

Red Cow Design & Planning Limited Trading As
CUNNINGHAM DESIGN & PLANNING
Consulting Engineers

Block C
N4 Axis Centre
Longford
Co. Longford

Tel: 043 33 40450
Mob: 087 850 9554
Email: mark@cunninghamdp.ie
Website: www.cunninghamdp.ie

Date: 06/01/2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Zoning Submission For Existing Lands At Newtownforbes, Co. Longford For John Mahon. (Folio No. LD3038F).

I refer to the above and I wish to inform the relevant parties that I as Chartered Engineer and Assigned Certifier am familiar with the above-mentioned property and I attach in *Appendix A* a screen shot from Land Direct which shows Mr. John Mahon's landholding at this location. In addition please find attached in *Appendix B* the relevant Draft Zoning Map of Newtownforbes for the proposed County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 which shows the lands in question outlined in blue and denoted with the letter "A" for ease of reference.

It is our professional opinion that the lands in question should be zoned "New Residential" instead of "Strategic Residential Reserve" because The National Planning Framework identifies the 'Midlands Regional Area' which includes Longford as an important strategic growth area: "*It central location in Ireland can be leveraged to enable significant strategic investment to a greater extent than at present, supported by a sustainable pattern of population growth, with a focus on strategic national employment and infrastructure development, quality of life and a strengthening of the urban core of the county towns and other principal settlements*".

Within this, Athlone is identified as the primary regional centre which acts as focal point for large geographical areas in its hinterland. It is earmarked for significant capacity to grow sustainably, secure investment for and work positively with adjacent interdependent areas.

National Policy Objective 3a states it is the intention of the government to concentrate a sizable proportion of development in existing settlements:

“Deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements”.

Section 4.5 underlines the importance of achieving urban infill/brownfield development, which is formalised under National Policy Objective 11:

“In meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth”. It is our professional opinion that since Newtownforbes is located within 2-3Km of Longford Town and with an excellent road infrastructure that Newtownforbes is therefore ideally situated.

Alongside the above, the subject site constitutes ‘Infill’ land. The National Planning Framework emphasises the importance of developing such land to realise compact growth. Section 4.5 of the framework states that this principle is *“applicable to all scales of settlement, from largest city, to the smallest village”*. As outlined in the policy section above, national objective 11 states categorically that there is a presumption in favour of developing such lands within existing settlements. Allied to this by rezoning the lands ‘*New Residential*’ will also contribute directly to regeneration and rejuvenation objectives in the National Planning Framework which underline the importance of using as of yet undeveloped land with development potential in urban areas to deliver affordable homes and the creation of mixed-use communities.

HOUSING DEMAND

There is demand for new housing locally. A review of market reports confirms a year-on-year increase in average house prices of 19% in County Longford in 2017¹. Average housing rents increased by 7.8% over the same period². Newtownforbes also has an important role to play in offsetting demand for urban-generated rural housing in the hinterland of the town

Further, demand for future development in Newtownforbes will be driven directly by the contents of the National Planning Framework which identifies the ‘Midlands Regional Area’ which includes Longford as strategically important. Athlone is identified as a primary regional growth centre which acts as focal point for large geographical areas in its hinterland.

It is earmarked for significant capacity to grow, secure investment for and work positively with adjacent interdependent areas. Newtownforbes is approximately 48 km from Athlone. The continued maintenance and consolidation of growth in Newtownforbes will ensure it is best placed to deliver on this potential.

¹ The Daft.ie House Price Report, Q4 2017

² The Daft.ie Rental Price Report, Q4 2017

At a highest level, accelerating delivery of housing for the private, social and rented sectors is a key priority for the Government. Ensuring sufficient stable and sustained provision of housing that is affordable, in the right locations, meets people's different needs and is of lasting quality is identified as one of the greatest challenges facing the country at present. *'Rebuilding Ireland – Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness'* gives effect to the Government objective "to ramp up delivery of housing from its current under-supply across all tenures to help individuals and families meet their housing needs". This Plan sets ambitious targets to double the annual level of residential construction to 25,000 homes and deliver 47,000 units of social housing in the period to 2021. The location and suitability of the subject lands and by rezoning same "New Residential" will contribute positively to meeting this.

Should you require any further clarity then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



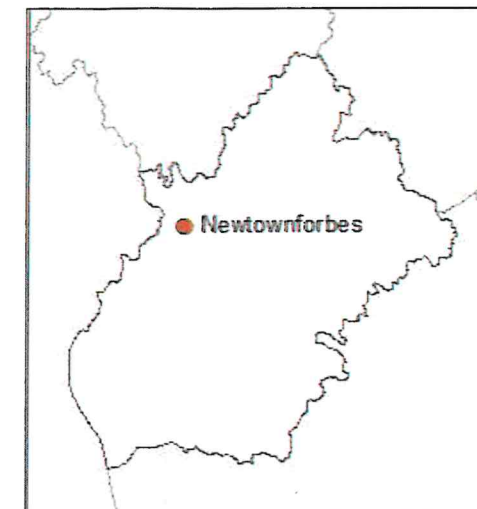
Signed: _____
Mark Cunningham, BEng, MSc, CEng, MIEI.

Appendix A

Appendix B

Newtownforbes Zoning Map

County Development Plan 2021-2027

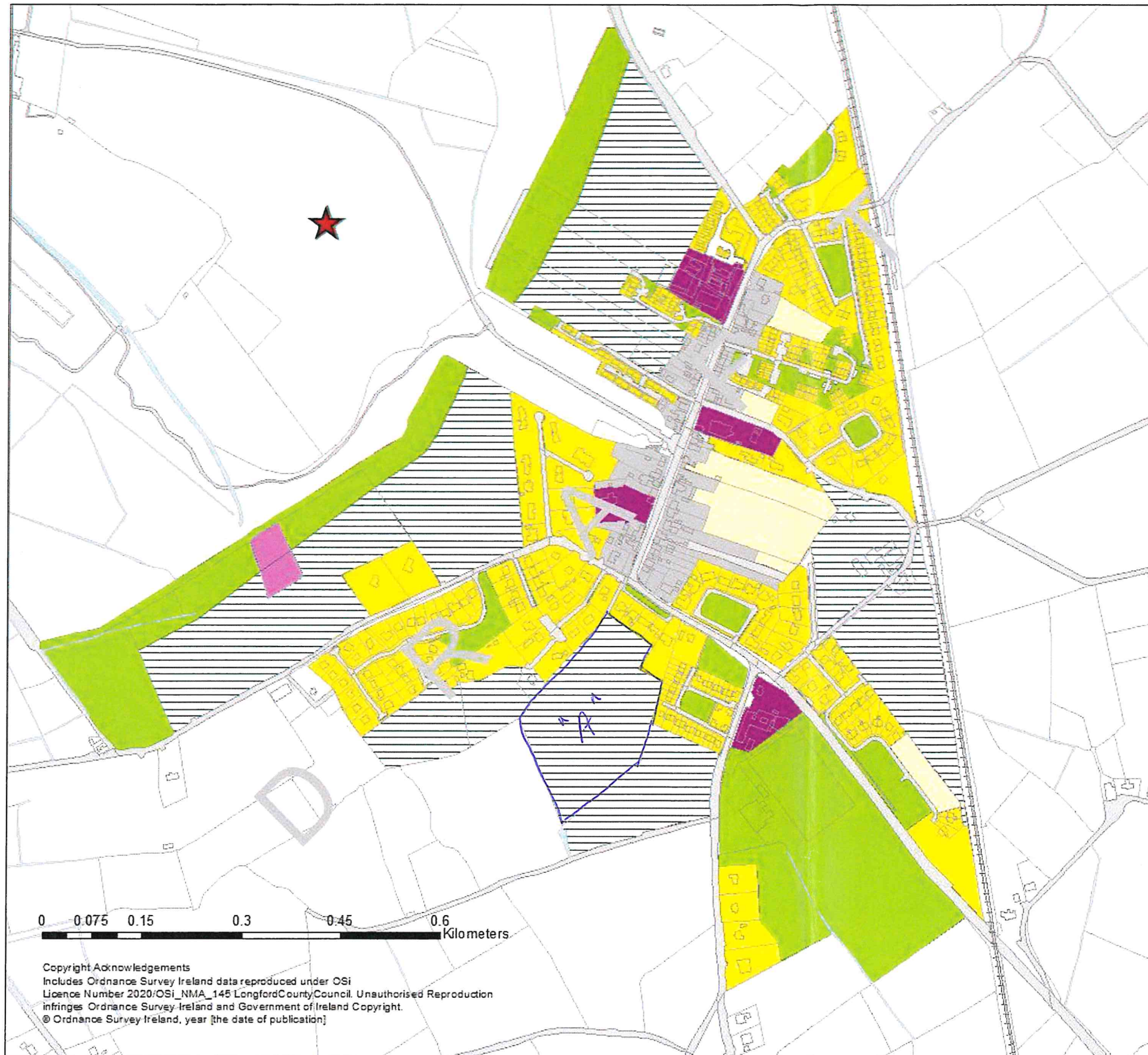
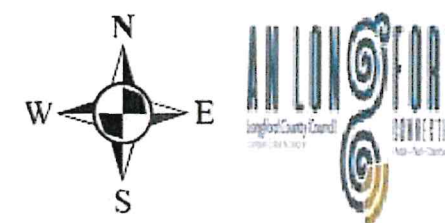


Legend

- New Residential
- Recreation/Amenity/Green Spaces
- Residential
- Site Resolution Objective
- Social/Community
- Social/Community/Education
- Strategic Residential Reserve
- Town Core
- Tourism & Events

Notes:
Please note that every effort has been made to include the latest version of Ordnance Survey mapping available.

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



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