promotion of high quality design. A key design aim in delivering sustainable communities is to

reduce as far as possible the need to travel by facilitating mixed use development and by promoting the efficient use of land and of investment in public transport.

The companion design manual “Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas”, May 2009, is recommended as a basic reference which shall inform the design process within each of the Framework Areas.

Density requirements shall be within the range specified in “Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas”, May 2009. The Land Use Zoning Objectives for the areas concerned in the Framework Plans is indicated in Volume 2 and this zoning objective shall take precedence over the Framework Plan in the event of any conflict arising.



Map 8.1 Framework Plans Mullingar

8.1 FRAMEWORK PLANS POLICIES & OBJECTIVES

It is a policy of the Council:	
P-FP1	To secure the integrated and phased development of the Robinstown,Ardmore/Marlinstown and Mullingar South areas.
P-FP2	To ensure that development of the urban expansion areas of Robinstown,Ardmore/Marlinstown and Mullingar South is guided by Framework Plans for these areas.
P-FP3	To secure major enhancement of sporting and recreational provision in the Robinstown area, to serve the Town.
P-FP4	To support the principles of social inclusion and social integration and provide for a diverse range of household types, age groups and a mix of tenures in the development of the Framework Areas.

P-FP5	To formulate and apply policies which address the issue of Flood Risk within each of the Framework Areas.
P-FP6	To secure the development of areas designated for major employment creation within the Framework areas of Ardmore/Marlinstown and Robinstown.
P-FP7	To provide for the establishment of an integrated movement network serving all modes with connectivity to the town centre and adjoining areas.
P-FP8	To provide for the establishment of an integrated open space network including a hierarchy of open space provision within the Framework Plan Areas, which fully integrate with the Royal Canal and River Brosna corridors and greenways.

P-FP9	To protect the natural and man made amenities and heritage value of the area including recorded monuments, archaeology, built heritage and natural heritage.
P-FP10	To protect and enhance the existing landscape structure by providing a new framework of linked green routes and spaces.
P-FP11	To protect and enhance the Brosna River and Lacey's Canal with a buffer of open space and ecological space for passive use, and to provide connections to the Royal Canal, the River Brosna and Lacey's Canal.
P-FP12	To provide an integrated and permeable network of routes and spaces, maximising linkages within the area and to surrounding areas.
P-FP13	To provide a network of efficient, attractive and safe walking routes that are integrated with other movement networks.
P-FP14	To encourage the use of cycles through provision of dedicated cycle lanes on main routes, while also providing for attractive and safe cycling on secondary routes.
P-FP15	To provide a new urban structure which reflects the role and position in the context of the area and the town as a whole.
P-FP16	To achieve sustainable densities of development in order to achieve a critical mass of households that will support local services and facilities.
P-FP17	To assess development proposals in accordance with the Planning and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 and to have regard to the recommendations of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and addendum thereto into Development Management within the plan area.

It is an objective of the Council:

O-FP1	To secure the provision of appropriate infrastructure, services and community facilities, including Primary and Secondary Schools to support the phased development of Robinstown, Ardmore/Marlinstown and Mullingar South Areas.
O-FP2	To ensure that future residential development proposals are in accordance with the principles set out in the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government's Sustainable Residential Development in "Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide for Planning Authority" (2009), or any updated version of these documents published during the lifetime of the plan.
O-FP3	To ensure the development of sustainable residential communities through the promotion of innovative high quality building design and layouts, which provide for a high level of permeability, accessibility and connectivity to the existing built environment, services and facilities.
O-FP4	To provide for a range of community and recreational facilities within each Framework Area to complement residential development.
O-FP5	To promote public transport provision to serve these Framework Plan areas and to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists in the design of movement networks.
O-FP6	To provide for a range of passive and active recreational facilities based on an integrated landscape and open space structure.
O-FP7	To consult the National Parks and Wildlife Service prior to carrying out an Ecological Impact and/or Appropriate Assessment for development associated with the provision of the proposed Green links, given the cumulative effect of creating this integrated green network on the ecology and environment of the river and canal.

O-FP8	To undertake a land use and sustainable movement study for Mullingar town, in order to examine transportation issues generally including access and circulation, public transport /bus routes and related land use and traffic generation matters.
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8.2 ARDMORE / MARLINSTOWN FRAMEWORK PLAN

Description of Framework Plan

This Framework Plan represents an integrated strategy for the physical, social and economic development of the south-eastern sector of Mullingar, consistent with the protection and enhancement of its amenities.

The Framework Plan Area is located on the south-eastern edge of Mullingar. Over half of the area has been already developed or serviced. Both social and basic road infrastructure are inadequate to cater for any further significant development in this area. Therefore an integrated approach is required to ensure that future development will be complimented by necessary support infrastructure, services and amenities.

8.3 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, ARDMORE/MARLINSTOWN, FRAMEWORK PLAN

8.3.1 Strategic Location

Situated south of the old Dublin Road and bisected north and south by the narrow suburbanised Ardmore Road (L-1133-0), the plan area lies to the south-eastern edge of Mullingar Town and is bounded physically by the N52 Bypass to the east and south east and the Royal Canal to the west and south-west. The area covers approximately 214ha of land, equating to about 27% of the physically developed area around Mullingar (approx. 775ha).

8.3.2 Geology

The bedrock in the Framework Plan Area is composed of two rock types: the Lucan Formation (otherwise known as Calp limestone, consisting of a bedded series of limestones and hard cherty beds), and Waulstorian Limestone (which consists of massive unbedded fossil rich muddy limestones).

8.3.3 Amenities

The area is bounded to the west and south by the Royal Canal. This is a designated Natural Heritage Area and an invaluable amenity for the Town area, along which strategic walking and cycling routes have been developed. External connections to surrounding streets/roads are not always clearly defined. It is an objective of this plan to enhance this unique amenity and ensure its valuable contribution to the new expansion area. In order to achieve this important objective, both the canal and its surrounding amenity should be fully integrated in any proposed new development.

There are no existing formal sports or recreational areas within the study area. These will have to be provided for the area as part of the Framework Plan.

8.3.4 Heritage

It is an objective of this Framework Plan to protect all recorded sites and monuments and promote their integration with the expansion area. Visible heritage mainly manifests itself with five National Recorded Monuments within the area, four of those occupying a promontory running north to south through the southern plan area, taking advantage of the high ground level. The five designated areas comprise four ringforts and one earthwork and are depicted in Volume 2. These existing ringforts and earthworks are historical amenities that form an intrinsic part of the landscape.

The list of Recorded National Monuments in the Ardmore/Marlinstown Area are as follows:

Monument Number	Townland	Classification
WM019-077	Ardmore	RINGFORT
WM019-078	Ardmore	EARTHWORK
WM019-079	Ardmore	RINGFORT
WM019-081	Ardmore	RINGFORT
WM019-082	Ardmore	RINGFORT

Table 8.1 Recorded National Monuments in the Ardmore/Marlinstown Framework Plan

8.3.5 Receiving Built Environment

The Ardmore Road has traditionally attracted one-off houses seeking a rural setting. The proximity of the Town Centre and the pace of growth have resulted in the area being partially absorbed by the natural expansion of the Town, with some housing estates now served by this road.

Much of the lands north of the Ardmore Road which have been developed, are for residential purposes at a medium-low density. Generally orientated inwards, these areas have little relationship with adjacent developments.

Apart from a housing estate at its northern end, the lands to the south of the Ardmore Road remain largely undeveloped. These lands, characterised by undulating fields and ring-forts, are rural in nature and currently used for agriculture. An electricity transmission sub-station is located at the western end.

To the east of the N52 Mullingar by-pass, the newly built and fully serviced IDA Business Park has the potential to accommodate high quality light industrial and technological companies. The design standard of the site should be of a high quality. It is an objective of this plan to reserve these lands for Technology and Innovation use. (Reference Character Area Map-Area No. 16). The area is conveniently located adjacent to the new N52 bypass. Due to its strategic location and design standard, it is anticipated that the area will attract high quality and low impact developments appropriate to the

technology and innovation zoning and also provide a critical high quality employment resource for residents and workers in the wider Mullingar Town area. The Framework Plan proposes the integration of this area with the remainder of the lands intended for development.

8.3.6 Urban Structure and Connectivity

Despite being surrounded by two major roads, the area has weak linkages and integration with the Town Centre and the rest of Mullingar.

The existing internal circulation network which relies largely upon the Ardmore Road will require significant improvement to serve the comprehensive development of the area envisaged. In order to address this deficiency, it is important to provide the area with a new transportation and movement network.

While the provision of additional road infrastructure may be seen to play a key part of this new structure; pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is equally important. This should connect the area both internally and with the rest of the quarters of the Town. The Royal Canal corridor affords a unique opportunity to further advance this important transport objective.

8.3.7 Road Infrastructure Ardmore Road

The plan area is bisected by the Ardmore Road, which runs east to west. Its capacity is impacted upon by extensive ribbon development and the levels of extraneous traffic which it carries. Its junctions with the surrounding network are constrained at Saunders Bridge and at the house-lined junction on Turnpike Crossroads. Some interim traffic calming has taken place. Carriageway widths are restricted and significant improvements are required to facilitate safe pedestrian and cycleway movements in the area.

It is an objective to provide a pedestrian walkway by means of a pedestrian bridge at Saunders Bridge to improve pedestrian safety at this location.

Eastern N52 bypass

The Eastern N52 bypass serves the plan area from the Dublin Road roundabout, crossing over the canal and the railway line. It links with the Western C-link, via the Clonmore section, to provide full vehicular circulation of Mullingar in conjunction with the N4 relief road. The bypass forms the eastern boundary of the plan area and provides high quality access from the N4 and National route network to the Industrial zone. This route will ultimately provide an important access into the Framework Plan area. Access onto the bypass will be restricted to controlled junctions and roundabouts in accordance with Westmeath County Council and National Road Authority (NRA) policy.

8.3.8 Public Transport Provision

Apart from the Bus Éireann service operating along the Dublin Road, there is currently no public transport serving the Ardmore Road or Marlinstown Road.

It is an objective of Westmeath County Council to undertake a full Land Use and Sustainable Movement Strategy for the Mullingar area. This will examine transportation issues generally including, public transport/bus routes, primarily on the distributor routes throughout the town and related land uses.

8.3.9 Community Facilities

Traditionally there has been a strong community presence among the established residents located along the Ardmore Road. It is an objective of the plan to provide social and recreational facilities within all new developments to provide for residents, existing and new. While there is a range of social and recreational facilities within Mullingar Town, there is still a requirement to provide facilities within new neighbourhoods and such provision, within and adjacent to the new neighbourhood centre is an objective of this Framework Plan.

8.3.10 Childcare and Educational Provision

Adequate childcare and primary educational facilities within walking or cycling distances are fundamental to the development of any sustainable community. Therefore, it is imperative to plan for the future provision of such critical infrastructure.

The plan area is deficient in levels of provision of childcare and educational facilities within walking distance to cope with the forecasted increase in population. There is currently a childcare facility operating from a dwelling on the Ardmore Road.

8.3.11 Retail Provision

The area relies on external retail provision for both convenience and comparison goods. Convenience retail outlets are located on the Dublin Road at Westmeath Motors.

It is policy of the Planning Authority that the Town Centre will sustain its position as the dominant retail centre. It is anticipated that the plan area will rely on this retail provision for comparison goods and that retail provision within the area shall be by way of neighbourhood facilities.

An adequate provision of convenience goods, including a range of local shops, located within walking distance, is required to facilitate the proper development of the plan area. This will be provided within the new neighbourhood centre.

8.3.12 Employment

Apart from the major employment centres including Imperial Tobacco and Mullingar Park Hotel, both which lie outside but adjacent to the boundaries of the Framework Area, the plan area is relatively undeveloped at present in terms of employment provision. While the development of the IDA Park as a major employment centre will serve Mullingar and its catchment, the intention of the plan is that the IDA Park will also contribute significantly to the creation of a more sustainable living/ working environment in

the area, with reduced need to travel long distances for employment.

It is anticipated that further employment opportunities would arise from childcare, education, health and neighbourhood facilities in general.

8.4 AREA CAPACITY AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

8.4.1 General

This section follows on from the previous section which looked at the general context of the plan area. A forecast population will be obtained based on land availability and recommended densities.

8.4.2 Population Projections

It has been estimated that there are approximately 820 dwellings within the existing plan area. Using an average household size of 2.5 persons per household, it is estimated that there are approximately 2,050 persons residing in the area at present.

On the basis of an average density of 35 units per hectare, it is estimated that this area has the potential to provide approximately 1,750 new housing units, comprising a mix of housing types, the precise number will be determined by residential densities, including typology and mix. Densities will have regard to the existing pattern of development, the DoEHLG Guidelines, “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas”, 2009 and the need to achieve a critical mass of population to support the infrastructure requirements of the area, including public transport, neighbourhood shopping, schools, community facilities etc. Higher densities are envisaged in the centre of the development area.

On the basis of the estimated additional 1,750 households, (and applying a lower household size based on future trends), the overall potential population increase for the area, including established residents is of the order of 4,200 persons.

8.4.3 Open Space Requirements

On this basis of the estimated population the following open space recreational provision will be required:

- Outdoor recreation ‘playing’ space (15.6ha)
- Outdoor equipped playgrounds (1 to 2)
- Casual/informal play space within housing areas (2.6 – 3.0ha)

Community facilities are ideal locations for passive and recreational open space. Recreational space should be provided in close proximity to a neighbourhood centre and proposed primary school. The following facilities are recommended to be provided:

- 1 multipurpose grass pitch to host outdoor field sport
- 1 all-weather pitch to house training, hockey and soccer
- 2 courts to house five-a-side, tennis or basketball
- 1 playground/Childs play facility
- 1 pavilion to host changing rooms, ancillary office and stores

Westmeath County Council intends to significantly increase the provision of open space for the Town area through the provision of a sports complex and associated playing fields at Robinstown to the north of Mullingar Town approximately 1.3km from the plan area.

A key component of this plan in regard to open space, is the reservation of lands for a 7.03ha neighbourhood park in the centre of the area, adjacent to other key community facilities and integration of open space provision with the Royal Canal corridor.

8.4.4 Educational Requirements

Typically, approximately 200 persons per thousand of the population are of school-going age, 60% of which are at primary level and the remaining 40% at secondary level.

If an additional 4,200 persons were in the plan area, it is estimated that when completed approximately 840 additional

persons would potentially be of school-going age, 60% of whom would be at primary level and 40% at secondary level. This is in addition to an estimated approximately 410 children of school-going age who live already in the area.

The Council have had on-going discussions with the Department of Education and Science in relation to the reservation of suitable lands for a Primary School in the area. Arising from these discussions, a new Primary School is to be provided on a site on the Ardmore Road.

8.4.5 Childcare Facilities

In addition to resident population needs, the Ardmore/Marlinstown area will attract a number of young families and therefore will require adequate childcare facilities.

The precise levels of childcare provision will be estimated in consultation with service providers and Westmeath County Childcare Committee. The objective to provide childcare services and facilities in conjunction with new residential and industrial development at appropriate locations or as part of a community hub is a key objective of the plan. The Council will apply DEHLG Childcare Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001 to new residential estate developments applications.

8.4.6 Retail Requirements

The Ardmore/Marlinstown area will require adequate retail provision if a sustainable neighbourhood is to be developed. The Westmeath County Development Plan 2008-2014 Retail Hierarchy states that the Ardmore/Marlinstown area has a neighbourhood function and provides for the establishment of a new Neighbourhood Centre.

The essence of Neighbourhood Centres is that they serve quite localised catchment areas in a way which is convenient to the population served. In the context of peripheral or suburban Mullingar, the local catchment population required to justify the establishment of a Neighbourhood

Centre would be available as the area becomes fully developed.

8.4.7 Community Facilities

Community facilities such as Primary Schools, youth facilities, medical facilities and open space make important contributions to neighbourhood life and will need to be provided as part of the overall development of the Ardmore/Marlinstown area.

8.4.8 Summary of Issues

The identified issues for the area include the lack of an identifiable centre, dispersed nature of development, the lack of physical integration between component areas, the need for integrated and effective movement network, the need for improved open space provision, and the absence of community and social infrastructure. The provision of a Primary School in the area is being advanced by the Local Authority in conjunction with the Department of Education and Science.

8.5 FRAMEWORK FOR MASTERPLAN AREA

The planning objectives which are outlined below are intended to help provide the framework for the integrated development of the Ardmore/Marlinstown area over the plan period and beyond.

8.5.1 Framework For Masterplan Area, Policies, Objectives And Development Controls

The Framework indicates the most appropriate and optimal means of developing the plan area in a sustainable manner. A sustainable urban quarter implies a mixture of uses to accommodate needs such as local shops, offices, schools, health centres, educational and recreational areas, all within a permeable urban structure.

8.5.2 Plan Concept & Description

At the heart of the area, there will be a Neighbourhood Centre which will comprise a mixture of uses such as residential, employment, retail, commercial, community and recreational – all within

walking (c.10 minutes) distance. Primary Education needs of the new community are provided for in the plan layout.

The Framework Plan aims to achieve the appropriate built form envisaged for the area based around the natural landscape, established and committed development and open space requirements. It is not the intention of the Framework Plan to be overly prescriptive as to building design, layout or construction, but rather to guide the layout, landscape and urban structure to ensure its future viability and sustainability. Principles as regards urban form, open space and movement network are defined on the basis of individual Character Areas, details of which are set out in the Plan.

The backbone of the area will be formed by two new avenues running from north to south and from east to the centre of the Framework lands and the provision of a new Neighbourhood Park adjacent to a new Primary School, neighbourhood centre and other essential community facilities. The new north south road will link the old Dublin Road with the Russellstown Road at Boardstown and the second one will link the N-52 bypass to the east with the new north-south avenue. It is proposed that the plan area will pivot around this neighbourhood centre and school. A network of interconnected streets emanating from this core is envisaged.

The neighbourhood will be further enhanced with the provision of open space along the Royal Canal, which will continue along the railway line and will link the new development area to the town centre.

The plan identifies a clear framework of roads, services, open space, and specific uses in each area, which should be followed. The plan also prescribes urban design and place making principles for the area which are critical to the successful implementation.

8.6 TRANSPORTATION AND MOVEMENT

8.6.1 Road Infrastructure:

The plan provides a hierarchy of avenues and streets for the movement and transportation of people within this area. The main avenues will be wide enough to accommodate a sharing of road space for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists ensuring the use of several modes of transport.

It is recommended that junctions will be of a design to encourage lower speeds and to allow for the safe movement of the more vulnerable road users. In order for this to work safely, vehicular speeds must be kept low.

On roads in the vicinity of the school, it is recommended that the Council assign a special speed limit of 30kph, in accordance with Guidelines issued by the Department of Transport and Sport. In other cases raised junction tables may be provided to slow traffic and to provide easier crossing conditions for pedestrians and mobility impaired.

Access from N52 to the development area shall be provided solely from the existing roundabout. All planning applications for development accessing off the N52, via this roundabout shall be accompanied by a Transport and Traffic Assessment.

Where development proposals are brought forward within the zone of influence of existing National roads or of planned new National roads, the developer shall identify and implement noise mitigation measures. These measures shall be in accordance with the requirements of S.I. No. 140 of the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006, and the costs of implementing same shall be borne by the developer.

The Department of Transport's 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets' (DMURS)(2013), should be referred to as the guidance document to inform approaches to design of roads and the management of all modes of traffic

including pedestrian, cyclists, public transport and private car.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The Transportation and Movement network shall be developed in accordance with the Masterplan and a hierarchy of avenues and internal connected streets. Detailed design of road alignments shall be subject to a tree survey, to minimise impact upon existing trees and hedgerows.

Any new development within the area shall have to open up and provide linkages to surrounding developments as described in this Framework Plan.

Junctions shall be designed to encourage lower speeds and to allow for the safe movement of the more vulnerable road users (i.e. pedestrians, cyclists and mobility impaired people).

A speed limit of 30kph be introduced in the vicinity of Schools.

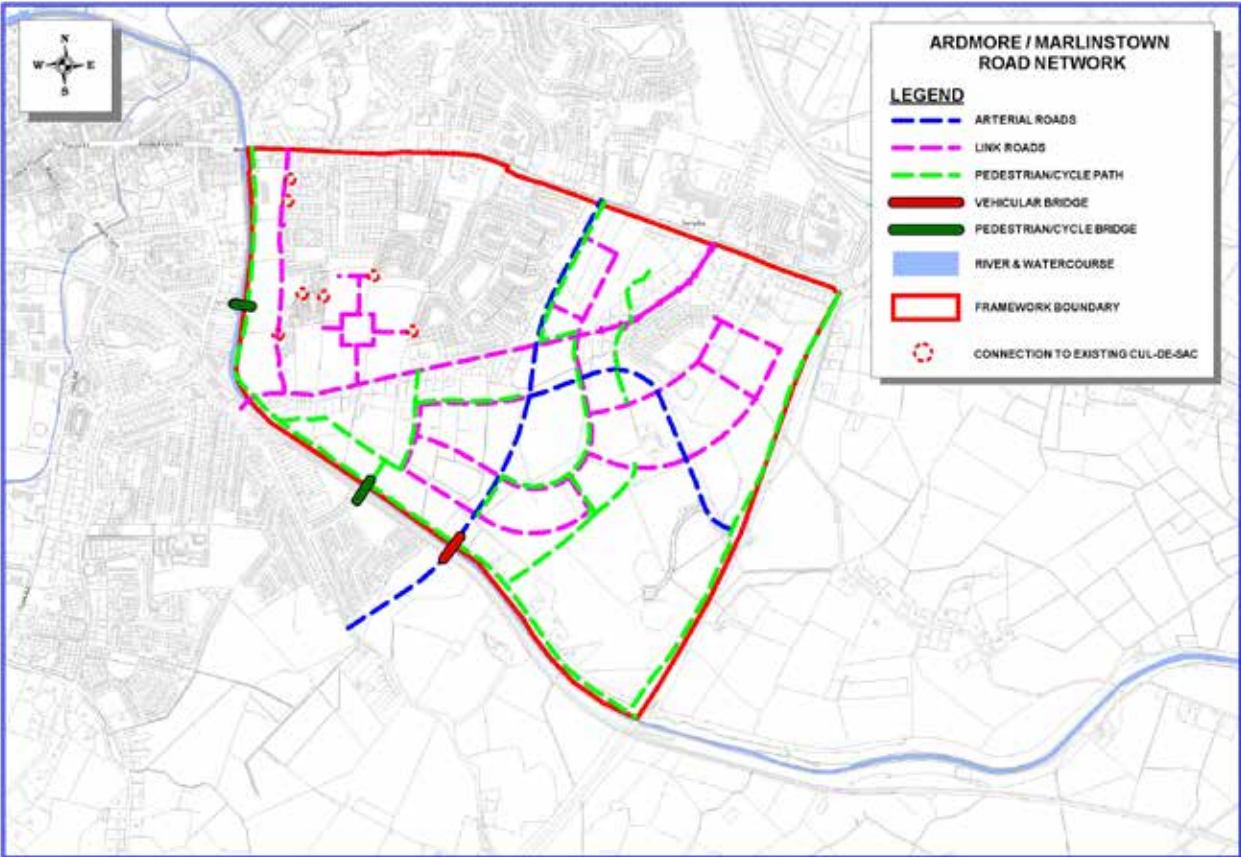
There shall be no direct access onto the N52, other than via the new service road to be constructed off the existing roundabout.

8.6.2 Controls

The design of arterial roads, link roads, cycle ways, pedestrian links and traffic calming measures shall be in accordance with DMURS. In particular, traffic calming measures shall be provided in the vicinity of the School and Neighbourhood Centre and within individual residential enclaves. Adequate lighting shall be provided to create a safe environment at night.

Tree planting shall be provided within a grass verge along the arterial and link roads, with average spacing between 10-12 metres. Where possible, native species shall be used.

Map 8.2. Ardmore/Marlinstown Road Network



8.6.3 Parking Standards:

Parking provision will be required to comply with car parking and cycle provision standards of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020.

The provision of extensive areas of hard impermeable surface is considered undesirable. Innovative proposals with regard to the provision of permeable car parking surface materials shall be encouraged.

8.6.4 Public Transport:

It is an objective of the Council to secure the provision of public transport services within Mullingar Town and the surrounding areas.

The provision of public transport for the existing residents of the Ardmore – Marlinstown area is currently unviable given the low population density of the area. The increase in population of the area on full implementation of the plan will allow for more effective provision of public transport for residents of the area. It will also provide an important service connection to the IDA Technological Park. It is likely that any successful new bus service would operate, not only through this newly developed quarter of the town, but also through other developing quarters of the town, (such as Robinstown) as well as existing areas.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

Pubic Transport services should be provided to serve the area and connect to Mullingar and environs.

The future provision of bus-stops will require the provision of both bus shelters and cycle parking facilities. Bus bays, shelters and waiting areas would be attractive locations and designed in accordance with best practice.

8.6.5 Cycling and Walking:

The Framework Plan will encourage environmentally friendly modes of transport by providing a highly permeable expansion of the town. Such permeability translates into shorter trip distances by foot or by bike compared with travelling to

the same destination by private car. Reduced trip distance is one of the key determinants for encouraging and walking and cycling.

The permeability of the area is enhanced further by the provision of dedicated traffic free routes through the proposed canal side and Neighbourhood Park and the provision of a dedicated pedestrian/cycle bridge over the canal. These elements will encourage not only commuting trips but also trips for leisure users. Appropriate density, permeable layouts, and mixed-use nature of development within a compact neighbourhood centre will also facilitate short trips suited to walking and cycling.

The proposed location of the Primary School within the area offers the opportunity to propose a 30kph speed limit in its vicinity. This will provide safety benefits for all road users and especially for school pupils.

In accordance with the DMURS Policy Document, pedestrian needs have been integrated in the design of the streets hierarchy ensuring shared provision with motorists. The provision of a new pedestrian and cycle link across the canal will ensure that the new expansion area will be connected to the established areas and the Town Centre. Provision is made for an additional pedestrian and cycle link through the canal side park in the south of the area, to connect into the established development area at Boardstown.

The plan also promotes medium and higher residential densities in close proximity to the proposed neighbourhood core and central park area which will reduce the need to travel and encourage more pedestrian and cycle travel movements.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The area shall be pedestrian/cycle friendly.

Junctions shall be of a design to encourage lower speeds and to allow for the safe movement of the more vulnerable road users (i.e. pedestrians, cyclists and mobility impaired).

All streets and avenues will use designs standards from the Department of Transport “Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets” (2013).

All development shall provide both direct and safe links with adjacent pedestrian and cycle facilities to ensure that a permeable layout is provided.

8.6.6 Mobility Management Plans:

A Mobility Management Plan (MMP) consists of a package of measures put in place by one organisation or a group of organisations (e.g. within an office park or industrial estate) to encourage and support more sustainable travel patterns among staff, visitors and customers. This applies in particular to Area 14 and 16 including the IDA Industrial Estate.

The requirements for the submission of a MMP will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Account will be taken of the location, scale of development, the precise nature of the uses proposed and the anticipated impact on the surrounding area, in terms of congestion and the existing and proposed transport network.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

Mobility Management Plans (MMP) will be required as part of major development applications of an industrial or commercial nature.

8.7 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The provision of social and community facilities are integral to the development of any new neighbourhood.

The Framework Plan requires provision of adequate and usable open space, education, childcare, retail and other community facilities such as health centres, community centres, etc in tandem with the sequence of development within the area.

There are a number of community facilities required for the successful development of the plan area, and lands have been reserved in the plan for this purpose. The Council shall require the timely provision of these necessary facilities in order to serve

the growing community and resident population.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The Council will require the provision of social, community and educational facilities in tandem with new residential development in the area.

8.7.1 Open Space Provision:

This plan has provided for both passive and active open space. This is in the form of residential open space, amenity open space within the neighbourhood park, the civic areas, the protection of the ringforts, buffer areas and the Linear Park. The total open space provision within the Framework Area is 37ha comprising 17.4ha for the linear canal corridor and 7.4ha for the Neighbourhood Park. This equates to 17 % of the total area, which meets the Planning Guidelines requirements for open space provision within a LAP.

The Westmeath County Development Plan 2008 - 2014 recognised the potential of the Royal Canal to create an integrated system of amenity and recreational open space which offers potential for further extending the urban pedestrian network along the banks and integrating this with the town open space system and green infrastructure.

Open space and recreational facilities are located and reserved in the Framework Plan on a hierarchical basis according to the needs of a defined population.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

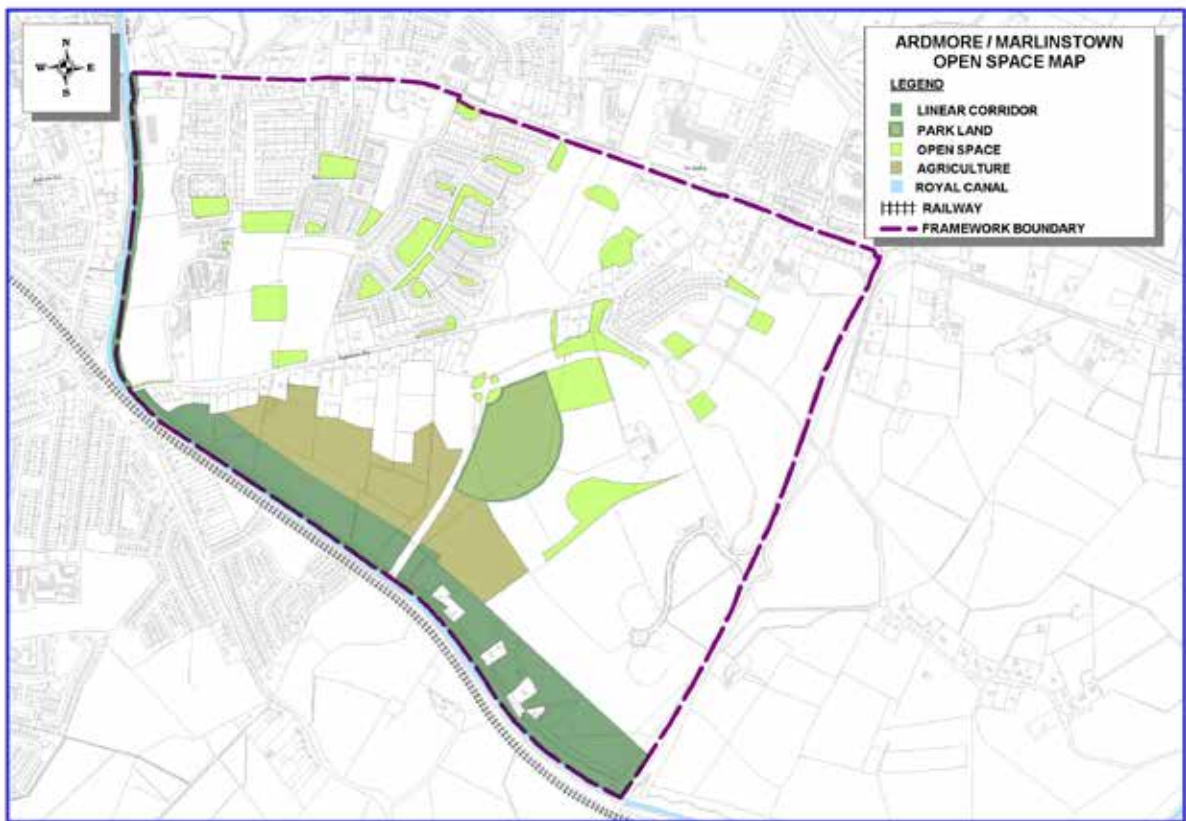
The plan area shall accommodate a hierarchy of public open spaces which include a Neighbourhood Park (Area 7), lands along the Royal Canal (Area 1, 2, and 11) and a series of smaller informal/casual open spaces and the buffer landscapes.

Where appropriate, a financial contribution in lieu of open space provision will be required, in accordance with the provisions of Section 48 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 as amended to fund these elements of infrastructure.

CONTROLS

Open space provision will be in accordance with the plan layout.

Development contributions towards the cost of provision of same will be required in lieu of non-provision of lands.



Map 8.3 Open Space Network, Ardmore Marlinstown

8.8 NATURAL HERITAGE

The plan area has a diversity of natural habitats including hedgerows, woodlands and grasslands. Even small stretches of hedgerow or individual trees can be important parts of the natural environment and should be protected where necessary. Increasing urban and rural development impact on hedgerows can detract from their associated wildlife and landscape values. Habitats cannot exist in isolation, there is a need to recognise the importance of ecological corridors or eco-networks that connect them. Therefore the Council will seek to protect and enhance the natural heritage, where possible, of the

plan area. Trees provide amenity value in the landscape and are also an important wildlife habitat.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

To protect and enhance the natural heritage of the plan area. Where natural features are in danger from development, the Council will exercise its development control power to protect the features.

To protect and conserve ecological networks and to prevent loss and fragmentation of ecological corridor where possible.

To protect streams by reserving land along their banks for ecological corridors, where appropriate and discourage culverting or realignment.

To protect the amenity of the canal, its boundaries and to provide for the creation and maintenance of public access along the Linear Park and the Canal Corridor.

8.9 PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lands have been identified for a Primary School to serve the area along the Ardmore Road and adjacent to the proposed Neighbourhood Centre. The Primary School will be designed in accordance with the Planning Guidelines produced by the Department of Education and Skills and the development of this site will be subject to consultation with the Department and local school providers.

8.10 CHILDCARE

The grouping of childcare facilities, if at all possible close to or within the same building as other educational and/or community facilities, is preferred. Consideration of childcare facilities provision should be raised as early as possible in pre-planning discussions for larger housing developments. The provision of such facilities shall be in accordance with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authority, 2001. Any new facility shall have space for off-street parking and /or suitable drop-off and collection points for children in addition to space for an outdoor play area.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

Arrangements involving grouping or association of childcare facilities with other educational/community facilities will be encouraged.

Safe cycling and pedestrian linkages to the schools shall be provided.

A Primary School shall be provided in accordance with the Planning Guidelines produced by Department of Education and Skills.

The Council will encourage clustering of school, community and open space

facilities and to consider dual use school and community facilities where appropriate.

8.11 RETAIL:

The Ardmore/Marlinstown Area has been identified as a suitable location for the development of a Neighbourhood Centre, in both the Westmeath Retail Strategy 2007 and the Mullingar Town Plan 2008-2014.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The Council will seek to ensure the provision of retail facilities within the designated Neighbourhood Centre to serve the Framework Plan area.

8.12 WATER & WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Council is responsible for the supply of water, collection, treatments and disposal of all wastewater originating in the area and for dealing with surface water collection and disposal in urban areas.

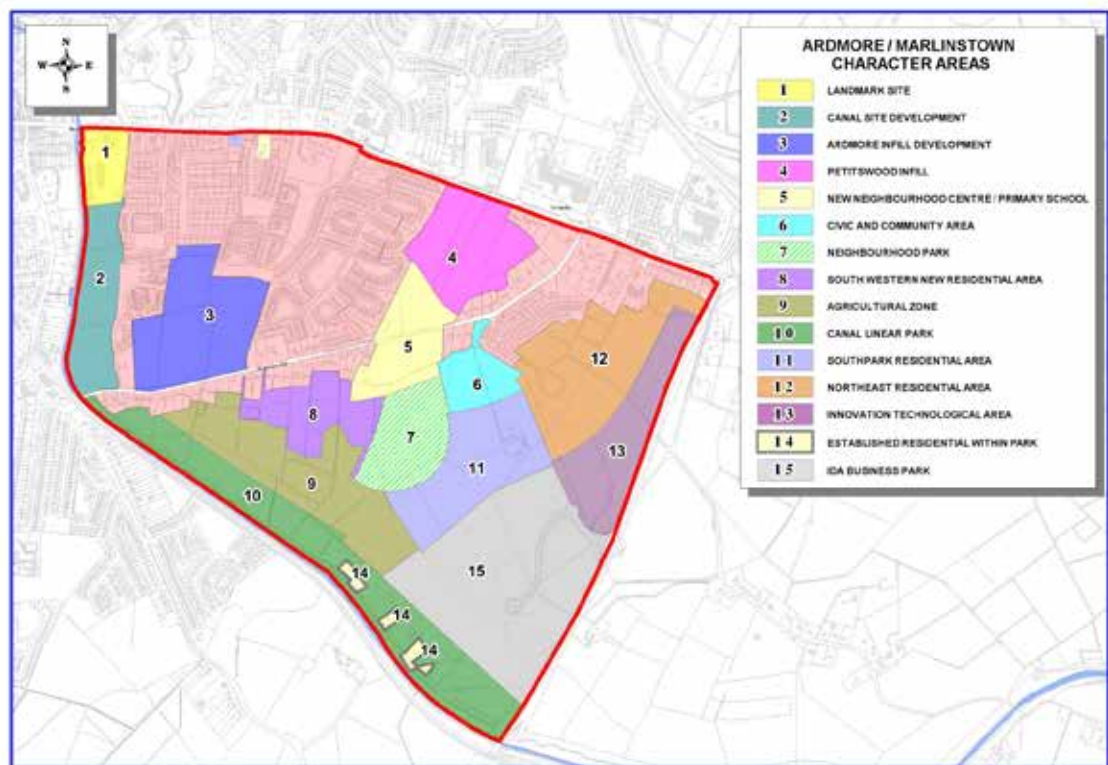
FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The Council will only permit development within areas adequately serviced with water, drainage, wastewater infrastructure, electricity and telecommunications.

The Council supports and encourages the introduction of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS).

8.13 Character Areas

The following sections examine each of the Character Areas proposed as part of the overall plan for the Ardmore/Marlinstown Plan Area. Each area has distinctive characteristics requiring specific attention and controls. These controls aim to achieve an attractive built environment and a coherent mix of uses within the plan area. The boundaries of the Character Areas are indicated in Map 8.4.



Map 8.4 Character Area Map

15 Character Areas:

1. Landmark Site
2. Canal Site Development
3. Ardmore Infill Development
4. Pettitswood Infill Development
5. New Neighbourhood Centre/Primary School
6. Civic & Community Area
7. Neighbourhood Park
8. South Western New Residential Area
9. Agricultural Zone
10. Canal Linear Park
11. Southpark Residential Area
12. Northeast Residential Area
13. Innovation Technology Ara
14. Established Residential within Park
15. IDA Business Park

8.13.1 Area 1 – Landmark Site

The area is located south of the Dublin Road and adjacent to the Royal Canal. It represents an opportunity for a high quality landmark development. The site comprises approximately 2.92ha. It currently accommodates residential development, comprising of two

distinctive vernacular styled two storey dwelling houses and a commercial enterprise.

This site has the potential to provide a significant entrance to the town overlooking the Canal. The Canal should be a main focal point of any development which should optimise the location by overlooking and providing accessibility to the Canal. A buffer of a minimum 20 metres is required from the canal bank to the front building line to protect the amenity of the canal.

It is envisaged that the site could accommodate a signature residential development or a hotel or other commercial development which would overlook and take full advantage of the canal setting and provide surveillance for the canal, while maintaining a linkage to this important amenity. The architectural design of the development should be of the highest standard, using high quality materials and finishes.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The area shall be zoned commercial to accommodate a signature residential development or a hotel, or mixed scheme. Any development at this site should respect the status of the site and the amenities of residential development, both existing and proposed in its immediate vicinity. Vernacular houses should be retained.

A buffer of at least 20m is required from the near Canal edge to the building line to protect the amenity of the Canal.

Private open space and car parking shall be provided within the site.

The development shall have vehicular access from the Dublin Road and access to Area 2 that will ultimately link to the Ardmore Road shall be provided for.

Provision shall be made for both a pedestrian and cycle-way access from the Dublin Road through the site to connect with the Canal Linear Park.

CONTROLS

Building Height: minimum 2 storeys
maximum 3 storeys

Buffer of at least 20 metres from the near edge of the Canal to the front building line.

8.13.2 Area 2 – Canalside Residential Development

This area comprises 6.88ha of land which is undeveloped at present. The area is linear and backs onto newly constructed development. The area is strategically located adjacent to the canal and any future development within this area must be sensitive to the character of the canal. The southern section of the area is the subject of a valid planning permission for residential development.

The area is intended to form a transition between the open space at Saunders Bridge and the landmark site to the north. The area will encompass a landscaped buffer to the south near Saunders Bridge, which will help integrate the new development with the proposed linear Park alongside the Royal Canal.

There will be a 20 metre buffer required between the canal bank and the front building line/new street as an elongated belt of green space. The development layout and built form shall respect the site contours and provide for high quality and usable open space.

It is important also that a connection is provided from this development area to the established development area to the east and to the opposite side of the canal. The connection across the canal is envisaged to be a pedestrian bridge which will facilitate both pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

In the calculation of appropriate residential density for this area, due regard will be taken of the amount of lands which are devoted to public open space use, including the Linear Park.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The area shall accommodate residential development at a medium density.

There shall be a buffer of least 20m provided between the near canal edge and the front building line/new street as an elongated belt of public open space.

There shall be a landscaped buffer along the entirety of the southern end of Character Area 2, of not less than 5m deep.

The development shall include a connection from the Ardmore Road to Area 1.

Connection to be provided from the character area by means of a pedestrian footbridge spanning the canal.

Provision shall be made for both pedestrian and cycle way links on an east west axis across Character Area 2.

CONTROLS

Building Density: 25-35 units per ha

Building Height: Two storey due to the elevated nature of the site

Buffer of 20m from the Canal bank to the front building line.

8.13.3 Area 3 – Ardmore Infill Development

This area is located north of Ardmore Road, at its western end. It is a substantial area comprising 11.71ha. The area is surrounded by existing housing developments to the north and east and will be further bounded by proposed developments to the west. This area is appropriate for new residential development of a similar density to surrounding developments. Residential developments should comprise dwellings overlooking a series of internal streetscapes which will all lead to a central located open space.

Housing types shall comprise a mix of typologies and dwelling sizes to accommodate a broad range of household compositions.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

- The area shall accommodate residential development at a medium density similar to surrounding developments.
- Any new development shall provide for connections to adjacent, existing and new developments.
- Housing types shall comprise a mix of typologies and dwelling sizes to accommodate a broad range of household compositions.
- The Principles contained in the “Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide of DoEHLG” (2009) shall be applied to the design and layout of any new residential areas.

CONTROLS

Average Building Height: 2 storeys

8.13.4 Area 4 - Petitswood Infill

This area is located south of the Dublin Road and northeast of the Ardmore Road. The area comprises 8.8ha. The area is surrounded by established low to medium density housing to the east along the Ardmore Road, north towards Dublin Road and medium density housing to the west.

The development of this area shall involve the construction of an avenue from the Dublin Road to Area 5 that ultimately will link to the Ardmore Road. This avenue shall have an urban street character, with development fronting onto both sides and suitably overlooked, as opposed to a traditional estate distributor road. The precise alignment of this north south avenue shall be determined at Development Management stage.

An appropriate buffer area shall be provided around the ring fort to provide protection from new development. This buffer shall be landscaped in order to protect residential amenity and views from the fort. A public pedestrian access to the fort area shall be considered as part of the development of the surrounding site.

Housing types should comprise a mix of typologies and dwelling size to accommodate a broad range of household compositions. Any new development will have to provide connections to adjacent existing and new developed areas.

At the northern end of these lands, an area fronting onto the Dublin Road has been reserved for commercial use such as corporate offices. Building design and specification shall reflect the sites prominent location.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

- The area shall accommodate residential development at a medium density.
- Any new development layout shall provide for connections including pedestrian and cycling links to adjacent existing and new developed areas.
- Development shall front onto the north-south avenue from the Dublin Road to the Ardmore Road.
- Housing types shall comprise a mix of typologies and dwelling sizes to accommodate a broad range of household compositions.
- A buffer shall be provided around the existing ring fort.
- An area for corporate offices/ commercial use has been reserved at the Dublin Road frontage.

The principles contained in the “Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide of DoEHLG” (2009) shall be applied to the design and layout of any new residential areas.

CONTROLS

Average Building Height: maximum of 2 storeys

8.13.5 Area No. 5 – Neighbourhood Centre and Primary School

This area encompasses lands north and south of the Ardmore Road which are located at the heart of the Framework Plan Area. It is proposed that this area will accommodate the new Neighbourhood Centre and Primary School to serve the area and will comprise a mixture of uses such as commercial, retail, community, educational and residential. The area comprises 6.8ha of land. This location has been selected due to its centrality, accessibility and proximity to the proposed Neighbourhood Park.

For the commercial area the built form should comprise perimeter blocks with internal open space provision to the rear. Parking will be provided within the internal space or below ground level if necessary. Additional parking provision will be in the form of parallel parking on adjacent streets.

The area to the south of the Ardmore Road is reserved solely for a new Primary School and associated grounds. To the west of the Primary School site, an area for residential development has been reserved.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The area shall accommodate a mixture of uses such as commercial, retail, community, primary school and residential. These shops will face the street with traditional street frontages.

The area to the south of the Ardmore Road is reserved for a new Primary School.

The residual plot to the west of the Primary School within Area 5 shall be zoned for residential use.

CONTROLS

Plot Ratio: 0.75 sqm/sq.m
Building Height: minimum 2 storey
maximum 3 storey
(school 1 to 2 storey)

8.13.6 Area No. 6 – Community and Residential

The area comprises 3.68ha and includes an area of archaeological significance which is reserved as open space. In addition pedestrian access is available from off the Ardmore Road via a greenway link. It is necessary that the ring fort national monument and its setting are protected. This area is an appropriate location for a mix of civic, community and residential uses having regard to its proximity to the proposed Neighbourhood Centre, Park and Primary School.

Civic and community uses comprising community resource, meeting rooms and recreational facilities would be acceptable in this area to compliment residential uses.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The archaeological monument and its setting shall be protected in accordance with Guidelines issued by the National Monuments Service of the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Community and civic uses shall be constructed using innovative design and construction methods.

Residential development shall comprise medium density to courtyard style layout.

CONTROLS

Building Height: Residential -maximum 2 storey
Civic and community - single storey.

8.13.7 Area No. 7 – Neighbourhood Park

The Neighbourhood Park is a key component of the overall plan. The open space designation has evolved from the existing physical character of the area and distinctive raised landform. The proposed 7.4ha Neighbourhood Park occupies a prominent position with a distinctive

landform which is visible from a number of surrounding locations.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

The park will be a public amenity which will allow primarily for passive recreational use. The design of the parkland shall take account of the requirement to retain existing trees and hedgerows, where possible. The Neighbourhood Park shall be developed in accordance with a detailed design prepared by a Landscape Architect.

8.13.8 Area No. 8 – South-Western Residential Area

This area is suitable for the accommodation of new residential developments and community uses. This site comprises c. 6.38 ha. In the area which backs onto established residential dwellings along the Ardmore Road new development will replicate the established pattern in terms of density and format. This will provide a more suitable transition into the new development areas south of Ardmore Road. It is intended that this housing type could be marketed as self-build plots.

To the south of this area will comprise residential development of medium density. The built form will be a traditional block form built around a grid street pattern with dwellings overlooking the streetscape and private open space to the rear. Access will be provided by way of a road network connected to the principle arterial road with provision for pedestrian and cycle path linkage. Pedestrian access to the area is also to be provided from directly off the Ardmore Road.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS:

The area shall accommodate residential development at a medium density together with self build individual plots immediately to the south of existing development fronting onto Ardmore Road.

Building types shall comprise a mix of typologies and dwelling sizes to accommodate a broad range of uses and household compositions.

The Principles contained in “Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide”, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009) shall be applied to the design and layout of any new residential areas.

Prior consultation shall be undertaken with the Electric Ireland in relation to development in the vicinity of substation and requirements of Electric Ireland complied with.

Pedestrian access points shall be provided directly from Ardmore Road.

CONTROLS

Building Height: maximum 2 storey

8.13.9 Area No. 9 – Agricultural Zone

This area comprising 13.79ha concerns lands which are subject to pluvial flooding and pending a possible remediation in the form of surface water drainage have been reserved for agricultural use. Given proximity to existing and proposed residential uses, intensive agricultural uses would not be appropriate.

8.13.10 Area No. 10 Canal Linear Park

This area comprising 17.7ha will respect the existing open space zoning. The area will therefore be reserved as a linear open space associated with the canal and greenway corridor. Uses within this area shall be compatible with the open space zoning.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS:

Reserve lands for open space use

CONTROLS:

The ecological value of the canal and its corridor shall be protected.

8.13.11 Area No. 11 – New Residential Development South of Neighbourhood Park

This area of 10.63ha can accommodate a range of differing housing layouts and densities.

Dwellings will be low to medium density built around a traditional grid street layout. The layout shall overlook the proposed Neighbourhood Park and also provide for linkages to the open space area associated with the Royal Canal and the agricultural zone. Potential for the development of a percentage of self-build plots exist within this area also. Any housing scheme for the area shall include proposals for the protection of the architectural setting of Ardmore House.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS:

The area shall accommodate residential development at a medium density.

Any new development shall provide for connections to adjacent existing and new developed areas as indicated on the Masterplan.

Housing types shall comprise a mix of typologies and dwelling sizes to accommodate a broad range of household compositions.

The development scheme shall respect Ardmore House and its curtilage and setting.

A buffer area shall be provided around the existing ring fort located to the southeast of the site to provide protection from new developments, in accordance with the National Monuments Advisory Service requirements. This buffer shall be landscaped in order to protect residential amenity and views from the fort. A public pedestrian access to the fort shall be considered as part of the development of the surrounding site.

The Principles contained in “Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide” (DEHLG) (2009) shall be applied to the design and layout of any new residential areas.

CONTROLS:

Building Height: Maximum - 2 Storeys

8.13.12 Area No. 12 – New Residential Area West of Industrial Zoned Lands

This area of land comprises 13.8ha for residential development. The dwellings will be of a medium residential density and will be of traditional perimeter built form. Housing types shall comprise a mix of typologies and dwelling sizes to accommodate a broad range of household compositions.

To the northeast of the area, there will be provision for low density (10-15 dwellings per hectare) housing to reflect the pattern in terms of size and scale of existing houses located in the area. The area shall be served by an internal road which is connected to the arterial road. Pedestrian and cycleway linkage to the existing residential development area served off Ardmore Road shall be provided in any residential scheme.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS:

The area shall accommodate residential development at a medium density.

Any development shall provide for connections to adjacent existing and new developed areas.

Building types shall comprise a mix of typologies and dwelling sizes to accommodate a broad range of uses and household compositions.

Public Open Space provision shall be provided in accordance with the plan requirements.

The principles contained in the “Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide” of DoEHLG 2009” shall be applied to the design and layout of any new residential areas.

CONTROLS:

Building Height Maximum – 2 Storeys

8.13.13 Area No. 13 Innovation and Technology Area

This area comprising 9.6ha is contained between the eastern bypass (N52) and housing area No. 12. The area shall be developed in accordance with an integrated layout providing for sole access off the new arterial road serving the IDA Estate. Future applications resulting in the intensification of development at the N52 junction shall be subject to Traffic and Transport Assessment. The area is suitable for corporate office and high-tech services and may include the establishment of micro enterprise engaged in research and innovation. A landscaped buffer area shall be provided along the western perimeter which adjoins the neighbouring residential zone.

Development falling under the remit of Part 11 ‘Major Accidents Directive’ of the Planning and Developments Regulations, 2001-2013 shall not be permitted, due to proximity of residential and other sensitive uses in the vicinity.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

A detailed layout for the overall development, servicing and landscaping of the lands shall be prepared and approved prior to initial development.

Any significant new development application shall be accompanied by a Traffic and Transport Assessment, including assessment of impacts on the N52 and the existing roundabout serving the Innovation Technology Zone.

CONTROLS

Building Height Maximum: Two storeys

8.13.14 Area No. 14 Established Residential Area (Within Linear Park)

There are a number of residential dwelling houses located within the designated open space area adjacent to the canal and Industrial Park. The established use of the properties shall be respected.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

Respect established uses within the open space area.

8.13.15 Area No. 15 IDA Employment Area

This area comprises 24.8ha which includes the IDA owned lands which shall provide for high quality enterprise and employment uses.

Due to its strategic positioning the area shall accommodate light Industrial/ Technological developments to a high quality design which will present high quality design on an important approach to the town.

It is anticipated that significant foreign direct investment (FDI) into the area, leading to significant employment generation, will take place over the life of the plan as the economy recovers. The IDA lands have been subjected to a masterplan which provides for the integrated development of these lands and the protection of the amenities of the canal and archaeological monuments located therein.

Development falling under the remit of Part 11 ‘Major Accidents Directive’ of the Planning and Developments Regulations, 2001-2013 would not be appropriate, due to proximity of residential and other sensitive uses including recreational in the vicinity.

A new arterial road layout will be required to link the site with adjoining industrial and residential developments. Any future development should provide public transport facilities such as a bus shelter and cycle lanes similar to the IDA site. Childcare facilities should be provided within the area to serve requirements of employees. Future applications resulting in the intensification of development at the N52 junction shall be subject to Traffic and Transport Assessment, to ensure that the strategic function of the National Road Network in the area is not compromised by local development pressures.

FRAMEWORK REQUIREMENTS
The area shall accommodate enterprise and employment uses.
There shall be no retail development provided in this area.
The site shall provide for all necessary infrastructure such as access roads, water and sewerage, internal roads and public lighting and public transport facilities.
Public transport facilities such as a bus shelter and cycle lanes shall be provided.
A Childcare Facility should be provided within Industrial Estates and Business Parks in accordance with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001).
Site layout, landscaping and open space network for the estate shall conform with the approved IDA Masterplan for the area. Any significant new development application shall be accompanied by a Traffic and Transport Assessment, including assessment of impacts on the N52 and the existing roundabout serving the IDA Business Park.

CONTROLS
Plot Ratio: Maximum of 0.50 sqm
Building Height IDA Park: 2-3 storeys

8.14 IMPLEMENTATION

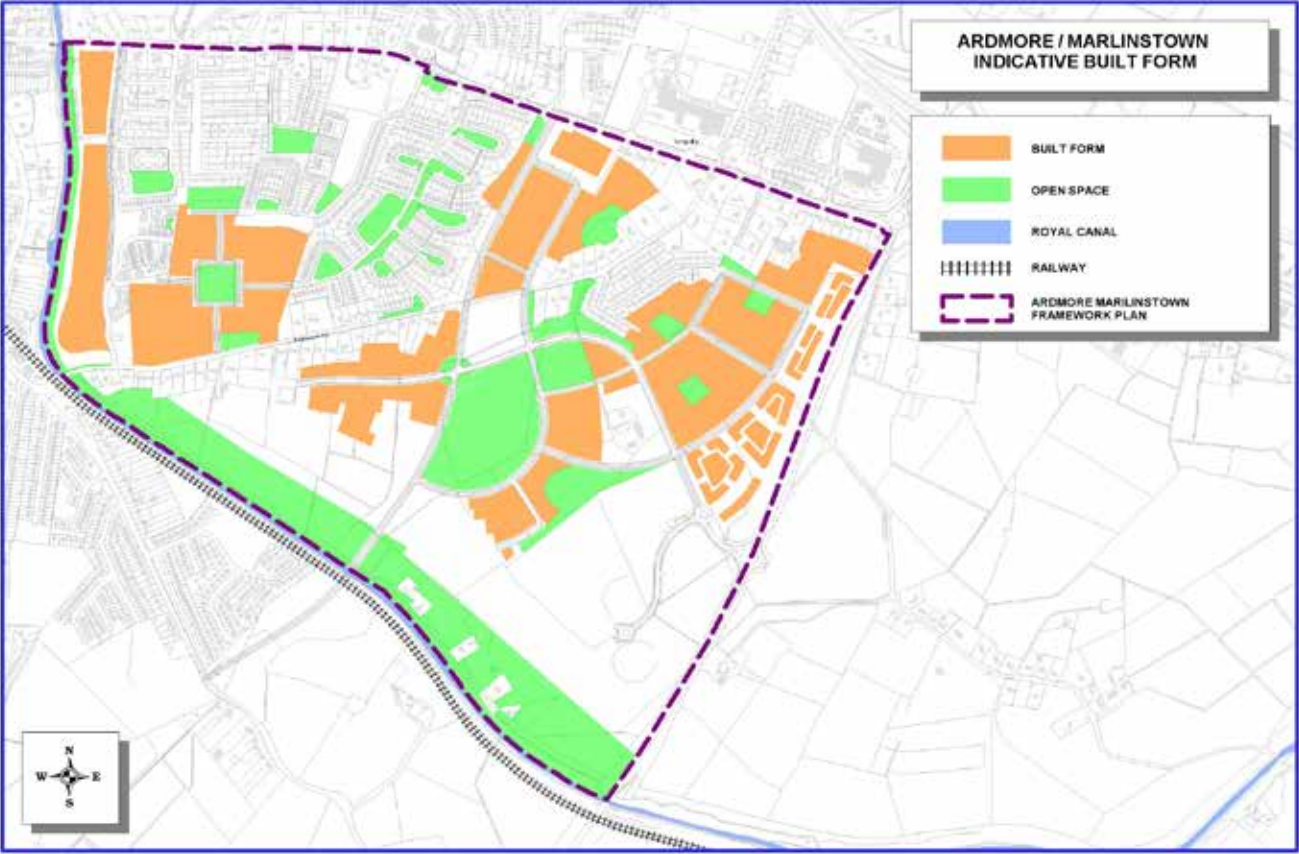
One of the principal aims of the Framework Plan is to develop the area in a coordinated and efficient manner to ensure the provision of all necessary physical and social infrastructures within a suitable timeframe. The plan describes how 15 designated areas should be developed.

The Framework controls and requirements are provided to ensure that the development will be in accordance with the plan principles. Phased implementation of the plan beyond the life of this Local Area Plan will be required. This will ensure that support infrastructure (i.e. roads, open spaces, community facilities etc.) will be provided as required and that sequential patterns of development are achieved.

8.14.1 Contributions and Infrastructure

The Council has powers which can help achieve some aspects of the plan, such as compulsory acquisition powers which may be used, if required, to facilitate site assembly or to secure the realisation of objectives contained in the plan. The Council can also require developers to contribute to the achievement of the specific objectives of this plan, including those relating to the provision of physical and social infrastructure, within their individual development proposals.

In order to fund the support infrastructure to fully implement this plan, the Council will consider establishing a specific Contribution Scheme for the benefiting area within this Framework Plan. Pending the adoption of any new Contribution Scheme, contributions in respect of public infrastructure and facilities including open spaces, benefiting the development, will be levied by the Planning Authority, on the basis of the established Contribution Schemes for the town of Mullingar.



Map 8.5 Indicative layout of the Built Form in the Ardmore/Marlinstown Framework Plan

8.15 MULLINGAR SOUTH FRAMEWORK PLAN

The area concerned in Mullingar South Framework Plan (MSFP) is located to the south of Mullingar and is made up of four distinct portions of land comprising approximately 83.3ha. The area extends from the River Brosna at the western end to Russellstown Road at the eastern end. For the purposes of the Framework Plan the area has been subdivided into four parcels as follows:



- (1) The eastern portion comprises approximately 21.4ha and is contained entirely within the townland of Ballinderry. It extends from Russellstown Road to the Rochfortbridge Road. To the east of Russellstown Road and to the north and north-west of the area it is bounded by housing development. To the south-east there is mainly open countryside.
- (2) Adjacent to these lands is the 'Lynn Lodge' parcel, comprising 17.8ha. This parcel contains two older houses [one of which is Lynn Lodge, listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) as being of regional importance], and a recent development of larger detached houses.
- (3) Lynn Rath, lies to the west of this parcel and is separated from it by the Ballinderry Hill Road. It comprises 10.6 ha. low density frontage (ribbon)

housing has developed along this route. This land is undulating with ground rising slightly from Ballinderry Hill Road and falling more steeply towards Lynn Road. The highest point of the land is towards the eastern end and includes an impressive bi-vallate rath and Mount Lynn House, a structure listed as being of regional importance in the NIAH.

- (4) Lynn Road defines the eastern boundary of the final parcel which comprises 33.5ha. It extends along a significant length of the approach road to the town. The Brosna defines the western and northern boundaries of the parcel. The line of the proposed N52 ring road extension defines the southern boundary. This area is flat and low-lying, except where it has been filled.

8.16 Built Heritage and Archaeology

There are two houses within the Framework Plan area that are listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) as being of regional importance. Lynn Lodge (Reg. No. 15401907) is situated on Rochfortbridge Road and is a detached three-bay two-storey house, built around 1800. It may incorporate the fabric of an earlier structure.

Mount Lynn House (Reg. No. 15401906) is a detached four-bay single-storey house, built around 1875. It is located at the junction of Rochfortbridge Road and Ballinderry Hill Road.

There is an impressive bi-vallate rath beside Mount Lynn House (WM019-074). Another impressive ringfort is located outside the Lynn Road portion south of the new N52 (WM026-005). Other smaller raths can be found at the southern end of the Lynn Road portion north of the new road (WM026-006), on the Ballinderry portion southeast of Lynn Heights (WM019-075), and at the junction of Ballinderry Hill Road and the new road south of the plan area (WM026-007).

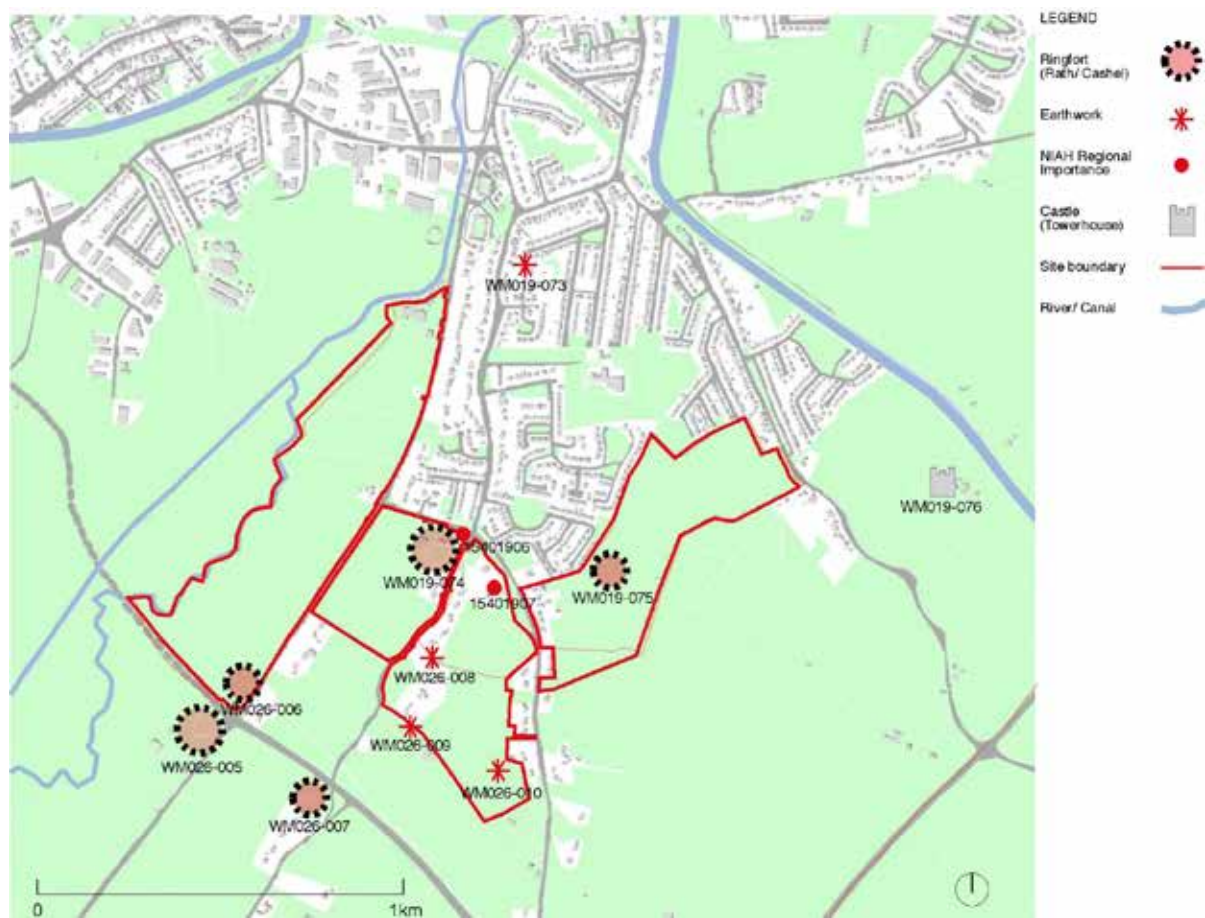
A number of earthworks are located in Mullingar South, three lie within the study area. One is located on the southern end of the Lynn Lodge portion near Ballinderry Hill Road (WM026-008), another one can be found further south (WM026-009), the third one is near the Rochfortbridge Road in the southern part of the study area (WM026-010). One Earthwork lies north of the plan area in the existing built-up area (WM019-073).

East of the Russelstown Road outside the plan area there is Boardstown Castle, a tower house dating from the 15th or 16th century (WM019-076).

8.17 Landscape framework

The rural countryside and typical pattern of enclosed fields, hedgerows and tree groups provides the backdrop for the town. There are large areas zoned as open space as well as sporting/ recreation along the waterways.

It is an intention of Westmeath County Council to develop a linear park and cycleway linking Mullingar Town Centre and Lough Ennell via Lacey’s Canal and the River Brosna.



Map 8.6 Built and Cultural Heritage

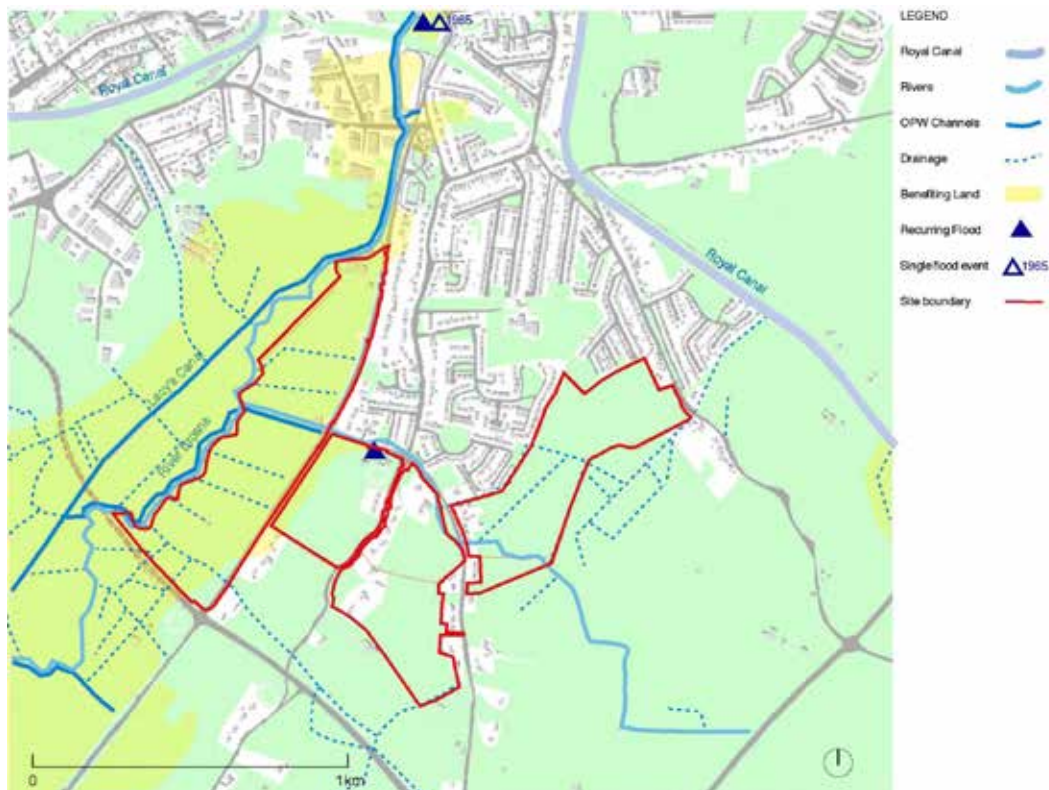
The character of the landscape is dominated by hedgerows and scattered groups of trees. An important feature in Mullingar South is water. Apart from the River Brosna and Lacey’s Canal to the west, there are also several channels maintained

by the Office of Public Works (OPW) and smaller drainage ditches.

The land on both sides of the River Brosna/Lacey’s Canal is designated as ‘benefiting land’ [that is, land that has been subject to OPW drainage schemes]. The

risk of flooding on these lands has been reduced by the drainage schemes carried out under the Arterial Drainage Act, 1945 (Brosna, Inny, Boyne). The design standard applied to these schemes was based on a

three-year flood recurrence. Despite the drainage schemes, a significant residual risk of flooding remains in many of these areas.



Map 8.7: Existing water courses and flooding issues

8.18 Settlement Structure and Visual Analysis

The existing settlements in Mullingar South have occurred in a wedge between Lynn Road in the west and the Royal Canal in the east. Along the main roads some individual housing exists while housing estates have been developed effectively as enclaves with poor connections to surrounding developments and areas. A pattern of small neighbourhoods has been established with limited access to main public roads. There is a uniformity of character and typology. Non-residential use is limited.

Scattered commercial buildings are located on the western side of Lynn Road. The topography of the area rises slightly from

the low-lying lands along the River Brosna/Lacey's Canal in the west towards the south-east. There are views across the Brosna valley from Lynn Rath. From Lynn Road views are opened to Lynn industrial estate, and beyond to the Cathedral of Christ the King and the Market Point apartment development.

8.19 Land Use and Activities

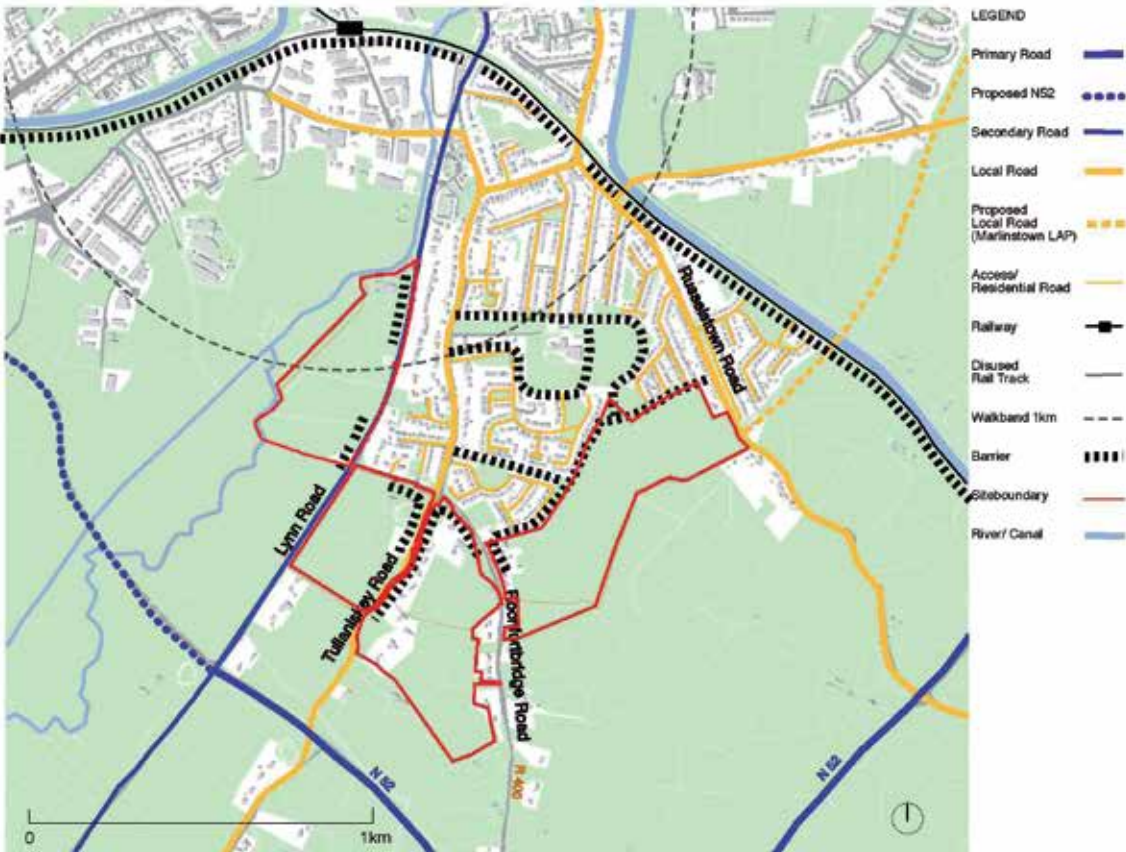
The predominant land use in the larger Mullingar South area is residential while the plan area itself is mainly in agricultural use. Along the existing roads one-off or ribbon housing has developed. Commercial development is mainly located along Lynn Road in the western portion of the plan area. There are few local services within reasonable walking distance of the plan area. Nearby community and institutional

uses are limited to the private hospital, the church and a crèche. Small convenience and retail stores are distributed through the area at Lynn Road and Belvedere Hills.

8.20 Movement and Access

The local route hierarchy comprises Lynn Road, regional roads, local and service roads. Orbital connections and links are undeveloped in the plan area. Cul de sacs and enclave, access routes dominate the suburban areas.

Access and provision for pedestrians and cyclists is poor. There is no bus service in the area at the moment but Westmeath County Council is investigating the provision of a local bus service for Mullingar.



Map 8.8: Access and movement Analysis

8.21 Vision

The vision for the Area is:

To provide for long term urban expansion to the South of Mullingar and to create a sustainable, distinctive place where the community can benefit from a mix of uses and activities and enjoy a high quality urban and landscape environment.

8.22 Principles

- To protect and enhance existing, positive aspects of character, environment and heritage
- To create new and distinctive places with identity, focus and attraction.
- To enhance connectivity, accessibility and permeability throughout the area.

- To promote a mix of uses and diversity of activities to serve new and existing suburban areas.
- To create a quality landscape, urban and open space structure.
- To provide a range of community and recreational facilities.
- To give priority to pedestrian and cyclist movement.
- To promote public transport links to the town centre.
- To achieve a high quality of residential environment and amenity.
- To provide high quality of design and layout incorporating elements of special character (field boundaries, water etc.).
- To promote sustainable methods of construction and energy use.
- To formulate and apply policies to address the issue of flood risk.
- To structure the place on three character areas reflecting use, landscape, movement and urban form.
- To create a focus for Ballinderry and surrounding areas by providing for a range of education, social and community uses and local services.
- To provide new linkages to the existing residential development.
- To continue the necklace of passive and active open spaces connected by tree-lined avenues.

8.22.1 Place and Character

The plan envisages three places of distinctive quality and character. These places will be linked with each other and seek to integrate with, and reinforce, existing places. The plan also recognises the need to allow for future growth and expansion. The three places are:

- Ballinderry (comprising three smaller elements).
- Lynn (comprising two smaller elements).
- Lynn Road.

The urban form, structure, landscape and land use of each area will need to reinforce the place and identity concept.

8.22.2 Ballinderry: Development Objectives

- To allow for the expansion of Mullingar South and the residential neighbourhood.

8.22.3 Lynn: Development Objectives

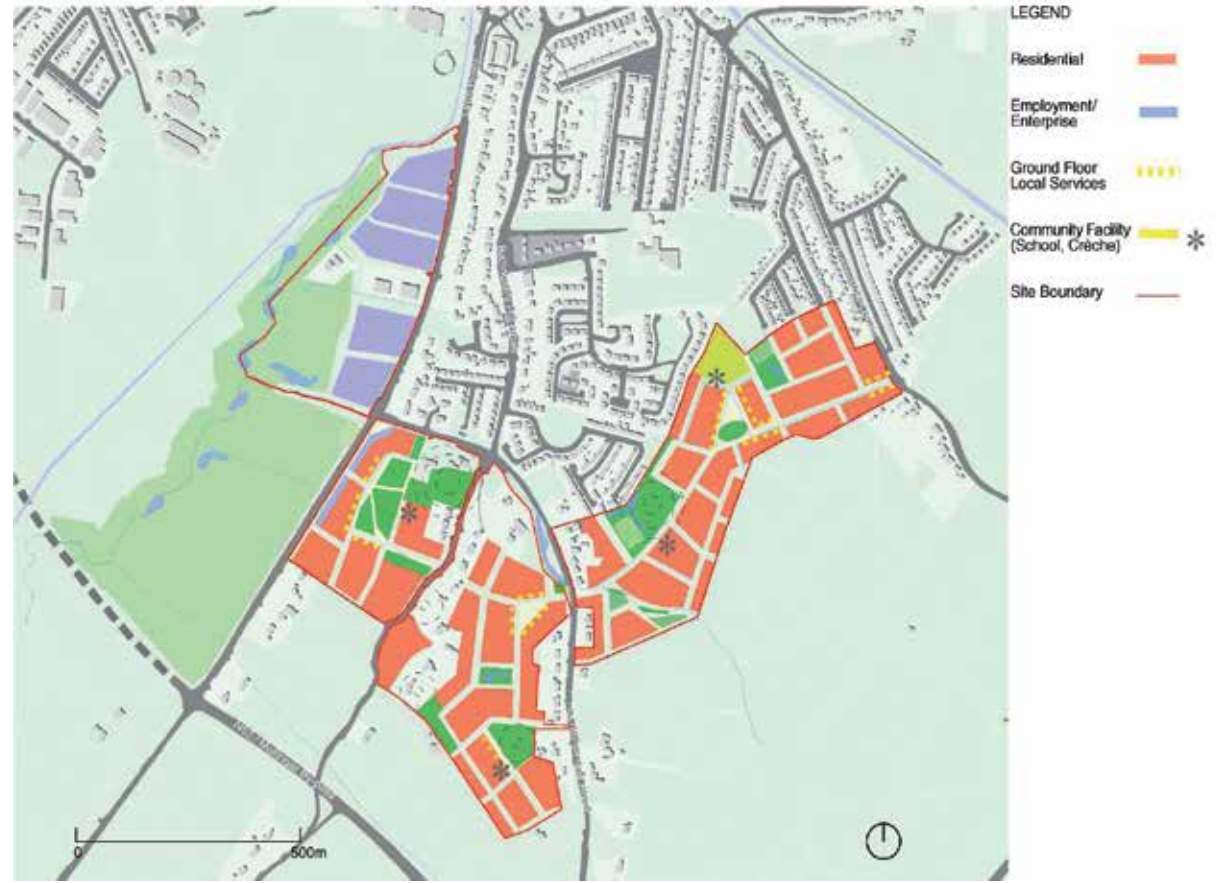
- To provide for the expansion of the neighbourhood.
- To integrate sensitively with the existing heritage, landscape and development.
- To provide a high quality residential environment that references and respects the built and archaeological heritage of Lynn.
- To provide a necklace of viable public and open space linking Lynn Road with Ballinderry while providing a focus and amenity for Lynn itself.

8.22.4 Lynn Road: Development Objectives

- To develop and improve Lynn Road as an urban avenue and an attractive approach to Mullingar.
- To provide new character, continuity and enclosure to the new avenue.
- To provide open space, appropriate frontage and linkages to the Brosna Valley and Lacey's Canal.
- To manage the issue of flood risk.
- To maintain, enhance and expand existing local shopping facilities at the northern end of lands zoned for enterprise and employment along the Lynn Road.



Map 8.9: Green Structure and Open Space



Map 8.10: Land use and function



Map 8.11: Route structure and Development Framework

8.23 Framework Plan

The Framework Plan shows an indicative basic layout for the area based on the vision, principles and strategies. The Framework Plan shows the development of the distinctive character areas and their physical relationship to each other. The perimeter blocks and building footprints are indicative and should inform later site layout and design.

8.23.1 Use mix

The principle use in the plan area will be residential. The area will also provide for a range of non-residential uses, which would form the basis of a centre in Ballinderry and community hubs in Lynn and Ballinderry. Retail development at this location shall accord with the requirements of the DoEHLG Retail Planning Guidelines (2005). Non-residential uses should be

located at ground floor fronting the focal spaces. In the medium to long term it will be important to provide for educational uses to serve the area.

Lynn Road has potential to provide for enterprise and employment units. Further south along Lynn Road employment and enterprise uses should be mixed with leisure uses, with connectivity to Lacy’s Canal corridor and gateway.

8.23.2 Density and Building Height

The density of proposed development should be derived from the basic concepts for development of the area. The gross plot ratio of the lands should lie between 0.35:1 and 0.50:1. This is contingent on provision of quality layout, design and bus services.

Building height should be modest overall and should reflect established heights in

the town and the area. A relatively consistent building height will ensure that the topography of the lands is reflected in the development. Generally, two-storey development should be considered as the context building height. Roof space could be provided to allow for loft space or future conversions. There is significant potential to provide for smaller, single storey buildings in mews, courtyards.

8.23.3 Community / Education Facilities

Community facilities in Lynn and Ballinderry should be located at the hubs and along the avenue, and should include childcare, education, multi-purpose community facility and health care.

In Ballinderry, an urban block of approximately 8,000 sq.m. in area has been designated to provide for future educational facilities. It is situated adjacent to the neighbourhood centre and a proposed public park. The new school shall meet the requirements of the DoEHLG Guidelines, Provision of Schools and the Planning System. A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, 2008. A multi-purpose community facility (meeting room, adult education, and sports facility), a small library and a crèche could be part of, or attached to, the educational building.

Other childcare facilities, such as a crèche should be situated along the avenue, near the rath in Ballinderry, and at the two hubs in Lynn, and shall be carried out in accordance with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines, 2001.

8.23.4 Employment

Local employment supports the basis for healthy and sustainable communities. The development of the Lynn/Ballinderry area will provide for local employment opportunities, initially in construction activities, but more importantly in local services, retail and a range of local businesses. Live-work and small unit employment uses will be provided in Ballinderry and Lynn, while significant office and enterprise-based employment could be provided for along Lynn Road.

8.23.5 Housing

The lands should provide for a range of housing types, sizes and tenures. Critical mass is necessary to develop a viable community in the area. It is intended to create a place where all ages and generations can live together.

To achieve diversity in architecture, different designers/architects should be assigned to larger areas. This is particularly important at the focal spaces and along the avenue, where blocks should be broken up into smaller plots. This should lead to choice and diversity for the future inhabitants and reflect the location and its potential. All new residential development shall have regard to the DoEHLG publications, Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) and the Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide (2009) and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013.

Social and affordable housing will be provided on the lands in consultation with Westmeath County Council and should be indistinguishable from other housing on the lands.

8.23.6 Live-work units

A live-work unit is where a property is used as both a dwelling and as a workspace, where the workspace occupies a certain proportion of the unit's total floor area. The work element must be compatible with residential use. There is a wide range of acceptable uses such as fashion, art, design, computing and I.T., consultancy, medical and therapeutic practices.

Live-work accommodation should be designed with its function in mind. It should make reasonable provision for business visitors. Communal areas, such as entrance arrangements, corridors and staircases need to be of a suitable standard. A reliable and fast internet connection in the area is required.

Provision for a broadband connection/service will be a specific requirement in all new live-work proposals.

8.23.7 Self-build plots

Self-build plots are an important aspect of achieving the plan's housing objectives. Individual plots will be designated, and these can be sold to individuals who can build their own house within defined building lines. Proposals for self-build plots will be subject to individual designs.

8.23.8 Low density houses

The Framework Plan proposes areas for self-build, low-density detached houses. Plot size will vary according to local circumstances. Development of these plots will be the subject of separate planning applications.

8.23.9 Streets and Parking

The lands provide for future connections to the main street structure for the area. The main streets or avenues in the lands will connect with Lynn Road, Ballinderry Hill Road, Rochfortbridge Road and Russelstown Road. These will provide the necessary connections north towards the town centre. The secondary structure will provide for residential streets and spaces, which are passively calmed by tight horizontal alignments. There are also opportunities in the structure for shared spaces, home zones, courtyards and bóithrín/lanes. New pedestrian links to adjoining residential cul de sacs will need to be provided for.

The avenue will need to provide for a degree of through-traffic, so active traffic calming or other design measures may be required. A cycle path as well as a generous footpath will be required along with a privacy strip for residential development fronting the street. Grass margins should not be provided on the footpath. If parallel parking is provided on-street it should be adequately softened in terms of planting such as tree lines and build-outs and it should be possible for pedestrians to cross comfortably and safely at all points of the avenue.

The secondary streets will be designed to prioritise their use by residents. These streets will be formed by considering the relationship between buildings and space.

On-street parking should generally be provided on one side of the street to facilitate crossing the street for pedestrians but may alternate sides.

The shared spaces, home zones, courtyards and bóithrín/lanes will be designed on an individual basis responding to local conditions and urban design considerations. Vehicular access should be restricted to residents and visitors, and priority in the layout should be on pedestrian movement and children's play. Shared off-street parking, such as internal courtyards, is preferred to additional on-street parking, especially in traffic calmed streets or home zones.

Special consideration should be given to the nature and character of Lynn Road as a major entry point and gateway to Mullingar Town. The stretch of Lynn Road that is situated in the plan area should be reconfigured as an avenue with major tree lines, building set-backs, a separate cycle track, generous footpaths and a reduced lane width to a design speed of 50km/h for general vehicular traffic.

While the layout of streets should facilitate crossing for pedestrians at any point, careful attention will need to be given to junctions. Raised tables at junctions facilitate crossing for people with prams and in wheelchairs. They slow down traffic and make drivers aware of a changing condition. Raised tables should go together with build-outs of the pedestrian path to shorten crossing and to improve visibility.

The design and layout of streets and parking should have particular regard to:

- Traffic Management Guidelines, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Dublin Transportation Office, 2004.
- Design Manual for Urban Roads, Department for Transport 2013
- Car Parking: What Works Where

8.23.10 Flooding

Land west of Lynn Road is designated as 'benefiting lands'. These lands were drained by the Office of Public Works

(OPW) for a return flood of three years. Residential development is not suitable on these lands.

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been undertaken to identify areas at risk of flooding.

8.23.11 Use of the Framework Plan

This Framework Plan provides the basic considerations of character and context and presents a set of core concepts for the development of the area. The plan should be used to inform the next phase of the development of the lands, which is site layout and detailed design stage.

8.24 Contributions and infrastructure

The Council has powers which can help achieve some aspects of the plan, such as compulsory acquisition powers which may be used, if required, to facilitate site assembly or to secure the realisation of objectives contained in the plan. The Council can also require developers to contribute to the achievement of the specific objectives of this plan, including those relating to the provision of physical and social infrastructure, within their individual development proposals. In order to fund the support infrastructure to fully implement this plan, it may be necessary to establish a specific General Contribution Scheme for the benefiting lands.

In order to fund the support infrastructure provision to fully implement this plan the Council will consider establishing a specific Contribution Scheme for the benefiting area within this Framework Plan. Pending the adoption of any new contribution scheme, contributions in respect of public infrastructure and facilities including open spaces, benefiting the development, will be levied by the Planning Authority, on the basis of the established Contribution Schemes for the town of Mullingar.

8.25 Stages of development

The stages of development of the plan area will be influenced by:

- The provision of key infrastructure.
- The improvement of access to and through the area.
- Property and ownership issues.
- Prevailing market conditions.
- Sequential approaches to development in order to secure the orderly expansion of Mullingar Town longer term.

Given the scale of development provided for and the nature of the areas peripheral location, the full implementation of the Framework Plan will extend beyond the life of the LAP and up to 2026.

8.26 ROBINSTOWN FRAMEWORK PLAN

8.26.1 Introduction

This Framework Plan is based upon an ambitious vision for the area which envisages a vital role for Robinstown in defining Mullingar, and its aspirations as a vibrant regional centre in the coming years.

Robinstown has the potential to secure sustainable long-term strategic urban expansion to the north of the town, with particular regard to its economic position as a linked Gateway under the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), and the Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines.

Urban expansion for an area of this scale demands a clear vision that adds value to the town's character and identity. It is intended that the Robinstown Area's primary purpose is not to facilitate standard suburban expansion, but be at the heart of stimulating economic and commercial growth, working in synergy with the town centre on the one hand, and the amenity potential of the existing environment on the other.

The attractiveness, vitality, viability, energy and quality of a place are key considerations for any business or individual is deciding where to locate. Therefore, the quality and type of the built environment that will be created is fundamental to achieving the economic goals for the area.

Robinstown also presents a critical opportunity to address the recreational and passive open space needs of the town. An environment that delivers high quality coherent development, sitting alongside parkland, waterways, recreation facilities and a diverse ecological environment may potentially deliver a package that is unique in the country.

The following elements provide the framework for guiding the cohesive development of the Robinstown area, upon which the Framework Plan is developed.

- Establish a robust framework for a planned urban extension to the north of the town.
- Provide direction and guidance for the assembly and integration for range of new uses
- Address deficits in open space and recreation provision in the town
- Provide for educational needs.
- Provide an integrated approach to mobility and land use, with connections to the Town Centre and other development areas.
- Consider the natural and built environments in an integrated manner.
- Address issues of flood risk and attenuation

8.26.2 Context

The Robinstown area generally comprises mainly of undeveloped lands. The Robinstown Link Road connecting Castlepollard Road and Delvin Road has recently been constructed through the area, represents a major infrastructural asset facilitating planned development of the area. At the time the Robinstown LAP was prepared, Murray and Associates, Landscape Architects, were commissioned to undertake a landscape analysis, and EurGeol. Dr. Robert T. Meehan, PGeo undertook a Soil Geology Study to ascertain the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the Robinstown Study area.

8.26.3 Strategic Context

Apart from Robinstown Lane, and the Canal Tunnel there are no crossing points connecting Robinstown directly to the Town Centre area. The presence of Cusack Park and Harbour Place also represent a physical barrier to any such connection.

Linkage from the town centre to Robinstown is currently diverted to the Castlepollard Road in the north and Delvin Road to the south. If the Framework Plan lands are to link with, and compliment the town centre, direct and legible linkage will be important.

Other strong barriers comprise the railway line that runs north-south along the western edge of the area and the Royal Canal. The Robinstown area includes residential estates, and St. Loman's Hospital along the Delvin Road, and the Lough Sheever Business Park at the Castlepollard Road. The majority of the lands are generally used for grazing, and there are also several playing pitches and sports clubs.

8.26.4 Soils Geology

Mineral soils (Lithosols, Greybrown podzolics and Gleys) cover circa 65% of the land surface in the area, with the remaining 35% is covered by peat soils. Much of the peat has been cut away and reclaimed. This reclaimed peat with grassland cover is very common in the flat areas of the eastern portion of the landscape. Forestry, both semi mature and young in age, forms the other major land use on the reclaimed peats. Fen peat areas are presented close to watercourses and in areas ponded by the construction of the canal and railway. Rock outcrop across the area is estimated at less than 1% of the land surface.

Perhaps the most important finding of the Soil Geology Study is the extent of significant areas covered by reclaimed peat. This soil type is extremely problematic for productive use. The water table is only about 2m below the surface in summer, and construction on such areas would require significant piling of foundations, given the significant risk of building subsidence. Therefore, the Soils Geology Study presents a robust indicator of where the natural development boundary should lie.

8.26.5 Topography

The area is generally very flat and low lying with the edges along the by-pass, Delvin Road and Canal higher than the interior. There are no natural vantage points or raised areas. The lower lying areas generally correlate with the reclaimed peat towards the centre of the lands, following the path of the River Brosna.

8.26.6 Water

The presence of watercourse features is an important element within the Framework Plan Area. The Royal Canal feeder links this urban area with Lough Owel. The feeder extends along the western side of the area traversing good quality landscaped areas. There is a well constructed trail along the majority its length.

8.26.7 Vegetation and Ecology

In terms of existing vegetation, the area is divided into two distinct areas. These are composed of: (1) the large area of mature pasture centred on Robinstown (Tyrell), and (2) the area around Robinstown (Levinge).

The first area is higher ground and is composed of mature pastureland fields of medium size which are bounded by mature hawthorn hedgerows.

The second area is more lower lying and is composed of poorly drained reclaimed peats principally used for rough grazing lands. The existing dual carriageway along the northern boundary of the site is well established with mature woodland vegetation, and provides a strong linear form in the landscape.

The presence of the canal and associated areas generate considerable wetland ecology potential. The areas along the Canal Bank and Canal feeder have a number of well developed fen areas. These areas support a rich diversity of plant species and wetland scrub.

Along the extent of the Brosna, the river passes through mineral agricultural soil, peat, wet podzolic soils and reclaimed peat. The extent of this river area provides high potential for the development of a series of ecotypes.

Very good quality detail is evident in the masonry wall with mature parkland trees associated with St Loman's Hospital and attendant grounds which gives the area a wooded character particularly when viewed along the roadways. There is a

large area of mature pasture centered on Robinstown (Tyrell), composed of mature pastureland fields of medium size which are bounded by mature hawthorn hedgerows. This type of woodland, hedgerow and stone wall would provide habitats for typical birds, insects and mammal species found in agricultural and peatlands.

The presence of the canal and associated areas generate considerable wetland ecology potential. Fen peat areas are located close to watercourses and in areas ponded by the construction of the canal and railway. These areas support a rich diversity of plant species and wetland scrub. The extent of the River Brosna area provides high potential for the development of a series of ecotypes along the extent of the river area.

8.26.8 Amenity- Walking Trails and Routes

The area contains a good variety of walking trails and routes. These provide a link from the Town Centre of Mullingar out through the study area to Lough Owel. The canal area has been developed as a walking, cycling route and a number of pedestrian linkages from the canal area to the Town centre exist.

The Canal Supply heads off in a northwesterly direction towards Lough Owel and is accessible on foot for most of its length. This trail provides an important linkage with the main Royal Canal ring. The combination of both of these features provides a unique linear open space, which has significant historical and ecological interest.

8.26.9 Active and Passive Recreation

A key objective of the Robinstown Framework Plan is to utilise and enhance the environmental qualities of the area, together with its accessibility to provide much needed municipal facilities both in terms of active recreation (playing pitches and walking/cycle tracks) as well as more passive recreation (formal parkland, and

natural environmental treatment). The range and scale of facilities is intended to address the current and future needs of the town.

8.26.10 Enterprise Development

It is a core objective of the Robinstown Framework Plan to maximise opportunities for inward investment in enterprise and job creation and in so doing to raise the economic profile of Mullingar. Creating a high quality built and natural environment is central to the achievement of economic stimulus. The establishment of an enterprise hub in Robinstown is intended to attract not only private decentralisation from the Dublin region, but to become a regional focus for the Midlands, serving national and international markets.

The vision for the area is to carefully control development to attract the correct balance of enterprise/financial and clean industry employers that will increase the value to the town and raise its profile nationally. Rather than isolate the area as an enterprise/ business area removed some distance from the town, this special enterprise district will have direct access to new mixed use urban areas, with a full range of services and facilities, and also be close to a new urban centre that provides choice in how people want to live, work and spend their leisure time.

8.26.11 Commercial and Retail

The role of this new development area through its proximity to the town centre will be to support the extension of the town core, and create synergy with existing businesses.

It is anticipated that the Robinstown Framework Plan will be implemented over a twelve year period thus requiring a phased implementation programme beyond the life of this Local Area Plan. The phased implementation of the Framework Plan with each phase having necessary support infrastructure including a link road to the Town Centre Area is the key to the ultimate delivery of the scheme presented in this plan.

8.26.12 Development Mix

It is intended that the Robinstown area's primary purpose is not to facilitate standard suburban expansion, but be at the heart of stimulating economic and commercial growth, working in synergy with the town centre on the one hand, and the amenity potential of the existing environment on the other.

In terms of need, the town is well served by new residential development, and the Ardmore/Marlinstown Action and Mullingar South Framework Areas in particular will address principally residential needs. While Robinstown will ultimately provide choice and alternatives in the residential market catering for urban living and lifestyles, its primary focus initially will be on recreational and enterprise development.

8.26.13 Roads

The layout of the expansion area will be permeable and accessible and allow for ease of movement for all modes. Avenues will be controlled so that new development is coherent and meets high standards for example in providing tree lined streets, which are lively, attractive and well cared for.

8.26.14 Drainage

Trunk Mains for a foul sewer network and surface water drainage scheme have been provided, in order to facilitate development within the plan area. As part of the overall approach to surface water drainage and flood risk management in the area, lands will be reserved for the purposes of drainage, flood relief and surface water attenuation.

8.27 FRAMEWORK PLAN

8.27.1 General

In general, areas affected by soils that are inadequate for development and those liable to flooding have been dedicated for open space and recreational purposes or retained in agricultural use. This area has been considered in detail under the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which has been undertaken for the Local Area Plan.

8.27.2 Built Form

Medium size perimeter blocks are prescribed in the Framework the basis for the development of the sites within each of the districts. This traditional approach promotes buildings facing the surrounding streets. The combination of an orthogonal grid with the use of perimeter blocks of medium size helps to create a highly integrated and "walkable" place. Each building and each development equally adds to the shaping of a common public space which along with proposed recreational areas will result in the establishment of a truly active new quarter for the Town of Mullingar.

8.27.3 TRANSPORTATION AND MOVEMENT

Ease of movement is of critical importance to the success of any Masterplan. The "street" network emanates from the traditional approach providing connections to the three accessible edges of the area, to the west, south and east. Three main avenues and a park road are the backbone of the grid.

The transportation and movement network shall provide for all modes, including walking, cycling and public transport. As the area develops towards full implementation, car travel will also be minimised in the Mixed Urban Core district where services and facilities will be located within walking distance.

A park'n'ride facility will be provided within the Innovation Technology Area District, which should eventually be serviced by a local bus route, when a sufficient population is in place to support one.

The linear parks consisting of pathways and cycleways will form the basis of the movement network throughout the open space area and will also provide unobstructed access to the wider county from Robinstown itself and the wider Mullingar Area.

The Primary Framework area is bounded by a series of roads mainly the existing N4 to the east, the Delvin Road in the south,

the Longford Road in the west and the Castlepollard Road in the north. The Sligo/Mullingar railway line runs adjacent to the plan area. It is an objective of the Robinstown Framework Plan that future development applications resulting in the intensification of development at the N4 junction should be subject to Traffic and Transport Assessment, to ensure that the strategic function of the National Road Network in the area is not compromised by local development pressures.

The Framework Plan proposals for development of the area should involve a hierarchy of avenues and streets for the movement and transportation of people within this area. The main avenues will be wide enough to accommodate a sharing of road space for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists ensuring the use of several modes of transport. It is envisaged that public transport will be provided to accommodate the movement of people between the Framework Plan area and the existing town centre. The variety of transportation and movement options will encourage a more sustainable approach to travel.

8.27.5 CYCLING AND WALKING

This Framework Plan provides for the provision of cycle lanes along the main avenues linking the Mixed Urban Core, the General Urban District and the Innovation Technology Area District. Pedestrian needs should be integrated in the design of the streets hierarchy ensuring shared provision with motorists. Pedestrian links from the existing Town Centre will ensure the safe movement of people between the old and the new districts.

As the area develops in the future, it is intended that private car dependency will be significantly less in Robinstown than in other areas of Mullingar. The density, permeable layout, and mixed-use nature of development will facilitate public transport provision and its use, and facilitate short trips suited to walking and cycling. Parking standards as set out in the current County Development Plan may be reviewed for this area. Appropriate parking standards

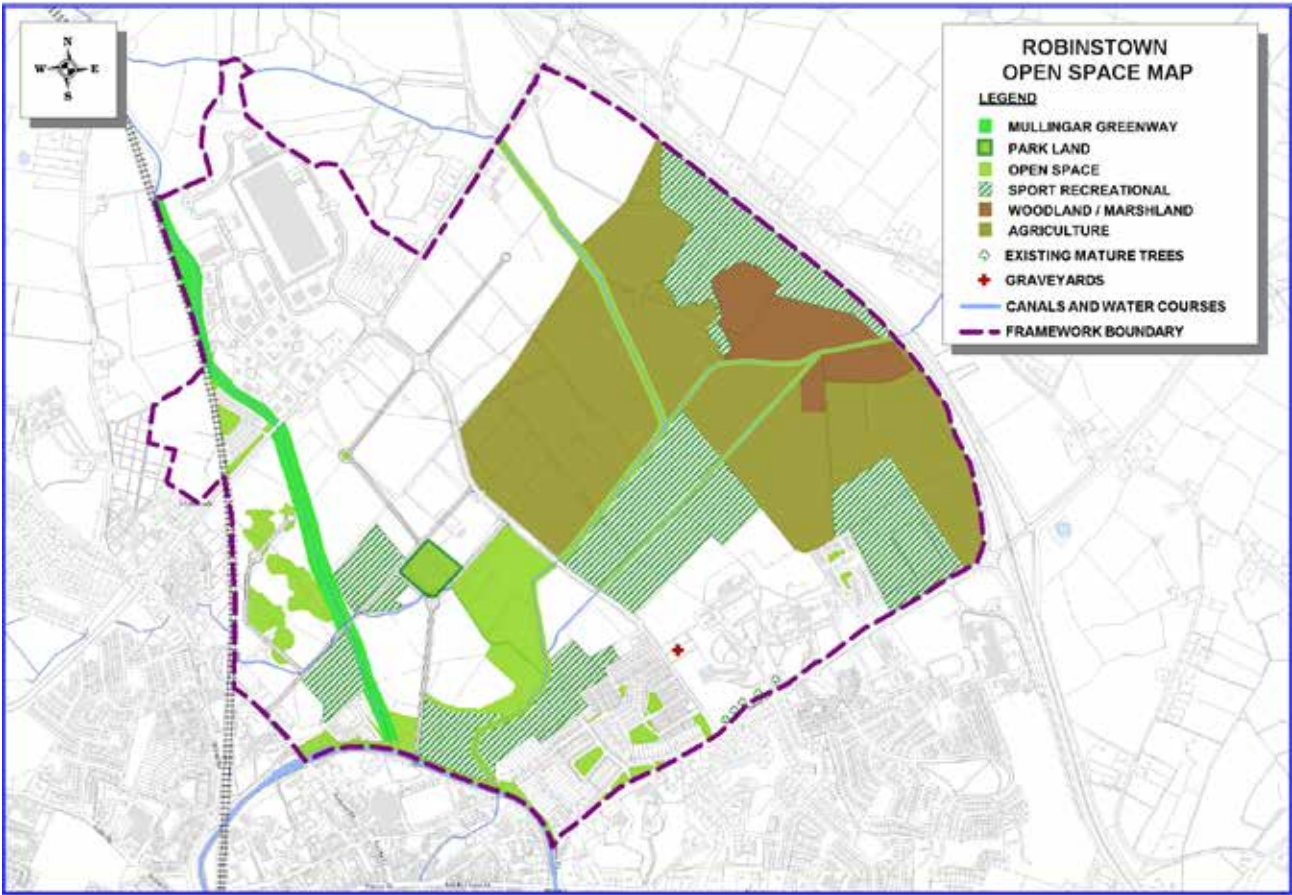
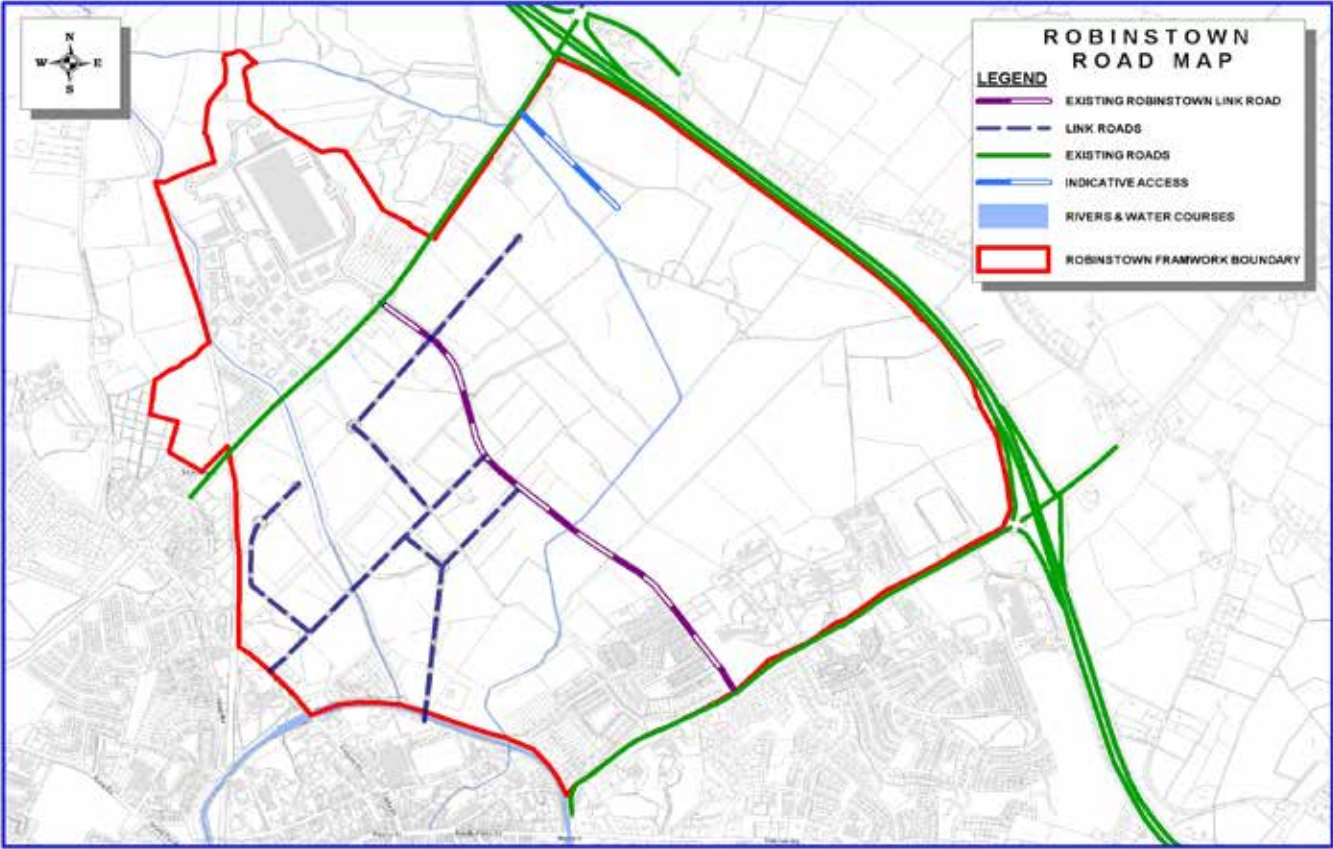
will be established as part of a Transport Plan for Mullingar where projected private car usage, and other transport implications will be considered in the context of the overall town.

The provision of extensive areas of hard impermeable surface is considered undesirable. Innovative proposals with regard to the provision of permeable car parking surface materials shall be encouraged.

8.27.6 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The Framework Plan provides for a hierarchy of avenues and streets suitable for the movement and transportation of people within the area. The street design should ensure that there is adequate road space for the future provision of public transport i.e a bus service if required.

Map . 8.12 Robinstown Road Network



Map 8.13 Robinstown Open Space Network

8.27.7 RECREATION AND AMENITY

Open space/ amenity provision is a core element of the Robinstown Framework Plan. Both passive and active recreation bring about significant economic and social incentives for participating communities in terms of improved health, social inclusion, economic benefits and environmental enhancements.

The Robinstown Area represents a unique opportunity for Mullingar to enhance the scale and quality of recreational provision, both active and passive, unlocking an area situated in close proximity to the Town Centre. There are 62ha of land zoned for sporting and recreational use in Robinstown, including an area of 16.58ha for new playing fields associated with the proposed Regional Sports Centre.

The inclusion of significant areas of open space within Robinstown including the clustering of facilities, will greatly enhance provision for existing and future residents of Mullingar and create a regional profile for recreational activity for the town.

8.27.8 THE URBAN RURAL FRINGE

The changing nature and diversification of farming practices has presented opportunities for farmers and landowners to take particular advantage of the urban demand for leisure and environmental services.

The creation of a country park, urban agriculture zone, community forest, nature reserve and/ or green corridors can provide a suitable buffer zone to the wider countryside. Increased awareness of the natural environment also provides educational opportunities. The promotion of these functions commensurate with farm management practice permeates through many of the recreational proposals contained in this Framework Plan.

8.27.9 MASTERPLAN OPEN SPACE PROPOSALS

Murray & Associates Landscape Architects prepared a Landscape Analysis of the Robinstown area in conjunction with the Robinstown LAP (2005). This study defined

the key landscape features and opportunities within the plan area. From this analysis, an open space framework for the Local Plan area was developed. The following areas of potential were identified:

8.27.10 OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK

The proposed Open Space Network is comprised of three components: (1) linear parkland linkage sectors, (2) a traditional parkland area with an adjacent transitional zone to be used as both an access/linkage from the existing town and proposed Mixed Use and General Urban Districts; and (3) recreation areas or locations for active pursuits on pitches or within clubs.

The positioning of these open space areas were chosen on the basis of proximity and type of existing uses, topography, existing landscape features and soil geology or agricultural. Wherever possible, proposed built up areas are located on a suitable under soil, leaving the peaty type soils for parkland/recreational or agricultural usage.

The open space framework also identifies existing areas of landscape potential within the Plan area, such as managed forests, mature trees, graveyards, lakes and ecological areas, and how they are linked via the linear park network.

All parkland/recreational elements will be subject to detailed design.

8.27.11 LINEAR PARKLAND

- The River Brosna and its feeder streams pass through a number of varying ecological areas, and it is an objective of the Framework Plan to utilise the main river course as a walking route.

- Overall the parkland area would be developed in an ecological manner with native woodland copses, wildflower meadows and walks. A number of playground features would be associated with the main walkways.

- Parks should be developed along the line of the canal and feeder canal to include cycle tracks, walkways and existing ecological areas such as fens and meadows and be sensitively developed to provide for public access and education.

- The complete linear park network will include the canal, canal feeder and the Brosna, and will connect such amenities as Lough Owel and Lough Sheever, managed forests and ecological areas to the north of the Framework Area Plan; managed forest to the east; proposed and existing recreational/sports areas to the south east; the proposed parkland area and lakes; the transitional zone, the cemeteries and proposed ecological areas along the feeder canal.

8.27.12 SPORT AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Existing recreational areas should be expanded and enhanced through higher levels of pedestrian and cycle access. At present access to existing facilities is poor which restricts participation. Recreational pitches and sporting clubs are proposed to be located in close proximity to one another to encourage sharing of facilities.

Additional land has been zoned for either the expansion of clubs or the creation of areas that can be used by all clubs or the community at large, including an astro-turf pitch with flood lighting and indoor sports arena/ Regional Sports Centre.

Due to the capacity restrictions on the existing Cusack Park G.A.A. ground, it has been suggested that land within Robinstown would be suitable for a sports stadium in the event that a larger facility is required in the long term. A new facility could benefit from a location in the Robinstown area, which has good road access, and remains in proximity to the Mixed Urban Core and the town itself.

8.27.13 FOUL WATER

Designs of proposed foul sewers and the locations of pumping stations for the Robinstown catchments were carried out by Barry and Partners Consulting Engineers on behalf of Weatmeath County Council as part of the Mullingar Sewerage Improvement Scheme.

8.27.14 SURFACE WATER

The Council commissioned a study to ascertain the river flow and channel capacity of the River Brosna, which is Mullingar's principal surface water collector. It is an intention within the Framework Plan to provide attenuation on lands zoned for open space, which are located south of the Link Road and west of the River Brosna, to ease pressure on river flow and to minimise the risk of flooding incidents. Much of the land in Robinstown is of a peaty nature and there are many drainage channels throughout. These will be maintained and the course of the Brosna River will be regenerated and widened where appropriate in consultation with the OPW as part of the linear park and drainage network. Existing watercourses and main drainage channel associated with the River still be left open in accordance with the Hydrological Consultants recommendations.

8.27.15 FLOOD RISK

The River Brosna runs through the centre of the action area. The land is quite low-lying and is therefore susceptible to flooding. The Framework recognises these constraints and has restricted development within this area. The careful management and attenuation of water within this area is a key aspect of the plan. Attenuation ponds will be located subject to hydrological study of the area. Attenuation measures must be taken into consideration in accordance with technical advice provided to the Council. Pluvial flooding has been identified as an issue on lands located within the General Urban District and over a small area at St. Lomans.

The Local Area Plan has been subject to a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and its findings are integrated into proposals contained in this Framework Area Plan.

8.28 SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

8.28.1 CONTEXT

The provision of social infrastructure as part of the Framework Planning exercise is essential to its overall success when it includes the establishment of a new community or neighbourhood. Whilst the new area must integrate with the existing town both physically and socially, additional pressure should not be placed on existing services and facilities, such as schools and health centres.

8.28.2 EDUCATION

The need for additional primary and secondary school accommodation in the town has been established in the LAP.

In order to meet the projected increase in the general Mullingar catchment area, a Secondary School site has also been identified in the Robinstown Area. Demand is to be addressed by reserving a plot of land within the Robinstown Area for a multi-campus school development, which will include both a Primary and Post-Primary School. These schools will cluster with the Proposed Regional Sports Centre and associated playing fields on the Robinstown Link Road on a site located at its south-eastern end close to the St Loman's Complex Grounds which is zoned accordingly in this LAP.

8.28.3 COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Robinstown area will have capacity to accommodate an eventual population of approx. 2,600. Provision is therefore required to be made within the plan for the following services and facilities:

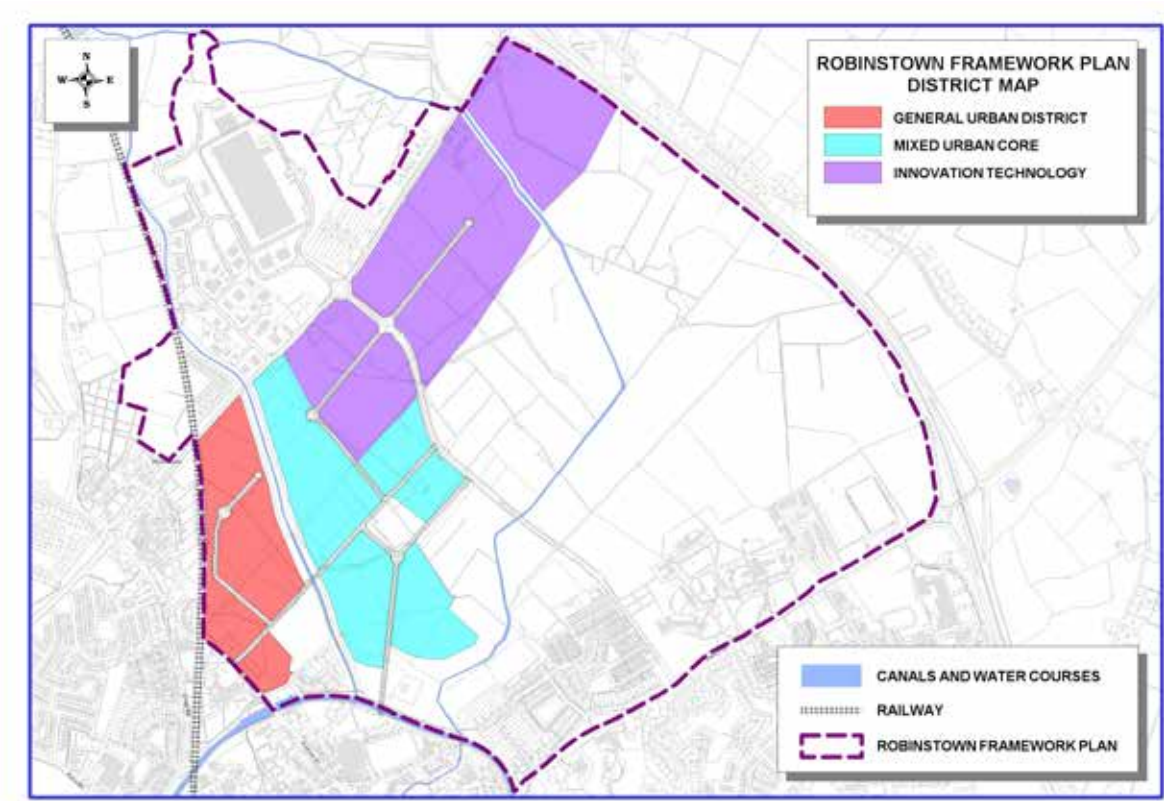
- Doctor's surgery
- Neighbourhood centre including Shopping
- Post office
- Place of Worship
- Childcare and Health Centre
- Community Centre

8.29 BUILT FORM AND PUBLIC SPACE

The main objective of the Framework Plan is to guide particular types of development towards certain parts of the development area. The type of development achieved will have a major bearing on the quality of the built environment and its attractiveness. Zoning and density on their own, do not always achieve desired outcomes in terms of built form and distinctive place making.

Traditional neighbourhood development integrated a range of activities which is better described by its building typology than by land use. For planning, traditional neighbourhood development controls prescribe architectural and urban forms according to the characteristics of real building typology. Essentially, these controls are intended to ensure continuity and attractiveness within the public realm, and minimise influence on individual building use.

The Framework prescribes three districts, Mixed Use Urban Core, General Urban Area and Innovation Technology District to compliment land use designations for the area which are prescribed on the Zoning Map in Volume 2, and are illustrated on Map 8.14 below.



Map 8.14 Districts within Robinstown Framework Plan

8.29.1 DISTRICT 1 - MIXED URBAN CORE

The **Mixed Urban Core** lies at the centre of the new quarter. It covers an area of approximately 30.5ha and when fully developed will consist of such uses as community, commercial, retail and residential. All of these uses will be mixed in a traditional grid layout with perimeter blocks, fine grain buildings and a central public space. The Mixed Urban Core will initially be linked to the existing Town Centre by a crossing of the Royal Canal supply via a new bridge. This way will be initially for pedestrians and cyclists but will be upgraded as more comprehensive development of the area takes place.

For this area to be successful the mix of uses referred to above will be permitted which will include community, commercial, retail and residential facilities. Built form requirements will prescribe the type of buildings which will be developed within this area. Building heights within the Mixed Urban Core will be generally three storeys maximum.

At the core of this Mixed Urban Core District a public park or landscaped public square will provide the focus of the area.

8.29.2 DISTRICT 2 – GENERAL URBAN AREA

The **General Urban District** is located to the south west between the railway line and the feeder canal. It is approximately 17.7ha in extent and will consist mainly of residential development together with other compatible uses including community/ medical and office. The nature of the residential development in this quarter will be a mix of typologies and dwelling sizes to accommodate a broad range of household compositions.

Buildings will comprise mainly of residential development with neighbourhood uses such as a convenience store, small retail commercial, office and community uses. Provision will be permitted to encourage “Working from home” where employees will live over the work premise. A mix of housing types

including apartments, town houses and units will be provided in both areas.

The pattern of development within the General Urban Area will be as permeable as possible to allow ease of access and ensure overlooking and increased safety. It is critical that the existing water courses are not disrupted as they perform an important drainage function for the area. New Development proposals will be required to be accompanied by detailed engineering designs for upgrading of surface water drainage systems and infrastructure serving the area.

Framework Requirements
Building Density: Desired 35-50 dwellings per ha
Building Height: Two storeys
Childcare Facilities: A childcare facility should be provided in all new housing developments comprising of more than 75 dwellings in accordance with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001.

A significant part of District 2 is affected by Pluvial Flooding, which has been addressed in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report and Addendum thereto.

8.29.3 DISTRICT 3 – INNOVATION TECHNOLOGY

An Area designated as **Innovation Technology** located to the north-west of the Mixed Urban Core and along the southeast side of Castlepollard Road is intended to be the Business/Enterprise District for the Robinstown Framework Area Plan. The area has a linear structure following a main avenue running north to south, adjoining the proposed urban grid at its south end.

The area will encompass an attractive layout within an intensively landscaped area in close proximity to the Mixed Urban Core and the parklands agricultural area. The district is proposed to be served with roads and water Infrastructure and is strategically located with frontage on to

the Castlepollard Road and the Robinstown link road and close to the N4 Castlepollard intersection. The concept for development in this area is based upon the unique opportunity which it presents for attracting economic and commercial investment and substantial job creation in the services sector.

This area will become the Business/Enterprise hub for the Robinstown Framework Area Plan. It is intended that this area will become a desirable location for investment, attracting companies efficient in new technologies and innovative practices. To the northern edge of this area, a park and ride facility will be developed. This will facilitate the future provision of public transport for the district.

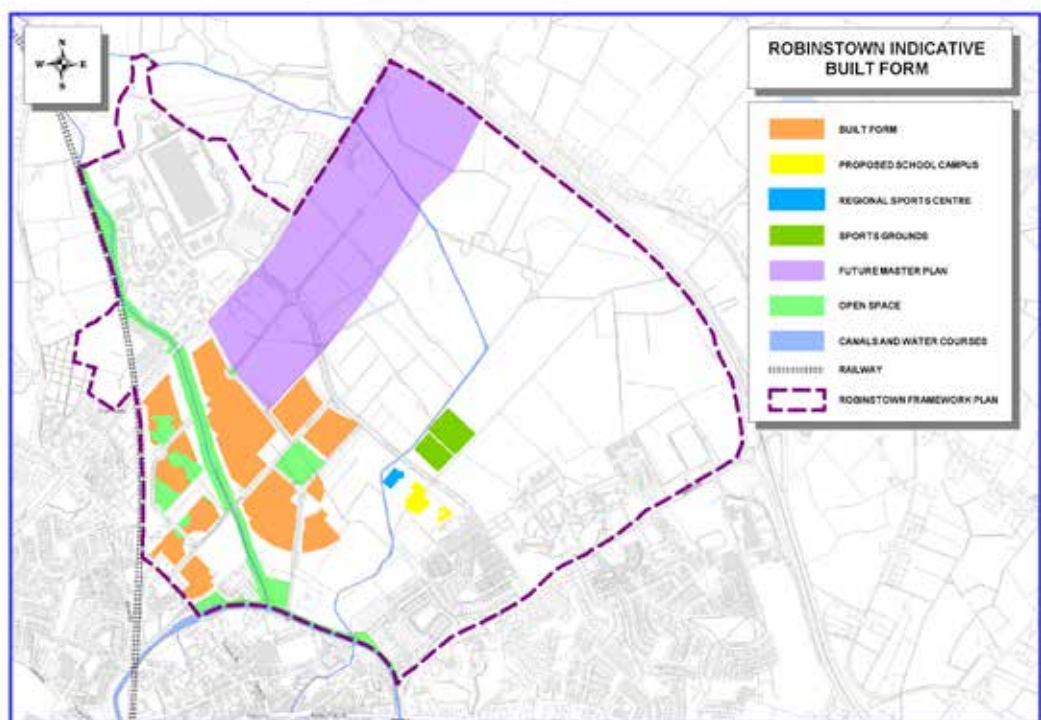
The Innovation Technology District is also intended to accommodate major enterprises and manufacturers such as the software industry, telecom providers, multi-media producers and publishing plants etc in addition to research and institutional facilities. This area will also accommodate a range of businesses from start-up companies and incubator units to office and training facilities.

Childcare facilities:

A childcare facility should be provided within Industrial Estates and Business Parks in accordance with the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2001.

Parking will be provided to the rear of the buildings and out of sight from the public. Landscaping will be provided surrounding all of the developments with special landscaping acting as a buffer between existing dwellings and proposed new developments. Buildings within this area will normally front the main access road and, where applicable, enhance the corners of the site.

Any type of development falling under the remit of Part 11 ‘Major Accidents Directive’ of The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended will not be permitted within the Innovation Technology District.



Map 8.15 Robinstown Indicative Built Form Map

8.30 CONTRIBUTIONS & INFRASTRUCTURE

In order to fund the support infrastructure to fully implement this plan, the Council will consider establishing a specific Contribution Scheme for the benefiting area within this Framework Plan. Pending the adoption of any new Contribution Scheme, contributions in respect of public infrastructure and facilities including open spaces, benefiting the development, will be levied by the Planning Authority, on the basis of the established Contribution Schemes for the town of Mullingar.

8.31 IMPLEMENTATION & PHASING OF DEVELOPMENT

Given the scale and range of development envisaged within this Framework Plan, full implementation will not take place within the lifetime of this Local Area Plan. The priority areas for development up to 2020 comprise of the General Urban District, education and recreational provision and the advancement of employment within the Innovation and Technology District.

Phasing of development will also be influenced by:

- The provision of key infrastructure
- The improvement of access to and through the area
- Investment climate for enterprise creation
- Sequential approaches to development in order to secure the orderly expansion of Mullingar Town in the longer term.

The Council has powers which can help achieve some aspects of the plan, such as compulsory acquisition powers which may be used, if required, to facilitate site assembly or to secure the realisation of objectives contained in the plan. The Council can also require developers to contribute to the achievement of the specific objectives of this plan, including those relating to the provision of physical and social infrastructure, within their individual development proposals. In order to fund the support infrastructure to fully implement this Plan, it may be necessary to establish a specific General Contribution Scheme for the benefiting lands.

Chapter 9 *Development Management*



9 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STANDARDS

INTRODUCTION

Development Management is one of the main implementation tools of this Local Area Plan. The carrying out of development in accordance with the standards set out in this chapter is therefore critical to the achievement of the objectives of the Mullingar Local Area Plan 2014-2020. The purpose of this chapter is to ensure that new development is of a high quality and satisfactorily relates to the character, scale, layout, form of development in the area in question. Reference to other agencies and legislative requirements is also made and these and their latest revisions will be taken into consideration.

The Council promotes prudent use of natural resources, prompting sustainable construction and sustainable energy practices. The creation of attractive environments with a genuine sense of space and place is a prerequisite to achieving sustainability.

9.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES

9.1.1 Design Statement

The design of schemes should promote best practice in architectural design, consistent with the aims of the “Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015” (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009).

The Planning Authority will require all planning applications for 20 houses or commercial/ industrial developments over 1,000sq.m to include a ‘Design Statement’. A ‘Design Statement’ is a short document which enables the applicant to explain why a particular design solution is considered the most suitable for a particular site. The statement will usually consist of both text and graphics, but is not intended to duplicate planning application documents. It may be of special value in

explaining why the context requires an exceptional – rather than a conventional – design approach. The statement should address all relevant Development Plan or Local Area Plan design policies and objectives, and relate them to the site. The Design Statement could outline a justification for the development as proposed and any alternative design options considered.

9.1.2 Visual Impact Assessments/ Photomontages

The Planning Authority will generally require Visual Impact Assessments (VIAs) to be completed to illustrate the visual impact of proposals likely to have an impact on protected views and other views of special amenity value. Failure to properly assess any major proposal in this regard will normally result in further information being requested. Visual Impact Assessment will be required for sites that lie within or towards views of:

- Landmark building viewing corridors;
- Landmark buildings within panoramic views;
- River Prospects;
- Areas of outstanding landscape or townscape value;

The impact of developments on important views and vistas can be accurately evaluated with Building Information Modelling models (BIM). This technique allows an accurate representation of the proposed development to be superimposed on its actual surroundings, thus enabling the scale, massing and heights of proposed developments to be assessed in relation to their context.

9.1.3 Building Height

There are a number of important/prominent views and panoramas both within and on approach to Mullingar, which require special consideration with regard to a tall building proposal. Impacts on these important views and panoramas could be negative or positive, however where it is considered that a proposal would have a significant impact on an important view or panorama a high level of detail would

have to be presented to justify the proposal, including computer generated images and 3D modelling of the views in question.

Other views and panoramas in addition to those listed above may be identified as being important in the course of assessing specific sites/proposals. The onus would be on anyone bringing forward such a proposal to identify and deal with any such issues in the course of the proposal.

9.1.4 Tall Building Precedent

Precedent exists for tall buildings to varying extents in Mullingar; these act as natural reference points to those considering tall buildings in these towns. Scope exists to provide tall buildings within this new skyline to achieve greater legibility in their context.

The Cathedrals and Church Spires represent the more established high precedent, utilising more traditional architectural methods, these shall remain the predominant features of the skyline. For the purposes of this plan, a tall building is a building of over three or four storeys, depending on context.

9.1.5 Use

Tall buildings are most successful where they contain a mix of uses. Uses that would ensure vitality and vibrancy at ground floor level are critical to the success of a tall building. Public use buildings such as a hotel or similar uses could be appropriate for a tall building.

Tall buildings over 3-4 storeys are generally considered to be inappropriate for residential use in Mullingar. There is however potential for mixed-use buildings to accommodate an element of high quality residential units over commercial uses to ensure efficient use of town centre lands.

The quality of residential elements of tall buildings is of critical importance to their success. The internal and external design, access to a high standard of services and

amenities including open space/recreational facilities, help make residential units attractive and conducive to owner and family occupation which is in turn essential to the medium and long term success of any such proposal.

9.1.6 Assessment of site

Sites where tall buildings may be proposed will be assessed using the following criteria:

- a) Does the site lend itself to a tall building arising from its **natural topography**?
- b) Given other constraints is the site of a **size** such that it can accommodate a tall building?
- c) Is the **urban grain** of the site and **grain and use of its surrounding** area compatible with the development of a tall building?
- d) Does the site avoid known or potential **archaeology** of significance?
- e) Where there is known **archaeology** within the proposed site can a tall building offer enhanced access and interpretation of site's past?
- f) Does the site have an established **building line** that can be enhanced by a tall building?
- g) Would a tall building on the site enhance an existing or help in defining **streetscape**?
- h) Do the existing **street width(s)** and number of streets the site fronts onto lend themselves to a tall building from an urban design and traffic safety perspective?
- i) Is there an **existing built form**, which can be enhanced by a tall building?
- j) Does the site avoid and/or offer potential to protect and enhance **ACAs**, and/or **Protected Structures** including close and distant views to and from?
- k) Where the site contains structures of **architectural and street/townscape merit** can they be enhanced by the development of a tall building?
- l) Does the site present opportunities which could be enhanced by the development of a tall building such as **external public spaces**?
- m) In the case of a tall building for a major employment generator on a green field site outside of the policy boundary is the site of sufficient size to facilitate a high level of

landscaping to form the setting of such a significant structure?

- n) Is the site adjacent to existing or proposed significant **public open space**?
- o) Is the site adjacent to a **waterway**?
- p) Are there important **views, panoramas and glimpses** (close and distant views) that would be impacted upon by a tall building on the site?
- q) Does the site offer potential to **cluster** taller buildings?
- r) Does the site offer potential for **stepping** from or to, existing or potential taller buildings?
- s) Does the site present opportunities to enhance daytime and night time **skylines/roofscapes**? (assessed particularly from the identified view and panoramas)
- t) Has the site proximity and the potential to offer good permeability from both within and to its wider setting to **public transport** infrastructure?
- u) Has the site or adjacent land been designated as a **European site** as defined in the Planning and Development Act 2000 or contain other assets of Natural Heritage Value?

9.1.7 Assessment of a Proposal for a Tall Building.

Proposals for tall buildings will be assessed using the following criteria:

- a) Is the proposal of high **architectural quality** when assessed under the following headings?
 - Height to width ratio
 - Scale
 - Form
 - Relationship with established building line if any, potential for establishment of building line where there is none.
 - Massing and bulk from both main and other views in isolation and in context
 - Plot ratio
 - Proportion
 - Affect on long, medium and short views into and out of the town, including but not confined to those views identified, by day and night. Are views weak or overpowering? Does it respect the scale and rhythm of its neighbours?
- b) Have car **parking** proposals and accommodation thereof within the proposed site been resolved successfully in the design whilst meeting Development Plan standards?
- c) Has surface **car parking been landscaped and** treated to a high standard?
- d) Has the short and long term commercial **viability** of the proposal been considered? Have adaptability and other safeguards against future obsolescence been designed in?
- e) Does the proposed development contribute positively to **public space** (internal and/or external) and to the public domain? Is it clear that this public space will provide a positive benefit; will it have a genuine use?
 - Lighting
 - Design of top and base of the building
 - Silhouette
 - Quality of proposed materials, how do they relate to materials in the surrounding area? Are there interesting comparisons or contrasts? How will proposed colours work?
 - Is the architecture appropriate to the use; is the design trying to be too grand or too modest?
 - Sustainability of construction and use? (due to the high profile and local impact high buildings will be expected to exceed current policies and regulation with regard to energy use and full life cycle energy cost of construction and operation)
 - Does the design contribute to the heterogeneity of design in the town whilst respecting existing built forms and materials?
 - Is the proposed landscaping of a sufficiently high quantity and quality to provide an appropriate setting for a tall building?

- f) Has the **vitality** of the proposed development been maximised, street level activity etc.?
- g) Has provision been made through uses and/or spaces created, for **social engagement**?
- h) Will the proposal contribute to **sense of place** and avoid the creation of anywhere places?
- i) Has the potential for the creation of **micro climates** been considered and mitigated in the design?
- j) Does the design including positioning and orientation of residential blocks, deal with issues of **daylight and sunlight** for both future users and any adjoining existing users? The recommendations of 'Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice', (B.R.E. 1991) or B.S. 8026 'Lighting for Buildings, Part 2 1992: Code of Practice for Day lighting' should be followed in this regard.
- k) Has any potential **overshadowing** of adjacent property been dealt with satisfactorily?
- l) Have opportunities for increased permeability **and legibility** of the street/townscape been availed of successfully?
- m) Have issues such as **access and means of escape** dealt with under other codes been considered so that they will not impact on proposed design?
- n) Does the proposal meet or exceed **current design standards** for internal and external spaces?
- o) Have real **alternative development strategies** been considered and the tall building remains the optimum method to achieve the development goals? For residential proposals alternatives may include urban blocks, apartments built around garden squares.
- p) Has provision been made in the design for **antennae, plant rooms, satellite dishes**, accommodation of window cleaning equipment/maintenance etc?

9.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Certain developments may require the submission of an Environmental Impact Statement at application stage, if the development is likely to have a significant effect on the environment. The full list of projects and threshold limits for EIA development are set out in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended. Regard shall also be had to current Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment.

9.3 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

Appropriate Assessment (AA) is a process of the assessment of the likely significant effects of every plan or project on the Natura 2000 network. The Natura 2000 network consists of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and candidate SACs and Special Protection Areas (SPA) and candidate SPAs within a 15km radius.

An Appropriate Assessment of proposed development is required in cases where it cannot be discounted that the proposed development would have a significant effect on a European site. It is the responsibility of the Planning Authority to screen proposed developments to determine whether an Appropriate Assessment is required. Where the Authority determines that an Appropriate Assessment is required, the applicant will normally be required to submit a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) with the planning application. Where the applicant considers that the proposed development is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site, it is open to him/her to submit a NIS with the planning application. The screening, scoping and carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment shall be undertaken in accordance with the Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland-Guidance for Planning Authorities 2009.

9.4 ACCESS FOR ALL

The Council recognises the need for equality of access for everybody to all aspects of the built and external environment as a fundamental prerequisite of equal opportunities and the development of an inclusive society. Standards established in Part M of the Building Regulations (S.I. No. 179 of 2000) seek to ensure that buildings are accessible and usable by everyone, including the aged, people with disabilities and people with children. The Technical Guidance Document in relation to Part M provides guidance on the access requirements for public buildings and for residential dwellings.

The Council will have regard to the National Disability Authority's Building for Everyone Planning Guidance (2009) and will seek to encourage the implementation of best practice standards with regard to access in relation to both indoor and outdoor environments.

An important element in achieving sustainability in the design of residential units is the ability of the design to accommodate reduced mobility as residents may acquire some level of mobility impairment through accident, or as an inevitable consequence of old age. In assessing planning applications in relation to protected structures, regard shall be had to the protected status of the structure and the need to protect the special character.

9.5 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Proposals should seek, as is reasonably possible, to address best practice sustainable solutions with emphasis on the following:

9.5.1 Sustainable Site Design

- The proposal should address how existing natural features of the site will inform sustainable urban design by exploring the potential for the integration of existing natural features of merit such as watercourses, mature planting and

topography. Such an approach ensures that the landscape character of the area is maintained whilst also assisting biodiversity maintenance and more natural forms of surface water drainage.

- Effectively, the layout of the proposed development will be informed by the inherent natural characteristics of the site. Connectivity between proposed open spaces and adjoining existing open space or natural features should also be considered in the site design.
- Proposals in relation to larger sites should be cognisant of any ecologically sensitive areas where it may be appropriate to retain or integrate into a Landscape Plan. In such cases the ecological attributes of the site and the impact of any development should be considered prior to any final design. Consultation with the Council is recommended in such instances, with all landscaping proposals complying with standards on landscaping.

9.5.2 Sustainable Buildings

- The Council welcomes development proposals that incorporate building designs which utilise sustainable energy technologies and innovative design solutions such as solar panels. All large-scale development proposals should be accompanied by a Sustainable Construction Management Plan and Water Conservation Plan documenting the sustainable construction elements and technologies in their proposals.
- In landscaping proposals involving apartment schemes, industrial parks, large commercial developments or utility buildings, rainwater harvesting systems shall be provided. These features are particularly favourable owing to their effectiveness in conserving water.
- Rainwater harvesting systems offer sustainable, environmental and infrastructural inexpensive alternatives to purified water for non-potable uses, whilst

- alleviating demands on water treatment systems.
- Green roofs can store stormwater and slow down the rate of run-off. Thus easing pressure on urban drainage systems. Green roofs can also reduce the amount of energy lost from a building and can sequester and store more carbon. Improved air quality, higher biodiversity and use as an area of amenity are also additional benefits accrued from green roofs.
 - In order to achieve the benefits outlined above, the following specification is recommended:
 - Substrate depth 6-10 cm.
 - Planting; minimum requirement of extensive green roof planting supplemented with semi-intensive or intensive type planting.

Table 9.1 Type of Green Roof

Type of Green Roof	Vegetation Type
Intensive	Wide variety of plants, shrubs, trees & grasses.
Semi-intensive	Restricted to shrubs, perennials & grasses.
Extensive	Restricted to mosses, sedums & grasses.

- Larger development proposals should also consider the incorporation of District Heating and Combined Heat & Power (CHP) schemes.
- Development proposals should seek to employ the optimum use of sustainable building design criteria in order to reduce energy consumption. Such design criteria include:
 - Passive solar principles relating to the orientation, location and sizing of windows and use of energy efficient glazing units and frames.
 - The use of green building materials: low embodied energy & recycled materials.

- Appropriate use of thermal mass and insulation.
- Appropriate renewable technologies.
- The use of natural ventilation or mechanical ventilation with heat recovery.
- Building envelope air tightness.

9.5.3 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

All proposals should incorporate the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in accordance with the requirements and standards of the Council.

9.6 BUILDING ENERGY PERFORMANCE

Building Regulations (Part L Amendment) and the European Communities (Energy Performance of Buildings) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 further support the employment of the sustainable building design criteria outlined above by requiring all new buildings to become more energy efficient.

These regulations contain a range of provisions aimed at improving energy performance in residential and non-residential buildings, both new and existing. The regulations are augmented by the introduction of the Building Energy Rating certification process, which facilitates the assessment of the building on the basis of their energy performance.

The Council is committed to developing sustainable building requirements resulting in energy efficient, low environmental impact buildings. In this regard all buildings, particularly any new proposals considered by the Council, should seek to attain high BER levels. The incorporation of good, sustainable building designs will be considered a positive factor for the Council in considering new development proposals.

9.7 NOISE MANAGEMENT

The generation of noise in the community can have undesirable effects on residential areas and the community at large. Noise emissions from specific activities are controlled by the Environmental Protection Agency through Integrated Pollution Prevention Control (IPPC) licensing and Waste licensing (refer to the Guidance Notes for Noise In Relation To Scheduled Activities 2006 (EPA)). The Environmental Noise Directive (END) (2002/49/EC) relates to noise from industries, road, rail & air traffic and requires Authorities to assess and manage noise from these sources. The Directive mainly addresses noise emitted by a range of transport sources (road, rail, and air traffic), although the definition of 'environmental noise' includes noise from industrial sites.

Where planning applications are submitted in close proximity to major roads (both proposed and existing) and would result in a breach of the NRA's design goal for sensitive receptors exposed to road traffic noise, the developer shall identify and propose noise mitigation measures within the zone of influence. In this regard the developer should refer to the Environment Noise Regulations 2006 and Noise Maps developed by the Council. The cost of implementing mitigation measures shall be borne by the developer.

9.8 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING APPLICATIONS

OPW Channels' are maintainable channels. The OPW requests that a 10m strip be retained from the top of the bank on both sides of these channels to allow for maintenance. This strip should not be paved or landscaped in a manner that would prevent access by maintenance plant.

'Drainage District Channels' are maintainable channels under the Drainage Districts and are maintainable by the Local Authority. Similar

facilities for maintenance as required by the OPW may be appropriate at the discretion of the Local Authority.

9.8.1 Development Assessment Criteria

The Council is committed to avert, insofar as possible, the threat of flooding in new developments, to minimise the impact of structures and earthworks on flood plains and river flow, and to reduce the rate and quantity of surface water run-off from all new developments.

Applicants are required to conduct a Flood Impact Assessment (FIA) in accordance with The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009) in all applications where a potential flood risk exists. It shall be a requirement that development proposals are framed such as to address in an authoritative manner the following issues with regard to flood protection:

- The requirement that a Flood Impact Assessment be submitted with all significant development proposals (areas exceeding 0.2ha) identifying potential loss of floodplain storage and mitigation proposals to minimise flood risk and impact.
- To require a certificate from a 'suitably qualified competent person' stating that the proposed development will not contribute to flooding, with planning applications for smaller scale development proposals as considered appropriate.
- To require applicants to submit, prior to commencement, details of sediment and water pollution control measures, for the agreement of the Water Services and Environmental Departments as appropriate.
- Where proposed developments are adjacent to watercourses of a significant conveyance capacity, any proposed structures (including hard landscaping), shall be set back from the edge of the watercourse to allow access for channel

clearing/maintenance and to protect their biodiversity value.

- All development proposals, especially those in floodplains and areas liable to flooding, shall, in so far as is reasonably practicable, incorporate sustainable design/construction measures to reduce the rate and quantity of runoff; for example:
 - Hard surface areas (car parks, etc.), should be constructed in permeable or semi-permeable materials.
 - On-site storm water ponds to store and/or attenuate additional runoff from the development should be provided.
 - Soak-aways or French drains should be provided to increase infiltration and minimise additional runoff.
- All new flood prevention or channel maintenance development shall be designed and constructed to meet the following minimum flood design standards:
- For urban areas or where developments (existing, proposed or anticipated) are involved the 100 year flood, a term used to describe the probability of a flood event expected to occur once in 100 years, is used as an assessment criterion in relation to proposed developments and Flood Risk Management.
- The Council will take account of the Guidelines established in “The Planning System and Flood Risk Management”, Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (2009) in assessing any development proposals in flood risk areas, with particular regard to the sequential approach. The sequential approach involves:
 - Assessing areas for risk of flooding;
 - Avoiding development in areas at risk of flooding;
 - If this is not possible, consider substituting a land-use that is less vulnerable to flooding;
 - Only when both avoidance and substitution cannot take place should

consideration be given to mitigation and management of risks.

9.9 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

9.9.1 Existing Residential Development Conversion of Existing Houses to Apartment Accommodation

In general there is a presumption in favour of retaining houses suited for family accommodation in their original undivided form.

Subdivision of houses into a number of smaller units will only be acceptable in areas which are characterised by large houses on relatively extensive sites, which are well served by public transport and where subdivision into a number of units would not result in a dramatic alteration to the character of the area.

In all instances the standard of development provided should satisfy the following criteria:

- The minimum size of the unit is 65m² or more,
- The internal space and design standards are acceptable.
- Apartments are self-contained.
- Sound insulation is installed to alleviate the problems of noise both between the new residential units and between them and neighbouring dwellings.
- Adequate, safe and secure access to all dwellings is provided.
- Those intended for families are provided on the ground floor or have direct access to a garden.
- Adequate parking is provided and the parking is not provided at the expense of garden or courtyard areas necessary for amenity purposes.
- Car parking in the surrounding grounds is dealt with sensitively; extensive parking areas to the front of the building line will be resisted.

9.9.2 Extensions and alterations to Dwellings

Extensions to existing dwellings will be assessed in terms of the degree of impact on existing adjacent residential amenity and the design approach adopted.

Impact on residential amenity can result from over-shadowing, loss of light and loss of outlook or from loss of privacy resulting from over looking. Extensions will not be permitted where they result in an unacceptable impact to adjacent residential amenity.

In terms of design, care should be taken to ensure that the design satisfies the following criteria:

- Follows the pattern of the existing building as much as possible.
- Is constructed with similar finishes and with similar window arrangements to the existing building so that they integrate better with it.
- Elevation detailing should match that of the host structure.
- In the case of an extension to the side of a house, be set back at least 150mm from the front wall of the existing house to give a more satisfactory appearance.
- In some circumstances a gap of 1m to be retained between the extension and the neighbouring dwelling so as to prevent dwellings which were intended to be detached from becoming a terrace.
- Have a pitched roof, particularly when visible from the public road or when the building is two or three storeys high. The traditional ridged roof is likely to cause fewer problems in the future rather than flat ones.
- Dormer extensions should not obscure the main features of the existing roof, i.e. should not break the ridge or eaves lines of the roof. Box dormers should be avoided.
- Front dormers should normally be set back at least three-tile courses from the eaves line and should be clad in a material matching the existing roof.

- Proposed side extensions shall retain side access to the rear of the property where possible.

9.9.3 New Residential Development in an Urban Area Infill Residential Development

Potential sites may range from small gap infill, unused or derelict land and backland areas, up to larger residual sites or sites assembled from a multiplicity of ownerships. In residential areas where the character is established by its density or architectural form, a balance has to be struck between the reasonable protection of the amenities and privacy of adjoining dwellings, the protection of the established character and the need to provide residential infill. The design approach should be based on recognition of the need to protect the amenities of directly adjoining neighbours and the general character of the area and its amenities, i.e. views, architectural quality, civic design. However, subject to reasonable conformity with these, developments on infill sites, particularly those in excess of 0.5ha, should be capable of proposing their own density and character. Local Authority intervention may be needed to facilitate this type of development, in particular with regard to the provision of access to backlands.

9.9.4 Density

The Planning Authority will have regard to the principles as outlined in the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government publication 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2009) and the accompanying Urban Design Manual (2009) and Smarter Travel Policy. Within these policies and guidelines a range of residential densities are prescribed dependent on location, context, scale and availability of public transport. Recommended densities in Mullingar range from 35-50 units per hectare, depending on location. In the town centre, densities of up to 50 units per hectare will generally apply. In

outer suburban locations, a density of 35-50 units is applicable.

Higher densities may be considered in respect of all sites in urban areas, but particularly those developments in excess of 0.5ha. When considering proposals for housing developments the Council will give first priority to design quality and to securing a good environment for residents, having regard both to the individual characteristics of the site and the character of the surrounding area. Subject to this, development should make the best use of land and new dwellings should be constructed at an appropriate density. In some special circumstances, e.g. in areas of environmental or architectural merit, the appropriate density may need to be lower.

9.9.5 Site Coverage

In order to prevent adverse effects of over-development in inner urban locations site coverage of between 70% and 80% would be appropriate. However, some flexibility will be applied in the interests of achieving a more sustainable use of inner urban/town centre land, when design is of exceptional merit.

9.9.6 Plot Ratio

Plot ratio is defined as the gross floor area of buildings on a site divided by the gross site area and is used to depict the intensity of use on the site and is determined as follows:

$$\text{Plot Ratio} = \frac{\text{Gross floor area of the building(s)}}{\text{Site area}}$$

In calculating the area of site adjoining road widths are excluded. The following range of indicative plot ratios is recommended:

Table 9.2: Indicative Plot Ratios

Area Location	Indicative Plot Ratio
Town Centre/Brownfield	1.0 – 2.0
Inner Suburban	0.5 – 1.0
Outer Suburban Close Proximity to Public Transport	0.35 – 0.5
Outer Suburban Remote from Public Transport	0.25 – 0.35

9.9.7 Design

Development proposals shall exhibit a high quality of architectural design and layout in order to achieve a high quality living environment. All housing developments will be assessed in both quantitative and qualitative terms as to whether they demonstrate the key elements of a good urban design and meet prescribed standards.

9.9.8 Privacy and Enclosure

- (i) In order to achieve adequate privacy and open areas between houses in new residential development the normal minimum rear garden space shall be not less than 11m in depth. This should be measured to the rearmost wall of the house and should not extend less than the full width of the house. As it is appreciated that this standard may not be readily complied with on all occasions, discretion will be employed where a side garden of equal or greater dimensions can be substituted for rear garden space and where the building design provides for the achievement of privacy. Consideration may be given to further reduction if the site is infill, is less than 10m deep and design is of a high standard.
- (ii) Where a front boundary wall or fencing is provided, the design and materials shall be such as to provide a pleasing design feature to the overall housing layout.
- (iii) Rear boundary walls or fences shall be constructed to a height of not more than

2m. Permanent screening of a similar height should also be provided between the gardens of adjoining houses for a minimum distance of 2.5m behind the rear of the house.

9.9.9 Over-looking

In general there should be a distance of 22m between opposing rear first floor windows. Innovative dwelling types, such as single aspect houses which have their main sleeping and living areas on one side, and circulation and bathrooms on the other, can be closer. Where developments are proposed in existing residential areas a distance of 35m or greater is required in the case of overlooking living room windows and balconies. Any window proposed at ground floor level shall not be less than 1m from the boundary it faces.

9.9.10 Overshadowing

This may be a problem with significantly high buildings or when new buildings are located close to adjoining structures. Daylight and shadow projection diagrams should be submitted for such proposals. The recommendations of ‘Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice’, (B.R.E. 1991) or B.S. 8026 ‘Lighting for Buildings, Part 2 1992: Code of Practice for Day lighting’ should be followed in this regard.

9.9.11 Private Open Space for Houses

To ensure that conventional dwellings have adequate private space the following standards, as set down in the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government publication ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2009) and the accompanying Urban Design Manual (2009), will apply:

- In general, development should have regard to the general character of the area in which they are located.
- For 3/4/5 bedroom houses, a minimum of 60-75m² should be provided as private open space.

- 1 to 2 bedroom houses, a minimum of 48m² should be provided as private open space.
- A garden of 25m² should be considered the minimum for inner urban infill dwellings.

Where appropriate a condition may be applied to permissions requiring that no additional development whatsoever take place within the curtilage of each house save with a prior grant of permission, notwithstanding the exempted development provisions of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Regulations 2001 as amended.

Innovative layouts may contain a combination of private and semi-private spaces in courtyard layouts. It may be considered appropriate to accept the sum of the area of both spaces as satisfying the private open space requirement for these dwellings.

All houses (terraced, semi-detached, detached) should have an area of private open space behind the building line.

Table 9.3: Private Open Spaces for Houses

Accommodation size	Min. private open area
1-2 bedrooms	48m ²
3-4-5 bedrooms	60-75m ²

9.9.12 Public Open Space

Open space in housing estate areas shall normally be based on a standard of 15% minimum of gross site area. The open space provision should be on a hierarchical system distributed throughout the housing area, ranging from small children’s play areas, located in sight of their homes to larger areas where recreation and games can be facilitated.

Regard should be given to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government publication ‘Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2009) and the

accompanying Urban Design Manual (2009), in the development and layout of public open space areas.

9.9.13 Internal Standards for Apartments

The Planning Authority will have regard to standards scheduled in the 'Social Housing: Design Guidelines', (DECLG, 1999) and the 'Design Standards for New Apartments' (DECLG, 2007), in the assessment of the quality and adequacy of residential layout.

The recommended minimum floor areas and standards for apartments are as follows:

Table 9.4: Min. Overall Apartment Floor Areas

One bedroom	45 m ²
Two bedroom	73 m ²
Three bedrooms	90 m ²

Table 9.5: Minimum Aggregate Floor Areas for Living/Dining/Kitchen Rooms, And Minimum Widths for the Main Living/Dining Rooms for Apartments

Apartment type	Width of living/dining room	Aggregate floor area of living/dining/kitchen area*
One bedroom	3.3 m	23 m ²
Two bed	3.6 m	30 m ²
Three bedrooms	3.8 m	34 m ²

Table 9.6: Minimum Bedroom Floor Areas/Widths for Apartments

Type	Minimum width	Minimum floor area
Single bedroom	2.1 m	7.1 m ²
Double bedroom	2.8 m	11.4 m ²
Twin bedroom	2.8 m	13 m ²

* Note: Minimum floor areas exclude built-in storage presses.

Table 9.7: Minimum Aggregate Bedroom Floor Areas for Apartments

One bedroom	11.4 m ²
Two bedroom	11.4+13 m ² =24.4 m ²
Three bedrooms	11.4+13 + 7.1 m ² = 31.5 m ²

Table 9.8: Minimum Storage Space Requirements

One bedroom	3 m ²
Two bedroom	6 m ²
Three bedrooms	9 m ²

9.9.14 Private Open Space for Apartments

The provision of some private open area increases amenity of apartment living thereby making them more sustainable. For this reason, the provision of some private gardens, suitably landscaped, should be included in new apartment developments. Courtyards and terraces/patios, particularly in the inner urban areas should be considered in the design of new apartment development, where it is not practicable to provide a private garden.

To ensure that apartments and flats have adequate private space the following standards, as set down in the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government publication 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' 2009 and the accompanying Urban Design Manual, and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for Apartments (2007) will apply:

Inner Urban/Town Centres:

1 bedroom apartment: min. of 10m² of private open space

2-3 bedroom apartments: min. of 15-20m² of private open space

Any shortfall in provision shall be made up in the form of communal space.

Outer suburban areas:

1 bedroom apartment: min. of 20m² of private open space

2-3 bedroom apartments: min. of 30-40m² of private open space

In *outer suburban areas* private space may be in the form of communal gardens or courtyards.

9.9.15 Landscaping

Trees and shrubs help blend new houses and buildings into the landscape and enhance the amenity, aesthetic quality and wildlife value of a development. Where possible, existing trees and fences/hedgerows should be preserved and incorporated into the design. Detailed proposals providing for a mix of both hard and soft landscaped areas should form part of the estate development application. In the interests of sustainable development, existing trees or hedgerows should be retained. Additional planting should be selected from native species. Applicants may refer to Council Publications in this regard.

9.9.16 Phasing of Large Scale Residential Development Schemes

- In large developments the Planning Authority will seek phasing programmes. The phasing can be by: number of units over a certain time period, or on completion of a particular area of a development, which is regarded as a discreet entity.
Commencement of any next phase will not be permitted until all services and infrastructures are completed to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.
- The Planning Authority may condition that no houses in a development shall be occupied until services to each house has been completed and are operational.

9.9.17 Taking In Charge

In any applications to have a development Taken in Charge, the Council will have regard to

its policy document 'Taking in Charge policy for private Housing Developments.' Generally, individual phases of development will not be taken in charge, only the entire completed development will be considered.

9.9.18 Residential Car-parking

Cars and car-parking have both positive and negative impacts on the environment. A balance needs to be achieved between the provision of car-parking and convenient vehicular access, and the design of pleasant living and social streets. The integration and provision of car-parking needs to be carefully considered when designing new residential layouts.

The most successful housing developments in the long term will most likely employ a range of parking solutions, thus catering for different peoples needs throughout the life cycle, as well as changing market conditions. Depending on the density range, these parking solutions will be primarily communal on-street and supplemented with grouped parking, peripheral grouped parking; and smaller numbers of undercroft, on-curtilage, rear access and small private parking courtyards.

Car parking for detached and semi-detached housing should be within the house site. Car parking for apartments and terraced housing should be in informal groups overlooked by housing units. The visual impact of large areas of car parking should be reduced by the judicious use of screen planting, low walls and the use of textured or coloured paving for parking bays.

In town centre residential estates, the on-site car parking requirement may be reduced in light of availability of public transport and urban design requirements.

9.9.19 Road Design and Layout in Residential Schemes.

Regard shall be had to the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) (2013),

which aims to end the practice of designing streets as traffic corridors, and instead focus on the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. The Manual sets out design guidance and standards for constructing new and reconfiguring existing urban roads and incorporating good planning and design practice and focus on the public realm.

These Guidelines replace the document, Policy and Planning Framework for Roads, published by the Department in 1985, supplement other policy guidance in other Ministerial Guidelines and replace the NRA Policy Statement on Development Management and National Roads published in May 2006.

Significant development proposals affecting National roads must be accompanied by Traffic and Transport Assessments (TTA) and/or Road Safety Audits and refer to the National Road Authority's (NRA) *Design Manual for Roads and Bridge* and to the *Traffic Management Guidelines* prepared by the then Department of Transport and the Department of the Environment and Local Government together with the Dublin Transportation Authority.

Development proposals which may necessitate changes to road and/or junction layout in order to address capacity and road safety concerns arising from significant additional trips/travel generated by the proposed development should be accompanied by a Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA). Applicants of such developments are referred to the *Traffic Management Guidelines* and the *Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) Guidelines* (2007) published by the NRA.

9.10 NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN A RURAL AREA

It is the Council's intention to enable and enhance new development in the countryside to be absorbed in a sustainable way. Development shall reflect the vernacular aspects in design and treatment to ensure a

respect for the local and traditional context, with minimal intrusion on the landscape and utilising appropriate design, scale and materials and use of planting and landscaping.

The Council has produced a supplementary design guideline, the 'Westmeath Rural Design Guidelines'(2005) to inform rural development, the Council will have regard to these Guidelines in the assessment of rural residential proposals.

9.10.1 Plot Size

The scale of the building should be appropriate to its setting. Larger houses and their resultant form, whilst they may be visible should be contained in the landscape, avoiding obtrusiveness. Generally a site of 0.2 hectares is required for new residential development. However, a small, typical, half-acre site is unsuitable in a country setting for a very large house. The size of the site is an important factor, in its ability to integrate the development into the landscape.

9.10.2 Building Line

The set back of buildings from the public road will depend on site size, adjacent building line, and topography of the site. In the absence of existing houses or a specific character, new developments will be required to be set back to building lines as follows, subject to requirements of good design and layouts:

Table 9.9: Building Line Setback

Road Capacity	Distance from centre line of roadway (minimum)
Regional Route	37m
Local Roads	20m but Local factors will be taken into consideration.

9.10.3 Orientation

This will be influenced by the direction of the sun and make maximum use of existing landscape screening, regard should be had to the Westmeath Rural Design Guidelines.

9.10.4 Boundary Treatment

Hedgerows should be retained and reinforced. Only in exceptional circumstances shall hedgerows be removed. In all cases, the replacement of removed hedges with similar of native species will be required. Native hedgerow species are recommended for planting and plants of local provenance are always preferable.

Trees provide an attractive element to any garden or home and help to blend new housing into the countryside. Native trees are ecologically more valuable than non-native species.

Planting clumps of trees is preferable to single trees, and biodiversity value can be further enhanced by connecting new planting with hedgerows, woodland edges and rivers and ponds.

9.10.5 Traffic Safety and Sight Visibility

It in the interests of traffic safety, it is an objective to ensure that appropriate sight distances, as set out below, are provided from vehicular entrances on the road network.

The prescribed site distances are as follows;

- Local Roads: 90m
- Regional Roads 150m
- National Roads: 230m

As set out by the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges sight distances shall be measured from a point 2.4m from the road edge at the proposed access to a point at the near edge of the approaching carriageway. The standard for Local Roads can be reduced on Secondary or Tertiary roads at the discretion of the Planning Authority.

9.10.6 Entrances

A new entrance should combine the requirement for continuity in the type of natural boundary with carefully considered linking of hedges to gates.

The new entrance shall be located within a 9m x 2.4m parking strip which shall adjoin the metalled edge of the public road. Hedgerow disturbance should be limited to that required to provide the parking strip and required sightlines only.

The entrance gate shall be located within the parking strip and recessed 4m behind the roadside boundary. The entrance gate shall be joined to the fence line which shall be splayed at angles of 45 degrees.

Table 9.10: New Rural Entrances Should Not Be Located Within the Following Distances of Junctions

Road Class	Adjacent	Opposite
Local Roads	50m	25m
Regional Roads	100m	30m
National roads	150m	50m

9.10.7 Drainage Requirements

Where public services in the form of water supply and sewerage mains are available (or likely to be provided), the developer will be required to connect to them. The standards for single private wastewater treatment are set out in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 'Code of Practice on Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems serving Single Houses (October 2009), and any revisions thereof. This Code of Practice establishes an overall framework of best practice in relation to the development of wastewater treatment and disposal systems, in unsewered rural areas, for protection of our environment and specifically water quality. It provides guidance on the design, operation and maintenance of on-site wastewater treatment systems for single houses (p.e. ≤10). The Code provides for the certification of the treatment system by a person, suitably qualified, and with professional indemnity insurance.

9.10.8 Water

Each dwelling shall be provided with a viable and secure water supply. Where public water supply is available, connection shall be made to the Mains to serve the new development.

9.11 INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

9.11.1 Development Considerations

Industrial and commercial developments on greenfield sites will be required to satisfy minimum requirements for design regarding location, layout, finishes, access, tree planting and landscaping, boundary treatment, water supply, fire fighting, drainage, and effluent disposal.

In addition, sufficient space shall be reserved within the curtilage of the sites for parking of all employees and visitors cars, and for the loading and unloading of vehicles. Parking shall be integrated in the overall design layout, and expanses of parking shall be broken by planting and landscaping.

It is intended that such developments should leave one-third of the site free from buildings and that adequate rear access to business premises be made. The Council shall require that adequately screened onsite storage be provided for raw materials, waste products and finished goods.

The Council will require that the design of structures be of a good standard and compatible with the design of adjacent structures in terms of building line, heights, roof design, proportions, window design, materials etc., and will consider the preparation of a Design Guide for Industrial Estates during the plan period.

The Council does not favour the splitting of occupancy on serviced sites and will consider the designation of sites for smaller cluster units as necessary.

The Council will require full details of the nature and extent of processes involved in industrial activities together with the means of dealing effectively with effluents, noise, solid waste and gas emissions if relevant.

The Council will, in dealing with applications for industrial development, take account of relevant provisions of the Regulations on Environmental Impact Assessment (SI 349/89) and where relevant, the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 as amended, in relation to integrated pollution control licensing.

9.11.2 Facilitation of Enterprise and Employment Development

The Council is prepared to use its powers of site assembly where appropriate to facilitate desirable development for enterprise and employment.

9.11.3 Industrial & Business Parks Site Coverage

It is an objective of the Planning Authority to seek to achieve the following standards with regard to new development in Industrial and Business Parks:

- It is desirable that an adequate proportion of sites be left without covered structures for parking, loading, air circulation, refuse storage etc. In industrial estates, site coverage of 60% shall generally apply.

Business Parks shall be laid out in an open parkland setting with a high level of landscaping and provision shall be made for pedestrian and cycle paths. The following design issues should be taken into consideration:

- Individual buildings should exhibit a high quality contemporary design and finish.
- Car parking shall be provided in a discreet, landscaped and well-screened environment with a view to minimising its visual impact,

particularly when viewed from approach roads.

- Proposals shall incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) and other measures that address adaptation to climate change including the creation of integrated wetlands, the construction of green/living roofs whereby opportunities for existing Solar Energy and Wind Energy are taken.
- In order to ensure an attractive open parkland setting, the building line on all principal road frontages shall generally not be less than 15 metres from the road. There shall be a minimum planted strip of a width of 5 metres on all principal road frontages. Where a proposed development is located within convenient walking distance of a high quality public transport network the above requirement may be varied so as to achieve a scale of development and density of employment appropriate to the proximity of the site to a high quality public transport network.

9.12 MIXED USE DEVELOPMENTS

In considering mixed use developments within the areas identified as appropriate in the county's towns and villages. The following mechanism for securing mixed-use developments in appropriate locations will be applied:

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

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.

9.13 EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Generally speaking, the minimum size for a new primary school is 8 classrooms. In rapidly developing areas this minimum may be as high as 16 classrooms, depending on the school catchment population and anticipated need.

Sites required for schools shall comply with the requirements of 'The Provision of Schools and the Planning System A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities' (2008). School buildings should exhibit high quality contemporary design, finishes and material.

9.14 CHILDCARE

Childcare facilities should comply with the provisions of 'Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2001). Childcare facilities are a key element in the provision of sustainable communities, and the following locations are considered appropriate locations for childcare facilities:

- (i) In communities/larger new housing estates.
- (ii) The vicinity of concentrations of work places, such as Industrial Estates, Business Parks and any other locations where there are significant numbers working.
- (iii) In the vicinity of schools.
- (iv) Neighbourhood and Town centres.
- (v) Adjacent to public transport corridors, park-and-ride facilities, pedestrian routes and dedicated cycle ways.

In relation to new housing areas a standard of one childcare facility providing for a minimum of 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings shall be provided, unless otherwise recommended by the County Childcare Committee.

9.15 NURSING HOMES

In general, these facilities should be located close to a range of facilities in the town, where

the residents can more easily access local services.

In determining planning applications for change of use of a residential dwelling or other building to nursing/elderly care home, the following factors should be considered:

- Compliance with the standards as set out in the Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) Regulations 2009 and the Health Act 2007 (Care and Welfare of Residents in Designated Centres for Older People) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 (or any such other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted).
- The impact on the amenities of adjoining properties.
- Suitable private open space.
- Proximity to local services and facilities.
- The size and scale of the facility proposed – the scale must be appropriate to the area.

Comprehensive landscaping plans must be prepared by a fully qualified Landscape Architect and shall be submitted at application stage.

9.16 RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

The Retail Planning Guidelines (2012) and accompanying Retail Design Manual require that the location, scale, nature and function of future retail development comply with the retail policies and objectives set out in Chapter 4 and with the key principles of the sequential approach as set out in the Guidelines. The Council will generally require a Retail Impact Assessment (RIA) to be carried out for large-scale retail proposals or where the Planning Authority considers the development may impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre.

The RIA shall comply with the criteria set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012) and accompanying Retail Design Manual.

It is a requirement of the Council that proposals for major retail centres such as shopping centres and retail outlets are accompanied by specific measures to address the following issues:

- The ability of the proposal to be adequately serviced in relation to car parking, public transport and pedestrian and cyclist access and facilities.
- The creation, and enclosure of, good pedestrian space at an appropriate scale;
- A good mix of uses to increase activity and passive security, particularly in the evening time.
- The provision, within the overall design of the centre, of public facilities such as childcare facilities, toilets, advice centres, public telephones, etc.
- The provision and design of street furniture including public art, telephones, seats, litter bins, etc.
- The design and layout of buildings, including materials, should discourage graffiti and other forms of vandalism.
- Service areas should be out of sight of surrounding residential and pedestrian areas.
- Tree planting and landscaping must form part of the overall design of the centre, plans of which must be prepared by a fully qualified Landscape Architect.
- Infill development should reflect the architectural character of its surroundings in terms of height, massing, materials and design.
- Shopping centres must conform to the highest urban design standards. The design must ensure that the proposed centre will be integrated with, and be complementary to the streetscape where it will be located in accordance with detailed urban design framework.

9.16.1 Retail Design

The designers of prospective retail developments are encouraged to carry out an appraisal of the distinctive character of the area

adjoining the site and to consider how the design and layout of the proposed development responds to, and preferably enriches that character. In instances where an appraisal finds that the adjacent area is characterised by poor design, the design approach to the proposed development shall be based on the ten urban design principles as outlined in Chapter 3.

9.16.2 Pre-Application Consultation

The Council will encourage the use of pre-application consultations with developers and their design teams, particularly in instances of major development proposals or where design issues are particularly important, e.g. within heritage towns or conservation areas, or which affect Protected Structures or Architectural Conservation Areas.

9.16.3 Use of Design Statements

A Design Statement addressing why a particular design solution is considered the most suitable for a particular site, especially in the context of larger or more complex forms of retail development, is required from developers or designers in supporting their planning application for large scale developments. In such circumstances, the following issues shall be addressed.

- How the proposed development contributes to the coherence and legibility of the urban structure of its location.
- The ability of the proposal to be adequately serviced in relation to car parking, public transport and pedestrian and cyclist access and facilities.
- The creation and enclosure of high quality pedestrian space at an appropriate scale.
- Contribute to the promotion of greater vitality and viability in town and village centres and provide a diversity of choice and quality in their retail offer and facilities.
- How proposed developments in larger urban centres combine shopping with complimentary uses that stay open later or contain residential elements in order to

increase the evening activity and security of the centre.

- The provision and design of street furniture including public art, telephones, seats, litter bins, etc.

9.16.4 Shopfronts

Traditional shop front designs and nameplates over shop windows should be preserved. The Council will require that new shop fronts designs be in keeping with the existing character and traditional form of the streetscapes of the county.

New shopfront design shall respect the scale and proportioning of the streetscape by maintaining the existing scale of development along the street and respecting the appropriate plot width. Large expanses of undivided glass will generally not be permitted. Elevation modelling and vertical proportioning should break up long runs of horizontal facades. The uses of fascias, pilasters and stall risers are means to achieve this.

9.16.5 Petrol Filling Stations

Regard shall be had to the Retail Planning Guidelines, (Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, 2012) and the County Retail Strategy when assessing applications.

Proposals for petrol stations shall comply with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges National Roads Authority (2000) along with the Dangerous Substances Regulations SI 311 (1979). Discharge licences to sewer shall be in accordance with the Water Pollution Acts 1979 and 1990.

9.16.6 Automatic Teller Machines

The provision of Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) will be strictly monitored having regard to the need to protect the character of the relevant building and to allow the normal function of the footpath. The Council would seek to minimise the impact of these machines

by not allowing canopies and encouraging the provision of lobby facilities.

9.16.7 Take-Aways

Due to amenity considerations, take-away establishments should generally be confined to core retail areas or areas of mixed commercial development. Such uses are generally not suited to mid-terrace locations or other locations where neighbouring properties or upper floors unconnected with the business are in residential use. Proposals for such uses near to residential areas will be given very careful consideration. In order to maintain an appropriate mix of uses and protect night-time amenities in particular areas, it is the objective of the Council to prevent an excessive concentration of takeaways and to ensure that the intensity of any proposed takeaway is in keeping with both the scale of the building and the pattern of development in the area. The provision of such facilities will be strictly controlled.

9.16.8 Betting Offices

The Council shall seek to avoid a concentration of betting offices in the core retail centre of the town. In controlling the provision of betting offices, the Council shall have regard to the following, where appropriate:

- The need to safeguard the vitality and viability of the defined retail core and to maintain a suitable mix of retail uses;
- The number/frequency of such facilities in the area;
- The existing number of similar, non-traditional retail service outlets in core retail areas such as internet cafés, call centres, amusement arcades and takeaways;
- The effect on the amenities in the area arising from noise, hours of operation and litter.

9.16.9 Amusement Arcades / Casinos

In considering proposals for Amusement Arcades and Casinos, the Council will have regard to the likely impact on the amenity of

neighbouring activities. There will be a presumption against locating them or expanding existing arcades in primary frontages or smaller settlements in order to maintain the vitality and character of shopping areas. Amusement arcades and casinos will not be permitted close to residential areas, schools, churches and other community buildings or associated lands due to the potential for noise and general disturbance. The provision of such facilities will be strictly controlled, having regard to the following, where appropriate:

- The likely impact on the residential amenity of the area arising from noise, litter and hours of operation;
- The number/frequency of such facilities in the area;
- The existing number of similar, non-traditional retail service outlets in core retail areas such as internet cafés, call centres, amusement arcades and takeaways;

9.16.10 Market/Casual Trading

Farmers' or local country markets are an increasingly popular retail element of towns and villages, providing an effective means of selling locally sourced produce and opportunities and expanding the rural economy base. The Council will seek to protect the economic and social benefits such markets offer on account of their ability to sustain and reinforce rural areas and support their role as visitor attractions. In considering planning applications for such facilities, the Council will have regard to the following:

- The impact the market would have on town centre vitality and viability and retail policy provisions.
- The likely impact on residential amenity, conservation areas, the general environment or existing shops.
- The capacity of the existing road structure to take any additional traffic generated by the proposal and parking requirements.
- Arrangements for customers'/traders' parking, servicing, storage, disposal and recycling of refuse and storage of stalls.

- Provisions of the Casual Trading Act of 1995 and specifically any bye-laws made by Westmeath County Council under Section 6 of the Act.

9.17 FACILITIES AND AMENITIES ANCILLARY TO TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL ATTRACTIONS

Certain facilities and amenities, and associated services, are often required to support the enjoyment of tourism and recreational attractions particularly in areas of high amenity value. Facilities of this type would often include car parks, viewing points, and may include toilets and cafes. Facilities will be permitted, where it can be demonstrated that they involve as appropriate:

- A simple form and function and unobtrusive siting and design so as not to interfere with the visual setting of sensitive visual attractions.
- The particular facilities are justified by reference to anticipated demand.
- There should be adequate capacity in the local public road network to accommodate vehicular and non vehicular traffic generated by the tourist and recreational attractions. This would involve where possible off road car parking sufficient for anticipated demand and strategically located to avoid traffic hazard and nuisance.
- Adequate signage, and interpretation panels, to inform and enhance the visitor experience and assist in proper site management.

It is important that both the facilities themselves, and downstream environmental impacts, are non-obtrusive with respect to the intrinsic character of place and setting that is essential to the amenity value of the attraction; and with respect to local biodiversity, and historic and archaeological potential that is associated with the environment.

9.17.1 Sustainable Forms of Niche Tourism and Recreation

The Council will promote sustainable forms of niche tourism and recreation in the town and its environs. These include theme holidays and group based activities that take advantage of local and natural resources in a way that enhances the appreciation of place, minimises disturbance to the local environment, and improves the prospects for tourism in the long term. Land uses can be associated with particular farms or forests, or special natural features. As a general preference, facilities should be in existing structures, or in buildings of character requiring renovation or in traditional farm houses. Where new buildings are permitted outside of this framework, they should be modest in scale, sensitively located and designed having regard to existing buildings, topography and landscape. In addition, they should be adequately serviced and suitably managed.

9.18 AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture will continue to be an important land use activity in the outer area of the Town and agricultural development in the form of new agricultural structures and extensions to existing buildings is likely to take place. In considering applications for agricultural development the Planning Authority will apply the same criteria as it would in any other planning applications and will be bound by the consideration of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. The Planning Authority will exercise strict control over the discharge of effluent from agricultural buildings in order to protect water bodies, water supplies and existing biodiversity.

9.18.1 Agricultural Buildings and Structures

- (i) The design, scale, siting and layout of agricultural buildings should respect, and where possible, enhance the rural environment.

- (ii) Buildings should generally be located a minimum of 100 metres from the nearest dwelling other than the applicants dwelling.
- (iii) Applicants shall demonstrate their ability to store and dispose of agriculture waste.
- (iv) In visually sensitive areas the Council will seek to group together and site buildings in an appropriate manner, and require the use of harmonious external materials to minimise obtrusion on the landscape. The use of dark coloured cladding, notably dark browns, greys, greens and reds are most suitable for farm buildings, and roof areas should be darker than walls.

9.18.2 Reuse of Existing Buildings

Planning permission may be granted for the re-use of redundant farm buildings for small-scale rural enterprise, provided the Council is satisfied about the following matters:

- That the building was previously in agricultural use for a reasonable period of time.
- That it is no longer required for agricultural purposes.
- That the use can be largely contained within the existing building.

9.18.3 Agricultural Related Industry

- (i) Agricultural-related development may not be permitted within the agricultural zone where it conflicts with the amenity or viable use of farm holdings.
- (ii) Other considerations include traffic safety, pollution and waste control, and the satisfactory treatment of effluents, smells and noise, the size and form of building and the extent to which they can be integrated into the landscape.

9.18.4 Forestry

Given the need to restructure agricultural practises the Council will assist the development of forestry, particularly deciduous forestry, as an alternative agricultural land use, while also protecting residential amenities of rural dwellers by the establishment of an appropriate area free from afforestation.

Forest developments should follow current best practice and the Forest Service's "Forestry and the Landscape Guidelines" (July 2000) where landscape objectives should focus on compatibility with, and enhancement of, existing local landscape character. Landscape Design Plans should be prepared where sensitive High Amenity Areas (HAA) are concerned.

Afforestation projects should be designed and implemented in a manner likely to enhance existing local amenities.

Forest owners should prepare and maintain a Forest Fire Defence Strategy, including provision and maintenance of adequate prescribed firebreaks, water supply reservoirs and forest access. Fire Plans should be prepared for each forest and reviewed annually.

The Council will not favour the development of forestry in locations which would adversely impact upon Protected/Listed Views or would adversely impact upon recorded monuments. Some forestry developments are subject to EIA, regard should be had to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 as amended in this regard.

9.19 ENVIRONMENT & HERITAGE

9.19.1 Protected Structures

Good design and conservation go hand in hand. They both recognise that the historic environment is a precious asset that shall be conserved for future generations. Good conservation ensures that important buildings and spaces continue to have contemporary relevance and vitality.

9.19.2 Development Involving Extensions or Alterations to a Protected Structure

The Council will not normally permit development, which would adversely affect the character or setting of a Protected Structure. Development proposals will normally only be

considered appropriate where all the following criteria are met:

- (a) The detailed design respects the Protected Structure in terms of scale, height, massing and alignment.
- (b) The works proposed make use of traditional or sympathetic structural materials and techniques which respect those found on the structure.
- (c) The nature of the use proposed respects the character and setting of the structure.
- (d) Development proposals involving protected structures shall be prepared by a Conservation Architect.

9.19.3 Recording and Designation of a Protected Structure

The Council will endeavour to keep an up-to-date and accurate list of Protected Structures, in the form of a Record of Protected Structures, and to inform owners/occupiers of the structure's status and their responsibilities.

9.19.4 Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and Townscape

The Council will require development proposals for new buildings, alterations, extensions and changes of use in, or which affect the setting of an Architectural Conservation Area to demonstrate that following criteria are met:

- (a) The development preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area.
- (b) The development is in sympathy with the characteristic built form of the area.
- (c) The scale, form, materials and detailing of the development respects the characteristics of adjoining buildings in the area.
- (d) Important views within, into and out of the area protected.
- (e) Trees and other landscape features contributing to the character or appearance of the area are protected.
- (f) The development conforms to the guidance set out in Architectural Conservation Area development briefs.

9.20 ARCHAEOLOGY

- (i) Within the designated Zone of Archaeological Potential in Mullingar and in sites on or abutting monuments identified by the Sites and Monuments Record, the Council will refer applications for proposed developments to the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht to ascertain their requirements.
- (ii) Where a proposed development would result in significant ground disturbance within a Zone of Archaeological Potential, a preliminary archaeological investigation by a licensed Archaeologist will be required to form part of any planning application.
- (iii) Where a proposed development would result in significant ground disturbance leading to potentially significant archaeological implications in a Zone of Archaeological Potential or in sites on or abutting monuments identified by the Sites and Monuments Record, a comprehensive Archaeological Report from a licensed Archaeologist will be required to be submitted to the Council and to the National Monuments Service of Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, for their assessment, prior to the commencement of any development on site, or where considered appropriate prior to the decision by the Council on a Planning Application.
- (iv) In all cases where a development would result in ground disturbance within a Zone of Archaeological Potential and in sites on or abutting monuments identified in the Sites and Monuments Record, it will be a requirement of a permission that a licensed Archaeologist be retained on site to monitor all site works, and in appropriate circumstances the preservation of all or part of any archaeological material so discovered will be required.
- (v) It will be a requirement that development shall cease immediately

upon the finding of any elements or artefacts of archaeological interest, and the Planning Authority and National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht, are informed to facilitate recording and protection of such elements.

9.21 TRANSPORT

9.21.1 Mobility Management Plans

Mobility Management aims to mitigate congestion in urban areas by providing for the transportation needs of people and goods in an ordered and planned manner. In doing this, the environmental and economic impacts of travel may be greatly reduced. Regard shall be had to the NRA Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2007, when preparing Mobility Management Plans. Mobility Management Plans are required where significant developments are proposed. The Council will require that consideration is given by prospective developers to limiting traffic generation as far as possible. Significant developments are those which are likely to result in more than 25 employees in a facility or a housing estate development. The developer should include in any significant proposal measures to reduce dependency on private car use for journey to work such as:

- Facilities to encourage car sharing/ pooling;
- Promotion of public transport / cycling / walking; and
- Provision of physical infrastructure to support cycling/walking i.e. footpaths /cycling paths and bicycle storage areas, showers, changing areas etc.

9.21.2 Car Parking Standards

It will generally be required that developments that are residential, commercial, enterprise and employment or otherwise, shall comply with the parking standards detailed in Table 9.11. The Council shall seek to control the provision of parking in town centres and has a policy to encourage alternatives to car commuting. Within the designated town centre location a lower standard of car parking provision shall apply.

9.21.3 Access for People with Disabilities / Mobility Impaired.

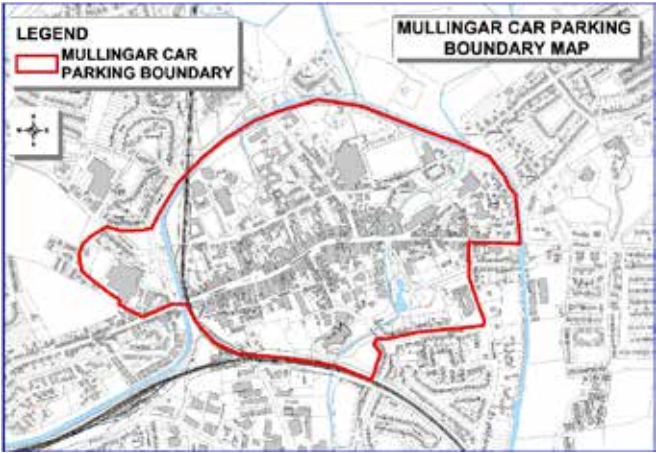
Car parking shall be provided for the People with Disabilities/mobility-impaired in all car parking developments. The minimum criteria for such parking provisions are detailed in “Building for Everyone -Planning and Policy”, published by the National Disability Authority in 2009. Special car parking bays for people with disabilities shall be provided as close as possible to the entrance of premises to be served. Each designated parking bay shall be clearly marked with the relevant standard international symbol.

Table 9.11: Car parking standards

Land Use	Unit	Plan Area	Designated Town Centre Area
		Min. Space / Unit	Min. Space/ Unit
Residential 2+ bedrooms	Dwelling 2+ Bedrooms	1	0
Residential 1 bedroom	Dwelling 1 bedroom	1	0
Visitor Parking for Residential	1 visitor space for every three dwellings	1	0
Shopping	100m ² gross floor area	6	3
Retail Warehousing	100m ² gross floor area	3	3
Cash & Carry	100m ² gross floor area	2	2
Manufacturing	100m ² gross floor area	2	1
Warehousing	100m ² gross floor area	1.5	1.5
Office	100m ² gross floor area	3	1.5
Bank/Financial Institutions	100m ² gross floor area	5	0
Library	100m ² gross floor area	3	1.5
Bar, function room, ballroom	100m ² gross floor area	6	0
Restaurant	100m ² gross floor area	6	0
Take-aways	Unit	5	0
Hotel/Guest House	Bedroom	1	0.5
Hospital	Bed	0.33	0.10
Nursing Home	Bed	0.33	0.10
Clinics and Group Medical Practises	Consulting room	1	1
Sports Hall/Club	100m ² gross floor area	2.00	0
Cinema, theatre, Stadium auditorium	Seat	1.0	0

The Town Centre Parking Standards will apply in the following designated areas:

The area bounded by the canal loop and the railway line to the south, including the Harbour St and Fairgreen Shopping Centres.



Map 9.1: Mullingar Car Parking Boundary.

For small scale development listed below within the area described above (Map 9.1), no parking requirement will apply, in the interests of encouraging town centre development and the consolidation of existing business:

- Extensions up to 100% of the net floor area of an existing business premises up to a maximum of 150m²
- New small business, the net floor area of which is below 150m²

This change in policy will have the effect of reducing the cost of starting or expanding a business in Mullingar Town Centre and will support the viability and vitality of the town centre area.

Required Dimensions:

- Car Parking Bay: 5m x 2.5m (end-on)
6m x 2.5m (parallel to kerb)
- Loading Bay: 15m x 3m (HGV)
6m x 3m (Small Van)
- Circulation Aisle: 6m in width.

9.21.4 Cycle Parking Standards

The Planning Authority requires the provision of a minimum level of secure cycle parking facilities in association with new development and a change of use. This is consistent with the objectives and policies of the Department of Transport’s National Cycle Policy (2009). Where the provision of cycle parking facilities are intended for use by the staff of that particular development, stands should be covered and located within the curtilage of the development to ensure security and supervision.

Table 9.1: Cycle Parking Standards (Source: National Cycle Manual, June 2011)

Location	Minimum number of bicycle parking spaces
Housing developments	2 private secure bicycle spaces per 100 sq.m (note –design should not require bicycle access via living area) 1 visitor bicycle space per two housing units
Offices	10% of employee numbers, (subject to minimum of 10 bicycle places or one bike space for every car space, whichever is the greater)
Schools	10% of pupil registration numbers, minimum 10 places Consider separate teacher / employee parking
Other developments	1 bike space for every car space
Shops	1 space per 100 sq m
Public Transport pick-up points (Rail, tram, taxi Ranks & QBCs)	2.5% of number of daily boarders at that point / station, subject to minimum of 10 bicycle places

9.21.5 Motorcycle Parking Standards

Provision for motorcycle parking will be required to accommodate this user and also to encourage modes of transport other than the car.

At a minimum, one secure motorcycle parking space shall be required for every 20 car parking spaces. These should be in well lit places, with limited gradients. The motorcycle parking bays should be a minimum of 2.5m by 1.5m. This may be required to be greater for bays parallel to the kerb to allow for manoeuvrability.

9.22 DEVELOPMENT ADJACENT/OVER OR NEAR RAILWAY

9.22.1 General

All potential works by third parties on and adjacent to the railway are required to meet the terms of the Railway Safety Act, 2005 (particularly Sections under Part 3 and Part 11).

All potential risks to the railway must be assessed early in the design stage and developed throughout the life of the proposed development works including the construction stage. At each stage of the assessment, the risk to the railway shall be clearly identified and the mitigation or elimination of such risks shall be agreed by Iarnród Éireann.

Where potential works may, or will have an impact on the railway, Iarnród Éireann has a formal technical and safety approval process for each stage of the project life of third party works.

9.22.2 Development adjacent the Railway

- (a) During the planning, design, construction, maintenance and the permanent completed state of a development adjacent the railway due consideration shall be given to the impact on the railway and such impacts shall be adequately addressed to the satisfaction of Iarnród

- Éireann and may possibly require the consent of the Railway Safety Commission.
- (b) Secure boundary treatment must be provided during the construction and in the permanent condition of the development works.
- (c) No development shall take place within 2m of the new boundary fence or wall to allow for maintenance.
- (d) No materials, plant, equipment, temporary works or site office be placed or operated in such a manner which would obscure or interfere with the sighting distances or visibility of railway signals.
- (e) Railway mounds, ditches and drains are to be preserved except where written consent of Iarnród Éireann has been sought and received.
- (f) Lights from the proposed development either during construction phase or when the development is completed shall not cause glare or in any way impair the vision of train drivers or personnel operating track machines.

9.22.3 Residential, Commercial & Institutional Development Adjacent the Railway.

- (a) To ensure the security of the railway boundaries preventing trespass and vandalism, the railway boundary to proposed developed lands shall be a minimum 2.4m high, welded steel palisade fencing or similar as approved by the Planning Authority/ Iarnród Éireann.

The existing boundary line with required provision for new fencing shall be maintained unless the boundary is less than 3m from the nearest rail of the track and then the new boundary line shall be a minimum of 3m from the nearest rail.

- (b) In all cases where residential development is proposed the boundary shall consist of a 2.4m high reinforced solid concrete or concrete block wall capped with copings to

be erected by the developer on the developer's side of the wall of the existing railway boundary line. The wall shall be of adequate strength, stability and durability. Boundary wall proposals shall be submitted for approval to Iarnród Éireann and shall demonstrate the adequacy of fulfilling the required functions in a Planning Application.

- (c) Any temporary and permanent works, including basements that come within the track support zone or railway structure zone shall be submitted to Iarnród Éireann for approval and included in a planning application.
- (d) The design of new structures adjacent to the railway should ensure that there is no flashback of sunlight from reflective surfaces, which would impair the vision of train drivers or other railway personnel.
- (e) No liquid, either surface water or effluent, shall be discharged onto railway property. The surface water run off from new buildings and paved areas is not to be discharged into any existing streams or water courses leading to a railway.
- (f) Iarnród Éireann requirements in relation to existing railway bridges, new bridges, utility crossings and level crossings shall be complied with in development proposals which concern these items of infrastructure.

9.23 GENERAL ADVERTISING

9.23.1 Canopies

The erection of plastic or fabric canopies or the 'Dutch' type will be discouraged. Such canopies disrupt the view along the street and obscure both shopfront detail and neighbouring advertising and are generally not acceptable. Where shading of a window display is required the use of traditional rectangular sun blinds/awnings of the retractable type may be permitted.

9.23.2 Roller Shutters

The installation of security shutters can visually detract from and deaden the shopping street at night, thereby detracting from the public realm/environment of the town. It is the policy of the Council to discourage the use of such shutters and to ensure the removal of unauthorised shutters. The erection of a roller shutter and its associated housing requires planning permission. Where security shutters are considered to be essential – for example, because of the type of business transacted or goods stored and where the location so indicates, the Council may permit them provided that they are internal roller shutters located behind a display window.

9.23.3 Hoardings & Billboards

In general the Council will not look sympathetically on applications for large-scale advertising hoardings and billboards. Excessive outdoor advertising will be strictly controlled. Such advertising will not be permitted in the following locations:

- Close to a listed building, a public open space or an important view.
 - In predominantly residential areas, especially on prominent gable walls.
 - Where a proliferation of such signage already exists.
 - On street elevations.
 - Where they may cause a road hazard
- Where it is considered there may be a detrimental visual impact

Where such advertising could perform a role in screening of derelict or obsolete areas thus improving the overall visual amenities of these areas, favourable consideration may be given to applications for temporary permission for signage which performs this function. Such proposals should not interfere with the desirability of the ultimate re-development of such areas.

9.23.4 Local Advertising

The importance of local advertising in the economy of Mullingar is recognised. Such advertising can play an important role in enabling the identification of a particular trade or service outlet or tourist facility. Local advertising structures can be segregated into two specific categories:

- On-premises local advertising.
- Remote local advertising.

The special needs of hotels and guest-houses or services for directional signs are catered for by licensing fingerpost signs.

9.23.5 On-Premises Local Advertising

(i) Applications for this type of local advertising will be assessed on merit having regard to the following points:

- Signs on free-standing hoardings are undesirable.
- Size and scale of signs shall not be in conflict with those on existing structures in the vicinity.
- Projecting signs should generally be at fascia level.
- Structures will not be allowed above the eaves or parapet level of the building.
- Signs should not interfere with windows or other features of the façade, they should not project above the skyline or outside the general bulk of the building.
- Signs shall not obscure architectural features such as cornices or window openings.
- Advertising signs erected parallel to a road or street are preferable to those projecting at angles thereto.
- Signs which compete with road signs or otherwise cause traffic hazard shall not be permitted.
- Advertising signs are undesirable in residential areas.
- Flashing refectories or glitter-type signs will not be permitted.

- Solid block or painted lettering will be preferred to hollow plastic or neon type signs.
- Traditional sign writing will be encouraged.
- Advertising signs of good quality and design which enhance and complement the streetscape will be encouraged.
- A plethora of advertising signs which cause visual clutter on buildings or streetscape will be discouraged.
- Is sympathetic in design and colouring both to the building on which they will be displayed and their surroundings.
- Shopfront advertising should be designed as an integral part of the shop front.

- (ii) The Planning Authority will require commercial interests and especially multiple outlets groups to adjust the use and scale of their corporate image-advertising logo to respect the scale and design of adjacent properties and streetscapes.
- (iii) Modern approaches to advertising such as internal window signs will be considered.

9.23.6 Advertising on Bus Shelters

Large, internally-illuminated advertising panels on bus shelters can detract from the visual appearance of Protected Structures in Architectural Conservation Areas and will not generally be permitted in these areas. In considering applications for bus shelters, the Planning Authority will have regard to the particular circumstances of each case, such as location, scale and type of advertising proposed and the effect on the amenities of the area and the streetscape and the requirements to provide shelter for waiting bus passengers.

9.23.7 Fingerpost Signs

The erection of finger post signs will require a licence from the Planning Authority and should comply with the following:

- Directional signs for major tourist attractions and community facilities will be considered. Product advertising will not be permitted.
- Signs must be of a standard size and colour and where permitted shall be provided by the licensee but will be erected by the Council.

9.23.8 For Hotels, Guesthouses And Industrial/Commercial Premises

- Each sign shall be a finger-post sign of standard dimensions (i.e. 950mmx288mm) with white lettering on a brown background with a white trim.
- The sign shall be erected on an existing road-sign pole where this is available, or otherwise on a pole of the same type specially erected.
- Signs shall not be permitted beyond a distance of 10km from the premises.
- A maximum of two signs may be permitted in respect of any establishment on a local road which connects to more than one regional route.
- Signs will not be permitted on National Roads.
- In addition to the initial sign, further signs will be permitted at intersections along the route of the county road as necessary.
- A sign shall be permitted only at a junction between a county or private road and another national/regional road, or at an entrance leading off a county or private road.
- Signs shall not be permitted at a junction between two national routes or two regional routes or between a national route and a regional route where the maximum speed limit applies. A maximum number of six signs shall be permitted on a single pole at any junction.

- Where appropriate, a sign may be permitted subject to a condition that if there is a further application in respect of a sign for another facility at the same junction, the Planning Authority may require the first sign to be removed and replaced by a joint sign advertising both facilities. This requirement is subject to the overall limitation of six signs as defined in the previous paragraph.

The basic planning development management principal in this regard is to reduce visual environmental clutter and to meet the needs of basic necessities thus improving the overall quality of the physical environment and legibility of the county.

9.23.9 Signage on National Routes

On national roads, the erection of signage must be tightly regulated for road safety and environmental reasons. The proliferation of roadside signage should be avoided, especially outside the 50-60 kmph speed limit areas, in a manner that would reduce the effectiveness of essential signage such as directional and other authorised road traffic signs, create visual clutter and distractions for road users and/or reduce visibility at junctions, interchanges and bends. In particular, the practice of random parking of large truck trailers on lands visible from the public road as a form of advertising hoarding is prohibited. Signage in relation to major tourist and leisure features and facilities must be carried out in accordance with the *NRA's Policy on the Provision of Tourist & Leisure Signage on National Roads (March 2011)* and NRA National Roads Guidelines 2011.

9.24 ENERGY

Wind Energy development proposals will be considered in designated industrial, enterprise and research areas. Such proposals shall have regard to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government) and any revisions thereof and the provisions of the

Habitats Directive, SEA Directive and other relevant Directives.

9.25 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

An efficient telecommunications system is important in the development of the economy. However, in considering locational requirements, the Planning Authority will take the Department of the Environment and Local Government's "Planning Guidelines for Telecommunications Antennae and Supports Structures" (1996) and any revision thereof into account. The Council will take necessary steps to ensure the protection of public health and the preservation of residential and visual amenity and to strike a fair balance between the rights of individual citizens and the general good.

Co-location agreements are desirable for the granting of planning permission. Where new facilities are proposed applicants will be required to satisfy the Council that they have made a reasonable effort to share facilities or to locate facilities in clusters.

9.26 IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNING PERMISSION

9.26.1 Development Contribution Scheme

The Council will when granting a permission under Section 34 of the Planning & Development Acts 2000 as amended, include condition/s for requiring the payment of contributions in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in its area and that is provided, or that is intended will be provided, by or on behalf of the Local Authority, in accordance with a Development Contribution Scheme made under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 as amended.

9.26.2 Supplementary Development Contribution Schemes

The Planning Authority will wherever appropriate, require by condition, payment of a contribution in respect of any public infrastructure service or project, in accordance with a Supplementary Development Contribution Scheme made under Section 49 (2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

- (a) Specified in a scheme made by the Planning Authority.
- (b) Provided or carried out, as may be appropriate, by a Planning Authority or pursuant to an agreement entered into by a Local Authority, any other person.
- (c) That will benefit the development to which the permission relates when carried out.

9.26.3 Special Contribution

Where appropriate the Planning Authority will in addition to the terms of a scheme, require the payment of a Special Contribution in respect of a particular development where specific exceptional costs not covered by a scheme are incurred by the Local Authority in respect of public infrastructure and facilities which benefit the proposed development, in accordance with a Development Contribution Scheme under Section 48 (2) (c) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended.

Chapter 10 *Land Use Zoning*



10 LAND USE ZONING

INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the general land use and zoning policies and objectives of the plan. It provides an explanation of the land use categories and the zoning objectives that apply to them. The primary purpose of land use zoning in the context of this Local Area Plan is to promote the orderly development of Mullingar by eliminating potential conflicts between incompatible land uses and to establish an efficient basis for investment in public infrastructure and facilities. The objective of zoning is to specify which types of land use the Council considers appropriate for different areas or 'Zones', and it therefore indicates the planning control objectives of the Council.

Zoning policy must have regard to the other strategic policies underlying the plan. These include the principles of sustainable development, consolidation of the town centre, the integration of land use and transportation planning and the maintenance of a high quality of life within Mullingar. In this regard, the overall zoning strategy for the town is based on the following principles:

- Sufficient land should be zoned at appropriate locations throughout the town to accommodate the expected growth in population, to meet the needs of growing communities and to facilitate economic growth within the lifetime of the Plan.
- Land use and transportation, should be considered in tandem with the objective of minimising the need to travel, and favouring other modes of travel over the private car.
- Flexibility should be provided for, subject to the ability to mitigate the effects of a use on existing or proposed neighbouring uses.
- Lands will be reserved for uses which are not market driven, such as open space or community facilities to ensure

that these necessary uses can be provided.

- A rational pattern of land use must be secured, and a framework put in place within which the objectives and strategies contained in this plan can be realised.
- The efficient use of infrastructure and services provided should be ensured, by maximising the use of nearby lands and consolidating the town centre, which will in turn enhance the vitality and viability of Mullingar.
- Amenity, including residential amenity must be protected, by promoting particular uses in appropriate locations, which will reduce conflict between uses.
- A framework for Development Management must be provided.
- Where new development areas are to be developed this should be carried out comprehensively and to a reasonable state of completion, before other development areas are commenced.

Should any conflict arise between the Written Statement and the Maps, the Written Statement shall prevail.

10.1 LAND USE ZONING CATEGORIES

The following sections set out the objectives and requirements of the Planning Authority for the main categories of land use. In total there are twelve land-use zoning categories as follows:

1. Residential
2. Mixed Use
3. Enterprise & Employment
4. Commercial
5. Retail Warehousing
6. Sporting/Recreational
7. Open Space
8. Education, Community & Institutional
9. Agricultural
10. Innovation Technology
11. General Urban District
12. Mixed Urban Core

10.2 LAND USE ZONING OBJECTIVES

10.2.1 Residential

O-LZ1 To provide for residential development, associated services and to protect and improve residential amenity.

The priority of the Council is to improve the quality of existing residential areas and to protect their amenities and to strengthen the provision of local community services and amenity. In both new and established residential areas, a range of uses will be permitted in principle, in addition to housing, which has the potential to strengthen communities and encourage the enjoyment of residential amenity. Such uses may include local shops, crèches, schools, nursing homes, open space and recreation facilities. These may be permitted provided they are appropriate in scale and do not unduly interfere with the predominant residential land use.

10.2.2 Mixed Use

O-LZ2 To provide for, protect and strengthen the vitality and viability of the town centre, through consolidating development, encouraging a mix of uses and maximising the use of land, to ensure the efficient use of infrastructure and services.

Mixed use reflects the mixture of uses which have always co-existed in town centres and which gives them the vitality, variety and intensity of uses which makes them attractive and important places for community interaction. A mixed use zoning provision can also help to ensure the economic efficiency through which public infrastructure and services can be provided. It can attract a critical mass to a central area around which service provision can be focused.

It is a policy of this Local Area Plan, to sustain and enhance the vitality and

viability of the town centre and where appropriate to consolidate the urban core area. This will be achieved by encouraging a mix of compatible uses within the town centre and maximising the use of land to ensure the efficient use of infrastructure and services, through mobilising brownfield and under-utilized land for development where appropriate. Any such development will have regard to the Council’s adopted Retail Strategy and policies in relation to the built heritage, urban archaeology, building height and density. Development incorporating residential units above ground floor ‘active’ street frontages such as commercial/retail units, will be encouraged where appropriate, to facilitate activity on the street both during and after office hours.

10.2.3 Enterprise & Employment

O-LZ3 To provide for enterprise, employment and related uses including industrial and service uses such as Class 3 offices, which due to their scale or nature cannot be located within the town centre.

It is the policy of the Council to ensure that there is adequate land available to facilitate opportunities for employment creation, and the Council will accommodate enterprise and employment uses that are incapable of being situated in a town centre location, provided that such development does not detract from the town centre’s commercial function. Warehousing, manufacturing, energy and recycling, technological and office based enterprise and ancillary services should be provided in high quality environments, incorporating a range of amenities.

The uses in this zone are likely to generate a considerable amount of traffic by both employees and service traffic. Sites should therefore have good vehicular and public transport access. The implementation of

Mobility Management Plans will provide important means of managing accessibility to these sites.

Since the development in this zone will provide significant employment, it may be appropriate to locate this zoning in close proximity to residential areas, depending on the nature of the employment use and whether or not the use would be likely detract from residential amenity. Childcare facilities may also be permitted, subject to appropriate design and location.

10.2.4 Commercial

O-LZ4 To provide for commercial development which does not need to be located in the Town Centre or retail warehousing zone.

This zoning provides for expansion of existing commercial uses and for new uses such as offices, hotel, showrooms. Such uses shall be consistent with the Retail Strategy and shall not detract from the retail function of the town centre. It does not encompass residential uses.

10.2.5 Retail Warehousing

O-LZ5 To provide for retail warehousing in appropriate locations on edge of town centre sites, which do not detract from the town centre's retailing function.

Retail Warehousing is defined as large stores specialising in the sale of bulky household goods such as carpets, furniture, electrical goods and bulky DIY items, which generally, cannot be located in the town centre due to their requirements for space and parking facilities. Retail Warehousing will be permitted in principle, depending on its scale and nature, provided that such development does not detract from the town centre's retailing function and provided that it is in accordance with Council's Retail Strategy and policy.

10.2.6 Sporting/Recreational

O-LZ6 To provide for, protect and improve the provision, attractiveness, accessibility and amenity value of sporting and recreational facilities.

Only development that is incidental to, or contributes to the enjoyment of recreation or leisure will be permitted within this zone. Development that enhances the amenity value of such areas will be facilitated. The development of such uses will have regard to the requirements in the area and needs of changing communities, as well as the quality of landscaping, usability and accessibility of areas and facilities. The Council will encourage the provision for a variety of sporting and recreation activities as required.

10.2.7 Open Space

O-LZ7 To provide for, protect and improve the provision, attractiveness, accessibility and amenity value of public open space and amenity areas, including public open spaces.

To provide for, protect and improve the provision, attractiveness and accessibility of public open space and amenity areas intended for use for recreational or amenity purposes. Only development that is incidental to, or contributes to the enjoyment of open space, amenity or recreational facilities will be permitted within this zone.

10.2.8 Educational/Institutional/Community

O-LZ8 To provide for, protect and improve educational and institutional facilities such as churches, schools, libraries, museums, health-centres, fire stations, graveyards and arts/entertainment facilities. To preserve the open character of institutional lands and the setting of heritage buildings contained within institutional lands.

It is the policy of the Council to protect and improve existing social, health, educational and arts / cultural / entertainment facilities and institutions and to safeguard their continued use and future provision. Such provision will be important in maintaining viable and stable communities and it will be necessary to provide for these uses in line with the pace of development, as they are required. Childcare facilities within institutions (or within this zoning category) may be permitted subject to appropriate design and location. Provision of such facilities may also arise through use of specific objectives and phasing arrangements provided for in the Framework Plans.

10.2.9 Agricultural

O-LZ9 To protect agricultural land from development that would restrict its use, and to provide for the development of existing established uses.

To ensure that premature urban development on unserviced or unsuitable agricultural land does not take place.

10.2.10 Innovation & Technology

O-LZ10 To provide for high value high Tech knowledge, R&D and SMART industries in a high quality built and landscaped environment.

This zoning is aimed at providing a location for high end, high quality, value added businesses and corporate headquarters. The focus in this area shall be on creating knowledge-based enterprise clusters. An emphasis on exemplar sustainable design and aesthetic quality will be promoted to enhance corporate image and identity.

10.2.11 General Urban District

O-LZ11 To provide residential development and other compatible community, health care, offices and associated uses.

The nature of the residential development In this quarter there will be a mix of typologies and dwelling sizes to accommodate a broad range of household compositions.

10.2.12 Mixed Urban Core

O-LZ12 To provide for community, commercial, retail and residential uses.

A mix of town centre type uses is envisaged within this zone set within a specific built form and layout. When fully developed, this area will consist of a combination of compatible uses appropriate to a new urban centre.

10.2.13 Major Opportunity Sites

The suitability of any use within these areas shall be determined in the first instance by an approved Regeneration Plan for each area and the options for future use referred to in Section 7.10.9 of this plan. In principal, the range of uses to be considered will be similar to those in the Commercial zoning category.

10.2.14 Non-conforming uses

It is not intended, that existing uses within the zones outlined in this plan, which appear to be inconsistent with the primary Land Use Zoning objective should be curtailed. All such cases, where legally established by continued use for the same purpose prior to 1st October 1964, or by a planning permission, shall not be subject to legal proceedings under the Acts in respect of the continued use. There will be a presumption against intensification of such premises or use of land, but each case shall be considered on its own merits.

Type of Development	Residential	Educational Community & Institutional	Mixed Use	Enterprise & Employment	Commercial	Sporting / Recreational	Open Space	Innovation Technology	General Urban District	Mixed Urban Core	Agriculture	Retail Warehousing
Abattoir	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Advertising Structures	X	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	O
Agri-Business	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	O	X	O	P	X
Agricultural building	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	P	X
Agri-Tourism	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	P	X
Amusement arcade	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
Betting office	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
Car Sales/Repairs	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	P
Caravan park; Residential	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Casual-trading	X	X	P	X	O	X	O	X	X	O	X	O
Cemetery	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Church	O	P	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X
Cinema	X	O	P	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
Commercial Car-park	X	O	P	P	P	O	X	X	O	O	X	P
Community Hall (Recreation & Functional)	O	O	P	O	P	O	O	X	O	P	X	P
Crèche/Nursery	P	P	O	O	O	O	X	P	P	P	X	P
Cultural use	P	P	P	O	O	O	P	X	P	P	X	O
Dance Hall/Discotheque	X	X	P	X	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	O
Doctor/Dentist	P	P	P	X	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	X
Dwelling	P	O	P	X	O	X	X	X	P	P	O	X
Education	P	P	O	O	O	O	X	O	P	P	X	O
Energy Production	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	O	O	O
Extractive industry	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Funeral Home	X	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	O
Garden Centre	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	O	P
Golf Course	X	X	X	X	X	P	O	X	X	X	O	X
Guest House	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	P	P	X	X

Type of Development	Residential	Educational/Institutional	Mixed Use	Enterprise & Employment	Commercial	Sporting / Recreational	Open Space/	Innovation Technology	General Urban District	Mixed Urban Core	Agricultural	Retail Warehousing
Halting Site	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Health Centre	O	O	P	O	O	O	X	X	P	P	X	O
Manufacturing Industry	X	X	O	P	O	X	X	P	X	O	X	X
Hospital	X	P	O	O	O	X	X	O	O	O	X	O
Hotel	O	X	P	O	O	X	X	X	X	P	X	O
Light Industry	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	P	O	P	X	X
Multi-Storey car park	X	O	P	P	P	O	X	O	X	O	X	P
Offices <100m ²	O	O	P	O	O	X	X	O	O	P	X	X
Offices 100m ² - 1000m ²	X	O	P	O	O	X	X	P	O	P	X	X
Offices >1000m ²	X	X	P	O	O	X	X	P	O	P	X	X
Off license	O	X	P	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
Open Space	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	O	P	P	O
Park & Ride	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	O	X	O
Petrol Station	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	O
Public House	O	X	P	X	O	O	X	X	X	P	X	X
Recycling Facilities	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	O	O	O	X
Residential Institution	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	P	P	X	X
Restaurant/Cafe	O	O	P	O	P	O	X	O	O	P	X	O
Retail warehouse	X	X	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	P
Research & Development	X	P	O	P	O	O	O	P	O	O	X	X
Retirement home	P	P	O	X	O	X	X	X	P	O	X	X
Shops - local	P	O	P	O	O	X	X	X	O	P	X	X
Shops - neighbourhood	O	X	P	X	O	X	X	X	X	P	X	X
Shops - major	X	X	P	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Workshop	O	X	O	P	O	X	X	X	X	O	O	X
Sports facility	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	O
Take-away/Fast food	X	X	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
Telecom structures	O	O	O	P	P	O	O	X	X	O	O	O

Type of Development	Residential	Educational/Institutional	Mixed Use	Enterprise & Employment	Commercial	Sporting / Recreational	Open Space/ Amenity	Innovation Technology	General Urban District	Mixed Urban Core	Agricultural	Retail Warehousing
Tourism-Recreational complex	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	X	O	P	O	O
Training Centre	O	P	P	P	O	O	X	P	O	P	X	O
Transport Depot	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Warehouse	X	X	X	P	O	X	X	O	X	X	X	O

Appendices



Site Code	Townland	Classification
WM019-044	Mullingar	Castle
WM019-047	Mullingar	Earthwork
WM019-048	Mullingar	Standing Stone
WM019-049	Mullingar	Abbey
WM019-05101	Mullingar	Motte
WM019-05102	Mullingar	Hill
WM019-052	Mullingar	Castle
WM019-053	Mullingar	Priory
WM019-054	Mullingar	Castle
WM019-055	Mullingar	Holy Well
WM019-056	Mullingar	Holy Well
WM019-057	Mullingar	Friary
WM019-058	Petitswood	Standing Stone
WM019-059	Ballagh (Moyashel & Magheradernon By.)	Ringfort (Rath / Cashel)
WM019-061	Petitswood	Earthwork
WM019-066	Petitswood	Ringfort (Rath / Cashel)
WM019-073	Ballinderry (Moyashel & Magheradernon By.)	Earthwork
WM019-074	Lynn	Ringfort / Rath
WM019-075	Ballinderry (Moyashel & Magheradernon By.)	Ringfort /Rath
WM019-077	Petitswood	Ringfort / Rath
WM019-078	Ardmore	Earthwork
WM019-079	Ardmore	Ringfort (Rath / Cashel)
WM019-080	Ardmore	Ringfort (Rath / Cashel)
WM019-081	Ardmore	Ringfort (Rath / Cashel)
WM019-082	Ardmore	Ringfort (Rath / Cashel)
WM019-090	Petitswood	Souterrain
WM026-008	Lynn	Earthwork
WM026-009	Lynn	Earthwork
WM026-010	Lynn	Earthwork

Site Code	Site Name
685	Lough Ennell SAC
1831	Split Hills and Long Hill Esker SAC
679	Garriskil Bog SAC
692	Scragh Bog SAC
688	Lough Owel SAC
2121	Lough Lene SAC
2299	River Boyne and River Blackwater SAC
2342	Mount Hevey Bog SAC
4043	Lough Derravaragh SPA
4102	Garriskill Bog SPA
4046	Lough Iron SPA
4047	Lough Owel SPA
4044	Lough Ennell SPA
4232	River Boyne and River Blackwater SPA

Tree Code	Grade of Significance	Function	Location
MT1	A	Important aesthetic function to the area.	Prospect, Dublin Road, Mullingar
MT2	A	Screens view of hospital, provides coverage to road, aesthetic function.	Grounds of St Lomans Hospital, Delvin Road, Mullingar
MT3	A	Provides natural break between two areas of housing, natural green amenity.	Bellivew Heights, off Dublin Road, Mullingar
MT4	B	Lone tree behind Church, is visible from Delvin/ Dublin Road	Behind St Paul’s church, Delvin Road, Mullingar
MT5	A	Screens visibility of school from road, shelters road and adds to the area aesthetically.	Grounds of St Finian’s College, Mullingar. Located in triangular field to the south of the school.
MT6	A	Visible from outside the town, acts as part of the canal green belt, natural break between two areas of the town, screens views of school and cathedral.	Carey’s bridge to west of the Cathedral of Christ the King and to the east of the canal.
MT7	B	Visible from the Tullamore Road, act as a screen for the fire station and Market Point, aesthetically pleasing.	South of the Fire Station, Clonmore, Mullingar
MT8	A	Group of trees add considerably to the view of the town from the N52, helps screen the town and Market Point development.	West of O’Brien’s Filling Station off the N52, Mullingar.
MT9	B	Mature trees along eastern boundary to Petitswood.	Petitswood, Dublin Road

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

**For the Mullingar Local Area Plan
2014-2020**

Section 1 Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

This is the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Mullingar Town Plan 2014-2020. The purpose of this report is to inform the Plan, particularly its policies and objectives, as well as its Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

This SFRA sets out how flood risk relates to the planning processes. It presents and analyses available flood related data at appropriate scales to identify Flood Risk Management priorities for the town.

1.2 Flood Risk, Context and its Relevance as an Issue to the Mullingar Local Area Plan

1.2.1 Flood Risk

Flooding is an environmental phenomenon which, as well as causing economic and social impacts, could in certain circumstances pose a risk to human health. Parts of Mullingar are vulnerable to flooding as mapped in Map Reference No. in Volume 2 and as identified by the Office of Public Works in the Draft Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, published in 2011. This vulnerability can be exacerbated by changes in the occurrence of severe rainfall events and associated flooding of the County's rivers. Local conditions such as low-lying lands and slow surface water drainage increase the risk of flooding. This risk can be increased by human actions including clearing of natural vegetation to make way for agriculture, drainage of bog and wetland areas, the development of settlements in the flood plains of rivers and on low-lying or eroding coastlines, as well as by changing weather patterns. Inadequately planned infrastructural developments, culverting, forestry operations and urban development in the floodplain can also give rise to flooding hazards.

1.2.2 Context

Flood risk must be seen in the context of both the long history of settlement in the town and in the context of existing and emerging policy and practice in relation to planning, development and flooding. The location and layout of settlements has generally evolved to avoid flood-prone areas. The direct impact of new urban development is generally not as significant a problem now as it was in the past, because of the implementation of

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS). However, vigilance is still needed at the planning and zoning stage to avoid flood risk, for example in less well understood urban fringe areas – hence the need for Flood Risk Appraisal of all new plans at all levels – including County Development Plan and Local Area Plan level.

1.3 Policy Framework

1.3.1 EU Flood Directive

European Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risk aims to reduce and manage the risks that floods pose to human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. The Directive applies to inland waters as well as all coastal waters across the whole territory of the E.U. The Directive requires Member States to carry out a preliminary assessment by 2011 in order to identify the river basins and associated coastal areas at risk of flooding. For such zones, Flood Risk Maps are required to be drawn up by 2013. Flood Risk Management Plans focused on prevention, protection and preparedness must be established by 2015.

Compliance with the Directive is to be co-ordinated with actions under the Water Framework Directive. Flood Risk Management Plans and River Basin Management Plans are also to be co-ordinated.

1.3.2 DOEHLG Flood Risk Management Guidelines

1.3.2.1 Introduction

In September 2008, the DOEHLG published draft guidelines on flood risk management for public consultation. These were called The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Consultation Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities. These were aimed at ensuring a more consistent, rigorous and systematic approach which will fully incorporate flood risk assessment and management into the planning system. Local Authorities were required to have regard to the draft Guidelines' recommended flood risk identification, assessment and management processes when preparing or varying Development Plans and Local Area Plans and in consideration of applications for planning permission.

After the draft stage, the actual Guidelines were published on 30th November 2009.

1.3.2.2 Principles of Flood Risk Management

The key principles of Flood Risk Management set out in the flood guidelines are to:

- Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible;
- Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and
- Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible.

The Flood Guidelines follow the principle that development should not be permitted in flood risk areas, particularly floodplains, except where there are no alternative and appropriate sites available in lower risk areas that are consistent with the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development.

Development in areas which have the highest flood risk should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances (through a prescribed Justification Test) if adequate land or sites are not available in areas which have lower flood risk. Most types of development would be considered inappropriate in areas which have the highest flood risk. Only water-compatible development such as docks and marinas, dockside activities that require a waterside location, amenity open space, outdoor sports and recreation and essential transport infrastructure that cannot be located elsewhere would be considered appropriate in these areas.

1.4 Role of the OPW in Regional Flood Risk Assessment and Management

The Office of Public Works (OPW) is the lead agency for Flood Risk Management in Ireland. The co-ordination and implementation of Government policy on the management of flood risk in Ireland is part of its responsibility. It is the primary agency responsible for ensuring Ireland's compliance with the EU Floods Directive and particularly for the preparation of a preliminary assessment by 2011, Flood Risk Mapping by 2013 and Flood Risk Management Plans by 2015. It is the principal agency involved in the preparation of Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies (FRAMs).

Section 2 Strategic Flood Risk Appraisal

This section provides a description of the spatial distribution of flood risk at appropriate scales for the draft Local Area Plan, based on available information.

It should be noted that some of this data is historically derived, not prescriptive in relation to flood return periods and not yet predictive or inclusive for climate change analysis.

Fluvial Flooding

As previously outlined, development in Mullingar has tended to avoid areas that are prone to flooding, or where ground conditions are very poor, due to the presence of peat and river borne soft clay deposits. These areas are generally along the River Brosna south the town in Lynn and to the North of the town in Robinstown. As part of the CFRAMS study for the Shannon Catchment, which includes Mullingar, the River Brosna, Lough Owel and Lough Ennell, consultants to the OPW have carried out a detailed assessment of flood risk in the town for the purpose of producing Flood Risk Maps by the end of 2013. While these maps are in draft form at present, they do give an indication of the areas that are at greatest risk of fluvial or river flooding and have been used in the compilation of the attached Flood Risk Map. The designation by OPW of lands at risk of Fluvial Flooding also included an assessment of benefiting lands. As the information is preliminary, it has been decided that it would not be appropriate at this stage to assign a likely flooding frequency to the identified lands. Rather, these lands are deemed to be at risk of flooding and as such, it is considered that the development of these lands should be avoided, if possible.

For this reason, the lands considered to be at risk of fluvial flooding, outside of the Royal Canal / Railway Line cordon, as shown on Drawing Number MLAP 13, are not being zoned for development in this Draft Local Area Plan. Within the Canal Railway cordon, lands at risk of fluvial flooding have been identified. However, these lands, for the most part, are within the centre of Mullingar and are already developed. No further development within the area at risk will be allowed unless and until the final Flood Risk outlines have been issued. Also, given the channel improvements that have been undertaken along the Brosna in recent years, flooding in the areas outlined is considered to be unlikely. However, in accordance with the Precautionary Principle, further development in the area identified should be subject to a site specific Flood Risk Assessment and areas that are not already developed, and for which a flood risk is identified will not be developed for flood vulnerable uses.

Pluvial Flooding

A number of areas have been identified within the development boundary of Mullingar that are vulnerable to pluvial flooding. These areas suffer from poor drainage characteristics, due to poor drainage, poor ground conditions or a combination of both and could be subject to flooding during intense rainfall events. The more extensive vulnerable areas are shown on Map Number MLAP13. Other localised pluvial flooding could occur at various locations. However, this is generally small scale and localised and could be dealt with through minor improvements to the drainage system.

A number of locations where there is the potential for significant pluvial flooding have been identified and will be dealt with as follows:

- Adjacent to Royal Canal in Ardmore Marlinstown – zoned agricultural in the LAP
- Adjacent to C Link at Ardleigh – zoned for a recreational park in the LAP
- Adjacent to C-link at Rathgowan – zoned as open space in the LAP and to be designed as part of an attenuation area to protect property downstream

In addition, other areas have also been identified as follows:

- In Robinstown between the Royal Canal Feeder Stream and the Railway Line (General Urban District) – this area can be developed and the pluvial flooding can be dealt with by improved drainage to the River Brosna and the Attenuation area to be provided adjacent to the River Brosna in Robinstown. Constraints to the capacity of surface water culverts under the railway embankment and Royal Canal supply require to be resolved, prior to development in this area proceeding.
- In Robinstown north of the Royal Canal Feeder Stream (Part of Mixed Urban Core area)- this area can be developed and the pluvial flooding can be dealt with by improved drainage to the River Brosna and the Attenuation area to be provided adjacent to the River Brosna in Robinstown.
- In Robinstown on lands zoned for development as part of the St. Loman's Major Opportunity Site, this area can be developed and the pluvial flooding can be dealt with by improved drainage to the River Brosna and the Attenuation area to be provided adjacent to the River Brosna in Robinstown.

- In Ardmore / Marlinstown adjacent to the N52 in the IDA Park – This area has already been developed and the drainage system has been constructed to alleviate this flooding risk.

While the above represents Westmeath County Council's current understanding and assessment of significant flood risk in Mullingar, it will be subject to change and refinement as the Shannon CFRAMS project progresses. In this regard, it will be necessary for all stakeholders to take account of that project on an ongoing basis.

ADDENDUM TO STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

Following the preparation of material amendments to the Plan, the following Addendum to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was prepared and shall be considered in conjunction with the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Criteria	Determination with regard to site subject to Pluvial Flooding in the General Urban District, Robinstown
1. The urban settlement is targeted for growth under the National Spatial Strategy, Regional Planning Guidelines, statutory plans as defined above or under the Planning Guidelines or Planning Directives provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.	Yes, Mullingar is a designated Linked Gateway Town targeted for growth under both the MRPG's and the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020.
2. The zoning or designation of the lands for the particular use or development type is required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the urban settlement and, in particular:	The lands concerned are part of a Framework Plan for the Robinstown area and have been identified for development.
- Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement	The lands are close to the urban core at its north-western edge.
- Comprises significantly of under-utilised lands	The lands in question are Greenfield undeveloped lands, which are under utilised.
- Is within the core or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement	The lands adjoin the urban core of the town.
- Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth	Development of the lands would further the implementation of the Robinstown Framework Plan and would promote sustainable urban growth.
- There are no alternative lands for the particular use or development type in areas at risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement.	There are suitable lands available for development, however the location of theses lands is not as convenient to the town centre.
3. A Flood Risk Assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the Local Area Plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere	A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was carried out on the LAP. In relation to the site in question, the SFRA states that "In Robinstown between the Royal Canal Feeder Stream and the Railway Line (General Urban District) – this area can be developed and the pluvial flooding can be dealt with by improved drainage to the River Brosna and the Attenuation area to be provided adjacent to the River Brosna in Robinstown."

Addendum to Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Criteria	Determination with regard to Major Opportunity Development site subject to Pluvial Flooding in Robinstown
1. The urban settlement is targeted for growth under the National Spatial Strategy, regional planning guidelines, statutory plans as defined above or under the Planning Guidelines or Planning Directives provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended.	Yes, Mullingar is a designated Linked Gateway Town targeted for growth under both the MRPG's and the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020.
2. The zoning or designation of the lands for the particular use or development type is required to achieve the proper planning and sustainable development of the urban settlement and, in particular:	The lands concerned are part of a Framework Plan for the Robinstown area and have been identified for development.
- Is essential to facilitate regeneration and/or expansion of the centre of the urban settlement	The lands are close to the urban core at its north-eastern edge.
- Comprises significantly of under-utilised lands	The lands in the main are zoned for major regeneration opportunity site. A small portion of the lands is zoned for Open Space. The lands in question are partially built upon and comprise of the attendant grounds of St. Loman's Hospital.
- Is within the core or adjoining the core of an established or designated urban settlement	The lands adjoin the urban core of the town.
- Will be essential in achieving compact and sustainable urban growth	Development of the lands would further the implementation of the Robinstown Framework Plan and would secure the re-development of this underutilised Major Regeneration Opportunity site and thus promote sustainable urban growth.
- There are no alternative lands for the particular use or development type in areas at risk of flooding within or adjoining the core of the urban settlement.	There are suitable lands available for development, however the location of theses lands is not as convenient to the town centre.
3. A Flood Risk Assessment to an appropriate level of detail has been carried out as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment as part of the Local Area Plan preparation process, which demonstrates that flood risk to the development can be adequately managed and the use or development of the lands will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts elsewhere.	A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was carried out on the LAP. The land area affected by Pluvial Flood Risk is relatively small in scale. In relation to the site in question, the SFRA states that In Robinstown on lands zoned for development as part of the St. Loman's Major Opportunity Site, this area can be developed and the pluvial flooding can be dealt with by improved drainage to the River Brosna and the Attenuation area to be provided adjacent to the River Brosna in Robinstown.

Conclusion

Having regard to the limited scale of lands contained in the Major Regeneration Site at Robinstown, taking account of the mitigation measures proposed in the SFRA, land use type proposed at the area affected by Pluvial Flood Risk should not include vulnerable uses such as residential use, as defined in the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009.

ADDENDUM NO. 2 TO THE STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENTArea 1 – Lands proposed to be zoned for residential development by amendment at Irishtown

This area has been identified in the “Surface Water Management Policy “ report by ARUP as possibly at risk of fluvial flooding associated with adjacent existing surface water drainage system. Based on the overall requirement for residential zoned land in the Plan area and the availability of alternative suitable sites the zoning of these lands cannot be justified. It is therefore recommended that these lands are not zoned for residential use.

Area 2 - Lands proposed to be zoned for residential development by amendment to the rear of Tesco

Part of this area has been identified in the “Surface Water Management Policy “ Report by ARUP as at risk of pluvial flooding. The proposed zoning of the site comprises residential and open space. It is recommended that the portion of this site which is subject to risk of flooding be retained as open space.

Area 3 – General Urban Area, Robinstown

Area 3 has been identified as at risk of Pluvial Flooding. Detailed Flood Risk Assessment undertaken of this area per “Surface Water Management Policy“ Report by ARUP. This report identifies area at risk of pluvial flooding, identifies constraints in the surface water drainage system such as culverts, and outlines remedial measures to alleviate this flooding. Recommended remedial measures could be implemented such as via OPW minor flood migration works or by Council funded surface water drainage scheme. Such works would address risk of flooding in this area and facilitate development as per proposed zoning. It is recommended that pending the installation of appropriate surface water infrastructure and flood mitigation measures, those lands affected by Pluvial Flooding shall be reserved for Open Space. A site specific Flood Risk Assessment at Development Management stage shall be required.

Area 4 – Opportunity Site, St. Lomans Hospital

Flood risk issues affecting a small portion of this site have been addressed in the Addendum to SFRA, which recommended that land use in the affected area should not include vulnerable uses such as residential. This recommendation has also had regard to the “Surface Water Management Policy“ report by ARUP. No change to the zoning is recommended.

Notes