



DRAFT LONGFORD TOWN LOCAL AREA PLAN 2025- 2031

**September 2024
Forward Planning Section
Longford County Council**

Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	2
2.0	Spatial Planning and Hierarchy context.....	12
3.0	Town Profile and Socio-Economic Context.....	19
4.0	Strategic Vision and Aims.....	38
5.0	Core Strategy Compliance.....	42
6.0	Residential Sustainability and Placemaking.....	55
7.0	Economic Development.....	69
8.0	Tourism.....	83
9.0	Regeneration and Placemaking.....	92
10.0	Social Infrastructure.....	111
11.0	Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure.....	133
12.0	Built and Cultural Heritage.....	151
13.0	Infrastructure.....	168
14.0	Sustainable Transport.....	186
15.0	Climate Change.....	225
16.0	Implementation and Monitoring.....	234
	Appendix 1: Land Use Zoning.....	245
	Appendix 2: Battery Road Conservation Area Statement.....	265

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Context

The Longford Town Local Area Plan 2025 – 2031 has been prepared to replace the Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2016-2022 (as inserted by Variation no. 2 to the Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021)¹ as the key strategic planning document which will guide the overall development of the town to 2031.

The Local Area Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Longford in the context of the *Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027*, the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region 2019-2031* and the *National Planning Framework (2018)*. It is also informed by Ministerial Guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Act together with EU requirements regarding Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA), and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

This Local Area Plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the guidance issued by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) under S.28 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2016 (the Acts) on Local Area Plans in 2013. the guidance issued by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) under S.28 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2016 (the Acts) on Local Area Plans in 2013, and other relevant Guidelines issued under s.28 of this Act and its associated regulations.

1.2 Statutory Basis

Section 19 (1)(b)(ii) of the Planning and Development Act, as amended, indicates a town with a population of over 5,000 requires the preparation of a Local Area Plan.

¹ Incorporation of LAP into Appendix 1A of CDP by way of Variation no.2 of the CDP, adopted by Longford County Council in September 2016

Therefore Longford Town, which has a population of 10,952 persons (Census 2022), requires a Local Area Plan.

This Local Area Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and provisions of the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, as amended (the 'Act'), in particular Sections 18-20 of the Act which provide that a local area plan shall be made in respect of an area which:

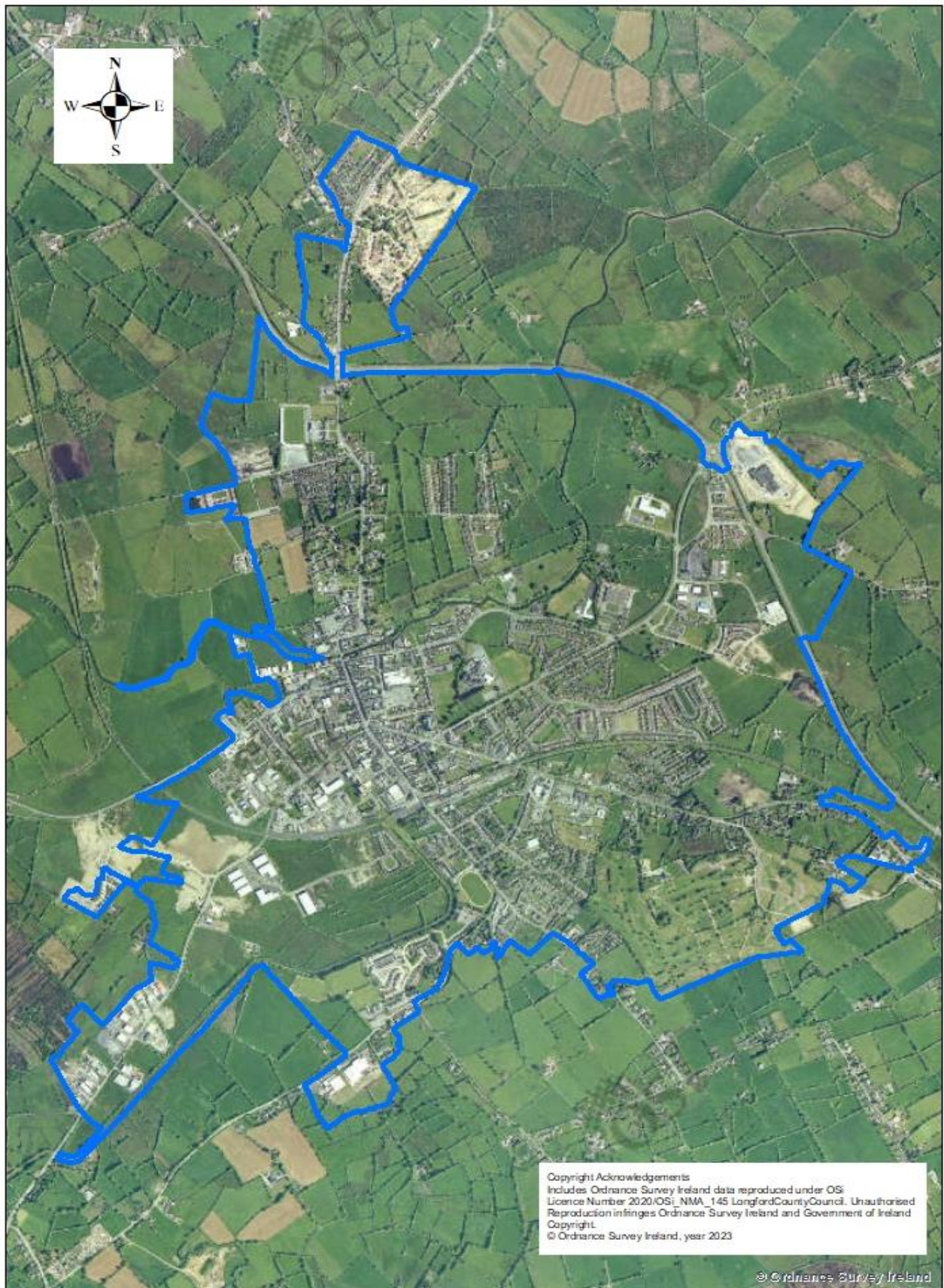
- Is designated as a town in the most recent census of population, other than a town designated as a suburb or environs in that census;
- has a population in excess of 5,000; and
- is situated within the functional area of a planning authority, which is a County Council.

As Census 2022 recorded a population of 10,952 persons in the town of Longford, a Local Area Plan is therefore a mandatory requirement.

1.3 Plan Extent

The geographic extent of this Local Area Plan are as follows is illustrated in **Figure 1**:

Figure 1: Longford Town and Environs Local Area Plan Extent



1.4 Duration of Plan

The period of the Plan is from 2025-2031 and shall be taken as being six years from the date of its adoption or until it is reviewed, or another plan made, unless it is extended under section 19(d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

1.5 Relationship with Other Plans and Guidelines

The Local Area Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Longford in the context of the *Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027* as well as the various national and EU legislative requirements. In this regard an evidence-led approach has been adopted in the formulation of the Plan. The Local Area Plan has been prepared having regard to national, regional and local policy documents, in addition to ministerial guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The Plan also has regard (where relevant) to any Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) contained in Section 28 ministerial guidelines as per the provisions of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018.

1.6 The Plan Making Process

In accordance with planning legislation and Ministerial Guidance, the key steps in making the plan are set out in **Figure 2**.

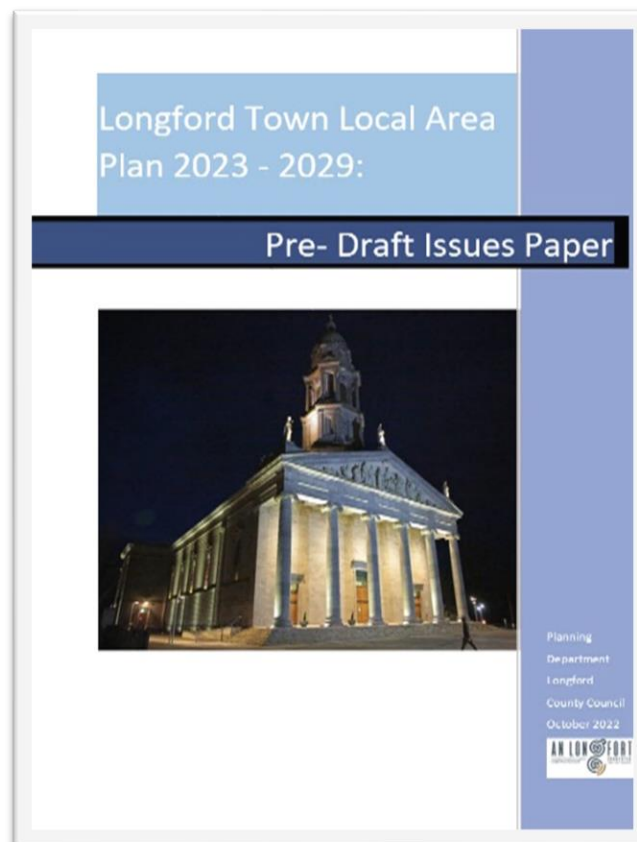
Figure 2: Key Stages in the Local Area Plan Making Process

1. Pre-Draft Stage
Forming the issues to be addressed in the Plan and gathering information from consultation with relevant stakeholders and interested parties.
2. Draft Plan Stage
Following a review of collated information, a Draft Plan will be prepared by the Planning Authority. The Draft will afford the public the first opportunity to gauge the direction that the final Plan is heading.
3. Notice of Draft Plan ** CURRENT STAGE **
The Draft Plan will be available for inspection for at least 6 weeks. We will publish a notice in local papers letting you know that the Draft is available for inspection and inviting your submissions.
4. Chief Executive's Report
A Chief Executive's Report will be prepared based on the submissions received and containing the opinion of the Chief Executive and his recommendations in relation to the Plan.
5. Consideration by Elected Members
The Elected Members will consider the Chief Executive's Report and then make, amend or revoke the Plan as appropriate in accordance with the recommendations of the Chief Executive.
6. Material Alterations
In the event of material alterations or amendments, we will publish notice of this and invite further submissions. A similar process to that outlined at stages 4 and 5 is then repeated.
7. Final Plan
Following consultation on Material Alterations, a further Chief Executive's Report will be prepared, to be considered by the Elected Members. The Elected Members will consider the report and then adopt then Plan.

1.7 Pre - Draft Public Consultation

The preparation of the Local Area Plan included pre-draft consultation with the local community, statutory agencies and adjoining local authorities in 2022. This pre-draft public consultation extended over a six-week period (7th October-18th November 2022 inclusive) and was accompanied by the publication of an Issues Paper which identified the key planning and development matters that the Plan could address. This Issues Paper was made available for inspection at Longford Town Branch Library, Longford County Council and online. The pre-draft process also included a public consultation event held on Wednesday 20th October 2022 in Longford Town Branch Library. A total of 19 no. submissions were received from residents, service providers, local community groups, interested parties and elected representatives. These submissions have been taken into consideration during the formulation of this Local Area Plan.

Figure 3: Public Consultation Pre-Draft Issues Paper



1.8 Draft Plan Public Display

Following on from Pre-Draft public consultation, Longford County Council commenced the preparation of the Draft LAP informed by the submissions received as part of the pre- draft consultation/stakeholder engagement. The public display of this Draft LAP marks the commencement of the statutory process. The Draft Plan will go on public display for a period of 6 weeks, during which time you may make submissions and attend a public consultation/drop in event to view and discuss the Draft Plan.

1.9 Subsequent Stages

The submissions received will be considered by the Elected Members of Longford County Council, who can decide to adopt, amend or revoke the Draft LAP. Any proposed amendments or material alterations to the Draft Plan requires public consultation for a period of 4 weeks. All submissions received will be considered by the Elected Members, who can decide to adopt the Draft LAP, with or without the material alterations. The LAP comes into effect 4 weeks after adoption.

1.10 Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR)

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 provided for the establishment of an independent Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR). Under the provisions of the Act, the OPR have assumed the Minister's evaluation and assessment function of all statutory land use plans including local area plans. The OPR will provide statutory observations on all draft statutory plans to ensure consistency with relevant national and regional policies. All Observations received from the OPR will be taken into consideration.

1.11 Composition of the Plan

This Plan comprises a written statement with accompanying maps. The written statement shall take precedence over the maps should any discrepancy arise between them. In the full interpretation of all objectives for Longford, it is essential

that both the County Development Plan (CDP) and the Local Area Plan be read in tandem. Where conflicting objectives arise between the CDP and the Local Area Plan, the objectives of the CDP shall take precedence. It should be noted that the general development management standards applicable to the plan area are included in the CDP. This Plan therefore provides policies and objectives that are specific to the future development of Longford.

1.12 Accompanying Reports

This Local Area Plan is accompanied by a number of separate assessments /reports which have been undertaken in parallel with the preparation of the Plan. They constitute the following strategies developed in this Plan which will build on priorities and apply a coordinated approach.

1.12.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. It informs the plan-making process of the likely environmental impacts of alternative actions and contributes to the integration of environmental considerations into the Plan. Under the provisions of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011, SEA is mandatory for plans for areas with a population of 5,000 persons or more; therefore, SEA is required for the Longford Local Area Plan.

The findings of the SEA are set out in the Environmental Report, which, while constituting part of the Plan documentation, is presented as a separate document alongside this Plan. The Environmental Report provides a clear understanding of the likely environmental consequences of decisions regarding the location of development in the Plan area. The mitigation measures needed to offset the

potential adverse effects of the Plan and future monitoring proposals have been transposed from the Environmental Report into the Plan.

1.12.2 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

The requirements for Habitats Directive Assessment of plans or projects, is outlined in Article 6(3) and (4) of the European Communities (1992) Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity ('Habitats Directive'). In any case where, following screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA), it is found that any plan or project is likely to have a significant impact on areas designated as Natura 2000 sites, a full Appropriate Assessment must be carried out.

A separate report combines both Stage 1 Screening and Stage 2AA of the Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan.

1.12.3 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

A SFRA was carried out to support the preparation of the Plan and is included as a separate report. The SFRA is required to be prepared in accordance with the requirements of *The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009) and Circular PL02/2014 (August 2014).

1.12.4 Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) Statement of Character

The Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) Statement of Character provides a comprehensive historical and architectural analysis in order to identify and define the special character of the Battery Road ACA (see Appendix 2). The Statement of Character also includes a guide which provides advice to homeowners, developers, architects and planning professionals on best practice for development within the ACA and type of works that will require planning permission.

1.13 Other Independent Related Reports

1.13.1 Infrastructure Assessment Report (IAR) – Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027

As part of the preparation of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 an Infrastructure Assessment Report (IAR) was carried out to inform the appropriate zoning of land in Longford Town. The Infrastructure Assessment Report comprises both quantitative and qualitative research analysis of existing and proposed infrastructure and was carried out in accordance with Appendix 3 of the National Planning Framework (2018). The land use zonings contained within this Local Area Plan have been informed by the Infrastructure Assessment Report (IAR) as it relates to Longford Town as contained within Volume 3: Annex 10 of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

1.13.2 Longford Town Transport Plan 2023

As a *Key Town*, the Longford LAP includes the relevant objectives of the Longford Local Transport Plan (LTP). The Longford Town Transport Plan is a short to medium-term plan that sets out the town's transport strategy for the period to 2029, but also looks beyond 2040. The aim of this document has been to improve the integration between Land Use and Transport Planning. This will be delivered in tandem with sustainable compact growth in the plan area, through appropriate means such as the development of lands in the existing built-up footprint of the town. It will be required to examine all transport modes and how they interact both in the town centre and throughout its environs, specifically including linkages with public transport modes such as rail and bus services. The LTP has been prepared in close collaboration with the National Transport Authority (National Transport Authority) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

2.0 Spatial planning and Hierarchy context

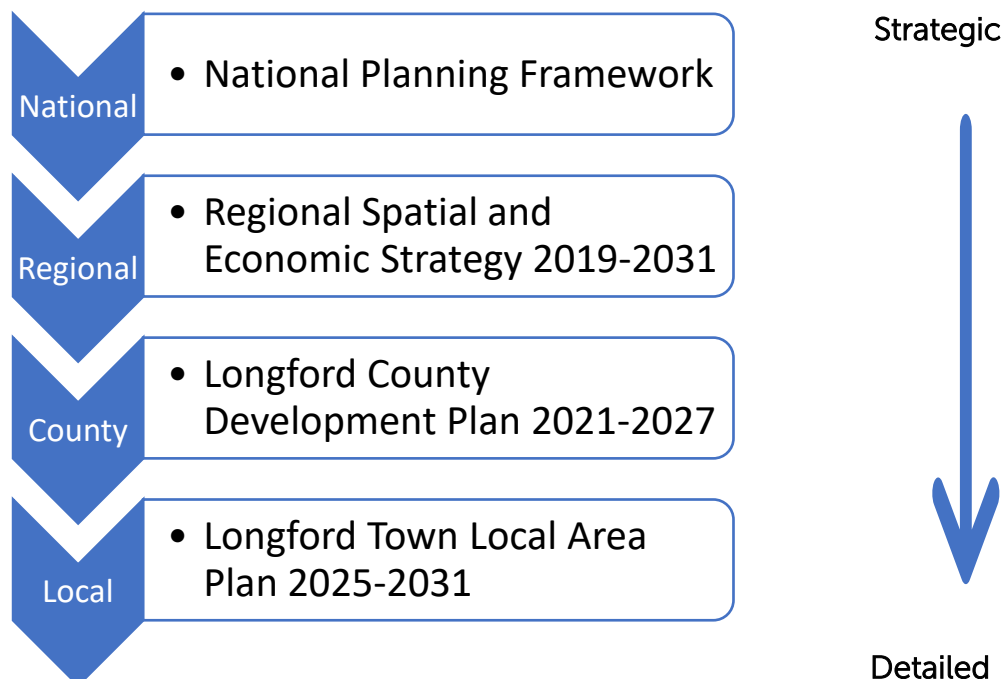
Strategic Aim:

To set out the statutory context of the Longford Local Area Plan in relation to its position within the hierarchy of spatial plans.

2.1 Compliance with Hierarchy of Plans

In establishing a framework for the sustainable planning and development of Longford to 2031, it is important that the position of the Longford Local Area Plan within the overarching spatial planning hierarchy be outlined in order to provide a level of context but also to demonstrate how the plan complies with these overarching policy documents, in line with statutory requirements (Figure 4). The provisions of these plans and strategies, insofar as they relate to the planning and development of Longford, are crucial and will be discussed thereafter.

Figure 4: Hierarchy of Spatial Plans



The content of this LAP aligns with international, European, national, regional and county policy and legislation, in addition to Ministerial Guidelines / policy Directives.

2.2 National and Regional Policy Context

2.2.1 National Planning Framework (NPF)

The National Planning Framework (NPF) together with the National Development Plan (2018-2027) was published in 2018 under Project Ireland 2040. Project Ireland 2040 is the Government's overarching long-term policy platform to guide and manage the future growth and development of the country. The primary aim of Project Ireland 2040 is to improve the quality of life in Ireland for all its citizens by creating and promoting opportunities for people and protecting and enhancing our environment. In order to achieve this goal, the NPF contains a series of National Policy Objectives (NPOs), which set out the intentions of the plan within specific areas. **Table 1** outlines the NPOs which are most relevant to the preparation of the Longford Town Local Area Plan.

Table 1: NPO's most relevant to Longford Town LAP

NPO 4	<i>Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being.</i>
NPO 5	<i>Develop cities and towns of sufficient scale and quality to compete internationally and to be drivers of national and regional growth, investment and prosperity.</i>
NPO 6	<i>Regenerate and rejuvenate cities, towns and villages of all types and scale as environmental assets that can accommodate changing roles and functions, increased residential population and employment activity and enhanced levels of amenity and design quality, in order to sustainably influence and support their surrounding area.</i>
NPO 7	<p><i>Apply a tailored approach to urban development, that will be linked to the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, with a particular focus on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- Encouraging population growth in strong employment and service centres of all sizes, supported by employment growth.</i> <i>- Reversing the stagnation or decline of many smaller urban centres, by identifying and establishing new roles and functions and enhancement of local infrastructure and amenities.</i>
NPO 11	<i>In meeting urban development requirements, there will be a presumption in favour of development that can encourage more people and generate more jobs and activity within existing cities, towns and villages, subject to development meeting appropriate planning standards and achieving targeted growth.</i>
NPO 20	<i>Regional and Local Authorities to identify and quantify locations for strategic employment development, where suitable, in urban and rural areas generally.</i>
NPO 21	<i>Enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the</i>

	<i>rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT-based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability.</i>
NPO 26	<i>Support the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, though integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policy.</i>
NPO 27	<i>Ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages.</i>
NPO 53	<i>Support the circular and bio economy including in particular through greater efficiency in land management, greater use of renewable resources and by reducing the rate of land use change from urban sprawl and new development.</i>
NPO 54	<i>Reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.</i>
NPO 60	<i>Conserve and enhance the rich qualities of natural and cultural heritage of Ireland in a manner appropriate to their significance.</i>

2.2.2 Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial Economic Strategy 2019-2031

Longford is identified in the EMRA RSES as a 'Key Town' for economic growth and development within the Region and the County within the Eastern and Midland RSES which characterises such settlements as *'economically active towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and the capacity to act as regional drivers to complement the Regional Growth Centres'*. This relates to large economically active service and/or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers

to complement the Regional Growth Centres. Longford Town is the only 'Key Town' in the County.

In terms of higher-level regional policy, Longford Town is identified as a large economically active town located within the Gateway Region. It is recognised that the town provides important connections with adjoining regions and has the capacity and future growth potential to accommodate above average growth in tandem with the requisite investment in employment creation, services, amenities and sustainable transport. Key regional priorities for Longford Town are to promote compact growth, the regeneration of the town centre and to expand Longford's role as a hub for enterprise, employment and tourism, as listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Longford Key Town – Specific Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's)

RPO 4.59:	<i>To 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.</i>
RPO 4.60:	<i>Support the development of Longford as a tourism hub having regard to its accessibility to key tourist destinations in the Region including Center Parcs, and proximity to natural amenities, recreational opportunities and the town's location on the Rebel Longford Trail.</i>
RPO 4.61:	<i>Support social inclusion measures including the revitalisation of areas by physical regeneration, planning, investment and community development and measures to improve educational attainment levels, up skilling in key competencies and skills acquisition.</i>
RPO 4.62:	<i>Support the plan-led development and regeneration of publicly owned land banks in the town for residential, employment, education, community, cultural and recreational opportunities and 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 building and strategic sites.</i>

RPO 4.63: *Support Longford Town as a strategic portal to the northwest and south in recognition of its location at the junction of the N55; M4/N4 Dublin/Sligo and N5; due to its proximity to the regional growth centre of Athlone; and support its role as a strategic employment centre.*

2.3 Development Plan Context

2.3.1 County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027

In terms of the County Longford Settlement Strategy Longford Town is identified as a 'Key Town'. 'Key Principle 6' relates to Longford Town as it aims to *'Focus on the need for more balanced development amongst the network of higher order towns in the Settlement Hierarchy to support the role and function of Longford Town as the principal economic driver and focus of investment for the county'*. Given its designation within the RSES Settlement Hierarchy as a 'Key Town', and as reflected in this Core Strategy, Longford Town is identified as the settlement targeted for the most growth in the County over the Plan period.

2.4 Longford County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

The Longford County Council Climate Action Plan takes into full consideration international and national climate change policy and legislation as well as the most up-to-date knowledge on current levels of climate change and its impacts and projections for the future. The Climate Action Plan sets out the evidence-base used to inform on climate action within the jurisdiction of Longford County Council, including climate change risks and emissions baseline profile. It outlines the structure, function, and aspirations with respect to climate change of the County Council and also details the climate actions currently underway. It outlines the Council's framework for climate action and its Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Actions. It focuses on Longford County Council's Decarbonisation Zone (DZ), Longford Town and includes the Objectives and Climate Actions tailored specifically

to the DZ. It sets out the Council's approach to implementing actions and measuring progress.

2.5 Local Area Plan Context

The Longford Local Area Plan contains a suite of specific measures which related to the aforementioned higher-level policy. It is a policy objective of the Council to prepare a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Longford Town to align with the RSES and the County Development Plan Core Strategy. The Longford Local Area Plan 2025-2031 is prepared in accordance with the provisions of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027. The vision, policy objectives, actions, Development Management Standards and zoning provisions contained within the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 and associated appendices and maps, apply to the Longford Town Local Area Plan 2025-2031. Any subsequent County Development Plan adopted within the timespan of the Local Area Plan will also apply.

3.0 Town Profile and Socio-Economic Context

3.1 Role

Longford Town is the dominant settlement in the County in terms of population, economic activity, level of service and infrastructure and connectivity. The town has well-established economic, administrative and social functions along with important retail, service and amenity functions for the County and neighbouring towns.

Longford Town is the primary settlement and largest population centre within County Longford. Centrally located within the County, and having the advantage of excellent national, regional and local transport linkages, the town is recognised as being a settlement of regional importance. The scope and scale of functions which Longford Town provides to its residents, as well as those of its hinterland has been recognised in national and regional context.

Longford Town is assigned the role of Strategic Portal to the North-West in the Eastern and Midland Regional Authority Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy. Longford town is the commercial, retail, service and industrial centre of the County. Longford town also functions as the County Administrative headquarters of Longford County Council. This Local Area Plan aims to build upon this role.

3.2 Topography, Location and Access

Located on the banks of the Camlin River, the land within the town core is predominantly flat, with a pronounced rise towards the southeast. A spur of the Royal Canal enters the town at the south-western corner, travelling as far as the railway line. Agricultural and amenity land in close proximity to the town centre significantly contributes to the character of the settlement. On the western outskirts of the town are a significant amount of lands which are subject to substantive flooding.

Longford town is centrally located both within the country and the county and has good communication links. It forms a strategic junction at the intersection of 2 no. National Primary Routes; the N4 (Dublin – Sligo) and the N5 (Dublin – Castlebar/Westport). The N63, the national secondary route to Roscommon, and several regional routes also serve the Town.

An improved road network has resulted in reduced travel times to Longford. The N5 bypass of the Town and the upgrading works due to be carried out on the N4 Dublin–Sligo Road will further increase the accessibility of the Town.

Longford town lies on the Dublin-Sligo rail line which runs through the centre of the town. This links the town with Dublin and Mullingar in the east and Sligo and Leitrim to the north-west. The town has a regular, well-utilised commuter service to Dublin. Also, there are a large number of bus services to both Dublin and within the county, which are provided by the state and private bus companies.

3.3 Socio Economic Context

3.3.1 Population

3.3.1.1 Growth and Change

Census 2022 shows that between April 2016 and April 2022 that Ireland's population grew by 8% from 4,761,865 to 5,149,139. Within County Longford the population increased from 40,873 persons in 2016 to 46,751 persons in 2022. This represents an increase of 14.38% (5,878 persons) between 2016 and 2022. During this time Longford Town experienced a rate of growth of 9.43% (944 persons), which is significantly below the county average growth rate during that time (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Population Growth in County Longford and Longford Town 2016 – 2022 (Source: CSO Census 2022)

	Population 2016	Population 2022	Growth Rate (2016-2022)
County Longford	40,873	46,751	5,878 persons (14.38%)
Longford Town	10,008	10,952	944 persons (9.43%)

3.3.1.2 Gender

As per Census 2022 in Ireland overall there were 2,604,590 females and 2,544,549 males or 98 males for every 100 females. Of County Longford's population, 23,302 were female and 23,449 were male, which means there were 101 males for every 100 females. As per Census 2022 the total population of Longford town (10,952 persons) is made up of 5,345 males and 5,607 females.

3.3.1.3 Age

Nationally, the average age of the population was 38.8, up from 37.4 in April 2016. The average age of County Longford's population in April 2022 was 38.8 years, compared with 37.4 years in April 2016.

According to the Census 2022 the age profile of Longford town includes a high percentage of children and young people (Table 3.2). The age cohort 0-19 makes up 29.23% of the population. The 20-64 age cohort, which represents those of working age, is 56.56%. There is a lower proportion of the population over 65 years with 14.21% compared to nationally.

The number of people aged 65 and over continues to grow. This age group increased by 26% to 7,332 in County Longford, and by 22% to 776,315 at a national level since 2016. In Longford Town 14.21% (1556 persons) were aged 65 years and over in Census 2022. As such a lower proportion of the population is in this older age category than at a county and national level. In terms of the gender split in the higher age cohort there are more females to males.

Table 3.2: Population by Sex and Age (Source CSO, Census 2022)

Age	Male	Female	Both Sexes
0-4	330	349	679
5-9	458	419	877
10-14	460	449	909
15-19	383	353	736
20-24	333	276	609
25-29	311	332	643
30-34	343	400	743
35-39	392	447	839
40-44	444	476	920
45-49	387	379	766
50-54	305	330	635
55-59	261	265	526
60-64	243	271	514
65-69	206	239	445
70-74	193	192	385
75-79	137	168	305
80-84	94	111	205
85 and over	65	151	216
Total	5345	5607	10952

3.3.2 Migration and Ethnicity

3.3.2.1 Citizenship

Nationally, dual Irish citizenship increased by 63% from 104,784 to 170,597 people and non-Irish citizens made up 12% of the population. In County Longford, the number of dual Irish citizens increased from 752 to 1,523 while non-Irish citizens accounted for 13% of the county's population.

Longford town is a diverse settlement with many nationalities living in the local area which contribute to the local population and vibrant community. As per census 2022, 34.65% of the town population were born overseas and 31.88% are not of Irish nationality (Table 3.3). In terms of non-national population in Longford Town there are high concentrations of 'Other EU'; Polish and 'Rest of World' evident.

Table 3.3: Usually resident population of Longford town by Birthplace and Nationality (Source: CSO Census 2022)

Location	No. of persons usually resident by Birthplace (%)	No. of persons usually resident by citizenship (%)
Ireland	7072 (65.35%)	7372 (68.12%)
UK	502 (4.64%)	159 (1.47%)
Poland	834 (7.71%)	700 (6.47%)
India	74 (0.68%)	62 (0.57%)
Other EU (Exec. Ireland & Poland)	1339 (12.37%)	1210 (11.18%)
Rest of World	1001 (9.25%)	589 (5.44%)
Not stated	0 (0%)	730 (6.75%)
Total	10822	10822 (100%)

3.3.2.2 Travelling Community

In terms of cultural and ethnic identity it is noted that as per Census 2022 that 657 persons identified as 'White Irish Traveller'. This represents 6% of the total population of the town.

3.3.2.3 Language

As per Census 2022 speakers of foreign languages by ability to speak English was measured and it was found that in Longford Town 2,678 persons can speak English Very Well / Well. While 524 persons indicated that they could not speak English Well, and 113 'Not at All'. 146 persons did not state.

In term of Speakers of foreign languages by language spoken 'Other' was the largest cohort at 2,343 persons, followed by Polish with 978 persons (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Speakers of Foreign Languages by Languages Spoken

(Source: CSO Census 2022)

Language	Total
Spanish	59
French	81
Polish	978
Other (incl. not stated)	2343
Total	3461

Irish Speakers

As per Census 2022 nationally, 1,873,997 people stated they were able to speak Irish, with 71,968 speaking Irish daily and 115,065 speaking it weekly. In County Longford

the number of people (aged three and over) who stated that they could speak Irish in County Longford was 14,993 compared with 14,057 in 2016. Within this figure 291 said they spoke Irish daily while 782 spoke Irish weekly.

In terms of Longford town, the number of people (aged 3 years and over) who speak Irish is 2,822 persons. This represents 25.77% of the overall population of the town.

3.3.3 Housing

3.3.3.1 Household Composition

In terms of household composition within Longford town the largest proportion of households is in the one- and two-person household category. In Census 2022 it was found that 56.91% of all private households identify as either one or two person households: 29.43% one person; two person households 27.48% (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: Private households by size in Longford town (Source: CSO Census 2022)

Household Size	No. of Private Households (%)	No. of Persons in Private Households
1 person	1190 (29.43%)	1190
2 persons	1111 (27.48%)	2222
3 persons	681 (16.84%)	2043
4 persons	530 (13.11%)	2120
5 persons	303 (7.49%)	1515
6 persons	138 (3.41%)	828
7 persons	59 (1.46%)	413
8 or more persons	31 (0.77%)	274
Total	4043	10605

3.3.3.2 Tenure and Home Ownership

In 2022, in County Longford 61% of households owned their own home, with a further 31% renting. This compared with 66% of households owning their home nationally and 28% renting.

In Longford Town as per census 2022 the level of home ownership (Table 3.6) either with or having no mortgage is 37.97% (1533 households). This consists of the following categories: home ownership with a mortgage or loan at 13%; and owned outright (24.97%). This is considerably below the aforementioned county and national figures.

In Longford town overall the rental sector dominates household occupancy, with private rental the dominant form of occupancy for 1190 households (29.48%). The level of social housing is also high at 906 households (22.44%).

Table 3.6: Home Ownership in Longford town (Source: CSO Census 2022)

Type of occupancy	No. of permanent private households	%	No. of persons in permanent private households
Owned with mortgage or loan	525	13.00%	1542
Owned outright	1008	24.97%	2060
Rented from private landlord	1190	29.48%	3511
Rented from Local Authority	906	22.44%	2418
Rented from voluntary/co-operative housing body	186	4.61%	468

Occupied free of rent	40	0.99%	93
Not stated	182	4.51%	495
Total	4037	100%	10587

Census 2022 recorded that the House/Bungalow is by far the largest accommodation type, accommodating 88.24%% of the population, followed by 11.55% of the population in flats/apartments (Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Private Households by Type of Accommodation
(Source: CSO Census 2022)

Type of Accommodation	No. of Private Households	No. of persons in Private Households
House/Bungalow	3503 (86.64%)	9358 (88.24%)
Flat/Apartment	530 (13.11%)	1225 (11.55%)
Bed Sit	4 (0.10%)	4 (0.10%)
Caravan/Mobile Home	6 (0.15%)	18 (0.17%)
Total	4043	10605

3.3.3.3 Housing Vacancy:

Census 2022 identified a housing stock vacancy within Longford town of 646 no. units (13.76%), of which 14 units were unoccupied holiday homes; 578 units were classed as 'other vacant dwellings' and 54 no. units were 'temporarily absent'.

3.3.4 Education, Employment and Economy

3.3.4.1 Education

As per Census 2022 the percentage of persons over 15 years of age identifying as having no formal education and primary education is 1,002 persons (15.40%). The

level of educational attainment in Longford town is low especially for those holding professional qualifications, including ordinary and honours bachelor's degrees. The percentage of persons holding these qualifications in Longford town is 13.85 % (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: Population aged 15 years and over by highest level of educational attainment (Source: CSO Census 2022)

Highest Level of Education Completed	Total number of persons	% of persons
No formal education	314	4.83%
Primary education	688	10.58%
Lower secondary	872	13.41%
Upper secondary	1250	19.22%
Technical or vocational qualification	698	10.59%
Advanced certificate/Completed apprenticeship	299	4.60%
Higher certificate	353	5.43%
Ordinary bachelor degree or national diploma	389	5.98%
Honours bachelor degree, professional qualification or both	512	7.87%
Postgraduate diploma or degree	347	5.33%
Doctorate (Ph.D.) or higher	42	0.65%
Not stated	741	11.39%
Total	6505	

3.3.4.2 Employment

As per Census 2022 nationally, there were 313,656 additional people (+16%) at work. In County Longford there were 19,695 people (aged 15 and over) at work, an increase of 4,523 people (+30%) between 2016 and 2022. Employment levels in County Longford (48.4%) were lower than the national average (53.4%) and unemployment at the county level (11.8%) was higher than the national average at (9.1%)

In Longford town there were 4032 persons (47.51%) at work. As per Census 2022, employment levels in Longford town (47.51%) were marginally lower than the County average (48.4%), and also lower than the national average (53.4%).

Upon further examination, a notable difference between principal economic status of the male and female portion of the population in Longford town was also evident, (Table 3.9). Specifically, there was a lower proportion of females at work and higher proportion at home or looking after families when compared to males. In contrast, unemployment was relatively high for males.

Table 3.9: Population aged 15 years and over by principal economic status and sex in Longford town (Source: CSO Census 2022)

Principal Economic Status	Male	Female	Total
At Work	2108 (51.45%)	1924 (43.83%)	4032 (47.51%)
Looking for first regular job	98 (2.39%)	92 (2.09%)	190 (2.24%)
Short term unemployed	160 (3.91%)	107 (2.44%)	267 (3.14%)
Long term unemployed	243 (5.93%)	180 (4.10%)	423 (4.98%)
Student	400 (9.76%)	418 (9.52%)	818 (9.64%)
Looking after home/family	96 (2.34%)	560 (12.76%)	656 (7.73%)
Retired	596 (14.55%)	715 (16.29%)	1311 (15.45%)

Unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability	337 (9.20%)	338 (7.70%)	675 (7.99%)
Other	59 (1.44%)	56 (1.28%)	115 (1.35%)
Total	4097	4390	8487

It is notable that 2,645 persons (24.15%) of the population of Longford town stated that they have a disability. Furthermore 7.99% (675 persons) of those aged 15 and over are unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability.

3.3.4.3 Economy

Information on economic activity and employment by industry is useful in providing an understanding of industries and socio-economic circumstances within Longford town.

Industries:

Longford town has a variety of industries that support the local, regional and national economy. The most dominant employment industries in the town providing employment are 'Other' (25.12%); 'Professional Services' (20.76%); 'Manufacturing Industries' (20.39%); and Commerce and Trade (17.83%) (Table 3.10).

Table 3.10: Persons at work by industry and gender in Longford town (Source: CSO Census 2022)

Industry	No. of male	No. of female	Total (%)
Agriculture forestry and fishing	25	7	32 (0.79%)
Building and construction	178	14	192 (4.76%)

Manufacturing industries	534	288	822 (20.39%)
Commerce and trade	367	352	719 (17.83%)
Transport and communications	170	38	208 (5.16%)
Public administration	89	120	209 (5.18%)
Professional services	268	569	837 (20.76%)
Other	477	536	1013 (25.12%)
Total	2108	1924	4032 (100%)

The proportion employed in the three highest professional socio-economic groups; employers and managers; higher professional; and lower professional (Table 3.11) was relatively low (12.16%). Further, the proportion of semi-skilled and unskilled workers is high in Longford town (16.87%). The largest workforce group are classified as 'all others gainfully occupied and unknown' (29.35%), followed closely by those employed in the non-manual group (29.01%) and subsequently semi-skilled (12.39%). The smallest workforce group are farmers (0.36%); and subsequently agricultural workers (0.41%).

Table 3.11: No. of persons in private households by socio-economic group of reference person (Source: CSO, Census 2022)

Socio-economic Group	No. of private households by socio-economic group or reference group	No. of persons in private households by socio-economic group of reference person (%)
Employers and managers	322	896 (8.45%)
Higher professional	34	88 (0.83%)
Lower professional	130	305 (2.88%)
Non-manual	1200	3077 (29.01%)
Manual skilled	354	1001 (9.44%)
Semi-skilled	470	1314 (12.39%)

Unskilled	181	475 (4.48%)
Own account workers	100	255 (2.40%)
Farmers	12	38 (0.36%)
Agricultural workers	18	43 (0.41%)
All others gainfully occupied and unknown	1222	3113 (29.35%)
Total	4043	10605

3.3.4.3 Commuting

As per census 2022 households with no car ownership in Longford town is 1007 households (28.13%). The majority of commuter journeys within the town are facilitated via private transportation; 28.88% car driver, 19.49% car passenger, 2.46% van drivers; motorcycle or scooter 0.09% (Table 3.12).

Table 3.12: Population aged 5 years and over by means of travel to work, school or college (Source: CSO Census 2022)

Means of travel	No. usually resident by means of travel to work	No. usually resident by means of travel to school, college or childcare	Total
On foot	644	722	1366 (20%)
Bicycle	141	30	171 (2.50%)
Bus, minibus or coach	58	322	380 (5.56%)
Train	50	56	106 (1.55%)
Motorcycle or scooter	6	0	6 (0.09%)

Car Driver	1923	49	1972 (28.88%)
Car passenger	272	1059	1331 (19.49%)
Van	160	8	168 (2.46%)
Other (inc. lorry)	8	10	18 (0.26%)
Work mainly at or from home	180	13	193 (2.83%)
Not stated	554	564	1118 (16.37%)
Total	3996	2833	6829

The use of sustainable modes of transport within the town including active travel for commuting indicates that 20% commute on foot walking, 2.5% using a bicycle, 5.56% using a bus, minibus or coach and 1.55% using the train.

3.3.4.4 Working from Home

In County Longford, 4,110 people (aged 15 and over) worked from home at least one day a week in 2022. This represented 21% of the workforce. The national figure was 32%. In Longford Town a relatively small proportion of the working population worked from home (193 persons) at 2.83 % (193 persons) (Census 2022). However, this is an increase on the figures from census 2016 when 1% of the working population worked from home. It is considered that such a pattern changed with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent changes to working practices.

3.3.4.5 Broadband

As per Census 2022 almost 80% of households had a broadband internet connection in 2022 up from 71% in 2016 and 64% in 2011. In County Longford the number of households with Internet access is indicated as 3033 households (75.13%); while 430 households (10.65%) did not have broadband, 471 (11.67%) not stated and 103 (2.55%) other.

3.3.4.6 Childcare

This was a new question for Census 2022. There were 9,728 children aged 15 and under in County Longford in April 2022. Of these, 3,044 (31%) were in childcare, compared with 33% nationally. In terms of Longford Town there were 2,465 children aged 14 under. 541 children aged 15 and under in childcare (see Table 3.13).

Table 3.13: Children in Childcare (Source: CSO Census 2022)

Children in Childcare	
Children ages 0-4 in childcare	233
Children ages 5-14 in childcare	308
Total children under 15 in childcare	541

3.3.5 Health

As per Census 2022, nationally, 83% of people stated that their health was good/very good, compared to 87% in 2016. In County Longford 76% of people stated that their health was good or very good compared with 85% in 2016. Of the population of Longford town 73.09% described their health in a positive light either as 'Good or Very Good'. Longford Town therefore had a lower percentage rate with a positive health perception than both the county and national levels. While 14.79% of the population described their health in a negative light as 'Fair, Bad or Very Bad' (Table 3.14).

Table 3.14: Population by general health and sex Longford town

(Source: CSO Census 2022)

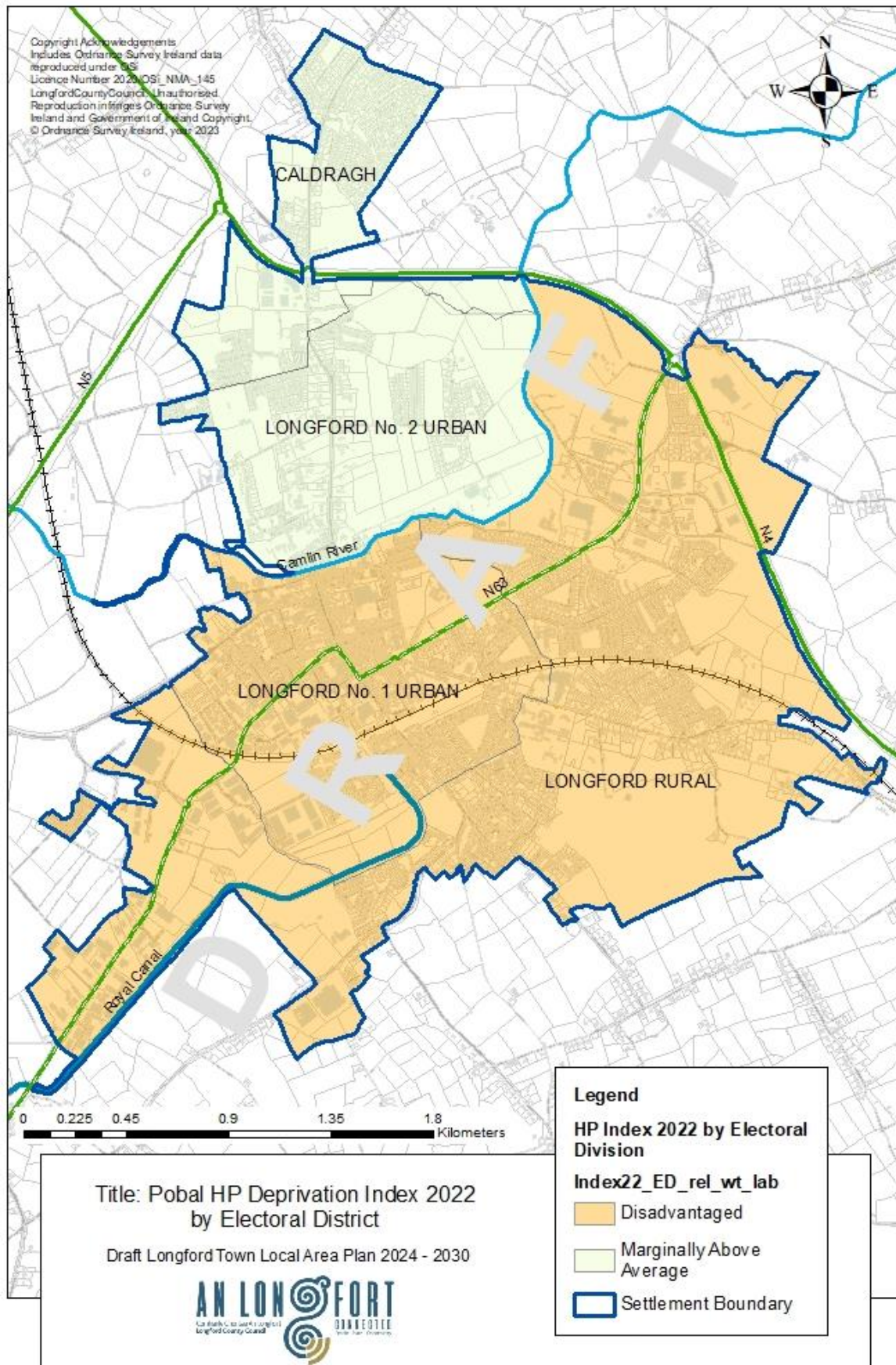
General Health	Male	Female	Total (%)
Very good	2344	2282	4626 (42.24%)
Good	1599	1779	3378 (30.84%)
Fair	597	694	1291 (11.79%)

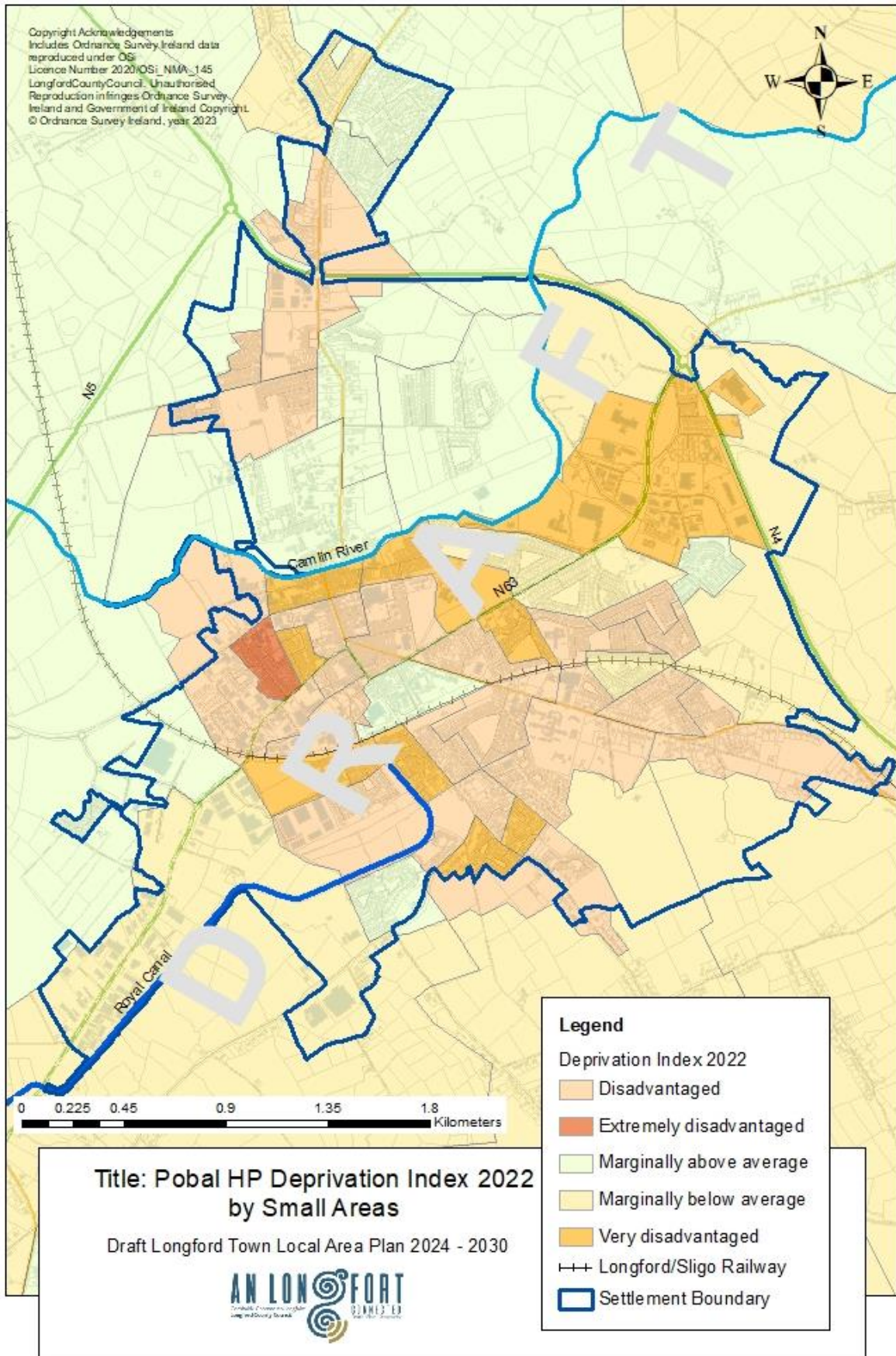
Bad	116	146	262 (2.39%)
Very bad	33	34	67 (0.61%)
Not stated	656	672	1328 (12.13%)
Total	5345	5607	10952 (100%)

3.3.6 Deprivation

The Pobal HP Deprivation Index shows Longford town and the associated levels of affluence and deprivation. (See **HP Deprivation Index Maps – Electoral Areas and Small Areas**). There is a high level of deprivation present in Longford town as indicated in Pobal’s HP Deprivation Index Maps based on Census 2022. The electoral areas within the Plan area which contains Longford no. 1 urban. Longford Rural are categorised as ‘Disadvantaged’; while Caldragh and Longford no. 2 Urban are categorised as ‘Marginally above Average’.

In terms of the ‘Small Areas’ Map which looks at the plan area at a more microscopic level the results indicate a high level of deprivation in Longford town, with no areas indicated as ‘Very Affluent’, or ‘Affluent’. Significant land areas are classified as ‘Very Disadvantaged’; and the Saint Michael’s Road area is classified as ‘Extremely Disadvantaged’.





4.0 Strategic Vision and Aims

The strategic vision for Longford Town has been informed through higher level policy, the socio-economic context and profile of the town, in conjunction with public consultation with residents and relevant stakeholders. The Vision of the Longford Town LAP is as follows:

'to set out a framework for the sustainable physical development of Longford Town, ensuring the conservation and protection of the built and natural environment, while providing in an equitable manner for all our people within the Town'.

4.1 Strategic Aims

The vision is underpinned by a number of strategic aims which are designed to provide a level of focus and direction to the objectives within this Local Area Plan. These were developed on the basis of higher-level policy, the many strengths of the town and seek to overcome the weaknesses and threats identified in order to future proof Longford and provide for its long-term growth and sustainable development. As such the Longford Town Local Area Plan provides for an overall strategy for the social, economic, cultural and physical development of the town.

Strategic Aims

1. Core Strategy Compliance

Strategic Aim:

to support the sustainable long-term growth of Longford Town in accordance with the Core Strategy of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 (or any succeeding plan), the provisions of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

2. Residential Sustainability and Placemaking

Strategic Aim:

to support and facilitate the development of integrated sustainable neighbourhoods that respond to the needs of changing demographics in terms of housing delivery.

3. Economic Development

Strategic Aim:

to encourage sustainable employment growth and economic activity and promote Longford as a local and regional centre of trade, business and tourism.

4. Tourism

Strategic Aim:

to encourage and provide for the continued expansion of the tourism sector by the continued sustainable development and enhancements of visitor attractions and activities capitalising on our natural and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.

5. Regeneration and Placemaking

Strategic Aim:

to tackle problems of population decline, lack of investment and physical dereliction in an integrated and cross cutting way, through several policy areas including integrated land use and socio-economic measures to address the physical, economic, social and environmental problems associated with dereliction and decay.

6. Social Infrastructure

Strategic Aim:

to facilitate and secure the provision of social infrastructure to support existing and new communities within the Plan area, in a manner which provides flexibility to respond to varied and changing community needs.

7. Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure

Strategic Aim:

to contribute towards the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage and the biodiversity within the Local Area Plan boundary and to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits.

8. Built and Cultural Heritage

Strategic Aim:

to conserve and manage Longford's unique heritage assets for the benefit of present and future generations and to promote such assets as generators of economic development and urban regeneration while adhering to the relevant statutory obligations.

9. Infrastructure

Strategic Aim:

to ensure that the delivery of infrastructural services is guided by the principles of sustainable development in facilitating more efficient land use and physical development, whilst providing for the continued social and economic growth of the County.

10. Sustainable Transport

Strategic Aim:

the promotion of the use and increased delivery of sustainable modes of transport within the Town, in order to contribute towards the achievement Ireland's carbon emission reduction requirements.

11. Climate Change

Strategic Aim:

to ensure Longford Town becomes a climate resilient town by promoting the economic, social and environmental benefits of low-carbon development, creating an integrated green infrastructure network, prioritising sustainable mobility and building at sustainable densities in appropriate locations.

12. Implementation and Monitoring

Strategic Aim:

to ensure development occurs in tandem with the delivery of supporting physical and social infrastructure, in an orderly and efficient manner and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

5.0 Core Strategy Compliance

Strategic Aim:

to support the sustainable long-term growth of Longford Town in accordance with the Core Strategy of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 (or any succeeding plan), the provisions of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019-2031

5.1 Compliance with the Settlement Structure of Longford County Development Plan

The following sections address consistency across the plan hierarchy in specific areas as required by the S.28 guidance issued by the DECLG on Local Area Plans (2013).

5.1.2 Function

As per section '4.8.5 County Longford Settlement Hierarchy Tiers' of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 the settlement hierarchy for County Longford has been assigned in accordance with the spatial structure and settlement typologies set out in the RSES. It categorises areas for development within the county on a priority basis.

The role and function of Longford Town is clearly set out in the County Development Plan at Section 4.8.5 'County Longford Settlement Hierarchy Tiers'. The Settlement Hierarchy for the county is contained in Table 4.13 Settlement Hierarchy for Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 which based on its designated role in the EMRA RSES places Longford Town at Tier 1 of the settlement hierarchy, designated as a Key Town described as:

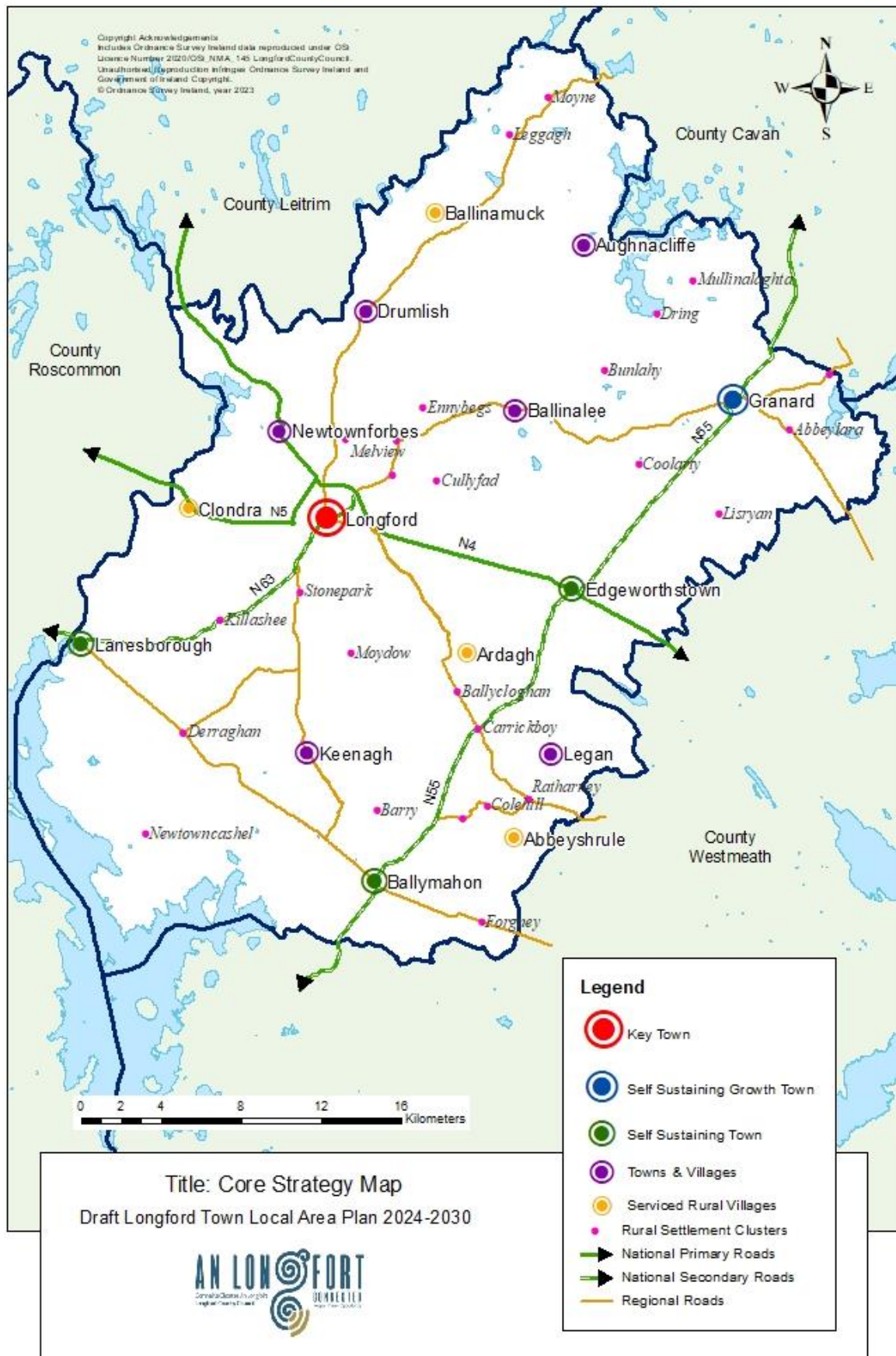
Large economically active service and / or county towns that provide employment for their surrounding areas and with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as growth drivers to complement the Regional Growth Drivers’.

The Settlement Hierarchy and recommended residential density for Longford Town are included in Table 4.14 of the Longford County Development Plan as set out below.

**Recommended Residential densities and settlement hierarchy (source
Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027)**

SETTLEMENT HIERARCHY		
Key Town (35-40 units/ha)	Longford Town	
Self-Sustaining Growth Town (25 units/ha)	Granard	
Self-Sustaining Towns (25 units/ha)	Edgeworthstown, Ballymahon, Lanesborough	
Towns and Villages (20 units/ha)	Aughnacliffe, Ballinalee, Drumlish, Keenagh, Legan, Newtownforbes	
Rural	Serviced Rural Villages (15 units/ha)	Abbeyshrule, Ardagh, Ballinamuck, Clondra
	Rural Settlement Clusters & Open Countryside	

The Core strategy Map also contained in the CDP that sets the function and role of Longford Town in a county context (see [Core Strategy Map](#))



This Local Area plan aims, through its policies and objectives to reinforce and support these functions to ensure that Longford Town fulfils its defined role as a designated 'Key Town' as an economically active service town providing employment for its surrounding area, as well as being endowed with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as a regional driver to complement the Regional Growth Centre of Athlone. This role is further reinforced by the associated housing and retail strategies that prioritise development in Longford Town and have informed the policy and objectives contained within this Local Area Plan.

5.1.2 Scale and Population

As per the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, the demographic analysis undertaken to inform the Core Strategy identified a consistent trend over the period between 1991-2016 whereby Longford Town assumed approximately 25% of the overall county population in each subsequent census over this period. This proportion is largely expected to be maintained over the plan period, with sufficient capacity within Longford Town to accommodate this additional growth.

Given its designation within the RSES Settlement Hierarchy, and as reflected in the County Longford Core Strategy (Chapter 4 *Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy* of the County Longford Development Plan), Longford Town is identified as the settlement targeted for the most growth over the Plan period. The core strategy sets out a significant level of growth in population within Longford. The population of Longford Town was 10,952 persons in the 2022 Census. The population growth target for the town is to grow by 2,502 persons, to a population of 12,510 people by 2027 in the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027. This additional growth requires 1,304 residential units (see **Adapted Extract from Table 4.15: Core Strategy Table – Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027**).

Adapted Extract from Core Strategy Table (Source: Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027).

Hierarchy Tier & Density	Pop. 2016	Pop. Grown to 2027	Pop. 2027	New HST (Housing Supply Targets) Units 2021-2027	30% of Required Res. Units within Existing settlement	Land Required for New Res. Units	Land Zoned for new Res. Units	Land Zoned within existing settlement (Brownfield Infill)	Potential Units that can be delivered within existing settlement (Brownfield/ Infill)	Housing Yield – 'Other Lands' ²	Potential no. of units ³
Key Town (35-40 units / ha.)	10,008	+2,502	12,510	1,304	391	34.77 ha.	35.33 ha.	35.33 ha.	1,304	105.91 ha.	0

Census 2022

Census 2022 indicated that the population of Longford Town was 10,952 persons. This is a growth of 944 persons between 2016 and 2022 (9.43%). If this growth is averaged annually over the 6 years of the census (2016-2022) it works out as 157 persons per year. Applied over 11 years it works out at 1,727 persons. For the next 5 years from 2022 to 2027 at a growth of 157 persons a year would result in an additional 785 persons.

² 'Other Lands' relates to 'Town Centre' and 'Strategic Residential Reserve' zoned lands.

³ Residential yield on 'other lands' will be subject to variation taking account of the NPF Tiered approach to zoning and sequential development approach and 'Compact Growth' in making up the overall housing supply target but will not result in an exceedance of overall HST figures.

The Development Plan 2021-2027 core strategy for Longford Town is based on the 2016 Census figure of 10,008 persons growing by 2,502 to 12,510 persons by 2027. This equates to a 25% increase on the 2016 Census figures to 2027. Therefore the growth is over 11 years i.e. from census 2016 base figure to 2027.

Therefore, taking account of the census 2022 population results (10,952 persons) and the growth of the town since 2016 by 944 persons to 2022 (9.43%), there is still an allowance from the date of census 2022 figures to 2027 to allow for a further population growth of 1,558 persons (15.57%). This rate for the remainder of the duration of the Development Plan for Longford town is above the growth rate which occurred from census 2016 to 2022 (9.43%),

Furthermore, as per the Development Plan 2-year Review (October 2023) 153 no. residential units have been granted. The core strategy allocated 1,304 residential units on 35.33 ha. As only a very small proportion of this land has received permission for residential development on residential zoned lands (2.4759 ha.), there is therefore significant land reserve remaining. This is considered adequate to meet future housing demands.

A policy is included in this Local Area Plan that upon the replacement of the current Core Strategy or zoning provisions contained in the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 by that of a subsequent Development Plan that the Local Area Plan will recognise this.

5.1.3 Compact Growth

The existing town centre housing stock comprises a general mix of traditional buildings of varying heights with some infill developments. There is a range of higher density housing within the town centre area of Longford. In accordance with higher level plans—the NPF, RSES and the Longford County Development Plan, emphasis

is placed on brownfield sites, infill sites and re-use of existing housing stock/vacant buildings (minimum 30%). In addition to the residentially zoned lands within the plan area, there are lands identified for infill / brownfield residential development. As per the requirements of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 and associated Core Strategy there is a requirement for provision for 391 residential units to be delivered on infill/brownfield sites.

Taking account of the projected growth, lands have been identified within its built-up urban boundary which could potentially be brought forward for development over the Plan period, and which are in accordance with the key NPO 3c of the NPF in delivering at least 30% of all new residential units targeted for Longford Town within its existing built-up footprint. In accordance with the recommendations of the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, published in January 2024 residential densities in the range of 40 dwellings plus per hectare shall be applied in the centre and urban neighbourhoods. Further detail in relation to this is indicated in section 6.2.1 *Growth priorities and residential densities* of this Plan.

5.1.4 LAP Compliance with County Development Plan Core Strategy

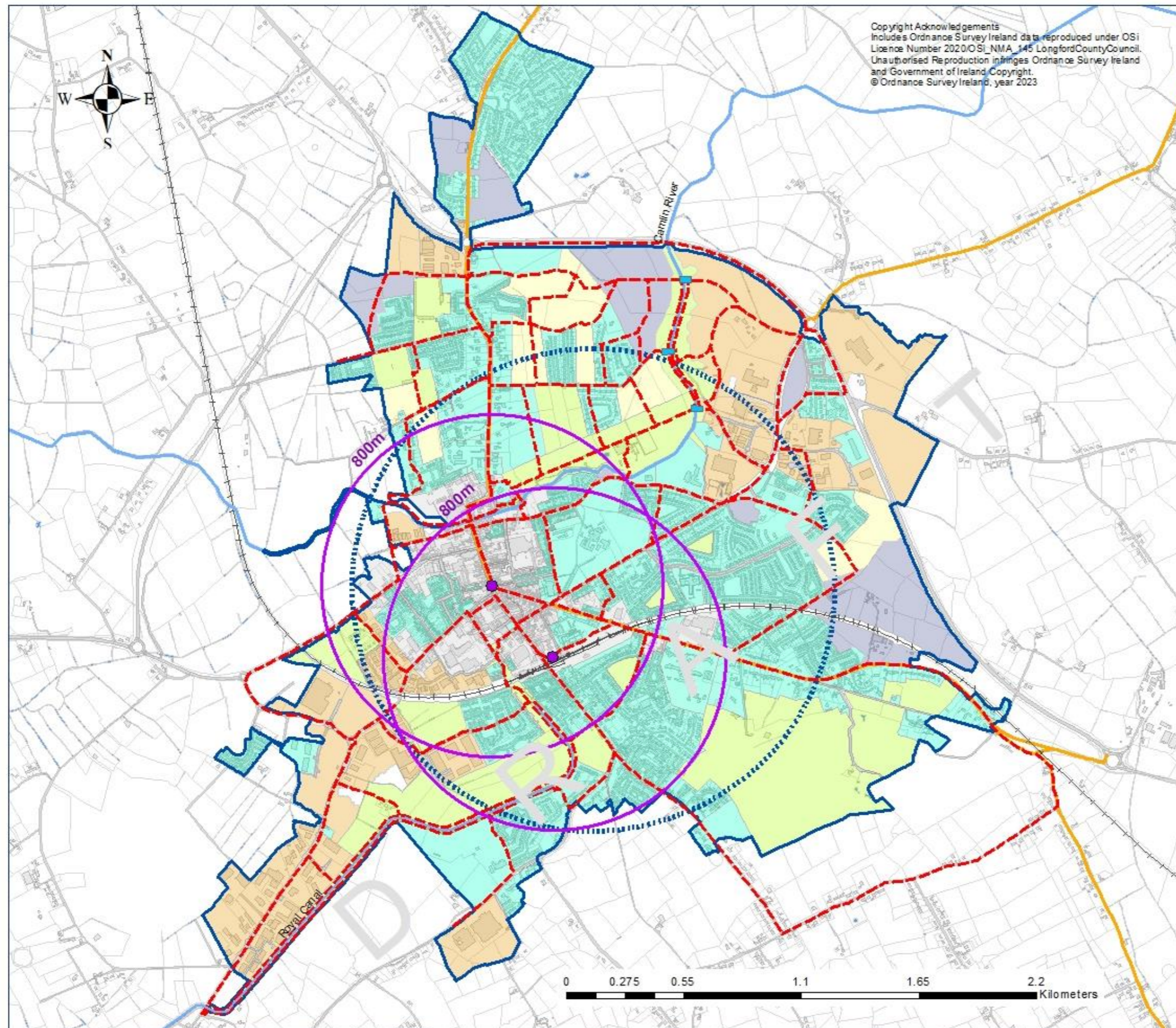
This LAP accords with both the Core Strategy and infill development requirements as set out in *Chapter 4 of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027* as appropriate lands have been identified and reserved to accommodate the forecasted growth within the plan period. This LAP provides guidance in relation to the location, type and design of new residential development, together with a phasing framework for residentially zoned lands, which ensures compliance with the Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and the Housing Need and Demand Assessment in the County Longford Development Plan, *and* in accordance with the guidance contained in the DEHLG *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas 2009* and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

To ensure continued compliance with the Core Strategy and its housing allocation for Longford it will be necessary to monitor the number of residential units permitted and developed on an annual basis. The quantum of land zoned in the Local Area Plan is based on an estimated density of specific sites. If that density is significantly increased a surplus of zoned lands is generated which, if developed within the lifetime of the Plan, will result in a greater population than the Core Strategy provided for. Monitoring the number of units permitted and constructed enables a closer alignment between the Core Strategy, the population projection, development activity and all the associated necessary physical, social and community infrastructure. If it appears that population targets are likely to be exceeded as a result of increased densities, it may be necessary to review the Plan.

5.2 Future Development Priorities

Continued population growth will create pressure on the housing market and on certain services and infrastructure including childcare, schools, transport, water, wastewater, recreation and amenity. This Plan presents an opportunity to initiate the necessary transition to a low carbon and sustainable model of development that will improve the quality of life for people living in the town. Accordingly, the priorities for this Plan are to achieve compact growth based on the prioritisation of the town centre sites and the development of infill sites and to identify new residential sites at sustainable densities.

The future Development Priorities for Longford Town are set out in schematic form in the CDP document (**see Longford Town Development Strategy Map**). This schematic map illustrates the potential that exists in the built fabric, cultural heritage and amenity of Longford town, its employment base and shopping facilities.



Title: Longford Town Development Strategy Map

Draft Longford Town Local Area
plan 2024 - 2030



Legend

- Travel Strategy Consolidated Network
- Settlement Boundary
- Dublin to Sligo Rail Line
- Indicative Regeneration Area
- Employment Lands
- Existing Urban Form
- New Residential Areas
- Retail Areas
- Strategic Residential Reserve
- Strategic Open Space
- Existing Road Network
- Key Centre/Transportation point with 800m catchment area (20mins walk)
- Proposed bridge



Following the building on all residential zoned lands, it is considered that the lands identified as '*Strategic Residential Reserve*' represent the next most appropriate area to cater for future strategic requirements to accommodate the orderly and sequential expansion of the town (**Longford Town Development Strategy Map**). For this reason, these lands have been zoned as '*Strategic Reserve*', a designation that seeks to protect such lands from inappropriate forms of development which would impede the orderly and efficient expansion of the urban settlement.

5.3 Environment and Heritage Protection

The Local Area Plan responds to environmental factors including proposed development within/adjacent to Special Areas of Conservation and areas at risk of flooding. It also acknowledges the importance of built and natural heritage as an environmental and economic asset (including tourism) and includes comprehensive and integrated objectives for its conservation and enhancement. The Plan has also been subject to and informed by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

Furthermore, the environmental sensitivities of the county identified in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process for the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 have informed the Core Strategy and the role it identifies for Longford Town.

Regarding built heritage protection, a Statement of Character has also been prepared for the Longford Town Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) which provides the local authority, residents and developers with best practice advice for development within the ACA (see Appendix 2).

5.4 Core Strategy Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

- CS 01** Support the implementation of the relevant County Policy Objectives (CPO's) contained within *Chapter 4: Core, Settlement and Housing Strategies* and other relevant chapters of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027, including the Core Strategy and all zoning provisions of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027, or subsequent relevant Development Plan and in accordance with the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)*.
- CS 02** Upon the replacement of the current core strategy and zoning provisions of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 by a subsequent Development Plan, this Local Area Plan will recognise this and any associated land use zoning.
- CS 03** Support and facilitate compact growth through the sustainable intensification and consolidation of the town centre and established residential areas.
- CS 04** Monitor the scale, type, tenure and location of constructed and permitted developments in Longford during the lifetime of the Plan and apply appropriate development management standards to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy.
- CS 05** Encourage the compact growth of Longford Town and undertake a town centre first approach to ensure that development proceeds sustainably and at an appropriate scale, density and sequence and in line with the County Core Strategy Table.
- CS 06** Remain within the allocated housing requirements set out in the County Development Plan 2021-2027 Core Strategy for Longford Town (or subsequent relevant Development Plan) when facilitating residential development. In this regard, development shall not be permitted where it conflicts with the County Core Strategy.

- CS 07** Encourage the appropriate redevelopment of brownfield and infill sites for residential and mixed uses within the existing built-up footprint of Longford Town.
- CS 08** Prioritise the development of sites zoned '*Town Centre*' and '*New Residential*' within the town (see **Land Use Zoning Map – Appendix 1**).
- CS 09** Support and facilitate the implementation of the regeneration of sites identified in this Plan (see **Strategic Sites Map – Regeneration Chapter**).
- CS 10** Focus new enterprise development into lands identified for Industry and Warehousing and Enterprise and Employment uses (see **Land Use Zoning Map – Appendix 1**).
- CS 11** Support new residential development and infill development that occurs in tandem with the delivery of supporting physical and social infrastructure.
- CS 12** Ensure that any development permitted is in accordance with the provisions of Volume 2: Appendix 1: Land Use Zoning Matrix and Volume 1: Section 16: Development Management Standards of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.
- CS 13** Preserve the lands identified as 'Strategic Reserve' on (see **Land Use Zoning Map – Appendix 1**), thereby controlling the level of piecemeal and haphazard development on these lands and safeguarding their strategic value in accommodating the orderly sequential expansion of the urban settlement beyond the current Plan period.
- CS 14** Ensure that projects giving rise to adverse effects on the integrity of European sites (cumulatively, directly, or indirectly) arising from their size or scale, land take, proximity, resource requirements, emissions (disposal to land, water or air), transportation requirements, duration of construction, operation, decommissioning or from any other effects shall not be permitted on the basis of this plan⁴.

⁴ Except as provided for in Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, viz. There must be: (a) no alternative solution available, (b) imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the plan to proceed; and (c) adequate compensatory measures in place.

CS15 Ensure that any development within the Longford Town Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is carried out in accordance with best practice advice for development within the ACA (see Appendix 2).

6.0 Residential Sustainability and Placemaking

Strategic Aim:

To support and facilitate the development of integrated sustainable neighbourhoods that respond to the needs of changing demographics in terms of housing delivery.

6.1 Overview

Residential Density, Mix and Design

The delivery of housing in Longford Town is essential to support the overall role and success of the settlement. A key focus for the settlement is to encourage the provision of high-quality housing development at the right locations over the coming years in order to ensure wider societal benefits and the sustainability and enhancement of facilities such as schools, shops, recreation facilities and open spaces. Central to this is the requirement to provide high quality housing products that meet a variety of housing needs, including those required by employees of existing and potential industry and enterprises within the town. New residential areas should be connected, attractive and well designed with a range of adaptable dwelling types and densities, creating a sense of place and a high-quality public realm.

Longford County Council's primary aim in relation to residential development is to deliver high quality, sustainable living environments which are attractive, safe and vibrant and meet the needs of the residents and the community. The principles of quality, sustainability and placemaking must be foremost in all future residential development in the plan area, including private, social, voluntary, special needs housing proposals and to provide accommodation for the needs of the Traveller Community in accordance with Longford County Council's *Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 - 2024 for County Longford* (or any updated/superseding document).

Continued population growth will create pressure on the housing market and on certain services and infrastructure including childcare, schools, transport, water, wastewater, recreation and amenity. The *Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027* contains policy objectives which will be taken into account.

6.2 Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities

The *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, published in January 2024, constitute Ministerial Guidelines under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The Guidelines set national planning policy and guidance in relation to the planning and development of urban and rural settlements, with a focus on sustainable residential development and the creation of compact settlements. The Guidelines replace the 2009 Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

The revised Guidelines set out in detail policy and guidance in relation to the growth priorities for settlements, residential density, urban design and placemaking and introduce development standards for housing.

6.2.1 Growth priorities and residential densities

Longford Town is classed as a 'Key Town and Large Town (5,000+ population)' in the Guidelines. The priorities for the growth of 'Key Towns and Large Towns' in order of priority are to:

- a) plan for an integrated and connected settlement overall, avoiding the displacement of development generated by economic drivers in the Key Town or Large Town to smaller towns and villages and rural areas in the hinterland;

- b) strengthen town centres;
- c) protect, restore and enhance historic fabric, character, amenity, natural heritage, biodiversity and environmental quality;
- d) realise opportunities for adaptation and reuse of existing buildings and for incremental backland, brownfield and infill development, and
- e) deliver sequential and sustainable urban extension at locations that are closest to the urban core and are integrated into, or can be integrated into, the existing built-up footprint of the settlement.

The Guidelines set out a methodology for identifying appropriate densities in the different types of settlements. The recommended net density ranges for Key Towns and Large Towns are as follows:

- **Centre and Urban Neighbourhoods:**
 - The centre comprises the town centre and the surrounding streets, while urban neighbourhoods consist of the early phases of residential development around the centre that have evolved over time to include a greater range of land uses.
 - Residential densities in the range of 40 dwellings per hectare (dph) to 100 dph shall be applied in the centres and urban neighbourhoods.
- **Suburban / Urban Extension:**
 - Suburban areas are the low-density car-orientated residential areas constructed at the edge of the town, while urban extension refers to greenfield lands at the edge of the existing built-up footprint area that are zoned for residential or mixed-use (including residential) development.
 - Residential densities in the range of 30 dph to 50 dph shall be applied at the suburban and urban extension locations.
 - Densities of up to 80 dph shall be considered at 'accessible' suburban / urban extension locations. 'Accessible' locations are defined in the Guidelines as lands within 500m (i.e. up to 5-6 minute walk) of existing

or planned high frequency (i.e. 10 minute peak hour frequency) urban bus services.

The Guidelines recognise that, while considerations of centrality and accessibility will have a significant bearing on density, it is also necessary to ensure that the quantum and scale of development at all locations can integrate successfully into the receiving environment. Therefore, Longford County Council will refine densities to ensure that new developments respond to the receiving environment in a positive way and do not result in a significant negative impact on character (including historic character), amenity or the natural environment.

6.2.2 Quality design and placemaking indicators

The Guidelines set out key indicators of quality design and placemaking which will inform the Longford Town LAP. The key indicators are as follows:

- **Sustainable and Efficient Movement:** Ensuring places are well connected and accessible by sustainable modes. Places should be perceived as safe and not dominated by cars.
- **Mix and Distribution of Uses:** Promoting the integration of land uses and transportation and a diverse mix of housing that can facilitate compact housing and provide greater housing choice.
- **Green and Blue Infrastructure:** Placing an emphasis on the protection of natural assets and biodiversity, whilst also taking a more strategic view as to how open space networks are formed to balance the needs of communities.
- **Responsive Built Form:** Placing an emphasis on the creation of a coherent urban structure and design approach that responds to local character and is attractive.

6.2.3 Development Standards for Housing

The Guidelines seek to promote a more consistent approach across local authorities in respect to housing standards and have set out specific planning policy

requirements (SPPRs) in relation to the separation between dwellings; private open space provision; car parking; and cycle parking. The SPPRs contained in the Guidelines will supersede any conflicting provisions in the current Development Plan and therefore will be applied by Longford County Council when assessing applications in accordance with the provisions of Section 34(2)(ba) of the Act.

- **SPPR 1 – Separation Distances** – A minimum separation distance of 16 meters, with the provision for further reductions in certain circumstances.
- **SPPR 2 – Minimum Private Open Space Standards for Houses** – Minimum requirement for private open space of 20 sq. m for a 1-bed house; 30 sq. m for a 2-bed house; 40 sq. m for a 3-bed house; and 50 sq. m for a 4-bed house. Further reductions are possible where high-quality communal open space is provided.
- **SPPR 3 – Car Parking** – In accessible locations, the provision of car parking should be 1.5 no. spaces per dwelling, increasing to 2 no. spaces per dwelling in immediate and peripheral locations. The maximum car parking provisions do not include bays assigned for use by car clubs, electric vehicle charging stations or accessible parking spaces.
- **SPPR 4 – Cycle Parking and Storage** – All new housing schemes must include safe and secure cycle storage facilities. A general minimum standard of 1 cycle storage space per bedroom should be applied.

The requirement for public open space has also been revised, however this is included in the Guidelines as a 'Policy and Objective' rather than as an SPPR. The requirement for public open space provision is 10-15% of the net site area, depending on the existing public open space in the area. A higher proportion of public open space will be required for sites that contain significant heritage, landscape or recreational features.

The Guidelines are accompanied by a Design Manual which illustrates best practice examples that relate to the application of the Guidelines.

6.3 Group/Special Needs Housing

There are a number of groups with specific design and planning needs including older people, people with disabilities and members of the travelling community. This Plan places emphasis on universal design in order to provide for those with specific housing needs. The mix and design of new housing for group/special needs housing in Longford town will be influenced by a range of factors including:

- Consideration of the nature of the existing housing stock and existing social mix in the area;
- Desirability of providing for mixed communities;
- Provision of a range of new housing types and tenures;
- The need to provide a choice of new housing types, suitable and adaptable for all age groups; abilities; and
- The need to cater for groups with specific needs.

6.4 Housing for Older People

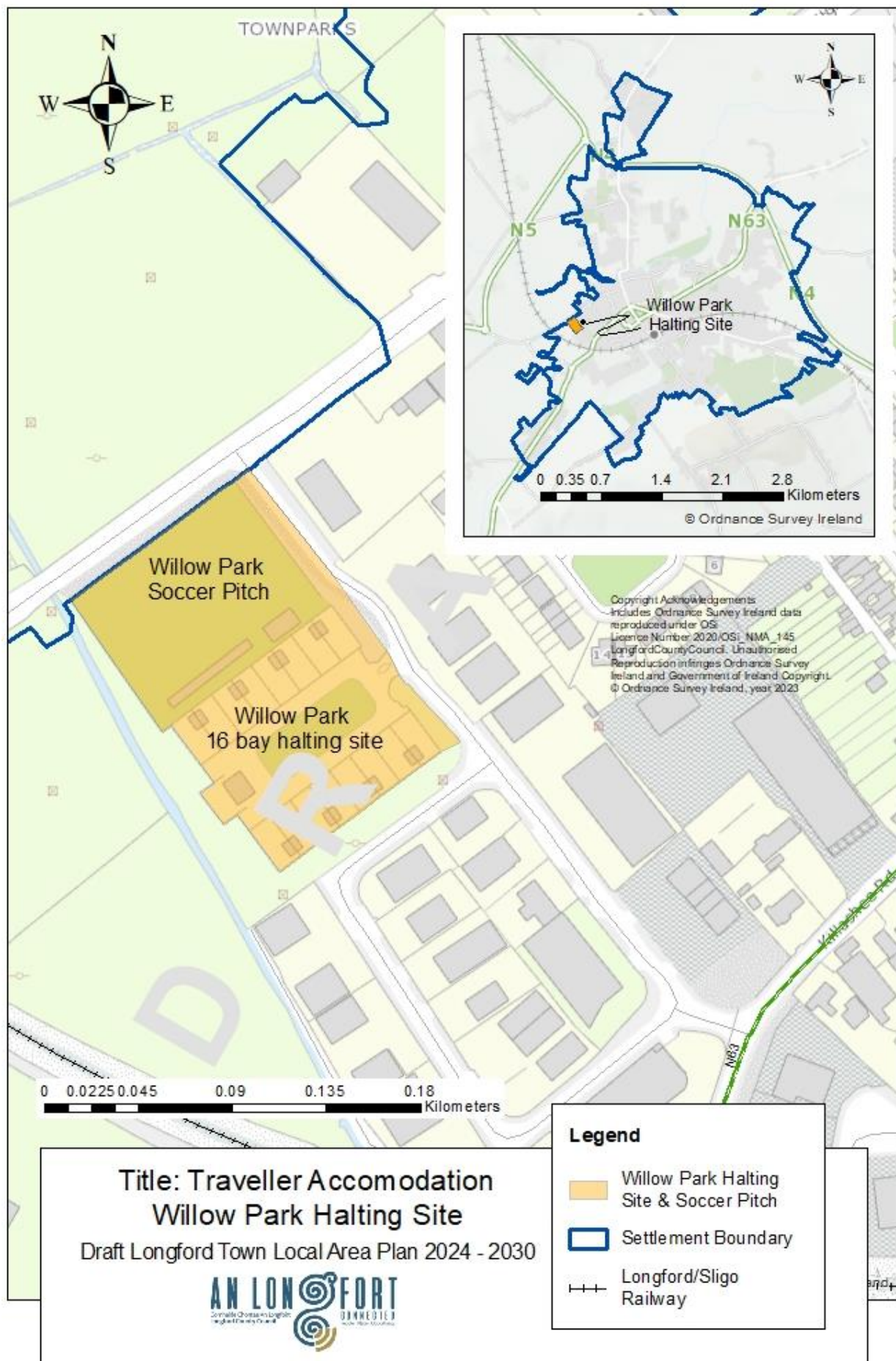
Longford County Council has a *Longford Age Friendly County Strategy 2019 – 2024* and associated Programme Co-ordinator. It is considered that as part of this Local Area Plan that supported housing and longer-term residential care facilities for older people should be fully integrated into the local community. Such facilities should be within walking distance of the town centre, key services and public transportation, car parking and public spaces while integrated into a universally accessible and age friendly public realm. *Longford Age Friendly County Strategy 2019 – 2024*. Furthermore, in the provision of housing, Longford County Council has appointed an age friendly housing specialist who will be involved in developing a programme to implement the age friendly housing policy at local level ("*housing options for the ageing population*").

6.5 Traveller Accommodation

There is 1 no. Traveller Halting site located at Willowpark in the Ballyminion area of the town (**See Traveller Accommodation Map**). This provides a 16-bay halting site.

The Longford County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme (TAP) 2019-2024 fulfils requirements under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998. The TAP aims to meet the accommodation needs of travellers in Longford within a five-year period up to 2024 whilst recognising the ethnic identity of the Traveller community and aiming to provide accommodation that is suitable to their specific needs. This includes for Longford town.

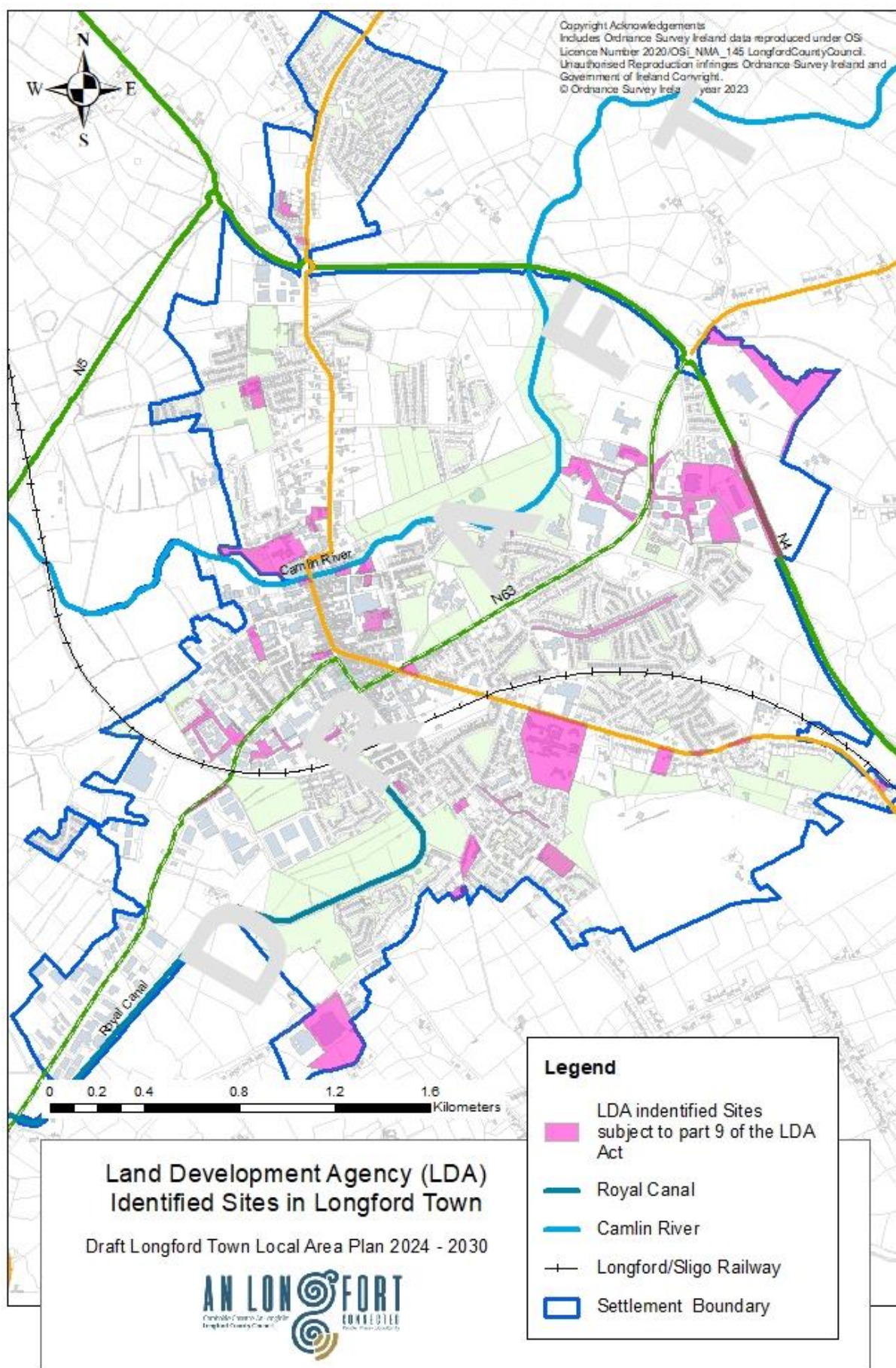
The TAP provides for standard housing options, as well as traveller-specific accommodation such as halting sites, temporary/emergency sites. Different housing options will be provided in accordance with an assessment of need and are subject to feasibility.



6.6 Social and Affordable Housing

Social and Affordable housing shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of the Housing Strategy of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027. Part 9 of the Land Development Agency Act 2021 requires, as a condition of a grant of planning permission, that an applicant for permission for the development of 5 or more dwellings on relevant public land is obligated to enter into an agreement with the relevant planning authority prior to the lodgement of a commencement notice to deliver a certain percentage of affordable housing, by way of either affordable purchase or cost rental units, within that development.

Relevant public land is land owned by a relevant public body, being a local authority, Government Minister or state body listed in Schedule 1 and 2 of the Act, within a town the population of which is equal to or greater than 10,000 persons at the most recent Census. The Land Development Agency has developed a Register of Relevant Public Land which identifies relevant public land and land owned by the LDA or a subsidiary DAC on a map and provides information on whether Part 9 requirements of the LDA Act are applicable (for relevant planning applications for residential / residential mixed development) or whether exempted from the provisions of the Part 9 affordability requirement. This register is publicly available at www.lda.ie and will allow for the relevant local authority to check and confirm whether land to be developed is subject to this Part 9 requirement (See Land Development Agency Identified Sites Map).



6.7 Vacancy, Dereliction, Re-Use and Land Activation

It is the Council's aim to reduce the number of vacant homes in Longford town. Measures to support the change of use from vacant commercial units to residential use in Longford town, where appropriate, will be supported by the Council under the Derelict Sites Act 1990 (as amended) or the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended). The Council will also encourage the use of upper floors of existing retail/office units within the Town Centre as residential accommodation. The planning authority will have regard to the 'Residential Zoned Land Tax – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2022' in identifying suitably zoned and serviced lands with the aim of bringing forward housing development. The Council will support the use of the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme, which provides grants for the refurbishment of vacant properties for occupation as a principle private residence, including the conversion of a property, which has not been used as residential heretofore.

6.8 Residential Density, Mix and Design Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

RES 01	Ensure that all new residential development provides for a sustainable mix of housing types, sizes and tenures and that new development complements the existing residential mix.
RES 02	Require residential developments be built at sustainable densities in appropriate locations, incorporating a mix of tenures and integrating the principles of healthy and age friendly placemaking.
RES 03	Promote and support innovative housing models including live-work units and specific needs housing.
RES 04	Require that an appropriate mix of housing type, tenure, density and size is provided in all new residential areas and in appropriate brownfield/infill areas to meet the needs of the population of Longford, including the provision of special needs housing which

	includes housing for older people, people with disabilities, social housing, affordable housing and accommodation for the travelling community.
RES 05	Promote an age-friendly town, which seeks universal accessibility and age-friendly homes in accordance with the Age-Friendly Ireland - Ten Universal Design Features, 2021, and the best-practice guidance outlined in the Building for Everyone – A Universal Design Approach, by the Centre of Excellence in Universal Design.
RES 06	Support the actions set out in <i>Longford Age Friendly County Strategy 2019 – 2024</i> and any subsequent strategy, regarding the implementation of age friendly principles in the planning, design and delivery of physical infrastructure, public realm works, business and commercial premises.
RES 07	Seek to provide Traveller Specific Accommodation at appropriate locations close to key services and public transport facilities in accordance with <i>Longford County Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024</i> and any subsequent traveller accommodation programme.
RES 08	Encourage the reuse of upper floors above commercial premises (existing retail / office units) in the Town Centre for residential accommodation.
RES 09	Promote healthy place-making, increase the liveability factor of Longford, encourage the most efficient use of land, and ensure a mixture of residential unit types that are designed and constructed on the principles of universal design, life-long adaptability and energy efficiency.
RES 10	Secure the provision of social infrastructure, community and recreational facilities in tandem with residential development.
RES 11	Comply with the <i>Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> , published in January

	2024, constitute Ministerial Guidelines and any other relevant Guidelines and Specific Planning Policy Requirements (SPPRs) issued under Section 28(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).
RES 12	Require that residential schemes in close proximity to heavily trafficked roads within the Plan area are designed and constructed to minimise noise disturbance, follow a good acoustic design process and clearly demonstrate that significant adverse noise impacts will be avoided.
RES 13	Apply a 10% social housing requirement, pursuant to Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) to all sites that are zoned solely for residential use or for a mixture of residential and other uses (save where the development is exempt from the provisions of Part V).
RES 14	Apply requirements of Part 8 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) that a specified percentage of relevant public land which is being developed for residential use must be used for affordable housing (save where the development is exempt from the provisions of Part 8).
RES 15	Apply the affordability requirement for residential developments on relevant public land with the right of first refusal of the LDA in relation to the disposal of relevant public land in accordance with Planning Circular Letter PGO 01/2023 and the Land Development Agency Act 2021 (Remaining Provisions) (Commencement) Order 2022.
RES 16	Where appropriate, to support the change of use from vacant commercial units to residential use under the Derelict Sites Act 1990 (as amended) or the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 (as amended).
RES 17	Have regard to the 'Residential Zoned Land Tax – Guidelines for Planning Authorities, June 2022' in identifying suitably zoned and serviced lands with the aim of bringing forward housing development.

RES 18 Support the use of the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund Scheme, which provides grants for the refurbishment of vacant properties for occupation as a principle private residence, including the conversion of a property, which has not been used as residential previously.

7.0 Economic Development

Strategic Aim:

to encourage employment growth and economic activity and promote Longford as a local and regional centre of trade, business and tourism.

7.1 Overview

Longford is a key town which provides a long- established employment base in the County. The Settlement Hierarchy as set out within Chapter 4 *Core Strategy, Settlement Strategy and Housing Strategy* of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 identifies Longford as a Level 2 (*Key Town*) settlement. Taking account of the role identified by the EMRA RSES as set out in RPO 4.63 to '*Support Longford Town as a strategic portal to the northwest and south in recognition of its location at the junction of the N55; M4/N4 Dublin/Sligo and N5; due to its proximity to the regional growth centre of Athlone; and support its role as a strategic employment centre*'. As such the town therefore has an elevated economic role in the County as a regionally strategic employment centre and in effect a regional driver tasked with complementing and supporting the higher-order urban area of Athlone.

Longford town is home to a broad economic and employment base ranging from microenterprises to large-scale multinational companies. This chapter sets out the economic strategy for the town. In developing this economic strategy, cognisance has been taken of the diverse economic and industrial base within the town. The Economic Strategy recognises the need to foster and facilitate a resilient and sustainable economy for the town. The challenges presented by Brexit and Covid over recent years demonstrated that the industrial and commercial base in Longford is very robust and ready to meet future challenges, in particular those presented by climate change and the transition to a low carbon society. Traditional industries must also look to integrate smart specialisation and digitalisation to remain competitive in an increasingly globalised economy.

7.2 Economic Profile

Longford town acts as a key employment centre with strong retail, administrative and service functions that serve a wide catchment. The town has a young, diverse and growing population of 10,952 people (Census 2022) and a growth rate of 9.43% from 2016 to 2022. Longford Town has grown significantly in recent decades with a substantial economic profile. This is reflected in the high job-to-resident-workers ratio which the town boasts; 2,592 persons of the 6,376 persons aged 5 years and over have a journey time of under 15 minutes to work, school or college (40.68%) based on data from 2022 Census. This is indicative of a net in-flow of workers into the settlement owing to its robust employment base with significant in-commuting and employment in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, pharma and agri-food. Longford Town is home to a mix of retail, commercial, services, agri-business, food processing, medical and biopharma industries. This reflects the strong commercial, enterprise and employment function of the town with an agricultural hinterland, accessibility to the national road network and the availability of an available workforce.

Longford Town is designated as a '*Key Town*' in the RSES on account of its role as an economically active service town providing employment for its surrounding area, as well as being endowed with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as a regional driver to complement the Regional Growth Centre of Athlone. Its designation is also reflective of the substantial retail and administrative functions on offer in Longford Town, as well as its level of physical and social infrastructure which serves a broad, cross-regional hinterland. The RSES states that Key Towns should seek commensurate population and employment growth, on high quality public transport corridors coupled with investment in services, amenities and sustainable transport. Regional policy identifies the town as a portal to the Northern and Western Region and providing a supporting role to the Regional Growth Centre of Athlone. As such economic development should strive to capitalise on this. Furthermore, the Upper Shannon Erne Future Economic Project, which is a collaboration between the

Cavan, Leitrim, and Longford local authorities with ESB and Bord na Móna, provides the opportunity to deliver cross regional economic projects.

Given its strong employment base, its critical mass and its designation within the region under the RSES, Longford Town is the focus for much of the economic development and projected population growth contained within the core strategy and policies of the *County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027*. As per the *Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027*, a key principle of the Settlement Strategy is Longford Town as the principal economic driver and focus of investment for the county.

The Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 has critical objectives across themes such as placemaking, climate change, and advanced manufacturing and it identifies key regional strengths that will support enterprise development and growth in the key strategic towns in the Region such as Longford Town.

The Regional Enterprise Plans recognise that enterprise policy coherence and collaboration at the national level needs to be mirrored from the 'bottom up', to enable:

- a place-based perspective on needs, capabilities and opportunities to inform national enterprise and other policies;
- economies of scale through joined up actions and investment;
- effective targeting of national initiatives to areas of opportunity and greatest need; and
- development and delivery of a programme of collaborative actions that can drive better outcomes in terms of regional job creation.

The challenge for Longford is to identify projects, partners and collaborators that can help to drive further economic growth. Opportunity exists to build further resilience by growing a strong advanced manufacturing base with world class R & D

facilities, a vibrant food and drink sector, a low carbon / green enterprise sector; an improved tourism offering and better quality of life.

Work patterns have changed in recent years and stakeholders across the Midlands in recognising its centrality and large number of commuters, have developed a network of co-working facilities throughout the region in both urban and peripheral areas. Opportunity exists in Longford Town to develop a co: working facility to provide for hybrid working options.

7.3 Longford Town Economic Development Strategy

7.3.1 Primary Economic Growth Town

The County Development Plan Economic Development Strategy and associated Economic Development Hierarchy (and hierarchy of Employment Centres) identifies Longford Town as a 'Primary Economic Growth Town'. This is due to its designation as a 'Key Town' in the RSES as the most economically active settlement in the County that provides employment for its surrounding area with high-quality transport links and the capacity to act as a growth driver to complement the Regional Growth Centre of Athlone. In the Economic Development Hierarchy, the characteristics and key sectoral strengths of Longford Town are identified as follows:

- Significant in-commuting and employment in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, med-tech, and food processing.
- Main administrative centre for the county.
- Primary retail centre.

Longford Town is the dominant settlement in the county in terms of population, economic activity, level of service and infrastructure and connectivity and therefore is the clear choice as the primary growth for the county. Critical mass is a core objective, supported by density levels which enable competitiveness and

sustainability and create opportunities for economies of scale to justify strategic infrastructure provision. As such it is important to ensure that there is an adequate supply of zoned land for employment purposes at appropriate locations to accommodate employment growth. A total of 197 hectares of land is zoned and available for employment purposes in Longford Town, across a range of employment land-use types. This offers significant potential for future economic development within the town.

7.4 Local Area Plan Approach

A quantum of lands has been identified in the plan area for appropriate employment development. The employment lands comprise of industrial and enterprise ventures that are operated by both national and international companies and are primarily located primarily on the outskirts of the town. Collectively these employment sites offer a strong employment base for the towns inhabitants and those living in surrounding areas. This plan seeks to advance these developments in tandem with the development of the plan's residential areas in the coming years. This approach will facilitate sustainable living whereby employment sites are accessible to residential areas by sustainable modes of travel without sole reliance on the private car.

This planned approach to future employment development in Longford town will comply with the provisions of both the EMRA RSES and County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 which supports the important role of Longford Town in terms of service provision and employment for its catchment within the economic function of the county. This plan will support the development of Longford Town as a dynamic and cutting-edge location with immediate access to excellent infrastructure and local services. This in-turn will ensure the town's attractiveness as a place for people to reside and employment companies to locate.

This Local Area Plan will support critical employment growth in the coming years. This accords with the approach set out in Chapter 8: Economic Development of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027.

A policy is included in this Local Area Plan that upon the replacement of the current Core Strategy or zoning provisions contained in the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 by that of a subsequent Development Plan that the Local Area Plan will recognise this.

7.5 Economic Development Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| ECON 01 | Support the implementation of the relevant County Policy Objectives (CPO's) contained within <i>Chapter 8: Economic Development</i> and other relevant chapters of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027. |
| ECON 02 | Support and promote Longford Town as a key hub for employment, enterprise and tourism within the Gateway Region, and in its role as an economic driver complementing the Regional Growth Centre of Athlone. |
| ECON 03 | Promote the Key Town of Longford Town as a primary centre of employment in the County and support the provision of increased employment through the expansion of the existing enterprise ecosystem in Longford and smart specialisation. |
| ECON 04 | Support the provision of physical infrastructure and zoned lands to realise the delivery of strategic employment lands in central accessible locations. |

ECON 05	Promote the plan led development and regeneration of publicly owned land banks in Longford Town for employment, education, community, cultural and recreational opportunities.
ECON 06	Support the development and expansion of enterprise and employment within Longford Town, and to co-operate with all stakeholders, landowners and relevant agencies to attract investment, while at the same time ensuring there is no resultant negative impact on the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre.
ECON 07	Upon the replacement of the current core strategy and zoning provisions of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 by a subsequent Development Plan, this Local Area Plan will recognise this and any associated land use zoning.
ECON 08	Support the economic development and regeneration of the town centre.
ECON 09	Support the development of a creative and innovation hub and co-working space within the settlement.
ECON 10	Support the development of a cross sectoral approach to promote Longford as a key tourism hub in the Midlands, building on Fáilte Ireland's <i>Hidden Heartlands</i> brand and the <i>Shannon Tourism Masterplan</i> .
ECON 11	Develop the recreation and amenity potential of waterways including the River Shannon and Lough Ree and the development of a greenway network including the Galway to Dublin Cycleway, subject to the requirements of the Birds and Habitats Directives and the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport's Dublin to Galway Greenway Plan 2017, including measures relating to environmental management and sustainable development.
ECON 12	Support and promote economic and enterprise development and activity in a manner which contributes to the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainably town.

7.6 Retail

7.6.1 Position of Longford Town in the Regional and County Retail Hierarchy

In the *Retail Planning Guidelines*, Longford town is defined as a Level 3 Settlement, assigning it the role of providing retail support at a sub-regional level⁵. The importance of Longford Town has also been recognised in the Eastern and Midland RSES, which has classified the town as a Level 2 centre (Major Town Centres & County (Principal) Town Centres).

7.6.2 County Longford Retail Strategy 2021-2027

The designation for Longford Town, prescribed by the RSES Regional Retail Hierarchy, has informed the Retail Hierarchy adopted in the County Longford Retail Strategy. As per the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 an interim review of projected floorspace requirements to provide an evidence-based quantum of retail floorspace requirements for the Plan period was undertaken (Annex 9: Retail Strategy, LCDP). As such the location and extent of new retail development must have regard to the planning framework for the County and central to the provision of additional retail floorspace is the need to reinforce the retail hierarchy of the County. Therefore, it is vital that Longford Town, as the County's principal urban centre continues to develop its retail function to meet expanding shopping needs and to ensure a healthy and competitive retail environment.

The Longford County Retail Strategy is contained in Volume 3: Annex 9 of the County Development Plan, with relevant policy contained in Section 8.7.2 of Volume 1 of the County Development Plan. The County Longford Retail Strategy reflects the important role Longford Town, identified as a Level 2 - 'County Town Centre' within the retail hierarchy for the Region, plays in the overall retailing function of the County through its position at the top of the retail hierarchy. As a consequence of the retail primacy of Longford Town in the County, the importance of promoting the use of appropriate lands within Longford Town for the

⁵ 'Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities', (DoECLG, 2012), Section 2.2.3, page 11.

development of associated employment generating, industrial and mixed uses in order to enhance and contribute to the overall economy of Longford is acknowledged.

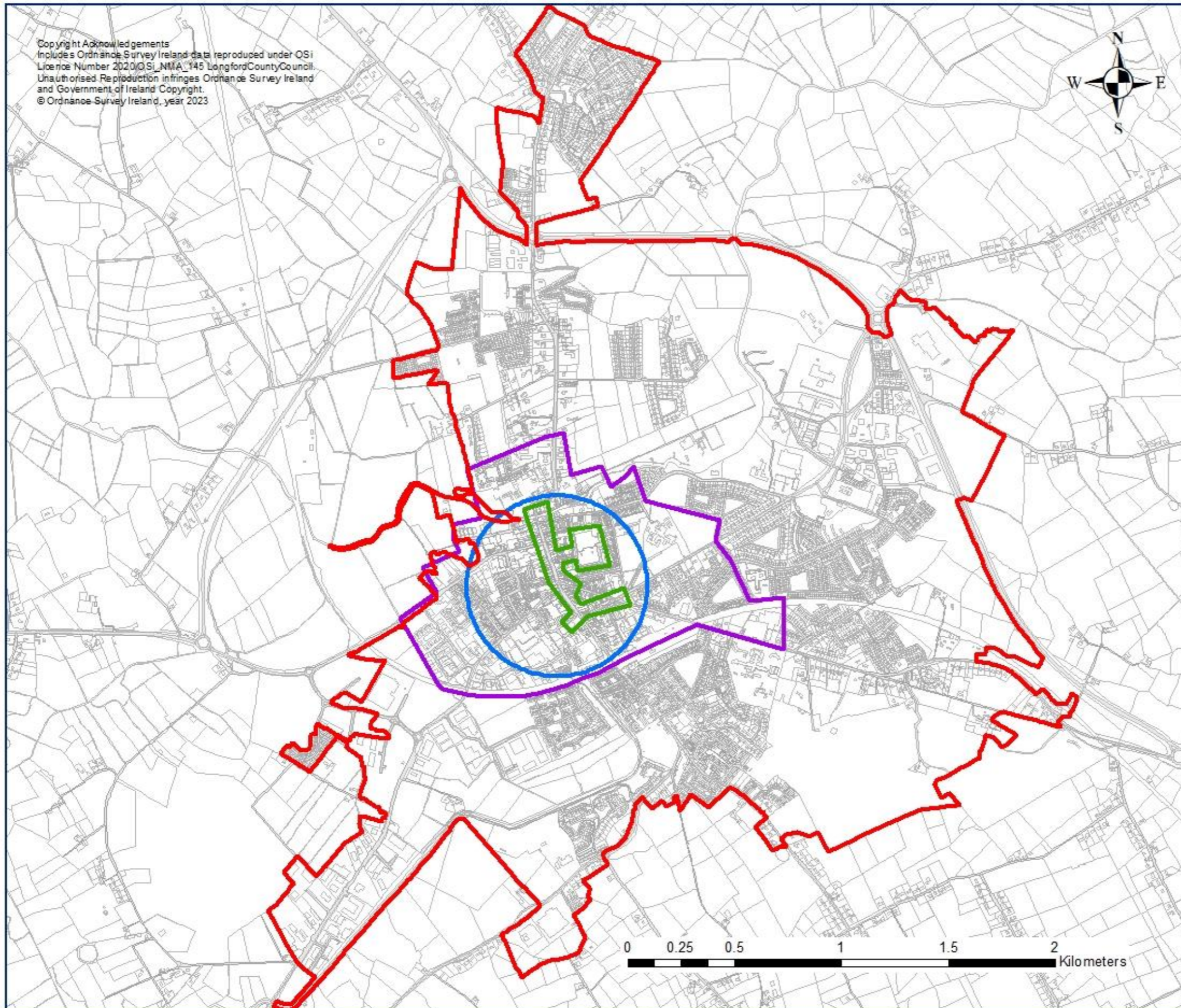
7.6.3 Retail Strategy – Longford Town

7.6.3.1 Core Retail Area

A key policy objective of the *Retail Planning Guidelines* is the promotion of greater vitality in town centres through the implementation of a sequential approach to the location of all retail development. This 'sequential approach' prioritises core areas within town centres over edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations. The importance of core areas as the most suitable locations for higher order fashion and comparison goods is recognised, as they are easily accessible for the majority of the catchment population and also provide a compact and sustainable critical mass of commercial activity and public amenities, thereby reducing the need to travel. Given its scale and dominance of retail development and uses relative to other settlements in the County, Longford Town is the most pertinent settlement to be subject to a defined core retail area.

7.6.3.2 Vacancy

The Retail Strategy indicates that there are particularly high concentrations of vacant properties in and around Longford town. Given the level of commercial vacancy within the settlement, coupled with a relative underperforming commercial and retail market, the Core Retail Area of Longford Town is identified as the dense clustering of key commercial activities, bounded by the primary thoroughfares of Main Street to the West and Dublin Street to the South, and the secondary thoroughfare of Ballymahon Street to the southwest. In accordance with the guidance on the location of all new retail activity set out in the *Retail Planning Guidelines*, Longford Town's Core Retail Area is to be the focus and preferred location for retail development during the plan period (see **Retail Strategy Map**).



Retail Strategy Map

Longford Town Local Area Plan
2024 - 2030



Legend

- ▬ Development Boundary
- ▬ Town Edge of Centre
- ▬ Town Commercial Core
- ▬ Town Centre

Notes:
Please note that every effort has been made to include the latest version of Ordnance Survey mapping available.
Queries on the accuracy of boundaries may be discussed and addressed at pre-planning stage with the Planning Authority.



7.6.3.3 Lack of Comparison Shopping

While Longford Town has a vibrant retail core, it has a notable deficiency in high-end, modern comparison retail floor plates. The lack of high value comparison anchors in the town core has undoubtedly contributed to the growth of expenditure leakage from the town's catchment area, as the retail profiles of competing centres have developed at a faster pace. In order for Longford Town to compete effectively with other urban centres of a similar scale, it is imperative that sufficient high-end comparison shopping is in place in the town core area. It is essential in terms of the sustainable development of the Town going forward that this high-end comparison-shopping provision is retained and substantially enhanced within the Town core area and that leakage to the periphery is prevented.

7.6.3.4 Specific Retail Development

Retail has an important contribution to make to the character and sense of place of urban spaces. It is essential therefore that retail development is of a high design quality and at an appropriate scale to the centre in which it is located.

7.6.3.4.1 Regional Shopping Centres

Due to Longford town's location at strategic point on national infrastructure, Longford has traditionally acted as an inter-regional centre for the surrounding counties. In order to maintain the role of Longford Town as a driver of development in the north midlands area and to maintain its position within the Regional Retailing Hierarchy, the potential for regional shopping facilities will be considered subject to relevant planning criteria.

7.6.3.4.2 District Shopping Centres

In line with the Retail Planning Guidelines, and having regard to the Retail Hierarchy, Longford Town is identified as being the only location within the County suitable for

the provision of District Centres for the purpose of providing retailing and amenities to serve its catchment population. District shopping centres will be considered in the context of their location. Applicants will be required to illustrate the compatibility of their proposal within the County Development Plan and provide a comprehensive report outlining and addressing these issues, including a demonstration of a deficiency in the provision of particular floorspace types and an indication of the demand for proposed additional floorspace. In accordance with the provisions of the Core Strategy, District Centres shall be restricted to Longford Town including, but not restricted to, the Northern Environs area.

7.6.3.4.3 Retail Parks and Retail Warehouses

Retail warehouses, due to their large retail floorspace requirements, the bulky nature of their goods and the consequent heavy requirement for car parking are generally located on the edge or outside of the built-up urban area. Due to the specialist nature of these parks, it is not considered that their location outside of the commercial core will adversely impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre. Consideration will be given to retail parks where goods sold are predominantly bulky goods that are difficult to accommodate within the town centre. Grouping of units into retail park situations to facilitate sustainable transport patterns and reduce congestion in the town centre will be encouraged. Individual retail warehousing units in out-of-centre locations will generally be subject to a minimum gross retail floorspace in the region of 700 sq.m. This is to prevent potential adverse impact on the vitality of the town centre. Maximum gross floorspace of individual units in such locations will be in the region of 6,000m² (this includes external display area, for example, ancillary garden centres). These minimum and maximum floorspace criteria apply to proposed new developments and extensions to or subdivisions of existing developments or those previously granted planning permission.

7.6.3.4.4 Local Shops

Local shops located in neighbourhood centres are an important element of the retailing industry in the urban area. Primarily convenience outlets, local shops because of their proximity to large residential areas, provide a readily accessible service for basic goods, especially for the less mobile sectors of the community such as the elderly and disabled.

This LAP aims to address issues related to retail development in Longford Town, given the primacy of its function as the main retail centre in the county.

7.7 Retail Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

RET 01	Support the implementation of the relevant County Policy Objectives (CPO's) contained within <i>Chapter 8: Economic Development</i> of the <i>County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
RET 02	Promote and encourage major enhancement of town centre activities within Longford town to enable it to maintain its strategic role as defined in the <i>Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy</i> .
RET 03	Support, promote and facilitate measures, such as town centre regeneration, implementation of the <i>Longford Town Local Transport Plan</i> to improve accessibility and public realm improvements, and <i>Town Centre First</i> initiatives to reduce retail and commercial vacancy in the town centre.
RET 04	Build upon the strong services function of Longford town and encourage an increase in high-end high street comparison retailing in the Longford Town core shopping areas.
RET 05	Support retail development which is of an appropriate size, scale and type to a town centre location in Longford Town's core shopping area.

RET 06	Protect and promote the vitality and viability of Longford town centre, including applying a sequential test for retail developments, in accordance with the Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2012).
RET 07	Improve the retailing environment of Longford Town by improving the public realm and facilitating a resolution to the centre traffic congestion problems.
RET 08	Establish a dedicated Longford Town Team to look at actions to support the regeneration and promotion of the town as a whole and to work with the appointed Town Regeneration Officer and the Night-Time Economy Advisor who will feed into the Town Team and TCF Plan.
RET 09	Promote and encourage appropriate evening and night-time economy uses to improve the vitality and vibrancy of Longford Town in accordance with the standards of the <i>Purple Flag Programme</i> , with the aim of achieving Purple Flag status for Longford Town.

8.0 Tourism

Strategic Aim:

to encourage and provide for the continued expansion of the tourism sector by the continued development and enhancements of visitor attractions and activities capitalising on our natural and cultural assets in a sustainable manner.

8.1 Overview

Centrally located within the Country, Longford Town is ideally located for tourism purposes. Longford town 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 Dublin-Westport Greenway and Mid Shannon Wilderness Park and key assets within the town such as St Mel's Cathedral, the River Camlin, a theatre and walking routes such as the Rebel Trail and Literary Trail. Longford Golf Course, GAA pitch, running tracks and sports grounds are also attractive features that attract visitors to the town.

In recent years County Longford has seen a significant upscaling of its tourism sector, most notably through the development of Longford Forest Center Parcs which opened in July 2019, and which is a significant employer with approximately 1,000 employees. Significant expansion of tourism infrastructure throughout the county has also taken place, spearheaded by a number of regeneration projects undertaken by Longford County Council, in the form of an enhanced network of leisure trails and cycleways. This activity has coincided with the 'Hidden Heartlands' tourism marketing campaign undertaken by Fáilte Ireland. In terms of the town this can be capitalised on, and this Local Area Plan builds upon this tourism offering.

8.2 Regional Policy

8.2.1 EMRA RSES

In terms of regional policy as per the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region (EMRA RSES) the following Regional Policy Objective for Longford Town is noted:

RPO 4.60: Support the development of Longford as a tourism hub having regard to its accessibility to key tourist destinations in the Region including Center Parcs, and proximity to natural amenities, recreational opportunities and the town's location on the Rebel Longford Trail.

In accordance with ROP 4.60 of the EMRA RSES this Plan will support the continued roll out of the tourism brand in Longford Town and ensure that provision is made for the development of the town as a tourism hub in accordance with RPO 4.60 of the EMRA RSES. This will include the development of appropriate tourism facilities and infrastructure.

8.2.2 Ireland's Hidden Heartlands

Longford Town forms part of the 'Ireland's Hidden Heartlands' tourism brand. The Shannon Masterplan provides a clear roadmap for the future tourism investment within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands. The focus of the Masterplan is centred on the River Shannon and its surrounding towns, including Longford. As per section '6.5.3 Shannon Gateway Towns', Shannon gateways are towns of scale located just outside the Shannon/ Shannon Erne Waterway corridor and includes Longford Town. As portals to the Shannon region, these gateway towns provide significant visitor services such as accommodation, food and drink, as well as critical access to public transport to major centres, with direct links to Dublin, Shannon and Knock Airports. These towns also provide ancillary experiences of cultural heritage, evening entertainment as well as opportunities to provide transport links to smaller settlements closer to the core masterplan area. This brand destination of Fáilte

Ireland presents an opportunity for Longford Town to further develop its evolving tourism product.

8.3 Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027

8.3.1 Longford Town '*Destination Town*'

As per the *Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027* Longford Town is identified as a '*Destination Town*' by Failte Ireland. This Local Area Plan will build on this role. As such it is considered the primary destination for visitors with its strong commercial, arts and cultural scene. It has many must-visit attractions including St. Mel's Cathedral, the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (commonly and historically referred to as 'the Mall' Park and the Royal Canal Greenway. High-quality local food and beverage is available, with a concentration of many restaurants, pubs and its very own craft beer brewery. There is an historic walking trail around Longford Town to compliment a visit to Longford Cathedral and highlight the many buildings and locations of interest in the county town. To attract increasing numbers of visitors the provision of facilities to serve tourism will need to be promoted and increased.

8.4 Blueways, Greenways, Cycleways

Blueways consist of a network of navigable inland waterways. A Greenway is an off-road route for walkers, cyclists and other non-motorised transport in Ireland. The Royal Canal is both a Blueway and Greenway. The Royal Canal is a man-made waterway linking Dublin to the River Shannon near Tarmonbarry, with a spur branching off and connecting with Longford town. It provides scenic routes by canoe, bike or on foot and connects Longford Town with the rest of the County and with neighbouring Counties such as Roscommon, Westmeath and Leitrim. The Greenway network present a number of connected natural and manmade features and locations and connects most areas of importance and natural beauty in the County. This includes Longford Town and the Counties tourism products of the Rebel Trail, the Literary Trail and the Mid-Shannon Wilderness Park, which are a fundamental part of the County's Tourism Strategy, 2017 – 2022. The County

Cycling strategy has been developed further into North, South and Mid-Longford Cycling Routes. This provides Longford town with access to a comprehensive Cycling network built around national and regional access Greenway Routes via the Royal Canal Greenway.

Royal Canal Gateway Spur:

A branch of the Royal Canal flows into Longford town and has been redeveloped into the town centre. This can provide an important tourism focus in the town core and has great potential for waterways tourism in Longford Town. A looped pedestrian walkway and cycle path along the banks of the Canal, provides a walkway from the Market Square to Farneyhoogan Bridge. There are a number of other walking and cycling routes which may be identified and further enhanced to improve the amenity value of the area and facilitate its enjoyment by the public.

The Council will aim to support the enhanced connection between the Royal Canal Greenway and town centre, as proposed in the Royal Canal Gateway Spur proposal (further detail contained in the *Longford Town Centre First Strategy*). Proposals include enhanced public realm design and wayfinding focused on improving the link between the Royal Canal Greenway and the Market Square where the original Royal Canal Harbour was located. This will include the representation of elements of the original Longford Spur canal channel into the town and harbour, reinforcing the existing disjointed connection between the Longford Canal Spur and the Town Centre. The proposal also includes the installation of a strong art feature that will create a focal and reference point for the town, whilst also assisting in the orientation and way-finding between the Longford Spur and the heart of Longford town.

The Council will continue to engage and consult with the relevant bodies, with regard to further potential opportunities for the Royal Canal Spur in Longford Town and other future development in the vicinity of the Canal including the promotion

of active and passive tourism and the sensitive assessment of new development in the Canal corridor.

8.5 Tourism Infrastructure

This Local Area Plan recognises that tourism development can make an important contribution to the economy of the Town and to the County. However in order to do this the Council recognises the need to strengthen tourism infrastructure in Longford. This includes promoting the distribution of tourism products and improving the readiness of the Town for the tourism market. Accordingly, encouraging the development of tourism products that are consumer-focused, having the potential to attract visitors, while at the same time are environmentally sustainable is a key objective of this plan.

The development of tourism will also be advanced through the provision, and extension, where appropriate, of existing amenities, including water-based activities and walking routes. Facilities that encourage visitors to remain in the Town shall be encouraged. Provision, improvement and/or enhancement of tourist attractions and ancillary facilities will be promoted. Support will also be given for the 'Slow Tourism' market as appropriate. An enhanced connection between the Royal Canal Greenway and town centre, as proposed in the Royal Canal Gateway Spur proposal will be supported.

The lack of an appropriate tourist accommodation base and substantial conference facilities is also recognised as a severe limiting factor, not only in terms of the development of the town as a product, but also in terms of its cultural and economic growth. The development of such facilities would be an important step forward for the business and leisure industry and the entire economy of the town and County. The establishment of appropriate tourism facilities, including hotel and conferencing facilities will be encouraged in suitable locations in the town.

8.6 Tourism Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| TOU 01: | Support the implementation of the relevant County Policy Objectives (CPO's) contained within <i>Chapter 10: Tourism</i> and other relevant chapters of the <i>County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027</i> . |
| TOU 02: | Continue to support the development and promotion of Longford 'Destination Town' as an urban tourism destination providing memorable and high-quality visitor experiences and services for visitors to the range of attractions and activities in the surrounding area. |
| TOU 03: | Support and promote Longford's as a 'Destination Town' by maximising the impact of branding and marketing through providing and sharing resources. |
| TOU 04: | Encourage the celebration of the unique attributes of Longford town in the design and delivery of all visitor interpretation, signage and public realm schemes in order to provide tourists with a strong 'Sense of Place' and a more memorable visit. |
| TOU 05: | Support the development and promotion of Longford town as the principal visitor services centre and hub for Fáilte Ireland's Hidden Heartlands in the County. |
| TOU 06: | Promote and develop its historical and cultural attractions and its recreation and amenity potential having regard to its natural amenities including the River Camlin, the Royal Canal and its links to the Longford Bogs and River Shannon. |
| TOU 07: | Facilitate the enhancement and development of Longford's Camlin Quarter, as a location where cultural heritage and artistic visitor attractions can be clustered, offering a unique and marketable tourism proposition. |

TOU 08:	Promote the location of the Camlin River, Connolly Barracks and the unique Mall Park on the town trail as part of the various Longford tourism trails and the Royal Canal Greenway.
TOU 09:	Support community projects and industry-led collaborative tourism initiatives which aim to enhance and promote the visitor offering in Longford Town. These shall include trail heads for the Rebel Trail, Literary Trail and Mid Shannon Wilderness Park (see CDP Appendix 5: Tourism - Literary & Rebel Trail Map)
TOU 10:	Support the development of a strong evening and night-time tourism economy, in collaboration with arts and music venues, festivals and events committees, the Longford and local Chambers of Commerce, Town Team and the Night-Time Economy Advisor. This shall include support for various festivals.
TOU 11:	Develop public open spaces in Longford town that have good connectivity and are accessible for safe, secure walking and cycle routes, in particular links to the Royal Canal Greenway.
TOU 12:	Facilitate, where appropriate, proposals to improve access for all at existing tourism sites and facilities, and to require all new tourism related developments to ensure the development is accessible to everyone, regardless of their age, or ability.
TOU 13:	Support the provision of accessible tourism and to achieve this, all projects and improvements will adopt the principles of Universal Design.
TOU 14:	Undertake an Accessibility Audit within the lifetime of the Development plan to inform Accessible Tourism priority investments at key tourism hubs subject to the necessary resources.
TOU 15:	Facilitate, where appropriate, the provision of high-quality tourism products and services within the Town and in particular the provision of quality hotels and accommodation facilities, and the development

of tourism activities, attractions and events and the development of linked tourist trails.

TOU 16: Encourage clustering of tourism related developments in order to maximise benefit through the establishment of synergistic operational links, e.g. links between accommodation providers and outdoor activity pursuits.

TOU 17: Encourage initiatives in the development of linked tourism and heritage trails that encourage longer stays in the Town.

TOU 18: Promote and encourage initiatives in the establishment of a signage committee to develop an integrated signage theme for tourist attractions, which shall include strict specifications in terms of appearance, materials and location.

TOU 19 : Promote the development of walking and cycling routes within the town, particularly along the Canal and River Camlin.

TOU 20: Maximise opportunities for the use of the Canal and Camlin River as tourism and recreational amenities by working with the appropriate bodies to develop the infrastructure and amenities.

TOU 21: Support the development of the Longford Royal Canal Gateway Spur and continue to engage with Waterways Ireland in relation to the further development of the Royal Canal and the upgrading of its associated infrastructure.

TOU 22: Support the enhanced connection between the Royal Canal Greenway and town centre, as proposed in the Royal Canal Gateway Spur proposal.

TOU 23: Engage and consult with the relevant bodies, with regard to further potential opportunities for the Royal Canal Gateway Spur in Longford Town and other future development in the vicinity of the Canal including the promotion of active and passive tourism and the sensitive assessment of new development in the Canal corridor.

TOU 24:	Promote and facilitate cultural and historical events to increase the tourism, cultural and lifestyle profile of the town.
TOU 25:	Promote and encourage initiatives in the support of eco-tourism such as initiatives in public transport and potential alternatives to the use of private cars to access visitor attractions.
TOU 26:	Promote and encourage initiatives in the development of best-practice guidelines on energy efficiency, waste management, and recycling in tourism facilities and enterprises.

9.0 Regeneration and Placemaking

Strategic Aim:

To tackle problems of lack of investment, social infrastructure deficits and physical dereliction in an integrated and cross cutting way, through several policy areas including integrated land use and socio-economic measures to address the physical, economic, social and environmental problems associated with dereliction and decay. To enhance the town core through the provision of healthy placemaking, to improve the attractiveness and functionality of Longford Town as a place to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the business, service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the community.

9.1 Overview

This Regeneration Chapter is intended to assist in the realisation of the key provisions of the Plan. While applying to the town as a whole, it focuses on the rejuvenation of the town centre by identifying and presenting co-ordinated actions to improve the retail and commercial attractiveness of the Core Retail Area, provide for enhanced permeability and sustainable mobility within the town centre and improve links between the core and surrounding residential and employment areas. 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.

As per the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 strong emphasis will be placed on the regeneration of key areas and further development of the town in order to sustain its important role within the County. A central objective of the Longford County Development 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 the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027,

Chapter 4: Core, Settlement and Housing Strategies and Chapter 6 Regeneration for more detail). As such this concept has been further developed in this Local Area Plan.

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 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. There are opportunities for improved links between both ends of the town and enhanced rejuvenation of, and connections between, the Royal Canal Greenway and the former location of the canal harbour around the Market Square.

9.2 Placemaking

In terms of placemaking this overlaps with the concept of regeneration. 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. Chapter 7 Placemaking of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out broad principles of placemaking, which includes Public Realm and Universal Design which will be taken into account in this Local Area Plan.

9.3 Regeneration Opportunities – 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. As per the Development Plan a significant number of potential projects for advancement are identified.

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 'Regeneration Area' and 'Strategic Sites' identified in the subsequent section 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). Also, the planned development of a creative and innovation hub and co-working space is also regarded as providing a further opportunity to drive enterprise development and entrepreneurship in the town.

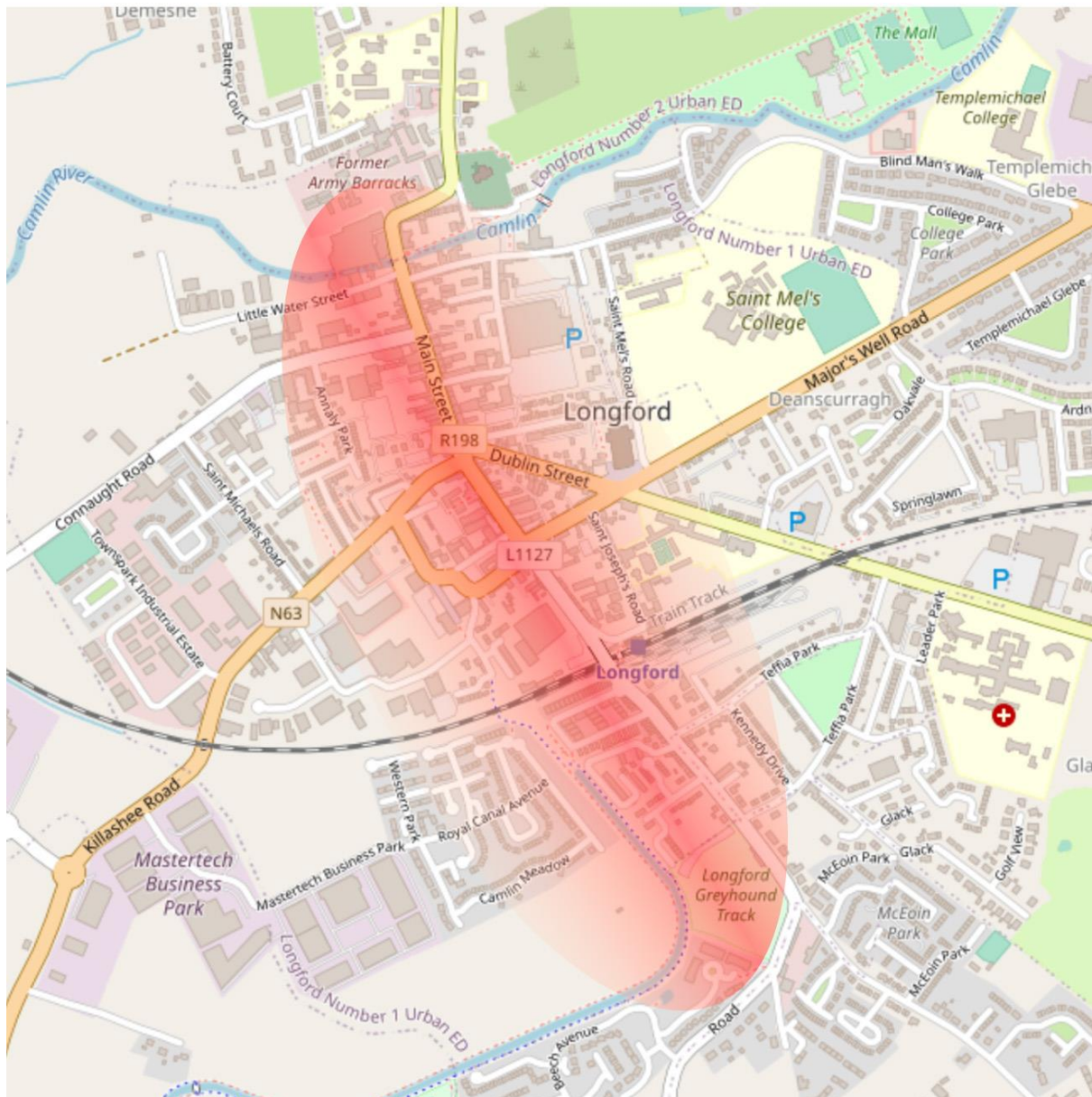
Potential projects under the various funding sources will also be identified. The Regeneration section will pursue complementary funding streams that support broader aims to achieve outcomes in the areas of tourism, economic, recreation, heritage, amenity, social inclusion and climate action.

Town Centre First Policy

The *Town Centre First Policy* provides a co-ordinated, whole-of-government policy framework to proactively address the decline in the health of towns across Ireland and support measures to regenerate and revitalise them. It aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community. It will facilitate that response by towns so that their centres can function as the sustainable and vibrant heart of the communities they serve, in ways that are adaptable and appropriate to 21st century needs. Key to *Town Centre First* are local communities and local businesses who have the opportunity to reimagine and shape the future of their town/ village through the development of a *Town Centre First Strategy* with the support of a dedicated Town Regeneration Officer and their Local Authority.

A Town Team comprising of representatives of local residents, business people, community/ voluntary groups and other stakeholders will come together with the support of the Local Authority through a dedicated Town Regeneration Officer to develop a plan (Town Centre First Strategy) and follow through with the all-important actions to make their area a better place to live, work and visit. A Town Centre First Strategy will be developed by early 2024 for Longford town. The town centre regeneration initiatives will primarily address issues identified within the Town Centre First Strategy, which will broadly cover the area as indicated in the following map.

Town Centre First Strategy – Indicative Land Area Map



9.4 Longford Town Regeneration and Placemaking Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

REG 01	Support the implementation of the relevant County Policy Objectives (CPO's) contained within <i>Chapter 6: Regeneration, Chapter 7: Placemaking</i> , and other relevant chapters of the <i>County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
REG 02	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.
REG 03	Support Longford Town as a strategic portal to the northwest.
REG 04	Support Longford Town in its role as a support centre to the regional growth centre of Athlone.
REG 05	Support Longford town in its role as a strategic employment centre.
REG 06	Support the development of Longford Town as a tourism hub.
REG 07	Support social inclusion measures including the revitalisation of areas by physical regeneration, planning, investment and community development.
REG 08	Support the plan-led development and regeneration of publicly owned land banks in the town for residential, employment, education, community, cultural and recreational opportunities.
REG 09	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.
REG 10	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.

REG 11	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.
REG 12	Supports tourism investment and the profile of the Camlin River in Longford Town through the strategic development of recreational trails and networks.
REG 13	Create 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 Barracks, St. Mel's Cathedral, the Backstage Theatre in relation to the town core.
REG 14	Promote the development of the Camlin Quarter area of Longford Town in accordance with the Camlin Quarter Plan, or other relevant subsequent plan / strategy.
REG 15	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.
REG 16	Work with elected members and support community capacity building through Town Teams and the URBACT Local Group, in delivering improved regeneration.
REG 17	Recognise the importance of universal accessibility and promote relevant Initiatives in conjunction with representative organisations which will include various interventions in the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall), the acquisition of ORIS investment or other relevant funding stream for works to the Camlin Bridge, and any further projects or delivery of universal accessibility under new initiatives addressing specific target areas.

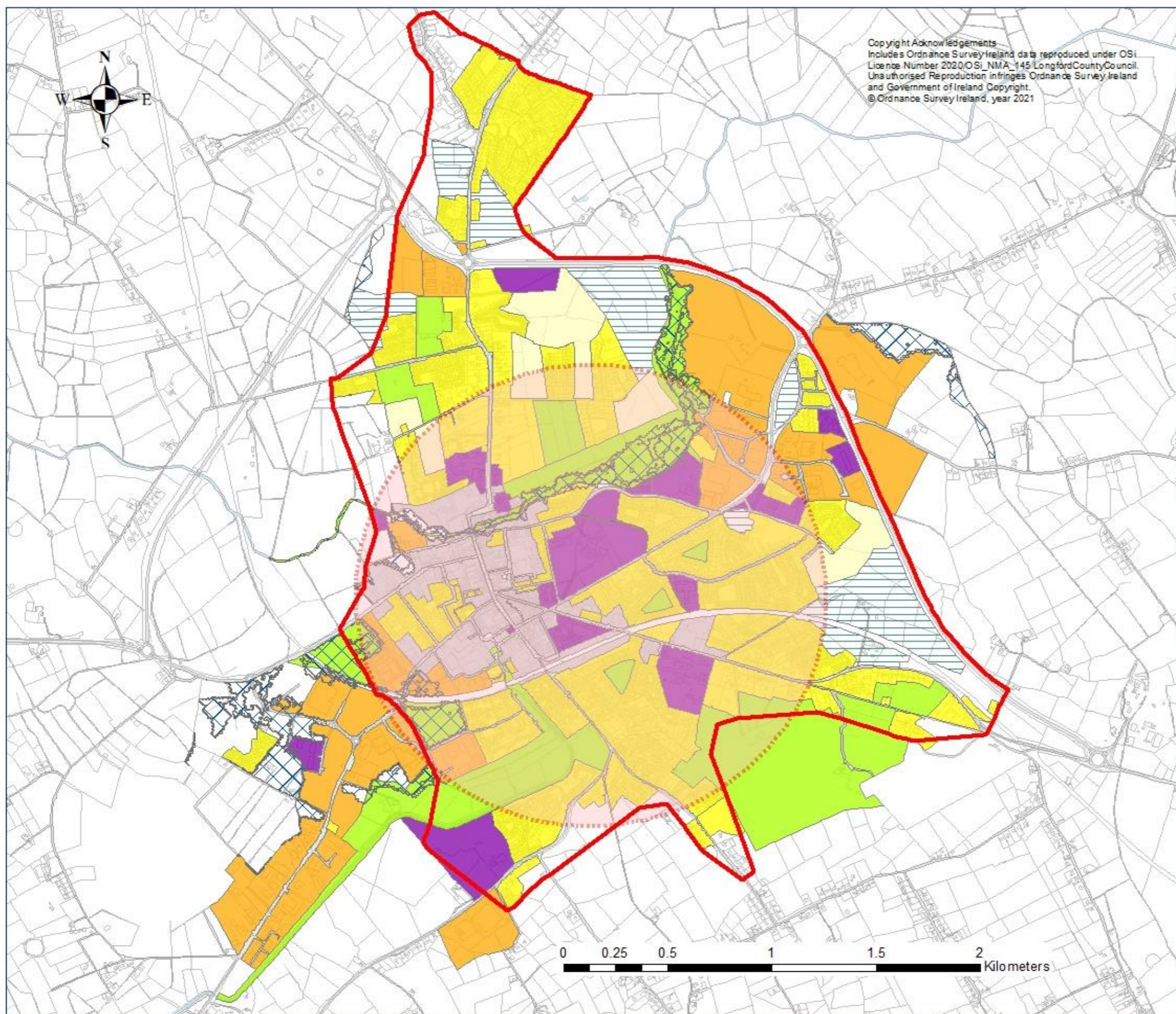
REG 18	Support the development of projects identified in the <i>Military Assets as Public Spaces Integrated Action Plan</i> and any other relevant plan or strategy for Longford Town.
REG 19	Pursue complementary funding streams that support broader aims to achieve outcomes in the areas of tourism, economic, recreation, heritage, amenity, social inclusion and climate action.
REG 20	Seek the preparation and implementation of regeneration plans (including for the public realm) in Longford's Town Centre, through appropriate funding sources.
REG 21	Develop and implement a <i>Town Centre First Strategy</i> which makes Longford town a better place to live, work and visit.
REG 22	Encourage the repair and enhancement of existing shopfronts and the replacement of inappropriate shop fronts where necessary in accordance with Annex 8: Shopfront Design Guidelines of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

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9.5 Designation of '*Regeneration Areas*' and *Master Planning*

9.5.1 *Regeneration Areas*

The designation of '*regeneration areas*' in the Development Plan is a requirement for the implementation of the Vacant Site Register under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act, 2015. As per the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 an indicative Regeneration Area is identified for Longford Town (see **Indicative Regeneration Areas Map**).



Longford Town Indicative Regeneration Area

Longford Town Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030



Legend

- Indicative Regeneration Area
- Industrial/Commercial/Warehousing
- New Residential
- Recreation/Amenity/Green Space
- Residential
- Social/Community/Education/Public Utility
- Strategic Residential Reserve
- Town Core
- Area of Constrained Land Use
- CSO Boundary

Notes:
Please note that every effort has been made to include the latest version of Ordnance Survey mapping available.
Queries on the accuracy of boundaries may be discussed and addressed at pre-planning stage with the Planning Authority.



Furthermore, 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 in this Plan for 'regeneration' purposes. The Vacant Sites are contained on the Vacant Sites Register. These will be developed in conjunction with the requirements of the Vacant Sites Officer and the Regeneration section. In addition, derelict sites will also be subject to regeneration initiatives.

9.5.2 Master Planning – Strategic Sites

This Local Area Plan sets a framework to identify and secure the redevelopment and regeneration of such areas in need of renewal and supports the active land management of vacant sites to address incidents of urban decay and vacancy. The primary objective is to facilitate long-term economic development in the town and the delivery of sustainable housing and the generation of economic activity.

Master Planning consists of a holistic approach to development through social, economic and environmental initiatives. Masterplans can be used as useful 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. Longford County Council will continue to prepare masterplans for areas in need of regeneration throughout the town, as these provide a clear vision for the area in terms of rejuvenation and aid in securing much needed funding streams in order to carry out such projects.

Further Regeneration areas are identified which correspond with those areas identified as 'Strategic Sites'. 'Strategic Sites' are considered regenerative catalysts within the town. During the lifetime of the Local Area Plan a Masterplan will where appropriate be prepared for each of the sites identified as 'Strategic Sites' (see **Strategic Sites Map**). Other areas not identified may also be focussed on for regeneration purposes as this initiative develops over the years. The development

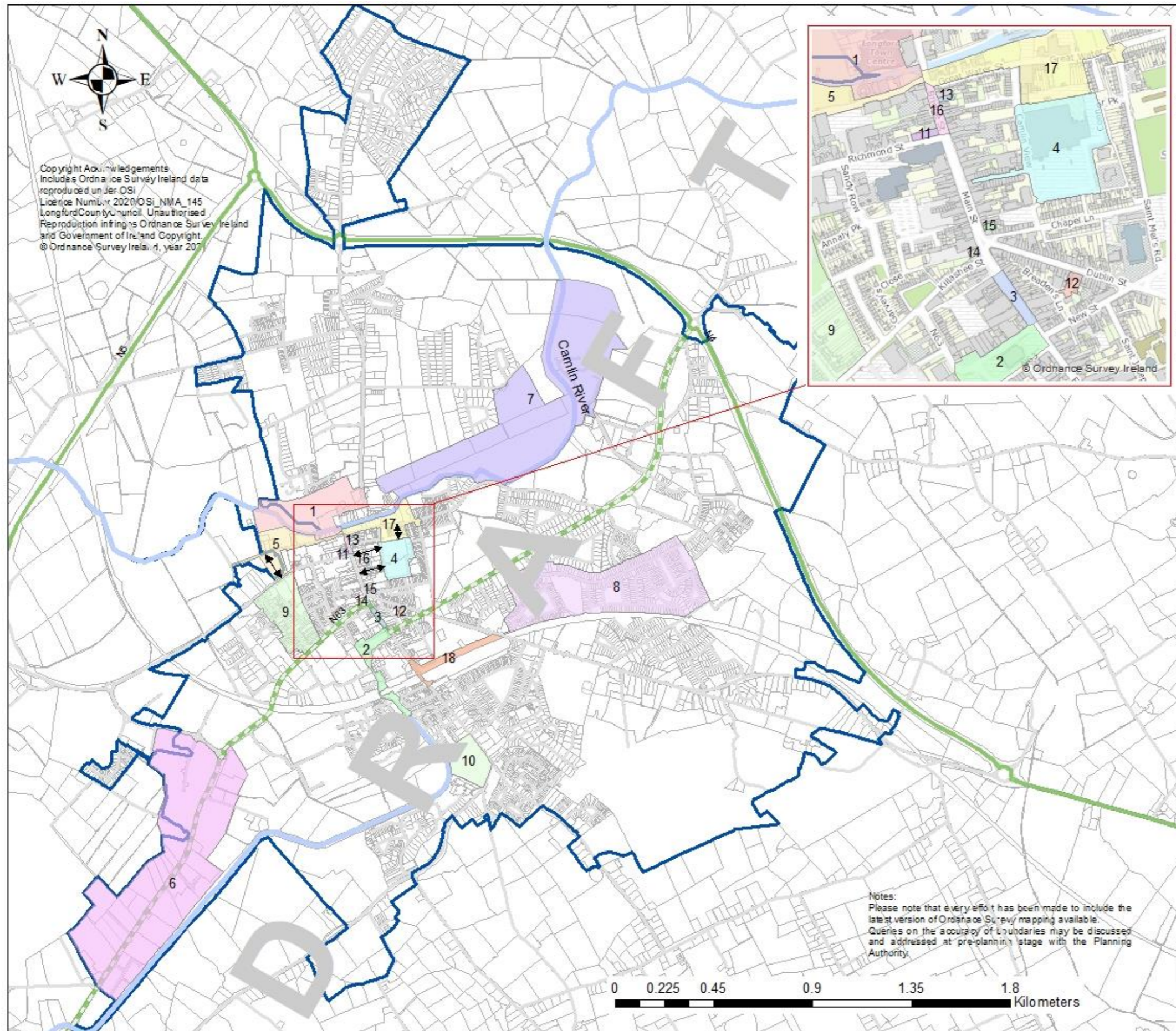
of masterplans will be determined by resources and priorities which may change over time.

These areas contain lands that detract from the overall area in which they are situated, 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.

The Ardnacassa and Saint Michael's Road areas of Longford Town and other areas which are suffering from social and economic deprivation will also be subject to designation as 'Strategic Sites'.

Strategic Site no. 9 (Athlone Road Commercial Industrial Area) 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.

Additional regeneration areas may also be identified in Longford town during the lifetime of the Local Area Plan as the need arises. Areas suffering from social and economic deprivation will be prioritised. The masterplans to be prepared in the lifetime of this plan shall promote an appropriate mix of development to facilitate the implementation of identified objectives in each instance. Developments in these areas should adhere to the principles contained within the DMURS and other guidance issued on Sustainable Urban Development and the accompanying Urban Design Manual and shall be prepared in consultation with infrastructure providers including Transport Infrastructure Ireland and Uisce Éireann.



Title: Strategic Sites

Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan
2024 - 2030



Legend

Strategic Sites

Name

- 1. Connolly Barracks/Northern Quarter
- 2. Market Square & Royal Canal Link
- 3. Ballymahon Street
- 4. Longford Shopping Centre
- 5. Little Water Street
- 6. Athlone Road Commercial/Industrial Area
- 7. The Mall and Camlin Village
- 8. Ardnacassagh Regeneration
- 9. St Michael's Road
- 10. Longford Dog Track
- 11. Providers Building
- 12. Old Garda Barracks
- 13. Old Post Office
- 14. McGuinness' Shop
- 15. No.72 Main Street
- 16. Lower Main Street
- 17. Bridge St. & Gt. Water St.
- 18. Train/Bus Station & Connection to Dublin Rd.

Development Boundary



9.5.3 Master Planning - Strategic Sites Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

MP 01	Promote the appropriate development and regeneration of the designated 'regeneration areas' identified in this Plan and to include ' <i>Vacant Sites</i> ' and ' <i>Derelict Sites</i> ' in accordance with the requirements of the Vacant Sites Officer and the Regeneration section.
MP 02	Promote the development and regeneration of the ' <i>Strategic Sites</i> ' identified in the Longford Local Area Plan, to include on a Master Plan basis.
MP 03	Identify additional ' <i>Regeneration Areas</i> ' as required, to include areas suffering from social and economic deprivation within Longford town.
MP 04	Promote innovative solutions to ensure social, economic and environmental gain for communities.
MP 05	Masterplans shall be prepared for the identified ' <i>Strategic Sites</i> ' in consultation with the community and also with relevant statutory bodies during the lifetime of this Plan. Additional areas suffering from social and economic deprivation will also be prioritised.
MP 06	Carry out master planning to ensure that large areas of land are appropriately planned and developed in a sustainable manner, which include provision for phasing, infrastructure provision, community facilities, density, layout, open spaces, landscaping and development design briefs and statements.
MP 07	Finalise and agree a masterplan for the appropriate regeneration and renaturing of the floodplain areas of the Ballyminion area of Longford Town.
MP 08	Prepare masterplans for additional areas as required, such as the Ardnacassa and St Michael's Road areas of Longford Town and other areas suffering from social and economic deprivation within Longford town.

MP 09	Encourage private development in accordance with a detailed and agreed masterplan that fully addresses the potential of the site in its wider context.
MP 10	Seek funding from a variety of local, national and EU sources as part of the dedicated town regeneration initiative.

9.6 Public Realm

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. 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. Traditional signage, lighting columns and benches may be more appropriate in some areas, whereas a more contemporary modern approach would be suited for new innovative developments in accordance with adherence to the Development Plan Signage Design Guidelines.

A detailed public realm assessment will be carried out in the town core area to identify improvements that can be made to enhance the pedestrian environment in particular in Longford Town and promote inward investment and residential use in the town core through:

- Promoting activity at street level in existing and new developments.
- Improving pedestrian permeability throughout the town core.
- Developing (an accessibility audited) hard and soft landscaping scheme throughout the town in accordance with a coordinated theme.
- Assessing footpaths and junctions within the town core from a pedestrian and an accessibility perspective and carry out improvements as required.

- Ensure that important views and vistas within the town streetscape are maintained and enhanced through public realm improvements and/or the promotion of specifically designed development at an appropriate scale and location.
- Connect, Overlap, Exchange and Accommodate – these are the strategies proposed following the outcome of dedicated research into Irish Towns - Longford being one of the settlements featured¹⁸.

Specifically with regard to Longford, the publication highlights the lack of connection between major recreational amenities at the Mall and the Canal and the potential of this defined connection, combined with enhanced connections between the Main Street and Shopping Centre car- park, to create a catalyst for development along the main thoroughfares. The following specific recommendations are made:

- *Exchange and overlap – promote the occupation of vacant buildings within the main street by community groups and other uses through rate reductions/rebates and promotion of flexible and overlapping uses in both buildings and urban spaces*
- *Accommodate – create the environment necessary to promote residential occupation of the town core, diversity of accommodation on a block-by-block basis*

These studies will be utilized and built upon in order to promote a vibrant, vital town centre that serves the needs of the town and its residents.

9.7 Universal Design

In accordance with the aspirations set out within that chapter, this plan will ensure that Longford Town is an inclusive and accessible place for everyone, paying particular attention to the needs of those with specific planning and design needs. There are a variety of ways in which this can be achieved which includes improving access to services and amenities within the plan area and by creating a pleasant

environment which is inviting and attractive to people. In terms of new development consideration must be given to the needs of those with impaired mobility or disabled persons as required by the Disability Act 2005 (as amended). This will also assist in ensuring that Longford becomes an accessibility friendly town.

9.8 Becoming an Age Friendly Town

There is a need for this Plan is to put in place supporting measures to cater for the ageing population. In future proofing Longford Town to cater for an increased older population, thereby making it a town that allows people to age in their community whilst also creating stronger more sustainable settlements. This requires an integrated approach and targeted investment at many levels from social infrastructure to mobility and housing. In this regard, measures are included in this Local Area Plan to make Longford Town an age friendly town.

The Longford Age Friendly Coordinator / Programme Manager has worked with various stakeholders to identify how new and existing infrastructure/buildings can be made age friendly by implementing the new policies and guiding documents from *Age Friendly Ireland*. The work so far in terms of Age Friendly actions includes the following:

- Age Friendly Car parking spaces.
- Age Friendly walkability tour of the town to include seating audit of Longford town.
- Library has completed Age friendly training and will receive their Age Friendly charter.
- Greater awareness of the Age friendly exercise opportunities.
- Increased awareness and appropriate use of the disabled parking bays.
- Healthy Homes scheme in place allowing older people to live longer in their homes.
- Community Text alert system.
- Crime Prevention Ambassador programme.
- Establishment of the Older Person Council (OPC).

- Digital skills workshops for older people in the library and community centres. as part of the Digital Ambassador programme.
- Age Friendly meeting hubs for older people through the library network.
- Active Age Friendly programme for all active retirement groups organised via the Sport's partnership.
- A member of the OPC is on the community forum, working groups and committees for Longford County Council.
- Annual programme of event including the Age Friendly information day, Bealtaine and Positive Aging Week events.

The County Longford Age Friendly Strategy 2023-2028 is currently under preparation. In terms of the new strategy the following is envisaged for Longford town:

- Inclusion of more age friendly carparking spaces in Longford town.
- Completion of a walkability tour.
- Age Friendly Shopping Centre in Longford town.
- Age Friendly Sport Stadium in Longford.
- Age Friendly Tourism trail and greenway in Longford.
- Age Friendly town in Longford starting with Longford town.
- Age Friendly lending collection in the library to help support people who need additional aids/devices.
- Bus shelter and seating in Longford town.
- More promotion of the transport options available to older people.
- Improve Road marking throughout the town.
- Better and more Age Friendly Signage – plain English in accessible fonts.
- Refresh the Age Friendly Business Recognition Scheme highlighting discounts available to the older person.
- Universal accessibility on the streets of Longford Town.
- Age Friendly rest areas in Longford Town.
- Age Friendly planning for all Local Authority housing in Longford Town.

The creation of an age friendly town also means that key destinations within the town should all be easily accessible by foot, particularly within the commercial core. A Mobility Audit for Longford Town (2017) conducted a survey of the town centre and recommended a number of actions be taken in order to provide a more age friendly pedestrian experience in the town.

9.9 Public Realm, Universal Design and Age Friendly Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

PUA 01	Ensure the policy objectives contained in <i>Chapter 7: Placemaking of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027</i> and other relevant chapters are taken into account.
PUA 02	Support and encourage the principle of healthy place-making in Longford Town.
PUA 03	Support the development of public realm projects in Longford that enhance the aesthetics of the town's built and natural character and improve the overall ambience and visitor experience of the town.
PUA 04	Review existing studies relating to the quality of life in the town and its environs and update these where relevant for incorporation into policy as appropriate.
PUA05	Ensure public realm improvements are carried out in accordance with adherence to the Development Plan Signage Design Guidelines.
PUA 06	Prepare a detailed public realm strategy to identify and address improvements required to the public realm, taking the principles of universal design into account.
PUA 07	Work with various stakeholders to identify how new and existing infrastructure / buildings can be made age friendly by implementing the new policies and guiding documents from <i>Age Friendly Ireland</i> .

PUA 08 Ensure the policies, objectives and actions of the forthcoming *County Longford Age Friendly Strategy 2023-2028* and any other relevant policy document are taken into account.

10.0 Social infrastructure

Strategic Aim:

to facilitate and secure the provision of social infrastructure to support existing and new communities within the Plan area, in a manner which provides flexibility to respond to varied and changing community needs.

10.1 Overview

'Social Infrastructure' relates to the provision of services and facilities which are essential for health, wellbeing, and the social development of a town. Social infrastructure facilities include but are not limited to schools, health services, community facilities, sports and recreational activities. 'Social infrastructure' facilities provide an invisible platform of community and social interaction which many residents may rely upon for personal wellbeing. As such the provision of the requisite levels of social infrastructure within Longford town is vital to support the needs and quality of life of the existing and planned residential base as well as the local catchment area.

Quality of life considerations are a key component for investment and this Plan will seek to protect the attributes that make Longford town attractive. Indicators such as commuting times, availability of key services, recreation opportunities and the quality of the built and natural environment are important.

The development of integrated sustainable communities is one of the key principles underpinning the Local Area Plan for Longford. In achieving such an aim, the town faces many challenges; its urban form is sprawling and low density in nature, and its residential estates are self-contained and car-dependent in design. While the town's social infrastructure was found to be good in some respects, for example with regards to further education and training facilities, other more basic amenities, such as the provision of playgrounds are noted to be deficient for the size of the population currently being served. The realisation of healthy placemaking in the

town will require sustained measures and targeted investment over the long term.

As part of the plan-making process a Social Infrastructure Audit was carried out to examine the availability and capacity of existing social infrastructure facilities in Longford Town, to determine future requirements and make recommendations based on anticipated settlement growth.

10.2 Longford Town Profile - Community Services and Recreational Facilities

The town has a young, diverse and growing population of 10,000 people and a growth rate of 13% in the ten years to 2016. The development of the town needs to be planned and managed to ensure an appropriate mix of facilities to sustain a vibrant town. The new plan will need to examine and identify any shortfalls in the provision of services. Community infrastructure plays a vital role in contributing to the quality of life for all. The physical environment should develop in such a way that it facilitates and does not obstruct the healthy functioning of community and cultural life. Services and amenities including crèches, schools, amenities, recreation and other community facilities should be provided in tandem with residential development.

Longford Town offers its residents a range of community facilities and services which include primary and secondary schools, creches, Education and Training Board, St Christophers', St. Josephs, and other HSE services. There are also medical centres, nursing homes/retirement homes, training centres, community centre, public swimming pool, Garda Station, Fire and Rescue Service, Post Office services, public library, town hall, playgrounds, sporting facilities and open space. The Albert Reynolds Peace Park (the Mall), the River Camlin, Royal Canal, open spaces and walkways provide valuable and accessible recreational areas for both visitors and existing residents. The library is a key piece of social infrastructure and the hub of the local community.

While the town is reasonably well served with community facilities, the forecasted population growth for Longford Town will require continued investment in community services and facilities into the future. This will be supported throughout the plan period.

This Plan highlights the key obstacles and the specific deficiencies in social infrastructure which hamper the development of sustainable communities and outlines a range of objectives to address these issues over the life of the Plan and beyond.

10.3 Assessment of Existing Social Infrastructure and Future Demand

10.3.1 Early Years Services / Childcare

Within the Plan area there are an identified 7 no. Registered Early Years' Service Providers which cater for children from 0-6 years offering a total capacity of 298 spaces. Childcare facilities are well distributed spatially within Longford town. These facilities are spread throughout the Plan area, predominantly located close to or within existing residential developments.

The *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)* establishes an indicative standard of one childcare facility providing for a minimum 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings. As per the Core Strategy Table in the *Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027*, it is projected that an additional 1,304 residential units will be required in Longford town. Therefore in order to cater for this additional growth and to comply with the *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)* the study area requires the provision of an additional 17.4 facilities, with a minimum capacity of 20 children each, or an equivalent number of an additional 348 spaces places in Longford Town by 2027. The location of any additional facilities should follow in new residential areas or beside existing schools.

In addition, it is recommended that an objective is included in the LAP where future residential developments must justify how childcare provision has been met (i.e. existing capacity) in instances where childcare facilities are omitted from a proposed scheme. With respect to childcare, the lead agent for delivery is the developer.

10.3.2 Education and Training

Within the Plan boundary there are 5 no. primary schools; 3 no. post-primary schools; 1 no. Special School; and 7 no. further education/training centres. 1 no. site has been identified by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) as a potential Post Primary School site (**see Educational Facilities Map**).

Primary and Secondary Schools:

There is no guiding population benchmark for the provision of primary or secondary school facilities in Ireland. Instead, these are determined on an area specific basis by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) having regard to available school capacity, demographic projections, an analysis of child benefit records, and local GIS travel pattern modelling. The DES approach includes a general standard that for every 1,000 dwellings in an area, circa 12% of the population will require primary school places and 8.5% will require post-primary school place. Applying this to the core strategy growth figures for Longford Town is set out in the subsequent table.

Longford Town School Places Assessment Table

Primary School	DES Requirement	Existing Provision	Local	Differential
For every 1,000 dwellings, c.12% of the population will require primary school places	1,200 places	1,147 places		-53 spaces
Post Primary				
For every 1,000 dwellings, c. 8.5% will require post-primary school places	850 places	1,471 places		+621 spaces

This would suggest that the town is sufficient in terms of post-primary schools. However there is a deficiency in terms of primary school provision (- 53 spaces).

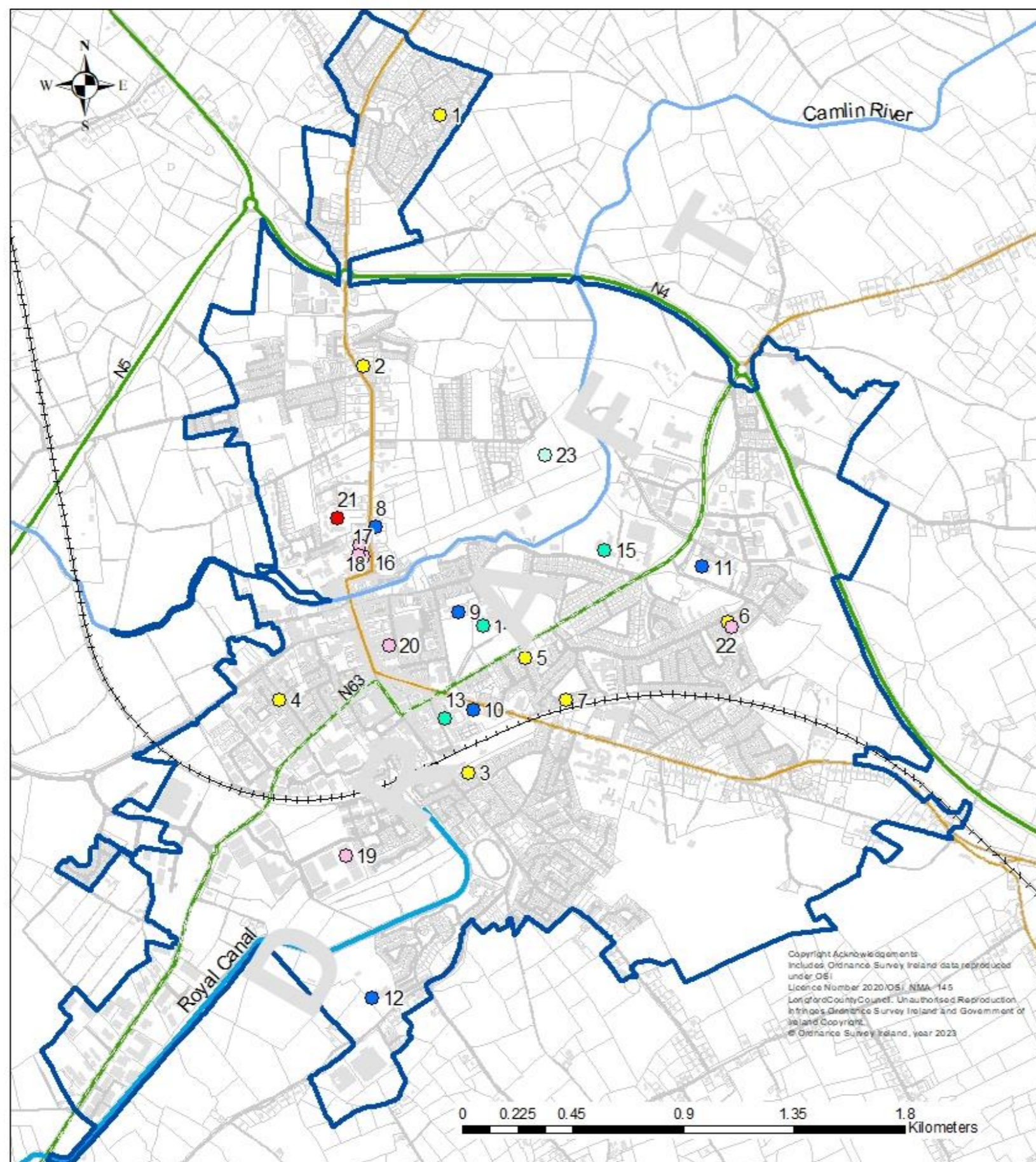
In accordance with the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), there is an obligation to make all their statutory plans consistent with the core strategies and objectives of the NPF and the relevant RSES. The Longford CDP 2021-2027 designates Longford as a 'Key Town' and provides for a projected population increase of 2,502 persons for Longford Town from 10,008 to 12,510 by 2027. As per the Department of Education (November 2022), it has been indicated that if this projected population increase materialises, a requirement for additional education provision at both primary and post-primary level may emerge over the lifetime of the plan and that any increase in population between 2028 and 2029 could also result in a requirement for additional education provision.

The Department also notes in terms of compliance with Longford Key Town Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's), the reference to the sustainable growth of compact urban settlements and the potential regeneration of existing areas within the town's and indicates that population growth within the existing "built-up" footprint of the town has the potential to upset the balance of use relative to

education provision in the area. The absence of specific school site provision in such locations can significantly challenge the delivery of required school places associated with intensified residential development. It is, therefore, critical that explicit provision for school development to cater for such development be made in existing "built-up" areas, within Longford. Also in terms of assessing current and future capacity, potential unforeseen circumstances such as the Ukrainian crisis, have the ability to put undue pressure on school place provision and could necessitate reassessments of school place provision from time to time. In this regard it is noted that the Department of Education will engage with the Council where the findings of an assessment require a review of existing or future school site provision within a specific location. The Department of Education are currently considering 'Dempsey's Field' in the Abbeycartron for a potential post primary school (see **Educational Facilities Map**).

Further Education:

In terms of further education and facilities the 7 no. Adult and Further Training centres offer a variety of courses ranging from bookkeeping, catering, business and IT, Hair and Beauty, Engineering, Health Care, social studies, and PLC courses (see **Educational Facilities Map**). As such it is considered that Longford town is well served by further education facilities and courses. The Council will support these existing facilities and support further development to address lack of higher educational attainment, including the need for third level education such as outreach / specialist courses.



LABEL	TYPE	NAME	ADDRESS
1	Early Years Services/Childcare	Bright Beginings	23 Sycamore Close, Conbalt Woods
2	Early Years Services/Childcare	Little Angels	Battery Rd., Abbeycarton
3	Early Years Services/Childcare	Bluebell's Montessori Nursery School	2 Bothar Na Pairce, Glack
4	Early Years Services/Childcare	Tir na Nog	Harmony Hse Comm. Group Ltd. St. Michaels Rd.
5	Early Years Services/Childcare	Trinity Tots	Deanscurragh, Ballinalee Rd.
6	Early Years Services/Childcare	Catkins Early years Ed & After Sch Service	Longford Women's Link, Willow Hse, Ardnacassa Av.
7	Early Years Services/Childcare	Springlawn Community Childcare Ltd	59/60 Springlawn, Glack
8	Primary	St. John's N.S	Battery Rd., Abbeycarton
9	Primary	Scoil Naonh Michael	St. Mel's Rd. Deanscurragh.
10	Primary	St. Joseph's National School	Dublin Rd., Longford
11	Primary	St. Emer's	Ballinalee Rd. Longford
12	Primary	Gaelscoil an Longfoirt.	Fearann ui Dhugain, Longford
13	Post Primary	Meán Scoil Muire	5 St. Joseph's Rd., Deanscurragh
14	Post Primary	St. Mel's College	Deanscurragh, Longford
15	Post Primary	Templemichael College	Templemichael, Longford
16	Further Education	Longford College of Further Education	Connolly Campus, Battery Rd., Longford
17	Further Education	Youthreach	Connolly Campus, Battery Rd., Longford
18	Further Education	LWETB	Connolly Campus, Battery Rd., Longford
19	Further Education	EDI Centre	11A2 Mastertech Business Park, Athlone Rd.
20	Further Education	National Learning Network	Grafton Court, Longford
21	Special School	St. Christopher's	Battery Rd., Longford
22	Further Education	Women's Link Longford	Longford Women's Link, Willow Hse, Ardnacassa Av.
23	Potential Post Primary	'Dempsey's Field'	Abbeycarton, Longford

Legend

- Early Years Services/Childcare
- Primary
- Post Primary
- Potential Post Primary
- Further Education
- Special School
- Settlement Boundary

Title: Educational Facilities

Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030



10.3.3 Health

Healthcare facilities included GPs, health centres, dentists, pharmacies, care and other related facilities. A total of 32 health facilities were identified in the town comprising 1 hospital; 10 GP practices and 1 GP out of hours practice; 1 health centre; 2 nursing homes; 12 pharmacies and 5 dental practices. The location of health facilities is dispersed throughout the town, although there is clustering within the centre and along the Dublin Road. The locations of these facilities are illustrated in the **Healthcare Facilities Map**.

A total of 18 no. health facilities were identified in the town comprising of the following:

- 10 GP Practices;
- 1 Nursing Homes;
- 1 Hospital / Nursing Home;
- 1 GP out of hours practice (MIDOC);
- 1 Primary Care Unit;
- 1 Health Centre;
- 1 Mental Health Centre;
- County Clinic;
- Covid Test Centre.

Using the Graduate Medical Education National Advisory Committee (GMENAC) standard of 0.25 physicians per 1,000 population, the current doctor to population ratio in Longford town (10,952 persons as per Census 2022) (based on GP services), is far in excess of this with 40 doctors practicing from 10 different facilities (HSE, 2022). Should the population grow by the anticipated 2,502 persons by 2027 to 12,510 persons, the ratio of existing doctors per population will still be in excess of the recommended threshold. However, it must also be noted the health services in Longford town serve a large rural hinterland that extends outside of the scope of this study.

Furthermore, in Census 2022 14.9% of the population of Longford town described their health in a negative light, identifying it as 'Fair, Bad or Very Bad'. This in turn could lead to increased demands on health services.



Health Care Facilities			
Label	Type	Name	Address
1	Doctors Surgery	College Medical Centre	1 Ballinalee Road, Longford
2	Doctors Surgery	New Street Medical Centre	14 New Street, Longford
3	Doctors Surgery	Longford Medical Centre	Leader House, Dublin Road, Longford
4	Doctors Surgery	Dr. T. D. Fitzgibbon	36 Dublin Street, Longford
5	Doctors Surgery	Station Medical Centre	Earl Street, Longford
6	Doctors Surgery	Longford Medical Park	Flancare Business Park, Athlone Road, Longford
7	Doctors Surgery	Centenary Medical Centre	Centenary Square, Longford
8	Doctors Surgery	Dublin Street Medical Centre	19 Dublin Street, Longford
9	Doctors Surgery	Atrium Medical Practice	2 College Park, Ballinalee Road, Longford
10	Doctors Surgery	Harbour Row Medical Practice	3A Harbour Row, Townspark, Longford
11	MIDOC	MIDOC	Dublin Rd., Longford
12	Primary Care Unit	HSE	Flancare Business Park, Athlone Road, Longford
13	Longford Health Centre	HSE	Dublin Road, Longford
14	Mental Health Services	HSE	Dublin Road, Longford
15	County Clinic	HSE	Dublin Road, Longford
16	Nursing Home	Laurel Lodge Nursing Home	Temple Michael Glebe, Longford
17	Hospital/Nursing Home	St. Joseph's Hospital/Care Centre	Dublin Road, Longford
18	Covid Test Centre	Covid Test Centre	Mastertech Business Park, Athlone Rd., Longford

Legend	
Facility Type	
●	Doctors Surgery
◆	MIDOC
◆	Primary Care Unit
●	Longford Health Centre
●	County Clinic
●	Nursing Home
■	Hospital/Nursing Home
●	Mental Health Services
●	Covid Test Centre
□	Settlement Boundary

Title: Health Care Facilities
Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030



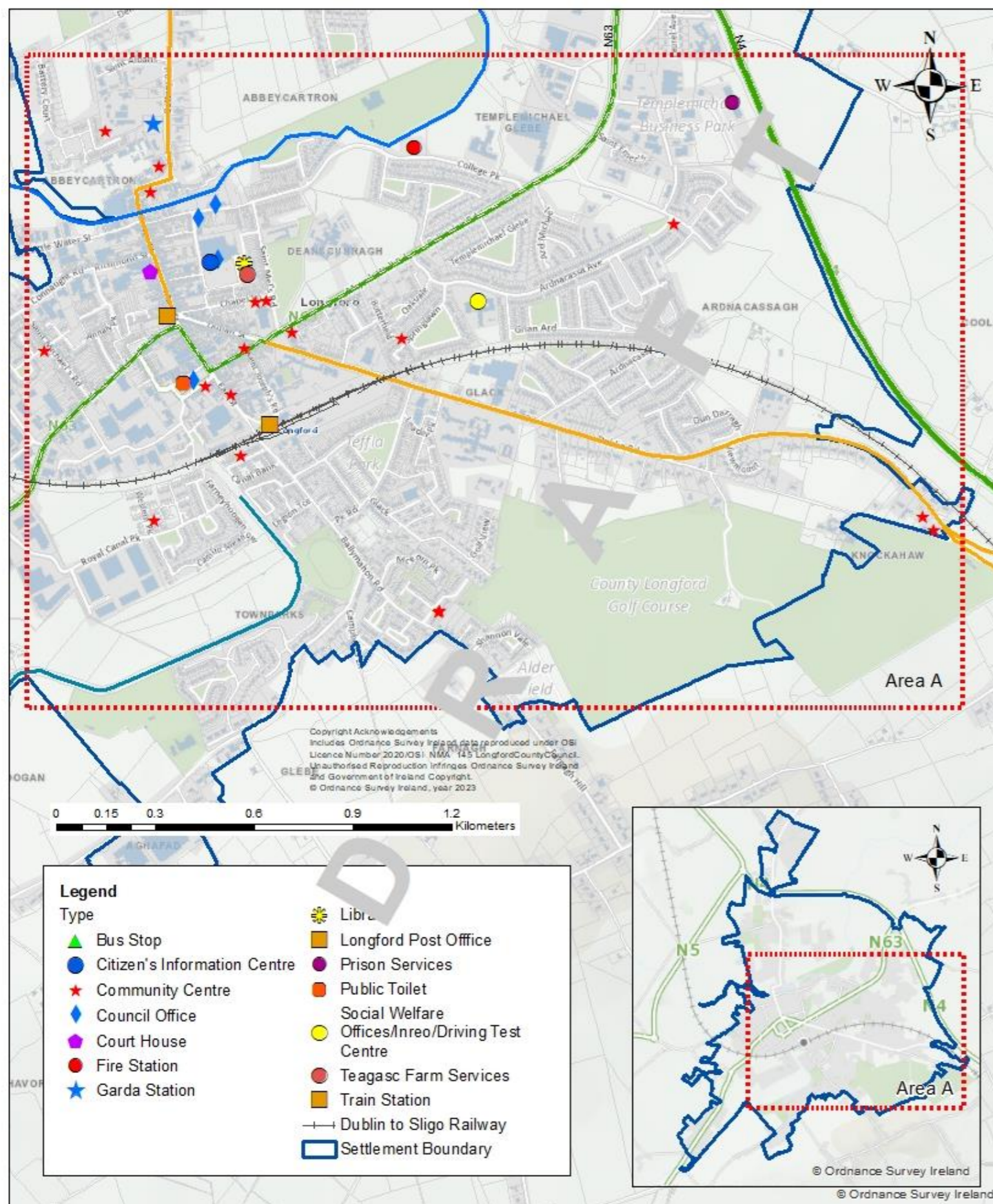
10.3.4 Education, Childcare and Health Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to:

ECH 01	Require the provision of appropriately located and purpose-built early learning and childcare facilities to meet the pro-rata childcare needs of housing development during the plan period.
ECH 02	Ensure future residential developments must justify how childcare provision has been met (i.e. existing capacity) in instances where childcare facilities are omitted from a proposed scheme. With respect to childcare, the lead agent for delivery is the developer.
ECH 03	Support and facilitate improvements to existing primary schools and secondary schools to resolve current capacity issues and facilitate forecasted future growth.
ECH 04	Support the provision of adequate and suitable school accommodation, as needs require, including the development of new schools and the expansion or alteration of existing ones (within the 'built up' areas within Longford).
ECH 05	Promote initiatives with relevant agencies to expand training and education that meets the wide range of business skills located in Longford town.
ECH 06	Support existing educational facilities and support development of further education facilities to address any lack of higher educational attainment, including the need for third level education such as outreach / specialist courses.
ECH 07	Support and co-operate with promoters or operators of public and private health care facilities by facilitating and encouraging the provision of improved health care facilities in appropriate locations in Longford town.

10.4 Social and Community

Social and Community facilities are a broad category and can include general civic services and other services (including social) targeted at specific sections of the community. Longford town contains a range of facilities including a library, theatre (Backstage), a number of community centres, and other civic services appropriate to a county town (**see Social and Community Facilities Map and also Civic Amenities Map - Section 13: Infrastructure**). The total area of lands within the study area zoned *'Social/Community/Education/Public Utility'* is 58.83 hectares.



Social & Community Facilities

1	Bus Stop	Glack Longford
2	Bus Stop	Outside the Court House, Main St. Longford
3	Bus Stop	Outside AIB, Main St. Longford
4	Bus Stop	Ballymahon St. Longford
5	Bus Stop	Cathedral Car Park, Longford
6	Bus Stop	Outside St Joseph's, Dublin Rd. Longford
7	Bus Stop	Outside Texaco, Dublin Rd., Longford
8	Bus Stop	Tesco Car Park, Longford Shopping Centre, Longford
9	Citizen's Information Centre	Level 1, Longford Shopping Centre
10	Community Centre	Youthreach, Battery Road
11	Community Centre	St. John's Hall, Church Street
12	Community Centre	Saint Vincent De Paul, Ozanam House, Chapel Lane
13	Community Centre	Springlawn Community Centre, 26 Springlawn
14	Community Centre	Farnagh Community Centre, 126 McEoin Park
15	Community Centre	McEoin Park Community House, 125 McEoin Park
16	Community Centre	St. Martin's Community Centre, SVP, 9 Bothar Na Pairce.
17	Community Centre	Sylvia Dawson Hall, Leamore Park
18	Community Centre	Western Park Community Centre, Western Park
19	Community Centre	L.S.P.C.A Market Square
20	Community Centre	Saint Joseph's Temperance Hall, New Street
21	Community Centre	County Longford Youth Service, 6 Earl Street
22	Community Centre	The Family Centre, St. Mel's Rd.
23	Community Centre	Longford Womens Link, Willow House, Annacassagh
24	Community Centre	Harmony House Community Centre, St. Michael's Rd.
25	Community Centre	Longford Centre for Independent living, CMC House Ballinalee Rd.
26	Community Centre	St. Martha's Hostel, SVP, Dublin Road
27	Community Centre	Bethany House, SVP, Dublin Road
28	Council Office	Aras an Chontae, Great Water St, Longford
29	Council Office	Council Offices/Motor Tax, Great Water St, Longford
30	Council Office	Council Offices/Housing/Traffic, Market Sq., Longford
31	Council Office	Council Offices/Library Services/National Driver Licence Service, Level 1, Longford Shopping Centre
32	Court House	Longford Court House, Main St, Longford
33	Fire Station	Temple Michael Glebe, Longford
34	Garda Station	Battery Rd., Abbeycarton, Longford
35	Library	Deanscurragh, Longford
36	Longford Post Office	3 Main St, Longford
37	Prison Services	IDA Business Park, Ballinalee Rd., Lisnamuck, Longford
38	Public Toilet	Townparks, Market Sq., Longford
39	Social Welfare Offices/Inreo/Driving Test Centre	Government Buildings, Ballinalee Rd., Ardnacassagh, Longford
40	Teagasc Farm Services	Deanscurragh, Longford
41	Train Station	Glack, Longford

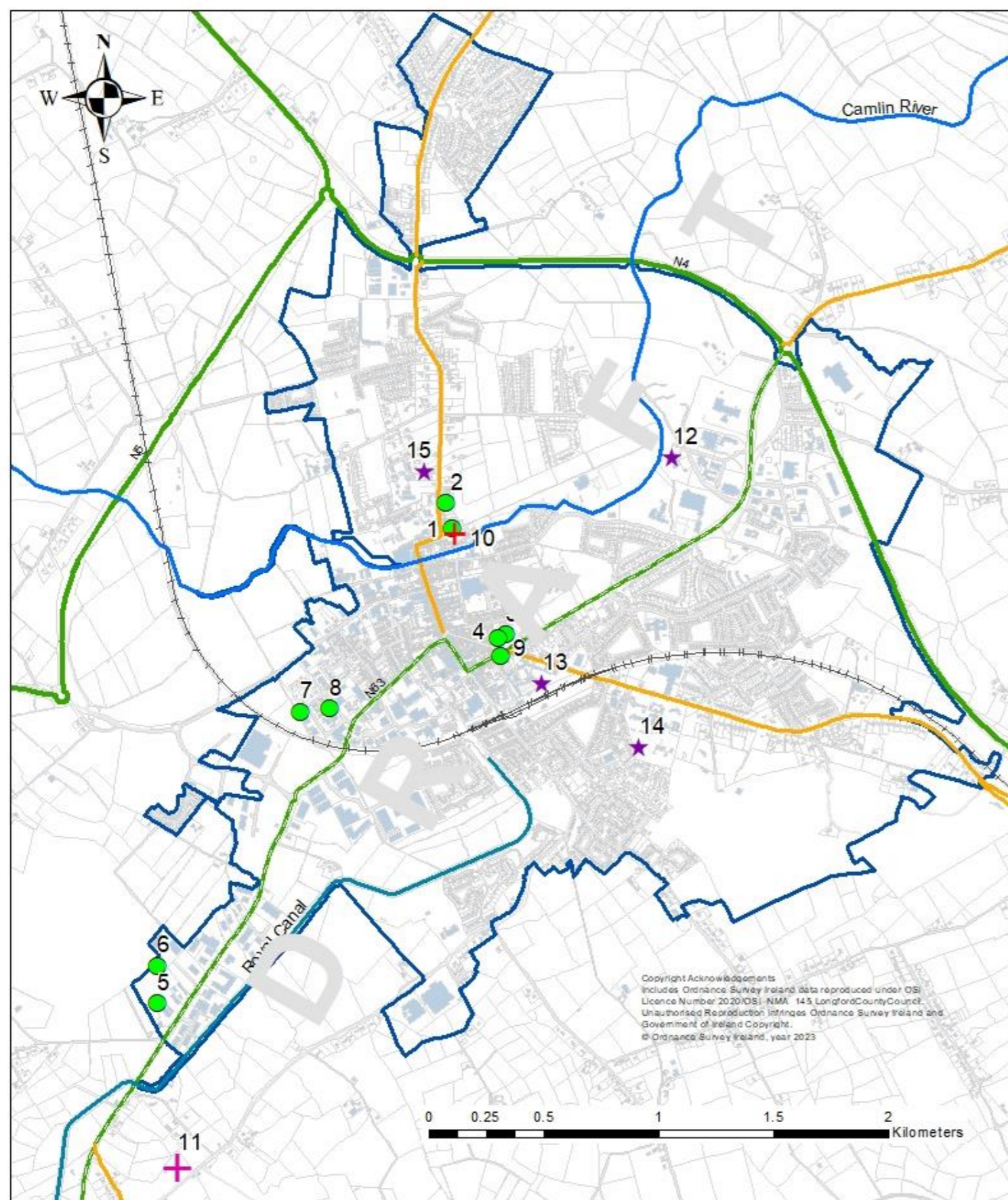
Title: Social & Community Facilities

Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030



10.5 Faith

A total of 8 no. faith facilities were identified within the Longford town Local Area Plan area (**see Faith Facilities Map**), comprising of the following: 8 no. places of worship; and 5 no. graveyard / cemeteries (of which 4 no. are closed). However just outside the Plan area is the primary Burial ground for Longford Town which is located at Ballymacormack (see no. 10 on Faith Facilities Map) and which also contains a columbarium wall. There is significant capacity within this cemetery and as such it is considered that Longford town is adequately served by cemeteries. There is no crematorium within the Plan area.



Faith Facilities			
Label	Type	Name	Address
1	Place of Worship	The Church Of Saint John	Church Street, Abbeycartron, Longford
2	Place of Worship	Methodist Church	Battery Rd, Abbeycartron, Longford
3	Place of Worship	Saint Mels Cathedral	Saint Mel's Cathedral, Dublin Rd, Longford
4	Place of Worship	Blessed Sacrament Chapel	The Presbytery, Dublin Rd, Longford
5	Place of Worship	Seventh Day Adventist Church	Johnston Business Park, Athlone Rd, Longford
6	Place of Worship	The Redeemed Christian Church Of God	Chapel Of Light, Cartonageeragh Business Park, Athlone Rd,
7	Place of Worship	Longford Islamic Centre	Townspark Industrial Estate, Athlone Rd, Longford
8	Place of Worship	The Church Of Penticost Ireland	Townspark Industrial Estate, Athlone Rd, Longford
9	Place of Worship	Longford Baptist Church	6 Keons Terrace, New St, Longford
10	Graveyard	The Church Of Saint John Graveyard	Church St, Abbeycartron, Longford
11	Cemetery	Ballymacormack Cemetery	Ballymacormack, Longford
12	Graveyard (Closed to new burials)	Temple Michael Glebe Cemetery	Temple Michael Glebe, Longford
13	Graveyard (Closed to new burials)	Longford Convent of Mercy, Nun's graveyard	St. Joseph's Road, Longford
14	Graveyard (Closed to new burials)	Workhouse Graveyard	Dublin Rd, Glack
15	Graveyard (Closed to new burials)	Graveyard Presbetarian	Battery Rd, Abbeycartron, Longford

Legend

- Place of Worship
- + Graveyard
- + Cemetery (Ballymacormack)
- ★ Graveyard (Closed to new burials)
- +— Sligo-Dublin Railway
- Settlement Boundary

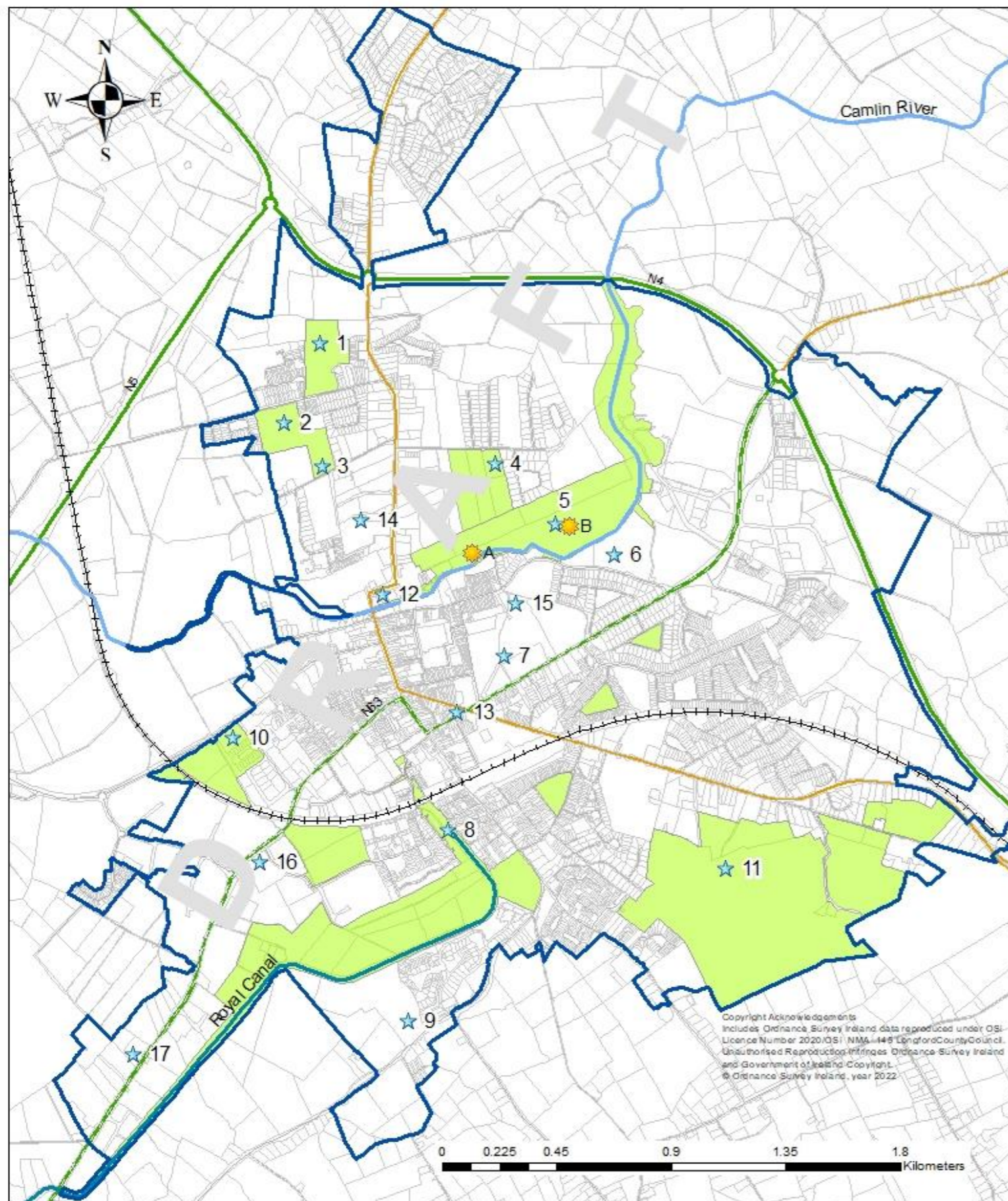
Title: Faith Facilities

Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030



10.6 Sports, Recreation and Open Space

Sports and recreation infrastructure include parks and playgrounds, dedicated public open space and amenity areas, sports centres, and formal club facilities. The town provides a wide variety of sporting facilities / clubs including Longford GAA Club, Longford RFC, Longford Town FC and Longford Tennis Club. Also provided is the Scouts Centre and a 25m swimming pool and gym at the Mall Leisure Club (see Sporting Facilities, Playgrounds and Recreational/ Amenity/ Green Space Zoning Map).



Sports Facilities

Label	Name	Address
1	Longford GAA Club	Pearse Park
2	Longford Rugby Club	Lisbrack Rd., Longford
3	Longford Tennis Club	1 Demesne Lane, Abbeycartron, Longford
4	Abbeycartron Soccer Pitch	Abbeycartron, Longford
5	Albert Reynold's Peace Park (The Mall)	Albert Reynold's Peace Park (The Mall) Longford
6	Templemichael College sports fields	Templemichael, Longford
7	St. Mel's College sports fields	St. Mel's College, Longford
8	Royal Canal Greenway	Longford Harbour, Longford
9	Slashers GAA Club	Slashers Complex, Aghafad, Longford
10	Longford Wanderers FC	Townparks, Longford
11	County Longford Golf Club	Lissanurlan, Longford
12	St. John's Hall	Church St., Deanscurragh
13	Temperance Hall	New Street, Longford
14	St. Christopher's Sports Club	Battery Rd, Longford
15	Longford Athletics Club	St. Mel's Longford
16	Longford Gymnastics Club	Mastertech Business Park, Farranyoogan
17	Longford Megabowl	Athlone Road, Farranyoogan, Longford

Legend

-  A. Mall Adventure Trail Playground
-  B. Mall Playground
-  Sports Facilities
-  Recreation/Amenity/Green Space
-  Settlement Boundary

Title: Sports Facilities, Playgrounds and Recreation/Amenity/Green Space Zoning

Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030



Open Space

Open spaces form a vital part of the urban environment. Such amenity spaces create benefits not only for the enhancement of the quality of life of residential areas but also provide opportunities for recreational activities, education and biodiversity through the preservation and enhancement of green infrastructure as well as helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change. The existence of quality open spaces also improves the visual attractiveness of places to live and work; it helps to create a sense of place and identity and can improve the economic performance of a town by attracting visitors and inward investment.

As per the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 there are 149.03 hectares of land zoned '*Recreation, Amenity, Green Space*' and as such provide for sports and recreational related activities within the plan area. These provide for sports and recreational related activities within the Local Area Plan area and represent 19.95% of the total area of the Plan (**see Sporting Facilities and Recreational/ Amenity/ Green Space Zoning Map**).

Public Parks:

There is one public Park, the Albert Reynolds Peace Park ('The Mall') within the plan area, which is located north of the town centre on the southern bank of the River Camlin (9.821 ha.). This park includes a children's playground, an all-weather pitch, basketball courts, outdoor adult gym equipment, along with a Scouts Centre, Leisure Centre and associated indoor swimming pool.

Former Dog Track:

It is noted that 2.95 ha. of Longford County Council lands are proposed to be designated as open space with the development of the former dog track in the eastern area of the town which will provide further future potential recreational and sporting facilities. It is envisaged the facility will be home to a range of active recreational activities and facilities. A skate park has been completed.

Playgrounds:

There are 2 no. playgrounds within the Plan area; The Mall Adventure Trail; and the Mall Playground (**see Sporting Facilities, Playgrounds and Recreational/ Amenity/ Green Space Zoning Map**). This represents a total area of 0.35 ha. Play facilities, outdoor gym equipment, benches and art installations should all be used to improve the quality of existing and proposed open spaces in Longford. Additional playgrounds should be promoted as need arises.

Natural / Semi – Natural Green Space:

There are also lands consisting of amenity green spaces and natural/semi-natural green spaces and provide habitats for ecological purposes, a focal point for active and passive recreation, promote community interaction and help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Open Space Strategy:

There is currently no Longford Open Space Strategy. Accordingly it is an objective that this is prepared and implemented over the lifetime of the Local Area Plan. There is an opportunity to enhance the green links between open spaces throughout Longford town. These links vary in character from woodland and riverside/canalside walks to pathways within the urban context. These also have the potential to link historical points of interest. Many of the open spaces closer to the town centre and in the residential areas are also passive in nature. The introduction of amenities/facilities such as picnic tables, playgrounds or outdoor gym equipment should be considered and integrated into the existing open space network.

Additional Facilities:

Provision for a new local dog park (preferably 2 ha or larger in area) in an appropriate location should be encouraged. Also the development of a new local eco-park in an appropriate location (2 ha or larger in area), which would provide active and passive recreation subject to appropriate environmental considerations should be

supported. Community-managed gardens/allotments and green waste composting sites should be encouraged.

Community Facilities / Services:

While it appears that Longford town is well served by community facilities/services, it is noted there is a high level of deprivation present in Longford town. Pobal's Small Areas Map of Deprivation based on Census 2022 indicates no areas as 'very affluent' or 'Affluent'; with significant land areas classified as 'Very Disadvantaged' and the Saint Michael's Road area classified as 'Extremely Disadvantaged' (**See Section 3.3.6 HP Deprivation Index – Small Area Map**). Taking this into consideration more community facilities/services are required to cater for demand in Longford town in order to address such deprivation levels. In particular the need for a Family Resource Centre has been identified.

Social Infrastructure Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

CSR 01	Facilitate and support a broad range of community, cultural and recreational facilities to serve the additional needs of the residents of Longford town as the need arises.
CSR 02	Support the development of additional community and social infrastructure at Saint Michael's Road and other disadvantaged areas in the town.
CSR 03	Support and facilitate the provision of both indoor and outdoor multi-functional community facilities to meet the needs of the population of Longford town.
CSR 04	Support and facilitate the development of a Family Resource Centre at an appropriate location.
CSR 05	Support, promote and facilitate the development of cultural, arts and performance spaces in Longford Town.

CSR 06	Support any appropriate development or extension of places of worship/burial in Longford Town.
CSR 07	Provide for a hierarchy of high quality multi-functional public open spaces within Longford town, and to preserve and protect such spaces through the appropriate zoning of lands.
CSR 08	Support the development and implementation of an Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Strategy for Longford Town relating to the provision of open space and outdoor recreation infrastructure in Longford town.
CSR 09	Promote and provide amenities and features such as playgrounds, outdoor gym equipment facilities and picnic tables in all open spaces to improve their quality and usability.
CSR 10	Cooperate with key stakeholders including landowners in the development (where appropriate) of universally accessible greenways and blueways, and other areas within Longford town for recreational purposes, subject to appropriate environmental considerations.
CSR 11	Explore the feasibility of and develop and/or improve linkages and connections between the network of open spaces in Longford town, without compromising the biodiversity along the banks of the River Camlin and banks of the Royal Canal.
CSR 12	Expand the footprint and improve existing connections to the existing Albert Reynolds Peace Park (The Mall) Longford Town, while supporting the development of all other parks within the Local Area Plan functional area.
CSR 13	Support and facilitate the provision of additional children's play facilities in Longford Town within existing and proposed green spaces as the need arises, for children of all ages while also having regard to those with special needs.

CSR 14	Require, promote and facilitate the development of a new local park to cater for the needs of the autistic community at the site of the former Greyhound Track.
CSR 15	Support and promote the development of a sports training hub on Longford County Council owned lands at the former Greyhound Track to cater for active recreation purposes.
CSR 16	Require, promote and facilitate the development of a new local dog park (preferably 2 ha or larger in area) in an appropriate location.
CSR 17	Support and facilitate the development of a new local eco-park in an appropriate location (2 ha or larger in area), which would provide active and passive recreation subject to appropriate environmental considerations.
CSR 18	Facilitate and promote community-managed gardens/allotments and green waste composting sites.
CSR 19	<p>Seek to provide open space and recreation facilities in the Plan area by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a network of open spaces, and creating connectivity between these to form a nature wildlife corridor; - Securing the creation of recreational facilities in association with the development of nearby residential, industrial or commercial development.

11.0 Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure

Strategic Aim:

to contribute towards the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage and the biodiversity within the Local Area Plan boundary and to provide a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits.

11.1 Overview

There is a great diversity of natural and semi-natural habitats in Longford town, ranging from its hedgerows to groups of trees, grassland areas, and riparian habitats along its river and canal corridors. It is considered that the natural heritage of Longford town, while somewhat underutilised, is a critical asset for the town which, when taken in combination with its built heritage, has huge potential, if appropriately and sensitively developed, to improving the overall wellbeing and quality of life of the town's residents whilst also providing critical economic and tourism opportunities.

The natural environment also plays a vital role in helping communities adapt to and mitigate the negative effects of climate change. Accordingly, the objectives set out in the Plan seek to protect Longford's existing habitats and promote the sensitive incorporation of new green infrastructure features into the existing urban fabric of the town alongside new developments in order to foster greater biodiversity, whilst also utilising such green infrastructure for climate mitigation purposes.

11.2 Biodiversity and Natural Heritage

Biodiversity is the measure of the number, variety and variability of living organisms including from microscopic bacteria to more complex plants and animals. Under Section 9 of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, a statutory responsibility is placed on the Minister of Environment, Heritage and Local Government to "promote the conservation of biological diversity." The National Biodiversity Plan indicates that

local authorities and other agencies will share responsibility for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

There is a diversity of natural and semi-natural habitats within the Longford town and environs; these include woodland, grassland, stream and canal habitats. This diversity, however, is coming under increasing threat as the development pressure intensifies and the demand for land for new development increases. A sustainable approach is needed to protect and conserve this natural heritage.

The natural environment creates a sense of place. While it is inevitable that our landscape will continue to change in response to the needs of our society, it is essential that a balance is reached between development and ensuring that there are no detrimental impacts to the natural heritage and biodiversity in the Plan area. The Council is committed to the conservation, preservation and enhancement of the environment and will seek to continue to protect natural resources in accordance with higher level national, regional and County Development Plan policy.

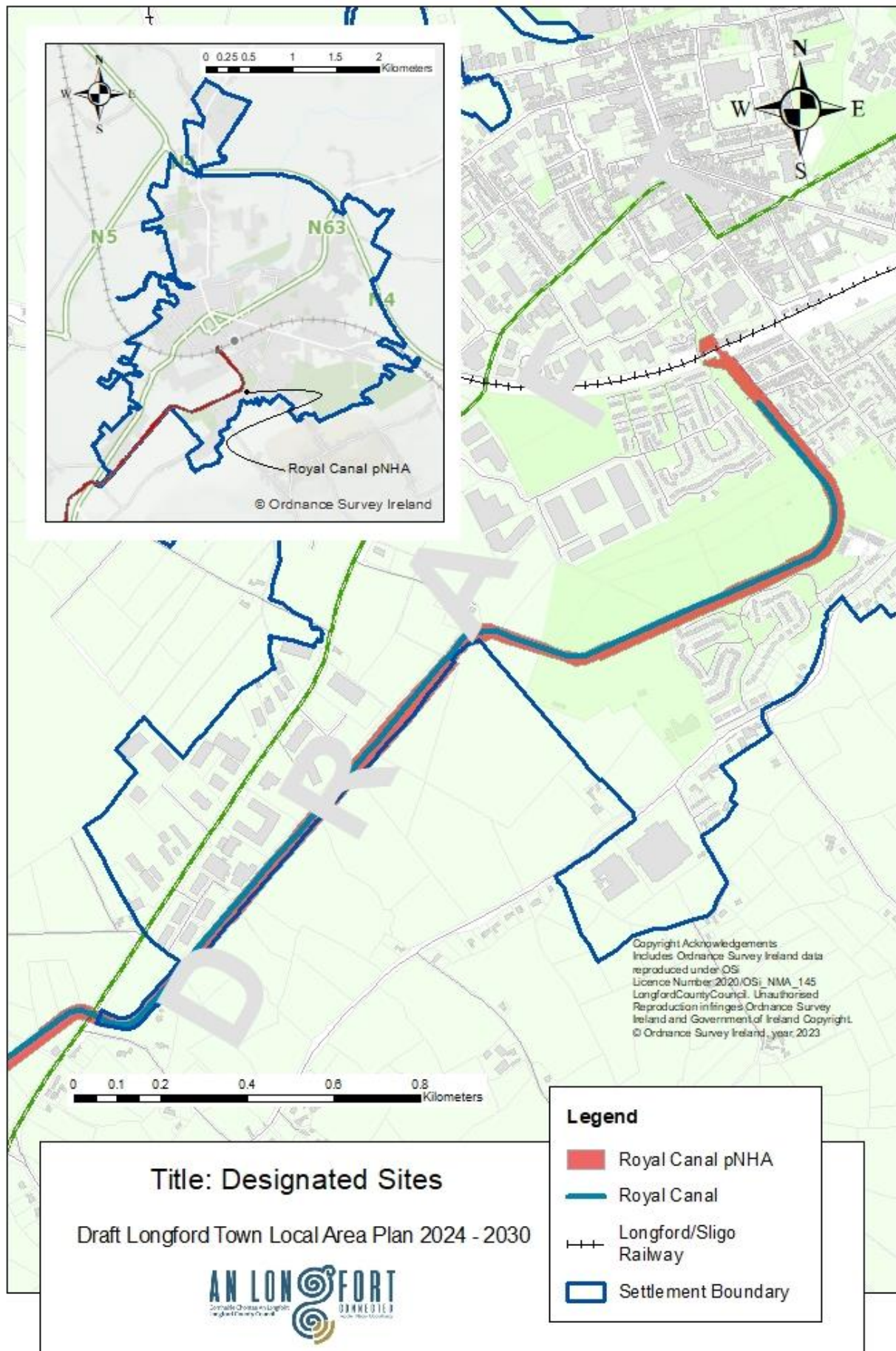
One of the primary indicators of a high quality of life is a high-quality environment, and an essential indicator of environmental quality is biodiversity. The maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity is a fundamental tenet in the achievement of sustainable development. On a local level, the County Longford Heritage Plan 2019-2024 also incorporates the Longford Biodiversity Action Plan. This LAP will incorporate the relevant policy and objectives for the Plan area. The overall aim of the County Longford Heritage Plan 2019-2024 to encourage engagement and appreciation of Longford's heritage for the enjoyment of all, as well as developing and supporting its protection for future generations.

This section should be read in conjunction with the other sections of the plan and in association with Chapter 12: Natural Heritage and Environment, Chapter 13: Green Infrastructure, Chapter 14: Landscape Character of the County Longford

Development Plan 2021-2027 and other documents such as the National Biodiversity Plan and County Longford Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2019-2024.

11.3 Designated Sites

European and national legislation protects the important and valuable heritage areas within the Town. This is achieved through the designation of sites as Natural Heritage Areas [(p) NHAs], Special Areas of Conservation [(c) SACs] and Special Protection Areas [(c) SPAs]. While there are no Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas within the Local Area Plan boundary, there is a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA); Royal Canal (site code pNHA 002103) (see Designated Sites Map). The 'Longford Spur' of the Royal Canal enters the town to the southwest, and the pNHA comprises the canal channel and the banks on either side of it. The canal supports important habitats and a diverse range of species.



11.4 Other Local Habitat and Biodiversity Sites of Importance

Beyond the boundaries of the designated sites within the Town are areas that are valuable in terms of local habitat and biodiversity and make up a network of linked spaces that contribute to the Town's Natural Heritage. These features include rivers, the canal and their corridors, lakes, ponds, hedgerows, important stands of trees and woodlands. On the environs much of the LAP lands have a distinct landscape character depicted by roadside field boundaries with mature native species which contribute to its biodiversity value. The creation/maintenance/enhancement of wildlife corridors to protect and expand biodiversity in the area should be encouraged.

11.4.1 Landscape Character Designations

In terms of Landscape Character Designations within Longford LAP it consists of mainly 'Central Corridor' with small areas to the south of 'Open Agriculture' and 'Peatlands' (see **Landscape Character, Scenic Views, Important Stands of Trees and Geological Sites Map**).

11.4.2 Protected Views

Within the Longford LAP boundaries is the following Protected View:

I.S.12: (Intermittent) Townlands: Feraghfad, Ballymakeegan, Farnagh, Glebe (Ed. Longford Rural), Townparks (Ardagh By), Farranyoogan, Aghafad, Cartronageeragh (see **Landscape Character, Scenic Views, Important Stands of Trees and Geological Sites Map**).

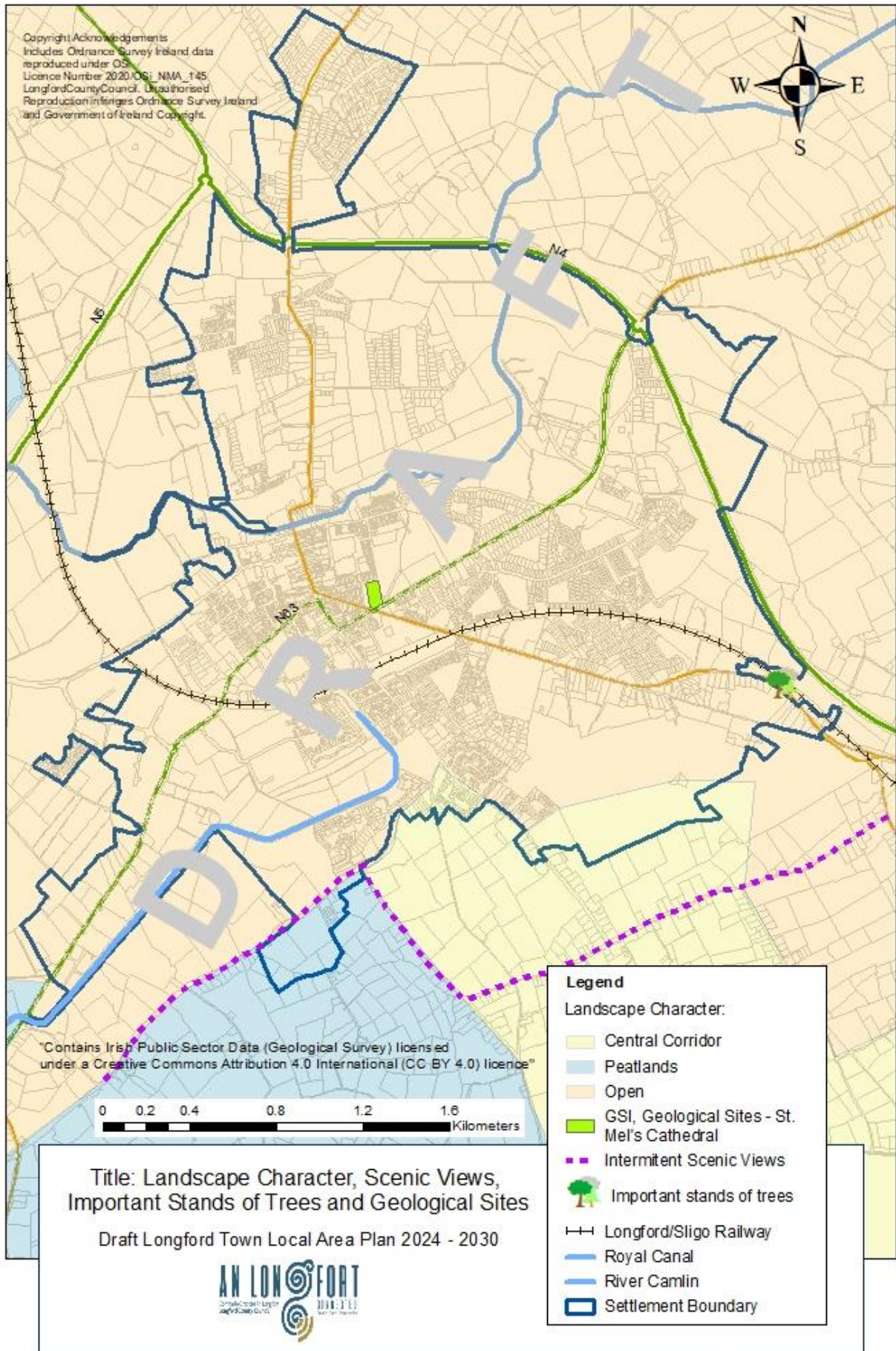
11.4.3 Protected Trees

Within the Longford LAP boundaries are protected trees along Regional Road R393 at Knockahaw (see **Landscape Character, Scenic Views, Important Stands of Trees and Geological Sites Map**).

11.4.4 Geological Sites

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) in tandem with the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the DoEHLG, identifies and selects sites of geological heritage within Ireland for future designations as NHAs. To date no geological site has been statutorily designated as an NHA. Within the Longford Town Local Area Plan boundaries 1 no. Geological Sites is identified, St. Mel's Cathedral (Site Code: LD015), which may eventually become a designated site (see **Landscape Character, Scenic Views, Important Stands of Trees and Geological Sites Map**). St. Mel's Cathedral is a landmark building which is identified as County Geological Site for its excellent display of rock used as a building material, both in the original edifice and in its restoration following a fire in 2009.

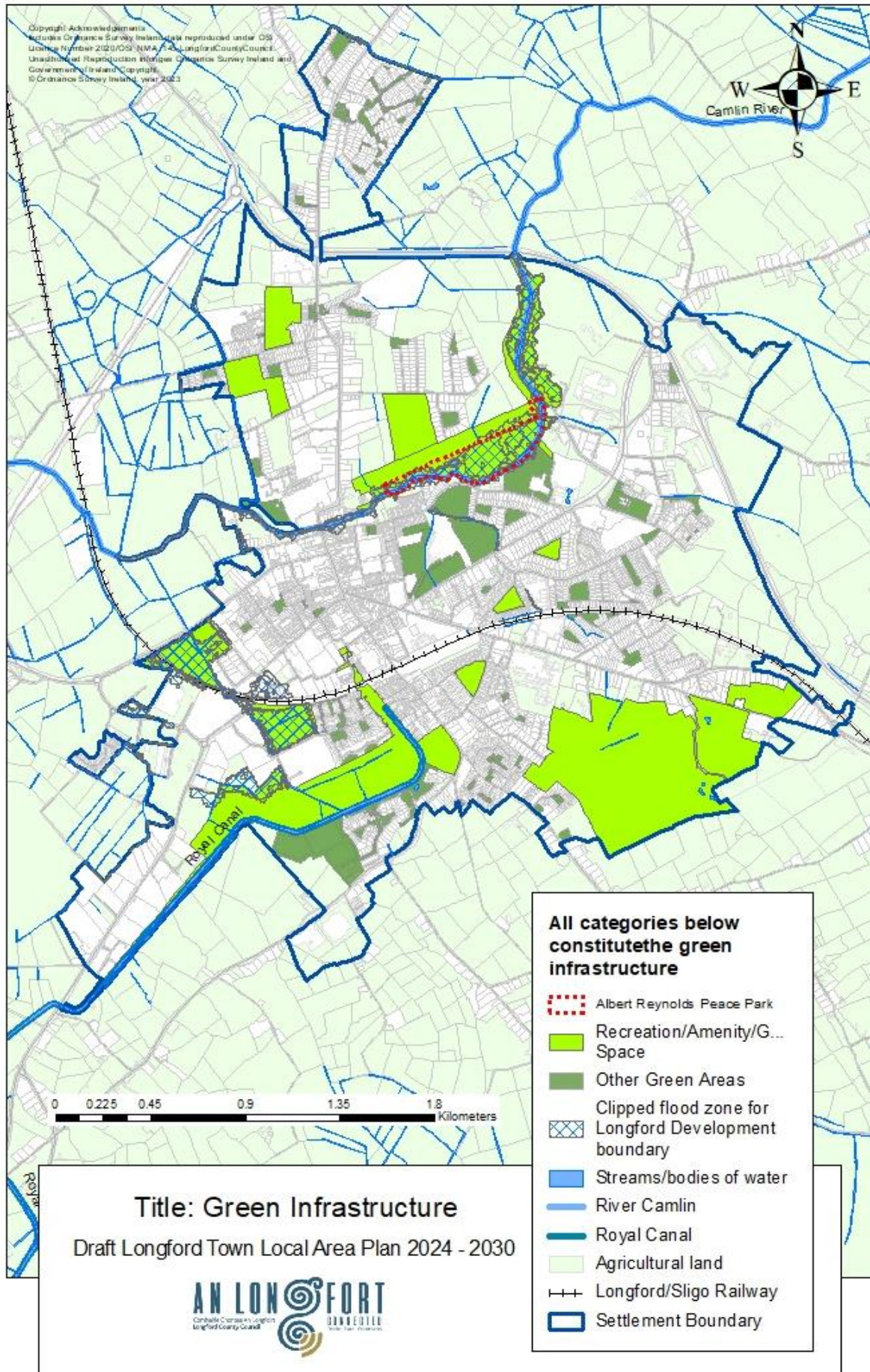
It is considered that the objectives outlined in this LAP and in the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 will ensure the continued environmental protection of these areas. Where the biodiversity of an area will be adversely affected by development within the LAP lands, the Council will require mitigation or remediation measures to be undertaken as appropriate.



11.5 Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure' is a term that is used to describe the interconnected network of environmental features such as nature conservation areas, parks, open space, rivers, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands and farmland and other open spaces that adjoin and are threaded through the town (**see Green Infrastructure Map**). The natural heritage features of Longford town can be described as its green infrastructure network. This network supports native plant and animal species and provides corridors for their movement, maintains natural ecological processes and biodiversity, sustains air and water quality, protects from flooding and provides vital amenity and recreational spaces for communities.

This Plan takes a proactive approach towards planning and managing the green infrastructure network of Longford town by seeking to maximise the benefits of the multi-functionality that such natural heritage provides. In protecting and enhancing the green infrastructure network of the town important amenity and recreational spaces can be provided for communities, thereby contributing to the health and quality of life of residents and also allowing for increased climate resilience within the town in the years ahead. A green infrastructure network should be designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.



11.6 Potential Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Projects

There is an opportunity to enhance the green links and ecological connectivity between open spaces throughout Longford town. This Plan seeks to establish a coherent, integrated and evolving green infrastructure network which extends through the town along the Camlin River and Royal Canal, in addition to numerous ecological corridors providing habitats for wildlife, air and water filtration, surface water management, recreational and tourism opportunities and 'greener' neighbourhoods.

11.7 Habitat Mapping

Under Article 10 of the EU Habitats Directive, planning and development policies must endeavour to conserve and sustainably manage corridors and stepping-stone habitat features. During the timespan of the Local Area Plan, habitat mapping and green infrastructure survey for the town will be completed. This report will identify and map the various habitats and green infrastructure areas in the town. These maps will be a valuable tool in the future planning of the area and also provide information for the general public and community groups. The survey will employ the Heritage Council's habitat classification system and recorded habitats by features according to their ecological value. Green Infrastructure Mapping will provide detailed information of the location and distribution of the various habitat types. These biodiversity areas will form a critical component of the town's Green Infrastructure.

It is critical that these areas are safeguarded and given the opportunity to increase their extent and ecological function within the town by retaining links and supporting connectivity within the network. In addition, stepping-stone habitats, including scattered trees and parkland as well as amenity areas within housing estates, further enhance the connectivity of habitats, and in turn, promote biodiversity across Longford town.

11.8 Pollination Zones/Biodiversity Zones

The Council supports pollinator friendly planting and wildlife strips or Biodiversity Zones to enhance biodiversity at approaches to the town, roundabouts, peripheral open space areas in residential areas, and areas connected to woodlands/farmlands/riparian zones throughout the plan area in accordance with the recommendations of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. In this regard, the Plan promotes the use of pesticide-free and pollinator friendly fertilisers and other treatments used by the Council on public land and will seek to progress the reduction, and ultimate cessation, of use of such pesticides and treatments.

11.9 Constructed Wetlands and Community Ponds

There is considerable potential to develop wetlands near the River Camlin and 'Constrained Land Use' Zoning Objective that flows through the Plan Area. This would provide habitat for wildlife and help reduce flood risk. Wetlands have been shown to be effective at removing pollutants from water and can double up as nature reserves as they attract a range of wildlife species. In addition, constructed wetlands can be used in the treatment of polluted water which otherwise may contaminate a local watercourse. They can be used where water treatment has not been fully effective, for a variety of reasons, (e.g., where tertiary treatment is not available) and can 'polish' the water by removing contaminants. Small ponds can also be crucial habitats for a range of wildlife from dragonflies and water hens to frogs and newts. These in turn, support other species of wildlife such as grey heron, otters and bats.

11.10 Inland Waterways

The Camlin River while not a designated site, flows through Longford Town to the north of the town centre. The Royal Canal, which is a designated site, enters the Town to the southwest. These waterways are important natural assets and provide a potential tourism resource as well as an essential natural corridor for biodiversity within the Town.

The River Camlin and the Royal Canal have the potential to play a key role in the regeneration of the town. This Local Area Plan aims to realise the full potential of these waterbodies as local and national amenities by providing supporting policies and objectives which seek to enhance walking/cycling route options connecting with residential areas and other public open spaces in the town and further afield (including the Rebel and Literary trails) without compromising the integrity of the designated sites, or biodiversity and natural heritage of the area.

11.11 Burial Grounds

This Plan recognises that burial grounds while providing culturally sensitive space for burial and remembrance also have significant value as recreational spaces similar to parks for nature conservation and the promotion of biodiversity. Grass cutting management and planting programmes will be considered for each site to provide access to the burial grounds while also allowing for the flowering of plants in certain areas.

11.12 Control of Invasive Species

Invasive species are a particular problem leading to a loss of biodiversity. The Council will seek to continue the implementation of non-native invasive species control within Longford Town and to co-ordinate control measures with other stakeholders, wherever possible, to ensure a collaborative approach in relation to removal and monitoring.

11.13 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

NHB 01	Comply with the Natural Heritage Objectives contained in <i>Chapter 12: Natural Heritage & Environment</i> of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.
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NHB 02	Implement where relevant the <i>County Longford Heritage Plan and Longford Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2024</i> .
NHB 03	Protect, conserve and enhance Longford's biodiversity and natural heritage that includes wildlife (flora and fauna), habitats and landscapes of importance to wildlife, particularly along the Royal Canal pNHA and Camlin River.
NHB 04	Require screening for Appropriate Assessment (AA), in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, to be carried out with respect to any plan or project which may have a likely significant impact on the River Camlin and Royal Canal pNHA.
NHB 05	Require an ecological appraisal, in addition to an Appropriate Assessment, for development not directly connected with or necessary to the management of European Sites, or a proposed European Site and which are likely to have significant effects on that site either individually or cumulatively.
NHB 06	Prohibit any development that would be harmful to or that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats and/or disturbance of protected species within Longford town. Appropriate species surveys (e.g., bat surveys, bird surveys etc.) will be required for proposals to redevelop and reuse existing buildings, recognising that these structures can provide niche habitats and places of shelter for protected species.
NHB 07	Support statutory authorities in measures to manage proposed or designated sites in order to achieve their conservation objectives.
NHB 08	Seek to enhance the Town's biodiversity, natural heritage and landscape, by promoting appropriate recreational and amenity schemes and encouraging the establishment of wildlife areas and corridors in the context of educational, recreational and amenity facilities.

NHB 09	Ensure the provision of appropriate Riparian strips of not less than 10 meters from the top of the bank of all watercourses to enhance biodiversity and preserve the natural flood regime of the area. The full extent of the biodiversity protection zone should be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Council, based on site specific characteristics and sensitivities.
NHB 10	Support restoration and conservation works to protect and enhance water quality of the Camlin River and the (pNHA) Royal Canal and the associated biodiversity value of riverbanks.
NHB 11	Support the role that biodiversity and green infrastructure plays in the Plan Area in relation to ecosystem services along with climate change mitigation and adaptation.
NHB 12	Promote the protection and preservation of existing natural vegetation features and hedgerows and encourage the planting of native hedgerow and tree species. Existing feature vegetation (e.g. groups of trees, shrubs, hedgerows etc) should be integrated into any new development wherever possible. Where the loss of the existing features is unavoidable, new biodiversity features should incorporate native species, and species of local provenance to replace existing hedgerows and trees.
NHB 13	Promote appropriate tree planting and pollinator friendly planting, in accordance with the recommendations of the <i>All Ireland Pollinator Plan</i> throughout Longford Town and in open spaces within new developments in order to enhance local biodiversity, visual amenity and surface water management.
NHB 14	Require that developments shall have regard to biodiversity within their landscaping and planting schemes, utilising site-appropriate native plants and, where feasible, facilitating wildlife corridors and access to the natural heritage of the Town.

NHB 15	Protect and enhance the biodiversity value of the public realm, through the adoption of appropriate planting schemes and landscaping and trimming methods.
NHB 16	Require mitigating measures in certain cases where it is evident that biodiversity is likely to be affected. These measures may, in association with other specified requirements, include establishment of wildlife areas/corridors/parks, tree planting, wildflower meadows/marshes and other areas.
NHB 17	Support a presumption against tree felling, topping, lopping or wilful destruction of mature trees as part of development proposals. Where a development proposal involves the felling, topping, lopping or threatens the destruction of a mature tree or trees, a tree survey will need to be included in the submission, carried out by a qualified Tree Specialist to justify the exceptional circumstances for their actions. The applicant must demonstrate the justification and rationale for removal of mature trees in terms of effect on ecology and landscape and demonstrate how replacement planting will compensate for loss of trees and woodland features. An assessment of potential tree roost features by a qualified and experienced ecologist may also be requested as part of such proposals.
NHB 18	Carry out a tree survey of the town to identify further trees suitable for Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and seek to protect trees with a particular local amenity or conservation value.
NHB 19	Protect views and important view corridors, as identified within this Local Area Plan and the Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.
NHB 20	Protect from inappropriate development, St. Mel's Cathedral, a county geological site, which is identified by the Irish Geological Heritage Programme for Protection.

NHB 21	Ensure that any proposals for the lighting/flood lighting of waterways infrastructure, buildings or pedestrian/cycling routes along waterways minimise adverse impacts on protected species (e.g. bats, birds, otters, etc) and incorporate lighting schemes as set out in 'Bats and Lighting, Guidance Notes for: Planners, engineers, architects, and developers' (Bat Conservation Ireland, December 2010).
NHB 22	Survey existing bridge structures in Longford town to identify whether any such structure currently supports bat roosts.
NHB 23	Investigate opportunities for placement of bat boxes and/or bird nesting boxes along the River Camlin and Royal Canal in conjunction with relevant bodies and in partnership with the National Parks & Wildlife Service and Waterways Ireland.
NHB 24	In consultation with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, pursue the preparation, establishment and implementation of Habitat Mapping and a Wetland Survey for the Town.
NHB 25	Ensure that where the presence of invasive species is identified at the site of any proposed development or where the proposed activity has an elevated risk of resulting in the presence of these species, details of how these species will be appropriately managed and controlled will be required.

Green Infrastructure Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

- GI 01** Protect, enhance and further develop the Green Infrastructure network in Longford town to provide a shared space for amenity, recreation and biodiversity to thrive and to strengthen links to the wider regional network. This should be informed by appropriate ecological surveys and assessment.
- GI 02** Reduce fragmentation of the existing green infrastructure network while protecting and enhancing its biodiversity by strengthening ecological links including stepping-stone habitats (according to their value).

- GI 03** Integrate new and existing green infrastructure as an essential component of all new developments and to restrict development that would fragment, damage or prejudice the integrity of the green infrastructure network. Site specific ecology surveys should be carried out to inform proposed developments.
- GI 04** Seek to provide open space and recreation facilities in the Plan area by creating a network of open spaces and creating connectivity between these to form a nature wildlife corridor.
- GI 05** Ensure the key green infrastructure and habitat features identified in **Potential Green Infrastructure Projects Map**, and the linkages they provide to larger areas of green infrastructure and the wider countryside are retained and integrated into the design of new developments as far as practicable.
- GI 06** Protect, enhance, create and connect natural heritage, high-quality amenity areas and other green spaces throughout Longford Town for both biodiversity and recreational use. Promote links with any further designated walking, cycling and wildlife routes existing or proposed throughout the County.
- GI 07** Preserve, protect and enhance the Royal Canal and Camlin River as important amenity and recreational resources. Walkway development will be promoted, particularly in the vicinity of the Canal and the Camlin River. Require retention or creation of public access to the waterways in order to facilitate the creation or expansion of walking/cycling routes.
- GI 08** Protect, enhance and improve existing public rights of way where appropriate and investigate the provision of additional rights of way, parking and lay-be facilities where appropriate through agreement with existing landowners and through the development management process.
- GI 09** Seek that development proposals also include an outline of measures to protect the retained green infrastructure of a site during the period of construction.
- GI 10** Provide for wildlife bridges (eco links) as part of any new pedestrian and cycle links across the River Camlin, the Royal Canal and railway, thereby facilitating the free movement of people and species throughout the Plan area.

- GI 11** Promote a network of pedestrian and cycle paths to enhance accessibility to the green infrastructure network, while ensuring that the design and operation of the routes responds to ecological protection needs.
- GI 12** Incorporate items of historical or heritage importance within the Green Infrastructure network as amenity features, where practical.

12.0 Built and Cultural Heritage

Strategic Aim:

to conserve and manage Longford's unique heritage assets for the benefit of present and future generations and to promote such assets as generators of economic development and urban regeneration while adhering to the relevant statutory obligations.

12.1 Overview

Built and Cultural Heritage, in the form of architectural and archaeological assets are an intrinsic part of our heritage, as they provide our communities and society with unique opportunities to learn about the past, support our sense of place, and form an intrinsic part of the character and attractiveness of the town.

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) places an obligation on local authorities to include objectives for the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. Archaeological structures may, in some situations, be considered as architectural heritage and, therefore, may appear on both the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). Furthermore, as per the National Planning Framework (NPF) our *'built heritage assets merit being nurtured in a manner appropriate to their significance as an aid to understanding the past, contributing to community wellbeing and quality of life as well as regional economic development.'*

This plan recognises our cultural heritage that gives the historic background to the rich built environment that underpins Longford town's historical sense of identity. Preservation of these resources not only enriches the identity of Longford town for generations to come but also provides for a unique selling point in terms of tourism and thus the local economy.

12.2 Longford Town Heritage Profile

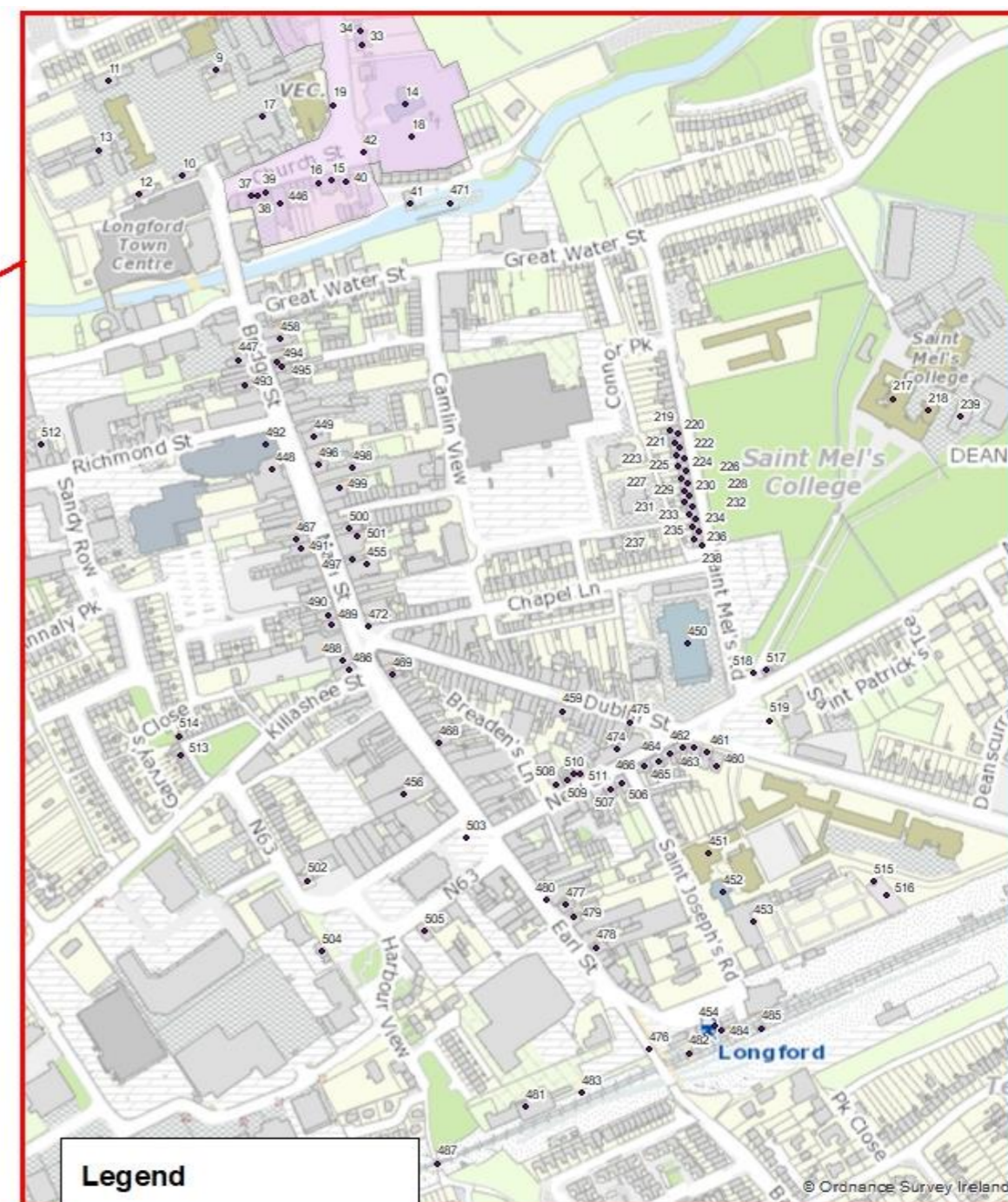
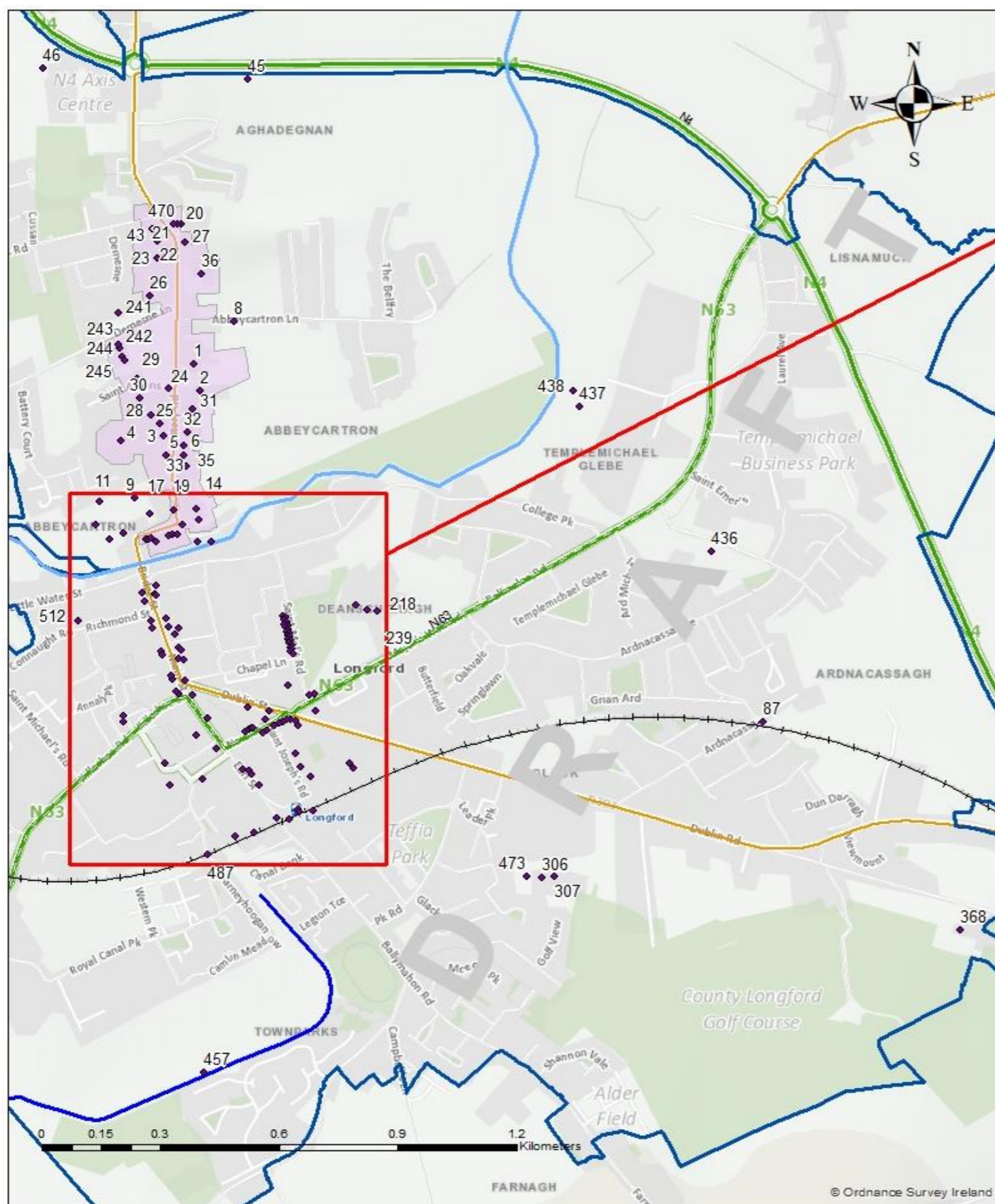
Longford town has an abundance of built and cultural heritage that gives the county its own unique and distinct character. Longford town is home to the architectural award-winning Saint Mel's Cathedral, which was rebuilt and reopened in 2014 after a devastating fire left it in ruins. In addition to the protection of these resources as Recorded Monuments and Places, there is also provision under the Planning and Development Act to afford protection by way of the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Area designations.

Longford Town boasts a rich stock of architectural and archaeological heritage, a non-renewable resource that provides a high level of distinctiveness and character to the town. Such heritage refers to all manmade features in the environment including buildings and other structures such as bridges, monuments, archaeological sites, walls and street furniture. These structures and sites play an integral part in the life of the town and include places of work, commerce, worship, education and recreation. It is important that these heritage items are not viewed in isolation or as an impediment to development on account of their existence but rather form an inherent part of the townscape of Longford, which lends the town a unique '*sense of place*' and offers great potential in providing for a place-based regeneration of the town.

Longford Town's heritage is an important consideration for new developments in order to conserve the area's character and to create a '*sense of place*'. Conservation and enhancement of the area's heritage assets will contribute to the attractiveness of Longford Town as a desirable place to live, shop and work and for communities to take pride in.

Longford Town has many fine buildings/structures, National Monuments and the River Camlin contributing to the heritage and distinctiveness of the town, in terms of placemaking and the identity of the town. There are 154 no. Protected Structures in the town and many of these are also listed as National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. Longford Town has 1 no. designated Architectural Conservation Areas

(ACA), namely the Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area (see **Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Area Map**). The designation of the Battery Road ACA and the associated management of both individual buildings and the public realm in the area continue to significantly enhance the quality of the built environment within Longford Town. There also are numerous sites listed on the Record of Monuments and Places for their archaeological significance.



Legend

- ◆ Record of Protected Structures
- Architectural Conservation Area
- Longford/Sligo Railway
- Royal Canal
- River Camlin
- Settlement Boundary

Title: Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Area.

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12.3 Record of Protected Structures

A protected structure is a structure or part of a structure that a Planning Authority considers to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. The list of Record of Protected Structures (RPS) relating to Longford Town is contained within the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027. There are 154 no. protected structures located within the Local Area Plan area (see **Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Area Map and Appendix 2**).

These structures merit protection and enhancement and in many cases have been identified by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) where a significant number are identified as being of regional importance. The entire Record of Protected Structures in the county was last reviewed in 2021 as part of the preparation of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

It should be noted that the consideration of any additions or deletions to the RPS is addressed outside of the local area plan-making process and must have regard to the relevant planning legislation and guidelines including the '*Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities*' (DoAHG, 2011).

12.4 Protected Structures Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

PS 01	Comply with the Record of Protected Structures Policies as contained in <i>Chapter 11: Built and Cultural Heritage</i> of the <i>Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
PS 02	Ensure the protection and preservation of all protected structures (or parts of structures), including the curtilage and attendant grounds of structures contained in the Record of Protected Structures (see Map XX

and Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, Volume 2: Appendix 6: Built and Cultural Heritage).

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|--------------|--|
| PS 03 | Acknowledge and promote awareness of the origins, historical development and cultural heritage of the town, to support high-quality developments that relate to local heritage and to ensure that new development respects and is responsive to the cultural heritage of Longford town. |
| PS 04 | Support the sensitive conservation of protected structures, their curtilage and attendant grounds, and to operate flexibility with regard to the use of these buildings to facilitate their ongoing use, subject to good conservation principles. |
| PS 05 | Proactively address dereliction, endangerment, neglect and vacancy in the town centre through the use of the Council's legal process and through the promotion of appropriate uses and the sensitive conservation of historic buildings, in conjunction with other relevant initiatives. |
| PS 06 | Encourage the protection, retention, appreciation and appropriate revitalisation of the vernacular and industrial heritage of Longford town. |
| PS 07 | Protect and conserve important heritage items such as, gates, street furniture, post boxes and other significant historic features of interest. |
| PS 08 | Support the development of a Longford Town Heritage Centre and Museum as an important tourism and heritage resource for the town. |
| PS 09 | Support the public access to Connolly Barracks as a tourist and heritage destination and to support the preparation of a conservation management plan for the building to avoid loss of historic building fabric and authenticity through appropriate repair and restoration work. |

PS 10	Work with and assist, where appropriate, owners of protected structures within Longford Town in their maintenance and repair of such structures through advice and grant aid from relevant sources.
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12.5 Architectural Conservation Area

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 provides the legislative basis for the protection of areas, known as Architectural Conservation Areas, or ACAs. An ACA is defined as 'a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that:

- is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, social or technical interest or value, or
- contributes to the appreciation of protected structures⁶

ACA designation forms the basis for policies to preserve or enhance an area and provides an element of control over the external appearance of buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Planning controls are more extensive in ACA's with exempted development curtailed in certain instances, for example, works, that in the opinion of the Planning Authority, would have a material effect on the character of an ACA, will require planning permission. Retaining the special character of an area is best achieved by controlling and guiding change on a wider scale than the individual structure. The objective of the ACA designation is to guide change within an area and ensure that future development is carried out in a manner sympathetic to the special character and unique identity of the area.

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural,

⁶ Part IV of Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

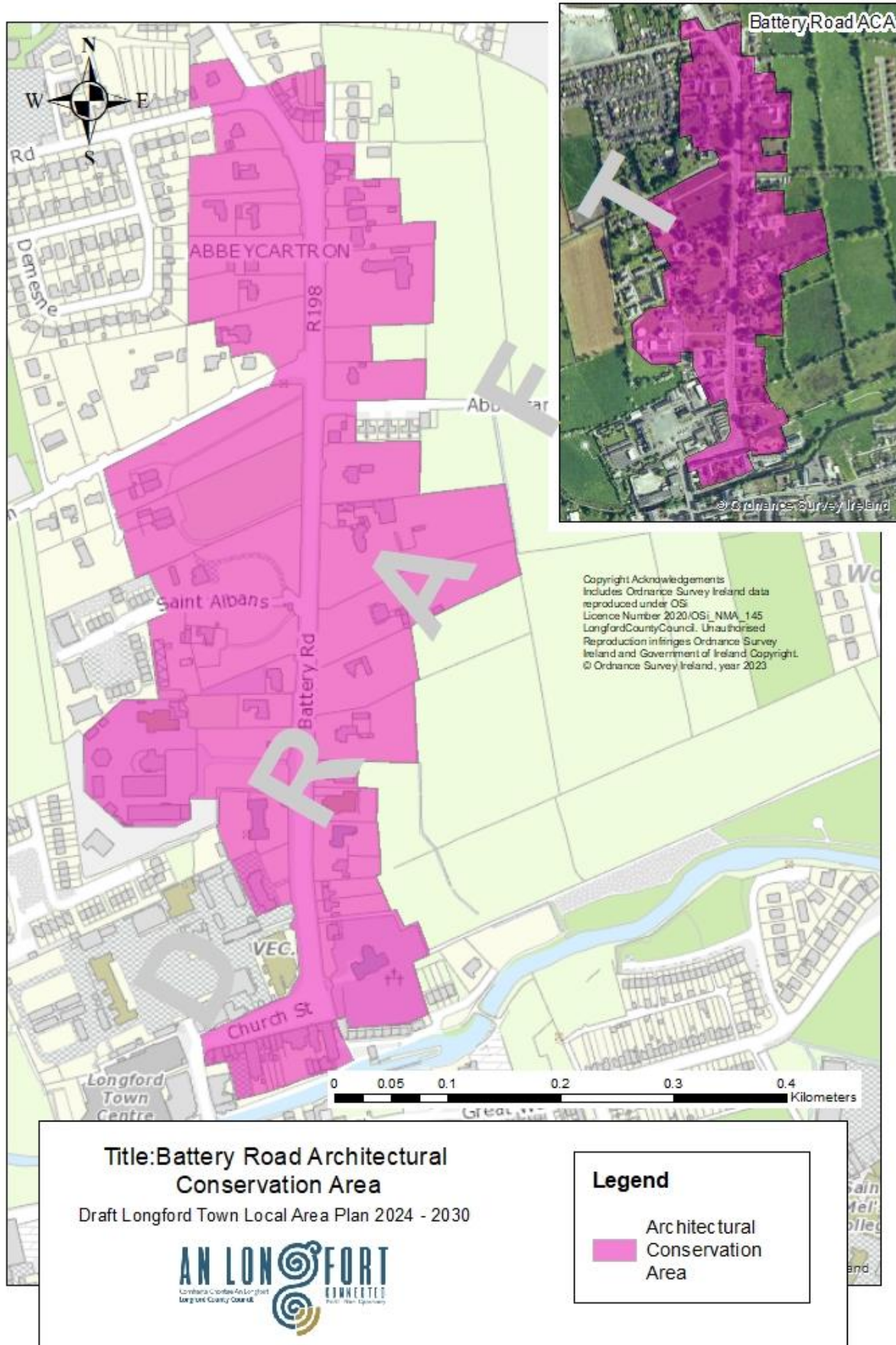
scientific, social or technical interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures. The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) provides the legislative basis for the protection of such Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA). While the purpose of this designation is to protect and enhance the special character of the area, this does not preclude appropriate forms of development, including the construction of new build from happening.

The following area in Longford Town has been identified as an ACA in the *Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027*.

12.6 Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area

The Battery Road Architectural Area is located in the northern portion of the Town (see **Battery Road Conservation Area Map**). The Battery Road in Longford Town has a distinct character with intrinsic qualities which are based on a particular form and layout which has developed over time. This character is derived from the cumulative impact of the area's buildings, their setting, landscape and other locally important features. This area is an expression of part of cultural identity of Longford and contributes to the quality of the public realm.

The Battery Road itself is a major existing approach route into the Town from the North and is important in forming the first visual impression for many people entering Longford. The area is characterised by a wide, tree-lined carriageway, bounded by a wide range of structures that display a myriad of uses, sizes, scales and architectural styles. The interaction of these buildings, many of which are protected structures, with their setting, including their boundaries, planting, entrance and surface treatments have a significant impact on how the area is experienced. The most effective and holistic method of retaining the unique character and identity of the area is to designate an ACA, as was the case in the Longford Town Plan 2009-2015 and which has been maintained unchanged in all subsequent plans.



12.7 Management of Development in the Architectural Conservation Area: Battery Road Statement of Character (to be read in conjunction with Appendix 2)

A Statement of Character for Longford ACA is included as per appendix 2. The purpose of the Statement is to define the special character of the Battery Road ACA and to provide guidance to property owners, developers, architects and planning professionals on important features and characteristics of the area and the type of works that would require planning permission within the ACA.

The Battery Road ACA Statement of Character shall act as a guide for homeowners, developers and the Planning Authority to inform proposed development proposals in the ACA. Owners and occupiers of non-protected structures located within the ACA should note that carrying out of works to the exterior of a structure located in an ACA constitutes exempted development only if those works would not materially affect the character of the area. Development which may normally be considered exempt, are consequently not exempt within the ACA.

This Plan aims to ensure that any development within or adjoining the ACA is sympathetic to the character of the area and that the design is appropriate. All planning applications within and adjoining the ACA shall be assessed having regard to Appendix 2, *Section B: Guide to Development* within the ACA of the Statement of Character. Applications for infill development within and contiguous to the ACA, and also modifications to existing or new shopfronts, should also have regard to Appendix 2, Section B of the ACA Statement of Character and include: a study of the overall façade; an analysis of how the development complements the setting; the removal of visually intrusive elements such as inappropriate signage, lighting and ancillary cables and ducts, and the use of appropriate materials.

12.8 Architectural Conservation Area Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

AC 01	Comply with the Architectural Conservation County Policy Objectives as contained in <i>Chapter 11: Built and Cultural Heritage</i> of the <i>Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
AC 02	Protect the character of the Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and carefully consider any proposals for development that would affect the special value of the ACA in accordance with the Battery Road ACA Statement of Character, DoEHG's 'Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004)' and their 'Advice Series'.
AC 03	Encourage the retention, repair and re-use of materials which characterise the vernacular architecture of the ACA including stone, slate, timber windows and doors, and decorative render.
AC 04	Ensure that any development (contemporary or traditional) within or adjoining the ACA is of high-quality design and finish and is sympathetic to the character of the area. All applications within and adjoining the ACA will be assessed in the context of the following criteria and the impact of any development on the immediate surroundings of the site, the broader townscape or its landscape setting;

- The height, scale and orientation of the proposed development;
- The bulk, massing and density of the proposed development and its layout in relation to any building line and the surrounding plan form;
- The quality and type of materials to be used in the construction of the development; any boundary treatment and landscaping;
- The design and detail of the proposed development;

- The retention of the traditional plot boundaries of the town;
- The retention and maintenance of historic street furniture, surfaces and boundary treatments.

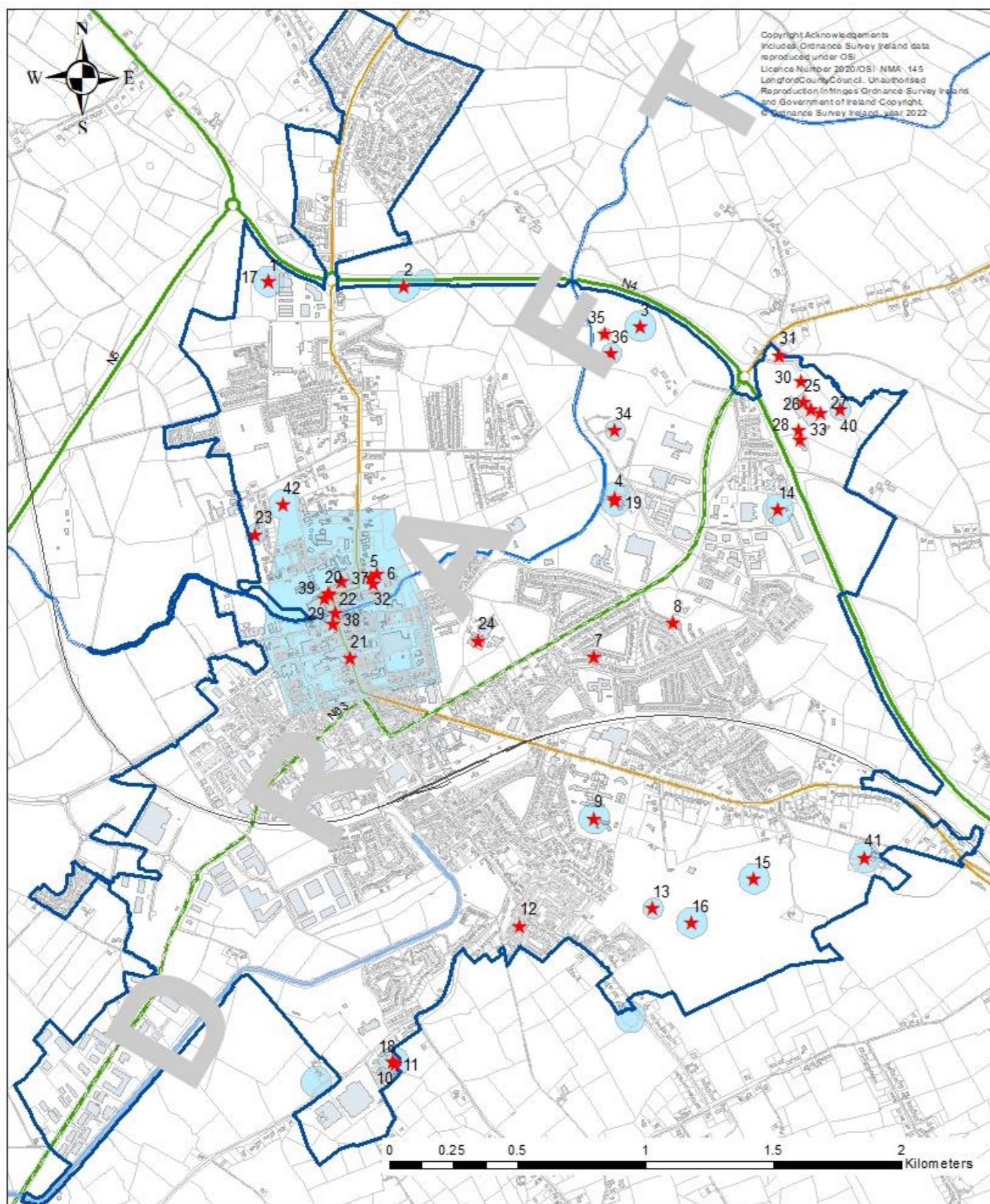
AC 05	Review all applications for demolition, modifications or extensions to existing buildings with regard to their relative importance to the appreciation of the character of the ACA as identified in the Statement of Character.
AC 06	Strongly discourage proposals for the demolition of a structure that positively contributes to the character of the ACA, except in exceptional circumstances. Longford County Council will require such applications to be accompanied by a photographic survey, condition report and architectural heritage assessment of the structure and an assessment of the impact of the replacement building on the character of the ACA.
AC 07	Require that proposals for infill development within the ACA, and proposals contiguous to the ACA should include an analysis of how the new development complements the setting, character and appearance of the ACA, making reference to the findings of the Statement of Character for the town.
AC 08	Encourage removal of visually intrusive elements from existing façades, and reinstatement of historic features, and differentiation of original building plots in accordance with the advice and case study demonstrated in the Statement of Character for the town.
AC 09	Encourage appropriate new infill development which is considered essential to the vibrancy and sustainability of the town, designed in accordance with the advice given in the Statement of Character.
AC 10	Reduce, prevent and encourage the removal of visual and urban clutter within the ACA.

AC 11	Protect the landscape character, values, sensitivities, focal points and views identified in the Battery Road ACA Statement of Character. This will include the following:
(i)	The requirement of a Visual Impact Assessment for developments with potential to impact on areas of significant landscape character, value or sensitivity, including both urban and natural features, significant townscapes and historic buildings, as appropriate.
(ii)	Prohibit development that will block or interfere with a significant focal point or a view. Where it is considered that a development may impact on focal points or views, proposals must have regard to the significance of any such impact and any appropriate mitigation measures that should be incorporated.

12.9 Archaeological Heritage

12.9.1 Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)

Under the National Monuments Acts recorded monuments and are listed on the SMR. The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) within the Longford Town Local Area Plan area are indicated in **Map: Sites and Monuments and Zones of Notification**



National Monuments

LABEL	RECORD NO.	DESCRIPTION	LABEL	RECORD NO.	DESCRIPTION
1	LF00427	Ringfort - mth	23	LF02442	Burnt mound
2	LF00428	Ringfort - mth	24	LF02450	Cross-inscribed pillar (present location)
3	LF00430	Ringfort - mth	25	LF02466	Fulacht fia
4	LF00431	Church	26	LF02467	Burnt mound
5	LF00445	Religious house - Dominican friars	27	LF02468	Fulacht fia
6	LF00446	Graveyard	28	LF02469	Excavation - miscellaneous
7	LF00447	Ringfort - mth	29	LF02486	Bridge
8	LF00448	Ringfort - mth	30	LF02543	Fulacht fia
9	LF00449	Ringfort - mth	31	LF02544	Excavation - miscellaneous
10	LF00454	Church	32	LF02777	Redundant record
11	LF00455	Ecclesiastical enclosure	33	LF02782	Redundant record
12	LF00458	Redundant record	34	LF02841	Fulacht fia
13	LF00459	Barrow - unclassified	35	LF02842	Cremation pit
14	LF00567	Ringfort - mth	36	LF02843	Fulacht fia
15	LF00575	Ringfort - mth	37	LF02902	Market-house
16	LF00608	Ringfort - mth	38	LF02908	House - 17th century
17	LF01807	House - indeterminate date	39	LF02911	Bawn
18	LF02009	Cross-inscribed pillar	40	LF02979	Burnt mound
19	LF02033	Graveyard	41	LF03015	Castle - tower house
20	LF02036	Castle - tower house	42	LF03038	Enclosure
21	LF02049	Historic town			
22	LF02095	House - fortified house			

Legend

- ★ National Monuments
- ◻ SMR Zones of Notification
- River Camlin
- Royal Canal
- ◻ Settlement Boundary

Title: National Monuments & Sites and Zones of Notification

Draft Longford Town Local Area Plan 2024 - 2030



The SMR for Longford Town is continually updated as new information becomes available and new sites are uncovered. As such the Archaeological Survey of Ireland database www.archaeology.ie contains an interactive map/search facility that provides access to all records of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) and should be consulted prior to the development of land within the Plan area.

Some archaeological structures may also be considered as architectural heritage and may therefore appear on both the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). Such structures are protected by both the National Monuments Acts and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The Council will engage with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and other statutory consultees when considering applications for planning permission for development on or in the vicinity of archaeological sites and/or monuments.

12.9.2 Archaeological Heritage Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

AH 01	Comply with the relevant policies as contained in Chapter 11: Built and Cultural Heritage of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.
AH 02	Safeguard the archaeological heritage located within the boundary of the Local Area Plan and avoid negative impacts on sites, monuments, features or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest.
AH 03	Prioritise the protection/preservation in situ items of archaeological interest from inappropriate development that would adversely affect and/or detract from the interpretation and setting of these sites.

AH 04	Encourage, where practicable, the provision of public access to sites identified on the Sites and Monuments Record under the direct ownership or control of the Local Authority and the State.
AH 05	Provide for the protection of historic burial grounds within Longford, in co-operation with agencies such as the Office of Public Works and the National Monuments Section of the Department of the Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
AH 06	Ensure that development proposals contribute towards the protection and preservation of the archaeological value of underwater or archaeological sites associated with the River Camlin, the Royal Canal and associated features.

13.0 Infrastructure

Strategic Aim:

to ensure that the delivery of infrastructural services is guided by the principles of sustainable development in facilitating more efficient land use and physical development, whilst providing for the continued social and economic growth of the County.

13.1 Overview

Underpinning the sustainable future development of the town is the delivery of high-quality infrastructure that can service the demands of the town's residents and its businesses and provide for balanced growth and reliable service provision necessary for creating sustainable and attractive communities and securing economic investment. This includes a wide range of infrastructure provision including road, water, wastewater, utilities (e.g. broadband, electricity, gas), flood and surface water management measures through a plan-led approach in accordance with the County Development Plan Core Strategy and the County Climate Strategy.

Adequate infrastructure is essential to facilitate future economic development in the County. Potential exists to stimulate economic development through the provision of adequate utilities such as broadband and natural gas within the town. Infrastructure delivery will be prioritised in the plan area. This accords with the approach set out in *Chapter 5: Transport, Infrastructure, Energy & Communications* of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027.

It should be noted that Roads and Transport are dealt with in Section 14 Sustainable Transport of this Plan.

13.2 Energy and Communications

13.2.1 Electricity

At present there is more than adequate electricity infrastructure supplying Longford town. There is capacity available in Longford town for industries and other demand uses wishing to locate in the town. Enhanced development of secure and reliable electricity transmission infrastructure is recognised as being a key factor for supporting economic development and attracting investment to any area. Furthermore, this Plan seeks to continue to encourage and facilitate the undergrounding of overhead electricity cables in built-up areas, particularly in the town centre, during the lifetime of this Plan.

13.2.2 Gas

The Bord Gáis gas network does not currently extend to Longford town. However, the Council will encourage the extension of the gas network to Longford town, if considered feasible.

13.2.3 Broadband

Broadband is readily available in Longford Town. In this regard the Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) has been installed in Longford Town. It is also noted that a number of telecoms providers have network infrastructure serving the area and provide various types of connectivity from fixed line to wireless and mobile broadband.

Speedy access to information is a key driver for all sectors of the economy. It is central to the development of a knowledge-based economy. The availability of this telecommunications infrastructure in Longford will enable high speed access to information for industry, public and private sector organisations. It will facilitate

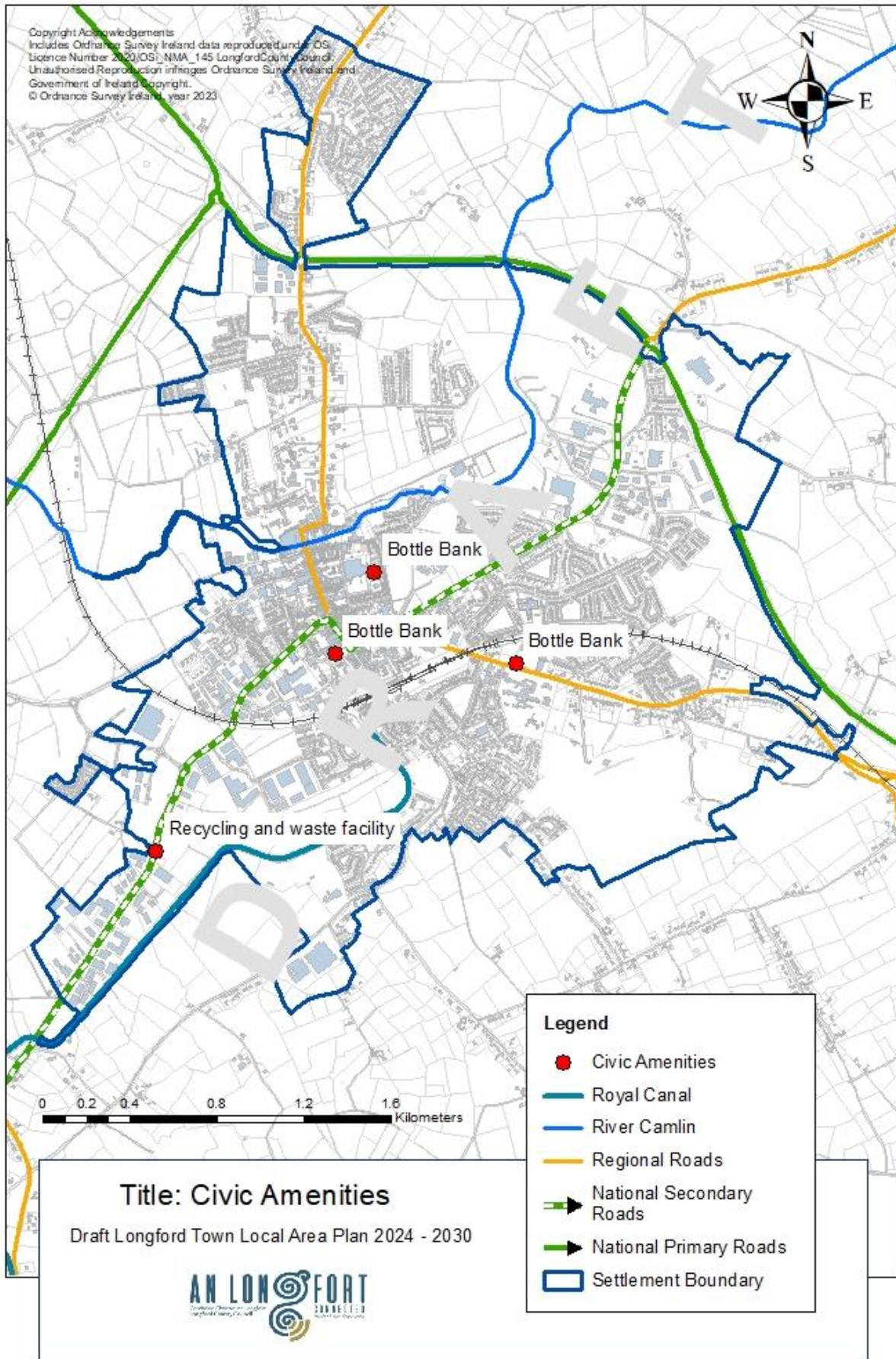
international e-commerce and is essential for all aspects of business including Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) and multi- nationals. It will also facilitate access to internet centred developments in areas such as banking, education and research. The provision of the Broadband network has enhanced the potential of Longford for investment and will lead to increased economic development for Longford Town and County.

Access to high-speed broadband is a central consideration in the development of a successful business environment and will be promoted as part of this plan, particularly in conjunction with the progression of the strategic sites identified in the Regeneration section of this Plan. There is a need to create a balance between the need for enhanced telecommunications and the protection of the existing amenity of the Town area.

13.2.4 Waste and Recycling

A Civic amenity site operated by a private operator (Mulleadys) is located on the Athlone Road and open 1.5 days / week. Also there are also 3 no. bring banks for bottles and cans located within the town, at Tesco Carpark, Market Square and Dunnes Stores (see **Civic Amenities Map**).

The Council will support the circular economy principles, prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery over the disposal of waste. As such the Council will encourage the provision of recycling infrastructure where it is considered necessary and will assess requirements for recycling facilities on a case-by-case basis as part of the development management process. The Council seeks to expand recycling opportunities in Longford town by establishing additional bring bank facilities at appropriate locations within the town. The need for the provision of hazardous waste collection at the civic amenity site is also recognised.



13.2.5 Energy, Communications and Waste Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

EC 01	Continue to work with infrastructure providers to secure adequate water services, effective public transport, energy, telecommunications, waste management facilities to support development.
EC 02	Promote and facilitate the development and renewal of energy and communications networks, including broadband services in Longford town, while protecting the amenities of the town, including landscape, residential amenity, visual and environmental considerations.
EC 03	Seek the undergrounding of all electricity, telephone and television cables within the town, wherever possible, while taking into consideration landscape, residential amenity, and environmental considerations.
EC 04	Adequately maintain existing recycling and bring bank facilities, assess their locations and secure the provision of additional facilities that will not adversely affect residential amenity or environmental quality at appropriate locations, as required.
EC 05	Seek the provision of hazardous waste collection at the Athlone Road Civic Amenity site, subject to appropriate environmental and amenity safeguards.
EC 06	Promote and encourage the use of renewable energy technologies in existing and proposed building stock subject to consideration of environmental, conservation and visual requirements.
EC 07	Protect environmental quality in Longford through the implementation of European, national and regional policy and legislation relating to air quality, greenhouse gases, climate change, light pollution, noise pollution and waste management.

EC 08	Require all commercial and residential developments to be provided with adequate internal and external space for the correct storage of waste and recyclable materials. This is particularly important in relation to shared bin spaces such as apartment developments.
EC 09	Support local schools, town and community groups such as Longford Green Towns Initiative and Longford Tidy Towns through education and awareness programmes and where available, through the provision of grant aid.

13.3 Water Supply and Wastewater Services

The provision of adequate water supply and sewage facilities is an integral part of the proper planning and sustainable development of any area. Uisce Eireann provides water supply and wastewater services to Longford. In the interest of Public Health and Environmental Sustainability, Uisce Eireann Infrastructure capacity requirements and proposed connections to the Water and Wastewater Infrastructure will be subject to the constraints of the Uisce Eireann Capital Investment Programme.

13.3.1 Water Supply

In terms of Water Supply the Longford Central Regional Scheme serves Longford Town and outlying districts including Edgeworthstown, Drumlish and Newtownforbes. The main source is Lough Forbes on the River Shannon. Uisce Eireann recently completed capital upgrade works at the Lough Forbes water treatment plant (WTP), primarily to enable increased WTP output with a view to meeting current and future population and development growth. These new capital upgrade works are currently undergoing process optimisation adjustments and enhanced programme monitoring to verify the effectiveness of these works with a view to delivering optimal supply output to meet demand in 2024 and going forward.

The provision of piped water services, drinking water and wastewater, are now in the domain of Uisce Eireann with the support of the Local Authority under a service level agreement. Longford County Council will collaborate with and support, as relevant and appropriate, Uisce Eireann in its role as authorities for water services towards compliance with the provisions of the relevant regulations. Development will only be permitted in instances where there is sufficient capacity in the public water and wastewater infrastructure. The provision of piped water services, drinking water and wastewater, are now in the domain of Uisce Eireann with the support of the Local Authority under a service level agreement. The Council, in conjunction with Uisce Eireann, shall undertake recommendations made by the EPA arising from any failure to meet drinking water standards and any enlistment on the EPA's Remedial Action List.

The units located on the Lanesborough Road area, which is the subject of the strategic site designation (See Regeneration Chapter – Strategic Site no. 6), are not currently served by means of sewerage. Foul waste from these units is treated by septic tanks and / or treatment systems each serving a group of units and percolating to ground. Uisce Eireann have indicated that connections to Uisce Eireann Infrastructure will be developer led.

Furthermore, headroom needs to be secured to ensure that anticipated levels of economic development can be accommodated into the future in a sustainable way.

13.3.2 Wastewater Services

In general, Uisce Eireann will have regard for the capacity of the water and sewerage network for the existing and future population in considering any development proposals in Longford Town. In order to accommodate proposed connections to

the municipal WWTP it may require an upgrade to be completed. This upgrade is not on the current Capital Investment Plan (CIP) and is currently proposed for the 2026 to 2030 CIP where works will not commence prior to 2030 (subject to change). For development to proceed in advance of these works being completed, potentially the most expeditious method of facilitating that would be to install an onsite treatment plant to treat the wastewater to agreed parameters. The discharge of the treated effluent to sewer needs to be licensed and they will be required to seek planning permission and all and any other necessary approvals, to provide, to operate and maintain a private on-site wastewater treatment plant at the applicants own risk and the treatment works will not be taken in charge by Uisce Eireann. The operation of such treatment works shall continue until such time as the Longford WWTP Plant upgrade is completed. The design of the private on-site wastewater treatment plant should also include for the decommissioning and bypassing of the plant once the upgrade is completed.

The majority of both foul and surface water sewers in the Town are separated. However, in certain Town Centre areas combined sewers remain. Any new developments in these areas without separate systems can no longer be accepted.

The Council aims to expand existing services in a planned and prioritised fashion and to facilitate development of additional services where economically feasible and where resources permit. This LAP aims to fulfil the requirements of Longford Town in terms of water supply and wastewater services over the Plan period. Further detail regarding water supply and quality and wastewater Services can be found in Chapter 5 *Transport, Infrastructure, Energy & Communications* of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

13.3.3 Water Supply and Wastewater Services Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

WS 01	Support the implementation of the relevant County Policy Objectives (CPO's) contained within <i>Chapter 5: Transport, Infrastructure, Energy & Communications</i> , and other relevant chapters of the <i>County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
WS 02	Promote the establishment of schemes in designated areas in tandem with proposed developers, Uisce Eireann and other utility and services providers to secure infrastructural services to designated sites for the promotion of appropriate development.
WS 03	Seek to ensure the provision of appropriate and adequate drinking water as part of Uisce Eireann investment and management programmes. Wastewater will be disregarded completely.
WS 04	Seek to ensure the provision of an appropriate level of headroom in water services to facilitate the economic, social and environmental development of the town in the longer term. In this regard, the sewerage treatment plant in the town should be sized, as part of Uisce Eireann investment, to cater for potential large-scale industrial development in particular and in addition to anticipated population projections.
WS 05	Investigate the feasibility of establishing additional projects in terms of improving existing water supply, establishing new supplies, sewerage mains provision and improvement of existing treatment plants in the medium and long-term in conjunction with Uisce Eireann.
WS 06	Carry out the extension of existing water supply and wastewater services where required and where resources permit. Where such extensions are required as a result of a new development, the

	developers shall be required to pay a contribution towards the cost of this extension or carry the works out.
WS 07	Designate and map wayleaves for the installation and maintenance of water services infrastructure. These wayleaves, once identified shall be protected from inappropriate development.
WS 08	Restrict or prohibit the large-scale development of un-serviced land where serviced land, of an appropriate size and nature to meet the needs of the proposed development, exists in the vicinity.
WS 09	Ensure that public water supply shall comply with EU standards and shall be upgraded where necessary to comply with same and to ensure that the public drinking water supply of the Town complies with relevant EU drinking water standards and to extend supply, where necessary and where resources permit, to meet demand.
WS 10	Protect existing sources of municipal water supplies through restricting potentially pollutant development within a specified distance from the proposed source. Where additional potential municipal water supplies are identified, it shall be the policy of the Council to restrict potentially pollutant development within a specified distance with the proposed source.
WS 11	Protect valuable groundwater sources and important surface water bodies from pollution through infiltration by domestic, agricultural or other sources of effluent/pollutant material.
WS 12	Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in Longford Town in conjunction with the EPA and in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 and future cycles of this Plan.
WS 13	Support the separation of foul and storm water network at the remaining locations within the town. Developments in locations where there are combined foul and surface water sewerage systems shall be required to provide separate systems. – move to surface water drainage

WS 14	Promote the sustainable use of water and water conservation in existing and new developments within the town by encouraging demand management measures among all water users and requiring new developments to incorporate water conservation measures.
WS 15	Educate the public in water conservation measures, through public awareness campaigns.
WS 16	Require that all developments relating to water supply and wastewater treatment are subject to screening for Appropriate Assessment to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity, defined by the structure and function, of any European sites and that the requirements of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive are met.
WS 17	Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the relevant River Basin Management Plan and associated Programme of Measures, or any such plan that may supersede the same during the lifetime of this plan.
WS 18	Discourage the over concentration/proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution.
WS 19	Ensure that all new development proposals include a Drainage Impact Assessment.
WS 20	Work alongside Uisce Éireann to minimise the number and frequency of storm overflows of sewage to watercourses.

13.4 Surface Water Drainage

Surface water drainage is becoming an increasingly important issue in the context of climate change, with higher rainfall levels and increased flood event frequency in major water systems throughout the Country. New developments should ensure that sufficient surface water capacity exists in an area prior to the submission of an application for development. Development will not be permitted in areas where

insufficient surface water capacity, either in terms of storm drains and/or available adjacent watercourses of sufficient size exists.

Even where sufficient capacity exists, the development of newly hard surfaced areas can significantly increase the rate of surface water run-off due to the lack of attenuation provided by the impervious surface. This may be accommodated through natural dissipation into nearby watercourses, streams or ditches, however, the time that this takes may vary and result in ponding or flooding where dissipation rates are slow or inhibited. This situation may be addressed through the installation of artificial attenuation and/or drainage systems that store this accelerated run-off, releasing it slowly and preventing overloading of streams, rivers and other watercourses, thus reducing the likelihood of flooding.

It is essential that adequate surface water measures are put in place in order to prevent pollution, flooding and to recognise that the alteration in natural flow patterns can lead to problems elsewhere within a river catchment. In particular surface water drainage deficiencies remain in some areas such as Springlawn and the Teffia Park/Dublin Road Junction, associated with the combined sewerage systems that exist in some areas of the town. Uisce Eireann will endeavour to resolve the separation of foul and surface water within its budget constraints. This plan will promote the resolution of these issues and ensure that further development will not take place in areas where surface water drainage deficiencies exist.

13.4.1 Surface Water Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

SW 01	Support the implementation of the relevant County Policy Objectives (CPO's) contained within <i>Chapter 5: Transport, Infrastructure, Energy</i>
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	<i>& Communications</i> , and other relevant chapters of the <i>County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
SW 02	Pursue the resolution of surface water drainage issues as required throughout the town, in conjunction with Uisce Eireann as appropriate.
SW 03	Require all proposed development to provide sufficient surface water drainage facilities, including attenuation and evidence of outfall suitability and capacity, and how such water is to be sufficiently treated prior to disposal in order to prevent pollution.
SW 04	Provide surface water attenuation measures where it is considered that the surface water run-off levels exceed permissible discharge rates. Storm water run-off design should be carried out in accordance with Sustainable Drainage Standards (SUDS) best operating practice.
SW 05	Minimise flood risk arising from pluvial (surface water) flooding in Longford Town by promoting the use of nature-based solutions including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), minimising extent of hard surfaces/paving, and smart solutions such as innovative green infrastructure.
SW 06	Prohibit the discharge of surface water run-off into foul sewage systems.
SW 07	Maintain, improve and enhance the environmental and ecological quality of surface waters and groundwater in Longford Town in conjunction with the EPA and in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2022-2027 and future cycles of this Plan.

13.5 Flooding

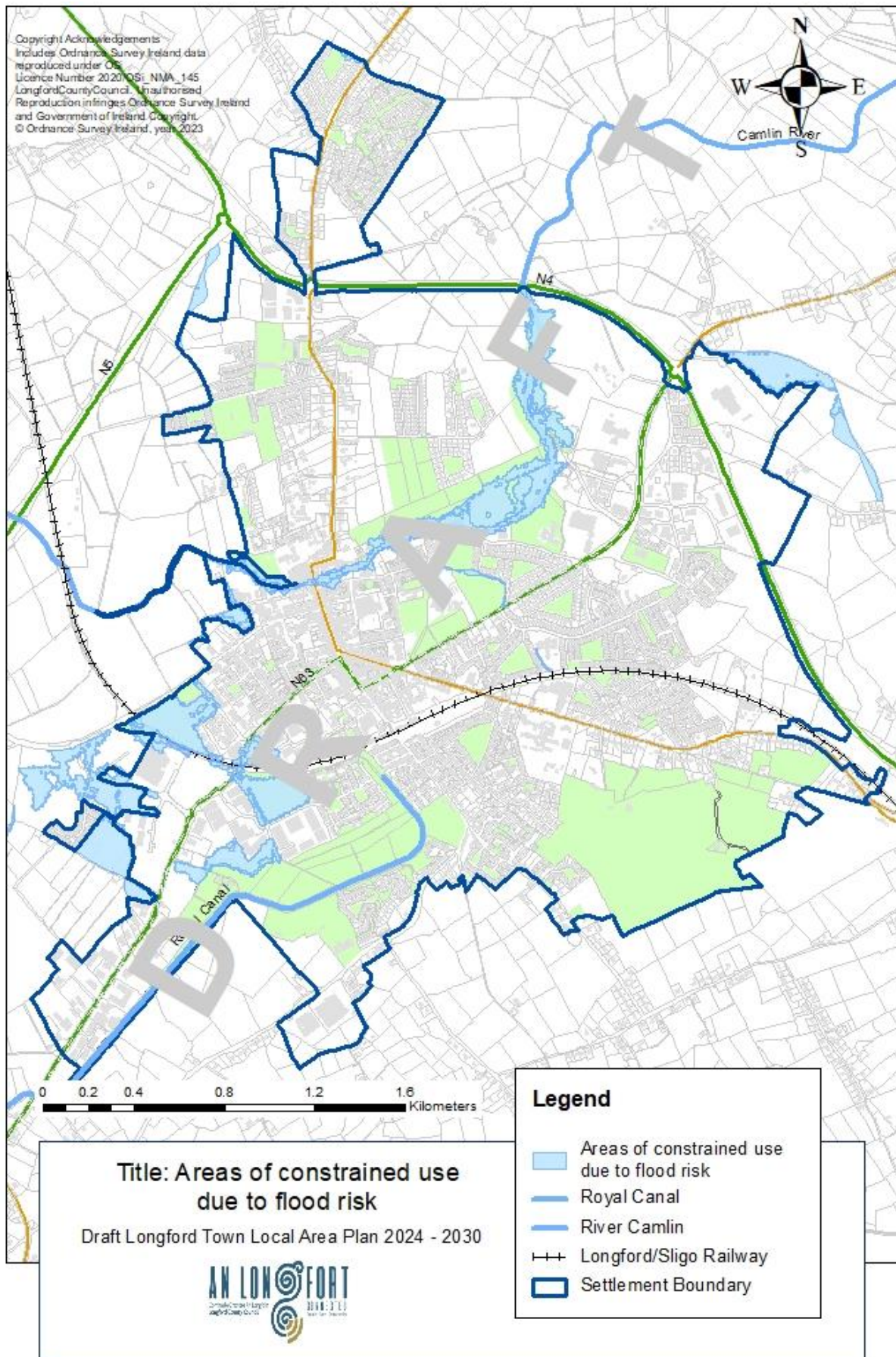
Flood risk is a key consideration in preparing a Local Area Plan. It is essential that potential flooding issues are properly addressed prior to development, given the increase in developed lands that has occurred over the last plan period and in the context of accelerated global climate change.

The National Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) mapping, published by the Office of Public Works, identifies Flood Zones in Longford Town. In particular it is noted that the western area of Longford Town suffers from flooding. As such provisions are required to mitigate against existing flooding problems and to prevent further flooding in the urban area.

The Camlin River, a tributary of the Shannon River, flows through Longford Town. The river has three major tributaries: the Ballyminion Stream, the Fallen River, and the Corbaun River. The Ballyminion Stream, the largest of the three, joins the River Camlin just downstream of the railway bridge immediately to the west of Longford Town. The River Camlin has a narrow channel with the catchment area to the north and west of Longford Town representing the historic floodplain. The Camlin River experiences out-of-bank flow for flood magnitudes as low as a two-year return period, an interval which is likely to decrease in the context of ever-increasing rainfall levels. Flooding has also frequently occurred at a low point along the railway line where it passes under the Strokestown Road immediately south-west of Longford Town which has led to disruption of the Dublin-Sligo rail link for up to 3 days at a time. The development of the areas in the floodplain will cause an increase in flood levels. There is a need to mitigate against this increase in order to reduce the frequency of flooding on the railway line as well as the areas of development.

It is noted that the Longford Flood Relief Scheme will address flood considerations and support appropriate use of riverside locations. Furthermore, a Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out for the plan area. It has identified the areas at risk of flooding, including fluvial, pluvial and groundwater flooding.

The Council seeks to avoid flood risk, substitute less vulnerable uses, when avoidance is not possible, and mitigate/manage the risk where avoidance and substitution are not possible. In this regard that following 'Constrained Land Use' Objective has been included (**see Appendix 1 Land Use Zoning**). Also *Chapter 5: Transport, Infrastructure, Energy and Communications* and *Chapter 16: Development Management Guidelines* of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out the Policy Objectives and Development Management Standards pertaining to Flood Risk Management in County Longford which includes the Longford LAP area.



13.5.1 Constrained Land Use Objective

Flood risk areas are represented by a '*Constrained Land Use*' designation in the land use zoning map (see Appendix 1). This zoning objective '*To facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas*' limits new development, while recognising that existing development uses within these zones may require small scale development, as outlined below, over the life of the Plan, which would contribute towards the compact and sustainable urban development of the County's zoned settlements. The underlying zoning or the existing permitted uses are deemed to be acceptable in principle for minor developments to existing buildings (such as small extensions to houses, most changes of use of existing buildings), which are unlikely to raise significant flooding issues, provided they do not obstruct important flow paths, introduce a significant additional number of people into flood risk areas, or entail the storage of hazardous substances.

Proposals shall only be considered where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities, or increase the risk of flooding to other locations. The nature and design of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures required for development in such areas will also be required to be demonstrated, to ensure that flood hazard and risk will not be increased. Measures proposed shall follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the development.

13.5.2 Flood Risk Management Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

FR 01	Support the implementation of the relevant County Policy Objectives (CPO's) contained within <i>Chapter 5: Transport, Infrastructure, Energy & Communications</i> , and other relevant chapters of the <i>County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
FR 02	Require that development proposals within the 'Constrained Land Use' zone shall be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with <i>The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines</i> and <i>Circular PL 2/2014</i> (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development, and consider the potential impacts of climate change in the application of these guidelines. Applicants should have regard to the most up-to-date Flood Mapping as presented on the Office of Public Works (OPW) maps.
FR 03	Require that developments in flood vulnerable areas comply with the requirements as set out in <i>the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027</i> and in particular CPO 5.120 and DMS16.206.
FR 04	Demonstrate that future development will not result in increased risk of flooding elsewhere, restrict flow paths, where compensatory storage / storm water retention measures shall be provided on site.

14.0 Sustainable Transport

Strategic Aim:

The promotion of the use and increased delivery of sustainable modes of transport within the Town, in order to contribute towards the achievement Ireland's carbon emission reduction requirements.

14.1 Overview

The transport sector is one of the most significant contributors to our national Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. Transition towards a low carbon society needs to coincide with improvements to existing levels of public transport services in order to provide more viable and attractive alternative modal choices to the private car. The promotion of the use and increased delivery of sustainable modes of transport is fundamental to achieving Ireland's carbon emission reduction requirements. In addition to the reduction of emissions, failure to deliver public transport investment will result in a highly congested network that cannot meet the economy's transport needs.

A key tenet of the NPF is the delivery of improved sustainable mobility in our towns and villages. This accords with Ireland's Climate Change mitigation plan whereby a concerted effort is made to move away from polluting and carbon intensive population systems to new cleaner technologies. The Eastern and Midland Regional Spatial Economic Strategy 2019-2031 (RSES) reinforces and expands on the policy provision for transportation contained in the NPF and sets out a number of guiding principles for the integration of land use and transport planning, as well as a number of Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs) for specific land use and transport. One such RPO requires the preparation of Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for a number of selected settlements within the region, including Longford Town (RPO 8.6). Such LTPs will include transport priorities for each settlement in terms of public transport infrastructure and services; cycle investment; improvements to the pedestrian

environment; and road enhancements. It is also noted that RPO 4.59 also outlines the key objective to enhance accessibility and sustainable mobility within Longford Town centre, by improving links between the core and surrounding areas through the further integration of public transport, walking and cycling facilities.

As per the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 given the importance placed on planning for more compact settlement forms across the planning policy hierarchy, there is a clear need for greater coordination between land use and public transport provision. As such future growth, both in terms of employment and residential development must be based on sustainable modes of transport. Given the strategic position of Longford town in terms of the national transport infrastructure and arterial public transport routes, consideration should be given to the development of an integrated transport hub within the town, which serves the county and for the promotion of public transport connectivity between Longford 'Key' town and other towns and villages.

The Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 advocates a range of policies aimed at maximising the use of this key regional and national transport infrastructure and maximising sustainable transport provision. In particular it is noted that *Chapter 5: Infrastructure* of the Longford County Development Plan sets out a series of Policy Objectives which establishes the sustainable transport priorities for the county in the coming years and are taken into account in this Local Area Plan. This Local Area Plan also takes account of the specific policies relating to the development of tourism and recreational cycleways and walkways detailed in *Chapter 10: Tourism* of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Options for travel, transport and movement are critical to achieving national climate targets, healthier lifestyles, and for progressive economic development. In line with national transport policy the proposed Plan is required to encourage modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport.

14.2 Existing Context

Longford town is strategically located on the N4/M4 from Dublin to Sligo, with a number of national roads passing through it; the N5 to Castlebar and the N63 to Roscommon. The town is also located on the Dublin to Sligo rail line. The Road Network within the town centre consists of a number of one-way systems. The N5 bypass offers some congestion relief.

Planned infrastructure upgrades include the N4 from Mullingar to Roosky. There is further potential to provide for enhanced rail service on the Sligo rail line and improve connections to Athlone. This in accordance with regional policy that the town acts as a portal to the Northern and Western Region and provides a supporting role to the Regional Growth Centre of Athlone. Opportunities to further develop this in terms of required infrastructure should be investigated.

14.3 County Longford Active Travel Strategy

The County Longford Active Travel Strategy (ATS) is an NTA publication which informs the Local Area Plan. It is a county wide strategy which considers the relationship between travel demand to and from Longford by residents and visitors and the associated impacts upon travel choice and use of the transport networks within the County Area. Longford town lies within the county wide study area.

14.4 Longford Town Local Transport Plan 2023

The RSES outlines its support for the collaborative preparation of a Local Transport Plan in conjunction with the NTA and other stakeholders. Local Transport Plans (LTP) integrate land use and transport planning and contribute to the NPF's objective of '*compact smart growth*'. Also in relation to the Longford County Development

Plan 2021-2027, as per *Chapter 5: Transport, Infrastructure, Energy & Communications* the following County Policy Objective (CPO) is noted:

CPO 5.9 Prepare and implement a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Longford Town in conjunction with the National Transport Authority (NTA) and other relevant stakeholders. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and other relevant stakeholders, in accordance with the guidance note Area Based Transport Assessment 2019 (or any subsequent update) produced by the NTA and TII.

The LTP is based on a clear set of objectives and the most recent demographic and travel information taking into account the policies and objectives of the Local Authorities, insofar as they align with those of National and Regional Policy. Local Link Offices (Transport Coordination Units) have been consulted in the development of the LTP. The LTP has informed this Local Area Plan. The LTP has been prepared in close collaboration with the National Transport Authority (National Transport Authority) and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII). The LTP has been subject to further transportation and environmental assessment at local level as appropriate based on guidance available.

It is noted that the Longford Transport Plan 2023 contains a number of transport strategies (Section 5) which encourage sustainable transport as follows:

- Pedestrian Strategy;
- Cycling Strategy;
- Permeability Strategy;
- Public Transport Strategy;
- Traffic Management Strategy;
- Car Parking Strategy;
- Abbeycarton Access Strategy - Alternative Sustainable Proposal.

Further detail is provided in Section 6 (Development of Schemes) of the LTP which contains specific information in relation to the following specific schemes:

14.4.1 Pedestrian Schemes

14.4.1.1 Footpath Upgrades

The footpaths schemes listed in Table 6.1 of the LTP have been identified based on locations that either do not have footpaths at present or could require footpath upgrades. It is assumed that new or upgraded footpaths would provide high quality, accessible footpaths with a minimum width of 2m.

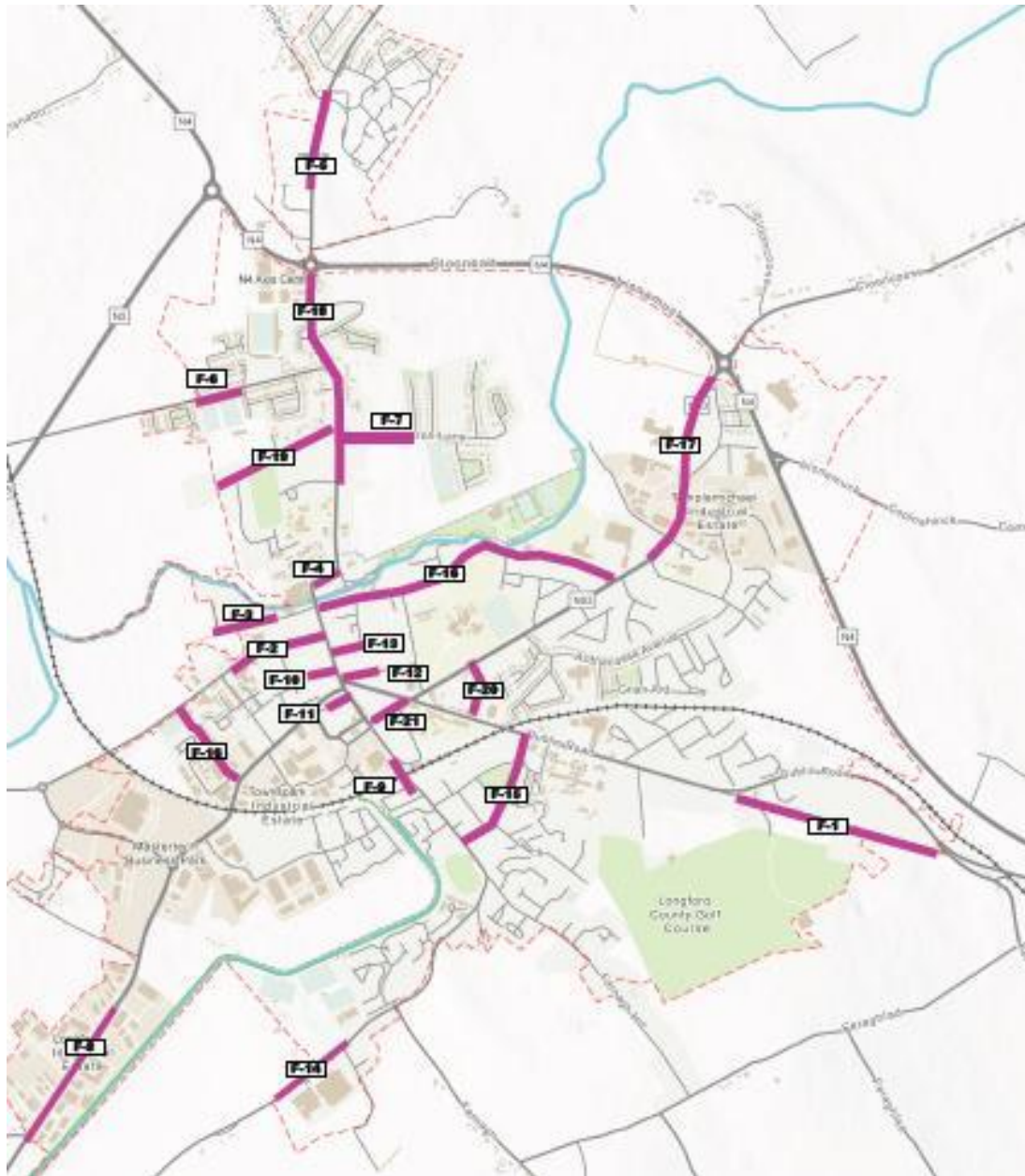
Proposed New or Improved Footpath Infrastructure Pedestrian Crossing Upgrades

Table (Table 6.1 of LTP)

No.	Pedestrian Footpath Improvement Schemes
F1	New footpath on Viewmount
F2	New footpath on Connaught Rd
F3	New footpath on Little Water Street
F4	New footpath on R198 (from Church to Cinema)
F5	New footpath on R198 Cloonbalt
F6	New footpath on Lisbrack Road
F7	New footpath on Abbeycarton Lane
F8	Footpath improvements at Longford Industrial Estate
F9	Improvements to pedestrian footbridge at train station
F10	Improvements to Garvey's Close pedestrian access
F11	Improvements to Bog Lane pedestrian access
F12	Widening of footpaths on Geraldine's Terrace
F13	Footpath improvements on Dublin Street
F14	Footpath improvements at Aghafad
F15	Footpath improvements at Teffia Park
F16	Footpath improvements at Townspark Industrial Estate

F17	Footpath improvements at N63 Ballinalee Road
F18	Footpath improvements at R198 Battery Rd
F19	New footpath on Demense Lane
F20	Footpath improvements at Deanscurragh
F21	Footpath improvements at New Street

Proposed Footpath Schemes (Figure 6.1 of LTP)



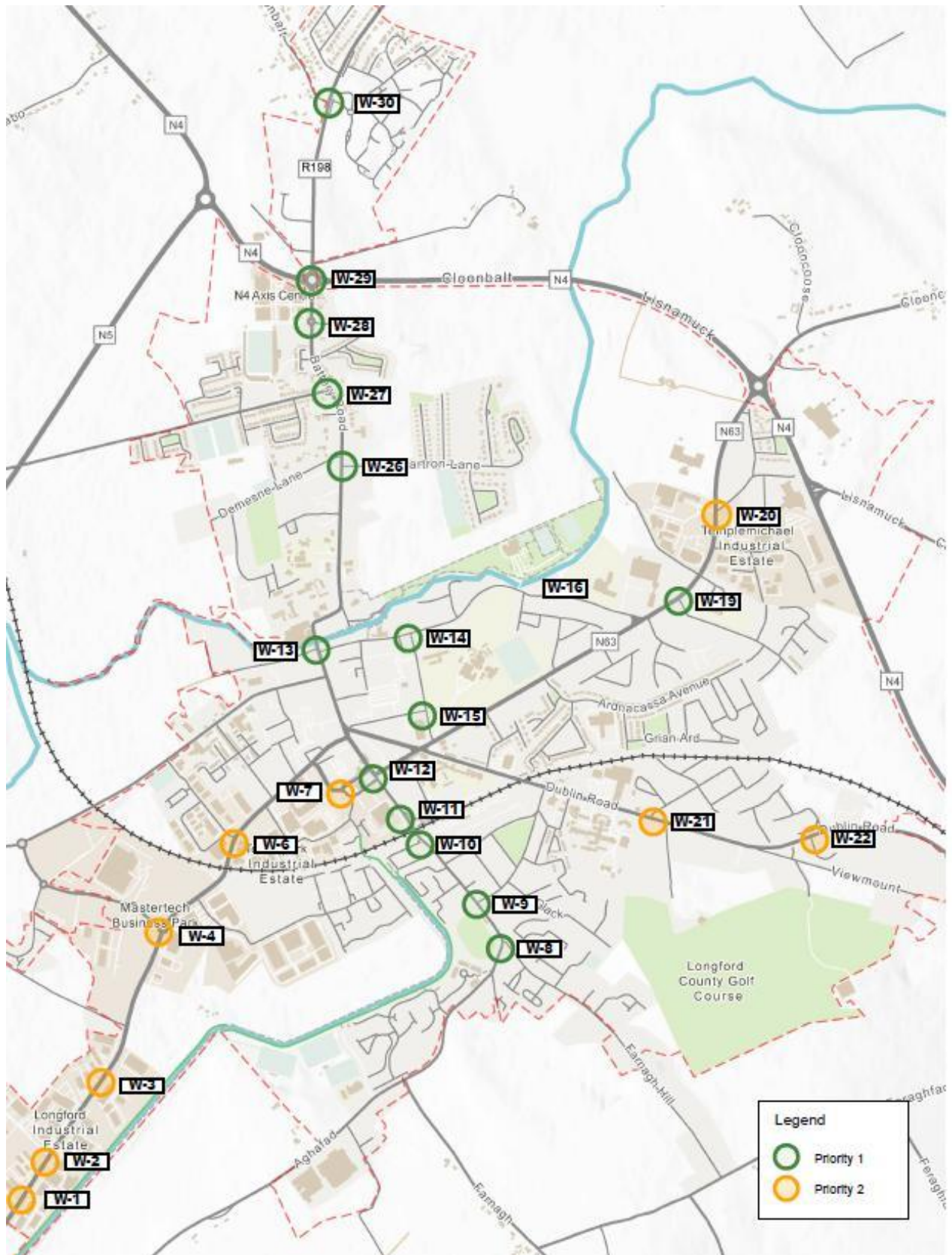
14.4.1.2 Pedestrian Crossing Upgrades

Key junctions which do not currently have signalised pedestrian crossings have been identified and included for assessment. Exact details of the proposed interventions are not detailed for each junction, but for the purposes of assessment it is assumed that they would be brought up to a standard that provides adequate pedestrian priority and safety. In some cases, on more major roads, this would include signalised crossings, but for minor roads/arms, an uncontrolled raised table/zebra crossing may be suitable.

Pedestrian Crossing Improvement Schemes Table (Table 6.2 of LTP)

No.	Pedestrian Crossing Improvement Schemes
W1	Junction of N63 /L11513
W2	Junction of N63/Cartronageeragh Business Park
W3	Junction of N63/Unnamed Road
W4	Roundabout N63/Gleann Riada
W5	Junction of N63/Royal Canal Avenue
W6	Junction of N63/Athlone Road
W7	Junction of N63/Market Square
W8	Junction of Park Road/Farnagh Hill
W9	Junction of Park Road/Bóthar Na Páirce
W10	Junction of Park Road/Canal Court
W11	Junction of Earl Street/St Joseph's Road
W12	Junction of Earl Street/New Street
W13	Junction of Bridge Street/Little Water Street/Great Water Street
W14	Junction of Great Water Street/St Mel's Road
W15	Junction of St. Mel's Road/Chapel Lane
W16	Junction of Templemichael Terrace/College Park
W17	Junction of Ballinalee Road/Oakvale
W18	Junction of Ballinalee Road/ Templemichael Terrace
W19	Junction of Ballinalee Road/Oaklands

W20	Junction of Ballinalee Road/The Laurels
W21	Junction of Dublin Road/Ardnacassa
W22	Junction of Dublin Road/Viewmount
W23	Junction of Connaught Road/St Michael's Road
W24	Junction of Lisbrack Road/Demesne/Cartrun Breac
W25	Junction of R198/St Albans
W26	Junction of R198/Demesne Lane/Abbeycartron Lane
W27	Junction of R198/Lisbrack Road
W28	Roundabout at Battery Road/White Linen Road
W29	Roundabout at N4/R148
W30	Junction of R198/Cloonbalt Wood



14.4.2 Cycle Schemes

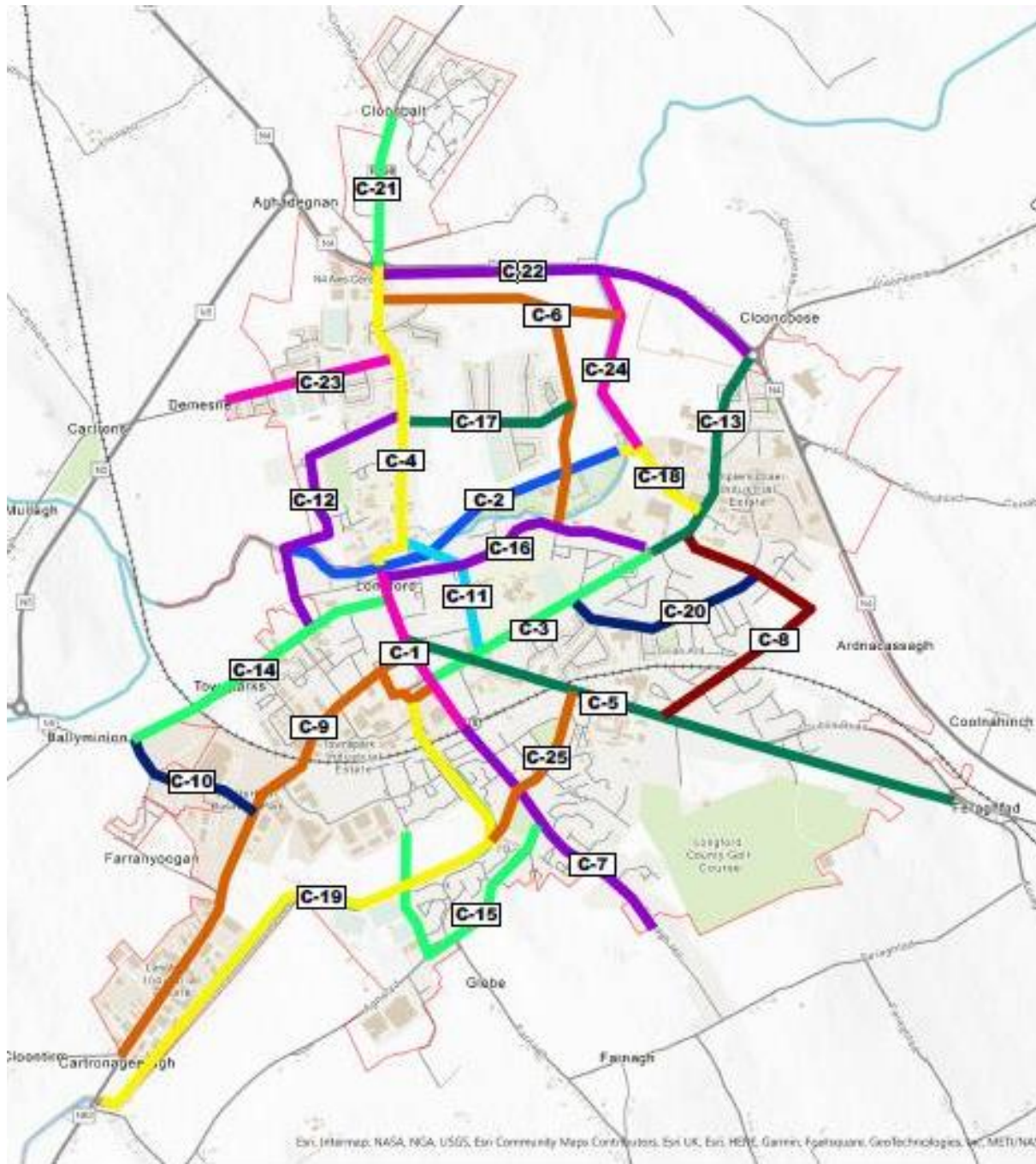
The schemes presented in the preceding table from the LTP are based on the network outlined in the CycleConnects proposals for Longford Town. The network has been divided into distinct routes which could be delivered as separate projects and will be assessed against each other in the MCA. For the purposes of assessment, it is assumed that high quality segregated cycle infrastructure is provided in both directions for each route, although the difficulty of providing that for each particular route is considered in the MCA process. Some of these schemes are currently in the design or construction stage as shown in Table 6.3 of the LTP.

Cycle Route Schemes Table (Table 6.3 of LTP)

No.	Scheme Description	Status
C1	Main St Cycle Route (From Bridge Street to Train Station)	Design Stage
C2	The Mall (from Little Water Street via the Mall and connection Ballinalee Road via new bridge crossing)	Not Started
C3	N63 (from Templemichael Terrace to Main Street)	Completed
C4	Battery Road (R198) and Church Street	Construction Stage
C5	Dublin Road	Not Started
C6	Northern Environs Connector	Not Started
C7	Park Road (From Train Station to Farnagh Hill)	Not Started
C8	Ardnacassa/Oaklands Avenue Connector	Not Started
C9	N63 (Athlone Rd to Main Street)	Design Stage
C10	Glenn Riada Cycling Connection	Not Started
C11	Great Water Street / St. Mel's Road	Not Started

C12	Demesne Ln / Battery Court / Little Water Street new connection and bridge.	Not Started.
C13	N63 (from Templemichael Terrace to N4 roundabout)	Construction Stage
C14	Connaught Rd (N5)	Not Started
C15	Park Rd / Prospect Woods	Not Started
C16	Templemichael Terrace	Not Started
C17	Abbeycartron Lane	Not Started
C18	Templemichael Cycleway	Part VIII Planning Approved
C19	Royal Canal Greenway	Completed
C20	Ardnacassa	Not Started
C21	R198 Cloonbalt	Not Started
C22	N4 Parallel Route (southern side)	Not Started
C23	Lisbrack Rd	Design Stage – Funding Partially Approved
C24	River Camlin East Bank Route (to N4)	Not Started
C25	Royal Canal to Dublin Road via Teffia Park	Not Started

Cycle Route Schemes Map (Figure 6.3 of LTP)



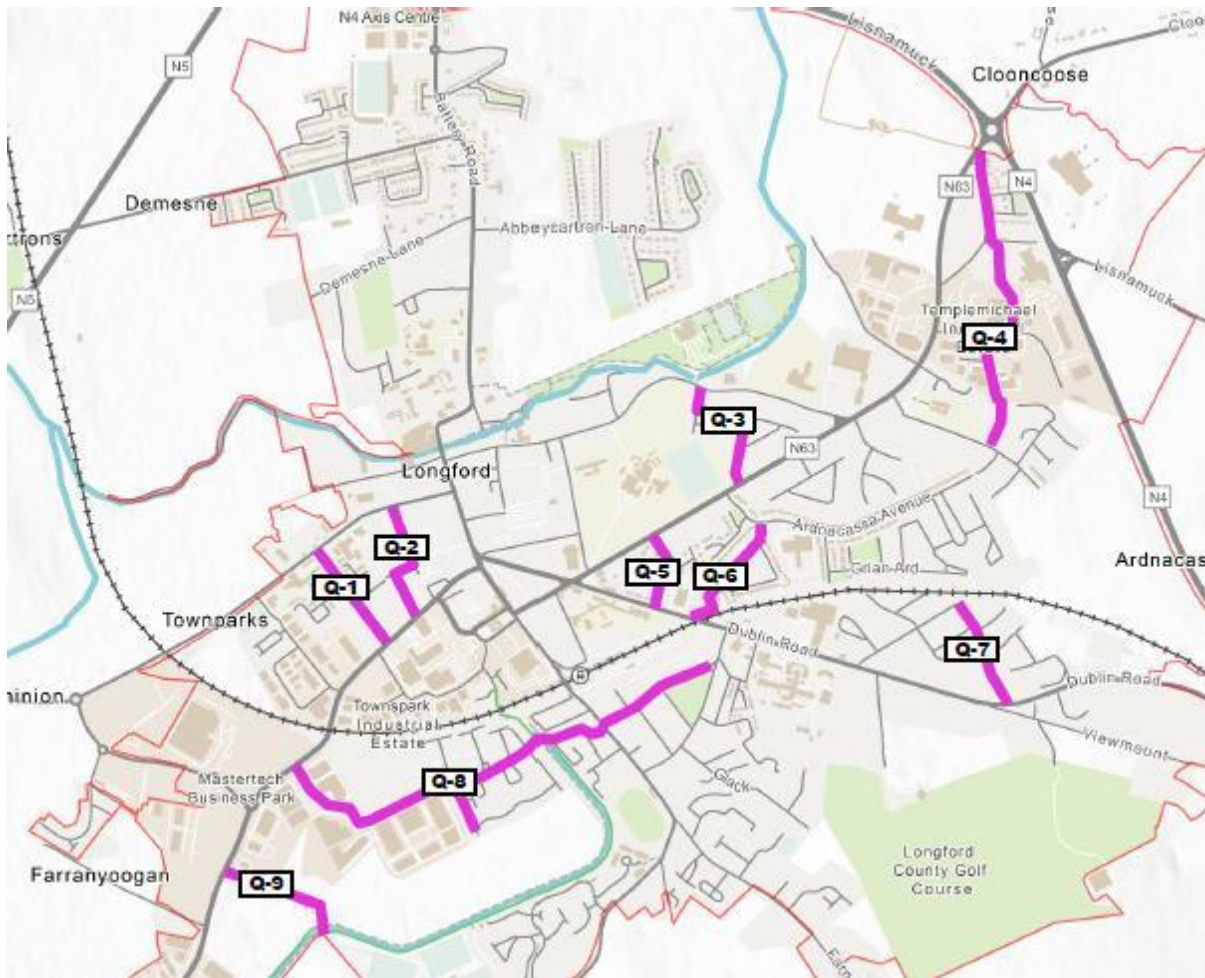
14.4.3 Quiet Streets

A number of 'Quiet Streets' schemes have been developed which are intended to compliment the proposed cycle network, and enhance cycling permeability throughout the town, particularly in the orbital links. Quiet streets require minimal infrastructural intervention and can be achieved through the use of traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds, road markings to indicate cycle priority, or filtered permeability to remove through traffic. In all cases, Quiet Streets will likely reduce the traffic volumes through redirection to more suitable road links or by encouraging mode shift to sustainable modes to travel.

Quiet Street Schemes Table (Table 6.4 of LTP)

No.	No.	Quiet Street Scheme
Q1		St. Michael's Road (between N5 and N63)
Q2		Annaly Park (between N5 and N63)
Q3		College Park (between N63 and Templemichael Terrace)
Q4		Templemichael Industrial Estate
Q5		Deanscurragh (between N63 and Dublin Road)
Q6		Springlawn (between Ardnacassa Ave and Dublin Road)
Q7		Dún Darrach (between Dublin Road and Ardnacassa)
Q8		Royal Canal Avenue / Park Villas / Teffia Park
Q9		Glack / McEoin Park (between Teffia Park and Farnagh Hill)
Q10		Mastertech Business Park to Royal Canal

Quiet Street Schemes Map (Figure 6.5 of LTP)



14.4.4 Bicycle Parking Schemes

Table 6.5 of the LTP outlines the proposed bicycle parking schemes, which are made up of a combination of upgrades to existing parking and provision of new parking. All bike parking should be provided in the form of Sheffield stands or similar, which may or may not be covered, and can be easily accessed without kerbs or other obstructions in the way.

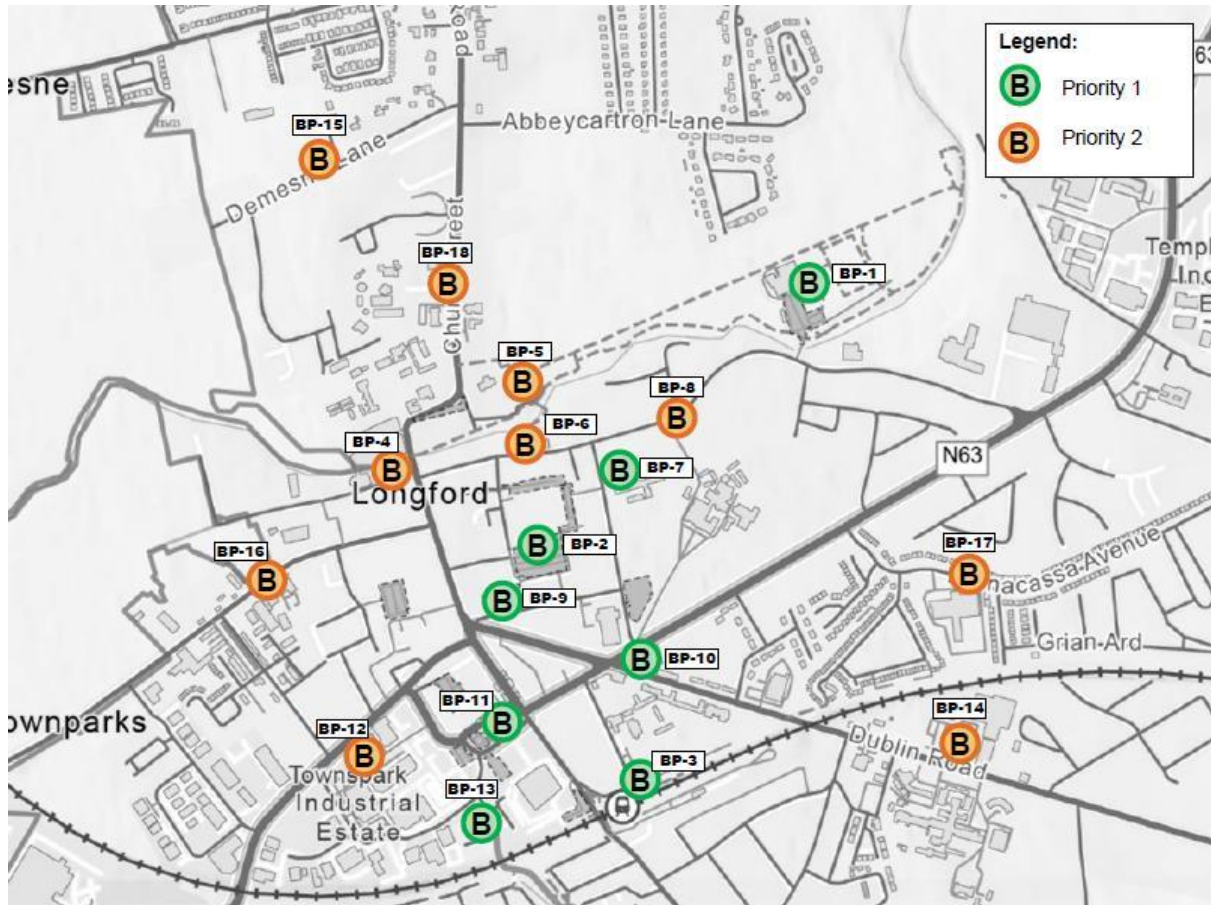
Bicycle Parking Schemes Table (Table 6.5 of LTP)

No.	Bicycle Parking Improvement Schemes
BP1	Improve Bicycle Parking at The Mall Sports Complex
BP2	Improve Bicycle Parking at Longford Shopping Centre (Tesco)
BP3	Improve Bicycle Parking at Train Station
BP4	Sheltered Bicycle parking in town centre at Little Water Street
BP5	Bicycle parking at Fee Court (at pedestrian/cyclist bridge)
BP6	Bicycle parking at Longford County Council offices/Battle of the Somme Memorial
BP7	Bicycle parking at St. Michael's Boys National School
BP8	Bicycle parking at St. Mel's College sports field
BP9	Bicycle parking at Geraldine's Terrace Car Park
BP10	Bicycle parking at St. Mel's Car Park
BP11	Bicycle parking at Market Square
BP12	Bicycle parking at Supervalu Townspark Industrial Estate
BP13	Bicycle parking at Harbour View (Royal Canal Greenway terminus)
BP14	Bicycle parking at Dunnes Stores (Dublin Rd)
BP15	Bicycle parking at Demesne Lane (Tennis Club)
BP16	Bicycle parking at Connaught Rd
BP17	Bicycle parking at Ardnacassa Avenue
BP18	Bicycle parking at Garda Station

Additional Measures:

- Improve wayfinding and signage to bicycle parking.
- Introduce Bicycle Sharing Scheme in town centre e.g. MOBY, TFI bikes, Bleeper.

Bicycle Parking Schemes Map (Figure 6.5 of LTP)



14.4.5 Permeability Schemes

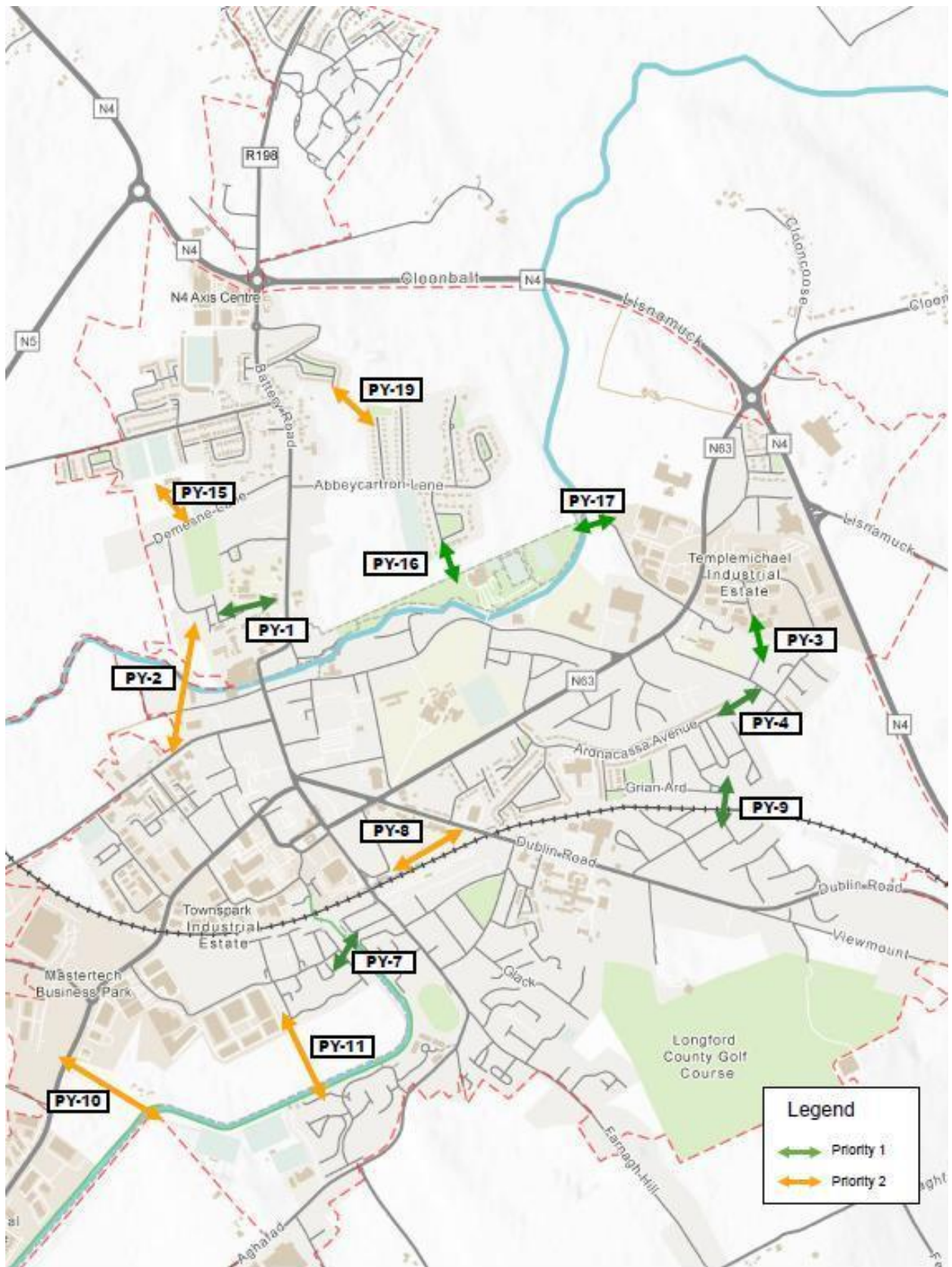
Permeability Schemes were developed based on a combination of desire lines and land use context in Section 3 of the LTP. The catchment analyses conducted as part of the baseline assessment provided an indication of areas in which permeability improvements should be made. These catchment shortfalls were used to identify logical, manageable locations for potential schemes to be assessed.

Walking and Cycling Permeability Schemes Table (Table 6.6 of LTP)

No.	No. Walking and Cycling Permeability Schemes
PY1	Battery Ct to Battery Rd
PY2	Little Water Street to Battery Ct
PY3	Oaklands Dr to Templemichael Business Park
PY4	Oaklands Grove to Ardnacassa
PY5	Strokestown Rd to Glenn Riada
PY6	Townspark to Western Park
PY7	Royal Canal to Camlin Meadow
PY8	St Joseph's Road to Dublin Road (via bus depot or convent)
PY9	Ardeevan to Ardnacassa
PY10	Royal Canal to N63 (exact location TBD)
PY11	Royal Canal to Mastertech Business Park
PY12	Glack to Dublin Road
PY13	Farnagh Hill to Farnagh
PY14	Farnagh Hill to Viewmount via golf course
PY15	Demesne Lane to Lisbrack Rd
PY16	Abbeycartron to the Mall
PY17	Ballinalee Road to the Mall Complex
PY18	Abbeycartron to Templemichael
PY19	Druid Glen to Abbeycartron
PY20	Cartrun Breac to N4 Axis Centre

PY21	Clonbalt Wood to Cloonbalt Lane
PY22	Cloonbalt Lane to Camlin River / Northern Environ Lands
PY23	Abbeycartron Lands to Clooncoose

Walking and Cycling Permeability Schemes (Figure 6.7 of LTP)



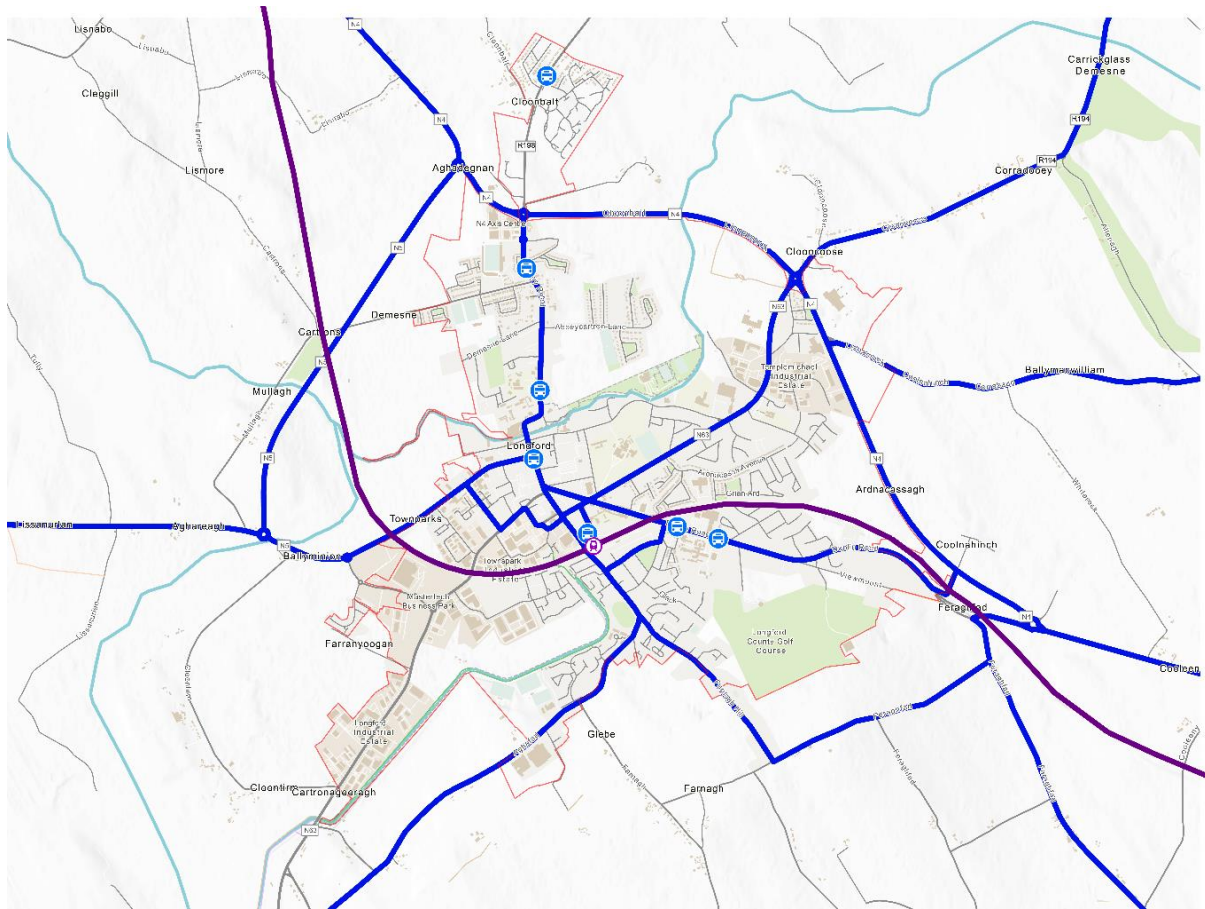
14.4.6 Public Transport Schemes

A number of public transport schemes have been developed which aim to improve public transport usage and frequencies of services within the town, including a new local bus route.

Public Transport Schemes Table (Table 6.6 of LTP)

No.	Public Transport Schemes
PT1	General improvements to Train Station (Including pedestrian access, and cycle parking).
PT2	Train Station Accessibility Study (to east)
PT3	Bus Stop upgrade programme (Across the study area)
PT4	Bus Route & Frequency Study (in conjunction with 'Connecting Ireland').
PT5	Bus stop improvements at Longford station
PT6	Work with the NTA to develop a town bus service

Public Transport Schemes Map (From LTP)



14.4.7 Traffic Management Schemes

A number of traffic management schemes have been developed which aim to simplify traffic movements and reduce traffic volumes in residential areas.

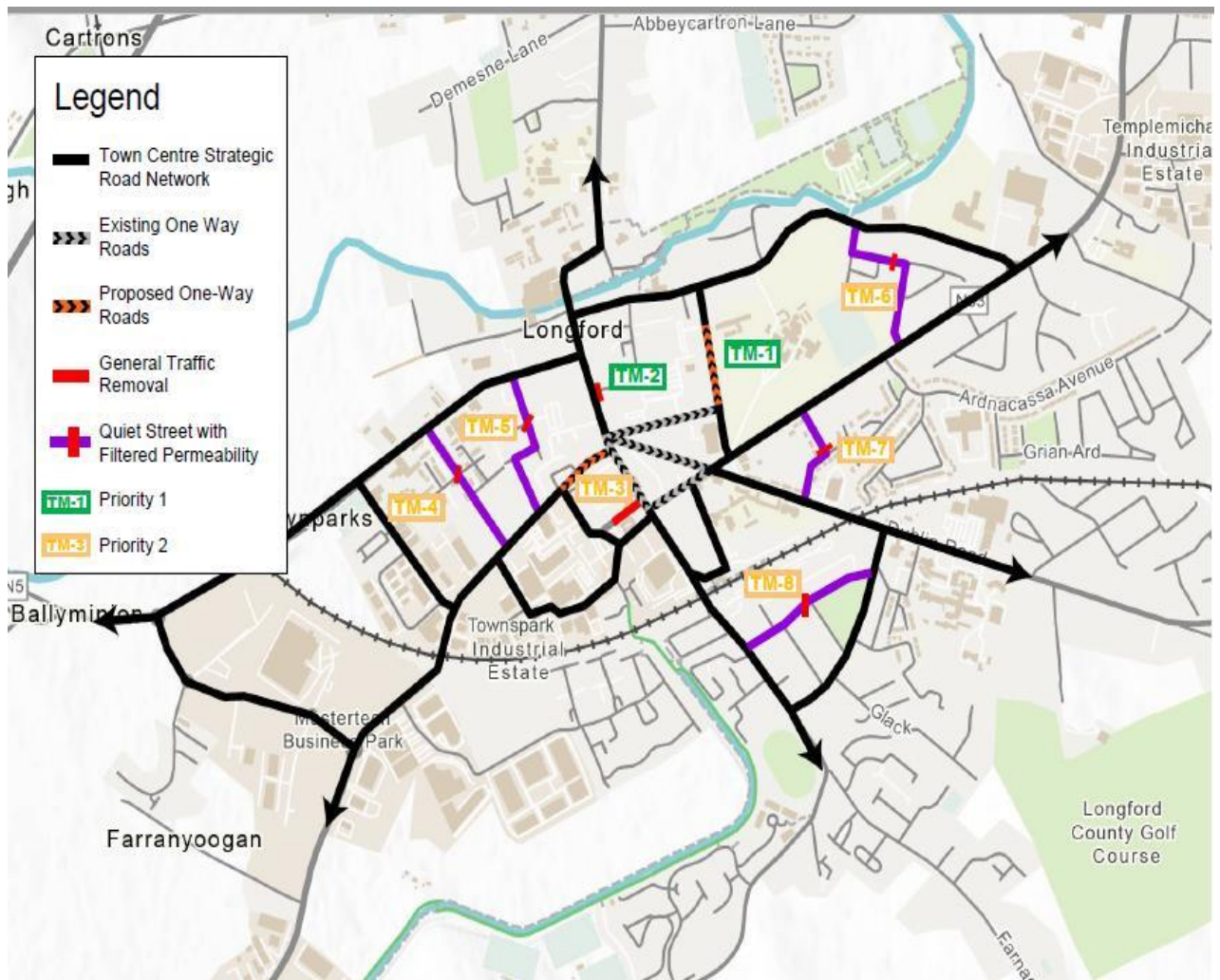
Traffic Management Schemes Table (Table 6.8 of LTP)

No.	No. Traffic Management Schemes
TM1	St Mel's Rd One-Way system
TM2	Longford Shopping Centre Main St Entrance Vehicular Restriction
TM3	Reorganisation of Market Square/Kilashee St One-way system
TM4	St Michaels Rd Quiet Street / Filtered Permeability
TM5	Annaly Park Quiet Street / Filtered Permeability
TM6	College Park Quiet Street / Filtered Permeability
TM7	Deanscurragh Quiet Street / Filtered Permeability
TM8	Teffia Park Quiet Street / Filtered Permeability

Additional measures:

- School streets / safe routes to school development and implementation
- Traffic calming measures such as raised tables at key junctions.
- Speed limit review

Traffic Management Schemes Map (Figure 6.8 of LTP)



14.4.8 Car Parking Schemes

A number of car parking schemes have been developed which aim to rationalise car parking along key walking and cycling routes, to allow for reallocation of space to active travel modes. Wayfinding strategies and one-way systems have been developed to improve access to existing car parks within Longford, which does not negatively impact on the walking, cycling and public transport networks.

Car Parking Schemes Table (Table 6.9 of LTP)

No.	Car Parking Schemes
CP1	Rationalisation of Main St and Dublin St parking (to facilitate cycle infrastructure).
CP2	Recommend Locations for Park and Stride schemes
CP3	Wayfinding strategy
CP4	Rationalisation of On-Street Car Parking along Geraldine's Terrace
CP5	Improve pedestrian access to Annaly car park from Main Street
CP6	Change parking regime at Annaly car park to max. 2hr stay
CP7	Change parking regime at Ballymahon car park to max. 2hr stay
CP8	Improve pedestrian access to car park (via Bog Lane) from Main Street.
CP9	Change parking regimes at car park to max. 2hr stay
CP10	New one-way system at Longford Shopping centre car park

Car Parking Strategy Map (Figure 6.9 of LTP) and Longford Shopping Centre Car Parking Strategy Map (Figure 6.10 of LTP)

Figure 6.9: Car parking strategy

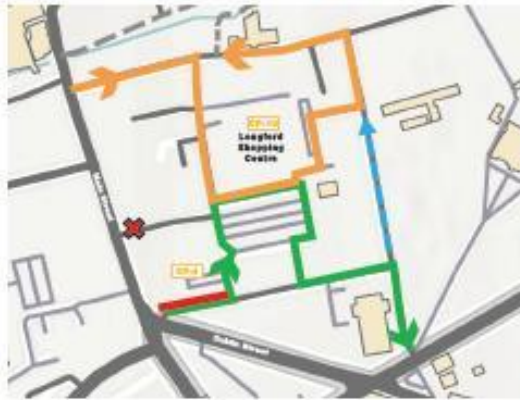


Figure 6.10: CP 10 Longford shopping centre car parking strategy



14.4.9 Abbeycartron Access Strategy

The proposed road network will be provided as part of the planning process and through funding opportunities and other initiatives as they arise. This will be informed by active travel principles and in accordance with the provisions of DMURS. The cycle network as outlined in the framework shall be progressed in tandem with these initiatives. This is based on the following provisions:

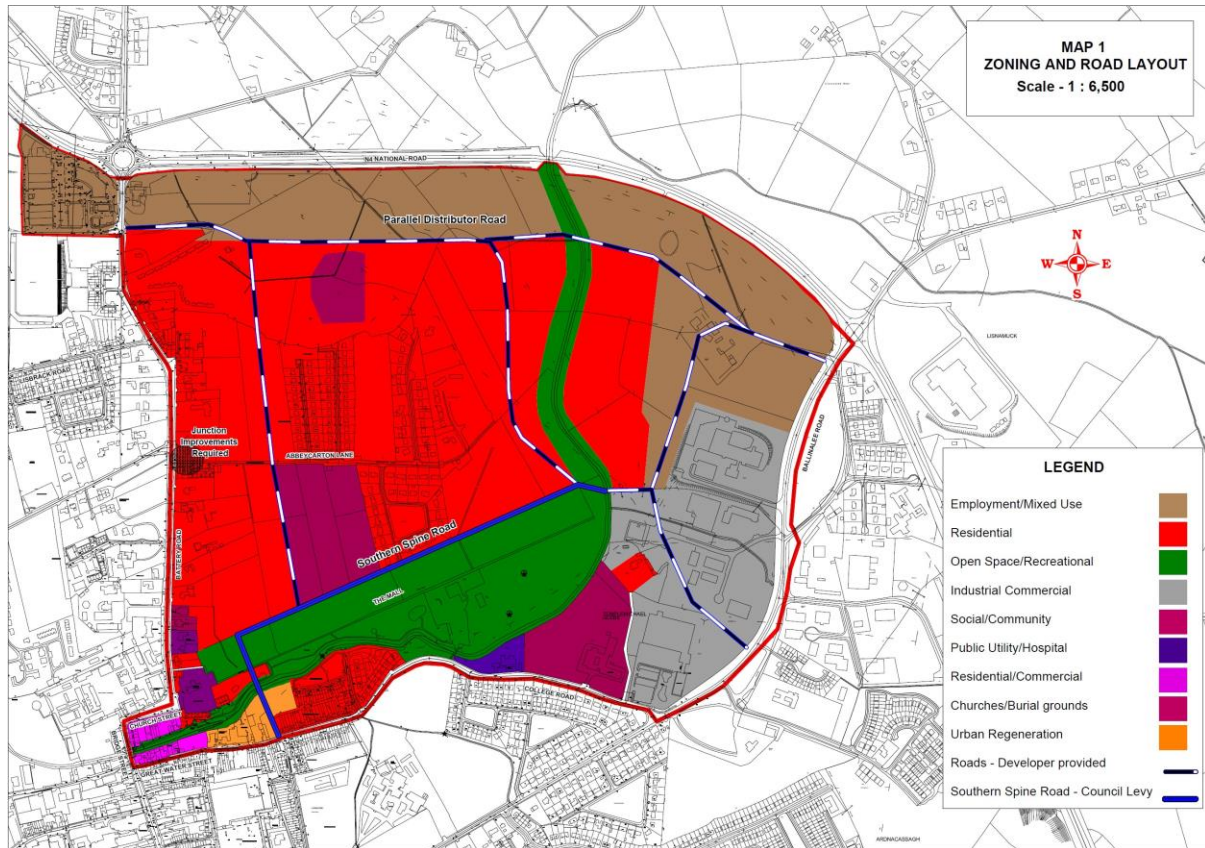
- Plans remain for the construction of an N4 dual carriageway from Mullingar linking with the existing dual carriageway at the Tomisky roundabout on the border with County Leitrim.
- Applications for planning permission on the industrially zoned lands to the north of the N4 Longford Bypass shall be subject to a detailed traffic impact assessment in advance of their consideration for development. Any proposed development shall have regard to National policy concerning the preservation of the N4 national primary road for National/Regional Traffic.
- Opportunities to address circulation issues within the town arising out of road declassification will be addressed where possible, as will potential funding shortfalls through alternative means, in the absence of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) funding as a result of such declassification.

The Abbeycartron Access Strategy consists of 2 options which are outlined accordingly:

14.4.9.1 Longford Northern Environs Local Area Plan 2008-2014 Option

The Longford Northern Environs Local Area Plan exists to provide a zoning and traffic assessed infrastructure strategy for the Abbeycartron Lands in the north of the town. As part of this, a number of new roads are identified within the area, with four new access points provided, making it extremely permeable for vehicles.

Longford Northern Environs Local Area Plan 2008-2014 Map (Figure 5.8 of LTP)



In the 15 years since this plan was published, transport policy and thinking has changed to favour sustainable modes of transport, and to reduce car dependency. Under this direction, a more sustainable schematic (Alternative Sustainable Proposal section) has therefore been developed with this plan as the alternative delivery option.

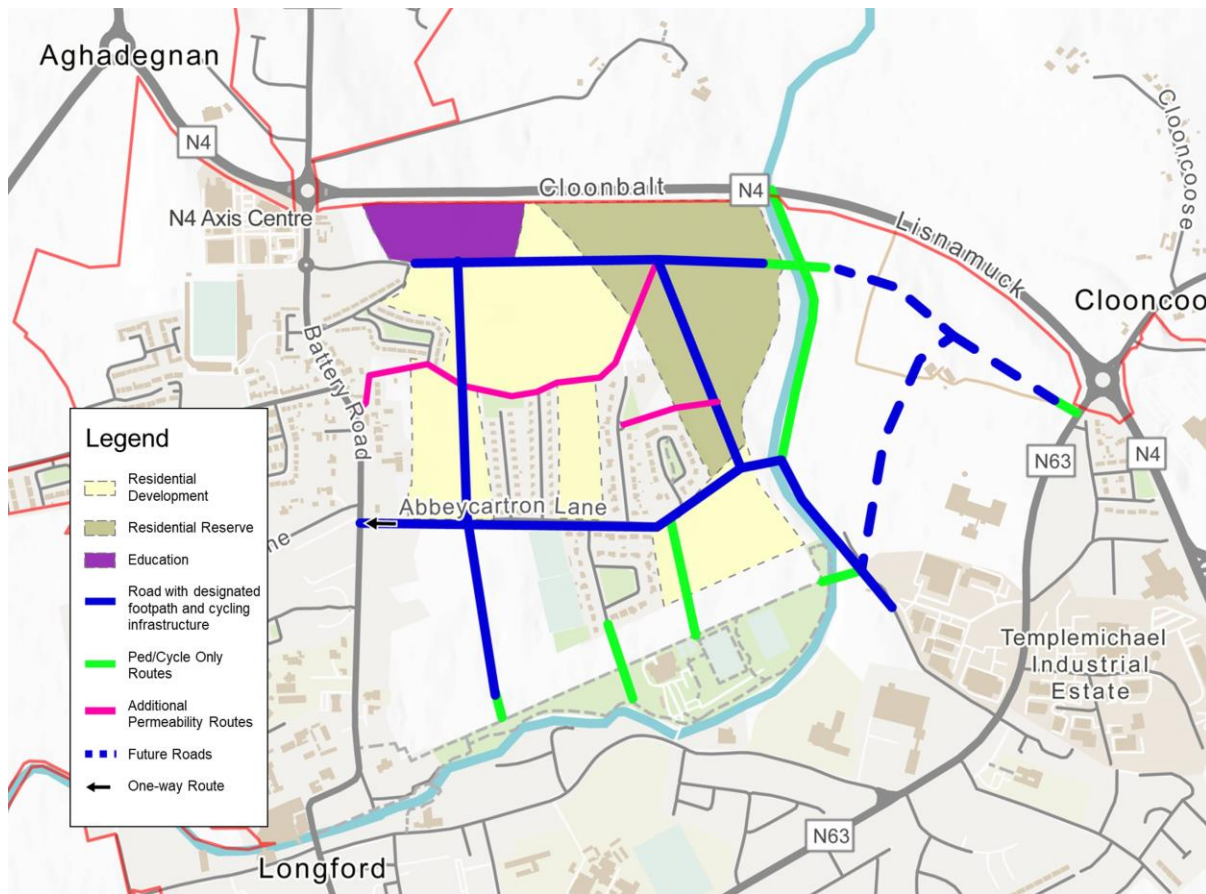
14.4.9.2 Alternative Sustainable Proposal Option

In order to facilitate access to these lands in a more environmentally friendly way, an indicative access strategy has been developed which provides balanced access for all modes. The proposal includes a new road between the roundabout on Battery Road, and Abbeycartron Lane. This provides for access onto Battery Road at two points reducing the overall volume of vehicles that utilise any one entrance point. High quality pedestrian and cycle infrastructure will also be provided along this route. Future indicative road proposals to serve the area east of the Camlin are also shown.

New pedestrian/cycle routes are proposed along and across the Camlin River and between Abbeycartron Lane and the Mall which provide additional active travel access routes to the lands. Further permeability routes are proposed, with a central route through the site from Druid Glen to the Camlin River Ped/cycle route, and a second connection between Abbeycartron and the Mall.

Overall, this strategy will seek to provide good permeability throughout the area for sustainable modes, while providing for appropriate access for vehicles. While individual elements of the lands, such as active travel and permeability proposals will be included in further sections of this report, in accordance with established development objectives for the area, the overall development of the Abbeycartron lands will be subject to further detailed traffic impact assessment beyond the scope of this LTP, including an assessment of its impacts on the strategic function of the N4.

Alternative Sustainable Proposal (Figure 5.9 of LTP)

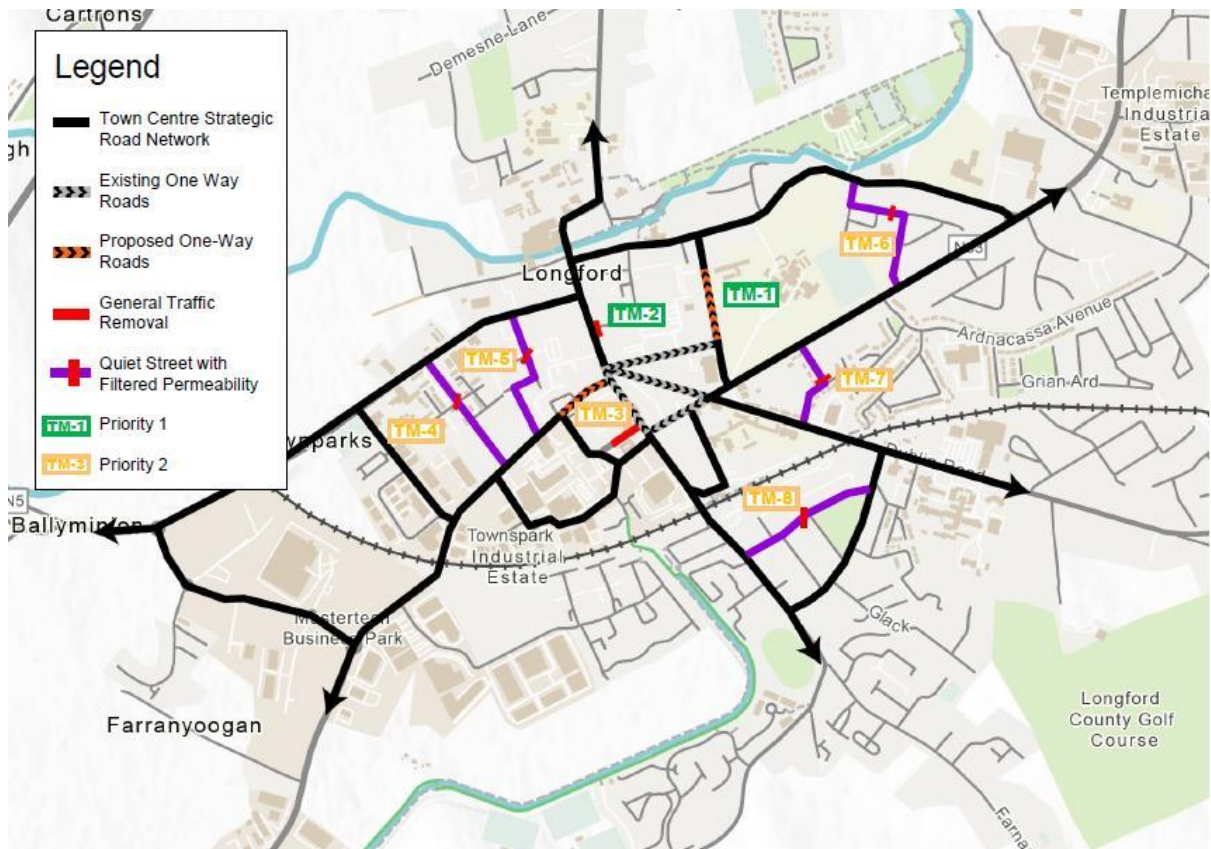


14.4.10 Overlapping Infrastructure Networks

Due to the overlapping nature of the transport networks identified, an analysis of their interaction and the potential conflicts which may occur has been undertaken. The potential for conflict between the walking network and other networks was not deemed to be significant, as it is expected that footpath improvements, new links and crossings can be implemented without adversely impacting on other modes. It is expected that conflicts may occur in particular between the proposed cycling network and the strategic road network (considering both private vehicle and public transport movements).

The provision of new cycling infrastructure requires a certain level of road space reallocation which may impact on vehicular movements, and in certain areas, in order to fulfil each of the objectives, further traffic management and/or infrastructure may be required. Three pinch points are identified at the particularly constrained railway line crossings. The central one-way triangular gyratory within the town is identified as contraflow cycling infrastructure may be required in order to provide for two-way cycle movements. A number of streets with constrained width, or which are residential in nature are highlighted due to the potential difficulty in providing cycle infrastructure. Consideration should be given to one-way systems or quiet street designation along these streets.

Overlap and potential conflicts between networks Map (Figure 5.6 of LTP)



14.5 Local Area Plan Sustainable Transport Strategy

This Local Area Plan seeks to incorporate smarter travel policies in the future development of Longford Town and its environs in the context of new development and proposed enhancements to existing developments and the public realm to reduce the need to travel, maximise efficiency, and promote sustainable travel choices, as outlined in policy throughout the plan. These will be supported by other land-use planning measures such as sequential residential development and appropriate density provisions, cycling and walking networks and the promotion of pedestrian permeability throughout the town, in other sections of this plan and the overarching Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

This LAP supports the extension and development of initiatives which respond to local travel needs throughout the town and to service its hinterland and the wider rural region which the town serves. This Plan will support sustainable transport provision including walking, cycling and public transport linked closely with planning as traditional high car dependency has led, in certain circumstances to low density settlement patterns and poor integration of public transport facilities and services. Walking and cycling is being continuously reviewed and improved within the town. These modes of travel will be encouraged in the first instance, followed by public transport, in compliance with higher level policy requirements.

The Longford LAP includes the relevant objectives of the Longford Local Transport Plan 2023-2029. The aim of this document has been to improve the integration between Land Use and Transport Planning. This will be delivered in tandem with sustainable compact growth in the plan area, through appropriate means such as the development of lands in the existing built-up footprint of the town.

This Local Area Plan will be in accordance with the specific policies relating to Sustainable Transport, and the development of tourism and recreational cycleways

and walkways as detailed in *Chapter 5: Transport, Infrastructure, Energy & Communications* and *Chapter 10: Tourism of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027*.

14.6 Sustainable Transport Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

ST 01	Support the implementation of the <i>Longford Town Transportation Plan 2023</i> and associated strategies contained therein.
ST 02	Comply with the relevant sections of <i>Chapter 5: Transport, Infrastructure, Energy & Communications</i> of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, including Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Public Transport, Cycling and Walking County Policy Objectives and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2019).
ST 03	Comply with the specific policies relating to the development of tourism and recreational cycleways and walkways are detailed in <i>Chapter 10: Tourism of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
ST 04	Management of space in town centres to deliver a high level of priority and permeability for walking, cycling and public transport modes to create accessible, attractive, vibrant and safe, places to work, live, shop and engage in community life.
ST 05	Seek to implement enhanced pedestrian and cycling permeability and networks in the urban environment of Longford Town in accordance with the provisions of the LTP, the <i>Design Manual of Urban Roads and Streets</i> , (DMURS) (DTTS and DECLG, 2020), the <i>Permeability Best Practice Guidelines</i> , (NTA, 2013) and the <i>National Cycle Manual</i> (NTA, 2011).

ST06	Seek to implement pedestrian and cycling improvements with the assistance of the NTA through the <i>Green Schools Programme</i> and <i>Sustainable Transport Measures Grants Scheme</i> .
ST 07	Carry out an Accessibility Audit over the lifetime of this plan in conjunction with the proposed public realm strategy and in association with other local authority departments, associations for the elderly, disabled and other community organisations to assess and improve accessibility for all, particularly within and between important services and the main thoroughfares and public spaces throughout the town.
ST 08	Encourage larger employers within the town and applications for planning permission to establish employment generating premises to develop mobility management plans to promote sustainable travel choices. This will include measures to support smarter travel such as the provision of cycle facilities and bicycle storage and shower facilities for employees.
ST 09	Ensure new development areas and employment land-uses are permeable for walking and cycling and are laid out in such a way as to facilitate the operation of and access to public transport by residents and employees.
ST 10	Ensure that the layout and design of new developments provide for bus stops, passenger waiting facilities, and bus turning and service regulatory layover facilities, as required.
ST 11	Support and develop public transport routes throughout the town through collaboration with the National Transport Authority.
ST 12	Retrospectively provide public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure and facilities in existing development areas to achieve growth in sustainable mobility.

ST 13	Provide suitable infrastructure on public transport corridors to improve safety and efficiency for public transport users.
ST 14	Engage and cooperate with the Department of Transport, National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Irish Rail, Local Link and other stakeholders to improve the provision of public transport and public transport facilities in Longford.
ST 15	Support the NTA in the provision of new and upgraded bus stops in Longford Town).
ST 16	Support the development of an integrated transport hub within the town, which serves the county and for the promotion of public transport connectivity between Longford 'Key' town and other towns and villages.
ST 17	Seek the development of effective cycling infrastructure along the key urban arterial routes to and from Longford Town:

- (R198 – Battery Road/Church Street/Bridge Street;
- R393 – Dublin Road; and
- the N63 – Ballinalee Road);

in order to coincide with key employment areas, public transport hubs and schools within Longford Town.

ST 18	Support the provision of electrical charging infrastructure both on street and in new developments in accordance with car parking standards prescribed in Chapter 16: <i>Development Management Standards</i> of the <i>Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
ST 19	Liaise and collaborate with relevant agencies to support the growth of EVs with support facilities and infrastructure through a roll-out of additional electrical charging infrastructure at appropriate locations in the town.

ST 20	Support the prioritisation of parking for Electric Vehicles (EVs) in town centre locations.
ST 21	Address the safety, capacity and strategic function of the national road network in accordance with the provisions of official policy and taking account of the requirements of the Section 28 DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).
ST 22	Carry out detailed traffic impact assessments for development proposed to the north of the N4 Longford bypass and the sequential provision of local roads network provisions as an alternative to the N4/N5 bypass.
ST 23	Continue to progress the development of the N4 Mullingar-Roskeel dual carriageway with the relevant government departments and transport agencies.
ST 24	Ensure that any proposed development shall have regard to National policy concerning the preservation of the N4 national primary road for National/Regional Traffic.
ST 25	Require that applications for planning permission on the industrially zoned lands to the north of the N4 Longford Bypass (see Appendix 1 Zoning map) shall be subject to a detailed traffic impact assessment in advance of their consideration for development.
ST 26	Require developers in specific areas to provide elements of the road network as indicated in the LTP Abbeycartron Access Strategy and associated cycle and pedestrian facilities in accordance with the provisions of the DMURS. This will be required and details agreed in association with permission for such development, where this will facilitate the appropriate access to and movement within the development concerned and to strengthen its relationship with the town centre. Where appropriate, infrastructural funding will be

addressed through the provisions of contribution schemes prepared under s.48 & 49 of the Act.

- ST 27** With reference to the LTP Abbeycartron Access Strategy - Longford Northern Environs Local Area Plan 2008-2014 option only, vehicular access to be provided linking Longford town centre and the lands zoned to the north of the Camlin River in the vicinity of Great Water Street, to include a spine road parallel to the Mall Amenity Area. This would be provided by the Local Authority and involve the installation of a new river crossing from the Mall to Great Water Street. This is to be funded through the application of specific levies on development that would benefit from such a link (in accordance with a specific scheme under S. 49 of the Act).
- ST 28** Links bridging the Camlin River and facilitating east-west movements as alternatives to the existing N4/N5 bypass would be provided as developer-led interconnectors providing access to and within the site. These will be provided as part of a legible and permeable road network to make connections across the northern portion of the town and protect the national road network (**See LTP Abbeycartron Access Strategy**).
- ST 29** A vehicular bridge will be provided to link proposed new development on the east and west side of the Camlin River (**see LTP Abbeycartron Access Strategy**)
- ST 30** A permeable secondary road network shall be provided to the lands to the south of the bypass to support and protect the capacity of the national road network. Road lines illustrated are indicative (**see LTP Abbeycartron Access Strategy**) and shall be clarified along with defined access and egress points prior to construction in consultation with the infrastructure department of Longford County Council.

ST 31	With reference to the LTP Abbeycartron Access Strategy - Longford Northern Environs Local Area Plan 2008-2014 option only, the southern spine route will be developed as indicated to facilitate the development of lands zoned to the north. All developments permitted that will benefit from the development of this route will be levied in accordance with a special scheme under s. 49 of the PDA to facilitate the construction of this route.
ST 32	Support and facilitate the implementation of the pedestrian, cycle, public transport, car parking, traffic management, and permeability 'Priority Schemes' set out in the Local Transport Plan. Proposals for new development will be required to demonstrate how they will integrate with the provisions of the Local Transport Plan.

15.0 Climate change

Strategic Aim:

to ensure Longford Town becomes a climate resilient town by promoting the economic, social and environmental benefits of low-carbon development, creating an integrated green infrastructure network, prioritising sustainable mobility and building at sustainable densities in appropriate locations.

15.1 Overview

The increase in the frequency of extreme weather events, as witnessed across varying global to local scales, serves only to highlight the increasing need for climate resilient development and the requisite infrastructure to enable such development in the future.

Mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change will have a significant bearing on future development patterns. Climate mitigation is now a focal point in national planning policy with an increased focus on the delivery of ‘compact growth’ development in our urban settlements to accommodate future growth. This has clear implications for the future provision of infrastructure in our urban settlements in improving the ‘liveability’ and attraction of our towns as an alternative to less sustainable development patterns which could undermine the globally recognised need to move towards a low carbon development economy and society.

15.2 Integrating Climate Considerations into the Longford Local Area Plan

In tackling global warming, a comprehensive legislative and policy framework relating to climate action has been developed in Ireland over the past number of years. These provisions seek to ensure that climate considerations are fully integrated into spatial plans such as the Longford Local Area Plan. As per the

National Planning Framework and National Strategic Outcome (NSO 8) is the need to initiate a transition to a low carbon and resilient society. Whilst the primary long-term goal is to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 (Climate Action Plan, 2019), recent policy developments reflect a widespread acceptance that climate change is happening now, and the associated impacts of same giving added urgency to the increasing emphasis of plans integrating mitigation⁷ and adaptation⁸ measures. In this regard, County Longford's Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019 has provided a critical point of reference in preparing this plan. As such this is therefore one of the cross-cutting principles of this Plan.

15.3 County Longford Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019

The Longford County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy (2019), as provided for under the Low Carbon Development Act 2015, signalled the beginning of a coordinated cross- departmental approach to implementing climate mitigation and adaptation measures. The strategy contains an adaptation framework which encompass all services, functions and operations of the Council and is centred around 6 no. complementary strategic high-level goals (Table below), each containing specific objectives and associated relevant actions.

15.4 Longford Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019 - Strategic Goals Table

1. Local Climate Change Adaptation for Governance and Business Operations

Goal: *Climate change adaptation considerations are mainstreamed and integrated successfully into all functions and activities of Longford County Council ensuring*

⁷ Climate mitigation refers to measures to reduce climate change by limiting greenhouse emissions. It includes strategies to reduce activities that give rise to greenhouse gases and to enhance carbon sinks.

⁸ Adaptation refers to actions which seek to better manage and reduce the risks and effects associated with existing or anticipated climate change and exploit beneficial opportunities.

operational protocols, procedures and policies implement an appropriate response in addressing the diversity of impacts associated with climate change.

2. Climate Change Adaptation for Local Infrastructure and Built Environment

Goal: *Establish climate resilient infrastructure centred around the effective management of climate risk and informed investment decisions for positive contributions towards a low carbon society.*

3. Climate Change Adaptation for Local Land Use and Development

Goal: *Provide and implement sustainable policies and measures to influence positive behavioural changes supporting climate adaptation actions and endorsing approaches for successful transition to low carbon and climate resilient society.*

4. Climate Change Adaptation for Local Drainage and Flood Management.

Goal: *Obtain greater understanding of the risks and consequences of flooding resulting from climate change and implement a co-ordinated approach to the successful management of drainage and flooding.*

5. Climate Change Adaptation for Local Natural Resources and Cultural Infrastructure

Goal: *Foster and implement meaningful approaches to protecting natural and key cultural assets through an appreciation of the adaptive capacity of the natural environment to absorb the impacts of climate change.*

6. Climate Change Adaptation for Local Community Health and Wellbeing

Goal: *Empowered and cohesive communities with strong understanding of climate risks, increased resilience to impacts of climate change with capacity to champion climate action at local level.*

These goals recognise that the effects of climate change pose a serious threat to quality of life, communities, businesses, the environment and biodiversity. The Longford Town Local Area Plan will be cognisant of the County Longford Climate Change Adaption Strategy addressing adaption (to minimise the effects of climate

change, such as extreme weather events, greenhouse gas emissions) and mitigation (to seek ways to prevent climate change such as innovative green construction methods and materials). As such the above goals have been taken into account in the relevant sections in the preparation of the Plan.

15.5 County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027

Climate change and its associated challenges has also been covered throughout the Development Plan as an embedded theme. In particular, Chapter 3 *Climate Change* details the nature and extent of climate change and how it impacts on people's lives, society and the wider economy. Particular attention is drawn to the County Policy Objectives (CPO's) contained within Chapter 3 of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 and to the Climate Actions contained at the end of each chapter of the Development Plan. The Local Area Plan will take cognisance of same.

15.6 Longford County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

The Longford County Council Climate Action Plan takes into full consideration international and national climate change policy and legislation as well as the most up-to-date knowledge on current levels of climate change and its impacts and projections for the future. The Climate Action Plan sets out the evidence-base used to inform on climate action within the jurisdiction of Longford County Council, including climate change risks and emissions baseline profile. It outlines the structure, function, and aspirations with respect to climate change of the County Council and also details the climate actions currently underway. It outlines the Council's framework for climate action and its Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Actions. It focuses on Longford County Council's Decarbonisation Zone (DZ), Longford Town and includes the Objectives and Climate Actions tailored specifically to the DZ. It sets out the Council's approach to implementing actions and measuring progress.

15.7 LAP Climate Related Measures

The potential of climate change to alter the development environment and how the planning system can avoid or prevent negative impacts in this context will be an important consideration in the policy contained within this plan. Climate Change is a cross cutting theme throughout both the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 and also accordingly the Longford Local Plan 2022-2028, which through its various objectives contained throughout the Plan incorporates and provides for the measures to both limit the amount of greenhouse gas emissions and increase the resilience of the town to the effects of existing and future climate change.

This plan shall consider ways in which the production of greenhouse gases can be minimised, such as the promotion of sustainable transport patterns and environmentally conscious energy production. Promotion of locally sourced building materials, environmentally aware production methods and the use of passive technologies are all sustainable principles that will be promoted as part of this policy document. Protecting and enhancing areas of natural heritage within the town district can help contribute positively towards reducing climate change. Flooding will also be a significant consideration.

It is noted that the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment have extended the Smokey Coal Ban to include Longford Town from September 2020. Longford Town is also designated as a 'Decarbonisation Zone'. The Longford Town Local Area Plan recognises this and will support the delivery of same.

15.8 Climate Change Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

CC 01	Support the implementation of <i>the County Longford Climate Change Adaptation Strategy</i> , or any succeeding document, with regard to its goals, objectives and actions relating to the planning and development of Longford Town.
CC 02	Support the implementation of the relevant County Policy Objectives (CPO's) contained within <i>Chapter 3: Climate</i> and other relevant chapters of the <i>County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
CC 03	Support the implementation of the relevant Climate Actions contained at the end of individual chapters of the <i>County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
CC 04	Support the implementation of Longford County Council's <i>Climate Action Plan 2024-2029</i> any other subsequent Climate related document deemed relevant by the Planning Authority.
CC 05	Ensure all plans and projects carried out in Longford encourage and provide for climate resilient measures.
CC 06	Support the circular and bio-economy through achieving greater efficiency in land management by building at sustainable densities and prioritising brownfield development in accordance with the Core Strategy of the <i>Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027</i> .
CC 07	Encourage the development of local renewable and low carbon, and zero-carbon energy sources in Longford Town through retrofitting and as part of new development proposals, which meet the highest feasible environmental standards during construction and occupation, in accordance with the Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES).
CC 08	Encourage innovative solutions to enhance local biodiversity within streets and open spaces through the utilisation of the incorporation of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) for surface water management where possible.

CC 09	Support and promote the use of biodiversity techniques, such as green roofs and walls and the integration of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS)/Nature Based Solutions into all new development schemes.
CC 10	Avoid inappropriate development in flood prone lands zoned ' <i>Constrained Land Use</i> '.
CC 11	Create an integrated green infrastructure network to support urban biodiversity, water retention and flood alleviation, allowing for natural and unhindered inundation during flood events.
CC 12	Reduce Longford's local carbon footprint caused by transport emissions by increasing connectivity and prioritising sustainable movement routes to key destinations within the town through the incorporation of relevant recommendations from the Longford Local Transport Plan 2023.
CC 13	Create and develop well planned sustainable communities, where sustainable modes of travel are encouraged to local facilities such as education, work and commercial activity.
CC 14	Promote sustainable patterns of development including development in sustainable locations.
CC 15	Support the development of sustainable low-carbon climate resilient communities and encourage a climate adaptation and mitigation approach to development which will enable regeneration.
CC 16	Support the delivery of the 'Decarbonisation Zone' in Longford Town and associated implementation plan promoting measures to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and improve general environmental conditions in the area.
CC 17	Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/5/0/EC) and ensure that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as out in the Air Quality

	Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 201) (or any updated/superseding documents).
CC 18	Ensure that applications for all new development shall be assessed against the latest technical standards relating to sustainable building construction and materials, traffic and pedestrian safety, access and service provision, effluent disposal and the protection of public health and the environment.
CC 19	Support the adaption of existing homes to reduce energy use subject to Development Management provisions.
CC 20	Minimise resource and energy requirements for new developments through appropriate siting, design, and layout, making the most of natural systems both within and around buildings.
CC 21	Support high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retrofitting of appropriate energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock, and to actively retrofit Longford County Council's housing stock to a B2 Building Energy Rating (BER) in line with the Government's Housing for All Plan retrofit targets for 2030, subject to Development Management provisions.
CC 22	Support Energy Master Plans prepared by Sustainable Energy Communities in Longford Town.
CC 23	Support the delivery of facilities needed to divert waste away from landfill and promote the prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery of materials (including heat from waste) with disposal to landfill as the final option.
CC 24	Promote and encourage positive community and/or co-operative led climate action initiatives and projects in Longford Town that seek to reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency, enhance green infrastructure and encourage awareness on climate change issues.

CC 25 Encourage innovation and facilitate the development of pilot schemes in Longford Town that support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

16.0 Implementation and Monitoring

Strategic Aim:

To ensure development occurs in tandem with the delivery of supporting physical and social infrastructure, in an orderly and efficient manner and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

16.1 Active Land Management

Achieving compact growth targets will require active land management 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 as follows:

16.2 Compliance with the Core Strategy

To ensure continued compliance with the Core Strategy and its housing allocation for Longford it will be necessary to monitor the number of residential units permitted and developed on an annual basis. The quantum of land zoned in the Local Area Plan is based on an estimated density of specific sites. If that density is significantly increased a surplus of zoned lands is generated which, if developed within the lifetime of the Plan, will result in a greater population than the Core Strategy provided for.

Monitoring the number of units permitted and constructed enables a closer alignment between the Core Strategy, the population projection, development activity and all the associated necessary physical, social and community

infrastructure. If it appears that population targets are likely to be exceeded as a result of increased densities, it may be necessary to review the Plan.

16.3 Phasing Scheme – Residential and Employment Zoned Lands

In relation to the preparation of Core Strategies, the NPF places considerable emphasis on significant infill/brownfield growth, particularly in cities and large towns through effective linkages between the zoning of land and the availability of infrastructure. In this regard, the NPF advocates a two-tier approach to land zoning in relation to:

- Tier 1: Serviced Zoned Land – this zoning comprises lands that are able to connect to existing development services, i.e. road and footpath access including public lighting, foul sewer drainage, surface water drainage and water supply, for which there is service capacity available and can therefore accommodate new development. These lands will generally be positioned within the existing built-up footprint of a settlement or contiguous to existing developed lands.
- Tier 2: Serviceable Zoned Land – this zoning comprises lands that are not currently sufficiently serviced to support new development but have potential to become fully serviced within the life of the plan, i.e. the lands are currently constrained due to the need to deliver some or all development services required to support new development, i.e. road or footpath access, water and/or wastewater treatment infrastructure.

As such residential lands have been included in a phasing scheme based on the Infrastructural Assessment Report (IAR) carried out as part of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

*Infrastructural Assessment Report (IAR) Employment and Residential Zoned Lands
(see CDP, Volume 3: Annex 5)*

The report and associated mapping shows the combined assessment of the residential and employment lands, presented as T1 (Tier 1), T2 (Tier 2) and un-serviced lands. The IAR provides the following:

- Examines the suitability of a site for future development based on NPF objectives, the RSES and the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 etc.
- Identifies potential sites for residential and employment zoning within the main settlement hierarchy of Longford Town.
- Assesses the infrastructure requirements to service each site.
- Assesses and weight the planning and serviceability/infrastructural provision for each site to enable a Tier to be assigned, as may be applicable.
- Where sites are identified as Tier 1 or Tier 2 lands, the assessment clearly identifies the likely development services required to support new development and where possible provide an indicative timeframe for delivery i.e. short to medium term or longer term.

As part of the plan preparation process, substantial discussions were undertaken with Uisce Eireann and local authority engineers regarding infrastructure needs. In this regard an Infrastructure Assessment Report (IAR) has been used to identify the existing and projected level of infrastructure provision within the boundaries of the Longford Town Local Area Plan (see Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, Volume 3, Annex 5: Infrastructure Assessment Report). This has identified lands fully serviced and available for development and other sites that are in need of more infrastructural investment prior to development. The zoning of certain sites has been altered to reflect the findings of the IAR). The sequential development of lands from the town core out is recommended based on the availability and feasibility of delivering services.

In terms of reasonable estimate of costs, that Uisce Eireann, has indicated that it does not have resources or capacity to carry out such an exercise and therefore no costings have been provided in terms of water services.

It should be noted that the overall Infrastructure Assessment Report and forms a 'live' document during the development plan process. The Water Services Section and Environment Section of Longford County Council are currently undertaking an assessment of estimated costs for future infrastructure provisions.

Phase 1: Short to Medium Term (Tier 1 – Serviced Lands)

Phase 1 lands (**see Phasing Map**) have been identified having regard to services, good planning principles such as the sequential approach (the identification of undeveloped lands closest to the town centre and existing established areas), potential pedestrian/cycle connectivity to the town centre, the avoidance of flood risk and environmentally sensitive areas. As a result of this assessment, it is clear that, for a range of infrastructural reasons, some sites are better placed to deliver employment and residential use in the short to medium term (Tier 1 lands). (Tier 1) lands are promoted for immediate development.

Phase 2: Medium Term (Tier 2: Serviceable Lands)

Phase 2 lands (**see Phasing Map**) can be described as serviceable land, comprising lands that are not currently sufficiently serviced to support new development but have the potential to become fully serviced within the life of the Plan or where there are planned infrastructure upgrades. In such instances the sites were considered to achieve a moderate status on sustainable planning criteria also. Due to the time constraints involved in addressing the servicing of these sites, these are more medium in delivery.

Strategic Residential Reserve Lands

Strategic Residential Reserve Lands (**see Phasing Map**) have an objective '*To provide for the longer-term housing requirements of the town*'. Residential development, other than that under certain specific criteria, will not be permitted on these lands during the lifetime of the Plan. Lands zoned 'Strategic Residential Reserve Areas' are not generally developable within the lifetime of the plan. The lands zoned for the purposes of strategic residential reserve may be released for development over future plan periods.

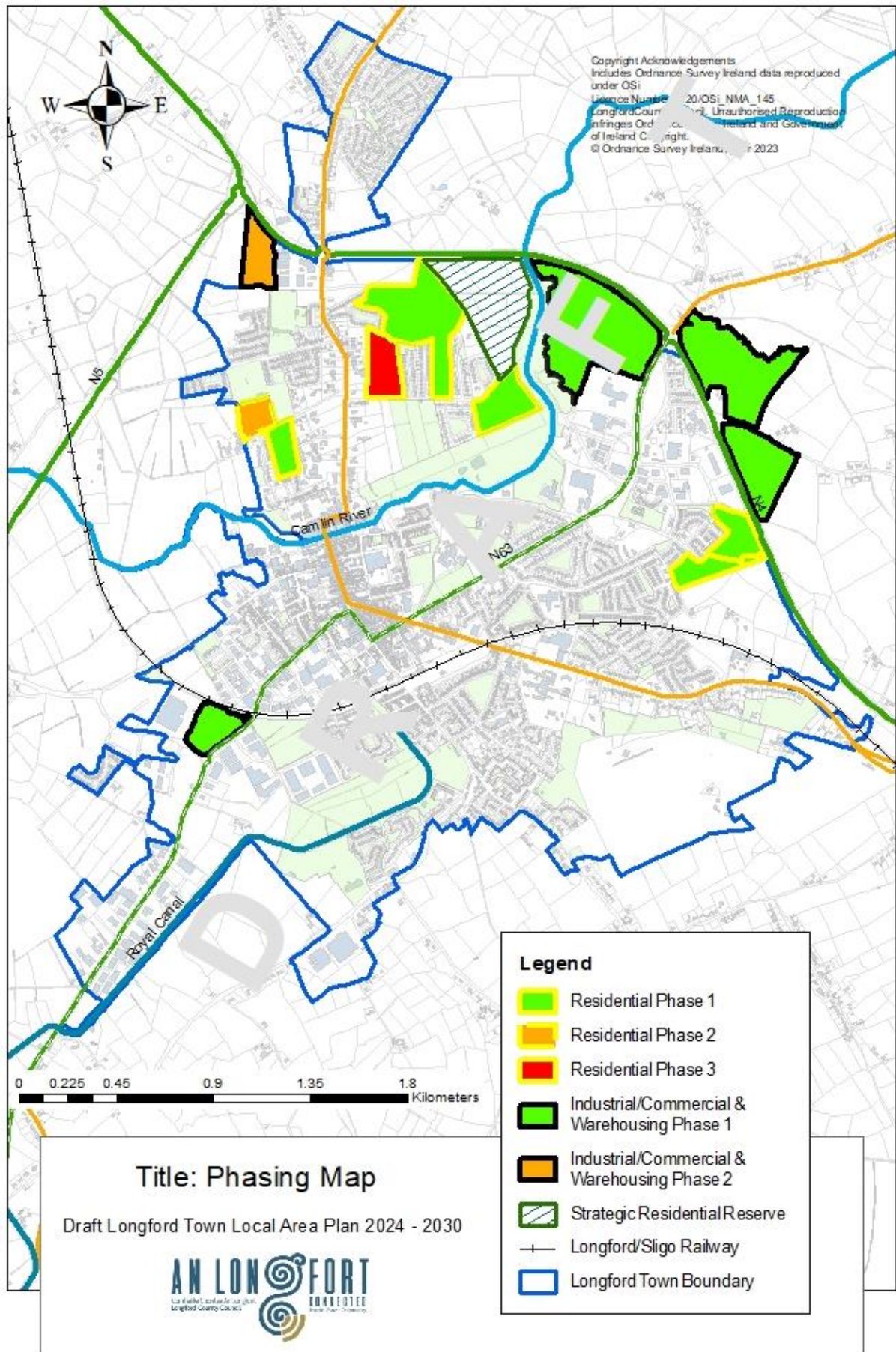
The following residential type of development may be considered acceptable:

- 1) Where there is a live permission for residential development that has not been activated. The life of these permissions may be extended in accordance with the provisions of Section 42A of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended. Proposals for new developments will not be considered over the lifetime of the current plan period.
- 2) A proposal for a single dwelling house may be considered under this zoning where:
 - a) the unit to be provided will serve as the permanent place of residence of the landowner or a member of his/her immediate family.
 - b) and where it can be clearly demonstrated that the provision of such a unit would not compromise the ability of the wider area of zoned land to be developed in the future.
 - c) and the dwelling would easily integrate with the existing and future development of the lands and those in the vicinity.
- 3) In exceptional circumstances, where it can be clearly demonstrated by the developer that there is a significant difficulty in the release or identification of lands for a specific residential type development, consideration will be given to the release of lands zoned Strategic Residential Reserve, subject to established planning criteria and including in particular:
 - a) The requirement to remain within the overall residential land use targets as set out in the Core Strategy.

b) The lands are being developed in a sequential manner.

c) It has been clearly justified and demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, that there is a clear discrepancy between the supply and release of residentially zoned lands and the demand for residential units.

Certain developments that can demonstrate a strategic element, (e.g. a significant commercial or social element), may be deemed acceptable.



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 12⁹ and 66¹⁰). The 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.

Application of Vacant Site Levy (VSL)

The Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 is a site activation measure to bring vacant and underutilised land in urban areas into beneficial use, while ensuring a more effective return on State investment by enabling infrastructure and helping to counter unsustainable urban sprawl. It introduced a statutory obligation for all Planning Authorities to establish a register of vacant sites. The Urban Regeneration

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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 areas and in rural towns and villages as a priority, particularly through the establishment of a National Regeneration and Development Agency

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.

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 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'.

Residential Zoned Land Tax

The Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) was introduced in the Finance Bill 2021 to activate land for development to increase housing supply. The RZLT potentially imposes a 3% annual market value tax on zoned lands which are suitable for residential development. Residential properties which pay Local Property Tax will not be subject to the RZLT. Any gardens or yards over 0.4047 hectares (1 acre) must be registered for the RZLT, although they will not be subject to pay the RZLT. Each Local Authority has been asked to produce a map which shows the residential and mixed-use land the tax will relate to (i.e. zoned and serviced land).

The Final Maps were published on 1st December, 2023, with commencement of the RZLT on 1st February, 2024, with this being the first valuation date. The tax will be administered by Revenue on a self -assessment basis, so the taxpayer determines the market value. Surcharges may apply if the land is later found to be undervalued.

Active Land Management Objectives

It is an objective of the Council to:

AL 01	Support the sequential development of lands with preference for Tier 1 followed by Tier 2 lands in accordance with the findings of the IAR (see CDP, Volume 3, Annex 5)
AL 02	Undertake the sequential development of lands shall from the town core out according to the availability or feasibility of delivering services.
AL 03	Ensure lands zoned 'Strategic Residential Reserve' other than for the certain specific criteria specified in Volume 2, Appendix IA of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 <i>'provide for the longer-term housing requirements of the town'</i> .
AL 04	Promote more active land management and co-ordinate provision of enabling infrastructure particularly on publicly owned lands.
AL 05	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.
AL 06	Use, where appropriate, Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) and other incentives including development contributions in combination with the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 in order to encourage urban regeneration of brownfield lands over the development of greenfield sites.

AL 07	Maintain and update a Vacant Sites Register in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015.
AL 08	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.
AL 09	Maintain and update the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT) Maps as required.

Appendix 1: Longford LAP Land Use Zonings and Land Zoning Matrix

(Based on Appendix 1: Land Use Zonings and
Appendix 1A: Key Town Longford Town of the
Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027)

Land Use Zoning

Introduction

The land use zoning emphasis of this plan is that of compact growth and urban consolidation, which supports the re-using of brownfield land, infill sites and underutilised lands in towns and villages across the settlement hierarchy. The settlement plans for each of the towns and villages aim to promote continued sustainable growth, providing for increased employment and supporting social infrastructure to deliver a higher quality of life.

The zonings aim to promote the orderly development of the County by eliminating potential conflicts between incompatible land uses and establishing an efficient basis for investment in public infrastructure and facilities. Associated zoning policy also has regard to the strategic policies underlying the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027. These include the principles of climate action, sustainable development through consolidated growth, the integration of land use and transportation planning and the maintenance and improvement of the quality of life across the Town as a whole.

The zonings contained within this section and illustrated on the accompanying map are indicative of the level and nature of development which is deemed by the Planning Authority to be appropriate to the area. The zonings are intended to be flexible, provided that the basic concepts of proper planning, residential amenity and good design practice are adhered to. Any proposed development should be compatible with the primary zoning use and should not detract from the amenity of the area.

Development Plan Context

The Longford Local Area Plan 2025-2031 is prepared in accordance with the provisions of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027. The vision, policy objectives, actions, Development Management Standards and zoning provisions contained within the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 and associated appendices and maps, apply to the Longford Town Local Area Plan 2025-2031. This section should be read in conjunction with *Chapter 4: Core Strategy, Settlement and Housing Strategies. Chapter 16 Development Management Standards* of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027. These zonings should be read in conjunction with the Development Management Standards, particularly in relation to design, materials, public open space and parking requirements and the following section which relates to the land use zoning matrix (also contained in Volume 2: Appendix 1- Land Use Zonings of the Longford County Development Plan).

Land Use Zoning Categories, Objectives and Area

The following table sets out the land use categories and the quantum of zonings contained within the Longford Local Area Plan area.

Land Use Zoning Table

Land Use Zoning Category	Objective	Total Area Zoned (Ha.)
Town Core	<i>Provide for the development and enhancement of town core uses including retail, residential, commercial, civic and other uses.</i>	49.14

Residential	<i>To provide for 252.34 residential development and protect and improve residential amenity.</i>
New Residential	<i>To provide for new 35.40 residential development in tandem with the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure.</i>
Social/Community/Education/Public Utility	<i>To primarily provide 58.84 for educational, health, social, cultural, religious and community facilities.</i>
Recreation/Amenity and Green Spaces	<i>To primarily provide 147.03 for recreational open space, (environmental buffers) and ancillary structures.</i>
Industrial/Commercial/Warehousing	<i>To primarily provide 147.69 for industrial/workshop, warehouse and commercial or</i>

	<i>business development including compatible uses such as offices and distribution.</i>	
Strategic Residential Reserve	<i>To provide for the longer-term housing requirements of the town.</i>	56.77
Constrained Land Use Objective	<i>To facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas.</i>	62.20
Total		802.65

In accordance with the provisions of the County Longford Development Plan 2021-2027 the following the zoning provisions of the Longford LAP should be read in conjunction with Volume 2: Appendix 1: Land Use Zoning Matrix and Volume 1: Section 16: Development Management Standards of the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027.

Town Core:

To provide for the development and enhancement of town core uses including retail, residential, commercial, civic and other uses.

The purpose of this zoning is to protect and enhance the special character of the town centre and to provide for and improve retailing, residential, commercial,

cultural and other uses appropriate to the centre of Longford. This zoning provides for the consolidated development and growth of the town centre, allowing for a broad range of compatible and complementary uses which will be encouraged to locate in this area. Development will be expected to contribute to a dynamic, vibrant and pedestrian focused town core with a strong urban design approach. The Council will encourage the appropriate re-use, adaptation and regeneration of buildings, backlands, derelict and obsolete lands including residential development above retail and commercial premises in the town centre.

Development carried out under this zoning should have regard to the mix of uses of the zoning, and, in particular, shall have regard to the retail policy for the County. Developers should be cognisant of the high-profile locations of this zoning and design, wherein siting and materials should be chosen accordingly. All development in this regard will be subject to sequential test.

It is envisioned that much of the proposed retail/commercial development in the town would take place in the existing commercial core, revitalising the centre of Longford and include provision for car parking.

Residential

To provide for residential development and protect and improve residential amenity.

This zoning is intended primarily for established housing development but may include a range of other uses particularly those that have the potential to improve the residential amenity of residential communities.

Potential sites may range from small gap infill, unused or derelict land and backland areas, side gardens of existing houses, up to larger undeveloped sites within an established residential area. A balance must be struck between the reasonable

protection of the amenities and privacy of adjoining dwellings, the protection of established character and the need to provide infill development.

Proposals for development involving the intensification of residential uses within existing residential areas will need to clearly demonstrate that the proposal respects the existing character of the area and would not harm the amenity value of adjacent properties. Proposed developments within the zoned area may include other uses particularly those that have the potential to improve the residential amenity of residential communities; developments within the zoned area may include such uses including schools, crèches, small shops, doctor's surgeries, small scale residential, playing fields etc.

Within this zoning category, the improved quality of existing residential areas will be the Council's priority.

New Residential

To provide for new residential development in tandem with the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructure.

The principles of sustainable development shall be taken into account when considering applications for new residential development in the area, including the use of appropriate housing densities, natural, locally sourced materials, energy efficiency and transport implications, the impact on the existing ecology and compatibility with local environmental conditions. It is considered appropriate that existing residential areas are augmented and areas where gaps or "leapfrogging" of development have occurred are infilled, and the town be consolidated for the purposes of an appropriate and sustainable town structure, creating a clear urban/rural divide.

Where appropriate, development design proposals shall provide for further access to adjacent zones of residential lands in order to facilitate their future access and development.

Strategic Residential Reserve

To provide for the longer-term housing requirements of the town.

Residential development, other than that set out below, will not be permitted on these lands during the lifetime of the Plan. (It should be noted that lands zoned for the purposes of strategic residential reserve may be released for development over future plan periods). The following residential type development may be considered acceptable:

1) Where there is a live permission for residential development that has not been activated.

The life of these permissions may be extended in accordance with the provisions of Section 42A of the Planning & Development Act 2010, as amended. Proposals for new developments will not be considered over the lifetime of the current plan period.

2) A proposal for a single dwelling house may be considered under this zoning where:

a) the unit to be provided will serve as the permanent place of residence of the landowner or a member of his/her immediate family.

b) and where it can be clearly demonstrated that the provision of such a unit would not compromise the ability of the wider area of zoned land to be developed in the future.

c) and the dwelling would easily integrate with the existing and future development of the lands and those in the vicinity.

3) In exceptional circumstances, where it can be clearly demonstrated by the developer that there is a significant difficulty in the release or identification of lands

for a specific residential type development, consideration will be given to the release of lands zoned Strategic Residential Reserve, subject to established planning criteria and including in particular:

- a) The requirement to remain within the overall residential land use targets as set out in the Core Strategy.
- b) The lands are being developed in a sequential manner.
- c) It has been clearly justified and demonstrated, to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, that there is a clear discrepancy between the supply and release of residentially zoned lands and the demand for residential units.

Certain developments that can demonstrate a strategic element, (e.g. a significant commercial or social element), may be deemed acceptable.

Industrial/Commercial/Warehousing

To primarily provide for industrial/workshop, warehouse and commercial or business development including compatible uses such as offices and distribution.

These are existing and proposed employment areas within the town and environs, that are central in securing sustained economic growth for the plan area. Zonings of industrial nature are indicative and are adaptable to the nature, size and requirements of future employment/industrial development. The creation of local employment is the primary aim of this zoning. Business parks including business/office and light industrial developments will be considered within this zoning. In certain instances, brownfield sites of a strategic nature may be considered for business use subject to compliance with all relevant development management standards. New developments will need to demonstrate a high standard of design and innovation in the construction of new industrial buildings and facilities and ensure that the surrounding areas are well maintained.

The dual zoning is weighed towards industrial development, with allowances made for ancillary commercial development. Larger scale commercial development

under this zoning will require the preparation of a detailed plan for the area involved prior to consideration, and, in particular retail, to be considered in the light of the findings of the retail strategy. The term 'Commercial' does not include traditional commercial functions that should locate within the town core. Where appropriate, development design proposals shall provide for further access to adjacent zones of industrial lands in order to facilitate their future access and development.

Recreation, Amenity and Green Spaces

To primarily provide for recreational open space and ancillary structures.

To preserve, provide for and improve active and passive recreational public and private open space, environmental buffers and ancillary structures. The areas included in this zoning objective cover both private and public open space and are dispersed throughout urban centres of every size. The Council will not normally permit development that would result in a loss of open space and green infrastructure. This zoning provides for the planned increase in green infrastructure throughout the town including open spaces, parks and development incidental to the enjoyment of open space including sport and leisure facilities such as a clubhouse, changing rooms, meeting rooms, a gym, sports training halls, catering facilities, caretaker accommodation.

The zoning also provides for the reservation of environmental buffers at strategic corridors. The proposed utilization of the River Camlin and Royal Canal as a walk and park would provide a recreational backbone to the town which would provide a wildlife corridor and a potential link to other walking routes, facilitating the establishment of a pedestrian network of pathways. The zoning further facilitates the protection of existing green areas and public open spaces which provide for the passive and active recreational needs and provides for the use of such land or such facilities for games, educational and recreational purposes.

The importance of the preservation of the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (The Mall) and the area previously used as the Longford Dog Track for the amenity and recreational use of the town are identified. The historical significance and amenity value of the Albert Reynolds Peace Park (The Mall) is recognised and the Planning Authority shall seek to protect, preserve and enhance the extent of this area and associated features for the continued amenity use of the public and in terms of its historical preservation. The area previously used as the Longford Dog Track in recognition of its historical and cultural significance to Longford Town shall be protected for the amenity purposes and use of the public.

Social/Community/Education/Public Utility

To primarily provide for educational, health, social, cultural, religious and community facilities.

This zoning encompasses community uses (such as schools, churches, OPDs etc.), public utility and social/administrative designations such as the Fire and Garda Stations. Expansion of these services will be facilitated where needed and compatible with adjoining land uses.

Constrained Land Use

To facilitate the appropriate management and sustainable use of flood risk areas.

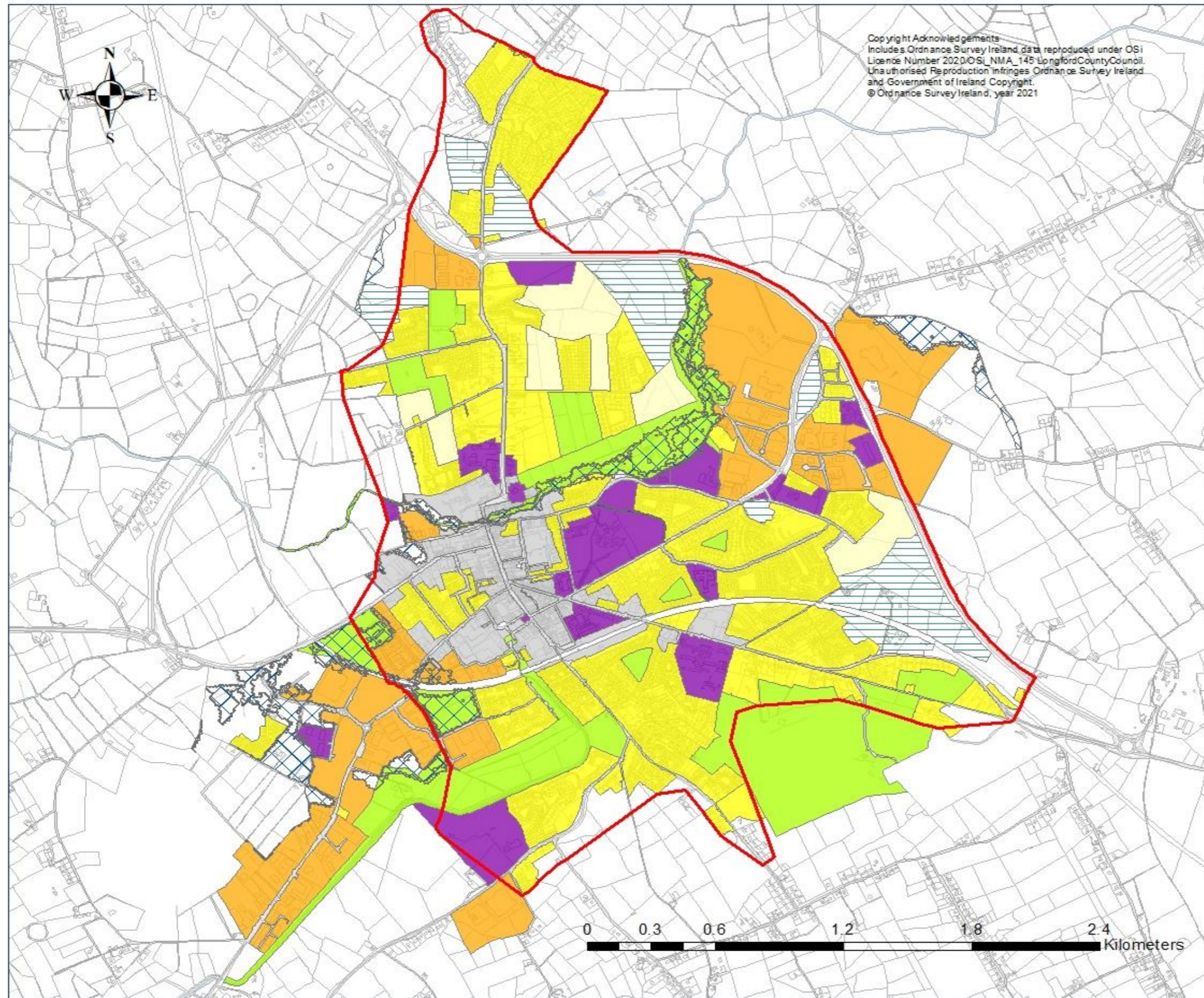
This zoning objective limits new development, while recognising that existing development uses within these zones may require small scale development, as outlined below, over the life of the Plan, which would contribute towards the compact and sustainable urban development of the County's zoned settlements.

The underlying zoning or the existing permitted uses are deemed to be acceptable in principle for minor developments to existing buildings (such as small extensions to houses, most changes of use of existing buildings), which are unlikely to raise significant flooding issues, provided they do not obstruct important flow paths, introduce a significant additional number of people into flood risk areas, or entail the storage of hazardous substances.

Development proposals within this zone shall be accompanied by a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, carried out in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines* and *Circular PL 2/2014* (or as updated), which shall assess the risks of flooding associated with the proposed development.

Proposals shall only be considered where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that they would not have adverse impacts or impede access to a watercourse, floodplain or flood protection and management facilities, or increase the risk of flooding to other locations. The nature and design of structural and non-structural flood risk management measures required for development in such areas will also be required to be demonstrated, to ensure that flood hazard and risk will not be increased. Measures proposed shall follow best practice in the management of health and safety for users and residents of the development.

Specifications for developments in flood vulnerable areas set out in this Plan shall be complied with as appropriate (Please also refer to CPO 5.120 and DMS16.206).



Longford Town Zoning Map

County Development Plan 2021-2027



Legend

- Industrial/Commercial/Warehousing
- New Residential
- Recreation/Amenity/Green Space
- Residential
- Social/Community/Education/Public Utility
- Strategic Residential Reserve
- Town Core
- Area of Constrained Land Use
- CSO Boundary

Notes:
Please note that every effort has been made to include the latest version of Ordnance Survey mapping available. Queries on the accuracy of boundaries may be discussed and addressed at pre-planning stage with the Planning Authority.



Land Use Zoning Matrix

The Land Use Zoning Matrix sets out each land use zoning type in the context of future development, in terms of whether particular development would be permitted, open for consideration or not normally permitted on such zoned lands. As such it provides guidance on the various uses that are considered acceptable in principle in each of the zoning objectives.

Uses other than the primary use for which an area is zoned may be permitted provided the use is not in conflict with the zoning objective or any other policies and objectives in the Plan. Any use not listed in the permissible or open for consideration categories is deemed not to be acceptable in principle. Such uses will be considered on their individual merits and will only be permitted if they enhance, complement, are ancillary to, or neutral to the zoning objective.

The guidance provided in this section is not intended to replace the normal planning process. An indication that a proposal would be 'permissible' within a particular land use zoning objective should in no way be taken to imply a grant of permission, or indeed that a planning application may necessarily be successful. Individual applications are a matter for the Council to decide upon, taking into consideration the wider policies and objectives that pertain to statutory land use planning including Development Plan Standards, Ministerial Guidance, and the merits of individual proposals.

P - 'Permitted in Principle'

'Permitted in Principle' means that the proposed use is generally acceptable subject to the normal planning process and compliance with the relevant policies, objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the County Development Plan, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. If a proposal is

indicated to be 'Permitted in Principle' in the zoning matrix, this does not imply that planning permission will automatically be granted as other factors must be considered and each proposal for development will be considered on its individual merits.

O - 'Open for Consideration'

The proposed use may be permitted where the local authority is satisfied that it is in compliance with the zoning objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the County Development Plan, and that the proposal would not conflict with the permitted, existing or adjoining land-uses by reason of its nature and scale, in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

X - 'Not Normally Permitted'

The proposed use will not normally be favourably considered by the local authority, except in exceptional circumstances, and in such instances, the development may represent a material contravention of the Plan.

Uses Not Listed in the Indicative Zoning Matrix

Proposed land-uses which are not listed in the indicative land-use zoning matrix will be considered on their merits having regard to the most appropriate use of a similar nature indicated in the matrix, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and compliance with the relevant policies and objectives, standards set out in both this Plan and relevant Section 28 Guidelines.

Non-Conforming Uses

'Non-conforming uses' are established uses that do not conform to the primary zoning objectives of the Plan. These include instances where such uses were in existence on

1st October 1964 (i.e. prior to planning legislation); have valid permission; are unauthorised but have exceeded the time limit for enforcement proceedings; have no permission and may or may not be the subject of enforcement proceedings. Any proposals for the expansion, improvement, or alteration of such uses will be considered on their individual merits. Development proposals that relate to the intensification of non-conforming uses, will be permitted only where the proposed development would not be detrimental to the amenities of the surrounding area and is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Land Use Zoning Matrix

Type of Development	Town Core	Residential; New Residential; Strategic Residential Reserve	Social/Community/Education/ Public Utility	Recreation/Amenity & Green Spaces	Industrial/Commercial/ Warehousing	Use Constrained Land Objective
Amusement Arcade	P	X	X	X	X	X
Bank/Financial Services	P	X	X	X	X	X
Betting Office	P	X	X	X	X	X
Boarding Kennels	X	X	X	X	O	X
Caravan Park Residential	X	O	O	X	X	X
Cemetery	X	X	O	O	X	X
Childcare Facilities	P	P	P	X	O	X
Church/Place of Worship	P	O	P	X	O	X
Cinema	O	X	O	X	X	X
Commercial Carpark	O	X	O	X	O	X
Community Hall	P	P	P	P	X	X
Cultural Use	P	P	P	P	X	X
Dance Hall/Discotheque	P	X	O	X	X	X
Doctor/Dentist	P	P	P	X	O	X
Education	P	P	P	O	O	X
End of Life Vehicles (ELVs)	X	X	X	X	P	X

Type of Development	Town Core	Residential; New Residential; Strategic Residential Reserve	Social/Community/Education/ Public Utility	Recreation/Amenity & Green Spaces	Industrial/Commercial/ Warehousing	Constrained Land	Use Objective
Equipment Hire	X	X	X	X	P	X	
Fire/Ambulance Station	X	O	P	O	O	X	
Fuel Filling Station	X	O	X	X	O	X	
Fuel Depot/Distributor	X	O	X	X	O	X	
Funeral Home	P	O	P	X	X	X	
Garden Centre	X	O	X	X	X	X	
Golf Course	X	X	O	P	X	O	
Guesthouse	P	P	O	X	X	X	
Health Centre	P	P	P	X	X	X	
Hostel	P	X	O	X	X	X	
Hospital	X	X	P	X	X	X	
Hotel	P	O	P	X	X	X	
Motor Sales Outlet/Showroom	X	X	X	X	O	X	
Multi-storey Carpark	P	X	O	X	O	X	
Offices<100m2	P	O	O	X	O	X	
Off Licence	P	O	X	X	O	X	
Open Space	P	P	P	P	P	P	
Park & Ride	P	X	O	O	O	X	

Type of Development	Town Core	Residential; New Residential; Strategic Residential Reserve	Social/Community/Education/ Public Utility	Recreation/Amenity & Green Spaces	Industrial/Commercial/ Warehousing	Constrained Land	Use Objective
Park/Playground	P	P	P	P	O	O	
Playing Fields	X	O	P	P	X	O	
Public House	P	O	X	X	X	X	
Recycling Facilities	X	X	X	X	P	X	
Recycling Waste Transfer Site	X	X	X	X	P	X	
Residential Institution	O	O	X	X	X	X	
Residential Single/Multiple	P	P	X	X	X	X	
Restaurant/Café	P	O	O	O	O	X	
Retail (Convenience)	P	O	O	X	O	X	
Retail (Comparison)	P	X	X	X	O	X	
Retail Warehouse	O	X	X	X	O	X	
Retirement Home/Scheme	P	P	P	X	X	X	
Nursing Home							
Shops-local	P	P	P	O	O	X	
Shops-neighbourhood	X	P	O	O	X	X	
Shops-major	P	X	X	X	X	X	
Sports Facility	O	O	P	P	O	X	
Take-away/Fast-food	P	O	X	X	O	X	

Type of Development	Town Core	Residential; New Residential; Strategic Residential Reserve	Social/Community/Education/ Public Utility	Recreation/Amenity & Green Spaces	Industrial/Commercial/ Warehousing	Constrained Land Use Objective
Taxi Office	P	X	O	X	O	X
Telecommunications	O	X	O	X	P	X
Tourism-recreational Complex	O	O	P	O	X	X
Training Centre	P	X	P	X	O	X
Transport Depot	X	X	X	X	O	X
Urban-Nature Reserve	O	O	O	P	X	P
Vehicle Servicing & Repairs	X	X	X	X	P	X
Veterinary Surgery	P	X	O	X	X	X
Warehousing	X	X	X	X	P	X
Wholesale Outlet	X	X	X	X	O	X
Workshop	O	X	X	X	P	X

Appendix 2: Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area Statement

17.0 Battery Road Architectural Conservation Area

The Battery Road in Longford Town has a distinct character with intrinsic qualities which are based on a particular form and layout which has developed over time. This character is derived from the cumulative impact of the area's buildings, their setting, landscape and other locally important features. Battery Road has a particular *genus loci* associated with it. This area is an expression of part of cultural identity of Longford and contributes to the quality of the public realm. This area may change but its special character is of great value and worthy of protection.

Battery Road is located in the northern portion of the Town and derives its name from the military installations that once stretched from the existing barracks on Church Street to the Battery, which is now occupied by Pearse Park GAA grounds and Pearse View housing estate. The Battery Road itself is a major existing approach route into the Town from the North and is important in forming the first visual impression for many people entering Longford.

The area is characterised by a wide, tree-lined carriageway, bounded by a wide range of structures that display a myriad of uses, sizes, scales and architectural styles. The interaction of these buildings, many of which are protected structures, with their setting, including their boundaries, planting, entrance and surface treatments have a significant impact on how the area is experienced. For this reason, the Local Authority consider that the most effective and holistic method of retaining the unique character and identity of the area is to create an ACA.

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 provides the legislative basis for the protection of such areas, known as Architectural Conservation Areas, or ACAs. Under

Part IV of this Act, an ACA is defined as ‘a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that:

- is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, social or technical interest or value, or
- contributes to the appreciation of protected structures’

A wide variety of areas can be considered for designation as an ACA. For example, an ACA could be centred on an individual building, or a terrace of houses; they may be rural or urban. ACA designation forms the basis for policies to preserve or enhance an area and provides an element of control over the external appearance of buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

Planning controls are more extensive in ACA’s with exempted development curtailed in certain instances, for example, works, that in the opinion of the Planning Authority, would have a material effect on the character of an ACA, will require planning permission. Retaining the special character of an area is best achieved by controlling and guiding change on a wider scale than the individual structure. Hence, the objective of the ACA designation is to guide change within an area and ensure that future development is carried out in a manner sympathetic to the special character and unique identity of the area.

The aim of this section of the plan is to:

- identify the extent of the Battery Road ACA, based on the unique character of the area and how this can best be preserved.
- to set out conservation and planning policies which protect its special

character and which will guide future development.

- to inform owners/occupiers and developers of the type of work that would require planning permission.

The proposed Battery Road ACA encompasses an area stretching from the existing mini roundabout at the junction with the Lisbrack Road in the north, down to and including Church Street in the south of the area, centered along the main vehicular carriageway (See *Map ACA Battery Road*) and includes the areas set out below.

1. Battery Road
2. Junction of Battery Road and Lisbrack Terrace
3. Junction of Battery Road and Demesne Lane
4. Silchester Terrace
5. Church Street
6. Church Street Junction with Bridge Street

18.0 Schedule of Protected Structures

A protected structure is a structure or part of a structure that a Planning Authority considers to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. There are numerous protected structures contained in the ACA boundary which are highlighted in the ACA map.

The typology of the protected structures and proposed protected structures include:

1. Key landmark buildings including churches schools and halls
2. Large detached houses
3. Uniform terraces
4. Villa style houses

19.0 Characteristics

The characteristics which are intrinsic to the uniqueness of Battery Road include the following:

Plot size:

The plot size of the buildings on the Battery Road define its distinct spatial quality. The spatial quality of the area can be compared with sections of the Howth Road in Dublin, which can be associated with a nineteenth century suburban environment. The large plot sizes associated with many of the properties, combined with dense planting and large set-backs (in an urban context) place a strong emphasis on privacy. The area is characterized by a low-density residential environment. The houses sit comfortably on their plots and, in many cases have landscaped front gardens, some of which may be contemporary with the buildings themselves. The combination of the boundary treatment and plot size creates private front zones which in turn aid definition of the character of this special area. The spatial relationship of this urban structure can be defined as between "Arcadian" and also "Boulevard planning" as defined in the Essex Design Guidelines 1997.

Architectural Character:

Battery Road is important both historically and architecturally. The buildings provide an interesting social commentary on the residential development of this section of the town. The majority of these are residential dwellings of an historically higher-end socio-economic profile.

Various architectural time frames are represented in the ACA all of which make a positive contribution to the architectural variety along the streetscapes within the ACA, these include:

Regency Victorian Gothic Revival Edwardian Arts and Crafts
International Style

Battery Road ACA was largely developed in the 19th century. However origins can be traced back to the 15th century. The character of the ACA is not rooted in any one architectural dimension. This contributes to its unique quality and character. There are a variety of architecturally distinct building types including a regency terrace, mid 19c villa, Arts and Crafts homes, interwar and later 20 century dwellings. Structures that are important to the heritage of the town are protected. Despite the variety of forms and styles, a visual harmony exists that contributes the unique identity of the area. The various architectural styles are clearly evident on the attached map labelled 'Structures Important to the Character of the ACA'. The setting of the terraces at right angles to Battery Road forms vistas which are particularly significant feature on Battery Road and thus aid significantly to the architectural character of the ACA.

The building materials used in the ACA include stucco-facing and render, red brick, and exposed rubble granite. These finishes are found on the buildings themselves but also on boundary and surface treatments. This palette of materials contributes to the

localised character of the area.

Landscaping: Mature trees bound many of the individual plots, forming extensive canopies that also line much of the public path. It is imperative that the sylvainian characteristics of this road do not become vulnerable and are retained as part of any future development. This landscaping has developed as distinct wildlife corridor which can important habitats for certain types of fauna. The sylvainian character also provides “green lungs” within the town. The variety of landscaping types also significantly contributes to the character of the area with contrasting styles varying from manicured exotic planting to large areas of lawn and gardens obscured by hedges and trees.

Walls: The majority of dwellings bounding the Battery Road are bounded by historic

boundary walls, some of which are combined with railings. These present an intrinsic introduction to the tree lined avenue and the dwellings beyond. The variety of gates and other ironwork are also important elements that contribute to the setting of the ACA.

Footpath: Battery Road contains an interesting example of nineteenth century stonemasonry which is still visible along the footpath edges. Its utilitarian nature makes it vulnerable to damage, which should be considered as part of future developments in the area.

Other important characteristics include:

1. Roof types: natural Slate
2. Iron work: including wrought iron gates and railings
3. Walls: random rubbles stone walls to Plaster walls with fine examples of pillars

20.0 Record of National Monuments

The ACA on Battery Road also contains National Monuments which are associated with St Johns Church.

21.0 Planning Implications of designation of an Architectural Conservation Area

In general terms there is a requirement under the Planning & Development Act 2000 to obtain planning permission for all development works which do not constitute exempted development. The regulations governing exempted development are set out in the Planning & Development Regulations 2001-06, as amended. These regulations

set out the classes of development, which constitute exempted development together with relevant conditions and limitations. Section 4 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 also lists developments, which constitute exempted development, for the purposes of the Act. Section 4(1)(h) is of particular relevance. It states that the following shall be exempted development for the purposes of the Act: *development consisting of the carrying out of works for the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any structure, being works which affect only the interior of the structure or which do not materially affect the external appearance of the structure so as to render the appearance consistent with the character of the structure or of neighbouring structures*". Here a question arises as to what in a particular case is or is not exempted development. Any person may, under Section 5(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, on payment of the prescribed fee, request in writing from the Planning Authority, a declaration on that question.

22.0 Protected Structures

Owners of structures are advised that planning permission is required for all works, which would materially affect the character of a protected structure, or any element of a structure, including its curtilage, which contributes to its special interest. Owners and occupiers proposing to carry out any works to a protected structure, including essential repair and maintenance works, are advised to request a declaration from the Planning Authority under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000¹¹. A declaration issued under this section sets out the type of works the Planning Authority considers would or would not materially affect the character of the structure or of any element of that structure, which contributes to its special interest.

¹¹ 2000 Act Section 57

23.0 Non-Protected Structures

Owners and occupiers of non-protected structures located within the Architectural Conservation Area should note that the normal exemptions from seeking planning permission pertaining to certain types of development under the Planning and Development Regulations will no longer apply. Works which, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, would materially affect the character of the ACA will require specific grant of planning permission. This includes the following:

a. Residential properties

- Extensions and all new build that impact on the street-facing elevations of buildings, or would be visible from the public realm.
- The demolition of any structure or part thereof.
- Complete re-pointing in a style or manner other than existing.
- Removal or alteration of original architectural features on the main facades of non-protected structures including: painting of previously unpainted brick or stone surfaces.
- Rendering of any façade not previously rendered.
- Formation of parking spaces.
- Removal and/or relocation of walls.
- Roofs.
- The removal of the original roofing materials such as natural slate or clay tiles and their replacement with modern materials such as fibre cement tiles.
- The removal of existing chimney-stacks and early terracotta or clay pots or other features of the roof-scape.
- The removal of timber bargeboards and/or their replacement in a material other than the existing.
- The installation of roof-lights or dormer windows on front elevations or on

slopes visible from the public realm. Where dormer windows are deemed to be permissible, these should fit in with the character of the structure, be of a modest size and should be constructed of natural materials.

b. Commercial Premises

- New commercial premises and material alterations to existing shop-fronts.
- The erection of, or alterations to, externally mounted signs and advertisements, including banners.
- The provision of awnings, canopies, flags and flagpoles.
- The provision of any security shutters or grilles and associated casings and fittings on the face of a building or in front of a window display area.

c. New Development

- New development should contribute to the visual enhancement and vibrancy of the area whilst respecting its existing physical character urban grain and plot size.
- Proposals to demolish structures of architectural merit within the ACA require planning permission. In general, they will not be permitted unless the proposed new structure is a positive benefit to the area.

Note: It should be noted that the above are not definitive. Local context may suggest alternative design solutions.

For structures/houses which are not listed as Protected Structures, the ACA designation does not prevent internal changes or re-arrangements, provided that these changes do not impact on the exterior of the structure. However, internal changes must comply with current building regulations.

24.0 Works to the public realm

Works to the public realm, which includes footpaths, street furniture, parking provision etc will have to have due regard to the special character of the ACA.

Any changes to traffic management and parking within the ACA will take into account its ACA designation and will seek to preserve or enhance the special character of the ACA in design and signage, ramps, renewed surfaces, dished pavements etc.

The Council will actively promote the retention of all surviving original kerbing and items of street furniture, which contribute to the special character of the ACA, e.g. lamp standards.

New street furniture when being provided will be of high quality reflecting the character of the ACA.

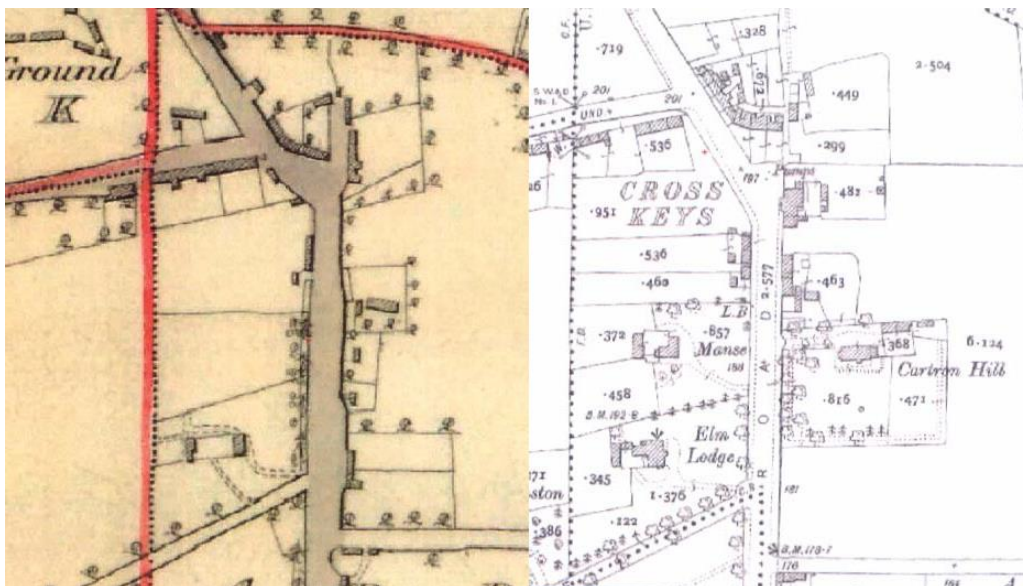
25.0 Boundary Treatment

The removal or alteration of traditional stone walls or railings, where visible from the public realm will not be permitted.

26.0 Exempted Development

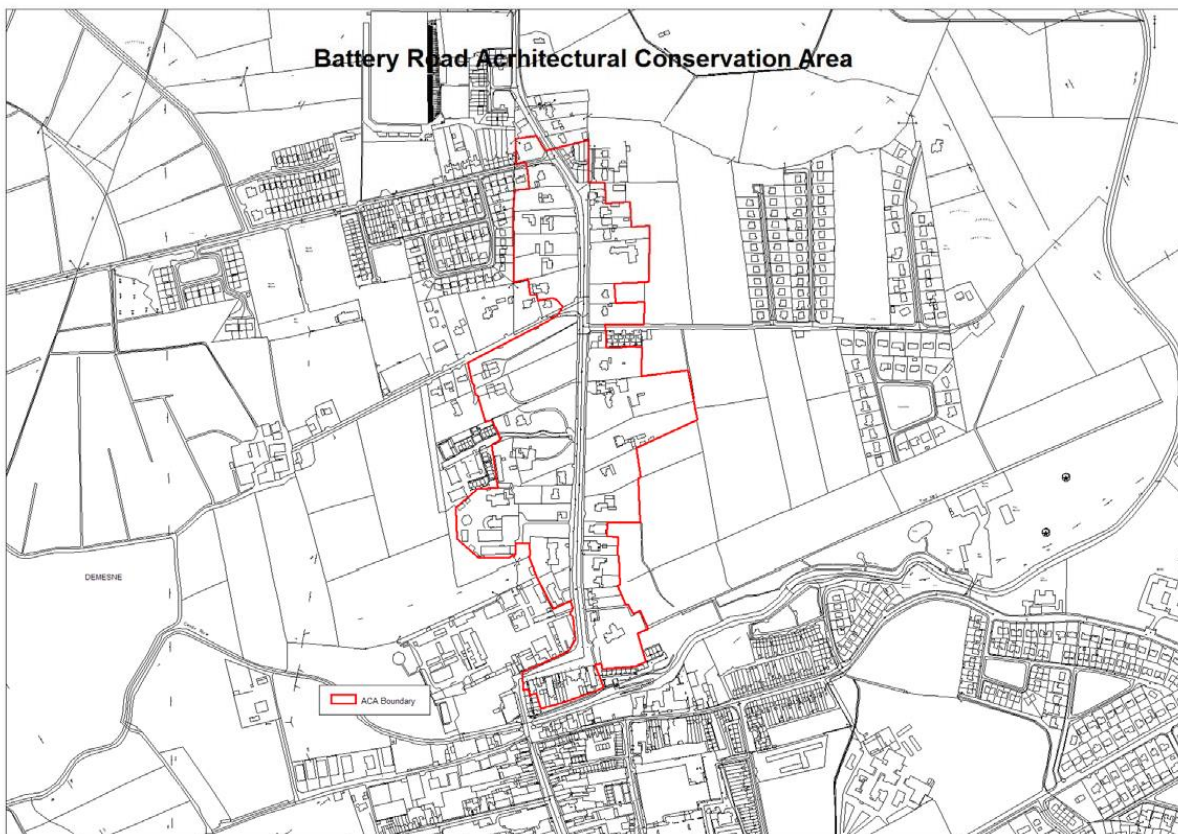
Routine maintenance that would not affect the character of the Architectural Conservation Area, involving the repair or replacement of damaged elements in the exterior of the structures with the same materials and forms would generally be exempted development. However owners and occupiers are advised to seek advice from the Planning Authority.

27.0 Ordnance Survey Map showing a Section of Battery Road



1837

1907



STRUCTURES CONTAINED WITHIN THE ACA

