

Sheila Healy

From: Terry Rooney
Sent: Wednesday 13 January 2021 16:09
To: cdp
Cc: Louise Kiernan; Donall Mac An Bheatha
Subject: FW: CDP response
Attachments: Chapter 6 - Regeneration response.docx; Chapter 7 - Placemaking response - DRAFT.docx; Longford regen.jpg; regen diagram copy.jpg; Zoning granard and lanesboro.docx

Categories: Red Category

Terry Rooney
 Head of Regeneration

Longford County Council
 Great Water Street, Longford. N39 NH56

043 3343404
 trooney@longfordcoco.ie



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From: Terry Rooney
Sent: 04 January 2021 12:14
To: Louise Kiernan <lkiernan@longfordcoco.ie>
Cc: Donall Mac An Bheatha <dmacanbheatha@longfordcoco.ie>; Aoife Moore <aoifem@longfordcoco.ie>; Lorraine O'Connor <laustin@longfordcoco.ie>; John McKeon <jmckeon@longfordcoco.ie>; John Brannigan <jbrannigan@longfordcoco.ie>; Iflynn <lflynn@longfordcoco.ie>
Subject: CDP response

Louise,

Please find attached:

- draft comments on CDP reviewed by the Regeneration Team.
- comments on chapters 6 & 7 as requested in previous correspondence.
- diagrams (as opposed to maps) illustrating holistic and combined approach to investment and connected project delivery as per text in respect of Longford Town and County.
- comments on zoning for Granard and Lanesboro.

Happy New Year.
 Kind Regards,
 Terry.

Terry Rooney
 Head of Regeneration

Longford County Council
Great Water Street, Longford. N39 NH56

043 3343404

trooney@longfordcoco.ie



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Tá an t-eolas sa ríomhphost seo, agus in aon cheangaltán leis, faoi phribhléid agus faoi rún agus le h-aghaidh an seolaí amháin. D'fhéadfadh ábhar an seoladh seo bheith faoi phribhléid proifisiúnta nó dlíthiúil. Mura tusa an seolaí a bhí beartaithe leis an ríomhphost seo a fháil, tá cosc air, nó aon chuid de, a úsáid, a chóipeál, nó a scaoileadh. Má tháinig sé chugat de bharr dearmad, téigh i dteagmháil leis an seoltóir agus scríos an t-ábhar ó do ríomhaire le do thoil.

Chapter 6: Regeneration

Read in conjunction with Placemaking

6.1 Introduction

Regeneration is a cross cutting theme of the Development Plan which contains a physical, social and economic dimension concerned with a coordinated approach to social economic and environmental development that, which in some cases may overlap aligns with policy at all levels under the overarching framework of the UN sustainable development Goals (SDGs). This Development Plan for the achievement of regeneration aims to tackle address long-term problems associated with of population decline physical dereliction, vacancy and a stagnation in the urban and rural environment associated with and compounded by a lack of available investment over several plan periods. Overlapping with and physical dereliction in an integrated and cross-cutting way, through several policy areas, regeneration looks at barriers to sustainable development in a holistic way, including integrated land use and socio-economic measures interventions to address these physical, economic, social and environmental problems associated with dereliction and decay in collaboration with key stakeholders from EU and government departments to private investors, NGO's and local communities. Regeneration interventions to date have worked in this way delivering projects across the urban realm and accessible placemaking, heritage preservation and awareness, tourism and amenity development, Climate Action, biodiversity enhancement and healthy communities. Measures to overcome substantive barriers to development such as new infrastructure provision, environmental enhancement and site assembly will be considered, along with the promotion of a multi-sector partnership approach involving the planning authority, other public agencies and business and community interests.

Flexibility in the application of zoning and development management policies and standards, will be considered in order to ensure that rRegeneration initiatives developed since the inception of the unit in 2015 work within existing planning frameworks and this plan will incorporate flexibility to ensure that this process is promoted rather than inhibited. Focussed funding streams will continue to be targeted and aligned with, while having due regard to t specific requirements, such as the need to protect structures and areas of architectural merit, including in the context of their broader setting and through the identification of appropriate and sustainable new uses for such buildings, under the Urban Regeneration and Development fund, Town and Villlage Renewal and Tourism funding streams, and those located in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and the rRemediation of contaminated and/or degraded lands will also be considered through the just transition and other processes. Initiatives will be supported through the application of available mechanisms such as the Vacant Site Levy, Derelict Sites Legislation and Compulsory purchase where required and appropriate.

In terms of funding support the Development Plan has identified and outlined a particular development strategy which can be formulated into more specific regeneration projects, and which encompass a number of elements aimed at enabling

'compact growth'. Areas in need of regeneration have been identified as the core areas of towns identified in tier 1-4 of the settlement hierarchy (section X) that fit the criteria outlined in the Act. Longford County Council will prioritise these areas and apply available mechanisms outlined throughout this chapter in order to create conditions that promote investment and support Compact Urban Growth. These include specific investment in infrastructure to support development, site assembly, land acquisition, and sustainable transport initiatives, aimed at activating town core areas and strategic sites that have been identified in the Development Plan. Regeneration also aims to provide balanced and sustainable benefit to smaller towns and villages throughout the hierarchy and ensure that this benefit is shared with rural hinterlands.

The current COVID—19 crisis has highlighted many issues that will be considered as part of the regeneration project development pipeline into the future. These include, but are not limited to the following and will be maintained under review over the course of programme development:

- The need for high quality, accessible outdoor amenity areas, particularly in Longford town in the vicinity of higher density housing areas and outdoor recreational facilities for children and adults of all ages and abilities
- The need to ensure safe pedestrian and cycle routes to essential services, shopping, education, health and childcare in particular
- The need to provide remote working facilities in rural areas with requisite supporting infrastructure such as high-speed broadband
- The potential for alternative uses within town cores and the need to rethink how these areas work in a post-covid future in terms of potential increased demand for space with a need for social distancing and/or less active town cores as more people work from home

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There are significant national and regional policy requirements, along with section 28 guidelines which relate with relevance to Regeneration. The Development Plan is underpinned by policies that are consistent with overarching relevant national and regional guidance and policies; the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), which place a new policy emphasis on renewing and developing existing urban settlements, in tandem with appropriate and balanced development in rural areas, set within the context of Climate Action.

6.2 Statutory Context

~~As per s~~Section 10(32)(h) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) ~~there is a requirement to include~~ sets out mandatory objectives in relation to regeneration. This requires that a development plan shall include objectives for

(h) the development and renewal of areas, identified having regard to the core strategy, that are in need of regeneration, in order to prevent –

(i) adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land,

(ii) Urban blight and decay

(iii) Anti-social behaviour, or

(iv) A shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use are a mixture of residential and other uses.

The requirements of S. 10 of the PDA are supported by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act (URHA), 2015 (as amended) at S.3, that sets out the following in relation to the designation of regeneration land for the application of the Vacant Sites Levy:

“regeneration land” means land identified by a planning authority in its development plan or local area plan, after the coming into operation of section 28, in accordance with section 10(2)(h) of the Act of 2000 with the objective of development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration, and includes any structures on such land;

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In respect of URHA S.3 above and for the purpose of this development plan, regeneration areas have been identified in tier 1-4 town core areas throughout the county (See Map Appendix XX), within which vacant sites can be designated on lands zoned for specific purposes (see S. 6.5.1.2). In Longford Town, Strategic Sites identified as part of the LAP are also designated as regeneration areas for the purposes of this section (See Map Appendix XX).

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Vacant sites will be identified within designated regeneration areas on appropriately zoned lands for the purpose of applying the Vacant site Levy under this legislation, based on the criteria outlined at S. 5 of the URHA:

5. (1) In this Part, a site is a vacant site if—

(b) in the case of a site consisting of regeneration land—

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(i) the site, or the majority of the site, is vacant or idle, and

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(ii) the site being vacant or idle has adverse effects on existing amenities or reduces the amenity provided by existing public infrastructure and facilities (within the meaning of section 48 of the Act of 2000) in the area in which the site is situated or has adverse effects on the character of the area.

The Vacant Site Levy is an important regeneration mechanism and is discussed further at Section 6.5 of this plan in the context of Land Activation.

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6.3 Policy Context

6.3.1 National Planning Framework (NPF) 2018

Regeneration and rejuvenation have been identified as central components in the delivery of compact growth the national strategic outcomes as set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) under project Ireland 2040. The focus nationally is on the regeneration of town and city centres and balancing this with growth in the rural economy, realising the potential of these areas in a holistic way, as a means of tackling address environmental degradation, climate change, social exclusion, and housing shortages, while working towards and improving quality of life.

At a national level, strong Links have been established between the national planning and development policy and available funding streams, consolidated into Project Ireland 2040, the central concepts of which are articulated in the national strategic outcomes. These concepts underpin the provisions of national investment and planning policy and are translated to a local level through the RSES and the subsequent alignment of CDPs and supporting plans. In this regard, Project Ireland is a coordination mechanism within which all government departments can work toward the achievement of identified goals, the strategic outcomes outlined above.

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The National Planning Framework highlights that the utilisation of public lands can act as a catalyst to stimulate regeneration and wider investment. One of the key policy priorities is the harnessing of publicly owned lands, including military sites, and combining the potential of such assets with community and wider private and public sector support and investment.

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The National Planning Framework also recognises the importance of regeneration to the strategic growth and renewal of our communities, through the establishment of a Regeneration and Development Fund, overseen by a new National Regeneration and Development Agency.

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Strategy (ORIS)- Town and village Renewal Scheme and other locally targeted funds also plays an important part engage for rural communities by providing funding supporting for the development of facilities that enhance local assets and promote a dynamic relationship between Rural and Urban economies. Projects delivered under these mechanisms to date include the development of tourism, amenity and new outdoor recreational infrastructure providing strategic connections to identified attractions and facilitating expanded national and regional green and blueway networks. Projects are considered in a holistic way to build on existing investment and ensure maximum impact (see Appendix XX). and for the necessary maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas across Ireland.

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Regeneration continues to engage with the funding streams associated with Project Ireland 2040, including the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) and the Climate Action Fund (CAF). The flexibility built into the regeneration work programme adapts to respond to these large scale funding calls that are reserved for transformational projects and announced on an intermittent basis, requiring a wide degree of flexibility in the Regeneration work programme.

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6.3.2 Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES)

The Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), sets out at a regional level to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the economic policies and objectives of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the development of the Eastern and Midland Region. This in turn further guides policy making decisions at a local level through the County Development Plan.

In terms of Regeneration the following Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSO's) are noted:

- RSO 2: Promote the regeneration of our cities, towns and villages by making better use of under-used land and buildings within the existing built-up urban footprint and to drive the delivery of quality housing and employment choice for the Region's citizens.
- RSO 3: Support sustainable rural development and strengthen rural networks, economies and communities. Manage urban generated growth in areas under strong urban influence and encourage sustainable growth in areas that have experienced decline or stagnation.
- RSO 5: Enhance, integrate and protect our arts, culture and heritage assets to promote creative places and heritage led regeneration.
- RSO 12: To build a resilient economic base and promote innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems that support smart specialisation, cluster development and sustained economic growth.
- RSO 16: Provide a regional framework for collaboration and partnerships and to support local and regional bodies in leveraging funding and partnership opportunities.

Accordingly, the County Development Plan has been aligned to the relevant Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) and associated relevant Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) as outlined below.

The RSES contain high level objectives to be incorporated into the County Development Plan. At a strategic level, the following are broad policy provisions outlining growth enablers for rural areas focus and guide the ongoing Regeneration work programme:

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- Renewables
- Recreation
- Tourism
- Integrated green/blue/peat-ways

These priorities continue to inform community-based tourism and amenity regeneration team, having been successful in securing funding and completing projects across the County under the various funding programmes. Urban and village renewal projects have also been carried out in support of the rural settlement hierarchy (see Map Appendix X).

Longford is designated a "Key" town under the RSES. Investment priorities are identified in relation to employment creation, services and amenities and sustainable transport in support of compact growth, town Core regeneration and connections with adjoining regions. Specific projects identified in the RSES have been the focus of regeneration initiatives within the Town to date and include:

- Development of the Camlin Quarter including Connolly Barracks, Church St. Great Water Street, Little Water Street onto the Albert Reynolds Peace Park,

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enhancing the public realm, investigation of potential land uses, landbank assembly and connectivity improvements

- Addressing barriers to development in the Ballyminion area, consulting with stakeholders in the public and private sector and Enterprise, infrastructure and planning departments on potential land activation measures.
- Creation of north-south linkages from the Canal to the Camlin River incorporating the Royal Canal Greenway and Albert Reynolds Peace Park, linking areas of tourism and amenity potential such as St. Mel's Cathedral and the Backstage Theater and their profile in relation to the Town Core.
- Creating an environment for investment in high quality residential development and supporting services and amenities such as schools, shops, recreation areas and open spaces.
- Measures to enhance investment opportunities in employment generation in conjunction with cross regional initiatives and enterprise innovation hub.
- Projects to promote social inclusion and community integration in conjunction with EU initiatives on Urban Security
- Promotion of access to sustainable transport and availability of alternative transport modes such as walking and cycling between strategic areas and services
- Promoting broadband availability to communities and the potential for remote working
- Initiatives to promote the expansion and sustainability of the Gas network in collaboration with Gas Networks Ireland
- Build on tourism investment in Center parcs and enhance Longford County as a destination, enhancing Royal Canal, Dublin-Westport Greenway, Shannon Wilderness Park and profile of Camlin River in Longford Town through strategic development of recreational trails and networks.

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6.3.3 *Action Plan for Rural Development: Realising our Rural Potential (GoI, 2018)*

The Action Plan for Rural Development contains a range of measures to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland under the Government's *Project Ireland 2040 Rural Regeneration Programme*. The *Town and Village Renewal Scheme* which was launched by the Government in 2016 is such a measure aimed at starting the process of rejuvenating Ireland's rural towns and villages to make them more attractive places in which to live, work and visit.

Commented [AM2]: Unsure of the need for this to be given a specific section other than a reference/footnote

6.3.4 *Framework for Town Centre Renewal (DBEI, 2017)*

This sets out key characteristics of a successful town centre and includes an Action Plan for Town Centre Renewal. These relate to the need to bring redundant, under-utilised and derelict land and buildings back into active use. It directly aligns with the principles of sustainable development by reducing the need for greenfield

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development, supporting the urban fabric and re-using existing resources. The Action Plan in this Framework will be a useful tool for towns and villages applying for funding under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. This document provides good 'health check' indicators on creating more vibrant town centres to include: -

- Accessibility
- Pedestrian Flows
- Environmental Quality
- Public Realm
- Diversity of Uses

A strong town centre would get a top mark in each of the aforementioned indicators. Regeneration should focus on working to develop a strong town core in the first instance, subsequently from the core to peripheral areas.

Commented [AM3]: This is dealt with at length in the placemaking section – s.28 guidance should possibly be prioritised?

6.3.5 *Draft County Longford Regeneration Strategy 2020* Longford Regeneration initiative

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This focuses on the following Thematic Priority Areas:-

1. Community-led Development and Capacity Building
2. Policy Alignment and Implementation
3. Coordination and implementation

Established in 2015, the regeneration section is tasked with the delivery of a wide range of projects and initiatives and securing funding for these through community-led development and capacity building, policy alignment and coordination and delivery. The following points summarise the main action areas of the section in support of:

- The provisions of the Core Strategy in securing the settlement hierarchy, ensuring that towns and villages are attractive places to live works and visit generating positive change in local communities
- Reversing town/village and rural population decline, by encouraging new roles and functions for buildings, streets and sites and promoting new economic opportunities through appropriate placemaking initiatives including targeted regeneration masterplanning for specific areas
- Compact and Sustainable Growth - encouraging compact forms of development that that focus on consolidating the footprint of existing settlements with new development.
- Integration of sustainable and climate action policies, the national transition objective and the Just transition process
- Strong stakeholder engagement through established Town Teams and other vehicles to maximise a bottom-up approach
- Protecting environmental and heritage assets, encouraging access, awareness conservation and preservation as appropriate

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A number of future projects have also been identified which have been incorporated into Development Plan Policy Objectives.

6.4 Regeneration Typology

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There are many different types of regeneration, which are discussed accordingly: -

1. Compact Growth Urban Regeneration (Housing)
2. Economic Urban Regeneration
3. Heritage Urban Regeneration
4. Rural Regeneration

Commented [AM4]: Are these typologies mandatory? The formatting of the section based on these serves to divide rather than integrate approaches and results in significant repetition of objectives

6.4.1 Compact Growth Urban Regeneration (Housing)

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One of the key elements of the NPF relates to the need for compact growth, with housing development within and close to existing built-up areas and a focus on the regeneration of infill and brownfield sites.¹ The NPF and EMRA RSES identifies 'Compact Growth' as the means to deliver sustainable growth in our urban settlements through consolidation, rather than the continued sprawl of urban development into the countryside, at the expense of town centres and smaller villages. Compact Growth is focused on the following types of urban sites, many of which incorporate a significant element of regeneration:

Commented [AM5]: •Why is this restricted to housing? A mix of uses is required to create an attractive environment for investment which includes housing. CUG is provided for in regeneration and more specifically, VSL in an overall regeneration sense (mixed use, housing where appropriate – as per proposed variation no.5) which is more suited to a Longford situation to avoid over-proliferation of usually single tenure housing that is not conducive to town centre placemaking. Objectives here would appear to relate to housing and development management standards in a general sense rather than regeneration.

- *Brownfield Sites* - Any land which has been subjected to building, engineering or other operations excluding temporary uses or urban green spaces. These sites generally comprise of redundant lands and/or buildings.
- *Infill Sites* - Development within urban infill sites must consider the context of the surrounding area.
- *Backland Development* - Undeveloped parcels of land located to the rear of existing buildings.

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Accordingly, urban regeneration and 'compact growth' are key focus areas within this Plan, supported with a central objective to regenerate the County's towns and villages by making better use of under-used land and buildings within the existing built-up urban footprint and to drive the delivery of quality Urban development housing. In accordance with the RSES, the Development Plan has adopted an asset-based approach to the strategic identification of locations of for new residential development, which will contribute to in support of regeneration, placemaking and compact growth (Figure 6.1).

Commented [AM6]: Would this sit better in the housing/development management/standards section and cross-refer?

Figure 6.1: Asset Test: Criteria for the strategic location of new residential development (Source: EMRA RSES 2019).

¹ NPO 3a Deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up footprint of existing settlements; NPO 3c Deliver at least 30% of all new homes that are targeted in settlements other than the five Cities and their suburbs, within their existing built-up footprints.

Scale	Is there potential for compact sustainable development, based on the settlements scale, rates of growth, local ambition and availability of serviced lands?
Functions	Is there a good level of local employment provision, based on its jobs ratio and net commuting flows, and/or potential to develop complementarities with other places?
Services	Will local services and amenities including community, education, health, leisure and retail be accessible as set out in the '10-minute settlement' concept?
Placemaking	Will the development reinforce a sense of place and character, and create a healthy and attractive environment in line with good urban design principles?
Economic	Is there potential for better alignment of housing and employment provision, to strengthen local economies or drive economic development opportunities?
Connectivity	Is the development accessible to existing/planned public transport and is there potential to improve modal share of public transport, walking and cycling?
Environment	Does the environment have the carrying capacity for development? Is there potential to enhance environmental quality and/or support transition to low carbon/climate resilience?
Infrastructure	Is there a requirement for improvements to water, waste water, utilities and/or digital infrastructure and services to support the proposed development?

The aim is to target the 'Key Town' of Longford and to develop economically active self-sustaining 'Growth Towns', in addition to promoting regeneration in rural towns and villages. Towns which require targeted 'catch-up' investment to enhance local employment and services and to promote regeneration in towns and villages are identified in the settlement hierarchy (see *Chapter 4: Core Strategy and Housing*).

A vital element of this approach is the regeneration of infill and brownfield sites. In this regard Longford County Council will over the lifetime of the Plan, establish a database of strategic brownfield and infill sites so that a 'pipeline' of development opportunities can be kept under review through monitoring and reporting. Longford County Council will also work collaboratively with relevant stakeholders to promote co-ordination in the delivery of increased-appropriate urban densities in towns centres. In this regard piecemeal development of individual greenfield? plots will generally not be permitted, unless it is satisfactorily demonstrated that the development will not jeopardise the comprehensive redevelopment of strategic? surrounding-landbanks (identified?)s. what is the role of zoning here?

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Compact Urban growth requires an overarching approach to ensure that the appropriate use mix achieves a social economic and environmental balance that creates attractive town centres where people will want to live, work and recreate. Regeneration supports this through large Urban Schemes such as the "Longford Connected" project, funded under the URDF, that addresses links and connectivity in Longford Town Centre (addressed further throughout this section). Further proposals

under the URDF include initiatives to address potential uses on Council owned lands and adjacent properties to ensure a vibrant town centre throughout the day and evening. Urban Schemes are complemented by rural initiatives that provide enhanced, interconnected amenity and recreation facilities that allow compact urban development to take place while maintaining quality of life. Ongoing regeneration improvements to the Albert Reynolds Peace Park and the Royal Canal Greenway have proved successful in this regard as evidenced by their intensified use and the important role played in maintaining Urban Quality of Life during lockdown in the COVID-19 crisis. Longford Town and other towns and villages throughout the County serve as “destinations” and gateways for surrounding rural attractions, as recognised in recent and ongoing projects in association with and supported by Fáilte Ireland. This interpretative role further supports compact urban growth through consolidation of facilities in the town core, while protecting the rural resource, illustrating the interconnectedness of Urban and Rural regeneration.

Compact Growth Urban Regeneration (Housing) – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 6.1	Work with all relevant stakeholders in the promotion of urban ‘compact growth’ regeneration in County Longford and establish a database of strategic brownfield and infill <u>opportunity sites aligned with the provisions of the core strategy</u> so that a ‘pipeline’ of development opportunities can be kept under review through monitoring and reporting.
CPO 6.2	Facilitate <u>Promote appropriate</u> urban development on infill/brownfield sites through the <u>consolidation</u> , redevelopment and regeneration of underused, vacant or derelict town centre and urban lands, <u>including degraded areas and/or contaminated sites to create more desirable places in which people can live and work</u> enhance quality of life. <i>Piecemeal development of individual plots will generally not be permitted, unless it is satisfactorily demonstrated that the development will not jeopardise the comprehensive redevelopment of <u>surrounding lands strategically important landbanks</u></i>
CPO 6.3	Enable <u>Promote consolidation through appropriate redevelopment of</u> infill and appropriate brownfield redevelopment in order sites to maximise the efficient use of existing infrastructure and services and promote a positive modal shift towards sustainable travel <u>transport use</u> .
CPO 6.4	Promote increased <u>appropriate</u> urban densities and building heights at suitable locations in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.
CPO 6.5	Enhance <u>Continue</u> accessibility and sustainable mobility <u>improvements</u> within <u>and between</u> the town centres of Longford, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Ballymahon, Lanesborough and Drumlish, by improving <u>pedestrian and cycle</u> links between the core and surrounding areas through and the further integration of public transport, walking and cycling facilities.
CPO 6.6	Set out measures to reduce <u>Address</u> vacancy and the underuse of existing building stock and support <u>regeneration</u> initiatives that

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	promote the reuse, refurbishment and retrofitting of existing buildings within urban centres.
CPO 6.7	Support efforts to deal with waste and contamination relating to brownfield regeneration.
CPO 6.8	Deliver compact urban growth through the delivery of innovative adaptable urban schemes <u>and supporting measures to maintain quality of life. Longford County Council will continue to target appropriate funding streams in this regard and make provision for matched funding resources as appropriate.</u>
CPO 6.9	Deliver compact growth and regeneration through <u>coordinated</u> active land management <u>initiatives through the statutory and non-statutory mechanisms available to the Local Authority, including, but not limited to, powers of compulsory purchase and the application and implementation of legislation relating to Vacant/Derelict Sites and dangerous structures.</u>
CPO 6.10	Encourage the development of improved connectivity, <u>provision of accessibility to</u> services and <u>good-high</u> quality public realm in urban locations and create an environment for <u>coordinated</u> investment in high quality residential development <u>and-with</u> supporting services and amenities such as schools, shops, recreation areas and open spaces.
CPO 6.11	Carry out master planning <u>Develop collaborative Masterplans in respective of strategic areas to ensure that large areas of land, are appropriately sustainable planned and developed development in consultation with key stakeholders in a sustainable manner, which includes provision for phasing, infrastructure provision, community facilities, density, layout, open spaces, landscaping and development design briefs and statements.</u>
CPO 6.12	Require all development proposals for strategic brownfield and infill sites be accompanied by a site brief and/or masterplan that sets out a phased programme for the regeneration of the site and demonstrates how the proposal will comply with National Guidelines that seek to integrate principles of good urban design, planning and placemaking.

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Commented [AM8]: Development management/waste management objective

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Commented [AM9]: Development Management objective

6.4.2 Economic ~~Urban~~ Regeneration

Should be read in conjunction with economic development chapter.

Longford is the eighth most deprived region in the country, according to the latest national deprivation index, (reference?). ~~The report draws on Census data and scores areas based on indicators such as unemployment rates, educational attainment, housing and lone parent ratio. This is seen as a contributor to anti-social behaviour and related problems.~~ It is recognised that there are a particular number of areas in the County which are blackspots in terms of economic opportunity and anti-social behaviour and related issues, and this requires targeted regeneration measures. Regeneration works with closely with the Joint Policing Committee (JPC) on the delivery of specific measures including CCTV enhancement at Longford Town,

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supplemented by additional public realm initiatives under development as part of the EU supported URBACT UrbSecurity project.

In accordance with ~~the Regional Policy contained with the~~ EMRA RSES policy, (RPO 6.61), Longford County Council recognises the importance of both promoting economic opportunity and supporting social inclusion measures including the revitalisation of areas by physical regeneration, planning, investment and community development. In ~~particular attentions~~ support of the settlement hierarchy at S. XX, priority will be given to deprived areas in the urban areas of Longford Town, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Lanesborough, Ballymahon and Drumlish. Economic strategies are currently being prepared for Lanesboro and Edgeworthstown.

In this regard Longford County Council will work collaboratively with relevant agencies to support the consolidation and development of strategically located land banks for enterprise and employment opportunity, and associated regeneration—social, economic and environmental gain. This will include collaboration with the IDA and Enterprise Ireland on the availability of sites of enterprise purposes that align with the regional skills forum?. The Upper Shannon Erne Future Economic Project, which is a collaboration between the Cavan, Leitrim, Longford and Roscommon local authorities with ESB and Bord na Móna, provides the opportunity to deliver cross regional economic projects and in association with the Just Transition process.

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Regeneration are working with communities in the development RURAL WORKING HUBS, supported by the RRDF, Enterprise funding (CHECK) and EU networks to develop sustainable alternatives to long-term commuting and to revitalise rural economies.

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Significant TOURISM DEVELOPMENT HAS COMMENCED IN LANESBORO AND GRANARD secured through regeneration funding from the RRDF, Fáilte Ireland and the Just Transition Fund. Natural and Cultural heritage interpretation facilities of national significance proposed at these locations will provide complementarity with existing funding secured under the URDF for Longford Town and under DTTAS and ORIS for local and national Greenway development in a comprehensive package of social, economic and environmental regeneration and development measures to benefit the entire County. Local Regeneration Action Plans prepared for these areas set out this alignment and a vision for the future development of these strategic settlements.

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In terms of physical and enabling infrastructure, it is recognised that County Longford is centrally located within the country, and Longford Town itself is strategically located on the N4/M4 from Dublin to Sligo, with national roads including the N55, N5 and N63. Planned infrastructure upgrades include the N4 from Mullingar to Carrick-on Shannon and there is further potential to provide for enhanced rail service on the Dublin - Sligo rail line and improve connections to Athlone. Given its location, the logistics and distribution industry is heavily represented in the County. Regeneration will seek to capitalise on this strategic locational advantage through its ongoing masterplanning programme, targeting funding for projects that will promote climate action through the decarbonisation of the transport sector in particular.

The Natural gas network has already come been extended to Ballymahon and should be capitalised on Longford County Council will continue to support further network

extension to Longford and Edgeworthstown in collaboration with Gas Networks Ireland and in support of Climate Action initiatives. An investigation into the potential feasibility of renewable energy development associated with the extension of the Gas network and the decarbonisation of the electricity, Transport and Agricultural sectors is underway, supported by the Just Transition Fund.

Economic Urban Regeneration – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 6.13	Work with all relevant stakeholders in the promotion of <u>appropriate economic regeneration and supporting infrastructure and services including educational and upskilling facilities, particularly in the area of climate action and the circular economy.</u>
CPO 6.14	Continue to Engage with communities, landowners, public and private sector agencies, the Joint Policing Committee (JPC) and other council departments <u>through the Local Regeneration Action Planning and Masterplanning processes, aligned with in-terms-of targeted funding streams, to identify and progress</u> regeneration opportunities for the towns and County, <u>building on existing investment to maximise impact and value for money.</u>
CPO 6.15	Support-Promote the consolidation of the town centres of Longford, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Ballymahon, Lanesborough and Drumlish and the enhancement and linking of brownfield and outlying sites to the town centres, with a focus on <u>strategic connections and</u> the regeneration of underused buildings and strategic sites <u>to create an attractive inward investment environment.</u>
CPO 6.16	Support the development and regeneration of <u>identify</u> publicly owned land banks in the 'Key Town' of Longford and the self-sustaining and growth towns of Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown, Lanesborough and Granard; and Drumlish for residential, employment, education, community, cultural and recreational <u>regeneration</u> opportunities, <u>and target the utilisation of available relevant funding streams where available and secure matched funding requirements as appropriate.</u>
CPO 6.17	Support social inclusion measures <u>in collaboration with relevant agencies and community groups that promote accessibility to services, equality of opportunities and integration of minority groups across Longford Society, including the revitalisation of areas by physical regeneration, planning, investment and community development. In particular attention will be given to d</u> Deprived areas in the urban areas of Longford Town, Edgeworthstown, Granard, Lanesborough, Ballymahon and Drumlish will be prioritised in support of the Settlement Hierarchy outlined at Section X.
CPO 6.18	Support the development of projects <u>which support that facilitate implementation of community-led themes actions, of Local Action Plans, including in terms of improved</u> digital connectivity, enterprise creation opportunities, public realm <u>and environmental enhancement and environment,</u> tourism infrastructure <u>provision, branding,</u> promotion and marketing.

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CHAPTER 6: REGENERATION

CPO 6.19	Secure projects to that promote social inclusion and community integration in conjunction <u>the JPC, Urbact Local Group, Town teams and other community organisations and in association</u> with EU initiatives on Urban Security.
CPO 6.20	Develop an Action Plan for Town Centre Renewal which brings redundant, under-utilised and derelict land and buildings back into active use as a first preference ahead of peripheral areas, and which reduces the need for greenfield development, supporting the urban fabric and re using existing resources.
CPO 6.21	Support the viability of small towns and villages through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes targeted in core areas.
CPO 6.22	Encourage pilot projects for the re-use of brownfield sites and encourage active temporary uses, where feasible, in order to encourage activation of vacant sites that require longer lead in time for regeneration.
CPO 6.23	Ensure development proposals on infill sites within existing streetscapes provide active frontages.
CPO 6.24	Ensure in accordance with the 'Framework for Town Centre Renewal, 2017' that 'health checks' are carried out for town centres and that more vibrant town centres are created in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility • Pedestrian Flows • Environmental Quality • Public Realm • Diversity of Uses
CPO 6.25	Promote <u>connectivity as part of regeneration projects to encourage walking and cycling between strategic areas and services and enhance accessibility</u> to sustainable transport nodes and availability of alternative transport modes such as walking and cycling between strategic areas and services.
CPO 6.26	Support and provision and development of serviced industrial and commercial sites in the towns and villages throughout the County, as appropriate.
CPO 6.27	Support the provision and development of Enterprise Hubs in the towns and villages throughout the County, as appropriate.
CPO 6.28	Promote high speed broadband availability to communities and the potential for remote working <u>and facilitate the development of rural working hubs.</u>
CPO 6.29	Develop initiatives to promote the expansion of the Gas network <u>to Longford and Edgeworthstown</u> in collaboration with Gas Networks Ireland <u>and in association with emerging opportunities in the renewable energy sector. Explore opportunities for decarbonisation of electricity, transport and infrastructure sectors in association with this process.</u>

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Commented [AM12]: Are these objectives relating to statutory LAP or regeneration masterplans? Repetition with land activation and other sections

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Commented [AM13]: This is already in the placemaking chapter – cross refer? Is there additional S 28 guidance that's appropriate?

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CPO 6.30	Promote measures to enhance investment opportunities in employment generation in conjunction with cross regional initiatives, including the Just Transition process.
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6.4.3 Heritage ~~Urban~~ Regeneration

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To be read in conjunction with Heritage Section, RPS, ACA, Natural heritage, Amenity etc.

County Longford has a rich and diverse heritage that is central to its identity and how it is perceived from the outside and ultimately, how it is packaged, branded and marketed. This heritage is framed within its unique landscape that has supported traditional industries and shaped its towns, villages, settlement and movement patterns. This distinct natural heritage and its relationship with the morphology of human settlement creates unique assets for the County that are central to the process of balanced urban and rural regeneration. These assets include the Wilderness of the Mid-Shannon, the peatlands including Corlea bog and Trackway, the Royal Canal, the River Inny and Newcastle woods as the setting for Center Parcs, Cairn Hill and the lakes in the north of the County, each of which continue to be the subject of regeneration initiatives in collaboration with the local community.

Heritage also includes the unique culture of the county shaped by historical events such as the 1798 rebellion, the War of Independence, the great war and Civil war, long-standing festivals, markets, literary and educational history. Longford County Council have worked with Communities across all of these areas to highlight local heritage and promote it on a national and international stage, through refurbishment of facilities such as the Latin School in Moyne, through to the Maria Edgeworth facility at Edgeworthstown along with providing sustainable connectivity between the peatlands, greenways and Canals, places of historic significance and social interaction, including connections to national and regional networks.

Planning for the regeneration of a historic town needs an integrated approach that balances the protection of the built heritage and the sustainable development of historic urban areas with the needs of modern living and takes account of the concerns and aspirations of the community and key stakeholders. ~~This requires the coordination and management of different stakeholders. In many cases the issue is to find a use for endangered buildings to secure occupation as the most effective form of conservation. Regeneration work closely with the Urbact Local group, Town Teams and the public and private sector to identify and rationalise spatial requirements for different uses and align these with potential regeneration opportunities.~~

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The development of a common vision for a town, supported by a coordinated and integrated series of objectives and a programme of realistic, achievable actions, will balance the conservation of heritage, alongside the needs of those who live in and use the historic town. Bringing unused or underused spaces within towns back into use has many advantages, such as reviving economic value, activating abandoned and derelict sites, and reducing pressure for greenfield development. Additional initiatives

to promote placemaking and the economic vibrancy include Town Centre Health checks, historic and public realm plans, which are linked to statutory local area plans. The importance of community led village design and enhancement statements is also recognised.

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Local distinctiveness is key to each town having a unique selling point and the character and distinctiveness of the historic built environment are recognised in the record of protected structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and areas of Archaeological Significance outlined at Section X. Preservation of this identity and uniqueness areas central to future vitality and viability.

It is recognised that there are opportunities for Longford County Council in conjunction with other stakeholders, such as Bord na Mona, Waterways Ireland and Fáilte Ireland, to target funding initiatives for heritage led regeneration. Examples of such heritage led regeneration are the Maria Edgeworth centre in Edgeworthstown, Connolly Barracks and the Camlin Quarter area in Longford town; Royal Canal Greenway Development, Granard Motte Development, Lanesboro Tourism development and the potential reuse of the former Lanesborough ESB power-plant-building generating site and adjacent lands.

Commented [AM17]: This is the subject of a working group underway as part of JT – maybe premature to refer to plant building pending outcome of process

Heritage Urban Regeneration – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 6.31	Work with the Heritage Office and all relevant stakeholders in the promotion of heritage led regeneration and identification of strategic projects that support social, economic and environmental development.
CPO 6.32	Promote the sensitive and adaptive reuse of Protected Structures, historic building stock and industrial structures, where appropriate in collaboration with local communities, the ULG and town teams. Identify and encourage uses that attract activity and vitality in strategic locations.
CPO 6.33	Undertake initiatives to promote placemaking and economic vibrancy in terms of Town Centre Health checks, historic and public realm plans and community led village design and enhancement statements.
CPO 6.34	Seek where possible Target European, national and regional regeneration related funding streams and matched funding resources to support heritage led regeneration projects, building on existing investment in a holistic way to maximise impact and value for money.

Commented [AM18]: As part of statutory LAP development?

6.4.4 Rural Regeneration

The NPF identifies the need to strengthen and diversify rural towns to be a focus for local housing and employment growth and the provision of appropriate level services. Rural towns can act as a focus for development in their areas through the provision of services across economic, social and administrative areas. For some rural areas in the county, urban and commuter generated development has undesirably affected the

character and cohesion of these locations. Simultaneously, in less accessible rural locations, population levels have declined, and it has been difficult to sustain basic services and community facilities at these locations. It is recognised that the RIAI's *Toolkit for Towns and Villages* provides useful advice for local authorities in relation to rural regeneration.

The RSES aims to strengthen the fabric of rural Ireland, supporting rural towns and communities. The rejuvenation of rural towns and villages requires that appropriate job creation can be supported in rural areas. It is recognised that provision of serviced or serviceable sites in a manner that provides a structured space for new enterprise would help to sustain smaller rural communities. Small industrial estates on the edge of towns facilitate local enterprise and entrepreneurship would help prevent both drift to larger urban centres and the construction of one-off units around domestic properties in rural areas.

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The countryside within the County provides for rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism, renewables, heritage based development and rural enterprise. Traditional sectors such as agriculture, tourism, extractive industries and forestry are complemented by diversification in sectors such as food, renewable energy and opportunities provided from improved digital connectivity. The agri-food sector plays a significant role in Ireland's rural economy and this sector is supported through the implementation of *Food Wise 2025*. The forestry sector is another significant contributor to the economy. Also, energy production, including renewable energy in the form of wind, solar and biomass and bioenergy offer opportunities have to date largely been provided in rural areas and the location of future renewable energy production is likely to be met in rural areas. (see Chapter 9: Rural Enterprise).

Commented [AM20]: Environmental concerns re: current forestry practice – are these addressed in another section?

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Another significant contributor to the economy is the tourism sector and the development of greenways, blueways and peatways to provide an alternative visitor experience and offer opportunities to consolidate visitor services including interpretation and accommodation in existing town and village centres. The RSES supports tourism development and promotional branding to ensure that areas associated with *Ireland's Hidden Heartlands* and *Ireland's Ancient East* are developed and promoted to tap into the economic potential of rural areas (see Chapter 9: Rural Enterprise and Chapter 10: Tourism in relation to the development of tourism in the County). In this regard Longford has a rich cultural heritage with potential to develop as a recreation and tourism hub, building on its proximity to attractions such as Centre Parcs, the Royal Canal, the proposed Dublin-Westport Greenway, the Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park, and also key assets within Longford town such as St Mel's Cathedral, the River Camlin, the Back Stage Theatre and walking routes such as the Rebel and Literary Trails. It is recognised that delivering on County Longford's walking and cycling strategy will provide links to national and cross regional walking and cycling trails, which will also provide economic benefit and regeneration.

There is also potential to further build on significant investment in network of greenways connecting the nearby flagship Center Parc's holiday village and the

investment by the local authority in tourism and recreational infrastructure. It is recognised that the provision of suitable accommodation is essential in order to maximise the return from visitors to the county.

In keeping with the NPF, and the EMRA RSES and the ongoing process of Just Transition, Longford County Council will support the longer-term strategic planning for industrial peatland areas within the current framework of decommissioning and rehabilitation underway by Bord na Mona as required under EPA licencing. This may include support, where appropriate, for a Transition Team and preparation of a comprehensive after use framework plan for the peatlands and related infrastructure, which addresses environmental, economic and social issues, including employment and replacement enterprise reflecting the current transition from employment based around peat extraction. In terms of the disused bogs, their use for tourism, aquaculture and market gardening / herb growing will be considered. The potential reuse of the site of Lough Ree power and adjacent lands Lanesborough power plant as a potential opportunity site for renewable energy, innovative tourism or enterprise and other alternatives is also recognised currently under consideration at a national level, with feasibility studies underway in these areas, supported by the Just Transition Fund.

Rural Regeneration – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 6.35	Engage and Collaborate with all relevant stakeholders in the promotion of rural regeneration in County Longford.
CPO 6.36	Encourage sustainable growth in rural areas, especially those that have experienced recent decline or stagnation, sustainable growth, having regard to while maintaining and enhancing the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements.
CPO 6.37	Support the regeneration of rural towns and villages through identification of regeneration projects for rural villages and rural areas and utilisation of appropriate through available funding streams and securing matched funding requirements opportunities.
CPO 6.38	Support the recommendations of the RIAI's Toolkit for Towns and Villages in relation to rural regeneration.
CPO 6.39	Encourage provision of identify appropriate locations for serviced or serviceable sites in a manner that provides a structured space for new enterprise in order to sustain smaller rural communities.
CPO 6.40	Support the development of small industrial estates on the edge of towns in order to facilitate local enterprise and entrepreneurship.
CPO 6.41	Support and protect existing rural economies and protect valuable agricultural lands to ensure sustainable food supply.
CPO 6.42	Support the diversification of rural economies to create additional jobs and maximise opportunities in emerging sectors, such as agri-business, renewable energy, rural tourism and forestry enterprise through appropriate initiatives and programmes including dedicated support under the Just Transition Fund.
CPO 6.43	Support the designation of the Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park as a UNESCO Biosphere candidate site in the County in collaboration with

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	<u>local communities and other key stakeholders including relevant state agencies and departments and adjacent local authorities.</u>
CPO 6.44	<u>Continue the ongoing programme of greenway and blueway provision throughout the County. Support the development of in support of Longford as a sustainable tourism hub and reinforce connections to wider national networks, having regard to its</u> Maintain and enhance accessibility to key tourist destinations in the Region, including Center Parcs, and proximity to natural amenities and recreational opportunities <u>and secure the position of Longford Town as a destination under the Fáilte Ireland "Hidden Heartlands" brand.</u>
CPO 6.45	<u>Identify and pursue initiatives and resources to Support and</u> encourage the provision of additional suitable tourist accommodation in appropriate locations throughout the County.

6.5 Mechanisms to Deliver Regeneration

6.5.1 Active Land Management

Achieving compact growth targets will require a Active land management is essential in the sustainable regeneration of Urban Areas that have been subject to vacancy and dereliction over sustained periods, such as Longford Town Core and responses to ensure that land and building resources within existing settlements are used to their full potential. In this regard Longford County Council will establish a database of strategic brownfield and infill sites so that brownfield site re-use can be managed and co-ordinated across multiple stakeholders as part of the active land management process. Such Active Land Management may be delivered through a number of mechanisms which are discussed accordingly: -

6.5.1.1 Collaboration with National Land Development Agency

The National Land Development Agency established under the NPF has the objective of maintaining and enhancing the capacity for co-ordinating and developing large, strategically located land banks, in order to promote the delivery of housing and other development in order to provide more affordable homes. The Agency is to have Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers and drive renewal of strategic areas not being utilised to their full potential (NPF National Policy Objectives 12² and 66³). The

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² NPO 12 The Government will establish a National Regeneration and Development Agency to work with local authorities, other public bodies and capital spending departments and agencies to co-ordinate and secure the best use of public lands, investment required within the capital envelopes provided in the National Development Plan and to drive the renewal of strategic areas not being utilised to their full potential. The Government will consider how best to make State lands available to such a body to kick-start its development role and to legislate for enhanced compulsory purchase powers to ensure that the necessary transformation of the places most in need of regeneration can take place more swiftly and effectively.

³ NPO 66 A more effective strategic and centrally managed approach will be taken to realise the development potential of the overall portfolio of state owned and/or influenced lands in the five main cities other major urban

Agency will access the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund in order to achieve these goals. In this regard Longford County Council will work collaboratively with the National Land Development Agency (LDA) in their role to support the consolidation and development of strategically located land banks, particularly publicly owned lands, to unlock housing and regeneration opportunities.

Commented [AM24]: Have significant public landbanks been identified and residential need established (as per housing/core strategies)?

6.5.1.2 Application of Vacant Site Levy (VSL) (read in conjunction with 6.2 statutory context – preferably consolidate)

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 ~~is a~~ (as amended) provides for the designation of regeneration areas within which the vacant site levy can be applied. The levy is a site activation measure designed to bring encourage active use of vacant and underutilised land in urban areas, where the requisite supporting infrastructure is provided, into beneficial use, while ensuring to ensure a more an effective return on State investment by enabling infrastructure and helping and to counter unsustainable urban sprawl. It introduced a statutory obligation for all Planning Authorities to establish a register of vacant sites. ~~The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 sets out two broad categories of vacant land that the levy may apply to:~~

- ~~Lands zoned primarily for residential purposes;~~
- ~~Lands in need of regeneration which includes:~~
 - ~~Mixed Use/Expanded Town Centre zonings as they offer opportunities to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres and where appropriate to consolidate urban areas.~~
 - ~~All 'Enterprise and Employment' and 'Commercial' zoned lands contained within Tier 1 – Tier 3 of the County's settlement hierarchy.~~

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Lands designated for the purpose of the URHA 2015 in County Longford are exclusively lands in need of regeneration, as defined in the Act as follows

"regeneration land" means land identified by a planning authority in its development plan or local area plan, after the coming into operation of section 28, in accordance with section 10(2)(h) of the Act of 2000 with the objective of development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration, and includes any structures on such land;

and cover areas zoned under the following objectives within identified regeneration areas:

- Mixed Use/Expanded Town Centre zonings as they offer opportunities to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres and where appropriate to consolidate urban areas.
- All 'Enterprise and Employment' and 'Commercial' zoned lands contained within Tier 1 – Tier 3 of the County's settlement hierarchy.

areas and in rural towns and villages as a priority, particularly through the establishment of a National Regeneration and Development Agency

Strategic sites and site resolution objectives a (as contained within Longford LAP) re-considered regeneration areas for the purposes of the URHA 2015.

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These land use zonings are subject to the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 with respect to the Vacant Site Levy for 'regeneration' purposes. The application of the VSL ~~needs to be~~ is coordinated with the strategic focus on compact growth in the development plan. Longford County Council have identified a number of Vacant Sites to date, which will also be designated as 'regeneration areas'.

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Derelict Sites

Dangerous Structures

Commented [AM26]: Collaborate with Environment

Compulsory Purchase

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It is the policy of Longford County Council to pursue negotiations with owners of land required for strategic purposes in the first instance and to engage with relevant stakeholders in the acquisition of property for the purpose of exercising its functions. Where options have exhausted, the Council will rely on its statutory powers of compulsory purchase where necessary and expedient to implement the objectives of this plan

Development Incentives

Commented [AM27]: Development contribution scheme – C&E, BID, Purple flag, rates rebates, tax incentives, shopfront improvement – Enterprise

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Active Land Management – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 6.46	Promote more co-ordinated active land management and co-ordinate provision of in areas where appropriate enabling infrastructure is present or can be provided particularly on publicly owned lands.
CPO 6.47	Support the National Land Development Agency and other relevant agencies in co-ordinating and developing large, strategically located landbanks, particularly publicly owned lands, in town centres and other locations as deemed appropriate throughout the County.
CPO 6.48	Use, where appropriate, Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) and other incentives including development contributions in combination with the provisions of the URHA 2015 to encourage urban regeneration of brownfield lands over the development of greenfield sites in urban areas
CPO 6.49	Apply the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended) in the following areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Areas zoned under the following objectives within identified regeneration areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed Use/Expanded Town Centre zonings as they offer opportunities to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres and where appropriate to consolidate urban areas. All 'Enterprise and Employment' and 'Commercial' zoned lands contained within Tier 1 – Tier 3 of the County's settlement hierarchy.

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	<p><u>2. Strategic sites and areas covered by the "Site Resolution" objective designated in Longford Town LAP.</u></p> <p><u>Vacant sites will be identified in accordance with statutory criteria for regeneration purposes within these areas and a levy applied. Maintain and update a Vacant Sites Register</u> in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015. <u>These sites will be placed on the Vacant Site Register which will be maintained and periodically reviewed.</u></p>
CPO 6.50	Facilitate the implementation of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, by utilising site activation measures, including the provision of the Vacant Site Levy, to assist in bringing vacant and underutilised zoned land into beneficial use.

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- Commented [AM29]: This objective should be prioritised in this section

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6.5.2 Designation of 'Regeneration Areas'

This Plan sets a framework to identify and secure the redevelopment and regeneration of areas in need of renewal and supports the active land management of vacant sites to address incidents of urban decay, and vacancy and underutilisation in areas where investment has been made in supporting infrastructure and services. The primary objective is to facilitate long-term economic development in the County and the delivery of sustainable housing and the generation of economic activity.

Commented [AM31]: This section would be more appropriate as a subheading under land activation/vacant sites – aware that this may also have a relationship to core strategy etc and should be cross-referred

The Implementation of the Vacant Site Register under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015 requires the designation of 'regeneration areas' in the Development Plan, within which vacant sites will be identified in accordance with statutory criteria is a requirement for the implementation of the Vacant Site Register under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015. All Vacant sites identified are subject to the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 with respect to the Vacant Site Levy and are deemed designated in this Plan for 'regeneration' purposes. Further Regeneration areas are identified which correspond with those areas identified as Strategic Sites and having a site resolution objective in the Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2016-2022 (see Appendix 3).

These areas contain lands that detract from the overall area in which they are situate, either by way of heightened levels of vacancy (commercial, industrial, residential) or through poor maintenance and/or dereliction, or a mix of these attributes. These areas are prominently located and have a significant visual impact that affects the overall image and investment potential of the town and environs. Strategic Site no. 6 is substantially within the floodplain, and as such has to be very sensitively dealt with, and its use for flood attenuation and urban forestry may be more appropriate. The Ballyminion Area (Strategic Site number 6) contains a mix of existing uses and includes areas subject to flood risk, which are covered by and addressed in the constrained land use objective. A Draft Regeneration Masterplan has been prepared for the area, to be finalised following the outcome of detailed collaboration with other departments and agencies operating in the area.

Many of the strategic sites within the town core have been the subject of approved funding under the URDF. Work is ongoing in these areas and future applications under these funds will seek to build on this investment.

Additional areas such as the Ardnacassa area of Longford Town ~~and the Lanesborough Power Plan site are other areas which~~ are suffering from social and economic deprivation and will also be subject to designation as 'regeneration areas' (see Appendix 3).

It is anticipated that Longford County Council will identify additional regeneration areas ~~will be identified over the lifetime of this Plan~~ in Longford town, in other settlements throughout the County and in rural areas during the lifetime of the Development Plan, as the need arises (see Appendix 3).

Regeneration Areas – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 6.51	Promote the appropriate development and regeneration of the designated 'regeneration areas' identified in this Plan and to include 'vacant sites'. Apply the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 as appropriate.
CPO 6.52	Promote the development and regeneration of the strategic sites identified in the Longford Local Area Plan (what is the status of the existing town plan with regard to this CDP?) .
CPO 6.53	Identify additional 'regeneration areas' as required, to include areas suffering from social and economic deprivation, both within Longford town and throughout the County.
CPO 6.54	Promote innovative solutions to ensure social, economic and environmental gain for communities.

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Commented [AM33]: Could consolidate these with land activation or where they have a significance in other areas of the plan (Core strategy, S.10(2)h etc)

6.5.3 Master Planning

~~This consists of~~ Masterplanning represents a holistic ~~and collaborative~~ approach ~~with overarching to development through~~ social, economic and environmental ~~initiatives gains~~. Masterplans ~~can behave been~~ used as useful ~~regeneration~~ tools to act as a driver for regeneration, in terms of providing a clear strategy for future development which also provides an opportunity to tap into various funding streams. Among the current Masterplans in County Longford are the following:

Commented [AM34]: Need to differentiate between statutory and non-statutory, planning (ie that required as part of application for pp or those to define specific phasing, density and design requirements) and regeneration

6.5.3.1 Longford Integrated Action Plan 2018 – Military Assets as Public Spaces ~~Camlin Quarter Masterplan~~

This plan deals with the Development of the ~~Camlin Quarter~~ including Connolly Barracks, Church St., Great Water Street, Little Water Street onto the Albert Reynolds Peace Park, enhancing the public realm, investigation of potential land uses, landbank assembly and connectivity improvements. This

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plan continues to form the basis of funding applications in support of identified actions, including large-scale development proposals under the URDF.

~~This is an Integrated Action Plan for Connolly Barracks and the Northern Quarter of Longford Town, which was produced as part of the URBACT Military Assets as Public Spaces (MAPS) project. It recognises that Longford town suffered significant decline following the economic crash in 2008, in the past was heavily reliant on the construction sector for employment and had not experienced the same growth in retail or commercial activity as other parts of the country. This was exacerbated by the closure of Connolly Barracks in 2009, with the loss of 200 jobs on-site and a knock-on effect on the wider economy.~~

~~Longford County Council recognised the potential and importance of this site to the future of the town and purchased a portion of it, acknowledging the ability of it to act as an economic driver for the town and wider region if developed appropriately.~~

~~The Integrated Action Plan (IAP) recognises the importance of improving the physical environment in which Connolly Barracks is located in enhancing and utilising the River Camlin which bounds the site. The redevelopment of Connolly Barracks and the wider area now provides an opportunity to open up the town to the River Camlin and embrace this valuable natural asset. This will be developed through a new masterplan for the wider Northern Quarter area, taking in Great Water Street and Little Water Street, as well as Lower Main Street, up to and including Connolly Barracks and Church Street.~~

6.5.3.2 Draft Ballyminion Regeneration Masterplan 2019

This draft Masterplan sets out to stimulate physical development that is underpinned by a commitment to community development and environmental sustainability. The Ballyminion area has been recognised as an area of strategic importance in the Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2016-2022. It is believed the area could act as a potential catalyst for the further development of Longford Town. The region is home to a range of commercial, community, and residential activity including Pulse Logistics, the Primary Care Centre, and the Glenn Riada housing estate. However, the relative isolation of the area from the town core has also been subject to considerable has facilitated dereliction, flooding, anti-social behaviour and visual disamenity issues. The priority of this plan is to provide coherent connections between Gleann Riada and the town core at a pedestrian scale while promoting appropriate development to serve the needs of the residents and generate activity to address longstanding issues. However Due to its proximity to the strategic road network and town centre, it is seen as an area of unmet potential, with the exception of areas of constrained land use related to flooding. ~~(with the exception of some area's within or adjoining a floodplain).~~ The area is designated within a site resolution objective that provides for the application of the vacant site levy. This will be used as required in combination with other site activation measures available to the Local Authority to

~~promote As such it offers a significant regeneration opportunity in the area, including addition to flood attenuation and urban forestry reserves.~~

6.5.3.3 Other Potential Masterplans

~~Other areas in the County could also benefit from such Regeneration are progressing with Masterplanning programme that includes Granard and Lanesboro in association with local Communities and other key stakeholders. Master planning i.e. the Ardnacassa area of Longford town. In this regard Longford County Council will continue to prepare masterplans for areas in need of regeneration throughout the county, as these provide a clear vision for the area in terms of rejuvenation and aid in securing much needed secure appropriate funding streams in order to carry out such for identified projects and actions.~~

~~It is anticipated that a masterplan will be prepared for each of the sites identified as Strategic Sites / having Specific Site Objectives as identified in the Longford Local Area Plan and as indicated in Figure 6.2 during the lifetime of this Development Plan.~~

Additional areas such as the Ardnacassa area of Longford Town and other areas suffering from social and economic deprivation both within Longford town and throughout the County will ~~also be prioritised~~ be considered over the Plan lifetime.

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Master Plans – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 6.55	Develop Regeneration Masterplans shall be prepared in consultation with the Local communities and also with relevant statutory bodies other key social, economic and environmental stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors.
CPO 6.56	Carry out master planning to ensure that large areas of strategic landbanks are appropriately planned and developed in a sustainable manner, which include provision for phasing, infrastructure provision, addressing accessibility to community facilities, density, layout, open spaces, landscaping and development design briefs and statements.
CPO 6.57	Promote Build on investment in the development of the strategic sites identified in the Longford Local Area Plan and continue to promote connectivity across these areas to maximise impact on a masterplan basis.
CPO 6.58	Finalise and agree a masterplan for the Ballyminion regeneration masterplan to promote its appropriate regeneration and renaturing of the floodplain areas of the Ballyminion area of and to enhance connectivity between adjacent areas and Longford Town centre.
CPO 6.59	Prepare masterplans for additional areas as required, such as the Ardnacassa area of Longford Town and other areas suffering from

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	social and economic deprivation both within Longford town and throughout the County.
CPO 6.60	Encourage private development in accordance with a detailed and agreed masterplan that fully addresses the potential of the site in its wider context.
CPO 6.61	Seek Pursue targeted funding streams from a variety of local, national and EU sources and secure matched funding as appropriate as part of the dedicated County regeneration initiative.

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6.5.4 Securing Funding Streams

In applying a tailored holistic approach to the location of new housing and economic development delivery of sustainable social, economic and environmental development, the importance of the role of regeneration in the delivery of the national strategic outcomes outlined in Project Ireland 2040 is acknowledged through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF). Regeneration will pursue complementary funding streams that support broader aims to achieve these outcomes in the areas of tourism, economic, recreation, heritage, amenity, social inclusion and climate action.

6.5.4.1 Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)

The URDF which was launched in 2018 and is a ten year national programme which sets out to support compact sustainable development, through the regeneration of Ireland's cities and large towns towards more compact and sustainable urban environments in line with national and regional policy. It aims to regenerate urban areas by facilitating the redevelopment of the existing built fabric of settlements in order to strengthen and support towns and cities as attractive and vibrant destinations where people choose to live and work, as well as to invest and visit. The URDF has an overall allocation of €2 billion to 2027.

Longford Town (which has a population over 10,000 persons; CSO, 2016) is the only town within the County of an appropriate population for this fund, which can be secured to regenerate the core area of town centres and bring back vitality and viability as a sustainable town, by accommodating identified social infrastructure and economic needs of the town. The ongoing Longford Connected project has secured €4m from this fund, including matched funding resources. The project involves public realm, legibility and accessibility improvements and promotes town core connectivity between strategic areas, supporting walking and cycling as dominant transport modes and enhancing the attractiveness of the core area as a place to live, work, recreate and invest.

Ongoing applications under this fund will focus on identified strategic sites (see Appendix XX) and build on investment made in the public realm and supporting infrastructure.

The types of proposals eligible for funding include:

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- Strategic development areas;
- Active land management;
- Measures to address building vacancy and refurbishment;
- Public realm improvements;
- Enabling infrastructure;
- Sustainable mobility;
- Transition to low carbon and climate resilience.

6.5.4.2 Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)

The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) was established to support job creation in rural areas, address de-population of rural communities and support improvements in towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas. The Government have committed €1 billion to be invested in rural Ireland over the period 2019 to 2027.

Apart from Longford Town (which has a population over 10,000 persons), other towns and villages within the County ~~would be of an appropriate population for~~ are eligible for applications under this fund. Funding has been secured for Granard, Edgeworthstown and Lanesboro (€XX) for town centre projects that will significantly enhance the social, economic and environmental development potential of these towns and their rural hinterlands. This fund provides an opportunity to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland, to make a significant and sustainable impact on rural communities, and to address depopulation in small rural towns, villages and rural areas. It will be a key instrument to support the objectives of the NPF, and in particular to achieve Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities – one of the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF. LCC, in conjunction with local communities and other key stakeholders will continue to develop projects that support the objectives of this fund and build on investment made.

~~Of the projects which have secured funding in County Longford to date, of particular note is the following:–~~

The Historic Granard Motte Project

Under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) approximately €2.9m has been allocated to the Historic Granard Motte Project, to develop a major tourism and amenity attraction at the site of Granard Motte, a national monument at Granard, Co. Longford. The project will develop a heritage park on 15 acres of land and will recreate a living Norman Village and children's amenities. It will complement previous successful funding applications on the site that saw the development of a 'Knights and Conquests' Heritage Centre and an onsite café as part of the REDZ scheme and Town and Village Renewal scheme. The Knights and Conquests Centre is an interpretative centre telling the story of the Norman Knights in Ireland,

allowing visitors an opportunity to walk through time and learn about life in Norman Ireland.

The RRDF funds will be used to bring additionality to the overall project, allowing for a tourism product of national and international scale to be opened on the site. This will be a living history village, which will result in an immersive visitor experience on Norman life 800 years ago, where visitors will be transported back to Norman Ireland through a series of innovative living history displays and activities, supported by audio-visual presentations, augmented reality, virtual reality (VR) and print. It will link into the Granard Motte, bringing it back into playing a pivotal role in the development of the town.

This project is a collaboration between Longford County Council, the local community and Fáilte Ireland. The RRDF allowed this project to be significantly scaled up to that of a tourism product that would encourage people to visit, enhancing the visitor experience and therefore the long-term sustainability of the project. This means that this project will have a significant economic impact on the town of Granard and the wider region. It is anticipated that in excess of 40 jobs will be created as a result of this project and 15,000 visitors projected to visit the site yearly, once fully operational. This will benefit existing and new businesses in Granard.

[Edgeworthstown](#)

[Lanesboro](#)

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6.5.4.3 Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme is a key initiative under *the Action Plan for Rural Development* and is part of a range of measures to support the revitalisation of rural Ireland under the Government's *Project Ireland 2040 Rural Regeneration Programme*. Towns and villages are at the heart of our rural communities and can play an important role in revitalising rural Ireland. Its aim is to rejuvenate Ireland's rural towns and villages to make them more attractive places in which to live, work and visit. The Scheme will help build the resilience of rural communities in the face of Brexit and can help to contribute to the transition to a low-carbon economy. A wide range of funding has been secured in association with local communities, town teams and local groups under this initiative to date. These projects link with other initiatives in economic, recreation, tourism, heritage and amenity areas and support the holistic, cross-sectoral and Countywide approach to regeneration. This programme will be continued over the lifetime of this plan.

6.5.4.4 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Strategy plays an important part in strengthening rural economies and communities as part of one of the strategic

objectives of the Government's *Project Ireland 2040* strategy for rural communities by providing funding for the development of new outdoor recreational infrastructure and for the necessary maintenance, enhancement or promotion of existing outdoor recreational infrastructure in rural areas across Ireland. The scheme seeks to support those sporting and recreational pursuits based on use of the resources of the countryside that contribute to healthy active lifestyles and the economic and tourism potential of the area for both local communities and tourist visitors alike. This fund has promoted the development of greenway connectivity across Longford Town and County and, in tandem with other funding streams such as DTTAS greenway funding, Just Transition and Fáilte Ireland initiatives, has provided sustainable connectivity for local communities and strategic links to national and regional networks.

6.6 Longford Regeneration Opportunities

Going forward over the life time of the Development Plan Longford County council will identify potential projects undertillising appropriate the various funding sources as they become available. Among the potential projects for advancement are the following: -

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6.6.1 Longford Key Town

In the RSES, Longford Town which is identified as a Gateway Region 'Key Town' is regarded as having a particularly high ratio of jobs to resident workers, with significant in-commuting and employment in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, agri-food and the pharma sectors. The planned development of a creative and innovation hub and co-working space on the Main Street are also regarded as providing a further opportunity to drive enterprise development and entrepreneurship in the town. Potential exists to stimulate economic development through the provision of broadband and natural gas within the town.

It is recognised that Longford Town has a number of strategic areas that can act as regenerative catalysts increasing the residential, economic and leisure potential of the town centre, whilst also addressing flooding issues, vacancy, derelict buildings and enhancing the vibrancy of the town. Key areas include the Camlin Quarter and Ballyminion areas, with further strategic sites throughout, including possibilities within the southern quarter of the town. The Strategic sites identified in the Longford and Environs Local Area Plan 2016-2022, and the additional 'regeneration areas' identified in this Plan (including the Ardnacassa area) will be targeted for specific action. The Longford Flood Relief Scheme will address flood considerations and support appropriate use of riverside locations. There are opportunities for improved links between both ends of the town and enhanced rejuvenation of, and connections

between, the Royal Canal Greenway, the former location of the canal harbour in the vicinity of the Market Square and the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall).

Longford Town Regeneration Opportunities – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 6.62	Support and prioritise Longford Town regeneration opportunities and the associated co-ordination of relevant stakeholders in recognition of its 'Key Town' status within the County.
CPO 6.63	Support Longford Town as a strategic portal to the northwest.
CPO 6.64	Support Longford Town in its role as a support centre to the regional growth centre of Athlone.
CPO 6.65	Support Longford town in its role as a strategic employment and innovation centre in collaboration with educational institutions and reskilling initiatives with a particular focus on climate action and the green economy centre.
CPO 6.66	Support the development of Longford Town as a tourism hub.
CPO 6.67	Support social inclusion measures including the revitalisation of areas by physical regeneration, planning, investment and community development.
CPO 6.68	Support the plan-led development and regeneration of publicly owned land banks in the town for residential, employment, education, community, cultural and recreational opportunities.
CPO 6.69	Support the consolidation of the town centre and the enhancement and linking of brownfield and outlying sites to the town centre, with a focus on the regeneration of underused buildings and strategic sites.
CPO 6.70	Enhance accessibility and sustainable mobility within the town centre by improving links between the core and surrounding areas through the further integration of public transport, walking and cycling facilities.
CPO 6.71	Connect educational, recreational, employment, civic and town centre economic activity, and in particular improve the relationship between the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall) and the town core.
CPO 6.72	Build on recreational, amenity and tourism investment and the profile of the Camlin River in Longford Town through the strategic development of recreational trails and networks and the promotion of appropriate and complementary uses.
CPO 6.73	Create Continue to consolidate north-south linkages from the Canal to the Camlin River incorporating the Royal Canal Greenway and Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall), linking areas of tourism and amenity potential such as; Connolly Barrack the Camlin Quarter, St. Mel's Cathedral, the Backstage Theatre in relation to the town core.
CPO 6.74	Promote the development of the Camlin Quarter area of Longford Town as outlined in the Camlin Quarter Masterplan in accordance with the Integrated Action Plan 2018, or other relevant subsequent plan/strategy, by enhancing the public realm, investigation of potential land uses, strategic landbank assembly and connectivity improvements.

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CHAPTER 6: REGENERATION

CPO 6.75	Develop the Camlin Quarter (including Connolly Barracks, Church St. Great Water Street, Little Water Street onto the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall), by enhancing the public realm, investigation of potential land uses, landbank assembly and connectivity improvements.
CPO 6.76	Work with elected members and support community capacity building through Town Teams and the URBACT Local Group, in identifying, developing and delivering improved collaborative regeneration projects.
CPO 6.77	Recognise the importance of Deliver universal accessibility as part of project implementation and promote relevant i nitiatives in conjunction with representative organisations, building on connectivity and amenity which will include various interventions in the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall), the progress of the Longford Connected Project to address targeted areas, and the acquisition of ORIS investment or other relevant funding stream for works to the Camlin Bridge and other investment, particularly in relation to the strategic sites identified in Longford Town.
CPO 6.78	Support the development of projects identified in the Military Assets as Public Spaces Integrated Action Camlin Quarter Masterplan Plan and any other relevant plan or strategy for Longford Town.
CPO 6.79	Promote the development of the Ballyminion Area of Longford Town in accordance with an adopted Masterplan for the area, or other relevant subsequent plan / strategy.
CPO 6.80	Address barriers to development in the Ballyminion area, consulting with the Enterprise, Infrastructure and Planning departments on potential land activation and flood control measures, and with other stakeholders in the public and private sector as appropriate

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6.6.2 Other Locations

There are many other specific areas in need of regeneration outside of Longford Town, which are also addressed in terms of regeneration over the duration of the Plan.

Regeneration Opportunities (Other Locations) – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 6.81	Promote the delivery of resource-based tourism initiatives at Granard, Edgeworthstown, Ballymahon, Lanesborough (in conjunction with Roscommon County Council) and Drumlisk and provide enhanced, sustainable links between these in conjunction with the community, Waterways Ireland and Bord na Mona.
CPO 6.82	Ensure a Continue the coordinated approach to development of rural and urban areas, greenways, blueways, and the development of Longford, Ballymahon and Lanesborough as destination towns which are part of wider national and regional networks.
CPO 6.83	Recognise the importance of Ensure universal accessibility and promote relevant Initiatives in conjunction with representative organisations,

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	which will include provision of a walkway installation in Drumlish, and universal access to GAA facilities throughout the County.
CPO 6.84	Build on tourism investment in Center Parcs and enhance Longford County as a destination, by enhancing the Royal Canal, Dublin-Westport Greenway, and Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park through the strategic development of recreational trails and networks <u>and promote tandem investment in accommodation provision to secure Longford County as a destination.</u>

6.6.3 Climate Change Action and 'Just Transition' Fund Opportunities

Climate Action is a significant theme in national policy. At

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~~a national level~~ The Climate Action Fund funding under the National Development Plan 2018-2027 is provided to support positive climate action through ~~the Climate Action Fund, which aims to~~ supporting large-scale, high impact climate action projects which will leverage investment by public and private bodies. The Fund will have an allocation of at least €500m over the period to 2027. The Climate Action Fund includes the objective of funding initiatives that contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets in a cost-effective manner. It also offers the potential for innovative interventions which, in the absence of support from the Fund, would not otherwise be developed.

Commented [AM41]: Need to reference – Climate Action and Low carbon legislation and subsequent bills currently being considered, national transition objective, Just Transition, Climate Action Plan, Adaptation and mitigation planning (Sectoral and Local Authority) and climate action charter to give context.

~~In terms of the~~ The 'Just Transition' process is a global concept that promotes equitable transition from dependence on fossil fuel resources to renewable alternatives while protecting communities from negative impacts. ~~Fund, this also relates to the provision and encouragement of ecological, environmentally and climate friendly initiatives. -As part of the scheme a~~ Under the EU Start Engagement Process, the Midlands Regional Transition Team (MRTT) ~~is collating received~~ proposals for projects ~~which can~~ assist a positive transition from peat harvesting and power generation in affected communities and related groups in the wider Midland Region. ~~-In this regard an Engagement Document, 'Midlands Engagement Process' (May 2020), has been produced which provides guidance on which organisations can make proposals and gives ideas and insights on potential types of projects and activities which could help create a more positive future for communities affected by peat phase out. -Registering projects through this Engagement Process, is the first stage in applying for funds from the 'Just Transition' Fund. -Community based organisations, public, private and third sector organisations~~ can make were invited as part of this process to make proposals on potential ~~types of~~ projects and activities to affect climate action and ~~which could~~ help create a more positive future for communities affected by peat phase out. Longford County Council were successful in securing support for a feasibility study on the development of renewable energy and associate circular economic activities at Lanesboro under this fund.

Climate Action and 'Just Transition' Fund Opportunities – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 6.85	Support the development and delivery of projects in County Longford under the <i>Just Transition Fund</i> and as identified in any related Implementation Plans in collaboration with local communities and other key stakeholders.
CPO 6.86	Investigate the use of State Agency Lands in County Longford for Green Energy Projects.
CPO 6.87	Examine the potential for using the existing infrastructure in the Lough Ree power plant and adjacent lands in Lanesborough for the development of an energy/tourism hub renewable resources and the circular economy. in the midlands.
CPO 6.88	Further expand the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure nationally, network including the enhancement of the charging network in County Longford.
CPO 6.89	Support the development of digital Hubs for Remote Working in County Longford.
CPO 6.90	Work with Gas Networks Ireland, Teagasc, Irish Water, Bord na Mona, Just Transition process, and the private sector in association with targeted funding streams to develop and deliver renewable energy solutions and to develop the circular economy.
CPO 6.91	Prioritise regeneration. Regeneration proposals that focus heavily on will be proofed to ensure sustainable responses to Climate Change mitigation and adaptation.
CPO 6.92	Seek to utilise Utilise the Council response to Climate Action Change as a catalyst for future regeneration within the county and ensure the alignment of all future proposals with its Climate Change Actions and the Climate Action Plan relevant and local policy actions, and as contained in the Longford County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 – 2024, and updates.

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6.7 Regeneration Climate Context and Associated Actions

In accordance with the format set out in *Chapter 3: Climate Change* of this Plan, the following is an assessment of the content of this chapter in a Climate Context and associated Actions.

Stopping CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels today will not reverse the damage already been inflicted on the planet⁴. Climate change will continue to advance but at a slower rate if action is not implemented. Never has regeneration played such a pivotal role in its ability to deliver not just 'carbon-neutral', but 'carbon negative' development. This challenge is set against a world where more than one million people every week relocate from rural to urban environments, each with the expectation of better access to jobs, education, health care, housing and quality of life⁵.

Urban Regeneration has been defined as "a comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of an area that has been subject to change"⁶. The sustainable delivery of this concept can be simply achieved by, putting brownfield and empty buildings first, applying higher densities, engaging with existing communities, encouraging mixed use development, using sustainable energy and causing minimal environmental impact.

In order to make our towns and cities more sustainable, they must be made more compact, better connected and less damaging to the environment; as the less dense our cities, the further the sprawl, the worse the traffic problem. Encouraging and replicating mixed-use, closely knit neighbourhoods ordered around streets and open spaces through good design and planning, intensifying and maximising mixed-use development while protecting the character of existing communities remains constant.

Regeneration has the potential to extend its scope well beyond the traditional realms of urban design and immerse itself into agriculture, technology, waste, and even human behaviour or biophilic design to combat climate change. Biophilic design is based on using nature-based systems, engineering principles (low energy buildings) and design cues to ultimately improve our environment, health and efficiency.

Four funds are available under 'Project Ireland 2040' designed to stimulate renewal and investment in rural and urban and urban areas, the environment and innovation. These consist of the Climate Action Fund, Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF), Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) and the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund, all of which have the potential to play a leading role in addressing climate change.

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⁴ Mauristen, T. & Pinus, P. (2017), 'Committed warming inferred from observations', Nature Climate Change Journal, 31 July 2017.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/nclimate3357>

⁵ International Organisation for Migration (2015), 'World Migration Report 2015, Overview – Migrants and Cities: New Partnerships to Manage Mobility'.

<https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/syria/IOM-World-Migration-Report-2015-Overview.pdf>

⁶ Roberts, P (2000), 'The Evolution, definition and Purpose of Urban Regeneration', Urban Regeneration Handbook, London, SAGE Publications, UK.

[https://www.scrip.org/\[S\(ceh2tfayw2orz553k1w0r45\)\]/reference/ReferencesPapers.aspx?ReferencelD=2167998](https://www.scrip.org/[S(ceh2tfayw2orz553k1w0r45)]/reference/ReferencesPapers.aspx?ReferencelD=2167998)

Regeneration Climate Actions

Longford County Council shall:

- A6.1 Discourage single land use and typologies within large scale developments, as considered by the Planning Authority.
- A6.2 Require all large-scale developments (as determined by the Planning Authority) to submit supporting and professionally prepared carbon footprint calculations, and an outline of the proposed measure to be implemented to offset same;
- A6.3 ~~Require an~~ Seek to develop an annual flagship Regeneration ~~application, project~~ to exclude those relating to trails, exclusively for the benefit of climate ~~change~~ action.
- A6.4 Prepare a marketing leaflet for Longford Town and towns within the functional area to encourage development within the serviced settlements.

Enhance sustainable and equitable transfer to carbon neutral society through the just transition process

Promote consolidation and reduce need to travel through increasing the attractiveness of settlements as places to live.

Provide sustainable alternatives to travel such as rural working hubs and pedestrian connectivity between places of attraction in rural and urban areas

Increase sustainability of travel by provision of EV charging points as part of regeneration projects, investigating the potential of renewable CNG as a transport fuel and enhancing access to public transport, particularly in rural areas

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Chapter 7: Placemaking

Should be read in conjunction with Regeneration Section

7.1 Introduction

Placemaking relates to the interrelationship and connection between people and the spaces they use. It includes how people move around places, the buildings and structures and their uses as well as the open space and landscape of an area and place and how these elements combine to influence the perception, legibility and identity of an area. It therefore requires a peoplepedestrian-centred-focused approach to the planning, design and management of our settlements and the built environment, utilising specific uses and features as assets from which to build a distinct sense of place. Placemaking is underpinned by good urban design, which seeks to create public spaces that are vibrant, distinctive, safe and accessible and which promote and facilitate social interaction, creating an attractive environment to promote investment and economic growth.

Placemaking is an essential link between spatial planning and improving people's quality of life through the creation of attractive places to live, work, visit and invest. The place or environment in which we live or work, including its physical nature and social environment or community has a profound impact on our physical and mental health well-being. The availability of, and accessibility toof, services is key to creating healthier and inclusive places. This includes access to adequate housing and employment choice, supported by good healthcare and education, quality public realm and access to nature, the arts and cultural heritage.

There are significant national and regional policy requirements, along with section 28 guidelines which relate to Placemaking. In working towards establishing viable and sustainable communities, it is important to ensure that the Development Plan is underpinned by policies and proposals that are consistent with overarching national and regional guidance and policies in respect of social and community development. The national strategic outcomes of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the regional policy objectives of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) place a new policy emphasis on sustainable renewaling and developing of existing urban settlements. The importance of healthy, inclusive placemaking and the provision of a high quality public realm with a vibrant use mix, including adequate social infrastructure, climate action supports and biodiversity enhancement – are central components of same. The COVID-19 crisis and subsequent lockdowns have highlighted the need for good placemaking practice. Strong accessible connections to amenity areas and recreational facilities for residents of Longford town core in particular, were essential during this time and provide insight into the development requirements of future proposals to enhance liveability and the maintenance of local economies in the County over the plan period.

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Commented [AM2]: Cross refer to relevant regeneration section in relation to regeneration projects under various funding streams that have contributed to placemaking in a holistic way

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7.2 Statutory Context

Section 10(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, sets out a list of mandatory objectives to be included in a Development Plan. A number of these objectives relate to social infrastructure, either directly or indirectly. The creation of

healthy, socially inclusive communities is a cross cutting theme of the Development Plan.

7.3 Policy Context

7.3.1 *National Planning Framework (NPF) 2018*

The National Planning Framework (NPF) in Chapter 6 'People, Homes and Communities' outlines how location, place and accessibility influence the quality of life that people enjoy.

Commented [AM4]: Cross refer to relevant section in regeneration that addresses interconnectedness of NSOs in a Longford context – RRDF, URDF etc

7.3.2 *Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES)*

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly (EMRA) emphasises the concept of Placemaking as a tool to enable sustained economic growth and employment, including the integration of better urban design, public realm, amenities and heritage to create attractive and liveable places that support active lifestyles and human health. The RSES addresses a wide range of issues including education, health, sports and community facilities and attempts to address mis-alignment in the Region across a range of factors including school provision, facilities and child-friendly amenities.

The following Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSO) are of note: -

- RSO 2: Promote the regeneration of our cities, towns and villages by making better use of under-used land and buildings within the existing built-up urban footprint and to drive the delivery of quality housing and employment choice for the Region's citizens.
- RSO 3: Support sustainable rural development and strengthen rural networks, economies and communities. Manage urban generated growth in areas under strong urban influence and encourage sustainable growth in areas that have experienced decline or stagnation.
- RSO 4: Protect and enhance the quality of our built and natural environment to support active lifestyles including walking and cycling, ensure clean air and water for all and quality healthcare and services that support human health.
- RSO 5: Enhance, integrate and protect our arts, culture and heritage assets to promote creative places and heritage led regeneration.

The County Development Plan has been aligned to the Regional Strategic Outcomes (RSOs) and associated relevant Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs).

Commented [AM5]: Cross refer to Relevant regeneration for Longford Specific objectives and how these have been implemented to date

7.3.3 *Framework for Town Centre Renewal, 2017*

This sets out key characteristics of a successful town centre and includes an Action Plan for Town Centre Renewal. 'Key Attributes' for successful town centres are also listed which include the following Strategies:

- A Placemaking Strategy – to ensure that a town positions itself as an attractive location for investment, for talent and as a place to enjoy a good quality of life

and the need for planning policy to place greater emphasis on placemaking for town centres at the key stages of development of Local Area Plans and Development Plans.

- A Visual Appearance Strategy – to ensure that town centres are attractive places to visit if they are to succeed and thrive and in particular the importance of revitalising existing spaces incrementally rather than depending on large-scale redevelopment.

Longford County Council is committed to ensuring a plan-led and delivery focused approach to securing compact sustainable growth centred on the principles of placemaking and the provision of social infrastructure in accordance with the National Planning Framework, the Eastern and Midlands Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the relevant guidance documents.

7.4 County Longford Placemaking Strategy

7.4.1 Healthy Placemaking

Healthy placemaking seeks to protect and enhance the unique identity and character of places and to facilitate improvements to human wellbeing and the quality of life that comes from the interaction of people and their environment. The creation of healthy and attractive places requires ongoing improvements to the physical and social infrastructure of urban centres. Placemaking is underpinned by good urban design, which seeks to create public spaces that are vibrant, distinctive, safe and accessible and which promote and facilitate social interaction.

Commented [AM6]: Repetition from intro

Figure 7.1: Placemaking Strategy (EMRA RSES, p205).



It is recognised that good Placemaking is both physical and social environmental – climate action, green infrastructure and biodiversity? and as such incorporates both tangible and non-tangible elements (see Figure 7.1). It incorporates an appropriate recognition and placement of the role of the town centre, associated good town centre management, public realm works and the creation of creative spaces and the provision of adequate social infrastructure.

A key element of healthy placemaking is the need to ensure the provision of alternatives to the car in the design of streets and public spaces, and to prioritise and promote cycling and walking as active means of transport. The provision of high-quality public transport, greenways and cycleways can enhance areas, contributing to more attractive places and creating opportunities to be physically active, and reduce the negative consequences of car-based commuting.

The Eastern and Midland RSES identifies 'Healthy Placemaking' as one of the 3 no. key principles for growth, which aims 'to promote people's quality of life through the

Commented [AM7]: Reference relevant regeneration section re: initiatives to date – connectivity improvements to promote sustainable travel in urban and rural areas, URDF RRDF initiatives

creation of healthy and attractive places to live, work, visit and study in'. In terms of regional guidance, the EMRA RSES contains a number of *Guiding Principles for Healthy Placemaking* which have been incorporated into the Development Plan.

EMRA Guiding Principles for Healthy Placemaking

- Good urban design principles are integrated into the layout and design of new development, as set out in Departmental Guidelines 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' and the 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)'
- Future development prioritises the need for people to be physically active in their daily lives and to promote walking and cycling in the design of streets and public spaces
- New schools and workplaces are linked to walking and cycling networks
- Exposure of children to the promotion of unhealthy foods is reduced such as the careful consideration of the location of fast food outlets in the vicinity of schools and parks
- Provision of open space should consider types of recreation and amenity uses required
- Public open spaces to have good connectivity and be accessible by safe, secure walking and cycling routes
- Open space to be planned for on a multi-functional basis incorporating ecosystem services, climate change measures, Green Infrastructure and key landscape features in their design.

In this regard the Development Plan sets out to protect and enhance the unique identity and character of Longford's towns and villages and improve quality of life and well-being through the application of Healthy Placemaking, underpinned by good urban design, with the creation of attractive public spaces that are vibrant, distinctive, safe and accessible and which promote and facilitate positive social interaction.

It is also recognised that in accordance with Regional Policy Objective (RPO 9.10), there is a need to provide alternatives to the car, and to prioritise and promote cycling and walking in the design of streets and public spaces. Regard has been given to both the 'Guiding Principles for Healthy Placemaking' and 'Integration of Land Use and Transport' as set out in the RSES and to national policy as set out in 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' and the 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)'.

Healthy Placemaking – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.1	Support new development which supports public health policy.
CPO 7.2	Promote the development of healthy and attractive places by ensuring exposure of children to the promotion of unhealthy foods is reduced such as through the careful consideration of the location of fast food outlets in the vicinity of schools and parks.

Commented [AM8]: Development Standards?

CPO 7.3	Provide alternatives to the car and to Continue to prioritise and promote cycling and walking in the design of streets and public spaces <u>through enhanced physical, visual and perceptual connectivity.</u>
CPO 7.4	Encourage sustainable and low carbon transport modes through the promotion of alternative modes of transport and 'walkable communities', whereby a range of facilities and services between residential, and employment centres <u>and services including childcare, healthcare and education</u> will be accessible within short walking or cycling distance.
CPO 7.5	Have regard to the Guiding Principles for 'Healthy Placemaking' and 'Integration of Land Use and Transport' as set out in the EMRA RSES.
CPO 7.6	Have regard to national policy as set out in 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' and the 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)'.
CPO 7.7	Cater for all levels of disability, through the appropriate mitigation of the built environment, and in particular for the needs of an ageing population.
CPO 7.8	Promote the development of healthy and attractive places by ensuring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of open space should consider types of recreation and amenity uses required; • Public open spaces to have good connectivity and be accessible by safe, secure walking and cycling routes; • Open space to be planned for on a multi-functional basis incorporating ecosystem services, climate change <u>Action</u> measures, Green Infrastructure and key landscape features in their design.

Commented [AM9]: Could work as one objective or refer to – in the consideration of public realm design

Commented [AM10]: Universal accessibility section?

Commented [AM11]: Works with CPO 7.3

7.4.2 Elements of Placemaking

Placemaking includes many elements, the principal ones of which are addressed accordingly:

7.4.2.1 Public Realm Improvements

Public realm comprises of the public outdoor spaces accessible to everyone, from squares, parks and open spaces to the footpaths and the streets that link them. Effective public realm interventions can dramatically improve human wellbeing and the vitality and viability of town and villages centres by enhancing the attractiveness of places for business investment, as well as for residents, workers, visitors and shoppers. Public realm plays a vital role in presenting the identity, character, image and 'atmosphere' of our towns and villages. Social activity in the public realm is heavily dependent on the quality of the built environment

Commented [AM12]: Refer to regeneration – URDF RRDF initiatives in a Longford specific context

Poorly considered infrastructure such as overhead wiring, excessive or garish signage and advertising, and an array of street furniture styles can be detrimental to the visual amenity of public spaces. It is essential that a consistent approach is maintained in the selection of street furniture, materials and installations rather than an ad-hoc mix of styles. A simple, uncluttered and consistent design approach is considered as the key to success. For example, in historic quarters, traditional signage, lighting columns and benches may be more appropriate, whereas a more contemporary modern approach would be suited for new innovative developments.

The concept of creative placemaking presents an opportunity to evolve our existing urban spaces to create attractive and memorable places that interweave and showcase Longford's arts, culture and heritage as part of the urban fabric. Development should contribute to the creation of a distinct sense of place and identity that not only facilitates, but encourages and creates opportunities for activity and interaction, from simple day to day activity to social, seasonal and planned events. It is important therefore that proposals for development show regard to existing features of interest and incorporate such features into design proposals. It is also recognised that the installation of Public Art can provide for interesting and creative focal points within our towns and villages.

Public Realm Improvements – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.9	Prepare Design Guidelines to provide for improvements in the appearance of streetscapes and for revitalising spaces.
CPO 7.10	Promote the value of placemaking in town centres, by preparing a Placemaking Strategy for the towns of Longford, Edgeworthstown, Ballymahon, Granard and Lanesborough, and any other urban areas as deemed appropriate.
CPO 7.11	Seek funding to support the preparation of site-specific Public Realm Strategies to enhance the unique characteristics and assets of Longford's towns and villages.
CPO 7.12	Ensure the best quality of design is achieved for all new commercial and residential development, which respects and enhances the specific characteristics of the different towns and villages in the County, by promoting quality urban design that accommodates creative patterns of use having regard to the physical, cultural, and social identities of individual settlements <u>building on existing investment in these measures to date.</u>
CPO 7.13	Provide for improvements to the appearance of streetscapes and revitalisation of public spaces for example with cost effective, temporary uses that build on the longer-term vision for space.
CPO 7.14	Apply the following key attributes when considering public realm and public space enhancements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible - connected and linked permeable spaces to ensure ease of movement; • Functional - safe, adaptable and social environments to attract and foster activity; • Attractive - visually pleasing spaces with high quality design, materials and installations (lighting, furniture and signage) based on a singular common design theme; • Distinctive - reference to local context and building on the character and identity of place.

Commented [AM13]: Are these initiatives to be progressed as part of Statutory LAP?

7.4.2.2 Universal Design

Universal Design refers to the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by everyone.

Successful public spaces are multi-dimensional and appeal to people of all abilities, young and old, for a variety of reasons and purposes with a central focus on improving quality of life. In catering for various cohorts in terms of older persons and disabled persons, young families etc., it is important to recognise that successful buildings, urban spaces and public realms should not only be attractive but should serve a functional purpose that is easily accessible to everyone, regardless of age or ability. It is therefore important in the creation of new or adapted built environments that an inclusive universal design approach is undertaken. Quality placemaking should integrate the principles of universal access in the design of buildings, housing, public realm, amenities and transport services to create places that are safe, easy to move around and accessible to all (National Disability Authority 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach').

Universal Design – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.15	Require proposals for public realm and built environment enhancements, include inclusive universal design principles.
CPO 7.16	Require that all new developments and social infrastructure provision, including public open spaces, are accessible and inclusive for a range of users and provide for an age friendly and disability friendly society by way of appropriate design of the built environment.
CPO 7.17	Promote simple and considered design interventions in urban environments as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elimination of stepped features to facilitate wheelchair users and to assist people with prams, suitcases or shopping trolleys, those using walking or mobility aids and people with impaired vision; • Use of clear, well-placed signage and way-marking using recognised symbols or pictograms and visual supports to help the visually impaired and people with reading or cognitive difficulties and which can be understood by different language speakers; • Provision of sensory-friendly designs and layouts, with considered lighting and wayfinding installations together with sensory sensitive physical spaces to provide an inclusive and autism friendly environment; • Provision of designated parking spaces for older persons close to shopping centre entrances and any other such places as deemed appropriate; • Provision of outdoor retractable seating for older and infirmed persons; • Provision of seating areas for older persons and infirmed persons in commercial and retail premises.

Commented [AM14]: Specific design guidance rather than strategic objective
 Could refer to –

- Town centre placemaking – prevent leakage to periphery/out of centre locations? Reference retail strategy? Appropriate mix of uses to increase use of TC/attractiveness
- Parking policy?
- Links to LEO
- Living-over the-shop, BID, Purple flag initiatives
- Refer to VSL in regeneration
- Industry and enterprise – role of LEO, design statements – PP/DM CPO 7.23-25

7.4.2.3 Town Centre Placemaking

Successful town centres are the chosen destinations that attract a variety of people offering retail, business, hospitality and a range of amenities and services, thus playing an important and influential role in supporting and promoting local economic growth. They are the destinations that represent the social and economic heartbeat of our

towns with an active role in retaining the vibrancy and vitality of the urban fabric. Successful town centres are people-orientated places - they present attractive and welcoming destinations, where residents and visitors can enjoy a safe, pleasant and vibrant destination and where businesses can thrive, in turn adding value to the vitality and vibrancy. However town centres are facing challenges presented by the growth of online shopping. It is therefore essential that our town centres adapt and offer more than the traditional 'high street' retail offering. As such to maintain and create activity in town centres, ongoing physical and social infrastructure improvements are required. It is important to provide a competitive mix of compatible uses, including retail and non-retail/entertainment (cafés, bars, restaurants) providing for a bustling vibrant atmosphere attracting people to work, live and recreate in the same area. This is dealt with in more detail in *Chapter 8: Economic Development*.

The *Town Centre Renewal Framework (2017)* outlines the key attributes of a successful town centre and identifies existing supports and best practice examples from around the country. The Framework includes an Action Plan for Town Centre Renewal which is intended to be a blueprint for towns and villages that also provides a structure for collaborative partnerships among stakeholders to achieve successful town centre renewal, whether a large town or small village.

Town Centre Placemaking – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.18	Support investment in town and village centres so that they can become more sustainable places for communities to live, work and enjoy.
CPO 7.19	Promote a range of complimentary commercial activities in existing buildings previously in single commercial use.
CPO 7.20	Ensure that all town and village centre proposals positively enhance the public realm.
CPO 7.21	Support the key attributes and strategies of the <i>Framework for Town Centre Renewal 2017</i> .
CPO 7.22	Support the use of targeted financial incentives to strengthen the role of town and villages centres <u>(could refer to incentives outlined under active land management)</u> .

Commented [AM15]: ?

7.4.2.4 Regeneration

In terms of placemaking this overlaps with the concept of regeneration. A central objective of this Plan is to regenerate the County's towns and villages by making better use of under-used land and buildings within the existing built-up urban footprint (see *Chapter 3: Core Strategy and Housing* and *Chapter 6 Regeneration* for more detail). Given the varied nature and attributes of the town and village centres in Longford, these chapters provide a framework to guide new development, regeneration and renewal of our towns and villages.

Commented [AM17]: Move paragraph to intro?

7.4.2.5 Industry and Enterprise Placemaking

While a range of factors is required to attract inward investments such as good access and location, success is hugely dependent on the quality and appropriateness of the facilities provided. In an increasingly competitive business market, investing in design

and innovation can serve to assist Longford with a comparative advantage. In order to sustain a competitive business edge, it is important that applications for new business and enterprise sites are accompanied by a Design Statement, which supports the local topography of the area and is underpinned by sustainable and energy efficient development and transportation principles.

Also the Longford Economic Strategy as detailed in *Chapter 8: Economic Development* encompasses the creation of 'live work' communities by promoting economic development in tandem with an inclusive and diverse community structure. This will allow people not just to live in the County, but also to invest in, work in and learn in Longford.

Industry and Enterprise Placemaking – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.23	Require all new enterprise / industry proposals to submit Design Statements which provide a positive visual presence underpinned by sustainable and energy efficient principles.
CPO 7.24	Ensure Greenfield Developments integrate with existing landscape features and incorporate natural features into the site layout.
CPO 7.25	Require industry / enterprise proposals to be accompanied with a Mobility Management Plan to include a site-specific programme to facilitate and promote sustainable operational practices, including the use of public transport services, walking and cycling.

Commented [AM18]: Threshold/scale required to trigger this requirement?

7.4.3 Social and Community Infrastructure

Part of placemaking is the provision of adequate social and community infrastructure. Successful places support a wide range of services and facilities that meet local and strategic needs and contribute towards a good quality of life. Such social infrastructure plays an important role in developing strong and inclusive communities and includes facilities in relation to health, education, libraries, childcare, recreation, cultural facilities, burial grounds and emergency facilities. Social infrastructure should be easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Shared use and co-location of facilities should be encouraged, in order to align service provision, use land more efficiently and facilitate opportunities for further inclusion and community participation.

Over the lifetime of the Development Plan population growth and changing demographics will require a policy response to ensure positive health outcomes for children, young people, older people, and families to support the population throughout life stage development. In catering for the provision of adequate social and community infrastructure, the County faces a number of challenges in terms of placemaking and its demographic components. Understanding the County's demographic structure is central to preparing a strategy which will address future community needs. The CSO figures highlight demographic pressures that will likely remain a feature in the County.

7.4.3.1 Growing Population

County Longford has experienced significant population growth. In 2011 County Longford had a population of 39,000 persons, which grew by 4.8% (1,873 persons) to

40,873 persons by 2016. Taking account of the characteristics of the growth categories this has implications in terms of social infrastructure provision.

7.4.3.2 Growing Youth Cohort

According to Census 2016, the population aged 19 years and under in County Longford accounted for 12,111 persons, equating to 29.6 % of the total county population and an increase of 1.8 % (695 persons) since the 2011 Census. This generates requirements for provision of adequate childcare, educational facilities and other associated infrastructure provision.

7.4.3.3 Ageing Population

According to Census 2016, the population aged 65 years and over in County Longford accounted for 5,824 persons (14.3%) of the total population, equating to an increase of 19.3% since the 2011 Census. Nationally the demographic of Ireland's population is changing with an increasing ageing population. By 2026 there will be 1.15 million people in Ireland aged 60 or over, representing almost one out of every four people.

Figure 7.2: Changing Demographic Profile – Age Structure 2016 to 2031
(Source: CSO)

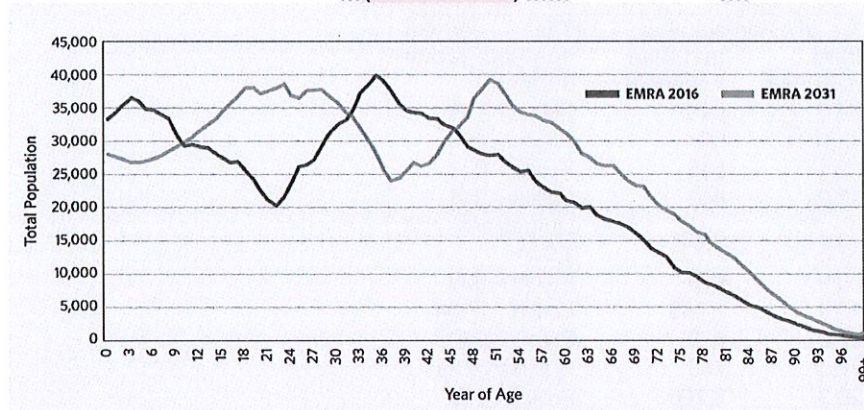


Figure 7.2 shows the largest increases in population are expected in the 50 to 55 age cohort to 2031. The persons aged over 65 is projected to increase significantly in the coming years, with the RSES projecting that growth rates of persons aged over 85's set to almost double. Likewise, the age profile of County Longford, over the coming years it is expected to follow a trend of an increasing ageing population.

7.4.3.4 Disabled Population

There were 5,916 persons registered as living with a disability or chronic illness in Longford equating to 15% of the County's population and representing an increase of 9.5 % on previous 2011 census figures. The Longford figure is also higher than the

national figure of 13.5%. This must be acknowledged in terms of the provision of healthy placemaking and adequate social infrastructure provision.

7.4.3.5 Ethnic Groups

Migration is recognised as a key driver of future population growth over the lifetime of the EMRA RSES, with Longford specifically identified as demographically diverse within the State. In fact, Longford is identified as a settlement which has more than a quarter of its residents born outside the State. Between 2011 to 2016, nationally only eight counties recorded an increase in their non-Irish national population, with the County of Longford having the second largest increase where the non-Irish population increased by 502 persons (9.1 %).

Figure 7.3 shows the 10 towns where more than 26 per cent of the population were non-Irish. This shows that County Longford has 3 towns (Edgeworthstown, Ballymahon and Longford) among the top 10 towns identified nationally with the highest proportion of non-Irish nationals.

Figure 7.3: Towns with the highest percentage of non-Irish nationals, 2016

Town	County	Number of residents	% of Irish nationals	Number of non-Irish nationals	The largest non-Irish group (number)
Ballyhaunis	Mayo	2,383	39.5	941	Polish – 159
Edgeworthstown	Longford	2,062	32.3	667	Polish – 163
Ballymahon	Longford	1,866	32.1	599	Polish – 273
Ballyjamesduff	Cavan	2,689	30.2	812	Polish – 311
Monaghan	Monaghan	7,597	30.1	2,287	Lithuanian – 1,004
Saggart	Dublin	3,145	28.9	909	Polish – 326
Longford	Longford	10,011	27.4	2,740	Polish – 1,004
Cahir	Tipperary	3,590	27.3	979	Polish – 340
Gort	Galway	2,951	26.6	785	Brazilian – 397
Cavan	Cavan	10,656	26.2	2,790	Polish – 827

Edgeworthstown with 667 persons representing 32.2 per cent of the total population; Ballymahon with 599 persons representing 32.1 % of the population; and Longford town with 2,740 persons, representing 27.4% of the population. This compared with an average non-Irish population of 14.9 per cent for all towns over 1,500 in 2016.

7.4.3.6 Traveller Community

Nationally the number of usual residents present in the State and enumerated as Irish Travellers in Census 2016 increased from 2011, by 5.1 per cent. Notably the biggest percentage increases were recorded in Longford where Traveller numbers rose by 40.8 %. Nationally Longford had the highest absolute increase in Traveller numbers

of any county, and the highest number of Travellers per head of population, with 25.7 Travellers for every thousand people.

Also, the structure of the Irish Traveller population is very different to that of the general population, with a broad base at the younger ages and reducing sharply at higher ages. Nearly 58.1% Irish Travellers were under 25 years of age, compared to just over 33.4% in the general population. In terms of those aged 65; this is significantly lower than the general population.

7.4.4 Social and Community Infrastructure Requirements

As a result of the particular population characteristics, there is therefore potential for mis-alignment in the county across a range of social and infrastructure services in the county, which the Development Plan aims to address. The Development Plan aims to consider demographic trends and patterns in terms of the provision of social infrastructure.

Longford County Council recognises that it is important to work collaboratively with service providers and stakeholders including the local community through LCDCs and the LECPs to identify social infrastructure needs and set out an agreed programme of social infrastructure provision.

In terms of housing provision the changing demographic patterns envisaged will require a change in tenure typologies. Changing household formation trends require a range of housing typologies, including smaller units, shared living schemes and flexible designs that are adaptive for people's full life cycle to meet their housing needs today and into the future. The provision of affordable, appropriate, adaptable and quality accommodation is recognised as key to positive health outcomes.

Also in accordance with the RSES, the quality of services and amenities for a diverse and multi-cultural society will be a key determinant in how successful and attractive the County is and will require a planning response to support the integration of traveller and migrant communities, to ensure that diverse needs are met now and over the lifetime of the Strategy.

Social and Community Infrastructure Provision – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.26	Work collaboratively with relevant service providers and stakeholders to facilitate the provision of community services and social infrastructure, where appropriate, in order to meet the needs of new and existing communities.
CPO 7.27	Support the relevant actions of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and the Longford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) to deliver social infrastructure needs and to reduce poverty and social exclusion.

CPO 7.28	Support the planned provision of easily accessible social, community, cultural and recreational facilities and ensure all communities have access to a range of facilities that meet their needs easily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport.
CPO 7.29	Encourage shared use and co-location of social and community facilities, in order to align service provision, use land more efficiently and facilitate opportunities for further inclusion and community participation.
CPO 7.30	Ensure the integration of age friendly and family friendly strategies in all design proposals and that provision is made for flexible housing typologies, and that buildings and public spaces are designed for all, including older people, disabled people and people with young children.
CPO 7.31	Support initiatives to increase social integration of minority groups, including non-Irish nationals and Travellers.
CPO 7.32	Secure the implementation of the Council's Traveler Accommodation Programme and to review this programme, if required and/or deemed to be necessary, during the Plan period.

7.4.5 Healthcare and Care Facilities

The availability and access to health services is central to creating healthier places. In addressing lifestyle induced illness and an aging population, the provision of educative and primary health care can support lifestyle adjustments that help people avoid tertiary care, leading to a more effective and less burdened health-care system.

The Council recognises the need to ensure the provision of appropriate care facilities and accommodation for the elderly and other vulnerable people. In addition to universal design standards, the quality of such accommodation is dependent on its location in terms of safe and convenient access to services and amenities. As such, there is a presumption against the development of Residential Respite and Retirement Homes in the open countryside for reasons relating to sustainability, poor accessibility and lack of public transport, social exclusion, isolation and safety.

Healthcare and Care Facilities – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.33	Facilitate the development of primary health care centres, hospitals, clinics, and facilities to cater for the specific needs of an ageing population in accordance with the settlement strategy and core strategy.
CPO 7.34	Support and encourage the development of sustainable retirement villages and sheltered housing for older persons in appropriate serviced town and village locations in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
CPO 7.35	Implement the following criteria when designing proposals for residential care homes, retirement homes, nursing homes, retirement villages and sheltered accommodation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location/Placemaking - Locate new developments close (walking distance) to services and amenities; • Physical Considerations – Employment of Universal Design standards;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology - Integrate technology into developments, enhancing safety and security, health monitoring, comfort and social connectedness; • Social Supports - Integrate social supports into developments, access to information, find non-health service-based solutions; • Adequate provision of open space informed by the need to cater for all levels of disability and in particular the needs of an ageing population and mobility impaired users, in line with Ministerial and Departmental guidelines; • Apply standards outlined in the Housing Options for Our Ageing Population and the Housing Agency document <i>Thinking Ahead: Independent and Supported Housing Modes for an Ageing Population</i>; • Provision of adequate parking facilities; • Innovative high-quality design and materials; • Potential impact on the residential amenities of adjoining properties.
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7.4.6 Education

School provision is a key part of social infrastructure to be provided in tandem with housing provision. The Development Plan seeks to prioritise the alignment of targeted and planned population and employment growth with educational investment, including the provision of new schools on well-located sites within or close to existing built-up areas that meet the diverse needs of local populations. It is expected that the number of children will continue to increase until the mid 2020's and decline only slowly thereafter. This means that the continued provision and enhancement of facilities and amenities for children and young people, such as childcare, schools, playgrounds, parks and sportsgrounds, is a priority and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

The Council will support the provision of high-quality education and training provision, including the allocation of sufficient sites and the development of childcare facilities, schools, and colleges in appropriate locations to cater for population growth targets, to provide for greater educational choice to facilitate improvement in skills, and to assist in tackling disadvantage.

Car dependency is a significant mode of school transport in the County. In addition to factoring sustainable access as a condition for new schools and educational infrastructure, a programme of settlement retrofit will be encouraged to facilitate safe walking, cycling or ease of access to public transport alternatives. Optimally, schools need to be located along sustainable transport corridors (i.e. walking, cycling, public transport). Co-ordinated decision making on school locations with the Department of Education and Skills will be carried out, with a planned approach to education provision to locate new school facilities within access to public transport and active travel modes.

Education – County Policy Objectives

It is the County Policy Objective to:

CPO 7.36	Work collaboratively with the Department of Education and Skills to ensure a planned approach to education provision and to the location of school facilities within access to public transport and sustainable travel modes (i.e. walking, cycling).
CPO 7.37	Ensure in areas where significant new housing is proposed, an assessment of need regarding schools' provision is carried out in collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills.
CPO 7.38	Ensure Local Area Plans prepared over the lifetime of the Development Plan, designate new school sites at accessible, pedestrian, cycle and public transport friendly locations.
CPO 7.39	Develop a programme for existing schools to facilitate safe walking, cycling or ease of access to public transport alternatives.

Commented [AM19]: Surely placemaking is concerned with the interaction of these areas rather than a detailed analysis of each which is already contained in another section?

Commented [AM20]: Should cross refer to relevant regeneration section

7.4.7 Recreation and Open Space Provision

In terms of placemaking, the focus on compact growth and increased densities in urban areas will require a greater alignment between the development of communities and the provision and planning of open space to provide for the recreational and amenity needs of communities. Recreation infrastructure and green spaces which are attractive, rich in biodiversity and well connected are shown to contribute to improved physical and mental health. It is important to consider green space within a holistic framework, as it can be enhanced through other means in the built environment, including the quality of the surrounding environment, density of residences, land-use mix, connectedness and walkability. Green spaces also reduce air pollution, mitigate floods, protect wildlife and improve building energy performance.

Accordingly, the preparation of open space and park strategies and the importance for enhanced cross boundary collaboration to provide for a hierarchy of open space provision, including regional scale open space and recreational facilities is recognised. Also, the importance of planning for recreation and open space in accordance with the *EMRA RSES Recreation and Open Space Guiding Principles*, and the relevant parts of the previously cited *Guiding Principles for Healthy Placemaking* are recognised in the County Policy Objectives contained in this Development Plan.

Recreation and Open Space Provision – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.40	Support the development of recreation and open space in accordance with the <i>EMRA RSES Recreation and Open Space Guiding Principles</i> and <i>Guiding Principles for Healthy Placemaking</i> .
CPO 7.41	Promote the development of a wide variety of high quality accessible open space areas, for both active and passive use, and formal and informal activities in accordance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy.
CPO 7.42	Provide multifunctional open spaces at locations deemed appropriate providing for both passive and active uses.
CPO 7.43	Assess the existing parks and open space assets in the County over the life of the Development Plan to identify opportunities for improvements where necessary to increase their usefulness as recreational spaces.

CPO 7.44	Resist the loss of existing public open space, unless alternative recreational facilities are provided in a suitable location.
CPO 7.45	Ensure public open space is accessible and designed so that passive surveillance is provided.

7.4.8 Sports Facilities:

Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are essential to promoting good health, social cohesion, a sense of community and enhancing quality of life and well-being. The provision of facilities for sports and recreation to serve our growing communities is key in supporting healthy and sustainable communities. The County is well served by traditional facilities including sports clubs and leisure centres and the County is developing additional facilities such as greenways, blueways, peatways, cycle routes and walking trails.

Sports Facilities – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.46	Support the provision of multi-purpose sports halls, all-weather playing pitches and associated facilities in appropriate locations and promote the provision, improvement and expansion of sports facilities within the County subject to normal planning criteria and the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.
CPO 7.47	Support local sports groups, community groups and other groups in the development of facilities through the reservation of suitable land, the provision and development of outdoor and indoor sporting and community facilities, and the provision of funding where available and appropriate.
CPO 7.48	Ensure that new leisure facilities, where possible, are located in proximity to public transportation routes and where they can best meet the needs of the community that the facilities are intended to serve.
CPO 7.49	Facilitate the development of children's play areas and playgrounds in proximity to existing and proposed neighborhoods, where feasible.
CPO 7.50	Support the development of sport and recreational facilities and community-related projects through the Council's Capital Programme.

7.4.9 Libraries

The library service plays a very important community, information, cultural and outreach facility role within the County. The public library service provides an important means of access to information and to leisure reading facilities, while playing a major role in the advancement of the arts, education and local history throughout the County. Libraries have also become an important venue for cultural activities. The Council manages and operates the County's public library service from its headquarters in Longford, with 6 no. additional libraries in main settlements in the County. The most recent of these is Edgeworthstown where a new build facility is under construction.

Commented [AM21]: See comment at 7.4.3

Libraries – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	

CPO 7.51	Continue to expand and improve the library service to meet the needs of the community, subject to finance and in line with the objectives and priorities of <i>Our Public Libraries 2022: Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities</i> .
CPO 7.52	Enhance and improve library facilities in County Longford, and to retain and develop the library headquarters for the County.

7.4.10 Fire Services

The Council is responsible for the provision of the Fire Service in the County, which includes for the provision and maintenance of the network of 5 no. fire stations; Longford Town, Granard, Ballymahon, Edgeworthstown and Lanesborough. The Council aims to ensure that the Fire Stations in the County are adequate to meet the needs of the Fire Service and to provide an appropriate level of Fire Service cover in the County. In Ballymahon the current facility is not considered fit for purpose, and a submission has been made seeking departmental approval to construct a new Fire Station. The remaining network of fire stations are deemed at present to be appropriate having regard to the size of the county and the dispersal of those living in the County.

The Council has a role to play with regard to ensuring that Fire Service vehicles can access locations where fires or other incidents occur. In this regard the views and requirements of the Fire Service will be taken into account when decisions are being made in relation to proposed developments. The Council also seeks to ensure that Fire Safety Standards are maintained on an ongoing basis. The Fire Service carries out inspections of many premises on an annual basis and in certain circumstances the requirement to undertake particular works or other measures may be identified as part of the inspection process.

Fire Services – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.53	Acquire and provide an appropriate site for a new fire station in Ballymahon Town.
CPO 7.54	Support the upgrade and extension of fire stations as appropriate to cater for the needs of the County.
CPO 7.55	Ensure communities are adequately serviced by a modern and effective Fire Service and to facilitate the accommodation of fire service facilities in locations that allow ease of access and safe functioning with respect to the road network.
CPO 7.56	Continue to assess and evaluate applications for fire safety certificates through the Chief Fire Officer and pursue its fire prevention programme.
CPO 7.57	Provide advice and guidance with regard to proposed developments in order to ensure that appropriate provision is incorporated in the design of developments that reduce the likelihood of injury or damage to property.

7.4.11 Places of Worship

As the population of the County becomes more diverse there has been an increase in the number of faith communities in the County. This has given rise to demand for worship spaces. Community centres may provide temporary solutions, as communities become more established and/or numbers increase, a dedicated place of worship may be required. The Council will encourage appropriate, easily accessible locations which comply with the Council's standards with regard to design, vehicular movement/parking and landscaping etc.

Places of Worship – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.58	Encourage and facilitate the development of places of worship in appropriate locations in urban centres and proximate to residential communities.

7.4.12 Burial Grounds

Local Authorities are responsible for ensuring that there are adequate burial facilities, including the reservation and acquisition of lands for such facilities, where necessary. The Council aims to provide an adequate level of cemetery provision on a county wide basis, taking into account the likely future requirements. In this regard the Council will seek to ensure that the lands necessary to provide for future needs are acquired and developed in a planned manner.

Burial Grounds – County Policy Objectives	
It is the County Policy Objective to:	
CPO 7.59	Facilitate the provision of traditional burial grounds, eco-friendly burial grounds, crematoria, and the extension of existing cemeteries and associated facilities, as appropriate, to cater for the needs of the County, subject to appropriate planning considerations, including ground and surface water, environmental, noise and traffic impacts.
CPO 7.60	Facilitate and support the development of multi-denominational burial grounds, having an awareness of the needs of multi-faith and non-religious communities.
CPO 7.61	Ensure that the cemeteries and associated facilities for which the Council is responsible are accessible and appropriately maintained.
CPO 7.62	Encourage local community groups to develop, manage and maintain burial facilities.
CPO 7.63	Protect the cultural heritage of historical burial grounds within the County and encourage their management and maintenance in accordance with best conservation practice.

7.5 Placemaking Climate Context and Associated Actions

In accordance with the format set out in *Chapter 3: Climate Change* of this Plan the following is an assessment of the content of this chapter in a Climate Context and associated Actions.

Placemaking is an overarching idea, as well as a hands-on tool for improving spaces. Irrespective of scale, it can refer to a site, a street, a community, a village, a town, or even a county or region. Traditionally the placemaking process has associated itself

with the physical, social, ecological, cultural and 'spiritual' qualities of the urban realm. However, in an era of ever-increasing and more severe heat waves, precipitation, droughts, and floods, responding to the impacts of climate change has now firmly positioned itself alongside these considerations.

Public spaces are where physical and social resilience meet and can now be considered a crucial tool in our arsenal to mitigate and adapt to rising temperatures and extreme weather conditions. Local Authorities are increasingly exploring the capacity of 'Greenery and Amenities' to improve our thermal comfort, regulating air temperature, radiation, humidity and wind pattern, and subsequent use and amenity. Public spaces should connect with nature and on a more practical level, encourage us to walk and cycle, while moving away from auto-centric design to place-led development. Mass transit and walkable, bike-friendly cities are among the best to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Our streets must be considered more as spaces and understood as a crucial tool towards improving our sustainable habits and supporting communities.

Communities that are structurally sound, but also socially empowered and connected are more resilient to disaster. Climate Change will put increased pressure on economically constrained communities, many of which have limited resources to respond to the changing conditions. The most successful placemaking initiatives have strong community-based participation at its centre, prioritising the assess of local community and their potential to create quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and well-being.

Placemaking Actions

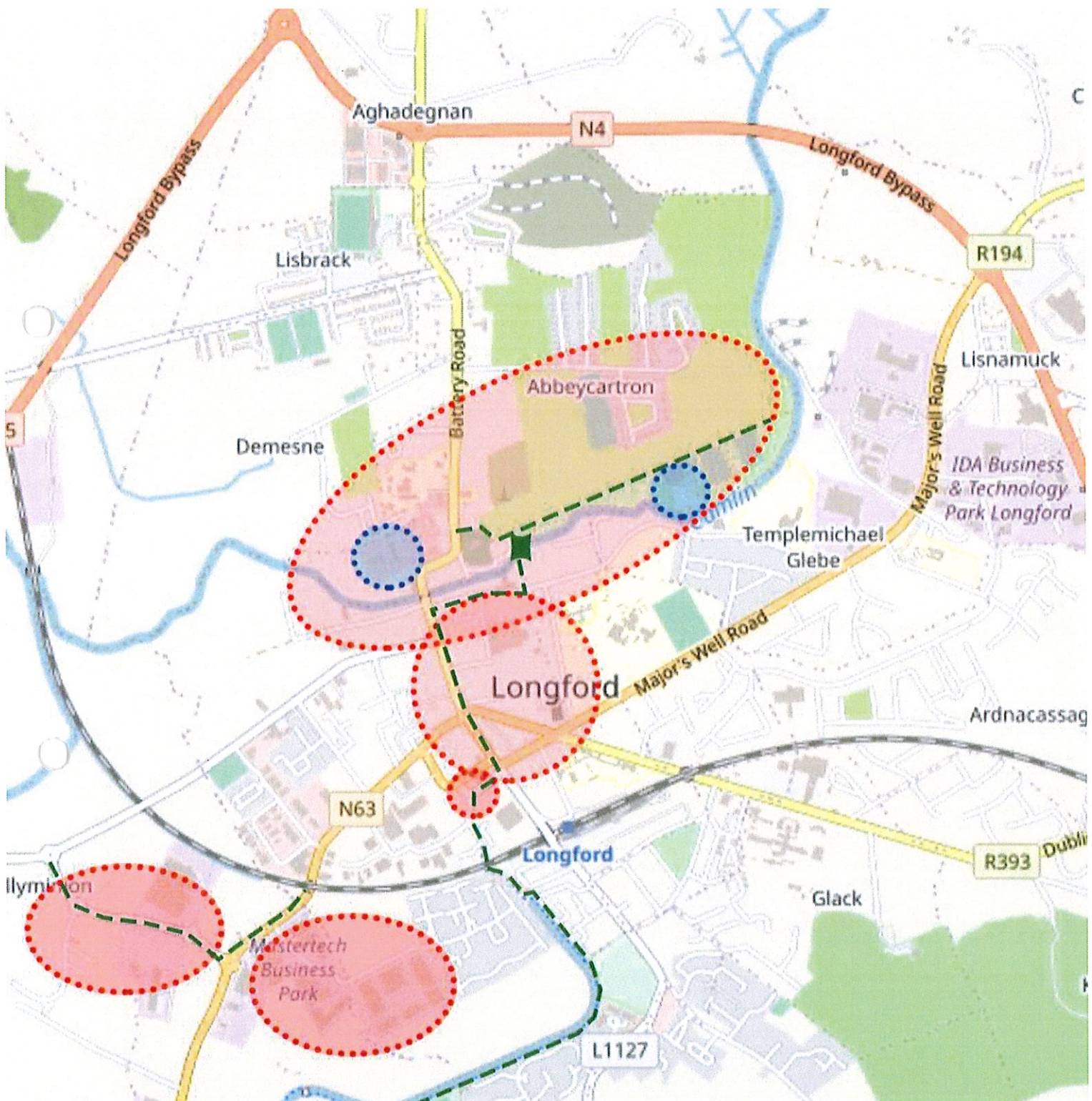
Longford County Council shall:

- A7.1 Prepare of an overarching landscaping plan for the towns of Longford, Ballymahon, Granard, Lanesborough and Edgeworthstown to identify pocket park, vertical landscaping, and green roof opportunities, and micro-spaces in Council public ownership to be immediately exploited, alongside an ambition to improve connectivity between green spaces, and the implement of same with stakeholder approval;
- A7.2 Prioritise the installation of soft-scaping over hardscaping within our towns and villages wherever possible, and ensure adequate understanding, adherence and address of the maintenance requirements of all existing and proposed surface treatments;
- A7.3 Encourage all large-scale development proposals to actively assess and demonstrate, increased and/or improved quality social spaces, both externally and internally;
- A7.4 The design of all open spaces to be professionally and adequately designed and orientated at its most preferred location within a scheme, and accompanied by a finishes schedule of highest quality and of sustainable materials;
- A7.5 Encourage the installation of awnings and retention of tree canopy cover where practicable, within the commercial areas of the county towns and villages;
- A7.6 Require all future residential developments over 10 no. or more units, to submit a Social and Community Statement, setting out the measures to be implemented that will bring about improved social benefit and amenity to the area (e.g. multiple house typologies, accessible housing, social services community housing, creche, etc).

Commented [AM22]: •Green infrastructure, flood mitigation, biodiversity, proximity to other functions/uses – encouraging walking cycling – Longford specific eg. Albert Reynolds peace park
 •Town Centre use mix – reduce need for vehicular travel
 •Installation of EV points at appropriate locations?
 •Co-location of facilities to reduce need to travel (bullet points above)
 •Promote Micro renewables and retrofit in conjunction with JTF and climate action plan

DRAFT

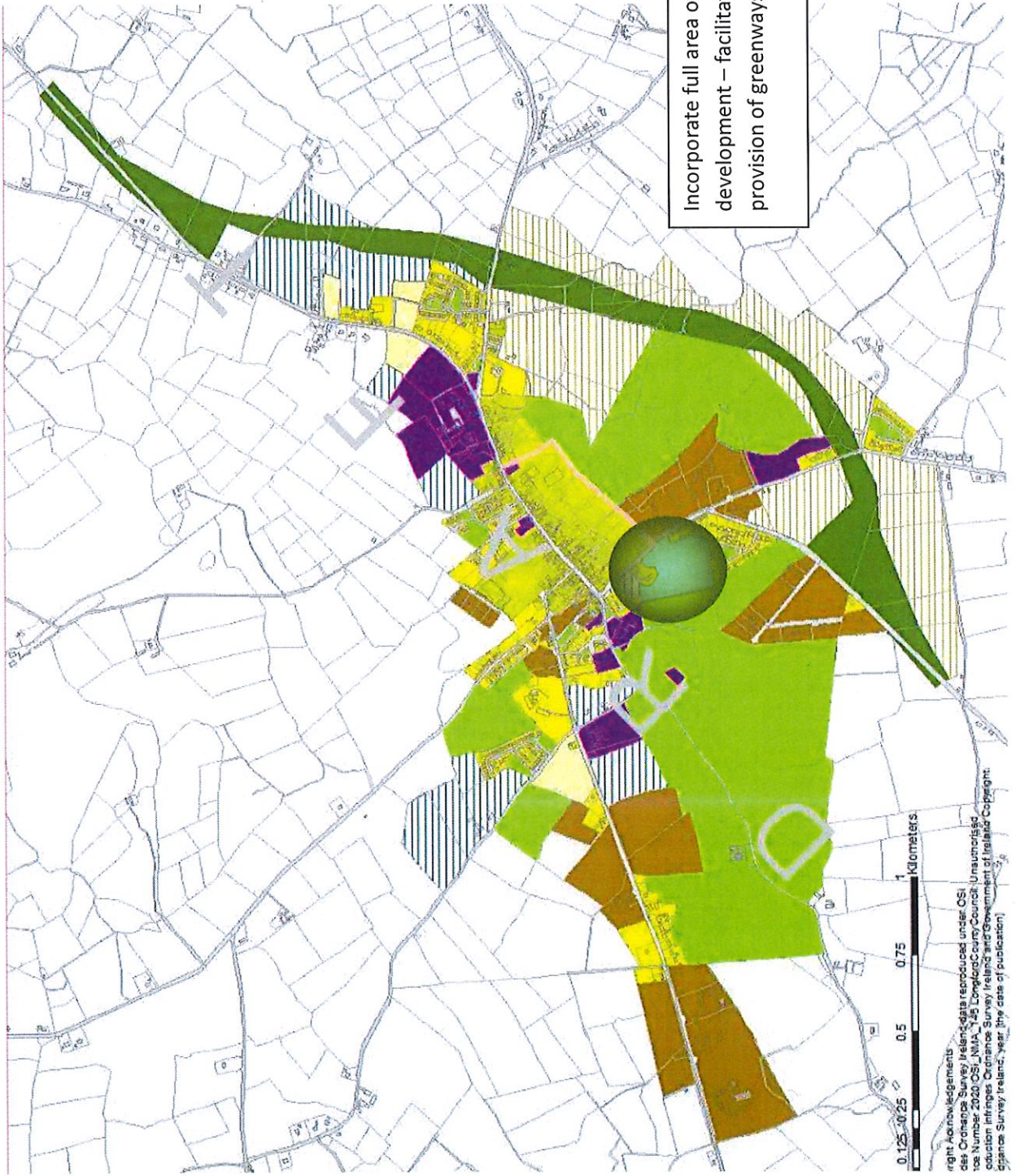






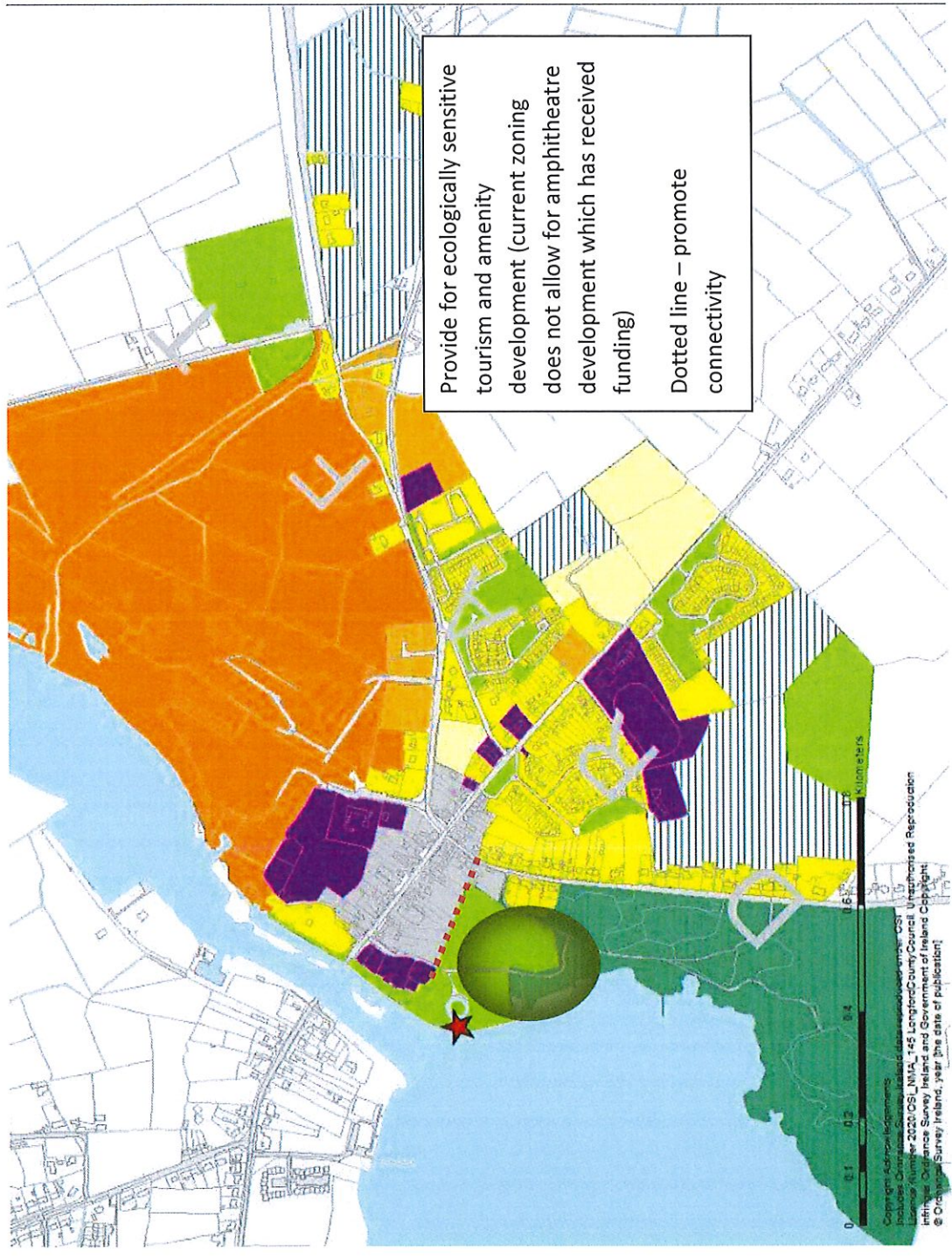
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Incorporate full area of motte development - facilitate provision of greenways

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Provide for ecologically sensitive
 tourism and amenity
 development (current zoning
 does not allow for amphitheatre
 development which has received
 funding)

Dotted line – promote
 connectivity

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