

Core
Strategy

LONGFORD



**TOWN
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN 2009-2015**

VARIATION NO. 1

Prepared by the Planning Section Longford Local Authorities

Adopted on 7th March 2013

Introduction and Explanatory Note

Variation number 1 to the Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015 has been made under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act for the purpose of incorporating a ‘Core Strategy’ into the Development Plan. Accordingly, the variation should be read in conjunction with the existing Town Development Plan.

The Variation has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2010, the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004 and Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. The Variation was adopted by the members of Longford Town Council on 7th March 2013.

This document is divided into three parts;

Part 1- provides an explanation regarding the requirement for the variation, what the variation consists of, what it is required to contain and outlines how the variation will impact on other planning policy documents. **Part One does not form part of the variation and is for explanatory purposes only.**

Part 2- of Variation No. 1 outlines the actual Core Strategy that will be inserted into the Town Development Plan 2009-2015. It replaces key elements contained in Section 2.3 of the existing Town Development Plan.

Part 3- of Variation No.1 replaces Appendices 1, 2 and 3 (Zoning Maps) of the existing Town Plan. It should be noted that no residential zoning changes are set out as part of this Core Strategy variation and that the revised zoning maps are simply to provide an improved and greater level of legibility.

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PART 1

What is the Core Strategy and what will it include?

The purpose of this Core Strategy is to articulate a medium to longer term evidence and quantitatively based strategy for the spatial development of Longford Town, whilst demonstrating consistency with national and regional development objectives outlined in the National Spatial Strategy and the Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines.

In summary, this document will identify the quantum, location and phasing of development for the plan period that is consistent with the regionally defined population targets and settlement hierarchy, and, which reflects the availability of existing services, planned investment, sequential development and environmental requirements (i.e. an evidence based approach in determining the suitability of lands for zoning purposes).

In accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2011 and the Guidance Note on Core Strategies issued in November 2010¹, this core strategy includes;

- Population targets;
- Quantification of the requirements for zoning of lands for residential purposes;
- Existing and future distribution of population within a defined settlement hierarchy;

¹ Guidance Note on Core Strategies, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, November 2010, Circular PSSP6/2010 (Core Strategy Guidance).

Furthermore, this core strategy also contains;

- a) A written statement which outlines the origins and broad aims of the strategy including population targets;
- b) A diagrammatic core strategy map which shows the areas designated for significant development during the period of the development plan and how it is envisioned the Town will develop in line with the availability of infrastructure, services and amenities; and,
- c) Having regard to the emphasis being placed on the quantum and distribution of future population and housing development lands, the document will also include a Core Strategy Table which outlines same.

What are the main aims of the Core strategy and what changes will it introduce?

One of the key aims of the Core Strategy is to demonstrate that the Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015 is consistent as far as practicable with the policies of the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government in relation to national and regional population targets, thus strengthening further the role of the Longford Town Development Plan as the fundamental implementation mechanism between national, regional, and local policy.

The main policy provisions of the existing Plan to which the Core Strategy relates are contained at Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Plan. In this regard these sections are revised accordingly. In addition Section “2.3 Zoning Strategy”, is amended to include the Core Strategy which identifies population projections, distributions and zoned land availability for the Town over the Town Development Plan period. The Core Strategy also identifies the role of Longford Town within the regional and county level settlement hierarchy, providing the basis for guiding the quantum, scale and location of new developments within Longford Town, up to 2015.

This Core Strategy demonstrates that the Longford Town Development Plan is consistent with national and regional frameworks which have informed the policies and objectives of the Plan, which in turn provides a basis for day-to-day planning decisions.

In light of the population targets and housing land requirement identified for the Town of Longford within the MRPGs, this variation modifies Section 2.3 of the Plan to identify and strengthen Longford Town's role in the revised County Settlement Strategy and Hierarchy, which is aligned with upper tier plans, the introduction of revised population targets and demonstration of how the population targets in the plan relate to the quantum of land zoned.

Changes to Local Area Plans-

In addition to the changes made to the Development Plan and to facilitate the revised objectives, contained as part of the Core Strategy, zonings and policies contained within existing Local Area Plans that impact on the town will need to be addressed. This applies to the *Northern and Southern Environs Local Area Plans*, lands of which are substantially contained within the Longford Town administrative area.

Where appropriate, in instances where existing Local Area Plan objectives are modified under the Core Strategy variation, the Core Strategy shall take precedent over any Local Area Plan until such time as appropriate action is taken to modify the relevant Local Area Plans (the modification or revocation of a Local Area Plan is a separate process).

Strategic Environmental Assessment

In accordance with Article 13A(4) of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 as amended by the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 and the DoEHLG Circular of 26th July 2011, 'Further Transposition of the EU Directive 2011/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment, the Variation to the Longford TDP 2009-2015 has been examined against Schedule 2A '*Criteria for determining whether a plan is likely to have significant effects on the environment*' of the SEA Regulations, as amended, and it has been determined that the Variation would not be likely to result in significant environmental effects.

Longford Town Council have taken into account submissions made by environmental authorities in finalising the Screening Report and in making the determination as required under Article 7 (13K) of the SEA Regulations, as amended.

Appropriate Assessment

An AA Screening process was undertaken alongside the preparation of the Variation. The likely impacts that will arise from the implementation of the Variation have been examined in the context of a number of factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network. On the basis of the findings of the Screening for Appropriate Assessment, it is concluded that the Variation:

- (i) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a Natura 2000 site; and
- (ii) will not have any significant impacts on the Natura 2000 network of sites therefore a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment was not required.

For the purpose of compliance with the Habitats Directive the following policies are updated as part of this Variation (amendments shown in **blue text**).

Policy NHB 6:

It is the policy of the Council to protect sites designated in National and European legislation, and in other relevant International Conventions, Agreements and Processes. This includes sites proposed to be designated or designated as:

- Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora).
- Special Protection Areas under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds).

Both the Birds and Habitats Directives have been transposed in Irish law by Ministerial Regulation. [The European Communities \(Birds and Natural Habitats\) Regulations 2011](#) are the most important of these because they provide for the protection measures and management regime that apply to SPAs and SACs.

[No projects giving rise to significant cumulative, direct, indirect or secondary impacts on Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions \(disposal to land, water or air\), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan \(either individually or in combination with other plans or projects\) Except as provided for in Article 6\(4\) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be:](#)

- [\(a\) no alternative solution available,](#)
- [\(b\) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and](#)
- [\(c\) adequate compensatory measures in place.](#)

NHB 15 (replaced as follows):

Where relevant, projects arising from this plan will be screened by the Council, in cooperation with the applicant for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

In addition, Policy IMP CS-6 is included at Section 2.3.10 to ensure compliance with the Habitats Directive and the protection of the Natura 2000 network.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) was prepared alongside the preparation of the Core Strategy Variation. Variation No. 1 does not provide for any land use zoning changes as such implementation of the Variation will not affect existing flood risk in the town.

PART 2

The following section replaces and amends Section 2.3, ‘Zoning Strategy’, of the current Town Development Plan. Where any ambiguity arises between the content of the Town Development Plan and this variation, the requirements of this variation will take precedence.

2.3 CORE STRATEGY

2.3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Core Strategy is to articulate a medium to longer term evidence and quantitatively based strategy for the spatial development of Longford Town, whilst demonstrating consistency with national and regional development objectives outlined in the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and the Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines (MRPG’s).

In summary, this Core Strategy identifies the quantum, location and phasing of development for the plan period that is consistent with the regionally defined population targets and settlement hierarchy, and, which reflects the availability of existing services, planned investment, sequential development and environmental requirements (i.e. an evidence based approach in determining the suitability of lands for zoning purposes).

2.3.2 Requirement for Core Strategy and Variation of Town Development Plan

Section 10 (1A)¹ of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2011, requires that a development plan shall include *“a core strategy which shows that development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and regional planning guidelines.”* Section 10 (1B) of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2011, further requires that a planning authority shall prepare a core strategy within a prescribed timeframe after the making of regional planning guidelines and shall accordingly vary the Development Plan under Section 13 of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2011 to include the core strategy. The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines were adopted in July 2010 and accordingly, in order to comply with the aforementioned statutory requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2011, this variation provides for the inclusion of a core strategy in the Development Plan.

¹ Inserted by Section 7 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010.

2.3.3 Core Strategy Strategic Aims:

The strategic aims of the Core Strategy are set out as follows:

Aim 1	To demonstrate that the Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015 is consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region and other national guidelines and policies.
Aim 2	To facilitate the closer alliance of County, Town and sub-county level plans with regional policy.
Aim 3	To identify the appropriate quantum, location and phasing of development considered necessary to provide for future population growth over the plan period in accordance with the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines.
Aim 4	To develop this quantum of land in a manner that supports public transport and existing services, in line with the defined role of Longford Town as indicated in the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines and County Development Plan.
Aim 5	To provide a framework supported by an evidence based settlement strategy, for deciding on the scale, phasing and location of new development, having regard to existing services and planned investment over the coming years, in collaboration with the Water Services and Roads Investment programmes.
Aim 6	To provide a framework within which the provision of sustainable infrastructure, amenities, economic investment and development can take place to maximize the use of resources in the plan area.

2.3.4 Core Strategy Policy Context and Rationale

National and Regional Policy Context: - The National Spatial Strategy and The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022

The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines (MRPGs), made in accordance with the National Spatial Strategy (NSS), define a regional development model that is based on a spatial hierarchy centred on the linked gateway of Athlone, Tullamore, and Mullingar as identified in the NSS and supported by the principal towns of Longford and Portlaoise. National Policy contained in the NSS, is translated to a regional level in the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022, which subsequently guide policy making decisions at a local level through the Town and County Development Plans.

The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines were adopted in July 2010. For the first time the MRPGs introduce population targets for Longford which are also indicated in terms of future housing land requirements for the Town and County. This coupled with the requirements of the Planning and Development (amendment) Act 2010, ensures that Development Plan policies are now consistent with the RPGs, whereas Development Plans were previously only required to have regard to the RPGs. The 'Core Strategy' contained as part of this plan is therefore central to ensuring such compliance with the RPGs.

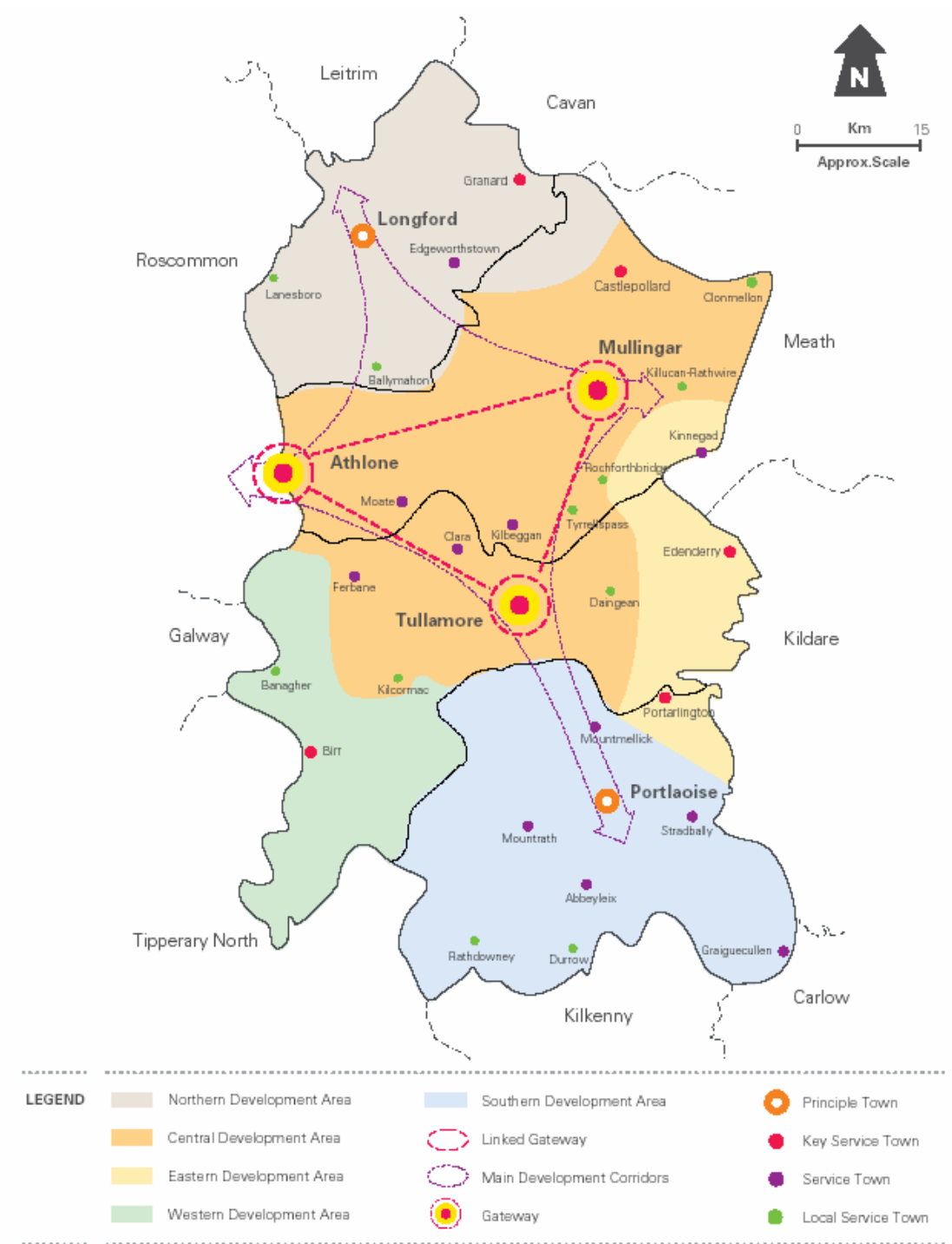
Longford Town is defined as a Principal Town in the MRPGs as part of the broader polycentric settlement model, centred on the linked gateway. It is defined as a major urban centre and economic driver for the north of the Midland Region with a distinct local economy and strong links to the adjacent region. In order to ensure that Longford as a Principal Town fulfils this role, the MRPGs indicate that the town is a significant focus for future population growth in the Regional Settlement Strategy.

In addition to the above, the Settlement Strategy contained in the MRPGs identifies Granard as a 'Key Service Town', Edgeworthstown as a 'Service Town' and

Ballymahon and Lanesboro as 'Local Service Towns'. Supporting this, the next tier of the settlement strategy as defined by the MRPGs is the 'Rural Hinterland' which includes the other towns, villages and open countryside.

Accordingly, population allocation within the County is reflective of the above hierarchical model. In this regard, this Core Strategy recognises the role of Longford, as a Principal Town, and policy therefore aligns itself with the terminology and goals set out in the MRPGs and are also informed by guidelines set out at a national level in relation to rural and urban residential development.

Figure 2.3.1: Midland Region-Spatial Settlement Strategy.



In light of the Midland Region Spatial Settlement Strategy, the MRPGs define population targets for Longford Town and County, as follows;

Table 2.3.1: Population Targets as defined by the MRPG's

	2006	2016	2022
County Longford	34,391	39,392	41,392
Longford (Principal Town)	7,622	10,747	12,622
County Balance	26,769	28,645	28,770

The MRPGs also indicate how the above population target for 2016 equates to a total housing land requirement of 163 hectares up until 2016, with **65 hectares** and 98 hectares allocated to Longford Town and the remainder of the County respectively. *Accordingly, the population and housing land requirement figures defined by the MRPGs are the starting point for the Core Strategy.*

2.3.5 Linkage with the County Development Plan 2009-2015

It is important to recognise the linkage between the Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015 and The Longford County Development Plan 2009-2015. The Longford County Development Plan 2009-2015 includes a Core Strategy for the entire County (Variation No.1). Through this mechanism and supplementary County Development Plan policy, the County Development Plan aims to ensure that the role of the Town is promoted and protected and that the role of Longford Town as a Principal Town, as assigned by the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines, is endorsed. In this regard the overall Settlement Strategy for the entire County, contained as part of the County Development Plan, acknowledges Longford Town's position and places it at the top of the Settlement Hierarchy.

Furthermore, The County Development Plan also identifies the target population for Longford Town, as prescribed by the MRPGs, and supports the Town's role as the main driver of development in the Northern Development Area (NDA). This is essential for facilitating the planning framework established by the MRPGs, as Longford Town will act as an important mechanism for channelling development both up (in terms of supporting the Gateway, acting as driver of development in the NDA and enhancing and maintaining strong links with the Border and West Regions) and down (in terms of supporting and driving population, social and economic growth in the remainder of the County and reaching and sustaining critical mass).

The following sections of this Core Strategy help to further identify the important linkage between the Town and County and aim to provide a greater contextualisation of the relationship between the two.

2.3.6 Core Strategy Relationship with other Development Strategies

Housing Strategy-

Under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2011, each planning authority is required to review and include a Housing Strategy within the Development Plan to cover the plan period. A joint Housing Strategy was prepared for both the Town and County and this is contained at Annex 3 of the current Town Development Plan 2009-2015.

In determining the housing demand methodology, the current Housing Strategy at the outset based the projection of the Longford County population on the detailed application of the 'Demographic Component Method'. However, this was ultimately revised and policy in line with the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines (2004), concerning the population target, took precedence over the demographic component method and was used as the basis in formulating the County's population targets. In this regard, the population targets defined as part of the Housing Strategy support the settlement hierarchy outlined within the current MRPGs by reinforcing the roles of Longford (Principal Town), Granard (Key Service Town), Edgeworthstown (Service Town), Lanesboro and Ballymahon (Local Service Towns).

In addition to the above, the Housing Strategy for Longford will be reviewed in accordance with the review of the Development Plan and the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000-2011. It should further be noted that whilst the Housing Strategy will remain the main document that addresses the provision of housing in the Town and County, including social and affordable housing, demand for different housing types, meeting the needs of varying households and incomes, the population projections and settlement hierarchy and structure defined as part of this core strategy take precedence over and replace the population projections and settlement hierarchy contained as part of the Housing Strategy.

Retail Strategy-

A joint Longford County Retail Strategy 2007-2015 was prepared for both the Town and County and the relevant policy of this is contained at Section 4.3 of the Longford Town Development Plan. This identifies a retail hierarchy for County Longford, which includes and provides a focus for Longford Town. It is considered that the retail hierarchy is generally in line with the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines whilst recognising the existing retail functions of the settlements defined. The retail hierarchy reinforces the role of the settlements within the settlement hierarchy and, most importantly, the hierarchy recognises the importance and reinforces the role of Longford Town, as a Principal Town, and places it at the top of the retail hierarchy. It is considered most appropriate that a revised retail strategy is prepared as part of the review of the Development Plan (due to commence in 2013) having regard to the recently published Retail Planning Guidelines.

2.3.6 Core Strategy Rationale

This section sets out the methodology used for the core strategy to ensure that the Longford Town Development Plan 2009 - 2015 is consistent with the National Spatial Strategy, the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines and Government guidelines.

The Core Strategy assigns regionally prescribed population targets as set out under the Regional Planning Guidelines, building upon the existing objectives of the Longford Town Development Plan.

- A target population for the years 2016 and 2022 has been allocated to County Longford, including a target population for Longford Town, by the Midlands Regional Authority through the Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines 2010–2022.
- Longford Town is addressed under this Core Strategy as the Principal Town, as identified in the overall County Settlement Hierarchy and as detailed as part of the CDP.
- The County Core Strategy identifies a population target for the entire County of 39,392 by the year 2016 with a target population of **10,747** identified for the principal town of Longford Town.
- The target population of Longford Town will be accommodated under this Core Strategy

The existing Longford Town Development Plan is, overall, broadly in line with the Regional Planning Guidelines in terms of population projections prescribed, however there are a number of issues which have been addressed to ensure that the development objectives in the Plan are consistent as far as practicable with the current MRPGs, specifically in terms of quantum of lands zoned, densities applied and strengthening the role of Longford Town within the County.

The amount of undeveloped residentially zoned lands available under the current Town Development Plan up to 2016 is 82ha. This compares to a figure of **65ha** identified for Longford Town in the Regional Planning Guidelines up to 2016. Furthermore, Longford Town's population allocation has been redefined as part of the MRPGs to reflect its Principal Town status as prescribed in the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines. In this context this Core Strategy aims to introduce greater consistency with national and regional population targets and policies, through identifying targeted areas for population growth and future development, providing consolidation of existing retail, business and employment areas, capitalising on existing brownfield sites/identified regeneration areas and promoting greater linkages throughout the Town and environs.

Longford Town and the County Settlement Hierarchy

The Hierarchy prescribed for County Longford as a whole, prioritises areas for development within the County over the lifetime of the plan, on a tiered basis, having regard to the regional Settlement Hierarchy as set out under the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midlands Region. This includes the designation of Longford Town as a Principal Town, whilst addressing the complementary role of other towns and villages, the availability of services, infrastructure and transport linkages and recognition of the rural nature, community needs, settlement structure and rural economy of the County.

Given that Longford Town is defined at the top of the Settlement Hierarchy for the County, the provisions of the Core Strategy, which outlines the anticipated location, extent and scale of development over the lifetime of the Plan, for Longford Town is reflective of this.

Core Strategy Table

The Core Strategy Table indicates the distribution of future population and housing for Longford Town. The position of Longford Town in the Settlement Hierarchy has been clearly linked to the quantitative population allocation as set out under the Core

Strategy Table. The Core Strategy Table illustrates clearly how the population targets as set out for County Longford at table 4.3 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region are to be distributed proportionate to Longford Town's positioning in the County Settlement Hierarchy.

Zoning Maps

Following the population allocation set out in the Core Strategy Table, this variation also introduces revised zoning maps to indicate the quantum and locations of future development for the plan period (although it is important to note that no residential zonings have been changed as part of this variation). It is considered that the lands identified for residential development are sufficient to meet the population targets set out in the Core Strategy Table and reflective of Longford Town's role in the Settlement Hierarchy.

The amount and location of zoned lands required within Longford Town was determined using an 'evidence based' approach which consisted of the following considerations;

- Position of the Settlement in the Regional Settlement Hierarchy and the population allocation set out under the Regional Planning Guidelines;
- Availability of services and infrastructure- planned and existing e.g. Smarter Travel and Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP);
- Potential for economic and social development of the settlement;
- Sequential Test;
- The need to consolidate settlements, keeping them physically compact;
- Flood risk assessment;
- Ground and surface water vulnerability;
- Environmental impact, including S.E.A and H.D.A. requirements;
- Planning history;
- Market availability/choice;

2.3.7 Settlement Strategy Context and Settlement Structure for Longford Town

2.3.7.1 Introduction and Background

The overall County Settlement Strategy has been aligned with the Settlement Strategy of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region and provides a framework to guide the location and scale of new development across the County, including the Town, for the Plan period.

Although this Core Strategy relates to Longford Town, it is important to contextualise Longford Town within the Settlement Hierarchy for the entire County in order to understand the position and role that Longford Town has.

Local, Regional and National Policy encourages new developments to locate in existing towns and villages where the basic social and infrastructural services are available and where such services may be provided or expanded on an economic basis. This policy direction has the primary aim of facilitating sustainable live-work patterns to strengthen the existing urban centres in order to encourage enhanced commercial and employment opportunities, to provide an increased range of social and recreational facilities and to protect the agricultural industry and rural areas.

Accordingly, the settlement strategy aims to provide for vibrant and viable settlements in urban and rural areas that provide a range of jobs, services and housing choice commensurate with their position on the hierarchy, with the capacity to facilitate the long-term sustainability of rural communities. The strategy was developed within the spatial development framework of national and regional policy, to ensure that the specific needs of communities are provided for, and to facilitate future development in a plan-led manner.

The following policies have been established as key aims for Longford Town within the Settlement Strategy Context to facilitate its delivery on a strategic level, whilst having specific regard to the importance of Longford Town's role in the settlement hierarchy.

SET 1:

The Council shall continue to support the strengthening of the role of Longford Town, in accordance with the hierarchy outlined in the following sections and supported by the Regional Planning Guidelines, Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines issued by the DoEHLG.

SET 2:

The Functional role of Longford Town shall be maintained and supported by the promotion of appropriate development and through the Development Management process.

SET 3:

The physical and social environment of the urban network, lead by Longford as the Principal Town in the County, is an important element in the promotion and strengthening of the settlement hierarchy. The Council aims, through the development management process and periodic initiatives at national and regional level, to create an attractive urban environment with a unique identity and an appropriate mix of uses to attract and retain population within the Town and drive the County as a whole.

2.3.7.3 Settlement Hierarchy

The settlement Hierarchy for the County has been assigned in line with the spatial structure as set out in the Regional Settlement Hierarchy defined in the MRPGs and categorises areas for development within the County on a priority basis across six tiers.

The settlement hierarchy outlined in the MRPG's for County Longford is as follows:

LONGORD – PRINCIPAL TOWN
GRANARD – KEY SERVICE TOWN
EDGEWORTHSTOWN – SERVICE TOWN
BALLYMAHON & LANESBORO – LOCAL SERVICE TOWNS
VILLAGE NETWORK (Served Settlements & Rural Service Settlements)

Longford Town is at the top of the County Settlement Hierarchy. Described as a 'Principal Town' in the MRPGs, it forms part of the broader polycentric model, centred on the linked gateway. Longford is described as the major urban centre and economic driver for the north of the Midland Region with a distinct local economy and strong links to the adjacent regions.

The position of Longford Town within the Settlement Hierarchy provides an indication of the potential scale of population growth permissible over the lifetime of the Plan and therefore plays a key role in the appropriate delivery of the population targets in order to achieve balanced development at local level, through the strengthening of the main urban settlement, while ensuring that the resources of rural areas are developed in a sustainable manner in meeting the needs of its people.

The policy of the Council is to promote the development of Longford Town as the primary County and Regional Centre for the area. The Town Council area is defined by the administrative boundary of the town and covered by the Longford Town Development Plan 2009 – 2015. It is important to note that lands immediately outside

the town boundary within the County administrative area are also relevant to the Town and are shown on maps contained as part of Appendix 3.

2.3.7.4 Hierarchy Tiers

As indicated above Longford Town is at the top of the Settlement Hierarchy for the County. Accordingly within the overall County Settlement Hierarchy tiers, Longford Town is outlined as follows;

Tier 1. Longford Town – County Town of Regional Importance

Longford Town is identified in the MRPGs as the main driver of development in the north of the region, with substantial retail and administrative functions and considerable social infrastructure serving a broad, cross-regional hinterland and hence has been identified as the main focus for population growth during the current Development Plan period. The majority of industrial, commercial, business and retail development will also be channeled to Longford Town.

The urban area is covered by the Longford Town Development Plan. Local Area Plans for the Southern and Northern Environs cover the environs areas of Longford Town that straddle both the town and county administrative areas.

In addition to both Local Area Plans, there are existing zoned lands to the south west, east and north of the town, contained within the County Council administrative area, which allow for the natural growth of Longford Town and relate to existing zonings within the town boundary.

The Longford County Development Plan should also be referred to in relation to adjacent zonings/compatibility etc and cognisance should be taken of the Longford Northern Environs Local Area Plan and the Southern Environs Local Area Plan.

LUTS- Land Use and Transportation Study of Longford Town and Environs

A Land Use and Transportation Study was previously prepared in order to enhance the attractiveness of the town as a commercial destination and as a prime location to live, work and visit, and in order to address potential pressures on existing infrastructure that may threaten the continued prosperity, quality of life and overall vitality and viability of Longford Town and its environs, through increasing traffic congestion and resultant deterioration of the pedestrian environment. It is considered that this study will be updated in order to appropriately inform the review of the Town Development Plan.

2.3.7.5 Settlement Structure

The anticipated future growth for Longford Town in terms of population targets and future housing land requirements is as prescribed by the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines. In complying, this Core Strategy is in line with Regional requirements and this will be required to be matched with the appropriate level of infrastructure provision as part of an evidence based strategy, to deliver the services needed to retain and attract the desired population and levels of economic development. In this regard, it is essential that the Town Settlement Structure is detailed to maximize existing opportunities and infrastructure investment, subsequently identify areas of focused residential and economic growth and to deal with factors that may limit the implementation of these targets that are required by the MRPGs and as translated into this Core Strategy.

This section should therefore be read in conjunction with the Core Strategy Concept Map and the Access Concept Strategy Map.

Local Area Plans and Identified Areas for Focusing Growth

Local Area Plans have been prepared for two areas that are within the Town boundary. These are the Northern Environs Local Area Plan and the Southern Environs Local Area Plan.

Despite the preparation of the Southern Environs Local Area Plan (the extent of these lands are identified as part of Appendix 2), it is important to note that the spatial expansion of the town in this area is currently restricted, primarily due to the fact that there is no service provision in this area, including a water supply, necessary roads infrastructure and appropriate surface water drainage and sewer network. In this regard and until such time that funding is available to provide same, the development of this area in a manner that supports regional policy through the achievement of the prescribed population projections, will not occur during the lifespan of the existing plan period or current RPG plan period.

Having regard to the above, the promotion of the development of the town in a manner that supports regional policy through the achievement of population targets and provision of sufficient housing land will therefore focus new development on lands contained within the Northern Environs LAP boundary.

The Northern Environs Local Area Plan occupies an area in the north of the town and the extent of these lands is illustrated on the map contained as part of Appendix 2. The area straddles the boundary with the County and the details for the development of this area are contained as part of the Local Area Plan prepared. The area also offers a bank of land that is capable of being extended in the longer term further into the County Administrative area. It is anticipated that the development of the Northern Environs area will help to attain the necessary critical mass that will contribute to the Town's ability to become more sustainable through the promotion of high quality and required residential development, development of economic and employment opportunities and the continued and appropriate development of services and amenities, all co-located and with identified linkages to the existing Town area.

The focus for development within the Town will also include the consolidation of the existing residential neighbourhoods within the town, albeit most likely to occur at a rate in character with the established nature of development. It is also envisioned that this focus for development will provide consolidation of existing retail, business and employment areas, capitalise on existing brownfield sites/identified regeneration

areas (see Concept Map) and promote greater linkages throughout the Town and environs.

Having regard to the aforementioned, it is essential that the upcoming reviews of the Retail and Housing Strategies provide focus for Longford Town and address issues such as retail and housing vacancy rates/locations and support the provision of new housing and retail development in line with the defined Town Structure, in order to ensure that the Town Settlement Structure is appropriately supported by complementary policy provision and that the implementation of the evidence based Core Strategy is facilitated in line with the prescribed Regional Policy.

Having regard to the above mentioned Settlement Hierarchy tier and the detailed Settlement Structure, the following policy shall be applied;

CS 1: Longford Town

Proposals for residential development in Longford Town, as shown on the maps contained at Appendix 1 and 2, will be determined in accordance with the requirements of the Core Strategy Table with regard to population return, the ability of the proposal to enhance the character of the Town and contribute to the detailed Settlement Structure, the demand/need for the proposed level and type of residential development in the settlement and compliance with technical, legislative, environmental, design policy and/or criteria contained within the Development Plan or any other relevant plan, the functional area of which the proposal forms part.

It is an objective that Longford Town will account for the majority of the urban population growth within the County over the duration of the Development Plan, resulting in a strong urban structure within the County that supports the wider hinterland areas.

2.3.7.6 Implementation

In order to ensure that the development of Longford Town is achieved in accordance with the figures prescribed by the MRPGs and in line with the defined Settlement Structure, it is important to acknowledge that the physical delineation of the Longford Town boundary in administrative terms, impacts on the ability of the Core Strategy,

including the role that Longford Town plays within the Midland Region to be realised.

The administrative boundary of Longford Town provides a demarcation around the Town area within which the population targets and housing land requirements, as defined by the MRPGs, must be met. This boundary can be viewed as part of the map contained at Appendix 1. As required by legislation, the achievement of population and housing land figures defined by the MRPGs must be justified using an evidence based strategy which channels development into appropriate areas taking account of factors such as infrastructural provision and environmental constraints.

As already demonstrated in the above text, a large section of lands within the Town administrative boundary, including lands covered by the Southern Environs Local Area Plan are not viable for development given that essential investment in infrastructure is not available to support this option for development. This means that the targets as prescribed by the MRPGs must be met within the remaining and somewhat limited existing residentially zoned pockets on other development lands within the Town administrative boundary. In terms of meeting the population targets as prescribed, this is of concern to the Planning Authority, particularly given that there are issues with regard to portions of the residentially zoned lands currently not developed within the Town boundary, including that some form part of agricultural landholdings and some are unlikely to be made available for the market, particularly given that they have remained undeveloped over several previous Longford Town Plan periods. In this regard and despite the indication as part of the Core Strategy Table that 85 hectares of undeveloped residentially zoned land is identified within the Town boundary, it is the opinion of the Planning Authority that less than the required 65 hectares as per the MRPGs is actually readily available to the market for development purposes.

Indeed the restrictive nature of the Town administrative boundary means that there are no alternative lands for selection within the Town that may be zoned for residential purposes. In this regard the provision of necessary infrastructure to open up new landbanks within the Town boundary and the upgrading of existing

infrastructure within the Town is critical to deliver the services that will be required to meet the prescribed population target and support the role of Longford Town as defined by the MRPGs. These issues will also be dealt with in more detail as part of the Housing Strategy which will be completed as part of the TDP review due to commence in 2013.

The above mentioned issue also has implications with regard to the ability of the Town to provide medium to large scale economic and employment opportunities, which are considered essential in order to retain and attract the necessary population and contribute to the ability of Longford Town to fulfill its role as defined by the MRPGs. In this regard, these types of desirable employment opportunities are more than likely to have to locate predominantly outside of the Town Boundary within the adjoining county administrative area, where readily available land banks exists. This issue should be dealt with in co-operation with the County Development Plan review, and, are most likely to be considered appropriate to the north of the town in areas that support the identified areas of focused development within the Town Settlement Structure and provide a natural progression of this. It should be noted however, that this will not preclude the appropriate development of lands within the Town Council boundary that have capacity to accommodate such development and is provided as a measure necessary to support the growth of Longford Town in accordance with that envisioned by the MRPGs and within the scope of the evidence based Core Strategy.

2.3.7.7 Longford Town Core Strategy Map

The Core Strategy Map (Figure 2.3.2) overleaf provides a visual representation and geographical illustration of how Longford Town is envisaged to develop over its Plan period in line with the availability and integration of services, transport, infrastructure and economic activity whilst also preserving its natural environment and amenities.

The format of the Core Strategy Map is as required under section 7 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010/ Section (2B) of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011.

Figure 2.3.2: Core Strategy Concept Map

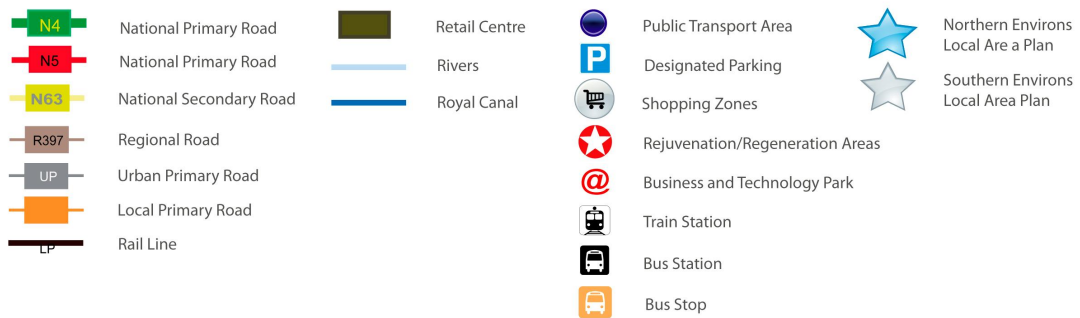
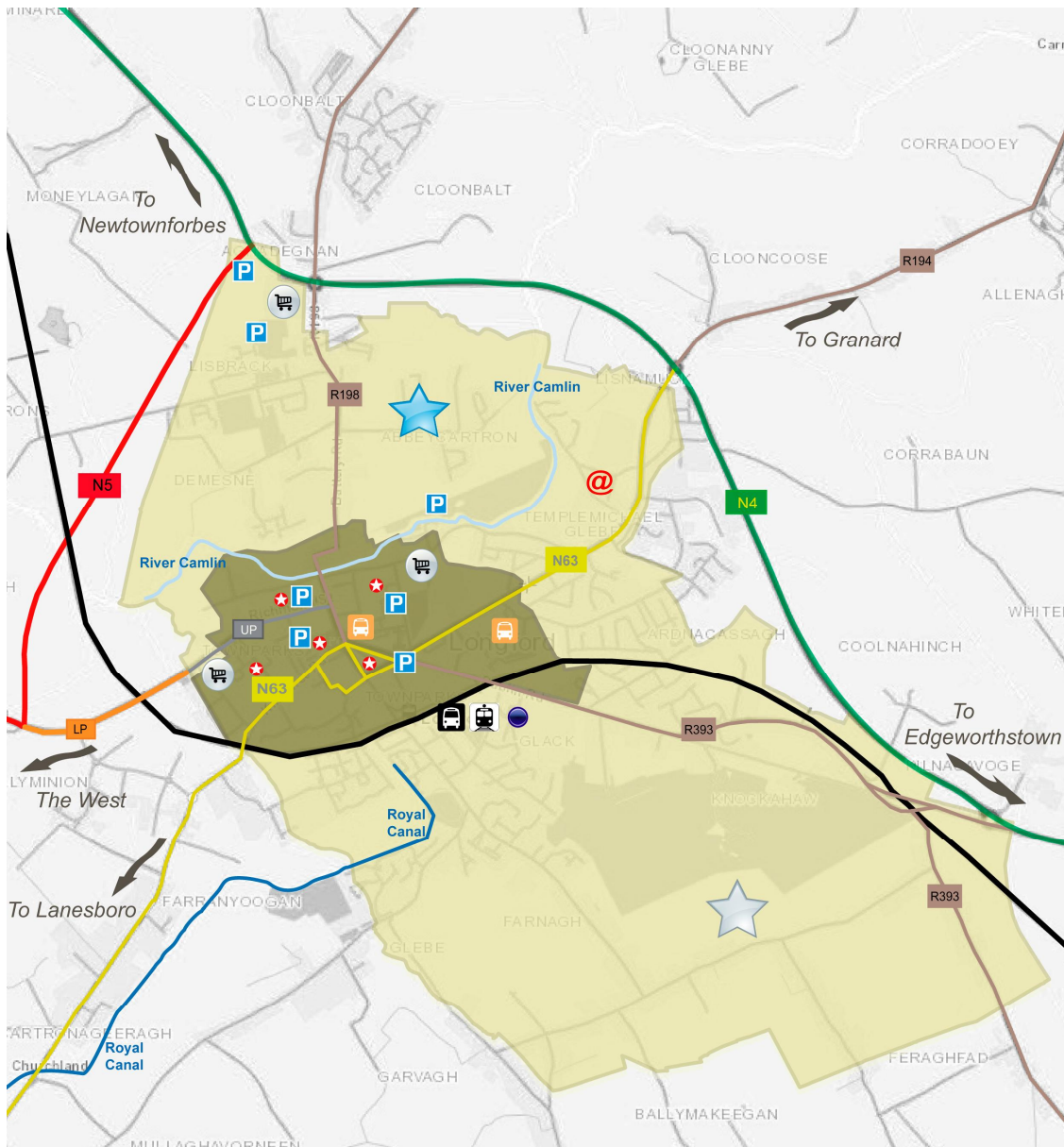
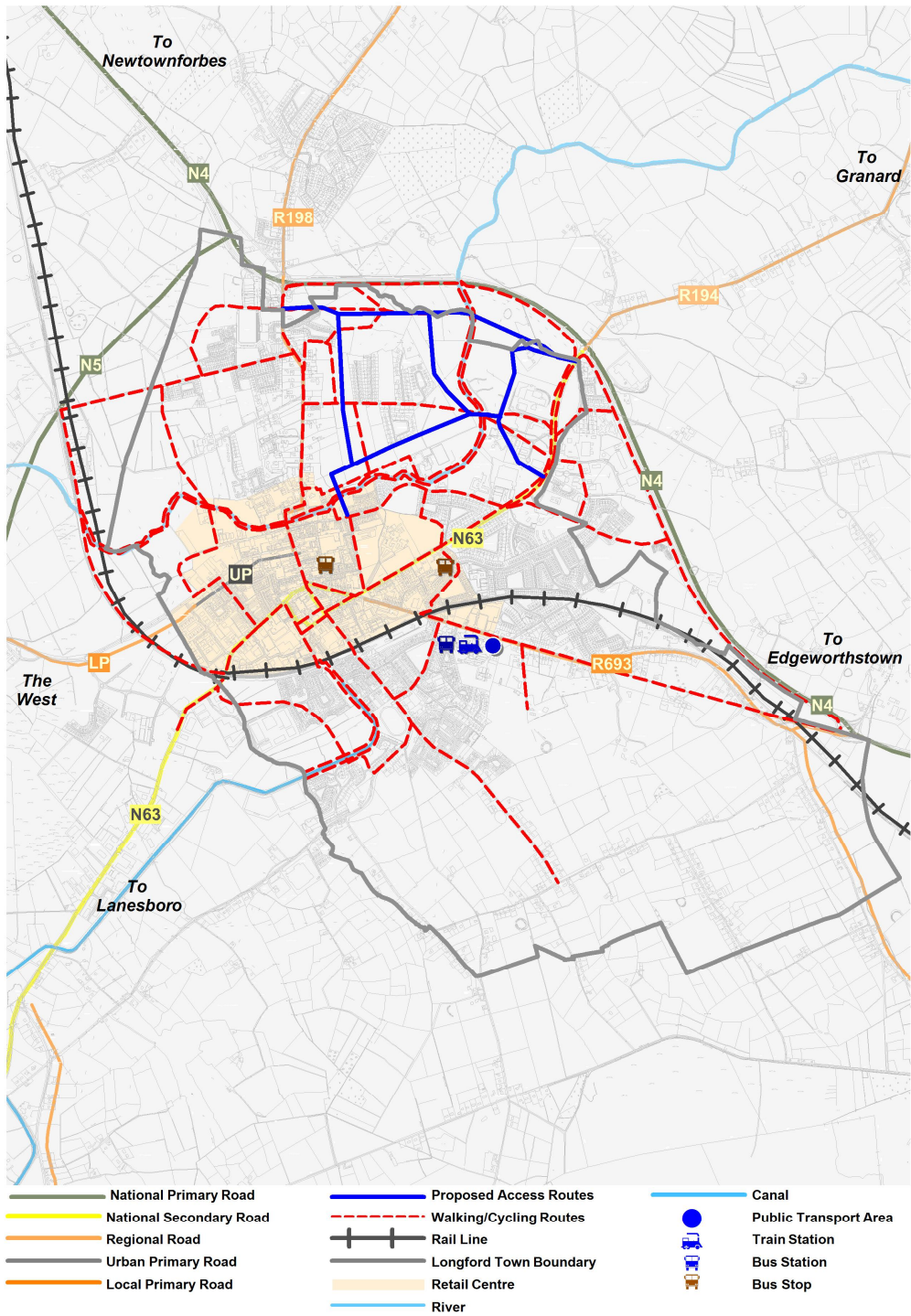


Figure 2.3.3: Access Concept Strategy Map



2.3.8 Regional Planning Guidelines Population Targets

The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022 set out population projections for the region with specific targets for each County, the linked Gateway and Principal Towns. The population targets prescribed for County Longford are set out under table 2.3.2 below. The guidelines indicate population targets of 39, 392 for County Longford to the period 2016 and 41, 392 to the period 2022. Of these targets, 10, 747 and 12, 622 are indicated for Longford Town to the periods 2016 and 2022 respectively. The remaining balances of population are to be located across the remainder of the County in line with the Settlement Hierarchy.

Table 2.3.2: Midland Regional Planning Guidelines Population Allocation

	Target 2016	Target 2022
County Longford	39, 392	41, 392
Longford Town (Principal Town)	10, 747	12, 622
County Balance	28, 645	28, 770

The population targets set out for County Longford provide for a population growth of 5,001 during the ten year period from 2006 to 2016. Longford Town, which is a principal town as designated under the RPG's and which accordingly sits at the top tier in the County Settlement Hierarchy, is allocated a population growth of **3,125**¹ persons. In order to meet these targets an appropriate level of housing land must be made available for development over the lifetime of the Plan. Table 2.3.3 which follows, sets out the amount of lands required in hectares (as prescribed by the MRPGs) and the number of units required over the duration of the Development Plan in order to accommodate the population target.

¹ The allocated figure refers to the period up to 2016. The Longford Town Development Plan is due for review in 2013 and covers the period from 2009 – 2015, hence the figures used cover up to the end of the 2015 period where a revised Development Plan will prescribe revised figures for the relevant period.

The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines identify that 65 hectares of land is required for Longford Town, to be developed at an average of 30units/ha in order to cater for the needs of Longford Town. An average household size of 2.4 persons has been applied in line with national trends and to ensure consistency with the forecast calculations employed under the Regional Planning Guidelines in setting target population figures. The allocation of 65 hectares of residentially zoned lands will provide for 1, 950 residential units over the lifetime of the Plan catering for the target population allocation of 3, 125 (These figures as prescribed by the MRPGs allow for 50% headroom to facilitate market choice and meet the population target).

Table 2.3.3: Midland Regional Planning Guidelines Housing Land Requirements 2016

	Target Population Growth -2016 as per RPG's	Hectares of housing land required (+50%)	Density	Number of Units Required
Longford Town (Principal Town)	3, 125	65	30 units / ha.	1, 950
County Balance	1, 876	98	12 units / ha.	1, 176
Total County Longford	5, 001	163		3, 126

2.3.9 Core Strategy Table

Introduction

In compliance with the Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022, and the requirements for a Core Strategy under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), Table 2.3.4 illustrates the target population for Longford Town. Building on the Settlement Strategy, with Longford Town at the top of this, the Core Strategy Table provides a quantitative expression for the spatial development of the County and Principal Town over the Development Plan period.

The **Core Strategy Table** gives a summary of the amount of land that is zoned for housing purposes under the current Plan compared to that zoned under the Core Strategy, in order to meet the population targets and future housing land requirement as set out under the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines. The table also identifies the quantum of lands addressed under the Core Strategy taking account of zoning objectives.

Table 1.2 of the Plan and the population and household projections as set out under the Longford County Housing Strategy 2007-2016, no longer apply.

Table 2.3.4: Core Strategy Table (up to 2016)

Settlement Designation	Core Strategy Population Allocation	Housing Requirement in Hectares ¹	Previous Zoning in Hectares ²	Zoning in Hectares ³	Housing Yield ⁴	Excess Zoning in Hectares
County ⁵	5001	163	926	194	163	763
County Town ⁶ Longford Town Principal Town	3125	65	82	82	65	17
County Balance ⁷	1876	98	844	112	98	746

¹ Expressed in hectares and taken from Table 4.3 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region 2010 - 2022

² Amount of land zoned in Longford Development Plans and associated Local Area Plans prior to the Core Strategy, primarily for housing and expressed in hectares

³ Amount of land zoned as a result of Core Strategy, primarily for housing units, expressed in hectares

Additional lands have been provided as per explanation at Columns 5,6 & 7 of 2.3.1.2.1, Core Strategy Table Explained, overleaf.

⁴ Housing yield is expressed in hectares. As defined by Guidance Note on Core Strategies, Housing Yield should be equal to column 3 'Housing Requirement in Hectares'. A density assumption of 30 units per hectare applies to Longford Town and an average density of 12 units per hectare applies to the remaining County Balance.

⁵ Population allocation has been taken from Table 4.3 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region 2010 - 2022

⁶ Population allocation has been taken from Table 4.3 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region 2010 - 2022

⁷ Population allocation has been taken from Table 4.3 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region 2010 - 2022

2.3.9.1 Core Strategy Table Explained

The following summary sets out an explanation of the headings contained in the Core Strategy Table.

Column 1 ‘Settlement Designation’

The first column sets out the main settlement within the County, defined in line with the Settlement Hierarchy.

Column 2 ‘Core Strategy Population Allocation’

The second column [Core Strategy Population Allocation](#) sets out the population allocations for Longford as expressed at Table 4.3 of the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region 2010 – 2022. A target population growth of 5,001 persons has been allocated to County Longford with 3, 125 persons to be located in Longford Town and the remaining balance to be distributed across the remainder of the County in line with the Settlement Hierarchy.

Column 3 ‘Housing Requirement in Hectares’

Column three [‘Housing Requirement in Hectares’](#) sets out the amount of land required for each area in order to accommodate the population targets in column number two ‘Core Strategy Population Allocation’. The figures provided for each settlement have incorporated 50% headroom in accordance with the document, ‘Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DoEHLG June 2007’.

An average household size of 2.4 is used for the purpose of calculating the zoned land requirements. A density of 30 units per hectare has been applied for Longford Town. The density applied is considered an average as some areas will have the ability to accommodate higher densities depending on the availability of services, infrastructure and proximity to public transport, whilst other areas may be more suitable to lower densities.

Column 4 ‘Previous Zoning in Hectares’

Column four, [Existing Zoning in Hectares](#), identifies the amount of zoned land previously available for development within Longford Town and the County prior to the Core Strategy. Prior to the adoption of any Core Strategy for the County or Town, there are 948 hectares of zoned lands available for development in County Longford including Longford Town.

Column 5 ‘Zoning in Hectares’, Column 6 ‘Housing Yield’ Column 7, ‘Excess Zoning in Hectares’

Column five [Zoning in Hectares](#) and column six, [Housing Yield](#), relates to the amount of lands zoned solely for residential development under the Core Strategy in order to meet the population allocations as set out under the current Regional Planning Guidelines. The difference between the previous zonings and that zoned under the Core Strategy is expressed in column seven [‘Excess Zoning in Hectares’](#).

The quantitative provision of lands for Longford Town has been designated taking account of the factor of land availability which refers to the likelihood of the land actually being developed in the short-term. Several residentially zoned land parcels within Longford Town remain undeveloped- a position that has continued over the life time of several Longford Town Development Plans. Furthermore, Longford has a larger percentage of the labour force employed in the agricultural sector than the state average. This has a direct impact on residentially zoned landholdings within the Longford Town settlement boundary, which are still used for agriculture and therefore the likelihood of the land being developed is reduced which must be considered in determining residential zoning provision.

In addition to the above, this figure includes parcels of residentially zoned lands located within the Southern Environs LAP area and it is important to note that the development of these residentially zoned land parcels are dependent on the provision of all the necessary physical utilities including the provision of a water supply, appropriate surface water drainage and sewer network. The provision of these physical utilities to serve this substantial section of Longford Town is dependent on funding.

Having regard to the above, it is considered appropriate that the allocation of the lands in excess of that required is not excessive and is appropriate to strive to ensure that there are sufficient residentially zoned lands to meet the required population growth and promote the role of Longford Town as the main settlement within the County's Settlement Hierarchy.

2.3.10 Implementation and Monitoring

The purpose of this section is to show clear mechanisms for the implementation of the Core Strategy in order to demonstrate how its provisions will be achieved. This in turn should be monitored to assess whether the policies and objectives are delivering the Core Strategy. In order to ensure the effective implementation and monitoring of the Core Strategy in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2011 and the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines, it is considered that in addition to the policy and objectives already indicated as part of this Core Strategy, there is need for additional policy and objectives to ensure the successful realisation of the Core Strategy and provide a more robust implementation framework. In this regard, the following policy shall apply;

IMP-CS 1:

The Planning Authority shall promote and facilitate the development of the Town in accordance with the provisions of the Core Strategy, including directing development and promoting development at an appropriate scale that is reflective of the terms of the Core Strategy Table and zoning map.

Central to the above, is the fact that a proportion of lands zoned within the Town are currently zoned as part of other statutory land use plans, namely the Northern and Southern Environs Local Area Plans. The Core Strategy complies with the national and regional population targets and emphasises that the Development Plan is the fundamental link with national, regional and local policies. In meeting the requirements of the future population target, the Longford Town Development Plan must ensure that the availability and orderly development of suitably zoned lands and infrastructure provision are sufficient to accommodate the population targets within the lifetime of the Plan. In this regard policy is required to give priority to the Core Strategy variation and to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy and the zoning maps and policies contained as part of the Appendices to this variation.

Having regard to the aforementioned, the following policy and objectives shall apply;

IMP-CS 2:

a) It is an objective of the Council to review the following Local Area Plans on adoption of this variation, in order to ensure that the population targets, future housing land requirement, zoning maps and policies contained as part of this Core Strategy can effectively be realised and to ensure consistency with the Core Strategy;

- The Northern Environs LAP
- The Southern Environs LAP

b) Having regard to point a) above and where any ambiguity arises between the content of any existing Land Use Plan and this variation, the Core Strategy will take precedence during any transitional period.

IMP-CS 3:

The Planning Authority shall maintain a record of residential development permitted in order to monitor consistency with the population allocations defined by the Core Strategy Table.

IMP-CS 4:

The Planning Authority shall apply the provisions of the Core Strategy to determine the scale, rate and location of proposed developments and apply appropriate development management measures to ensure compliance with the Settlement Hierarchy, Strategy and Structure, including the population targets as prescribed in the Core Strategy Table.

In addition to the above, there are other factors that will markedly contribute to the ability of the Core Strategy to be delivered. Central to this is the need to consolidate and promote the growth of Longford Town in order to ensure that the Town, at the top of the settlement hierarchy, fulfils its role as Principal Town, driving the development of the County, and that it reaches its population target as prescribed by the RPGs.

In this regard it is vital to ensure the promotion of infrastructure provision, within the town council administrative boundary, is actively promoted to provide suitable and sufficient land banks that allow for the appropriate, consolidated and sequential growth of the town and to provide alternatives to the existing land banks that have

remained undeveloped over previous plan periods. In this regard the following policy shall apply;

IMP-CS 5:

It is policy of the council to secure the provision of necessary infrastructure, including the provision of a water supply, appropriate road infrastructure and appropriate surface water drainage and sewer network, to,

- a) Existing developed areas that are inadequately serviced within the Town Council administrative boundary, and;
- b) Areas that are currently un-serviced within the Town Council administrative boundary

This is critical in order to facilitate the appropriate, consolidated and sequential growth of the town, reinforcing its functional role as Principal Town and to facilitate the achievement of population growth targets and comply with policy as prescribed by the MRPGs.

IMP-CS 6:

Subject to compliance with the provisions of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 2011, the Council will continue to progress the Long Term Upgrade of Lough Forbes Water Treatment Plant

It is the policy of the Council to consider the provision of improved and additional wastewater services in appropriate locations/ having regard to the need to control the impact of wastewater on receiving waters. To this effect, the Water Services Department of the Council are appointing consultants and will submit a plan for the upgrade of the WWTP to the Department in 2013 with a view towards ensuring the undertaking any upgrade works required. All upgrade works will be screened by the Council for the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

The development of a robust implementation framework allows the Core Strategy to be self monitoring through the incorporation of policy to ensure this. Table 2.3.5 below indicates this through demonstrating how the goals of the Core Strategy are achieved through policy that has been incorporated.

Table 2.3.5: Monitoring Framework

Strategic Aims	Policy/Objective
To demonstrate that the Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015 is consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy	SET 1, SET 2, SET 3, IMP-CS1, IMP-CS4

and Regional Planning Guidelines for the Midland Region and other national guidelines and policies.	
To facilitate the closer alliance of County, Town and sub-county level plans with regional policy.	SET 1, CS1, IMP-CS 1, IMP-CS 2, IMP-CS3
To identify the appropriate quantum, location and phasing of development considered necessary to provide for future population growth over the plan period in accordance with the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines.	CS 1, IMP-CS 1, IMP-CS3, IMP-CS 4 Also see Table 2.3.4- Core Strategy Table
To develop this quantum of land in a manner that supports public transport and existing services, in line with the defined role of Longford Town as indicated in the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines and County Development Plan.	SET 1, SET 3, CS 1 Also see Core Strategy Map
To provide a framework supported by an evidence based settlement strategy, for deciding on the scale, phasing and location of new development, having regard to existing services and planned investment over the coming years, in collaboration with the Water Services and Roads Investment programmes.	SET 2, SET 3, CS 1, IMP-CS 5 Core Strategy Map Also see Table 2.3.4- Core Strategy Table
To provide a framework within which the provision of sustainable infrastructure, amenities, economic investment and development can take place to maximize the use of resources in the plan area.	SET 3, CS 1, IMP-CS 5 Also see Table 2.3.4- Core Strategy Table and Zoning Maps

With regard to the future and longevity of the Core Strategy, any future changes to the MRPGs and the recent publication of the completed Census in 2012 may have an impact in this regard. The Census provides an important indication as to the suitability of the Core Strategy, including the policies and objectives contained as part of it, and points towards areas where strengthening of policy may be required.

2.3.11 Future and Longevity of the current Core Strategy (Changes to the MRPGs and full publication of Census 2011)

Given the requirement of the Core Strategy to comply with the Midland Regional Planning Guidelines, it is apparent that as the MRPGs are reviewed or updated, the Core Strategy may change as a result. In this regard the full publication of Census 2011 is extremely relevant with particular regard to the actual population figures for County Longford.

The following table indicates the Target population, as outlined in the MRPGs, until 2016 and also shows the actual population as recorded in the 2011 Census.

Table 2.3.6: Target Population as per MRPGs and Actual Population as per Census 2011

Settlement	Target Population 2016	Actual Population 2011
County Longford	39,392	39,000
Longford Town (Principal Town)	10,747	8002 (stated aggregate Towns Pop., 12,908)
County Balance	28,645	30,998 (stated aggregate rural Pop. 26,092)

The 2011 Census indicates that the population of County Longford has grown strongly in recent times and is at a level higher than that envisaged at the time the MRPGs were finalised. As indicated by the above table, the target population for County Longford until 2016, as defined by the MRPGs is likely to be exceeded and in this regard the population is actually approaching the 2022 population target as defined by the MRPGs, which in opinion of the Planning Authority, would remain consistent with the relevant policies and objectives set out in the NSS and MRPGs. It is also evident from the above figures, that there is need to encourage growth within the Longford Town administrative area. This Core Strategy document has provided

measures to facilitate this through the promotion of the defined Settlement Structure, the incorporation of policy, including policy contained at Section 2.3.10, through the stated implementation measures and the application of the Core Strategy Table in collaboration with complimentary County Development Plan policy.

However, until such time that the MRPGs are revised, the Core Strategy must proceed in accordance with the requirements of current planning legislation, using the population targets and future housing land requirement figures as contained within the current MRPGs. There is subjective opinion that suggests that current mitigating factors such as the economic downturn and emigration may well lead to a slower growth rate in the Town over the short term and it is important to recognise this. Equally, it is important to acknowledge that the Census figures provide an important indication as to the suitability of the figures contained within the current Regional Settlement Strategy and the Core Strategy, whilst also providing an indication of where strengthening of policy and change is required. In this regard, it should be noted that the Department will be engaging with the CSO in developing updated National and Regional Population Forecasts, which will be adopted as an update of the current RPG's, probably by late 2013 - a mid term point in the 2010-2016 RPG's, and the situation will be reconciled. Following this, the population targets and future housing land requirement figures for the Town will be revised and these figures will be incorporated into the updated Core Strategy contained as part of the Town Development Plan review which is due to commence in 2013.

PART 3- REVISED APPENDICES

This part of Variation No. 1 replaces Appendices 1, 2 and 3 (Zoning Maps) of the existing Town Plan. It should be noted that no zoning alterations have been made as part of this Core Strategy variation and that the revised zoning maps are simply to provide an improved and greater level of map legibility, than that previously provided as part of the Town Plan, and to ensure that mapping standards comply with recent and updated mapping requirements and legislation.

Appendix 1

**Longford Town Zoning Strategy
Excluding Zonings covered by Local Area Plans
& Consolidated Zoning Map**



Zoning

The zonings contained within this document and illustrated on the accompanying maps are indicative of the level and nature of development which is deemed by the Planning Authority to be appropriate to the area. The development envelope shown is indicative of the administrative area of Longford Town Council and the uses identified for these areas are considered appropriate for development by the Planning Authority, satisfying the objectives of local, regional and national policy as contained in the relevant development plans and guidelines. The zonings are intended to be flexible provided that the basic concepts of proper planning, residential amenity and good design practice are adhered to. Any proposed development should be compatible with the primary zoning use and should not detract from the amenity of the area.

Zonings should be read in conjunction with the Development Plan Design Standards, particularly in relation to design, materials, public open space and parking requirements.

When reading zonings, cognisance should also be had to the Northern Environs Local Area Plan and Southern Environs Local Area Plan which should be consulted in respect of particular zoning policies relevant to these areas both within and outside the Longford Town administrative boundary.

The following zoning provisions should be read in consultation with the attached Zoning Map.

* The zoning definitions which follow update and replace those previously contained at Section 2.3.2 of the Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015.

Residential

To primarily provide for residential development; to preserve and enhance residential amenity, dwellings and compatible uses including social and community facilities, open spaces and local shopping facilities.

The principles of sustainable development shall be taken into account when considering applications for residential development in the area, including the use of natural, locally sourced materials, energy efficient construction and operation and the application of housing densities in accordance with DoELGH Guidelines. Consideration will be given to the potential transport implications of a proposed development, particularly in relation to the promotion of walking and cycling, the development of a public transport system for the Town and the encouragement of multi-trip journeys for private transport users. The potential impact of the proposed development on the existing ecology and compatibility with local environmental conditions should be addressed.

It is considered appropriate that existing residential areas are augmented and areas where gaps or “leapfrogging” of development have occurred are infilled, and the town be consolidated for the purposes of an appropriate and sustainable town structure, creating a clear urban/rural divide.

The provision of neighbourhood facilities may be required as part of any proposed residential development, such as a neighbourhood shop, post office, school, crèche, etc.

Commercial/Residential

To primarily provide for commercial/retail development with an element of residential development

Development carried out under this zoning should encourage town centre commercial development and have regard to the dual use of the zoning, and, in particular, shall have regard to the provisions of the current retail strategy. Developers should be cognisant of

the high profile locations of this zoning and design, siting and materials should be chosen accordingly.

A proactive approach to urban design will be taken and substantial development in these areas should utilise opportunities to facilitate attractive and vibrant environments designed at a human scale, with enhanced pedestrian permeability, visually engaging, secure and inviting public realms that promote and encourage passive and active recreation. In certain instances, particularly in relation to large scale developments in the Town Centre, masterplans may be required to facilitate a coherent urban design approach.

This zone also contains areas of residential accommodation in housing areas and above existing commercial premises. This mix of commercial and residential use is recognised and encouraged within this zoning.

Employment/Mixed Use

To primarily provide for employment generating uses (office/light industrial/commercial/retail associated with town centre development), to include hi-tech/business/office use and residential where appropriate, in association with the delivery of necessary strategic road infrastructure.

Any significant convenience retail development proposed in these areas will only be considered having regard to the Longford Retail Strategy and where such development is proposed in tandem with a substantial and appropriate redevelopment of the core area, with significant and tangible benefits, including improved traffic access circulation and car parking, ensuring the continued vitality and vibrancy of the Town centre into the future.

Urban Regeneration

To primarily provide for mixed use development appropriate to high profile town centre location with an emphasis on the provision of public spaces, civic offices, retail, commercial and amenity uses that maximise pedestrian interaction at street

level.

This zoning provides for the comprehensive redevelopment of this sector of the town, allowing for a broad range of compatible and complimentary uses which will be encouraged to locate in this area and contribute to a dynamic, vibrant and pedestrian focused town core. A strong urban design approach will be required in all aspects of development in this area.

A palette of compatible uses that span daytime into the evening and beyond will be promoted to develop the area as one which retains a secure and inviting environment at all times. In addition to more traditional town core activities such as retail and commercial establishments, institutional, social/community and civic facilities will be prioritised where of a nature and scale appropriate to the location. Innovative approaches will be welcomed in the area, particularly with regard to residential development.

Development under this zoning, including commercial development, will also be considered in the context of any master plan setting out an urban regeneration framework for the area.

Rejuvenation Area

To primarily provide for the rejuvenation of Breadan's Lane and to unlock its commercial potential.

The purpose of this zoning is to promote development in this area in accordance with the provisions outlined at Section 7.5.2. Due to the central location and its position as a major pedestrian short-cut across the urban retail core, significant potential exists for transforming this underused street into a vibrant pedestrian shopping route.

Visually distinctive due to its highly enclosed nature and entrance archway, the lane connects Dublin Street, the Old Garda Barracks and New Street. This presents a unique opportunity to develop a succession of small scale, high quality commercial, retail and residential developments and/or provide potential additional access elevations for

existing premises fronting onto other streets, thereby unlocking the underlying unique spatial qualities of the area.

This redevelopment shall be designed to the highest architectural standards to provide an attractive uniform urban environment with unique character and identity.

Industrial

To primarily provide for industrial/workshop and commercial/office development.

Zonings of industrial nature are indicative and are adaptable to the nature, size and requirements of future employment/industrial development. The creation of enhanced employment opportunities and generation of economic development is the primary aim of this zoning.

Hi-tech business/office and light industrial developments will be considered within this zoning. Lower order commercial/repair activities shall generally not be considered appropriate in high quality industrial zones of such as the Enterprise Centre and Prison Services Offices industrial estates along the Ballinalee Road.

The provision of developments within this zoning shall be designed to the highest architectural standards and will be flagship in terms of quality, employment and status.

Social/Community

To primarily provide for social and community facilities.

This zoning provides for facilities that serve the community as a whole such as schools, community centres, community medical facilities, crèches, nursing homes, etc. These uses may also be considered under other zonings where it can be demonstrated that they will not adversely affect the residential amenity of the area.

Recreational/Open Space

To primarily provide for recreational open space and ancillary structures.

The utilisation of the River Camlin and Royal Canal as walking trails and public parks provide a recreational backbone to the town, providing wildlife corridors and a potential link to other amenity and recreational uses. The development of a Town View Park at Farnagh Hill would further enhance the recreational facilities within the Town, facilitating the establishment of a linked network of public spaces, connected by clearly defined pedestrian and cycle routes, to include existing areas of amenity and recreational use such as the Mall park and various other sports grounds, pitches, tracks and facilities (see walking/cycle routes map at Appendix 7 of Town Development Plan).

This zoning also provides for sports centres, playing pitches and associated facilities, outdoor recreation centres and other facilities that contribute to meeting the leisure, recreation and amenity needs of the community.

Car Parking

To provide car parking facilities and structures ancillary to car parking.

Public Utility

To primarily allow for the expansion and development of public utilities.

Expansion of public utilities such as Fire and Garda Stations will be facilitated where needed subject to their compatibility with adjoining land uses.

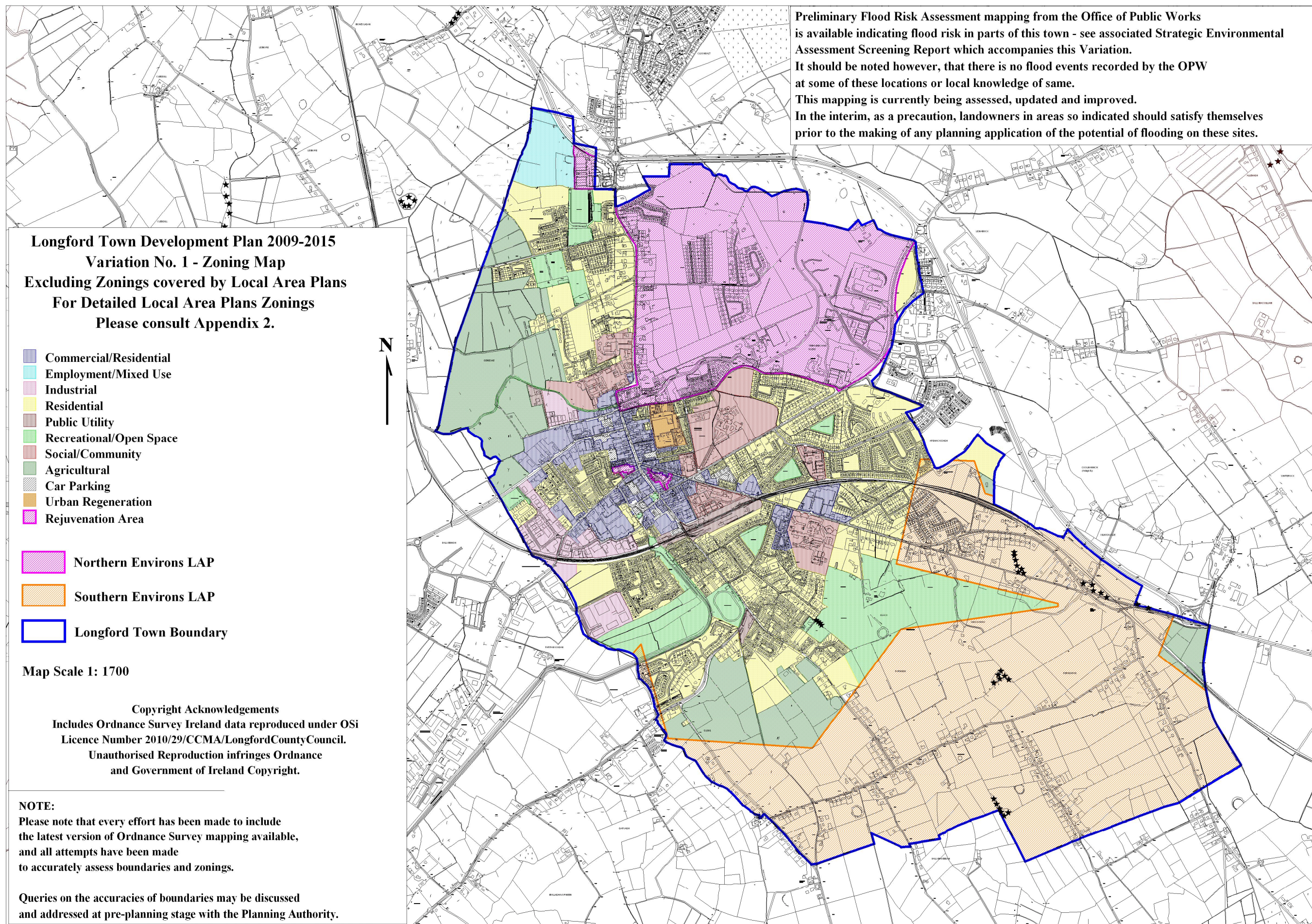
Agricultural

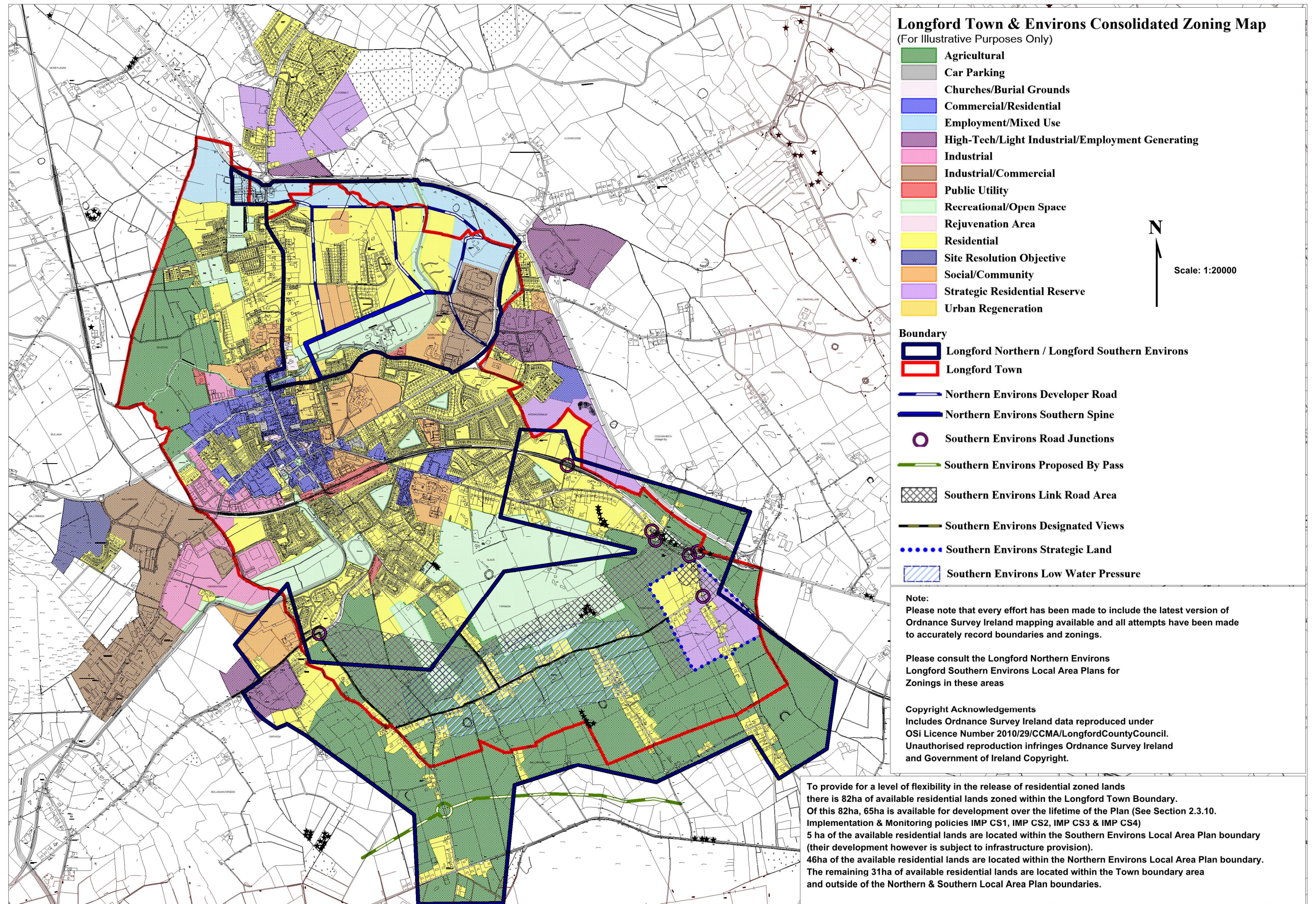
To primarily provide for agricultural uses and structures ancillary to agricultural practices including alternative farm enterprise.

This zoning provides for the use of lands for agricultural purposes including alternative farm enterprise, agri-tourism projects and farm shops on agricultural lands subject to compliance with appropriate planning and services requirements and subject to compatibility with adjacent land uses and the preservation of local amenities.

All agricultural proposals will be considered by the Planning Authority having regard to the Minimum Specifications as set out by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and subject to siting and design, which should be in sympathy with the surrounding area.

Individual dwellings for permanent occupancy for family members will be open for consideration subject to normal site suitability considerations.

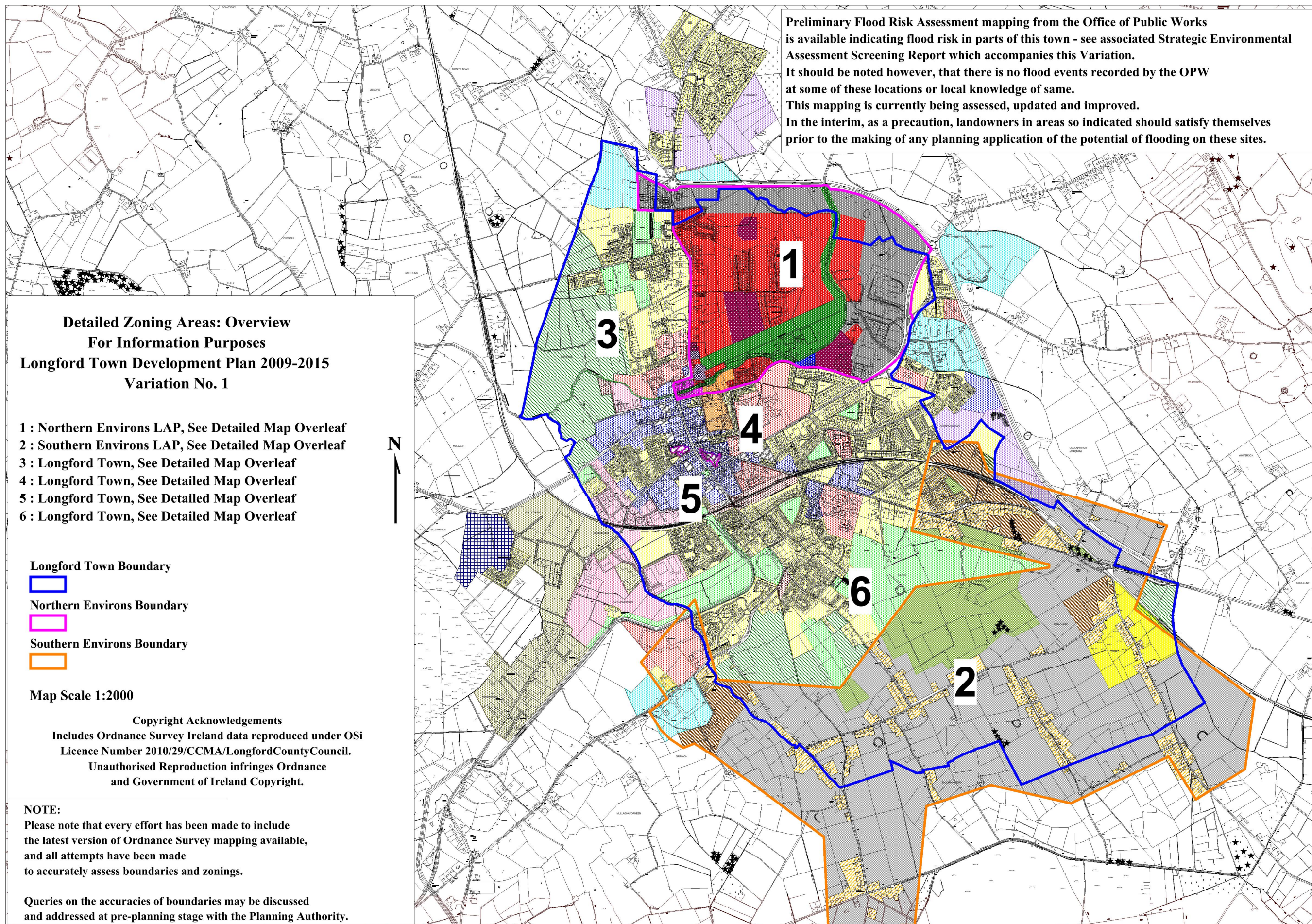


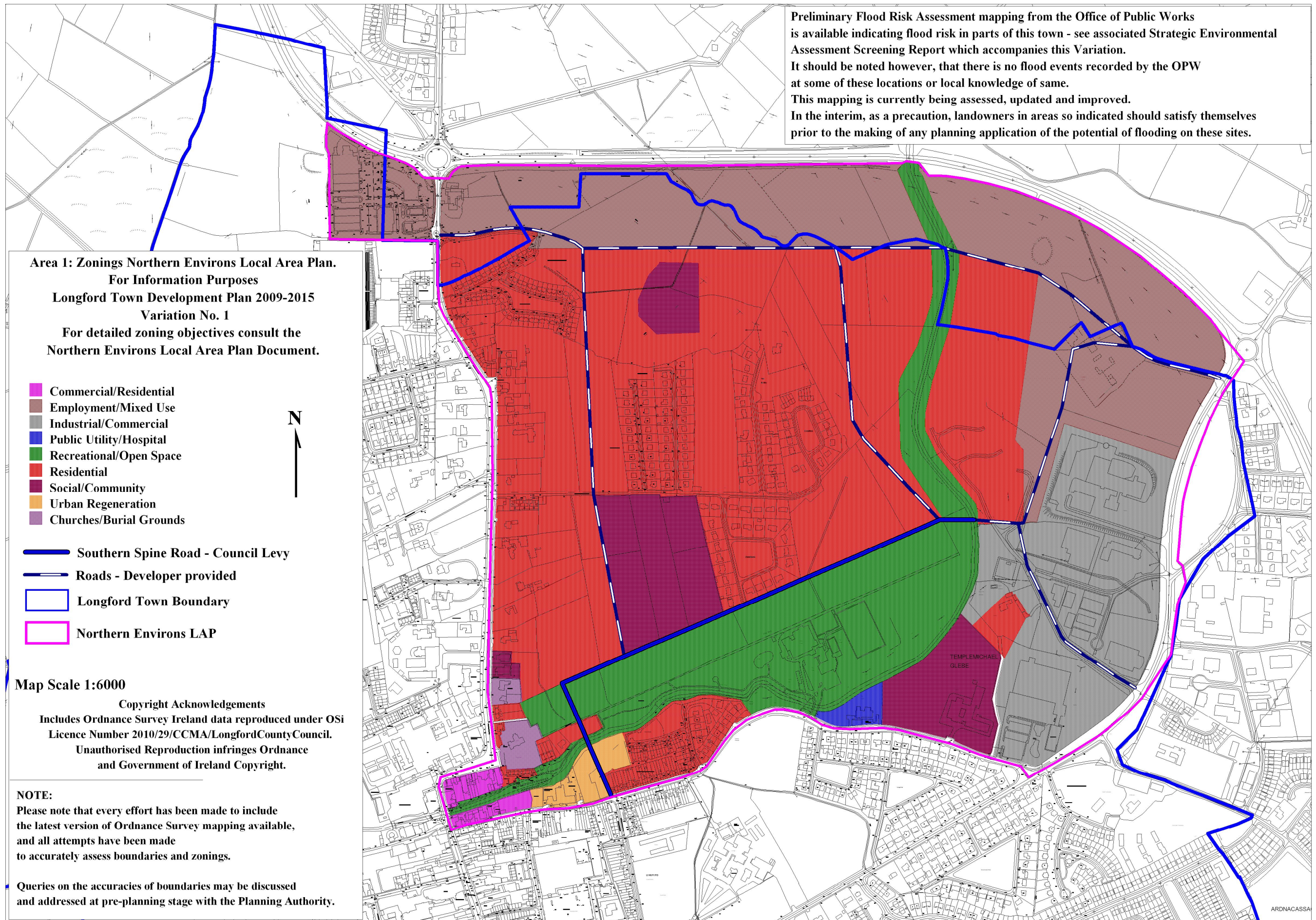


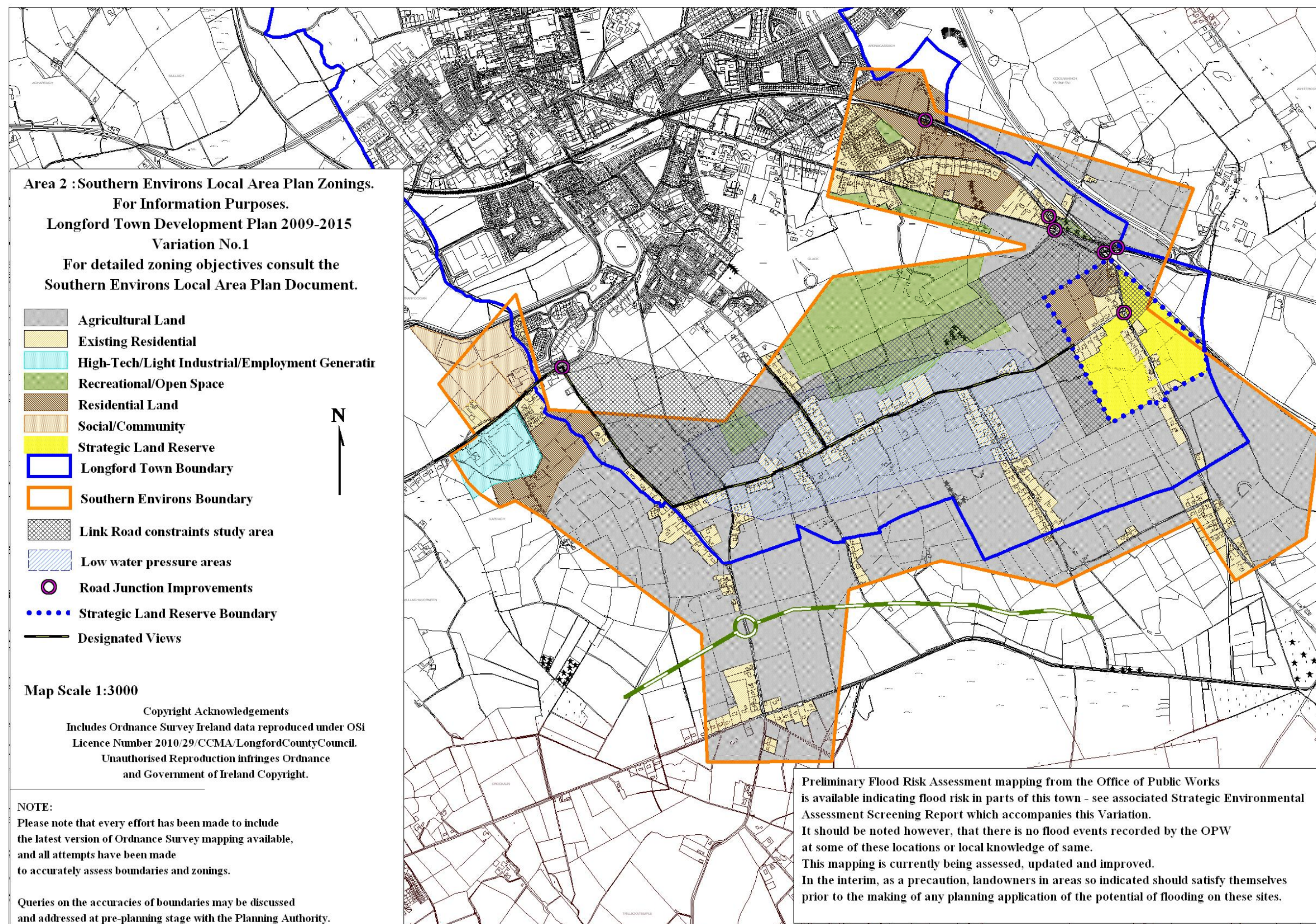
Appendix 2

Longford Town Detailed Zoning Areas Overview









Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment mapping from the Office of Public Works is available indicating flood risk in parts of this town - see associated Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report which accompanies this Variation. It should be noted however, that there is no flood events recorded by the OPW at some of these locations or local knowledge of same. This mapping is currently being assessed, updated and improved. In the interim, as a precaution, landowners in areas so indicated should satisfy themselves prior to the making of any planning application of the potential of flooding on these sites.

Area 3: Zonings
For Information Purposes
Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015
Variation No. 1

Commercial/Residential

Employment/Mixed Use

Industrial

Residential

Public Utility

Recreational/Open Space

Social/Community

Agricultural

Car Parking

Urban Regeneration

Rejuvenation Area

Longford Town Boundary

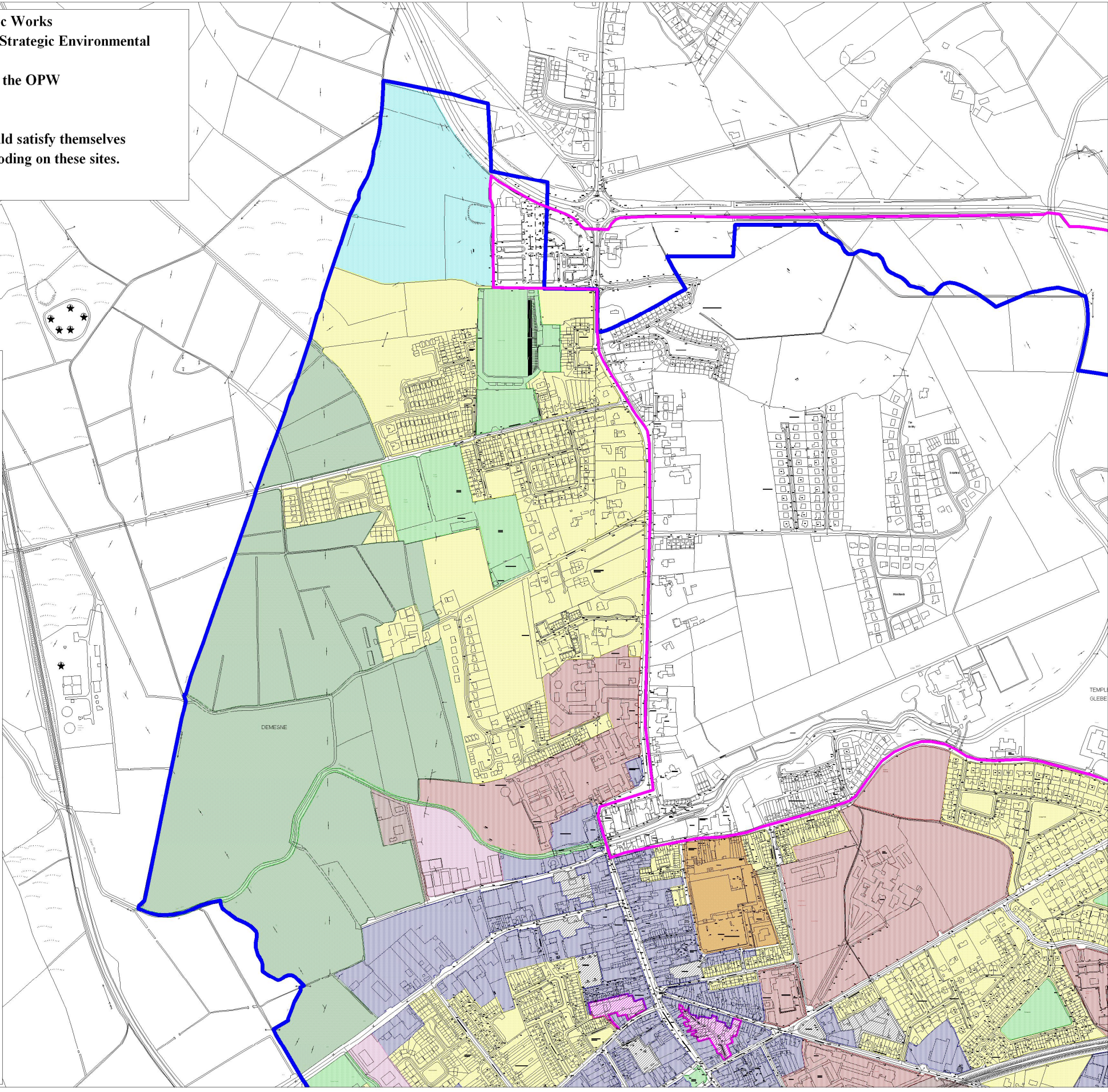
Northern Environs Boundary

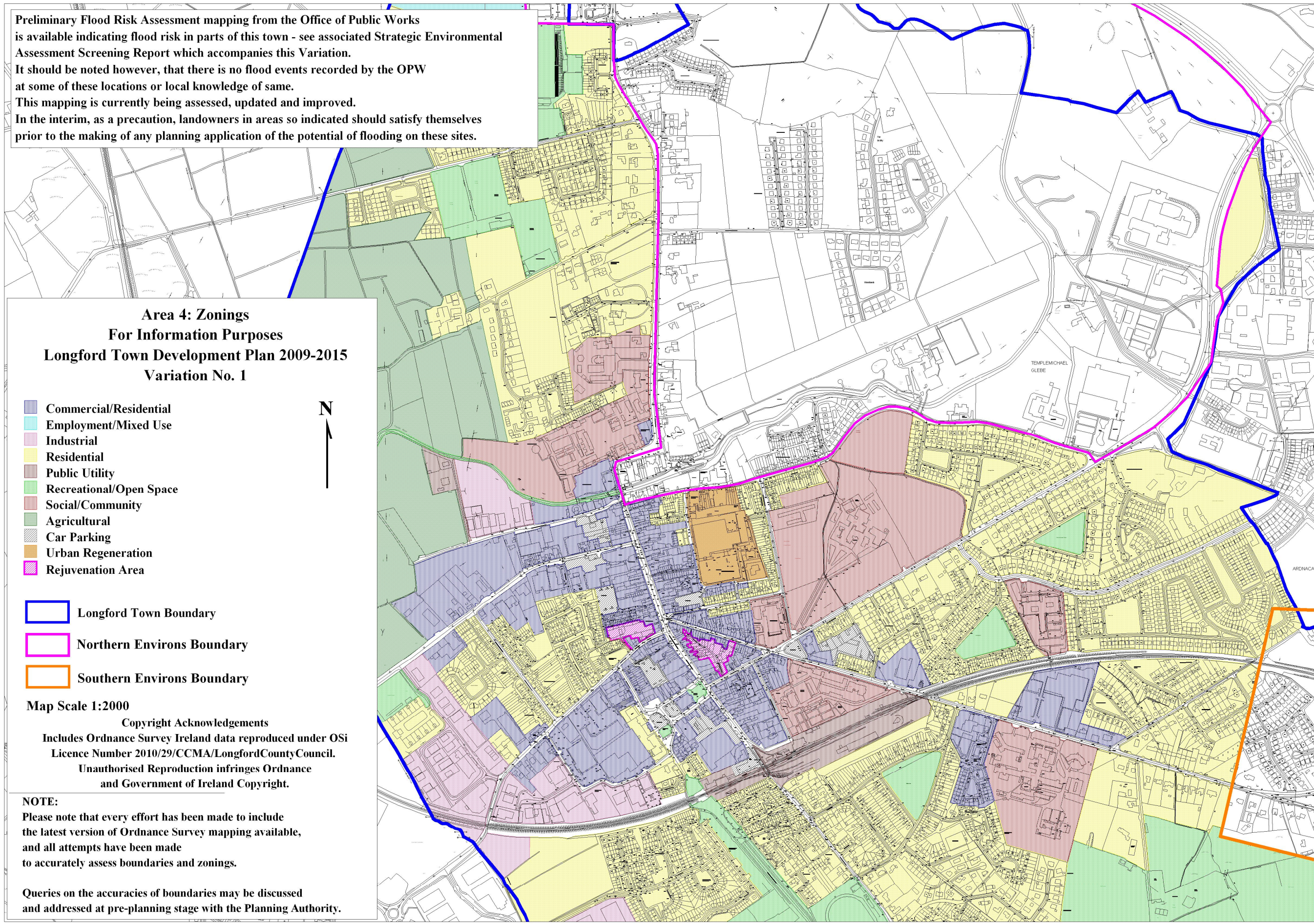
Map Scale 1:2000

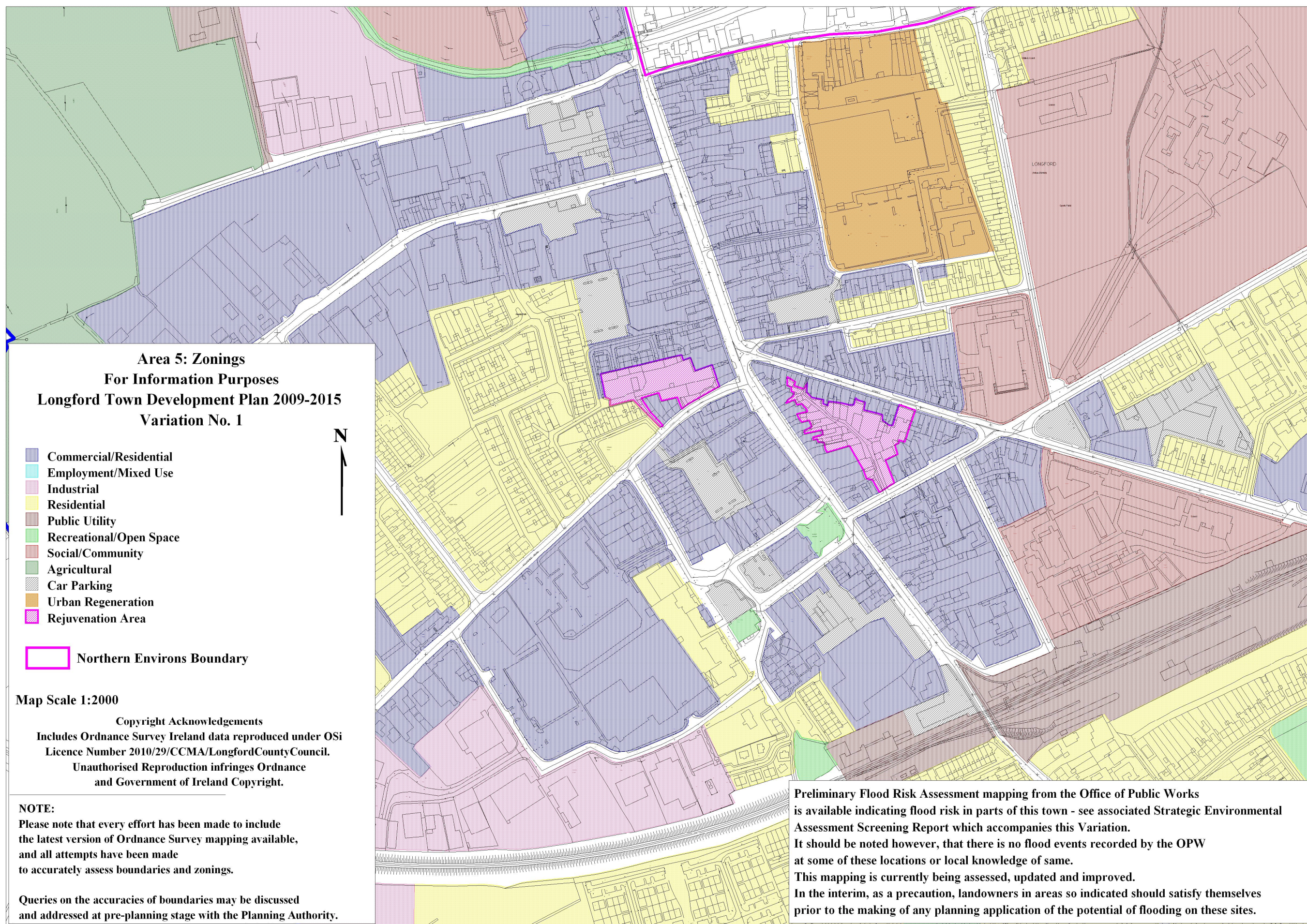
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NOTE:
Please note that every effort has been made to include
the latest version of Ordnance Survey mapping available,
and all attempts have been made
to accurately assess boundaries and zonings.

Queries on the accuracies of boundaries may be discussed
and addressed at pre-planning stage with the Planning Authority.







Area 5: Zonings

For Information Purposes

Longford Town Development Plan 2009-2015

Variation No. 1

- Commercial/Residential
- Employment/Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Residential
- Public Utility
- Recreational/Open Space
- Social/Community
- Agricultural
- Car Parking
- Urban Regeneration
- Rejuvenation Area

Northern Environs Boundary

Map Scale 1:2000

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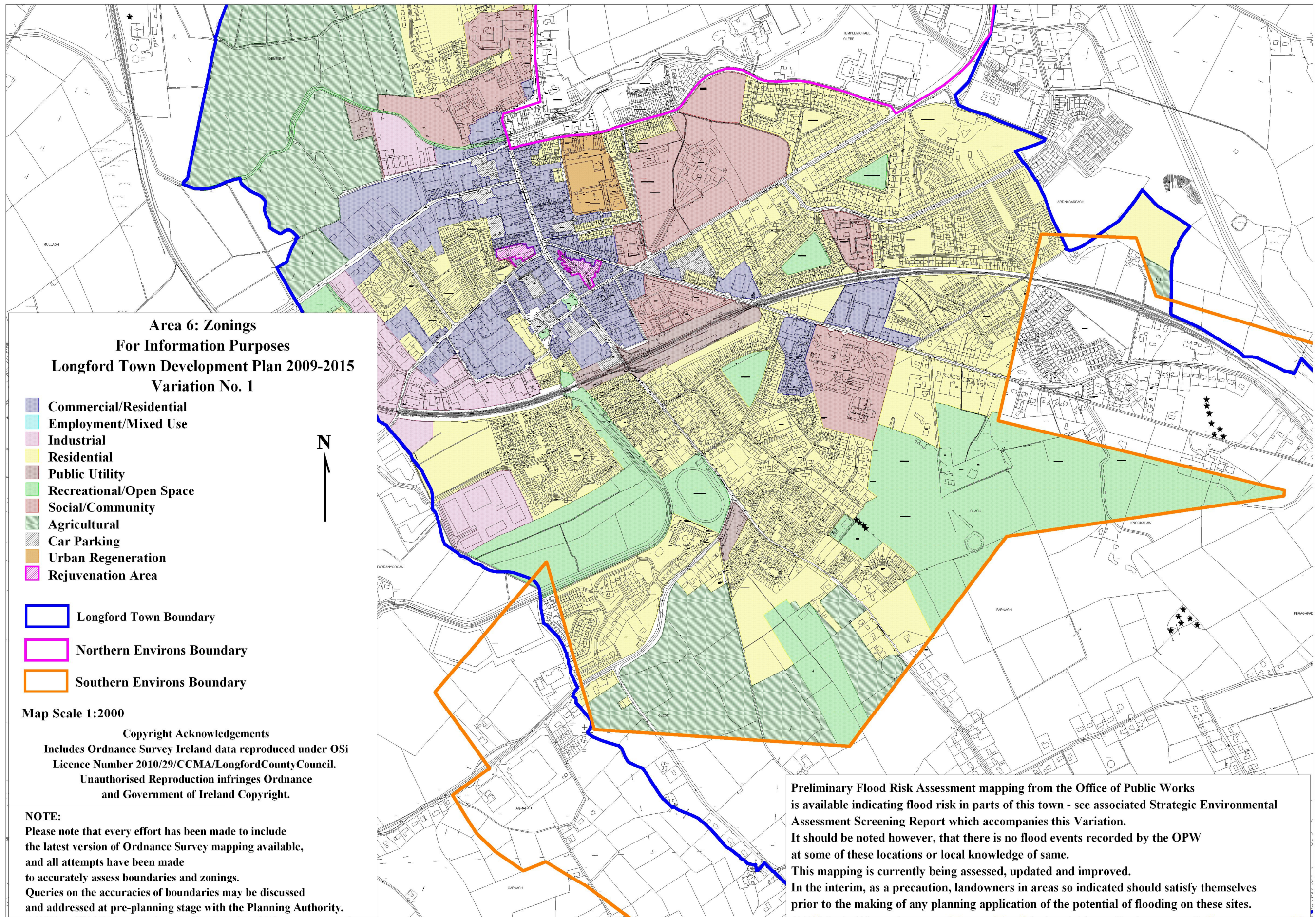
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Appendix 3

Lands Bounding Longford Town within County Administrative Boundary



