

Draft Local Area Plan for Longford Southern Environs 2009

DRAFT

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Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Planning Context	7
3. Existing Environment	18
4. Existing Development Constraints	25
5. Implications for Development based on Infrastructure Constraints	36
6. Surface water drainage, flooding and groundwater Protection	41
7. Capacity and Population Analysis	49
8. Key Principles of the Proposed Development Strategy and Form of Development	53
9. Strategic Objectives and Zoning	56
10. Development Policies	70
11. Urban Design Framework	78
12. Implementation	88
13. Appendix 1 – Population Figures	90
14. Appendix 2 – Sites and Monuments in and adjacent to the SELAP lands	91
15. Appendix 3 – Main Recommendations from Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd. 'Design Review Report – Longford South Eastern Environs Drainage' (P. 18/19)	92



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

Keith Simpson and Associates (KSA) has been appointed to work with Longford Local Authorities in producing a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Longford South East Environs. KSA have worked on this draft LAP with Tobin Consulting Engineers (Galway), who in turn, have liaised with the Water Services and Roads Department of Longford County Council.

The South East Environs LAP (SELAP) seeks a phased sustainable growth strategy for the development of the subject lands which envisages primarily residential and educational zonings, based on the lands' infrastructural opportunities and constraints.

1.2 SEA and Appropriate Assessment Screening

Based on the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436 of 2004), the undertaking of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is now an important consideration for planning authorities. This legislation states that an SEA may be required where a Plan or Programme is subject to preparation and/or adoption by a national, regional or local authority, or prepared by an authority for adoption through a legislative procedure. SEA is mandatory for LAP areas with a population of 10,000 persons or more.

As SEA is not mandatory for the Local Area Plan in question as it falls below the mandatory threshold levels for Strategic Environmental Assessment. In accordance with the SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004, the proposed Local Area Plan was therefore screened to ascertain if the plan required the preparation of an Environmental Report. The Screening Report was sent to the designated Environmental Authorities and it is the opinion of the Planning Authority that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required.

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) have recently issued a number of circulars in relation to Ireland's EU obligations in respect of protected habitats. These require that all land use plans, including LAPs, must be



screened, undergoing an 'appropriate assessment', in relation to the 'ecological implications of any plan or project' in relation to Natura 2000 sites. Within Ireland Natura 2000 sites are normally Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). This additional requirement for appropriate assessment, is primarily a result of DOEHLG circular letter SEA 1/08, and also of NPWS 1/08, which has placed additional requirements for 'appropriate assessments' in addition to SEA requirements. This plan was also screened for Appropriate Assessment in addition to the SEA process, in which it was determined that implementation of the policies within the plan would not result in likely significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites within or adjoining the plan area.

1.3 The Vision for Longford South Eastern Environs

This draft SELAP is based on the principles contained within the both the Longford County Development Plan 2009 – 2015 and the Longford Town Development Plan 2009 – 2015. The draft SELAP has developed a vision statement, specific to the lands, as follows:

'The overall goal for the Longford South Eastern Environs is to facilitate a high quality sustainable, phased expansion of the town based on a detailed appraisal of infrastructural opportunities and constraints while protecting areas of amenity value. Infrastructural constraints need to be identified and proposals put forward for the elimination of these constraints. A strong design emphasis will be required in order to provide for mixed, balanced and sustainable new communities which will integrate new development within sensitive elements of the LAP lands, such as the visually vulnerable highest sections of the site, areas of archaeological value and the existing residential environments.'

1.4 Background and Context

The draft SELAP has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 18 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001.

These lands predominantly lie within the Longford Town Council boundary and have been subject to development pressure in the past, which has lead to the overconcentration of individual domestic treatment systems in a confined area, with



resultant pollution of adjacent lands. While this problem has been addressed to an extent, development in the area is curtailed pending the installation of a public sewerage system in the area. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government have requested that a Local Area Plan be prepared in advance of any funding for such a system. As such, one of the primary aims of this plan is to establish the likely extent of potential development in this area in planning and infrastructure terms in the short, medium and long term.

These considerations, in addition to the vision outlined at Section 1.2 above will be taken into to consideration to provide the following:

- Provide a robust planning framework to implement this vision;
- Ensure compatibility with the planning policy hierarchy, of which the LAP forms part;
- Provide a detailed assessment of the foul and surface water drainage of the area and assess the future requirements to facilitate an appropriate level of development of the LAP lands;
- Provide a detailed assessment of other infrastructural provisions, including road access and traffic circulation, water supply and other utilities;
- Set out detailed policy and objectives in relation to the nature, mix and level of proposed development for the area, having regard to the existing land uses, the proximity of Longford Town and constraints related to existing and future infrastructural provision, the preservation of environmental quality, road safety and public health;
- Set out a phasing scheme, indicating the preferred spatial sequence of development and the services/infrastructure required for each phase and indicative timeframes involved for each;
- Provide for the establishment, maintenance and enhancement of a sense of identity and distinctiveness in the development of the draft LAP lands;



- Safeguard existing protected areas on the basis of landscape, archaeological and/or ecological sensitivity and designate or recommend for designation, other safeguarded areas where appropriate.

The adopted County and Town Development Plans set out the strategic framework within which the zoning and other objectives of the LAP must comply. The Local Area Plan must be consistent with the objectives and policies of the Development Plans. The following section of the document examines the planning policy context of the LAP in more detail.

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2 PLANNING CONTEXT

The Local Area Plan sets out specific objectives and policies that articulate the broader planning aims for the area. The LAP fits within the planning policy context of National, Regional and local level policy and guidelines.

2.1 National Plans and Guidelines

The following documents, listed below, form the national-level strategic planning framework. The key policies of each document are consolidated at the county level into the Longford County Development Plan, 2009 – 2015 and at town level in the Longford Town Development Plan 2009 – 2015.

The Longford County and Longford Town Development Plans ('the Development Plan') when taken together contain specific policies for site development, general policies and objectives across the County and zonings and policy related specifically to Longford Town.

The LAP, in turn, fits within the overarching context of these Development Plans, which forms the LAP's 'parent' document. The LAP is therefore considered to take into account the following national level documents:

- **The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2002-2020 (2002)** sets out a vision for balanced regional development throughout the Country. Longford Town, along with Portlaoise, provides a strategically placed supporting role in strengthening the Midlands Gateway. The NSS describes Longford Town as being an important County Town that is strategically placed on national road and rail links, which can be enhanced in competitive terms to drive development at the County Level.

The Town and County Development Plans are in accordance with the aims of the NSS, the development plan stating that its policies '*are in accordance with the spatial policy as laid out in the strategy*'. Specific to Longford Town, the Strategy identifies that to ensure its enhancement, '*high urban design quality, effective water services and clear local development frameworks will be necessary*' (p.80/81).

- **The National Heritage Plan (2002)** sets a framework for the protection and enhancement of Ireland's heritage. The document's primary aims are reflected in both the Town and County Development Plans which seek to conserve and



protect Longford's heritage, through the process of Development Control and by affording identified monuments, artefacts and areas statutory protection.

- **The National Biodiversity Plan** (2002) outlines a series of measures that will enhance biodiversity. The National Biodiversity Plan was developed to run in tandem with the National Heritage Plan. However, following a review of the National Biodiversity Plan, 'Countdown 2010' has largely replaced the document and comprises a broad alliance of governments, state agencies, internal organizations and others which seeks to halt biodiversity decline.

This broad aim is echoed in the Development Plans for the area a key aim of which is to protect, conserve and enhance the County's biodiversity and natural heritage.

- **Transport 21** is a transport infrastructure framework which outlines investment for the period 2006-2015, including addressing past investment backlogs and continuing growth in transport demand. This includes specific projects within Longford County, also identified in the County Development Plan, such as the Longford-Roskey and Longford-Mullingar road improvement schemes.
- The Government's **National Climate Change Strategy** 2007-2012 seeks to illustrate how Ireland will meet its climate commitments under the Kyoto Protocol and also to show how these measures position the country post-2012. The document has influenced the formulation of the Longford Town and County Development Plans

This strategy is relevant to the planning sector in numerous ways, such as via the aim of improved spatial and energy use planning, which in turn are reflected within this LAP.

- **Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2008)** which was published in May 2009, reviews and updates the 1999 Residential Density Guidelines to assist planning authorities and developers (and their designers) in delivering appropriately designed residential development. With relevance to the LAP lands, the document continues to reinforce the view on retaining the open character of certain lands,



but where these are to be redeveloped, concentrating increased densities in appropriate selected locations.

The document also identifies that particular attention needs to be paid to planning for future schools needs and timely consultation with the Schools Planning Section of the Department of Education and Science.

In locating school sites within residential neighbourhoods, the guidance notes that planning authorities should have regard to:

- Code of Practice on the Provision of Schools and the Planning System.
 - the need to reserve sites in development plans and / or local area plans;
 - the need to maximise opportunities to walk or cycle to school, and to also ensure that post-primary schools (which may serve a larger catchment) are within walking distance of a bus route or rail station; and
 - the potential to share public and school use of major public open spaces.
- Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities
Consultation Draft September 2008

2.2 Regional Context

The Regional Planning context is primarily provided by the Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines, which, within the planning policy hierarchy, sit beneath the National level-guidelines and policies identified above. As with the national policies and guidelines, identified above, the main objectives of the regional guidelines are consolidated within the Longford County and Longford Town Development Plans. In turn, the policies and objectives of the Development Plans are taken into account within this SELAP.

The Regional Planning Guidelines are currently in their statutory review phase, with the review commencing in March 2009. It is envisaged that the revised Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines will be adopted by May 2010. The revised MRPGs will take account of the changing economic circumstances, in developing the most appropriate strategy for the way forward over the coming years. Under the 2009 Planning and Development Bill, all Development Plans and Local Area Plans will be required to be consistent with RPGs, rather than have due regard to them, as heretofore, which may require some amendments to Development Plans. In terms of this LAP, the population figures used are in keeping with those of the settlement strategy of the Longford County Development



Plan, which was calculated in accordance with the figures set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines.

Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines (2004)

The Midland Regional Planning Guidelines (RPG) form the basis of the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy at regional and local Level.

Longford is located in the Border Midland Western Region which has retained EU Objective One status. The Midlands RPG were adopted in May 2004 and provide a framework for the development of the region and endeavour to ensure that by 2020, the Midlands Region will be a successful, sustainable and equitable region full of opportunities for its expanded population. The Regional Guidelines will achieve this objective through:-

- Enhancing the critical mass¹ of the region by combining the strengths of the linked gateway and those of the principal towns of Portlaoise and Longford within the broader polycentric model;
- Developing the full potential of rural areas in the region in a manner that is compatible with the strengthening of the urban structure of the region;
- Offering distinctive lifestyles rooted in a high quality living environment, rich in heritage and landscape value;
- Harnessing the Central geographical location of the region in Ireland to build a strategically focused network of transport and communication links.

The Regional Guidelines establish Longford Town as a 'Principal' Town where development is to be focused. The town is identified as a settlement which will provide a focus for attracting population and economic activity to the region. The Regional Guidelines indicate that Longford Town will help drive development in the northern region of the Midlands. Located on strategic national road and rail infrastructure, the guidelines also note that Longford functions as the main driver of development in the area, with substantial retail and administrative functions, and considerable social infrastructure serving a broad, cross-regional area. The Regional Guidelines further

¹ The definition for critical mass is put forward in the National Spatial Strategy, which states: "Critical mass relates to the size and concentration of population that enables a range of services and facilities to be supported. This in turn can attract and support higher levels of economic activity and improved quality of life" (Government of Ireland, 2002).



state that the bulk of the growth in the northern region will be channelled to Longford Town.

The RPG Future estimates that the population growth, within the Longford development area, would need to grow by a range between 8,000 to 11,000 in the period to 2020 equating to 4,000 houses over the next 16 years. With specific relevance to this LAP the RPG states that:

'Accommodating this housing requirement will need to be phased to match provision of other essential physical infrastructure such as water services and social facilities such as schools etc'

Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines s.73,p.48

2.3 Local Context

Longford County Development Plan, 2009 – 2015

The Longford County Development Plan is the fundamental planning policy document for development in the County of Longford over the period of 2009 to 2015 and covers the functional area of Longford County Council. This plan was adopted in February 2009. The Longford Town Development Plan (see below) covers the Longford Urban Area.

It is the policy of the County Development Plan to encourage new developments to locate in existing towns and villages, where basic social and infrastructural services are available and/or where such services may be provided or expanded on an economic basis. This policy is designed to enable the County's inhabitants to live and find employment in close proximity to each other, thus improving the quality of life to the resident population, creating more sustainable communities and adhering to the principles of proper planning.

The County Development Plan highlights the importance of providing a clear urban hierarchy for the County and defining functional roles of various settlement centres. In doing so the Development Plan acknowledges that the County of Longford is highly rural in character, with the majority of the population living in these rural areas. The County Development Plan identifies this scenario as reflected in the County's small urban base,



with the urban settlement of Longford being the largest town. The rural nature of the County is also recognised and that sustaining these rural areas is central to the achievement of the settlement strategy. Therefore, the policy of the Council as set out in the Development Plan (and as reflected in the Midlands Regional Planning Guidelines) is to promote the development of Longford Town as the primary County Regional Centre of the area, stating that:

'Longford – County Town of regional importance. Major growth centre with a high level of access and existing services where the majority of industrial, commercial, business and retail development will be channelled'

Section 2.3.3, Longford County Development Plan, 2009.

In accordance with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities for the preparation of Development Plans, the Longford County Development Plan 2009 – 2015 sets out strategic objectives, which are in accordance with EU, national and regional guidelines, for future County wide development. Based on more generalised objectives these strategic objectives can be categorised into social, economic and environmental and are set out as follows:

Social

- Ensure equal opportunity in obtaining affordable housing and accessibility to employment, education and training, community services, recreational facilities, arts and culture.
- To integrate the proper planning and sustainable development of Longford County with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population.

Economic

- Promote Longford as a local and regional centre of trade, business and tourism, while encouraging employment growth and economic activity.



- Build on the unprecedented growth which has occurred over recent years and maximise the economic and social benefits that can be achieved from this in a manner which is compatible with the principles of sustainable development.

Environmental

- Provide a framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County over the plan period.
- To identify, preserve, protect and enhance where appropriate, the unique landscape character of Longford County, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.
- Ensure that quality underpins all forms of development. Develop and maintain a sense of place and local distinctiveness in established and newly developing areas.



Arial photo of north eastern section of the LAP lands

Longford Town Development Plan, 2009 – 2015

Longford Town Development Plan is the statutory Development Plan for the Town of Longford from 2009 – 2015. The overall aim of the plan is to set out a framework for the



sustainable physical development of the town, while ensuring the conservation and protection of the built and natural environment.

The Town Development Plan seeks to promote the development of Longford Town as a balanced sustainable settlement with well planned residential areas with adjacent commercial and industrial activities.

In order to facilitate future sustainable development, growth and expansion of the town, the following are the goals upon which the Town Development Plan has been prepared:

- To formulate a framework for the future sustainable development of Longford Town in a co-ordinated manner, while simultaneously conserving the Town's unique character, form, heritage and amenity.
- To encourage and promote the use of alternative transport modes to the private car, in particular, through the enhancement of the pedestrian environment throughout the town and its environs.
- To ensure that the policies, aims and objectives of the Town Plan which compliment and work in tandem with the current Longford County Development plan.
- To promote and enhance the role of Longford Town as the commercial, retail, service and industrial centre of the County and to protect the Town from any proposals which may detract from its position as a County/Regional centre.
- To promote the development of Longford Town as a balanced settlement with residential areas existing in harmony with commercial and industrial activities and retaining its role as the main service centre for the Upper Midland Region.
- To direct and encourage economic growth towards Longford Town, facilitating its development and consolidating its position as one of the main service centres of the upper midland region.
- To increase the rate of employment creation and enlarging the employment base of the Town.
- To concentrate future development within the Town and on zoned land so as to consolidate development and to aid in the provision of public transport.
- To support the regeneration and redevelopment of run down and derelict areas within the Town and environs.



- To facilitate the development of an attractive and vibrant town centre that provides for current needs and potential future demands in the face of recent unprecedented growth.
- To create sustainable, high quality residential and commercial environments – attractive, vibrant and safe places which function effectively.
- To ensure the orderly and balanced use of resources and to provide for sufficient housing, employment and recreational facilities.
- To identify elements of key importance to the unique identity and character of Longford Town, and enhance, conserve and/or protect these as appropriate.
- To translate relevant national and regional policy, guidelines, strategies and regulations to a County and local level.
- To work with the strategy for the economic, social and cultural development in Longford Town and County.
- To promote and enhance the role of Longford Town as a centre of regional importance in terms of services, employment, settlement and economic activity.

The Longford Retail Strategy jointly covers the jurisdiction of Longford Town Council and Longford County Council authorities and is incorporated into both Longford County and Town Development Plans. In accordance with Regional Planning Guidelines, the Retail Strategy provides guidance on future county-wide demand for retail floorspace and future changes in retailing patterns. Specifically, Longford is defined as a 'level 1' retail centre on the Strategy's retail hierarchy with the identified appropriate retail type being major convenience and comparison.

The Retail Strategy identifies that Longford will need to retain and substantially enhance its high-end comparison shopping offer and reduce leakage of this retail type to the periphery of the town. With specific relevance to the LAP area, the Strategy states that:

'Any significant convenience retail development proposed in any area other than the town core or centre will only be considered where this is proposed in tandem with a substantial and appropriate redevelopment of the core area'

Similar to the Retail Strategy, the Longford County Housing Strategy is a strategy that jointly covers the jurisdiction of Longford Town Council and Longford County Council authorities. The most recent Housing Strategy, 2007-2016, clearly sets out the



requirement for the existing and future housing needs of Longford County. Of specific relevance to this LAP, the Longford County and Town Development Plans seek to provide housing levels to sufficiently cater for Social and Affordable Housing need.

The LAP for Longford Northern Environs has now also been adopted, and in force from 9th July 2008.

Longford County Development Board and Action Plan

Longford County Development Board was established in 2000, with the aim of local government and local development systems integration through a partnership approach. The Board consists of social and economic, social, sports and recreation sub-committees. The primary aims of the Development Board are as follows:

- To provide a 'shared vision' for the development of County Longford;
- To provide for a more strategic and integrated response to the challenges facing Longford; and
- To assist in shaping and developing the County for the future.

The main areas of concern covered by the Development Board are economic development (i.e. infrastructure, enterprise and tourism), social development (i.e. housing, education, healthcare, social disadvantage and marginalisation, and community development) and cultural development (i.e. sports and recreation, arts and heritage).



Slashers GAA Club and Backstage Theatre



View south eastward from Upper Ferefad



Specific to Longford, the stated aims for the town within the Board's Action Plan 2006-2008 are to:

- Upgrade existing water supply for Longford town;
- Secure funding for the Longford N5 bypass;
- Extend the dual carriage way through Longford.

National Roads Authority National Policy

The National Roads Authority identifies several routes within Longford currently under consideration including:

- Upgrading of approximately 50 km of the N4 National Primary road between Mullingar and Tomisky, Co. Longford. The scheme will link the N4 Mullingar Bypass (Dual Carriageway) to the newly opened N4 Dromod-Roosky 2+2 scheme and the Longford bypass scheme.
- The Longford bypass scheme which involves the construction of a new route approximately 2.6 km long through green field which will provide a bypass to the west of Longford Town. The project commences at a proposed roundabout on the existing N5 and includes 3 bridge structures before rejoining the existing N4 at a proposed roundabout junction.

This is considered to comprise the planning context of the site. The following section outlines the site's physical and environmental context.



3 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Strategic Location

The LAP lands are located approximately 2.0-2.5 kilometres south of Longford Town centre straddling the administrative areas of both Longford County Council and Longford Town Council.

Within the boundaries of the LAP area, the gross area is 485 hectares (1,198 acres), and consists of the townlands of Aghafad, Garvagh, Farnagh, Ballymakeegan, Knockahaw and Feraghfad.

Longford is located at the axis of several national and regional transport routes. Specifically, the LAP lands are bounded by the N4 (Dublin-Sligo) national road to the north-east and the N63 (Longford-Roscommon) national road to the west. The R393 regional road bisects the eastern section of the LAP lands in a south-eastern direction to Carrickboy. In addition, the N5 runs westward from Longford to Castlebar.

The western part of the LAP area is traversed by a local road to Moydow. The Dublin-Sligo main rail line traverses the north eastern part of the subject area – Longford is served by a railway station on the line. The Bus Station occupies a strategic central location adjacent to the railway station.

The Royal Canal (a proposed National Heritage Area) briefly transects the LAP lands near the Slashers G.A.A. Club in the north-west portion of the LAP area.

3.2 Character and Description of LAP Lands

The LAP lands encompass the south eastern environs of the town as seen on the following map. The land uses and topography are diverse and vary considerably across the area. The majority of the southern section of the lands is predominantly rural in nature, the majority of the land being put to agricultural use which contrasts with the relatively high density residential areas in the north of the LAP lands. A large section of the northern LAP lands is occupied by amenity uses such as Longford Golf Club and the adjacent driving range.



There are around 250 existing residential properties within the LAP lands. These dwellings vary in design, age, heights and materials, with a significant number forming part of a pattern of lower density development. No specific dwelling type is typical of the LAP lands, although many are low rise and often single storey within the southern parts of the LAP lands. Higher density estates, typically with semi-detached houses are more prevalent in the northern parts of the LAP lands.



A range of dwelling types are found within the LAP lands

Whilst the LAP lands are predominantly agricultural in nature, with a limited service infrastructure, smaller sections of the lands to the north east and north west, adjacent to the existing town, are more urban in character, comprising a denser built form and more developed infrastructure. Consequently, within this LAP, three discrete character areas have been identified.

- Character Area 1 - Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw Character area, to the north east of the LAP lands;
- Character Area 2 - Aghafad Character Area, to the north west of the LAP lands;
- Character Area 3 - Rural Character Area, to the south of the LAP lands.

Character Area 1 – Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw Character Area

This character area is located in the north east of the LAP lands, partially within the established urban area of the town. The Character area is broadly situated either side of the main Dublin - Sligo railway line. This section of the LAP lands also encompasses significant transport infrastructure, including the N4 national road and R393 regional Road. The area is characterised by typical urban fringe land uses, including small parcels of agricultural land and several small-scale industrial premises, farms sandwiched between the existing road and railway infrastructure as well as the golf club, driving range, bed and breakfast accommodation and older residential properties. There



is no clearly defined boundary between the established town of Longford and the rural lands beyond, to the south and east.

Existing residential properties within this character area comprise the outer sections of modern (post 1980s) housing estates, located on the urban fringe of Longford Town, some of which are currently under construction, in addition to more traditional, low density housing.

Character Area 2 - Aghafad Character Area

This character area, located on the western edge of Longford town, is typified by a mix of land uses, including industrial uses, agricultural uses, a theatre, centre for the arts and the adjacent Slashers GAA clubhouse and associated playing pitches and grounds. The area is more rural in character than the Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw Character Area described above, and possesses less developed transport infrastructure. Despite this, the area comprises portions of a relatively high density residential estate around Prospect Avenue and Beech Avenue located on the edge of Longford Town. The Aghafad Character area facilitates pedestrian access to the town centre. There are also pedestrian walkways along the Royal Canal, part of which crosses this Character area.

In addition, there are several large-scale, two and three storey general industrial units to the south of Park Road, including ABB cables, a large multinational company specialising in power and automation technologies.

This Character area, as with the Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw Character Area, suffers from a lack of any firm demarcation between the established area of Longford Town and the rural areas beyond

Character Area 3 – Rural Character Area

By far the largest of the three Character Areas, the Rural Character Area encompasses the majority of the LAP lands, and is comprised predominantly of agricultural land. The agricultural use of the lands includes both arable and pastoral farming. The field formation is typified by relatively small parcels of land and well defined hedgerow boundaries.



Residential development within the area comprises mature residential properties - linear in form and follows the existing road pattern. This pattern is limited and comprises one central road, Upper Ferefad, running along the highest point in the LAP area, a ridge broadly running from east to west. Two roads run from this central route northwards into Longford Town, whilst three roads run from the ridgeline southward into the open countryside to the south of Longford. A further route, the Ardagh Road, in the east of the LAP lands, runs from the south into Longford via a junction with the N4.

These roads predominantly comprise narrow, vegetation lined country lanes (boreens), with limited vehicular passing points. The LAP lands are typified by a lack of other significant supporting infrastructure such as sewerage infrastructure, appropriately engineered roads or public pedestrian facilities such as footpaths or crossing points.

The historical ribbon development and one off housing within the rural character area has resulted in there being no clearly defined boundary between the rural character area and the established town boundary – as a result the town ‘trickles’ into the surrounding rural area to the south.

The dwellings within this part of the LAP lands are typically detached and are served by private septic tank. Properties within the area are characterised by large curtilages, typical of the area’s rural setting, although the properties vary in size, style and age

Despite the lack of suitable pedestrian facilities and due to the area’s proximity to Longford town, the area contains a number of well established and well used walking routes.

3.3 Topography

The highest point within the LAP lands are along a ridge toward the centre of the lands in the proximity of Farnagh Hill. The LAP lands predominantly rise from north to south and from east to west. The highest points of the lands range between 111 metres AOD and 120 metres AOD based along a ridge along Upper Ferefad, the main east-west road through the site. These high level lands allow uninterrupted views and prospects over the town of Longford and the surrounding landscape from different locations in the LAP area and are currently protected under Town Development Plan policy.



Lower levels, generally between 80-85 metres AOD are typical around the southern fringe of Longford Town.

The southern SELAP lands are primarily bogland which has traditionally constrained residential development in this area.

3.4 Built Heritage

Protected structures include the Royal Canal (LTC reference 37) – also a proposed NHA - which fringes the north western area of the site as well as Viewmount House (LTC reference 36) a former Georgian residential property built in c.1790, which is now used as a hotel/guesthouse, located on the former Dublin Road. A ringfort at Farnagh Hill is also listed as a recorded monument within The Longford Town Development Plan.

3.5 Archaeology

There are 14 ringforts identified within the Sites and Monuments Record within the lap lands, identified in the Map on page XX and within appendix 2.

In addition, there are several ringforts located outside the LAP boundary but within close proximity to the site.

3.6 Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) Analysis

A SWOT analysis has been prepared. In this type of analysis, strengths and weaknesses relate to the current or historic situation, with the threats and opportunities relating to the future. The figure on the following page sets out an overall summary of the SWOT analysis of the LAP area.



STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust land supply within LAP lands as whole to cater for potential future growth, albeit currently with little infrastructure. • LAP contains low lying lands which could be developed without an adverse impact upon visual amenity. • Existing foul sewer and surface water pipes in north east and north west of lands. • Good existing strategic road links adjacent to LAP lands including N4 and R393 and Longford bypass. • Existing high level of passive and active amenity uses in the area close to the town centre • Existing high levels of biodiversity • Rich archaeology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current lack of waste water treatment infrastructure • Currently no existing foul sewers or surface water pipes in the LAP area, other than in the north east and north west of the lands, at Knockahaw and Aghafad respectively. • Limited existing road infrastructure to facilitate new development. • Existing linear residential development along LAP roads reduces opportunities for road widening. • Extremely limited specific pedestrian or cycle facilities within the LAP lands, in particular outside the established built up areas. • No clearly defined boundary between the town and the rural landscape beyond.
THREATS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of LAP lands at higher level. Development of higher level lands threatens the visual amenity of the lands adjacent to the existing town and in close proximity to the main southern approaches to Longford. • 14 ringforts listed on the Sites and Monuments record within the LAP lands. Associated threat to the archaeological value of the area. • Potential for loss of unique rural/semi-rural character of the area through inappropriate densities/design or over development. • Mature roadside vegetation e.g. trees, shrubs which contribute to rural character of area. Could be threatened by development. • Integrating existing lower density development with new forms of development, specifically in southern extent of LAP lands. New residential densities will need to be appropriate for the location and existing form of development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longford Town Waste Water Treatment plant expansion and sewer network expansion will allow opportunities for significant population growth, by 2012. • Phase 1 of Longford Central Waste Water supply scheme to be available by 2014. Interim measures in place to assist existing supply to the town (no significant new development). • Opportunities for incremental, planned, logical, sustainable and phased expansion to the town which could accommodate forecast population expansion. Opportunities to intensify densities within existing very low density residential areas, within the framework of government guidelines on residential density and provided appropriately designed. Potential to expand and diversify existing well utilised amenity in the area • Potential to enhance biodiversity and create wildlife corridors into urban area

Figure 3.1 SWOT Analysis of South East Environs LAP Lands



View north eastward from Upper Ferefad



Entry into Longford along Park Road

DRAFT



4 EXISTING DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

The following section analyses the LAP lands' development constraints. The LAP lands as a whole are constrained by a variety of factors which will need to be overcome before these lands can be developed, particularly in relation to key physical infrastructure. The implications for development are also summarised within this section. Certain appropriate measures are identified within the LAP to address these constraints which will be required before these lands will be able to be developed.

4.1 Landscape Character and Visual Impact

The landscape character of the lands is predominantly rural. Much of the lands are highly visible on the southern, eastern and, to a more limited extent, western approaches to the town.

Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw Character Area and Aghafad Character Area

The Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw and Aghafad Character areas are located adjacent to Longford Town in the northern LAP lands as shown on the attached Map. The landscape character in these areas can be described as semi-urban, characterised by urban fringe uses. Amenity facilities such as the golf and driving range, limited industrial uses, new housing estates, and the new reservoir currently under development are located here, adjacent to open fields beyond.

These Character Areas are at a lower elevation than much of the LAP lands and are also located in relatively close proximity to Longford Town Centre and the established urbanised areas. The topography rises to the south, towards the centre of the LAP lands along the high ridge line at Farnagh Hill running broadly east-west across the LAP lands which restricts views into the Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw and Aghafad Character areas. The visual impact of development within these areas is therefore reduced in comparison to the southern areas of the LAP lands. However, this is a high profile character area as it forms part of a highly trafficked route into Longford Town.



Policy NHB 10 of the Town Development Plan notes the value of the trees along the R393 at Knockahaw.

The Rural Character Area

The landscape character in this Area, is, as outlined at section 3.2 is predominantly rural in nature. The lands within the Rural Character Area are elevated and visible from long distance views from the north, south and east. The traditional pattern of small fields dispersed with rural country roads and high quality planting along several of these routes results in a landscape with high amenity value.

The strategy within this LAP acknowledges the high quality of the landscape within the LAP lands, and particularly, the Rural Character Area. The quality of the landscape character of the Rural Character area has helped inform the development strategy identified within this LAP and the 'fit' of new development forms within the three landscape character areas identified within the LAP.

The Rural Character Area is well used by walkers, primarily along the main roads where few pedestrian facilities exist at present. The Rural Character area also adds to the 'arrival experience' into Longford along the R393 Ardagh Road, although there is no clear demarcation between the rural areas and the established town boundary. The primarily agricultural land uses and bogland to the south of the SELAP lands add to the rural 'feel' of the Rural Character Area which significantly contributes to the biodiversity of the urban area.

4.2 View Corridors

Both the Longford Town and County Development Plan identify protected views within this study area. Relevant to the LAP lands, the County Development Plan identifies intermittent views running along Upper Ferefad. The views are intermittent due to their 'glimpsed' nature framed between dwellings and vegetation towards Longford Town to the north, and the open countryside to the south.

The landscape quality of this area is high and significantly contributes to the appearance and identity of Longford Town as a whole.



Views looking south west and view north east from Farnagh Hill, identified in Development Plans and draft County Development Plan as designated views.



Views looking north from Upper Ferefad as identified in Development Plans as designated views

The views identified within Longford Town Development Plan (2009 – 2015) broadly echo those identified within the County Development Plan and specifically identify views northwards down Farnagh Hill to wards Longford town centre. The Longford Town Plan also identifies protected views looking south east and south west of Farnagh Hill.

The Longford Town Development Plan shows an extended view corridor along both Upper Ferefad and Farnagh Hill and includes a proposed 'Town Park' area to protect and enhance this vista.

4.3 Archaeological and Historic Heritage

As identified within section XX, there are several protected structures within the subject lands, or partly within the LAP lands including:

- The Royal Canal which fringes the north western area of the lands;
- Viewmount House, a former Georgian residential property built in c.1790;
- A ringfort at Farnagh Hill.



These structures enhance the cultural heritage value of the lands and help give it its unique identity and character.

As identified previously, the archaeological and historic heritage of the LAP lands includes 14 ringforts within the site, including that at Farnagh Hill, identified within the Sites and Monuments Record. Prior to the lands being developed, and as part of future planning applications under this LAP, the developer must liaise with the Council and seek advice from the National Monuments Service in the Department for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Standards and objectives within the Town and County Development Plan will need to be adhered to in respect of both the archaeological heritage of the site. These include, but are not limited to, the following objectives:

- To encourage and promote access to and understanding of the archaeological heritage of the county.
- To presume in favour of the physical preservation in-situ of archaeological remains and their settings, where appropriate
- To strictly control development proposals on agricultural or recreationally zoned lands within the LAP area which may be detrimental to items of archaeological significance, or detract from its interpretation and setting.

For relevant sites within the LAP lands, which may contain important archaeological remains, and for development proposed in the vicinity of the sites of recognised archaeological importance, a full archaeological assessment which shall include test excavations shall be submitted to the planning authority.

4.4 Biodiversity

The Royal Canal, a proposed National Heritage Area (NHA), runs through the north-western fringe of the LAP lands. Two local bogs to the south of the LAP lands have NHA status. It is considered the development policies and objectives outlined in this LAP will ensure the continued environmental protection of these areas.



Much of the LAP lands have a distinct landscape character depicted by roadside field boundaries with mature native species which contribute to its biodiversity value. These field boundaries include both established hedgerows and mature tree planting which will require to be maintained wherever possible in new developments. Generally, where any mature trees or hedgerows are to be removed, the Council will require replacement planting to take place, or to strengthen existing hedgerows. During construction the trees and their root systems shall be fenced off for protection to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

Existing hedgerows should be augmented as part of any proposed development to ensure the creation/maintenance/enhancement of wildlife corridors to protect and expand biodiversity in the area

Where the biodiversity of an area will be adversely affected by development within the SELAP lands, the Council will require mitigation or remediation measures to be undertaken which may include tree planting, wildlife areas/corridors or parks as appropriate. These measures may be required to be provided within areas of open space as part of residential developments, as advocated within the adopted Town and County Development Plans and policy NHB17 of the emerging County Development Plan.

4.5 Educational Requirements

Longford town has several primary schools (for ages 4-12) including a Gaelscoil, and three secondary schools (for ages 12-19). The secondary schools are St. Mel's College, a boys' school and Scoil Mhuire, a girls' school, as well as a mixed school, Templemichael College, formerly known as Longford Vocational School. An extensive adult education centre exists in Longford offering a variety of vocational courses.

Gaelscoil An Longfoirt is a primary school located adjacent to the Slashers GAA club and is the only school in the LAP area. The anticipated population increase as a result of development anticipated within this LAP is relatively modest. However, further lands are proposed to be zoned for educational use, adjacent to the existing



Gaelscoil, should expansion of this school, or further educational facilities be required in the future. This includes childcare and other educationally associated facilities as required.

4.6 Proposed Neighbourhood Centre within the Strategic Land Reserve

This SELAP proposes a Strategic Land Reserve (SLR) for possible future development needs to the east of the LAP lands. It is not anticipated this SLR will be required within the lifetime of the SELAP given the identified infrastructural and population constraints. However, a neighbourhood centre is identified for the SLR, given its distance from Longford Town Centre. This neighbourhood centre will provide limited local services, which may include small scale educational facilities, neighbourhood level shops, post office, crèche etc, in accordance with policy LE 4.

4.7 Healthcare Needs

Within Longford, the Mount Carmel/St. Joseph's hospital is located on Dublin Road, in close proximity to the LAP lands. There is also a health centre also located on the Dublin Road. Recently completed developments include the Female Wing at St. Joseph's Hospital and provision of the Midoc Service, an out of hours healthcare system.

4.8 Community Facilities, Retail and Other Services

It is anticipated that for the development of the section of the LAP lands zoned for residential within this LAP may be suitable for limited additional community facilities and local level retail facilities to augment those already existing within the town. The primary use of the residential zoned lands will be residential.

4.9 Flooding, Surface Water and Attenuation Measures

Surface water sewers are not proposed under the Longford Sewerage Scheme – Phase Two. The area of the Phase Two scheme covers approximately the same area as the lands within the SELAP area.



The Longford Sewerage Scheme Preliminary Report of 2001 recommended that adequate surface water sewers are provided by individual developers for all future proposed development. It will therefore be essential that all future development proposals within the SELAP area include detailed proposals for surface water and storm water attenuation and a detailed flood risk assessment of the development particularly downstream of the development. As previously stated the capacity of the existing surface water pipe downstream from the LAP lands is inadequate to cater for further development. This system needs to be upgraded and replaced prior to any substantial development in the LAP area.

Full details are contained within Chapter 6. If and when the surface water sewers to service the LAP area are upgraded then developers will be required to provide surface water outfalls, constructed to the County Council's standards and will need to demonstrate that sufficient capacity exists in receptor watercourses. All new development will be required to use the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) (or similar sustainable drainage systems) in accordance with best practice, which will balance the impact of urban drainage through the achievement of control of run-off quantity and quality and enhancing amenity and habitat. Existing watercourses should be kept open and incorporated into the landscaping of the area as much as possible. Section 6 expands on required responses to these constraints.

4.10 Water Supply

Longford Town is currently served from the Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme, which is an ongoing scheme which is periodically upgraded and currently includes the development of a reservoir in the northern section of the LAP lands. The SELAP lands are served from either the existing Public or Group Water scheme watermains and currently includes the development of additional storage with a new 10,000m³ reservoir under construction at Knockahaw, which is located in the northern section of the LAP lands. This reservoir is designed primarily to augment storage for existing developments in Longford Town and will have a top water level of 88.3mOD, which is generally too low to serve proposed developments in the SELAP lands.

The existing scheme suffers from a lack of headroom capacity, including a lack of treatment capacity at the main Lough Forbes Water Treatment Works. In recent



years this has restricted development in the town. A Strategic Review Report, undertaken by Tobin Consulting Engineers in 2006 has outlined a blueprint for the Longford Central Regional Water Supply Scheme for the next 20 years. Until certain elements of this scheme are developed, the development of Longford Town will be restricted by a water supply deficit. Approval has been given by the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government for phase one of this scheme, which will result in an increase supply of 5,000m³/day. It is expected that this additional water supply will be available by 2014.

As an interim measure, the Council has developed an additional borehole. This is due to be in production by December 2008, supplying an extra 800m³/day. This borehole is designed to facilitate existing supply to the town, rather than allow the expansion of new development areas, such as the SELAP lands.

This represents a constraint in respect of the amount of lands that can be appropriately zoned as part of this LAP. The interim measure does not allow capacity for further developments at the present time although the Department's approval for phase one of this scheme, anticipated to be available in 2014, will facilitate additional water supply for new developments when complete.

Water Pressure

There is also an area of low water pressure within the SELAP lands in the vicinity of Upper Ferefad. This is broadly centred on the highest area of the site, and predominantly relates to areas above 105mOD in the vicinity of Ballymakeegan Reservoir, around the junction between Upper Ferefad and Farnagh Hill. Generally, areas of low pressure within distribution systems correspond with inhabited areas close to service reservoirs.

This SELAP proposes a buffer to development in and around the identified current low pressure exclusion zone, shown on the SELAP maps, in order to preserve water pressure.



4.11 Sewerage and Drainage

Sewerage Treatment

The existing Longford Town Wastewater Treatment Plant has a capacity of 20,000 Population Equivalent (PE). The current wastewater load to the plant from the existing foul sewer network has been estimated at 16,500 PE. Therefore based on the current wastewater load estimate there is 3,500 PE existing spare capacity immediately available for either future development within the existing foul sewer network catchment area or for additional development areas. Servicing additional development areas would require extensions to the existing foul sewer network.

A proposed Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion from 20,000 PE to 30,000 PE is scheduled to be completed and operational by 2012. It should be noted that this is a preliminary estimated completion date provided by Longford County Council Water Services Department. A further expansion of the treatment works is proposed for 2023 when the Wastewater Treatment Plant capacity is to be increased further to 40,000 PE.

Sewer Network

Therefore, whilst a limited sewerage system is already in place in the identified Character Area 1 (Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw) and Character Area 2 (Aghafad) close to the existing built up area of Longford Town, the remainder of the lands are served by septic tanks only. The timetable for an extended sewerage system into the SELAP lands is unlikely to be in place to serve the remaining lands until 2012, the final year of the SELAP's life.

A Preliminary Report was undertaken on behalf of the Council by consultants, in 2001. A foul sewer network was outlined in this report and designed to cater for a population within the SELAP area of 3,699. However, Tobin Consulting Engineers have advised that this network could be redesigned and the pipework upsized to accommodate greater levels of growth. This upgrading should be done at the expense of private developments in the area. No proposals are in place to provide a surface and storm water system for the area or to upgrade the existing inadequate system down stream in the town.



4.12 Road Network

The road network within the northern sections of the SELAP lands, within both Character Area 1 at Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw and Character Area 2 at Aghafad are relatively well developed and are in keeping with the road network within Longford town. Character Area 1 at Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw in particular comprises well established, main vehicular routes into the town including the N4 and the Dublin Road, although these routes are strategic in nature and provide limited access opportunities. Significant severance issues exist due to the close proximity of major infrastructural arteries such as the N4, Sligo-Dublin Railway and the Dublin Road, which bisect the lands in the area.

The central and southern sections of the SELAP lands are more rural in nature. The existing road network within the majority of the southern SELAP area, within the Rural Character Area, is predominantly undeveloped, comprising relatively narrow country lanes. These lanes provide poor vehicular access with substandard road widths, alignments and a lack of required sightlines making significant levels of new development unlikely. Potential widening of the existing internal road network is compromised by the area's extensive ribbon development pattern, which physically restricts lateral carriageway expansion. However, opportunities do exist to expand into road verges in some areas. Furthermore, critical to the development of the SELAP lands is the junction capacities on the internal road network in the area.

In addition, given the rural nature of the lands, there is a severe lack of pedestrian facilities such as pavements, lighting and crossing facilities.

In relation to the proposed Longford bypass (N4/N63) link road, this is proposed as a long term aspirational goal included within the list of longer term measures (2023) by Longford Local Authorities. It is considered prudent to preclude development within the proposed route corridor as illustrated on the attached map.



4.13 Constraints Summary

The SELAP lands are predominantly rural in nature. The underdeveloped nature of the lands requires both physical infrastructure, such as water facilities and new roads as well as 'community' related infrastructure such as possible healthcare, education and limited neighbourhood retail facilities. The archaeological and historic heritage of the lands is a further constraint, with 14 ringforts located within the subject lands. The ringforts and their setting are sensitive both in terms of ground disturbances and visual amenity, requiring a considered approach in line with Section 4.3 and detailed Development Plan policy.



Low density residential development within the SELAP Viewmount House—A protected structure in the north lands near Park Road



Viewmount House—A protected structure in the north east of the SELAP lands

It is considered that an appropriate development response, as identified within the SELAP, will be able to overcome the constraints related to the high landscape quality of the area, the archaeological heritage of the area and the required community facilities such as healthcare and other neighbourhood facilities.

However, it is considered the primary constraint to development is the current lack of basic water and sewerage infrastructure facilities including surface and storm water facilities to serve the subject lands. The following section analysis the constraints on the water supply, sewerage and drainage in respect of the subject lands and the implications on development of the subject lands.



5 IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT BASED ON INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRAINTS

As identified in the previous section of the SELAP, the constraints related to water supply, surface water and sewerage infrastructure will need to be addressed prior to the development of the LAP lands. The previous section examined the capacity of the proposed, timetabled infrastructure network. This section of the SELAP analyses the implications of these constraints for development of the land.

5.1 Primary Infrastructure Constraints

The main constraint on development is the lack of capacity in the existing surface and storm water system and sewage treatment works and lack of any sewer network within the SELAP lands, with the exception of limited areas in the north east and north west. The restrictions in relation to surface and storm water are set out in Chapter 6 of this document.

Until a new sewer network is provided, no significant development can take place within the SELAP lands. A new sewer network is currently programmed for 2012. The provision of a foul sewer network is considered a critical infrastructure element to realise the development of the SELAP lands.

There is wastewater treatment works treatment capacity currently available to facilitate development throughout the town and of portions of the SELAP lands. This available capacity is 3,500PE, as identified at section 4.11. A proposed Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion from 20,000PE to 30,000PE is also scheduled to be completed and operational by 2012. The additional 10,000 PE would be available to the entire Longford Town and environs catchment, rather than the SELAP lands alone. From this available capacity figure, evaluation is required to obtain a 'share' of the growth for the SELAP lands.

The provision of sewerage treatment and subsequent associated network are considered a critical infrastructure element to realise the development of the SELAP lands.



5.2 SELAP Population Capacity

As referenced above, given the lack of any new sewer infrastructure within the SELAP lands, no significant can take place within the lands until this is provided. The timeframe for this new sewer network is 2012. However, another primary constraint is the wastewater treatment facility. Although there is 3,500PE capacity currently, another 10,000PE is timetabled for 2012, under proposed upgrading works.

An assumption can be made that 50% of the excess waster water facility upgrade works will be required for industrial or 'non domestic' uses over the life of the plan, up until 2015. This results in a growth limit in relation to residential development of 6,536.5 PE. Assuming a minimum of 3,500 PE is required within the North Eastern Environs LAP growth area, this leaves a residual PE of 3036.5. Given that, in line with national and regional policy, development within the urban area will be prioritised, it is estimated that approximately 1,500 of this PE will be required in relation to residential infill within the existing Longford Town boundary and outside the SELAP boundary. This results in an overall indicative limit of 1,536.5 PE for the subject lands.

Table 1 - Sewage Treatment Works constraints on SELAP lands

	Excess capacity following programmed sewage treatment works	PE following 2012 treatment	50% requirement for industrial development	approximate requirement for NE Environs LAP area	Approximate assumed requirement for NE Environs LAP area	Estimated Requirement for town centre residential development
	-		-6,536.5 PE		-3,500 PE ²	-1,500 PE ³
Cumulative total PE for SE Environs LAP Area	13,073 PE		6,536.5 PE		3,036.5 PE	1,536.5 PE

The 1,536.5 figure in the above table, based on 2.58⁴ persons per household equates to approximately 595 residential units. The total land bank required to accommodate this growth is 30 hectares. This assumes an overall density of 18.5

² Indicative estimate

³ Indicative estimate

⁴ Figure derived from Longford Settlement Strategy (Proposed Amendments to the Longford County Development Plan, November 2008). The 2.58 figure is an average of CSO estimated household sizes from 2006-2016



units/hectare, in line with the Council's Settlement Strategy (taking an average of the identified residential density range between 12-25 units per hectare). In terms of the policy context and, in particular, the settlement strategy outlined in Longford County development Plan, it is considered that a maximum of 15 ha should be considered for a Strategic Land Reserve in this area. It is recognised that this is a maximum, as densities within the existing town itself, may suitable at higher densities than the 18.5 density identified, dependent on design, layout and context.

Development cannot take place in this area in the absence of mains sewerage facilities. The use of stand-alone on site package treatment plants to facilitate development during the life of the SELAP is not considered acceptable as the proliferation of such units would not be considered appropriate in environmental, engineering or facility management terms. Instead, the development of more permanent waste water solutions (mains sewerage) as identified above, is the only realistic, sustainable and acceptable solution. As such, the development of the SLR will not be considered prior to waste water treatment infrastructural improvements of a suitable scale and extent.

5.3 Water supply

Another primary constraint is water supply. The town's water supply facilities are at capacity. Interim measures are currently being put in place to ensure the existing PE can be maintained in the form of borehole development. The SELAP lands are not considered suitable for development in any significant manner without increasing water supply capacity. Works are programmed to be constructed and operational by 2014 which would significantly increase water capacity (by 5,000m³/day).

A low pressure area is also identified within the SELAP lands towards the highest point of the site, close to Ballymakeegan Reservoir. Development is directed away from this part of the SELAP lands until such time as the low pressure issue can be overcome. It is not however, anticipated that this area would be developed within the life of the SELAP in any event, due to its location at the highest part of the site and away from the more logical areas for development, as outlined in the LAP. The current Longford County Development Plan and Town Development Plan also



identify view corridors in this location, as result of its elevated topography which add further constraints to development of this area.

5.4 Roads

It is considered that the road network, in order to cater for significant levels of development, has to be addressed in two primary ways: internally (within the SELAP lands), and externally, with its connections to the main distributor roads. These internal road improvements will need to be carried out as the area develops, and based on the phasing strategy identified within the SELAP. This includes road widening (facilitating cyclepaths and footpaths) and road realignment works which will increase the capacity of the existing network and allow pedestrian access to the town centre.

Based on infrastructural constraints related to the lands, it is evident that there are significant restrictions on potential new development until 2012 which will need to be overcome before the land can be developed. Whilst the provision of several key segments of this new infrastructure is timetabled within identified development programmes, the timeframe for this provision is late within the SELAP lifespan.

The attached map indicates a road study corridor for the provision of a southern inner link road, connecting the N63 and N4. This corridor extends beyond the plan boundaries and is a long-term objective to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of local traffic from the west to the east of the Urban area.

In the short to medium term, it is intended to upgrade the existing Ferefad road as opportunities arise. These improvements are likely to take the form of limited road widening and the provision of pedestrian facilities such as footpaths and lighting. Large scale increases in traffic volumes, speeds or vehicle sizes will not be facilitated or promoted on this primarily local residential route.

5.5 Summary

One of the primary objectives of this LAP is to, where possible, overcome the identified infrastructural constraints and to allow development to take place, as



appropriate, provided the infrastructural issues and other factors as identified in this LAP have been fully addressed. The potential delivery of the required infrastructure is outlined in the above section.

There is limited available sewage capacity at the current time, at 3,500PE. Further capacity upgrades are planned for the waste water treatment plant which would take capacity to 13,073PE for the entire Longford Town Environs area, including the northern environs. This upgrade is identified as occurring in 2012.

The other main constraints are inadequate surface water capacity and water supply which is also at capacity. However, the current infrastructure programme identifies that the new water supply works are to be constructed and operational by 2014.

As referenced previously, and in line with the Longford County Settlement Strategy a density range of 12-25 units/hectare is considered appropriate. Allowing for a development area of approximately 30 hectares, this would accommodate a projected population in the region of 1,400 persons in the long-term (density calculated as mean of range i.e. 18.5/ha), based on the infrastructure constraints identified above.

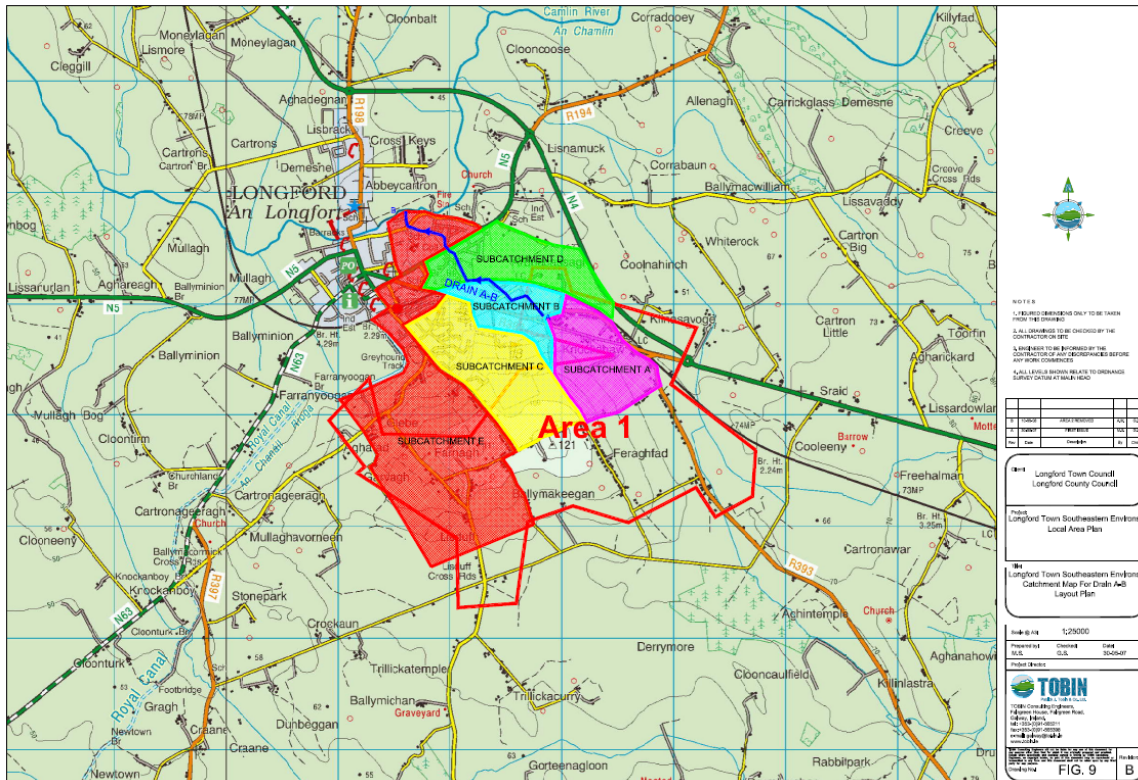


6 SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE, FLOODING AND GROUNDWATER PROTECTION

Surface Water Drainage

Existing Studies and Analysis

In relation to surface water, there are two studies which have been undertaken in, or in the vicinity, of the subject lands. The Council's consultants, Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd., undertook a Drainage Study of the South Eastern Environs of Longford Town in December 1999, in conjunction with Longford Central Water Supply Scheme (Stage 6). This study assessed the capacity of the existing surface water drainage channel at the Dublin Road at Ardnacassagh to the River Camlin.



Subcatchment sections and main drain, marked A-B

- A Pink
- B Blue
- C Yellow
- D Green
- E Red



For the purposes of this study, sub-catchments were established within the main catchment to assess the capacity of individual sections of drain and to take into account significant tributary contributions. The sub-catchments are indicated as areas A, B, C, D and E as shown on the map above. The main drainage channel within the lands is shown marked as A-B.

Specific to the lands covered by this SELAP, the majority the northern portion of the subject lands, nearest Longford Town, are within identified sub-catchments A, C and E. This northern section of the SELAP lands is where the majority of lands zoned for development within this LAP are located. The southern sections of the LAP lands are not contained within the study catchment and drain in a southerly direction (approximately from the ridgeline along Upper Ferefad).

Nicholas O'Dwyer's 1999 Drainage study recommends both pipe replacement and additional pipework along the length of the main drainage channel (shown as A-B on the above Tobin map). The report also recommends that separate drainage system should be provided to cater for future development in sub-catchment C. The level of development which could be catered for within the current drainage system within sub-catchment C is not referenced. However, no new zoning is proposed within this LAP within sub-catchment C and this recommendation is not included within the 2007 update to this report (see below).

2007 Report Update

In June 2007, Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd. published a report which provided an update to the 1999 study report as significant development had taken place since the original report. This 2007 updated report reiterates the need to carry out both pipe replacement works and the laying of additional pipework in order to provide the required capacity within the existing drainage system to contain the peak runoff flows from a storm of a 5 year return period. This indicates that the existing drainage system does not have sufficient capacity at the current time to cater for these peak runoff flows.

Therefore the works recommended within the June 2007 report would have to take place prior to significant development within the northern half of the SELAP lands (which drains towards Longford Town).



Please note the main recommendations of the updated June 2007 report are contained at Appendix 3

General Policies and Principles

Assuming the above upgrades take place, and in general terms, the discharge of surface water run-off and rainwater in foul sewage systems within the SELAP lands shall be strictly prohibited. Surface water storage measures will also need to be provided where it is considered that surface water run-off levels exceed permissible discharge rates, and in accordance with Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) and best practice guidelines.

SUDS refers to an approach to the management of surface water drainage that involves the reduction, attenuation on site and/or slowing of surface water runoff to more closely follow the natural runoff patterns. SUDS provide a more sustainable approach to surface water management than conventional methods, which generally involve piping surface water directly to the nearest watercourse or river

Most developments on greenfield sites will result in a significant increase in the area of impervious surface, including roofs and hard pavements. This significantly affects the surface water runoff flows, potentially increasing the risk of flooding and contamination of watercourses, waterbodies and groundwater resources. Surface water collected from these surfaces must be disposed of in a controlled and sustainable manner, so that the risk of flooding and contamination is minimised.

The provision of adequate surface water drainage within the LAP will be guided by the following:

- Section 5.3 of the County Development Plan 2009, which sets out the general standards with regard to building control standards for surface water drainage, and any other applicable policies, objectives and standards in the emerging Development Plan..
- The EU *Water Framework Directive 2000*, and associated Irish legislation *European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (SI No. 722 of 2003)*.



- The *EPA Waste Water Treatment Manual – Treatment Systems for Single Houses* and *EPA Waste Water Treatment Manual – Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Leisure Centres and Hotels*, as appropriate, or any revision or replacement of these manuals in the lifetime of the Plan.
- The strategies, policies, objectives, guidelines and standards contained in this Plan, in particular the overall intention to create SUDS within the LAP and the relevant provisions contained in Section 10.3.

Longford Local Authorities will adopt a best practice approach with regard to surface water drainage through the promotion of catchment management and SUDS. This will help to ensure that amount of surface water is minimised and that the role of the receiving environment (mainly watercourses) as conveyor is protected and enhanced. In relation to catchments, it should be noted that what happens in the catchment will affect water quality and potential flood risk at lower level lands outside the LAP study area.

The following provisions shall generally apply to surface water drainage:

- All surface water generated by a development shall normally be disposed of within the site and shall not be discharged onto the public road or the adjoining property.
- Where soil conditions are suitable, developments may dispose of surface water via soakaways to groundwater, provided that soakaways are designed in accordance with BRE Digest 365 and are properly maintained. Surface water from roads and paths shall discharge to a soakaway via a suitable petrol/oil interceptor.
- The flow rate from future development sites to the piped system shall not exceed the peak runoff from a greenfield site, i.e. 4.4 l/s/ha. Developers shall submit surface water attenuation proposals so as to ensure that this peak runoff rate shall not be exceeded.
- If necessary a treatment pond shall be installed at the downstream end of the piped system to remove pollutants.
- Future developments shall be designed so that the storm sewers do not flood any part of the site in a 1 in 30 year return period design storm, and such that



no flood water leaves the site in a 1 in 100 year design storm, in accordance with current UK practice.

- The existing sinkholes shall be protected to prevent ingress of any materials that may cause blockage or restrict the capacity of the sinkholes.

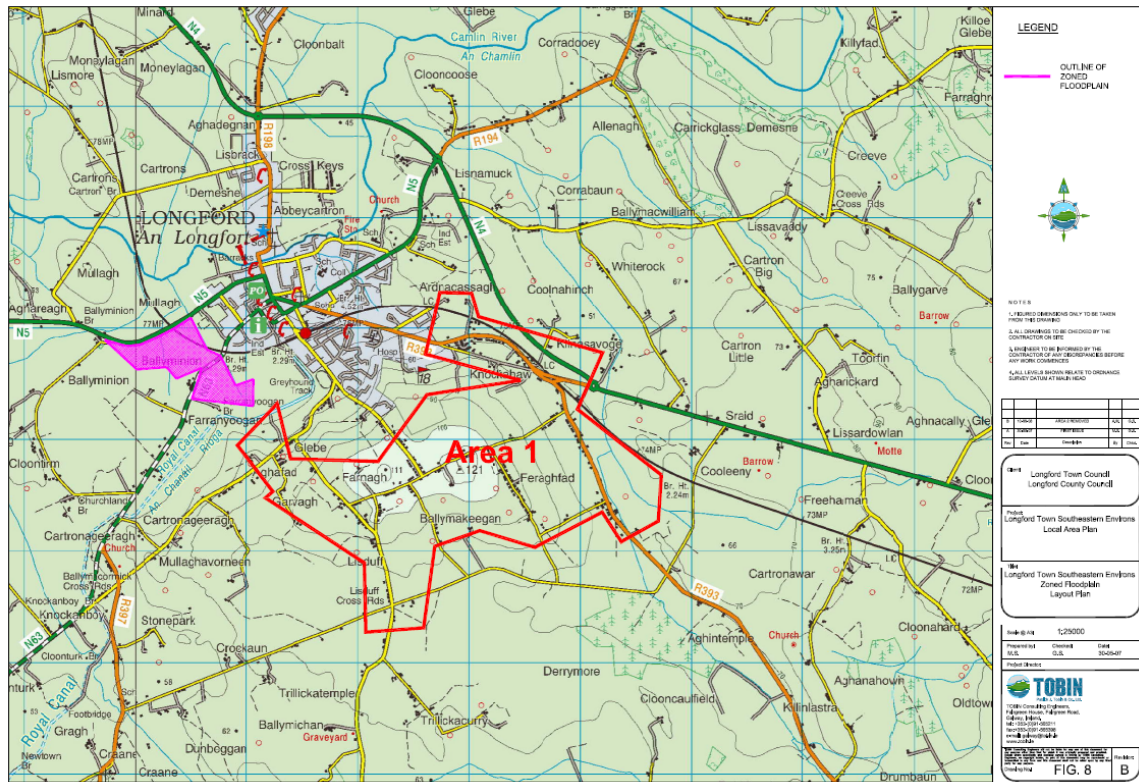
All applications for planning permission must be accompanied by complete details of surface water systems and disposal. All significant developments must also include a detailed assessment and proposals for storm water management. In accordance with the Development Contributions Scheme, a Special Development Contribution may be imposed towards the provision of a surface water network to service the area, amount to be determined on a case by case basis in consultation with the Planning Authority and the Water Services Section.

Flooding

Existing Studies and Analysis

Nicholas O'Dwyer Ltd., the Council's consultants, prepared a report entitled '*Flood Study of the River Camlin at Longford Town*' in April 2002. The study area of this report covers the townlands of Townspark, Farranyoogan and Ballyminnion. The flood study area is therefore to the north west of the study area for SELAP lands. The indicative flood plain was also identified to the north west of the Longford Town South Eastern Environs LAP area, outside the boundary of the LAP lands and not overlapping with it. The figure below illustrates its extent in relation to the LAP.

Significant flooding took place around this floodplain in February of 2002. However, the flooding that occurred in this area was concentrated only to the northwest of the indicative zoned floodplain shown below.



Extent of outline of zoned floodplain shown pink and to the north west of the SELAP lands shown outlined red

To date, the flood alleviation measures outlined in the 2002 report have not yet been carried out. However, on review of these recommendations and mitigation measures, none of the measures proposed are relevant to, or have an impact upon, the SELAP area and no reference to the subject lands is made within the report.

However, recommendations for the general development of Longford Town within the report have been taken into account with the LAP such as the need to take into account the potential impact of global warming and the need to attenuate runoff from new development sites (see Development Policies, Section 10).

General Policies and Principles

Development should not itself be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor should it cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations. This shall be guided by the following requirements:



- Development that is sensitive to the effects of flooding will generally not be permitted within areas of the LAP which are subsequently found to be flood prone.
- Development must so far as is reasonably practicable incorporate the maximum provision to reduce the rate and quantity of runoff. In particular: 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; and soakaways or French drains should be provided to increase infiltration and minimise additional runoff.
- For developments adjacent to watercourses, any structures (including hard landscaping) must be set back from the edge of the watercourse to allow access for channel clearing/maintenance/vegetation. A minimum set back of 6m either side of the watercourse shall generally be required.
- All new development must be designed to meet the following minimum flood design standards: for built up areas or where developments (existing, proposed or anticipated) are involved – the 100 year flood; for rural areas or where developments (existing, proposed or anticipated) are not involved – the 25 year flood; and where streams, open drains or other watercourses are being culverted – the minimum permissible culvert diameter is 900mm (access should be provided for maintenance as appropriate).
- A flood impact assessment and proposals for the storage and attenuation of runoff/discharges (including foul drains) to ensure development does not increase the flood risk in the relevant catchment must accompany applications for planning permission for development of areas exceeding 1ha.
- A certificate from a competent person that the development will not contribute to flooding within the relevant catchment must accompany applications for planning permission for developments of areas of 1ha or less.

Groundwater and Watercourse Protection

Development works shall have regard to the preservation of groundwater and surface water quality during all stages of construction. Development that is proposed in close proximity to a watercourse shall be required to submit measures to reduce and prevent pollution to the watercourse, both during construction and after completion of the scheme. The protection of groundwater resources and watercourses within the



LAP lands will be guided by the provisions of the County and Town Development Plans and established best practice guidance.

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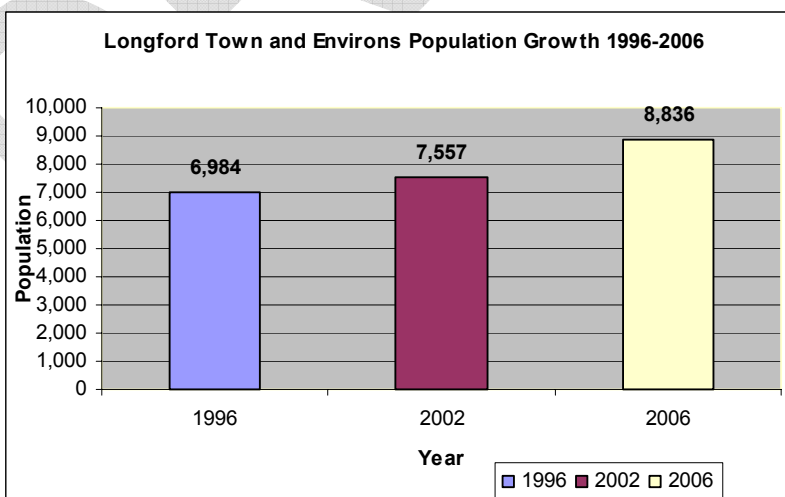
7 CAPACITY AND POPULATION ANALYSIS

The Longford Town South Eastern Environs has the physical capacity for growth and expansion to cater for future needs of Longford Town and projected population growth of the area. This is dependent upon the necessary infrastructure being provided. Although the previous section has outlined the infrastructural constraints to development, it is recognised that once this infrastructure is in place, sections of the SELAP lands will be able to accommodate a phased, logical and sustainable pattern of development.

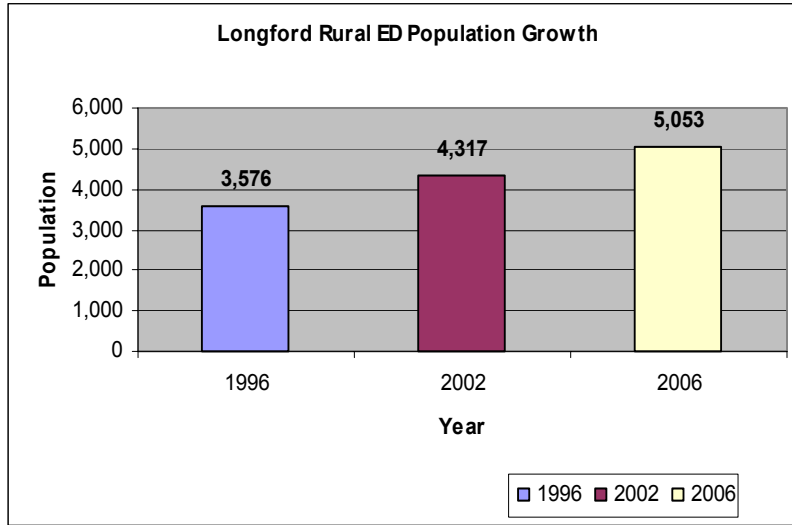
Whilst the provision of appropriate physical infrastructure will be the key determinant in relation to the development of the SELAP lands, it is necessary to view such growth in conjunction with the anticipated change in population over this period.

The Longford South East Environs LAP falls within the Longford Rural Electoral Division (E.D.). The graphs below illustrate an analysis of the historical population change for Longford Rural, together with that for Longford Town and Environs, in the period 1996 to 2006.

Figure 6.1 and 6.2 Population Analysis for Longford Town and Environs and Longford Rural from 1996 to 2006



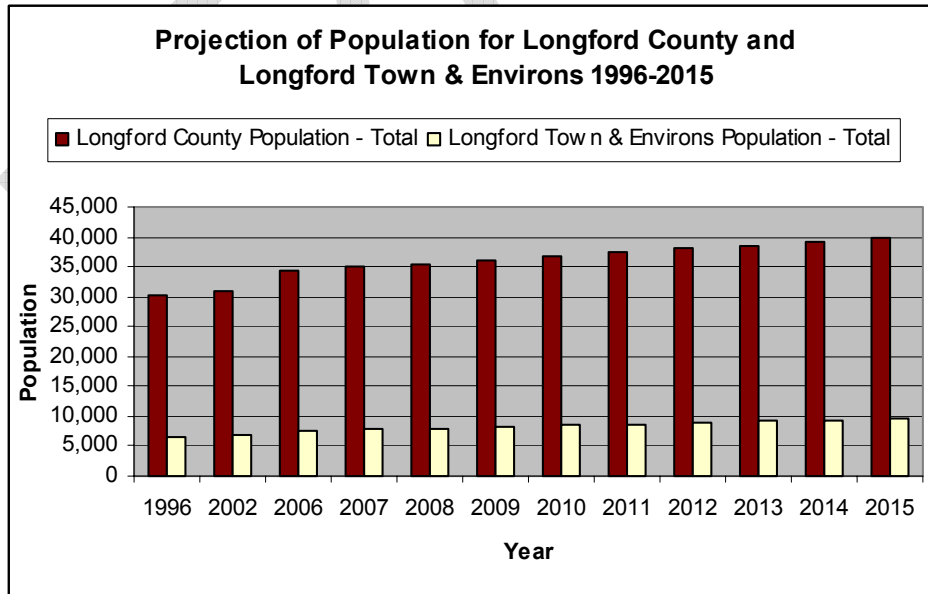
Figures based on KSA Population Analysis undertaken as part of Longford County Council Housing Strategy 2009-2015



Figures based on KSA Population Analysis undertaken as part of Longford County Council Housing Strategy 2009-2015

The predicted population projection of both Longford County and Longford Town and Environs is set out in the graph below.

Figure 6.3 Projection of Population for Longford County and Longford Town and Environs from 1996 to 2015



Figures based on KSA Population Analysis undertaken as part of Longford County Council Housing Strategy 2009-2015



Longford Rural ED, within which the SELAP lands are located, has a total area of 2,091 hectares. The SELAP lands measure approximately 485 hectares - therefore the lands measure approximately one quarter of the total area of the Rural ED.

The Rural ED falls within the defined Longford Town and Environs for the purposes of the population projections undertaken as part of the recently completed Housing Strategy for Longford. The Longford Town and Environs comprises the Rural ED, Longford Town (split into Longford Urban 1 and 2) and several other EDs.

The above graph shows the predicted growth rate of Longford Town and Environs as increasing from 7,811 people in 2007 to 9,115 in 2013. This is growth of 1,304 people for Longford Towns and its environs, including for the South Eastern Environs, during the life of the SELAP.

The future growth of the Longford South East Environs LAP area is primarily based on the realities of its infrastructure opportunities and constraints. However, the strategy has recognised the population growth levels anticipated and caters for this growth. The strategy advocated by the SELAP includes a Strategic Land Reserve which will allow for future phases of SELAP land to be released in line with population growth requirements, once the necessary physical infrastructure has been provided.

The population prediction is a growth of 1,304 up to 2013 for Longford and its environs. Despite the cap on population growth caused by current lack of infrastructure, the SELAP lands are still considered able to comfortably accommodate this predicted growth within the life of the SELAP. However, in reality, the population growth will also be accommodated within other areas of the Longford environs, such as Longford town and other areas of Longford Rural ED as well as within the Longford SELAP lands themselves.

For this reason, incremental phasing of the zoning promoted within this LAP is proposed which will allow lands to be developed in line with both the predicted population growth rates identified in the Longford Housing Strategy, 2007 and the identified infrastructure capacity constraints.



In addition, with the appropriate infrastructure is only likely to be ready to facilitate growth by 2012. The number of dwellings that can be built in one year, in the final life of the plan is dependent on house building rates.

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8 KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND FORM OF DEVELOPMENT

Given the identified development constraints within the SELAP area and the relatively limited anticipated population growth of Longford and environs within the life of the plan, key principles have emerged around which the development of the LAP will be based.

It is considered development of the low lying lands in the north east and north west of the SELAP lands, in close proximity and within the existing Longford town urbanised area as infill, and would allow development to progress as a natural extension at the edges of Longford where appropriate utilising existing infrastructure and utilities. The lands around the N4 approach within Longford would be developed in this scenario and at Aghafad to the south west of Longford Town. Based on the identified infrastructural constraints, and robust planning rationale it is considered this is the most sustainable and feasible strategy to develop the SELAP lands.

When the infrastructure constraints are taken into account alongside the other environmental and planning considerations, the most appropriate areas for initial/first phase development are considered, in broad terms, to be:

- The area within the established built up area of the town, located around the Old Dublin Road and the main Dublin–Sligo railway line, to the east of Longford Town identified as development area 1, as shown on Sheet 1, and within Character Area 1.
- At Aghafad Character Area, around the existing industrial/residential area to the north west of the SELAP lands bounded to the 95 m contour to the south – development area 2 (Sheet 2).
- A possible future development area is identified as a Strategic Land Reserve (SLR) exists at Feraghfad to the east of the lands, extending southward and bordered to the 85 m topography contour to the west – potential future development area 3 (Sheet 1).

This development scenario where possible, maximises and consolidates development opportunities within the established town boundary, around the old N4



approach to the town, and around the railway line (area 1, above). In area 2, located around the Aghafad townland, to the north west of the SELAP lands, the lands currently occupy a mix of residential, educational, community and industrial uses. It is considered that these uses should be consolidated and additional residential growth located to the south, the 95 metre boundary forming the contour of the southern extent of this development area, in order to protect visual amenity and protect the most visible parts of the SELAP lands. A buffer or gap area will be required in order to protect the amenities of potential future residential developments adjacent to existing industrial lands.

The development options outline zones an SLR for residential and/or employment uses and neighbourhood centre uses, such as neighbourhood shop, school, crèche, which will only be developed once the appropriate infrastructure is in place and in line with projected housing requirements. It is not anticipated that this land will be available due to infrastructure constraints, or required, during the lifetime of the SELAP. However, the SLR is considered the most appropriate area for the future long-term expansion of the SELAP lands.

A core development principle discourages ribbon development or further 'one off' housing exacerbating the existing linear development pattern within the rural areas of the SELAP, reducing the economic case for, and therefore endangering potential infrastructure provision in the area. It is recognised that certain members of local families may need to locate in their own rural areas, however development should proceed as per the recommendations of the Government's guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas.

One-off development will be discouraged in the SELAP lands for four primary reasons:

1. Such development, where on unserviced lands, adds pressure on service infrastructure provision.
2. Linear or ribbon development creates unclear definition between the established settlement and open countryside beyond.



3. Such areas create an unsustainable reliance on the private car as they are normally located away from established urban areas in narrow corridors along which all traffic must manoeuvre.
4. 'One off' houses across the lands may hamper future road widening and realignment required in order to serve existing residential development and install appropriate pedestrian facilities.

A key objective of this LAP is, where possible, to consolidate existing urban form through development of pockets of residential development adjacent to the existing settlement of Longford. A key principle will be to discourage further ribbon development whilst recognising that one-off dwellings will be appropriate in certain circumstances and in accordance with the provisions of the guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas.

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9 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND ZONING

It is evident from the infrastructural constraints outlined at Chapter 5, much of the SELAP area is not suitable for development within the timeframe of the document.

The development option outlined in the previous section is based on the settlement strategy contained in the current CDP, infrastructural constraints, and a logical, planned development of the South East environs of Longford in line with population projections. The highest, most visually sensitive central points of the site remain undeveloped in the above scenario. The areas of the lands identified for development in the proposal outlined above are considered to have the following benefits:

- Proximity to Longford Town;
- Cost effectively utilising the (limited) sewage/road infrastructure currently existing within the SELAP lands (within the town);
- Development of the less elevated sections of the SELAP lands, which will both protect visual amenity and encourage the connection to the town via 'soft' modes of transport;
- Sequential Development in accordance with government planning policy and guidelines.

Whilst recognising that there will be circumstances when one-off housing is appropriate, there is a need to reduce the historically high levels of one-off housing and consequent ribbon development in this area if it is to be developed sustainably into the future.

9.1 The Vision for Longford South Eastern Environs

The SELAP, based on the principles contained within the Town and County Development Plans, has developed a vision statement, specific to the site, as follows:

'The overall goal for the South Eastern Environs is to facilitate a high quality sustainable, phased expansion of the town based on a detailed appraisal of infrastructural opportunities and constraints. Quality pedestrian, cycle and public transport links in tandem with vehicular access improvement works will facilitate the development of a range of appropriate house types tailored to the needs of the area.'



A strong design emphasis will be required in order to provide for mixed, balanced and sustainable new communities which will integrate new development within sensitive elements of the LAP lands, such as the visually vulnerable highest sections of the site, areas of archaeological value and the existing residential environments.'

Longford Local Authorities are committed to delivering the vision through working in partnership with both the local community and its stakeholders and through promoting the objectives and policies contained within the SELAP and the Town and County Development Plans.

9.2 Strategic Objectives

Within the SELAP's strategic objectives, an emphasis is placed upon the lands' contiguous proximity to Longford town and upon the areas of the lands most able to absorb new development forms given much of the land's rural and semi-rural context, and identified constraints and opportunities.

The land zoned in this SELAP is for residential and ancillary uses, and an area identified for a Strategic Land Reserve. In addition, an area has been designated for educational use to the west to allow for potential expansion of the Gaelscoil into the future.

The Longford County Development Plan 2009 – 2015 states that it is the policy of the County Council to ensure adequate infrastructural facilities are available or provided to serve urban settlements and to provide for such urban and industrial growth, subject to the availability of resources. This policy statement is directly appropriate to the South Eastern Environs LAP area which has extensive continuous roadside development of low density housing served from septic tanks and will benefit from the planned sewerage infrastructure works. The overriding strategic objective is in line with this Development Plan aim and lands will not be permitted to be developed until such time as the required infrastructure is provided.

Accordingly, the SELAP builds upon the strategy of both Longford Town and County Development Plans by supporting, formalising and promoting the sustainable



development of the South East environs, and based on the infrastructural realities of the lands.

In order to achieve these aims, the following strategic objectives have been established which will serve to underpin the SELAP:

Objective 1:

Robust and Workable Development Boundaries and Logical Phasing Sequence

- Promote steady sustainable growth through a phased development approach, as identified within the SELAP
- Introduce well defined, logical development boundaries which will guide development to the appropriate locations within the SELAP area
- create a clearly defined development boundary or 'edge' for Longford Town. A logically phased development approach will be introduced, in order to achieve this.

To encourage orderly, phased and regulated growth of the Local Area Plan area, based on logical development boundaries which make a positive contribution to sustainable development and the incremental, phased, logical, sequential growth of Longford.

Objective 2:

An Infrastructure-Led Approach

One of the primary development constraints identified within this SELAP is the current lack of infrastructure within the lands, including surface water, sewerage infrastructure and water supply.

This LAP sets out a planned strategy to formalise and regulate the current servicing and future servicing of the area, based on these constraints. The timetabled upgrading will service existing development, including the residential properties within the SELAP lands and also unlock opportunities for new development on a phased basis. It is recognised that the timetable for the provision of new infrastructure may change. Consequently, the Council will have regard to alterations to the timeframe for infrastructure provision identified within this document.



To provide appropriately serviced land based on permanent, sustainable solutions, for existing and future development within the SELAP lands.

Objective 3:

Residential Density

Within the SELAP lands as a whole, lower densities have traditionally been the norm. This is the historical development form of rural areas around Longford, as well as other rural areas in Ireland. However, as settlements have grown, such densities have led to pressure on services and land. Accordingly this is not considered a sustainable approach to the development of the SELAP lands. Residential densities in zoned areas will generally be in the region of 12-25 units per hectare, having regard to the existing adjacent uses development pattern and form. The guidance contained within the guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (May 2009) suggests this figure in order to ensure the efficient use of land. This is considered appropriate due to the semi-rural/urban fringe character of much of the land, and in accordance with the flexibility afforded to such sites by the guidelines (Section 5.3 contains further details).

Such densities will need to ensure that the residential amenity of existing occupiers is not adversely affected. There will be strong emphasis on high quality design to ensure this objective is achieved. However, it is considered that larger residential plots, in excess of 0.5 hectares are capable of proposing their own densities and character and not replicating those of existing adjacent properties.

To provide residential densities in the region of 12-25 units/ha in line with current Development Plan settlement policy and government guidelines.

Objective 4:

Natural Environment

This is a high amenity area with an elevated topography, commanding views and prospects over Longford Town and the adjoining countryside. There is significant existing well-established mature vegetation within the SELAP lands which will require to be retained in new development, particularly along roads.



To ensure areas of high amenity are retained and protected and new development forms do not adversely impact upon important view corridors within the SELAP lands, particularly from elevated parts of the site.

Objective 5:

Accessibility and Permeable Links

A strategic objective will be to improve accessibility and permeability through the promotion of an attractive, legible built and natural environment, with physical, visual and ecological connectivity/links particularly to the town centre and its associated services and facilities. The SELAP facilitates significant opportunities to provide/connect into open space networks and wildlife corridors in the form of hedgerows and other planted areas within and adjacent to the LAP lands, and to promote walking and cycling within such areas, utilising the existing natural assets in the LAP area.

Facilitate connections to existing open space, recreational areas and walking and cycling routes within the SELAP lands, promote the extension and creation of networks, and strongly promoting sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport towards Longford town centre, while maintaining and enhancing wildlife corridors and biodiversity.

9.3 Land Use Zonings

Land use zonings are intended as a general guide to assessing the acceptability or otherwise of proposed development proposals. The various categories of land use zoning for the South Eastern Environs are shown on Sheets 1 and 2. The zonings are intended to be flexible, provided that the basic concepts of proper sustainable planning, residential amenity and good design practice are adhered to. Any proposed development should be compatible with the primary zoning use.

The following provides a detailed description of the land use zonings for the SELAP area:

Residential Zoning

Definition:



To provide for residential development with an emphasis on high quality design. Such provision will be expected to be in line with appropriate residential densities, as outlined within this plan and taking into account provision of suitable neighbourhood level social and community facilities, open space and appropriate services. New residential development will be expected to promote walking, cycling and public transport modes as well as accommodating local level vehicular traffic.

This zoning provides for new residential development and other services incidental and ancillary to residential development. While housing is the primary use in the zoning category, recreation, education, crèche/playschool, clinic/surgery use, and small local retail outlets are also open to consideration subject to compatibility with residential use and the preservation of neighbourhood residential amenity. However, given the limited development growth anticipated within the SELAP lands, and the proximity of those areas identified for growth, it is not expected that significant levels of community facilities will be required.

There will be a strong emphasis on both high quality design and sustainable development principles when considering applications for residential development in the area, including the use of higher housing densities where appropriate and outlined in this plan, natural, locally sourced materials, energy efficiency, transport implications, the impact on the existing ecology and compatibility with local environmental conditions.

Social/Community Zoning

Definition:

To provide facilities and promote the expansion and improvement of social and community facilities and/or the provision of new facilities.

The purpose of this zoning, as shown on the accompanying maps, is to allow for the expansion of the existing education facilities adjacent. The zoning will allow for the expansion of the primary Gaelscoil An Longfoirt and/or the provision of new primary or secondary school facilities as appropriate.



9.4 Phasing of Development

Several large tracts of residentially zoned land, located in close proximity to the town centre, remain undeveloped - a position which has been continued through the lifetime of several Longford Town Development Plans. The allocation of lands in excess of that required for the population growth of Longford seeks to ensure that sufficient lands are developed for residential development through the life of the plan, providing a degree of market choice.

The implementation of the South Eastern Environs LAP will be undertaken through a development phasing approach in a planned and sustainable manner. The proposed phasing is in two stages, developed based on population growth and availability of infrastructure services. The two LAP phases are defined in Section 8 and illustrated on Sheets 1 & 2, with each phase being strategically selected to deliver the most appropriate required development addition to the existing urban form of Longford Town.

Prior to planning applications coming forward based on this phasing scheme, it is an objective of the Local Planning Authority to prepare a '*Special Development Contribution Scheme*' under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 for the SELAP area. The Special Development Contribution Scheme report will specify the financial contributions developers will be expected to pay for the provision of new distributor roads, water services infrastructure, Class 1 public open space, expansion of the areas physical infrastructure, the expansion of utilities and the provision of schools.

The gross residential development area of the SELAP is 485 hectares (1,198 acres), and the resulting net residential development area of approximately 30 ha will be accommodated within the two phases of development as follows, as shown on the accompanying Maps :

Phase 1 - Residential Development Area (corresponding to area 1) - approximately 20 ha (51 acres);

Phase 2 - Residential Development Area 9 ha (corresponding to area 2) (23 acres);



Strategic Land Reserve (if required) - Residential Development Area 15 ha (37.5 acres);

Residential units of a wide housing mix in terms of tenure, house size and type will be required in order to ensure the development of a balanced community structure.

9.5 Social and Affordable Provision

The SELAP's social and affordable housing requirement shall be delivered in accordance with the provisions of the Longford County Housing Strategy 2007-2016. The social and affordable housing shall be delivered jointly by Longford Local Authorities, private developers and the voluntary housing sector. As a general policy, 20% of land zoned for residential use is required to be social and affordable, to be delivered in accordance with the Longford Housing Strategy.

9.6 Phased Infrastructure Development

Transport Infrastructure:

The proposed road layout within the SELAP area shall provide for a street hierarchy. Each street shall be designed according to the core principle that the street is a space, a place of containment and activity rather than simply a movement and access route. The scale and the character of each street, its width, and the height of buildings along it shall be determined within planning applications for the SELAP lands. The primary identified elements of the future road network are shown on the accompanying maps and comprise the following:

- Junction improvements/new road alignments at:
 1. **The Dublin Road**. A new road will be required which will allow for a more appropriate vehicular link to Upper Ferefad, as identified by the Council's retained engineering consultants, Colin Buchanan and Partners. This road will be required to facilitate both vehicular and pedestrian access to residentially zoned lands to the south. An extension of this road, to the south of Upper Ferefad will be required to access to the Strategic Land Reserve (SLR). As identified within



section 7, the SLR is anticipated to come forward outside the lifespan of the SELAP.

Two link roads are also identified to access lands to the north east of the railway line. These potential link roads will be the subject of further study in connection with the N4 realignment. These potential future link roads will allow access into currently agricultural/recreational zoned lands between the N4 and the railway line. The lands are not considered appropriate for zoning at the current time due to ongoing studies in the realignment of the N4.

2. **The Dublin Road**, to facilitate improvements and new accesses to new residential zonings. Lands zoned for residential to the south of the Dublin Road and north of Elm Mount Road be required to be served from one safe and appropriate access point only, from the Dublin Road.
3. **Upper Ferefad**, including road widening works which will allow a safer access to the Strategic Land Reserve (SLR). Also illustrated is the route study corridor for a potential future inner southern route, linking N4 and N63. This is a long-term objective which is outside of the timeframe of the this LAP.
4. **Junction works at Park Road**, to the west of the SELAP lands to facilitate access to the residential zoning at Aghafad. Road widening and junction improvement works will be required to facilitate a safe, suitable access to these lands.
5. **Improvements to railway overbridge**, at Ardnacassagh, off the Dublin Road, as identified on the maps within this SELAP. This overbridge will be required to upgraded to the Council's satisfaction prior to the lands north of the railway being developed.

The actual road and reservations are indicative and may be subject to change, dependent on further studies and requirements.



9.7 Services Infrastructure

Water Services - before any housing development is occupied, permission will be required from Longford County Council stating that there is sufficient water supply available to serve new development. It is also important that all new water main pipes are in place before the occupation of any housing developments. Restricted areas are illustrated on the attached sheets where developments will not be considered due to low water pressure.

Foul Drainage - there are no existing foul sewers or surface water pipes within the SELAP area. As identified within Objective 2 of the SELAP, before any housing development is permitted, an adequate sewage scheme must be in place. Temporary arrangements for dealing with foul sewage will not be considered by the Local Authority.

Surface Water - all new development will be required to use the principles of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS), which will balance the impact of urban drainage through the achievement of control of run-off quantity and quality and enhancing amenity and habitat.

Utilities - it will be important to secure and facilitate the provision of electricity, gas, telecommunications services and other public utilities to the SELAP area in order to satisfy the development needs of the area. The masterplans for each phase will need to specify a phasing utility scheme for bring forward the necessary utilities in tandem with residential development.

9.8 Public Open Space

The open space strategy for the site requires that access to a range of public open space should be provided for the future occupiers of the SELAP lands. This range of open space is divided into three levels, or types of open space, as follows:

- Class 1 open space, which should comprise larger open spaces including playing pitches;



- Class 2 open space, which should consist of smaller casual spaces suitable for smaller children's play, informal kick-about and passive amenity;
- Class 3 open space, which is provided by residential gardens and 'informal', areas of open space, which would normally be smaller than those provided under class 2, such as verges or areas adjacent to residential properties, but which are not privately owned.

The general strategy for the SELAP lands will be to ensure that the proposed layouts offer appropriate pedestrian/cycle access to each of these types of open space both within the site, and where suitable, off site. In general terms, developer will normally be expected to provide 15% public open space, in line with Development Plan standards to ensure that:

- it is located where it is accessible to the maximum number of dwellings in the area;
- it is overlooked allowing for easy supervision and may not be to the rear or side of housing or other development;
- parking is not permitted along the roadside frontage of open space;
- landscape treatment reflects the use to which the area is put;
- existing trees and hedgerows are incorporated into the design of housing layouts to the greatest extent possible, taking into consideration the most sustainable use of land - consideration will be given to making Tree Preservation Orders with regard to trees, or stands of trees, which are considered to have notable Landscape Character Value;
- existing rights-of-way are protected and not blocked by development and new rights of way are established within new developments;
- open spaces are designed in such a way as to minimise anti-social behaviour, maintenance requirements and the accumulation of litter.

Whilst open space provision will be expected on site, the Longford County Development Plan allows for opportunities to contribute to off-site parks/open spaces. There are also opportunities to access recreational facilities outside the lands, in the adjacent rural areas further south than the lands zoned in the SELAP



such as riverbanks, walking routes or playing pitches. As part of development proposals, developers may be required to provide pedestrian links and/or wildlife corridors to such areas.

9.9 Development Phases

Considering the possible population growth and infrastructure constraints the lands will not be developed entirely within the life of this SELAP, but more likely over several successive Local Area Plans.

It is important that a logical and well-planned pattern of future development is established at an early juncture. It is essential that the provision of transport and services infrastructure, public open space, local service areas, and community and educational facilities take place in tandem with phased residential development.

The phasing of development within the Longford South Eastern Environs LAP shall be as follows:

Phase 1 - the first residential phase to be developed as shown on Sheet 1. In tandem with the phased residential development the following must be provided for:

- All physical infrastructure and utilities needed to serve new development should be in place before any housing development is occupied, which will include adequate and appropriate waste water treatment provision, water supply and sewer network. Each element of the phase 1 development will incorporate appropriate road works, as required and appropriate cycle, pedestrian and public transport provision.
- The required percentage of Class 1 Public Open Space to be completed, anticipated to be 15% of the development area (in line with SELAP objective R7 and the Development Plan);
- All development in Phase 1 must be completed before any development can commence within Phase 2.

Phase 2 - the second sector to be development is at the Aghafad Character Area, and shown on Sheet 2. In tandem with the phased residential development the following must be provided for:



- All physical infrastructure and utilities needed to serve new development should be in place before any housing development is occupied, which will include adequate and appropriate waste water treatment provision, water supply and sewer network. Each element of the phase 2 development will incorporate appropriate road works, as required and appropriate cycle, pedestrian and public transport provision.
- The required percentage of Class 1 Public Open Space to be completed (15% of the development area);
- All development in Phase 2 must be completed before any development can commence within the Strategic Land Reserve.

Phase 3 - the Strategic Land Reserve is shown to the south of Phase 1 on Sheet 1. This Strategic Land Reserve is not anticipated to be required within the timeframe of the SELAP. The required population growth can be comfortably accommodated within Phases 1 and 2. There are currently no programmed infrastructure capacity to develop the SLR within the lifetime of this SELAP. However, the SLR does provide a contingency residential development area. If the SLR is to be developed for residential development the following must be provided for in tandem with the development, and prior to occupation:

- Road realignment at the Ardagh Road/Dublin Road junction shall have been completed;
- All physical infrastructure and utilities needed to serve new development should be in place before any housing development is occupied, which will include adequate and appropriate waste water treatment provision, water supply and sewer network. Each element of the SLR development will incorporate appropriate road works, as required and appropriate cycle, pedestrian and public transport provision.
- The required percentage of Class 1 Public Open Space to be completed (15% of the development area).



The following section interprets the development policies to be applied to these development phases.

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10 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

10.1 Sustainable Development

The following are the specific development policies for sustainable development within the SELAP area:

- **SD1: Achieve high quality, sustainably planned, well designed development. This is a key objective for Longford South Eastern Environs LAP so as to ensure a balanced community with high quality standards in the provision of housing, social and community facilities, recreation and amenities, transport and the natural environment.**
- **SD2: Accessibility to facilities is essential and new housing development should be directed to locations where walking and cycling to shops, facilities, schools, areas of open space, etc., can be created as a safe and attractive alternative to private car use.**
- **SD3: Ensuring high standards of energy efficiency in all housing developments and encouraging developers, owners and tenants to improve the environmental performance of the building stock, including the use of renewable energy.**
- **SD4: The introduction of a performance based CO₂ emissions target for all new building developments in excess of 10 dwellings or greater than 1,000m² floor area for non-residential and mixed developments.**
- **SD5: New housing should be energy efficient in relation to siting and design. The use of renewable resources and alternative energy will be encouraged.**
- **SD6: Development will be required to provide the necessary waste recycling facilities within the SELAP area.**



10.2 Residential

The following are the specific development policies for housing within the SELAP area:

- **R1: In the residential zonings identified in this LAP, the policy will be to primarily provide for residential development; incorporating the preservation and improvement of residential amenity of existing and new occupiers, facilitating provision of dwellings and compatible uses including social and community facilities, open spaces and local shopping facilities.**
- **R2: All new residential development shall comply with the phased development approach of this plan, as set out in Section 8.9, thus providing high quality residential layouts.**
- **R3: Provide for a range and mix of house types, size and tenure to meet varying house needs.**
- **R4: New residential development densities shall normally be expected at a maximum of 35 dwellings per a hectare, and in accordance with the Government's emerging document, 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (May 2009)**
- **R5: Opportunities will, where appropriate, be encouraged to redevelop existing low density housing sites within the SELAP lands for higher densities, provided suitable access can be secured and in appropriate locations, with consideration of the residential amenity of adjacent occupiers.**
- **R6: All new residential development on zoned lands residential shall be required to comply with Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, in terms of the provision of Social and Affordable housing. This rate is 20% of the overall development, and the breakdown of this 20%**



into Social and Affordable Housing will be determined by the existing concentration of social housing as specified in the revised Longford County Housing Strategy 2007-2016. In order to promote and facilitate social integration it is an objective to ensure that social and affordable housing is spread throughout the SELAP lands.

- **R7:** Any infill development will be required to ensure the residential amenity of adjacent occupiers is protected. There should be a strong emphasis on high quality design in order to ensure this occurs, whilst allowing higher density where appropriate. Infill development will be expected to take into account the existing context. However new development is not expected to continue historical low density forms of development or necessarily follow traditional design.
- **R8:** It is the policy that 15% useable open space be provided in new developments or contribute towards the maintenance or the assembly of lands for a larger public park for the benefit of the settlement as a whole. All open space shall be landscape designed as part of the development and provided with woodland areas and walks linked to other areas of public open space.
- **R9:** Facilitate the provision of housing for those with special needs, such as elderly people and those with disabilities, through for example the provision of sheltered housing. The integration of such housing provision into developments located near services and community facilities will be encouraged.
- **R10:** Encourage and promote energy efficient homes through the use of alternative and renewable sources of energy where appropriate.

10.3 Transport and Services Infrastructure

Transport Infrastructure



The following are the specific development policies for transport infrastructure within the SELAP area:

- **TI1: A Land Use and Transportation Study (LUTS) for Longford Town and Environs is currently being prepared and will contain details of the alignment of long term link roads and distributor roads, e.g. proposed N4/N63 Link Road in relation to SELAP area and proposed Distributor Road within the lands, defined. The alignments/route corridors of these future roads will have to be preserved.**
- **TI2: All future road improvements within the SELAP area will be coordinated with the lands and carried out as the area develops, including road widening (facilitating footpaths) and road realignment works. Care will be required in the design of residential layouts to ensure that while provision is made for vehicular access, roads and traffic do not dominate. The layout and detailed design of road infrastructure will give consideration to vehicle flows, emergency access, traffic-calming measures and public transport service provision.**
- **TI3: To allow access to residential zoned land within this SELAP and the identified Strategic Land Reserve, appropriate access works will be required to facilitate a safe and secure access to the lands.**
- **TI4: Undertaking of a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) within the SELAP area to estimate the potential traffic impact of future development within. A TIA will also be required for major individual developments within the lands.**
- **TI5: Promote permeable, secure, legible and connective links through planned new development allowing ease of access within the neighbourhood for walking and cycling and co-ordinate the provision of road, cycle and pedestrian networks and infrastructure to new residential areas.**



- **TI6: Provide adequate car and cycle parking facilities in all new developments in accordance with sections 5.1.2 – 5.1.3 of the Longford County Development Plan/section 5.1 of the Longford Town Development Plan in liaison with the County Council Roads Department.**

Services infrastructure

The following are the specific development policies for services infrastructure within the SELAP area:

- **S1: Development will be required to be appropriately and permanently serviced, including by suitable waste water, water supply and sewer network facilities.**
- **S2: Development should ensure the application of SUDS throughout the Plan Area, based on the surface water drainage catchments and watercourses identified within the LAP, in order to reduce surface water runoff generated by hard surfacing in new development and protect streams and associated habitats as ecological, visual and recreational resources.**
- **S3: Surface water runoff from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and will generally not exceed 2l/s/ha, with any excess runoff being attenuated on site. Methods that can be used include at source, conveyance and pipe end systems, as appropriate to the hydrology, topography and development proposed**
- **S4: The existing streams within the LAP should be protected as follows:**
 - **Restore and reinstate streams or portions of streams that have been filled in or covered over as part of new developments.**
 - **Culverting of the streams should be restricted.**
 - **There will be a general minimum 6m wide buffer on either side of streams to protect these watercourse and associated habitats.**



Additional areas should be incorporated as required to provide for attenuation, habitat conservation, etc.

- **S5:** Once new and emerging OPW (Office of Public Works) flood maps become available they will be incorporated into the LAP and, where necessary, the content of the plan will be amended to reflect this new information. This will include mapping the areas prone to flooding, their inclusion within the ecological network/sustainable urban drainage system for the LAP and any associated amendment of land use proposals considered necessary.
- **S6:** All planning applications for developments consisting of more than single, one-off houses to be accompanied by a hydrological report and SUDS proposal.
- **S7:** All proposed developments within the SELAP lands should take into account the effect of climate change in determining the design floor levels to accommodate the potential impact of global warming.
- **S8:** In line with Longford Local Authorities planning guidelines for new developments, runoff from all the new development sites must be attenuated.

10.4 Built Environment

The following are the specific development policies for the built environment within the SELAP area:

- **BE1:** Protect and enhance the character of protected structures and monuments or any buildings and/or monuments worthy of protection.
- **BE2:** Resist development that would adversely affect the setting and character of a protected structure.



- **BE3: Retain ringforts in their natural state, and carry out monitoring and testing in relation to proposed new development in the vicinity.**
- **BE4: For appropriate sites within the SELAP lands in the vicinity of the sites of recognised archaeological importance, a full archaeological assessment which shall include test excavations shall be submitted to the planning authority. Applicants will be expected to liaise with the Council and seek advice from the National Monuments Service in the Department for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.**

10.5 Natural Environment

The following are the specific development policies for the natural environment within the SELAP area:

- **NE1: Retain roadside boundaries and natural vegetation features where possible in terms of visual amenity and biodiversity. Existing feature vegetation (e.g. groups of trees, shrubs, hedgerows, etc.) should be integrated into any new development wherever possible. Exception will be made for removal of above for the purposes of road visibility, safety, etc. with replanting/strengthening of existing stands of vegetation being a requirement.**
- **NE2: Protect views and important view corridors, as identified with the SELAP, the Longford County Development Plan (2009-2015) and the Longford Town Development Plan (2009-2015).**
- **NE3: Seek to provide open space and recreation facilities in the SELAP area by:**
 - **Creating a network of open spaces, and creating connectivity between these to form a nature wildlife corridor;**
 - **Securing open space requirements through the Development Management process when assessing planning applications;**
 - **Securing a contribution towards the landscaping of public open space and the creation of recreational facilities in association**



with the development of nearby residential, industrial or commercial development.

- **NE4: Landscaping plans will be required with all large-scale applications with a particular emphasis on landscaping and screening on Greenfield sites proposed for redevelopment.**

10.6 Local Economy, Employment and Enterprise

The following are the specific development policies for the local economy, employment and enterprise within the SELAP area:

- **LE1: Facilitate the continuity, and encourage the expansion, of established enterprises having regard to residential amenity of existing dwellings.**
- **LE2: Encourage distinct, yet complementary, roles for urban and rural areas in the form of agri-tourism, fishing holidays, city farm, etc.**
- **LE3: Permit small scale retail units commensurate with the scale and size of a neighbourhood, serving a local area and need only.**

10.7 Community and Education Facilities

The following are the specific development policies for the natural environment within the SELAP area:

- **CE1: Apply the Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG 2001) where development proposals will require the provision of appropriate purpose built childcare facilities.**
- **CE2: facilitate and promote the expansion and improvement of educational facilities as appropriate and required in appropriate locations within the SELAP lands.**



11 URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

11.1 Introduction

This draft Local Area Plan seeks to provide a framework of uses within the Longford Southern Environs which provides a sustainable, incremental and logical expansion of the town. A key objective of the SELAP is to provide quality pedestrian, public transport and vehicular improvement works and a range of appropriate house types within a framework of high quality design.

This emphasis on urban design as a key objective of the SELAP is reflected in this chapter. The Urban Design Framework Strategy establishes the general principles and strategies that are proposed for the Longford southern environs. The overall aim of the strategy will be to achieve a flexible and realistic framework for the growth of Longford, which should be sustainable and logical. It is also an objective of the SELAP to ensure the growth of Longford is focused on the pedestrian, facilities public transport, and where possible, reduces the need to travel altogether.

This objective is also a key aim of the Department for the Environment's document, *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*⁵, which recommends the following in relation to urban form:

'Priority should be given to connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists and the potential for car-free developments should be actively considered. New interventions such as the creation of new streets or infill redevelopment of backlands might be identified. An analysis of urban form can also identify features worthy of integration and/or re-use in new development. (Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, p.13)

The overall aim of the SELAP will be to achieve a flexible, realistic and logical framework for growth with an emphasis on high quality design.

⁵ Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Consultation guidelines for Planning Authorities, May 2009, Department for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government



11.2 Primary Design Objectives

To create a clear edge/development boundary to the town

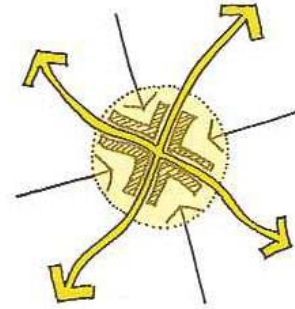
As outlined in section 3.2, the SELAP lands can be divided into three character areas, as referenced previously:

- Character Area 1 - Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw Character area, to the north east of the SELAP lands;
- Character Area 2 - Aghafad Character Area, to the north west of the SELAP lands;
- Character Area 3 - Rural Character Area, to the south of the SELAP lands

Due to historic forms of development, including ribbon development, over time the tendency is for the boundaries between these Character areas, and more generally between the town and countryside within the subject lands, to merge and dilute into an undefined single component which negates the objective of establishing areas of 'distinct uniqueness'. There is a clear objective within the SELAP to provide delineated boundaries, and where possible to create 'logical boundaries', to reflect features on the ground that can be easily identified forming clearly identifiable and justified edges to the urban environment.

To increase accessibility and permeability

One of the key identified weaknesses of the SELAP lands is the lack of pedestrian and cycle facilities in the SELAP lands (See SWOT analysis, table 3.1). A key design tenet of this SELAP is to provide both a 'walkable' environment within the identified development areas and excellent pedestrian connections into the town centre. The areas considered suitable for development within this SELAP are within close proximity of the town centre and associated services and facilities. There are opportunities to encourage and exploit this proximity.



Effective solutions attempt to create pedestrian and public transport-orientated centres

A pedestrian-friendly approach with increased permeability

Source: Urban Design Compendium, English Partnerships

To enhance the arrival into Longford, particularly from the east

The SELAP lands contain highly visible potential development sites along the Dublin Road, and by rail, into Longford. There are excellent opportunities to enhance the 'arrival experience' into the town through the provision of a series of potential gateway locations and landmark buildings signalling a distinctive entrance to the SELAP lands. Such locations for possible landmark buildings could include along the frontage of the residential zoning north of the Dublin Road and south of the railway line. These areas will require a particularly high standard of design in any event given their visual prominence, and a landmark development or developments may be appropriate, provided any such development is appropriate for its context and taking into account existing residential estates and roads adjacent to these lands.

To provide a logical, incremental and sustainable expansion of Longford

The identified zonings within the SELAP provide development within close proximity to Longford town centre which adheres to infrastructural development constraints while maximising opportunities offered by existing land banks within the town itself. Higher level, visually prominent lands with identified view corridors within the SELAP area are not considered suitable for development. Accordingly, the expansion of



Longford is anticipated to be based on sound sustainability and urban design principles.

The Strategic Land Reserve identified within the SELAP allows for a further logical phased area of development which may be required in the future. Historic development forms within the Rural Character Area have been in the form of ribbon development and one off housing. This SELAP recognises that one-off housing will still be appropriate in certain circumstances.

However, the traditional higher levels of one-off housing and ribbon developments to the south of Longford will, in general terms, be restricted in favour of more sustainable urban development forms which are less reliant on the car and offer opportunities to more easily facilitate viable public transport modes and pedestrian movement to services and facilities.

11.3 Urban Design – Key tenets

As defined in the document Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas, prepared by the Department for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 'urban design' relates to the creation and maintenance of successful places.

The document outlines the defining qualities of successful urban places as a sense of place, ease of movement, legibility, quality of the public realm, variety, efficiency, inclusivity and adaptability (para. 3.1).

At the local level, the Longford Town Development Plan states that a proactive approach to urban design will be taken and 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 (Longford Development Plan 4.3.6).

Planning authorities should plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Good design should contribute



positively to making places better for people. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions, should not be accepted.

Taking these key urban design objectives into account, the following general principles will be required to guide development within the SELAP area:

Urban Realm:

The urban realm can be defined as public and private spaces, and the interface between these. The SELAP lands include residential and educational (social and community) zonings. The urban realm will be an important factor if high quality design is to be reflected within these designations. There should be clear definition between spaces within the public realm in order to create 'defensible space'. This can be defined as an attempt to control and mitigate antisocial behaviour and/or crime through environmental design.

Certain factors have been isolated which can help to establish 'defensible space', in particular a hierarchy of stepping stone spaces spanning from the public realm to the private. These spaces act as filters progressively inducing a sense of intrusion for a person approaching a private space.

The urban realm hierarchy is composed of:

- Public space: - e.g. the street, the public realm.
- Semi-public/ Semi-private space: - e.g. a courtyard or entrance lobby, a corridor or 'front garden'.
- Private space: - e.g. front door and interior, and rear garden of house.

Clear delineation between these hierarchical levels will avoid the creation of unusable space, over which there could be ambiguity or indifference in relation to ownership or maintenance.



Overlooked footpaths provide crucial passive surveillance



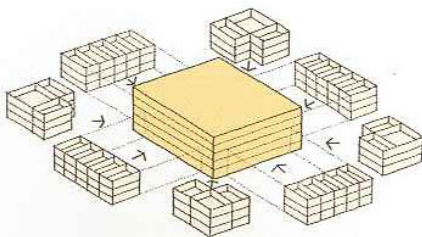
Source: Urban Design Compendium, English Partnerships

Urban Grain:

Urban Grain can be defined as the pattern of the arrangement of street blocks, plots and their buildings within a settlement. Fine grained developments result in small and frequent plot divisions. Course grain developments have large blocks and less frequent subdivisions.

Given the existing rural character of the majority of the SELAP lands, and the small scale residential blocks prevalent throughout each of the three identified character areas (see section 3.2), a fine grain development will generally be required for residential development within the lands.

Creating developments where access and circulation are well designed will often naturally contribute to a fine-grain network of direct and connected routes within and beyond the site, rather than creating big blocks. In designing for these connected streets care should be taken to avoid undermining the security and 'defensible space' of particular neighbourhoods (see Urban Realm, above). Active frontages should predominate where possible at ground level, which would allow a more inviting and secure pedestrian environment.



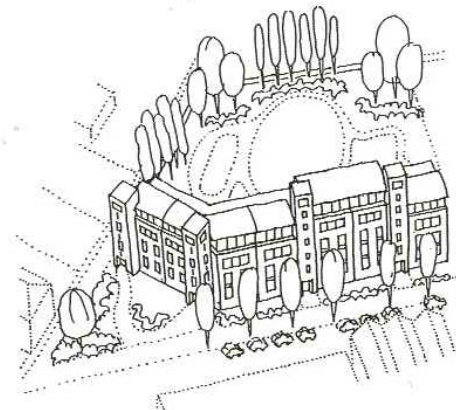
Larger boxy units can be effectively wrapped by smaller units to create active frontages

Source: Urban Design Compendium, English Partnerships



Legible Design and Permeability:

The legibility of urban areas has been defined as the ease with which its parts can be recognised and organised into a coherent pattern – in essence how easily an area can be ‘read’ and navigated. A legible structure of streets and buildings should link the southern environs into adjacent developments and amenities such as the town centre, public open space, amenity areas within the residential character area and other adjacent residential areas easily and logically. The permeability of the area will be promoted by making places that connect with each other and are easy to move through, creating walkable environments which integrate land uses and transport.



Car free urbanism with clear demarcation of public and private open space

Source: Urban Design Compendium, English Partnerships

Visual Analysis:

Whilst the key viewpoints within the SELAP lands are identified in both the Longford Town Development Plan and the Longford County Development Plan, and echoed within this document, each individual development site will require initial visual analysis if there are any identified view corridors, vistas or key viewpoints that will need to be analysed within detailed development proposals. Visual impact is examined at section 3.2 of the SELAP.

Green and Amenity Spaces:

Both the Longford County Development Plan and the Longford Town Development Plan require open space to be provided at a minimum rate of 15% of the total site area. As well as providing the minimum quantitative standards, a strong emphasis on the quality of the open space will be paramount, particularly in relation to the



following best practice, as identified in the government's document: Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas:

- **Design:** The layout and facilities – particularly in larger parks – should be designed to meet a range of user needs, including both active and passive recreation. Users should feel safe at all times within parks; adequate supervision, passive surveillance, boundary treatment and public lighting contribute to creating a sense of security. Public open spaces should be suitably proportioned; narrow tracts which are difficult to manage should not be acceptable. Materials should be chosen for their durability.
- **Accessibility:** Local parks should be located to be within not more than 10 minutes' walk of the majority of homes in the area; they should also, where possible, be on public transport routes as well as pedestrian/cycle paths. Larger open spaces should also be 'linked' to one another. Playgrounds should be carefully sited within residential areas so that they are both easily accessible and overlooked by dwellings, while not causing a nuisance to nearby residents.
- **Shared use:** The potential for maximising the use of open space facilities (such as all-weather pitches) should be explored, for example, by sharing them with nearby schools.
- **Biodiversity:** Public open spaces, especially larger ones, can provide for a range of natural habitats and can facilitate the preservation of flora and fauna.



Larger open spaces linked in a green network

Source: Urban Design Compendium, English Partnerships



Although yet to be determined, the special Development Contribution Scheme which will be prepared for the SELAP lands may provide a mechanism for funding the provision of larger open spaces within residential areas, whereas smaller public open space should normally be provided as part of housing developments.

Local Landmarks:

Landmarks are point references within the landscape, of varying scale. Given the context of the SELAP lands, it is unlikely to be appropriate to provide large scale local landmarks. Specific to the subject lands, there is an opportunity to provide a high quality local landmark building or buildings on the approach to the centre, from the N4, along Dublin Road. These local landmarks will need to be placed in the context of the low rise eastern area of Longford, typified by one and two storey residential buildings and relatively low density development forms. If appropriate, these landmarks should be well used civic buildings. This would help with the legibility of the town and help signify the arrival 'experience' into Longford.

Sense of Identity:

The area has been divided into three distinct character areas. Development within these areas will require a different design response, particularly between the rural character area and the more urban character areas of Kilnasavogue/Knockahaw and Aghafad.

Developments will be expected to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development and landscapes. Development that responds sensitively to the site and its setting, by contrast, is likely to create a place that is valued and pleasing to the eye –for example, the development of the residential area adjacent to the SLR will need to respond to the existing ribbon development adjacent to it and create a separate sense of identity or place to that found, for example, closer to Longford town centre.

Detailing:

The richness of a building lies in its use of materials which contribute to the attractiveness of its appearance and the character of an area and sense of identity



(see above). The quality of detail is particularly important at ground floor level, where people see it close at hand.

Generally, as advocated by the County and Town Development Plans, design should be of a high standard, yet simple, with a minimum of different materials, finishes and detailing. Local materials should be utilised wherever possible and use of renewable energy and resources will be encouraged.



Active frontages onto open spaces provides overlooking

Source: Urban Design Compendium, English Partnerships



12 IMPLEMENTATION

12.1 How the SELAP will be Implemented

The Longford South East Environs LAP has set out a phased, logical, sustainable and incremental growth strategy for Longford Town based on identified infrastructural constraints and opportunities. This strategy is considered to incorporate the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

There are many issues set out in the LAP for Longford South East Environs over which the Longford Town and County Councils would have no direct responsibility or control. Whilst the Councils will fully endeavour to facilitate the provision of social, community and transport infrastructure, it is not in all instances the direct provider of such services.

Resource implementation requires consultation with Government and Non-Government organisations and individuals.

12.2 Special Development Contribution Scheme

The Planning and Development Act 2000 provides for the adoption of a development contribution scheme. Some exceptions apply to certain development under the contribution scheme and contribution cannot be levied, for example, in regard to existing properties and in respect of residential units which are provided in accordance with an agreement made under Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 or those provided by approved housing bodies.

Section 48 (2) of the Act outlines that a planning authority may, 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 Council, for public infrastructure and facilities which benefit the proposed development.

Prior to planning applications coming forward for the SELAP lands, and based on the identified phasing scheme, it is an objective of the Local Planning Authority to



prepare a 'Special Development Contribution Scheme' report for the SELAP area. The Special Development Contribution Scheme report will specify the financial contributions developers will be expected to pay for the provision of new distributor roads, water services infrastructure, Class 1 public open space, expansion of the areas physical infrastructure, the expansion of utilities and the provision of schools.

12.3 Monitoring

The Councils will keep all matters which affect development and the planning of development under regular review. This is particularly relevant in respect of new and timetabled infrastructure provision. Monitoring is an essential part of the overall development plan process. There is a requirement therefore, to monitor and evaluate the extent to which the SELAP is being implemented and the effectiveness of its policies and proposals, particularly in relation to sustainability. In addition, the assumptions and forecasts which underpin the SELAP will require continued assessment to detect any fundamental changes which impact upon the policies within the SELAP.

12.4 Pre-planning advice

Longford County and Town Council offers an advisory service to potential developers in the form of pre-planning advice. Advice is given on general planning and design, and the ability of existing services to accommodate the proposed development. This advice is given subject to the stipulations of Section 247 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, where the carrying out of consultants shall not prejudice the performance of a planning authority in any of its functions. The service is available from the earliest stage of a proposed development project and intending developers are recommended to avail of the service and to contact the relevant Local Authority for information and an appointment.



13 APPENDIX 1 - POPULATION FIGURES

Projection of Population for Longford County and Longford Town and Environs from 2007 to 2020

Year	Longford County Population - Total	Longford Town & Environs Population - Total	Longford Town as a % of Longford County
1996	30,166	6,444	21.36%
2002	31,068	6,831	21.99%
2006	34,391	7,612	22.13%
2007	34,966	7,811	22.34%
2008	35,551	8,017	22.55%
2009	36,145	8,227	22.76%
2010	36,749	8,441	22.97%
2011	37,364	8,661	23.18%
2012	37,989	8,886	23.39%
2013	38,624	9,115	23.60%
2014	39,270	9,346	23.80%
2015	39,926	9,583	24.00%
2016	40,594	9,742	24.00%
2017	41,272	9,905	24.00%
2018	41,962	10,071	24.00%
2019	42,664	10,239	24.00%
2020	43,377	10,411	24.00%

Figures based on KSA Population Analysis undertaken as part of Longford County Council Housing Strategy 2009-2015



14 APPENDIX 2 - SITES AND MONUMENTS IN AND ADJACENT TO THE SELAP LANDS

SITES AND MONUMENT RECORD

SMR Number	Classification	Townland
LF013 - 039	Ringfort - Rath	FARNAGH
LF013 - 035	Ringfort - Rath	FARNAGH/GARVAGH
LF013 - 034	Church Possible	AGHAFAD
LF013 - 034001	Ecclesiastical Enclosure	AGHAFAD
LF013 - 034002	Cross Pillar	AGHAFAD
LF013 - 033	Ringfort - Rath	FARRANYOOGON
LF013 - 044	Ringfort - Rath	LISDUFF/ARDAGH
LF013 - 043	Ringfort - Rath	LISDUFF/ARDAGH
LF014 - 062	Ringfort - Rath	BALLYMAKEEGAN
LF014 - 061	Ringfort - Rath	BALLYMAKEEGAN
LF014 - 063	Ringfort - Rath	FERAGHFAD
LF014 - 064	Ringfort - Rath	FERAGHFAD
LF014 - 065	Enclosure	FERAGHFAD
LF014 - 066	Ringfort - Rath	FERAGHFAD
LF014 - 118	Ritual Site Holywell	FERAGHFAD
LF014 - 028	Ringfort - Rath	KILNASAVOGE
LF014 - 026	Enclosure	KNOCKASHAW
LF014 - 058	Ringfort - Rath	FARNAG GUASK

15 APPENDIX 3 – MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS FROM NICHOLAS O'DWYER LTD. 'DESIGN REVIEW REPORT – LONGFORD SOUTH EASTERN ENVIRONS DRAINAGE' (P.18/19)



5.2 Recommendations

The recommended improvement works from the 1999 Drainage Assessment Report are as follows:

- 1) Lay approximately 193m of 1200mm pipe in parallel with the existing 24m of twin 900mm pipe at Chainage 139 and the existing 139m of twin 1200mm pipe running to the outfall at the River Camlin.
- 2) Provide twin 900mm pipe culverts at the Government Offices in Springlawn from approximately 100m to approximately 290m along Ardnacassagh Avenue to connect into the road culvert on Major's Well Road. The existing 900-1050mm pipe culvert that runs from outside the Government Offices to the road culvert is to be maintained. This is required because of the lack of hydraulic capacity in the existing arrangement, however, the twin 900mm pipes could be extended upstream to the railway bridge if blockages in the open channel are affecting the performance of the drainage system.
- 3) Replace existing 600mm pipe section through Ardnacassagh housing estate with a new 900 mm pipeline. This is between Chainage 1351 m (Station 240) and Chainage 1573 m (Station 257). The existing 600mm pipe is in poor condition.
- 4) The screening arrangement located at the entrance to each of the culverted sections of drain should be investigated and replaced where necessary.
- 5) Both the culverted and open channel section of drain should be thoroughly cleaned out.