



Rathcairn Local Area Plan 2009-2015

**May 2009**

This document was prepared by:

Sheridan Woods Architects + Urban Planners  
42 Arran Street East  
Dublin 7  
Tel: 01 878 0403  
Fax: 01 878 0532  
E-mail: [info@sheridanwoods.ie](mailto:info@sheridanwoods.ie)

On behalf of:

Meath County Council

## Table of Contents

### Preamble

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>Policies and Objectives</b>
1.1	Statutory Context	4.1.	Language and Culture
1.1.1	<i>Scope of the Local Area Plan</i>	4.1.1	<i>Economic Development</i>
1.1.2	<i>Likely Significant Effects on the Environment</i>	4.1.2	<i>Community</i>
1.2	Policy Context	4.1.3	<i>Population / Residential</i>
1.2.1	<i>Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas - Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i>	4.1.4	<i>Gaeltacht Identity</i>
1.2.2	<i>County and Local Policy</i>	4.2	Land Use
1.3	The Challenge	4.2.1	<i>Residential Use</i>
1.4	Objectives	4.2.2	<i>Village Centre Uses</i>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Context</b>	4.2.3	<i>Industrial and Related Uses</i>
2.1	Strategic Context	4.2.4	<i>Community and Recreational Uses</i>
2.2	Key Demographic and Socio-Economic Trends	4.2.5	<i>Broad Land Use Layout</i>
2.2.1	<i>Population</i>	4.3	Movement and Access
2.2.2	<i>Irish Language</i>	4.3.1	<i>Public Transport</i>
2.2.3	<i>Recent Development</i>	4.3.2	<i>Pedestrian and Cycle Movement</i>
2.2.4	<i>Employment Context</i>	4.3.3	<i>Vehicular Movement</i>
2.2.5	<i>Education</i>	4.3.4	<i>Car and Bicycle Parking</i>
2.3	Historical Context	4.4	Natural and Built Heritage
2.3.1	<i>Cultural / Gaeltacht Heritage</i>	4.5	Design Standards
2.3.2	<i>Physical</i>	4.5.1	<i>Building Typologies</i>
2.4	Natural and Built Heritage	4.5.2	<i>Density</i>
2.5	Land Uses	4.5.3	<i>Building Height</i>
2.6	Movement and Access	4.5.4	<i>Building Lines and Street Frontage</i>
2.7	Urban Analysis	4.5.5	<i>Private and Public Open Space</i>
2.8	Services and Utilities	4.5.6	<i>Materials and Finishes</i>
2.8.1	<i>Waste Water Collection and Treatment</i>	4.5.7	<i>Architectural Design</i>
2.8.2	<i>Water Supply</i>	4.5.8	<i>Hard and Soft Landscaping</i>
2.8.3	<i>Flooding</i>	4.5.9	<i>Sustainable Design</i>
2.8.4	<i>Other Utility Services</i>	4.6	Services and Infrastructure
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	4.6.1	<i>Waste Water Collection and Treatment</i>
3.1	Vision	4.6.2	<i>Surface Water</i>
3.2	Linguistic and Cultural Heritage Strategy	4.6.3	<i>Water Supply</i>
3.3	Land Use Strategy	4.6.4	<i>Flooding</i>
3.4	Movement and Access Strategy	4.6.5	<i>Other Utility Services - Waste Management</i>
3.5	Natural and Built Heritage Strategy	<b>5.0</b>	<b>Master Plan</b>
		<b>6.0</b>	<b>Phasing and Implementation</b>
		6.1	Opportunity Sites
		6.2	Phasing
		6.3	Contributions
		6.4	Monitoring and Review

### Appendices

## Preamble

The Meath County Development Plan, 2007-2013 (hereafter referred to as the CDP) was adopted on the 2nd of March 2007. It identified Rathcairn, Carnaross, Carlanstown, Clonard, Crossakeel, Donacarney, Donore, Drumconrath, Gibbstown (Baile Ghib), Gormanstown, Julianston, Kentstown, Kilbride (Dunshaughlin Electoral Area), Kildalkey, Kilmainhamwood, Kilmessan, Mornington, Moynalty, Rathcairn and Rathmolyon as Villages and specified that the future development of all villages shall be subject to the adoption of Local Area Plans which will replace the existing plans for the villages.

Rathcairn is one of two Gaeltachts in County Meath. The Irish language is the definable characteristic of the Gaeltacht community. It is the verbal expression of the people's communication and has survived through the generations in oral and written form. Like many minority languages it is under threat as a community language by the predominant international languages and popular cultures. Other strands of Gaeltacht culture include music, dance, storey telling, drama, sports and festival celebrations. While some of these traditions continue to thrive others are under threat, particularly if the population of the Gaeltacht area declines.

The Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that a Development Plan involving a Gaeltacht must include an objective to protect *'the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht, including the promotion of Irish as a community language'*. This objective is incorporated in the Meath County Development Plan 2007 - 2013 and is the underlying goal in this Local Area Plan.

The CDP also envisages that these villages *'are intended to act as nodes for distinctive quality driven residential development and essential local commercial and community services. It is envisaged that the future growth of these villages should be curtailed and safeguarded so that they do not act as catalysts to facilitate continuing expansion of the outer suburbs of Dublin City in particular, or other Large or Moderate Towns. The villages located close to the Metropolitan Area or other Large or Moderate Growth Towns and close to significant public roads are particularly under pressure in this regard. Such*

*villages are largely a reflection of their existing status and the nature of their development to date, witnessing the emergence as dormitory villages. The future development of Villages will be predicated more closely to local rather than regional growth which has taken place over the past decade'.*

The CDP including Variation No. 2 of the CDP adopted in February 2008, sets the context for the preparation of a Local Area Plan (LAP) for Rathcairn. This Local Area Plan builds on the broad policy objectives contained in the CDP by providing a more detailed and comprehensive planning framework to guide the future development of the village.

This Plan consists of this written statement and the attached maps, and shall be known as the Rathcairn Local Area Plan 2009-2015. Once adopted, the Plan shall remain in effect for a period of six years from the date of adoption or until it is the subject of an amendment, a review or a revocation by the Council. It will be subservient to the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, which is the primary planning document in the County. The Meath County Development Plan takes precedence over the Rathcairn Local Area Plan in the event of any conflict arising between the contents of the two documents.

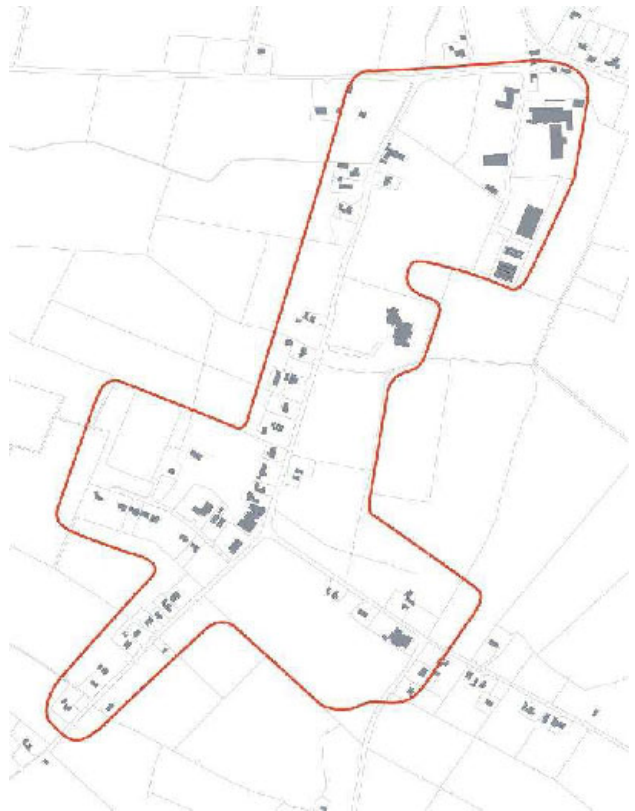
In accordance with Section 20(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 pre-draft public consultation took place in two phases with the publication of an issues paper and the holding of a public consultation event in Rathcairn.

A notice was published in the Meath Chronicle. This notice advertised the Planning Authority's intention to prepare the Rathcairn LAP and that an Issues Paper would be available for public inspection for a period of five weeks until the 16th of January 2009. The notice also invited written submissions from interested parties and members of the public on what matters should be addressed in the LAP. 21 no. submissions were received in response to the Issues Paper. All submissions and observations received by the closing date were taken into account in the preparation of the Draft LAP.

The Planning Authority held a public meeting in the Rathcairn National School, Scoil Uí Ghramhnaigh, on the 8th of January 2009 to gather the views of local residents on how they would like to see their village develop in the future. Further comments/submissions were received as a result of this public consultation and these were also considered in the preparation of the Draft Rathcairn LAP. The Draft LAP was on display for a period of six weeks from the 2nd of March to the 13th April, 2009.

On the 28th of February 2009 a notice was published in the Meath Chronicle advertising the display of the Draft Rathcairn Local Area Plan and inviting written submissions from interested parties and members of the public on the Draft LAP. 8 no. submissions were received and these submissions were taken into consideration in making the Plan.

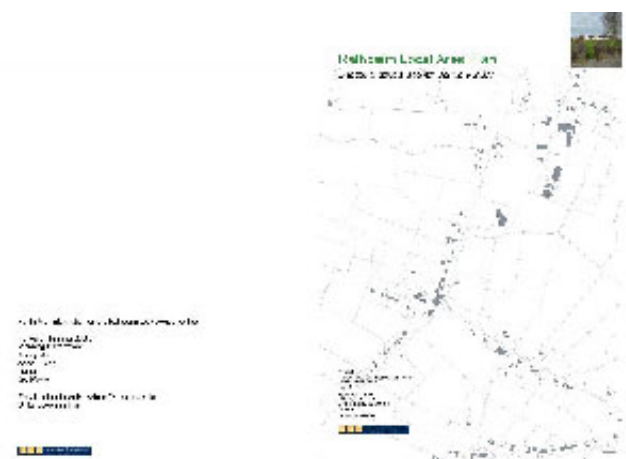
All mapping and diagrams throughout the document are orientated in the direction of true north. None are to scale but contain an indicative scale bar for guidance only. Where there is any apparent conflict between the text and illustrations, the text shall be the interpretive determinant.



Rathcairn Village Boundary



Pre-Draft Public Consultation Meeting



Rathcairn Strategic Issues Consultation Booklet

## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Statutory Context

#### 1.1.1 *Scope of the Local Area Plan*

A Local Area Plan (LAP) consists of a written statement and a plan or plans indicating the objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies including details of community facilities and amenities and standards for the design of proposed development. This Local Area Plan will also include objectives for the protection and enhancement of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the area. Upon adoption, a LAP shall have statutory effect as provided for by the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

#### 1.1.2 *Likely Significant Effects on the Environment*

A LAP shall contain information on the likely significant effects on the environment arising from the implementation of the Plan. However the carrying out of a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not mandatory under the provisions of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 for the Rathcairn LAP as it has a population of less than 10,000. A screening exercise was carried out to assess the likely impacts that the implementation of the proposed Plan would have. The screening report is contained in Appendix I.

#### *Natura Sites*

DoEHLG Circular Letter SEA 1/08 and NPWS 1/08 relates to the requirement to screen land use plans for potential impacts on designated Natura 2000 sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs)). An assessment of the plan is required if necessary. The circular states that an appropriate assessment means an assessment, based on best scientific knowledge, by a person with ecological expertise, of the potential impacts of the plan on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site (including Natura 2000 sites not situated in the area encompassed by the draft plan or scheme) and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects. The potential impacts of policies outside Natura 2000 sites, but potentially impacting upon them (known as 'ex site' impacts) must also be included in the assessment according to the Circular.

There are no SACs or SPAs in Rathcairn or adjoining or in close proximity to the settlement. An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report was prepared and is included in Appendix II. It is not considered that the proposed Local Area Plan will have any potential impacts on the conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 site and as a result, it is considered that no further assessment of this type is required.

### 1.2 Policy Context

The planning context for Rathcairn is defined by a hierarchy of plans, policies and guidelines which operate at national, regional and local levels and include the National Spatial Strategy, the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area and the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.

The Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that a Development Plan involving a Gaeltacht must include an objective to protect *'the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht, including the promotion of Irish as a community language'*.

#### 1.2.1 *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas - Guidelines for Planning Authorities*

In December 2008, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government adopted guidelines for planning authorities entitled Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas. These guidelines outline best practice and advice in relation to the sustainable development of existing urban areas. Planning Authorities are required to have regard to these guidelines in the performance of their functions. The guidelines are accompanied by a best practice Urban Design Manual which provides guidance to planning authorities on the standards of urban design that should be achieved in new urban developments.

#### 1.2.2 *County and Local Policy* *Meath County Development Plan 2007*

The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 is the key contextual planning policy document informing the preparation of the Rathcairn LAP.

Rathcairn is one of two settlements in County Meath that has been officially designated a Gaeltacht by the Department of Community, Rural, and Gaeltacht Affairs. The Rathcairn Gaeltacht occupies a distinctive position in terms of the cultural and linguistic heritage of the county. It is an obligation on Planning Authorities to include objectives in the development plan for the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht area including the promotion of Irish as the community language.

The CDP states that in the preparation of the LAP for Rathcairn the following principles will be taken on board:

- To recognise the economic, social and cultural importance of the Irish language in Gaeltacht life,
- To identify methods whereby the Irish language can be preserved, and
- To plan an efficient system whereby the aspects of the Gaeltacht environment can be assessed and protected as part of the planning process, including the use of language conditions.

The CDP designates Rathcairn as one of 19 villages in the County. These villages are intended to act as:

*'Nodes for distinctive quality driven residential development and essential local commercial and community services. It is envisaged that the future growth of these villages should be curtailed and safeguarded so that they do not act as catalysts to facilitate continuing expansion of the outer suburbs of Dublin City in particular, or other Large or Moderate Towns. The villages located close to the Metropolitan Area or other Large or Moderate Growth Towns and close to significant public roads are particularly under pressure in this regard. Such villages are largely a reflection of their existing status and the nature of their development to date, witnessing the emergence as dormitory villages. The future development of Villages will be predicated more closely to local rather than regional growth which has taken place over the past decade.'*

Under its designation as a Village, the existing Development Plan for Rathcairn has been re-adopted pending the preparation of a Local Area Plan. The existing Development Plan for Rathcairn identifies a development area boundary and land use zoning objectives and specific objectives for lands identified within this boundary.

Variation No. 2 of the CDP adopted in February 2008 establishes an Order of Priority for the release of lands with a residential land use zoning objective. It is intended that these lands are released in two phases, 2007-2013 and post 2013. Phase 1 and Phase 2 lands in Rathcairn have been identified under this variation.

### 1.3 The Challenge

The challenge is to produce a LAP that will form the basis for a consensus between the Planning Authority, the public, landowners, developers and all interested parties, as to how development should proceed to achieve the development objectives for Rathcairn, in a manner that protects and enhances its linguistic and cultural distinctiveness, while also providing for development which is physically, economically and socially sustainable. The challenge is also to produce a document, which facilitates the creation of a built environment that is attractive and physically distinctive as a Gaeltacht village for those who will live and work in as well as visit Rathcairn.

A further challenge is to provide a document that is sufficiently prescriptive to achieve these objectives while allowing for flexibility to account for economic and social changes that may occur over the Plan period. This LAP, when adopted, will be a subsidiary document of the CDP 2007-2013, which is the primary document.

#### 1.4 Objectives

The main objectives for the LAP are essentially derived from the CDP and are as follows:

- To ensure the continued survival and promotion of the Irish Language as the spoken language of the Gaeltacht community.
- To facilitate the protection and promotion of all aspects of the Gaeltachts cultural identity.
- To promote development that protects and enhances the linguistic and cultural heritage of Rathcairn.
- To accommodate population growth in accordance with the levels of growth provided for by Table 6 of the County Development Plan through the implementation of the policies contained in Variation No.2 of that Plan and to cater primarily for the needs of the local population.
- To facilitate population growth that will sustain and promote the development of the community and its economy in a way that is language and culture friendly.
- To provide opportunities for expansion of the employment base of the village, and to ensure that new employment contributes to the Irish language and culture.
- To provide a robust urban design framework that reflects the village's Gaeltacht distinctiveness.
- To provide for a good social mix including the provision of residential units which cater for the requirements of different user types.
- To provide amenity and open spaces at appropriate strategic locations which would be of a high design quality and that promotes community participation.
- To develop an appropriate movement network for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and motorists.
- To ensure adequate provision of appropriate commercial, community and educational facilities to serve existing and future residents and that is language and culture friendly.

## 2.0 Context

### 2.1 Strategic Context

Rathcairn is located in the centre of County Meath. It is one of two settlements in the Meath Gaeltacht. Rathcairn is located between the R154 (Athboy / Trim Regional Road) and the N51 (Athboy / Navan Road) and approximately 5km east of Athboy.

### 2.2 Key Demographic and Socio-Economic Trends

The statistics available from the Central Statistics Office and illustrated here reflect the 2006 census of population of the Rath Mor Electoral Area unless otherwise stated. This area exceeds the village study area but gives an indication of trends in the area.

#### 2.2.1 Population

The Gaeltacht areas in Meath had a combined population of 1,591 persons in 2002, representing an increase of 13% from the 1996 Census. The population in 2006 comprised 1,670 persons representing a population increase of 5%. County Meath experienced an overall population increase of 21.5% in the 2002-2006 period. The 2006 census of population for the Rath Mor electoral division, within which Rathcairn is located, recorded a population of 860 persons. The Small Area Populations Statistics for the village indicated a population of 210 people living in Rathcairn village and 69 no. households within the village. This equates to an average household size of 3.0 persons per household. Rathcairn village represents 13.5% of the overall Gaeltacht population in Meath, which reflects the rural settlement pattern in the Gaeltacht area.

#### 2.2.2 Irish Language

The number of persons aged 3 years or over identified by their ability to speak Irish comprises 49% of the population in the Rath Mor electoral area. This compares to 61% of the population in the overall Meath Gaeltacht area, and 69% of the population of the total Gaeltacht areas in the country.

#### 2.2.3 Recent Development

The most recent development to have occurred in Rathcairn comprises one-off dwellings. Earlier development in Rathcairn includes smaller vernacular cottages, and large one-off bungalows and houses

constructed in a mixture of styles and materials and industrial development.

#### 2.2.4 Employment Context

The NIRSA socio economic profile of the county indicated that both Gaeltacht Areas in Meath are significant industrial employment locations, relative to their size and rural nature. The work force in the Meath Gaeltacht areas are predominately employed in skilled work. Almost 60% of persons over 5 years of age stated travel distances of 0-14km to school, work or college. Approximately 40% of the population that stated distance travelled to school, work or college, travelled over 15km. The nature of employment and travel distances in the Rath Mor Electoral Area suggests a medium level of employment to population ratio within reasonable proximity of the village area.

#### 2.2.5 Education

There is a primary school within the village, Scoil Uí Ghramhnaigh, and a primary school located outside the village at Kilbride. There is a secondary school, Coláiste Pobail Ráth Cairn in the village. There may be potential to increase the capacity of these primary and secondary schools, subject to demand.

### 2.3 Historical Context

#### 2.3.1 Cultural / Gaeltacht Heritage

Rathcairn was designated a Gaeltacht in the 1930's when migrants from Galway settled in the area. The migration to the Rathcairn Gaeltacht took place as a result of the Irish Land Commission's work in relieving congestion along the Atlantic Coast. Sufficient land was not available convenient to these congested areas and suitable estates were more readily available in the east of Ireland. In 1935 forty families from Galway were relocated to what is now Rathcairn village. The identity of the Gaeltacht has largely been preserved, benefiting from its rural location, the size of the community and the development of employment and community initiatives that protect and enhance the Irish language and culture of the area.

### 2.3.2 Historical Context - Physical Development

Rathcairn has evolved as a medium sized settlement. The village developed in the 1930's and comprised one-off dispersed Land Commission dwellings. These dwellings are distinctive and characteristic of the Gaeltacht Area.

## 2.4 Natural and Built Heritage

### *Natural Heritage*

Rathcairn is located within the West Navan Lowlands as identified in the Landscape Character Assessment of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. This landscape is flat surrounding the village, and rises to the south. There are generally poorly defined approaches to the village, and poorly defined building lines and hedgerows within the village. The landscape surrounding Rathcairn comprises mixed woodland and coniferous plantations and rougher mixed pasture and areas of scrappy woodland.

A review of the Meath County Landscape Character Assessment of the area is summarised in Table 1.

Key recommendations identified within the Landscape Character Assessment and applicable to Rathcairn include the promotion of the Gaeltacht around Rathcairn as a cultural resource and to promote links with other Gaeltachts including Gibstown.

There are no existing or candidate / proposed Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) within the immediate vicinity of the village.

### *Built Heritage*

The CDP 2007-2013 does not identify any protected structures within Rathcairn village. The village has developed in three distinct areas. These include an industrial area to the north of the village, the village centre and associated cul de sac developments and the primary school and residential cluster at the Trim Road junction.

The village centre is compact in form, giving a sense of place. The remainder of the village is dispersed and lacks overall coherence and structure, but retains an overall rural character.



Rathcairn Village Centre



Rathcairn Residential Cluster



Former Land Commission Dwelling

Landscape Character Type	West Navan Lowlands Character Area Lowland Landscape
Landscape Character Area	Moderate Value
Landscape Sensitivity	Moderate Sensitivity
Landscape Capacity	Low potential capacity for large farm buildings, visitor facilities, multi house developments, one-off houses, conversion of existing buildings, overhead cables, substations and masts, roads and railways, underground services, wind turbines, biomass and forestry
Visual Amenity	No particular view points identified
Landmarks	No landmarks identified
Prehistory Landscape	Number of registered monuments proximate to the village
Protected Churches	No protected churches identified
Medieval Landscape	No medieval landscape
18th and 19th century structures	Site of 18th and 19th century protected structures to south east
Topography	Located in the 50 - 100m contour
Geology	Chert with thin limestone soils
Hydrology	LI/E moderately productive only in local zones
Land Use	Natural Grassland
Ecological Sites	None
Settlement Type	Village
Tourist Attractions	Way marked paths and cycle routes, and existing driving route south of village on Trim / Athboy Road (R154)

Table 1 Landscape Character Assessment



Building Typologies

## 2.5 Land Uses

The principal land uses in Rathcairn comprise local service and employment uses, educational uses and residential development. The main commercial and industrial activities within the village include the Údarás na Gaeltachta industrial estate to the north of the village. Employment is generated through work associated with the Irish language and cultural initiatives, including Irish language learning / summer schools, and associated tourism activities such as Irish music, dancing, walks, festivals, etc.

Community uses are centrally located and include the community centre and clubhouse (An Bradan Feasa), the library, church and football field. The primary school is located at the entrance to the village from the south / Trim Road, and the secondary school is located between the village centre and the industrial area. There is one public amenity area in the village centre adjoining the church.

Residential uses are located within and adjoining the village development boundary. These mainly comprise the historic Land Commission dwellings and more recent one-off houses in the form of ribbon development, and small cul de sac clusters.

The principal land uses surrounding and adjoining the village comprise lands used for agricultural purposes.



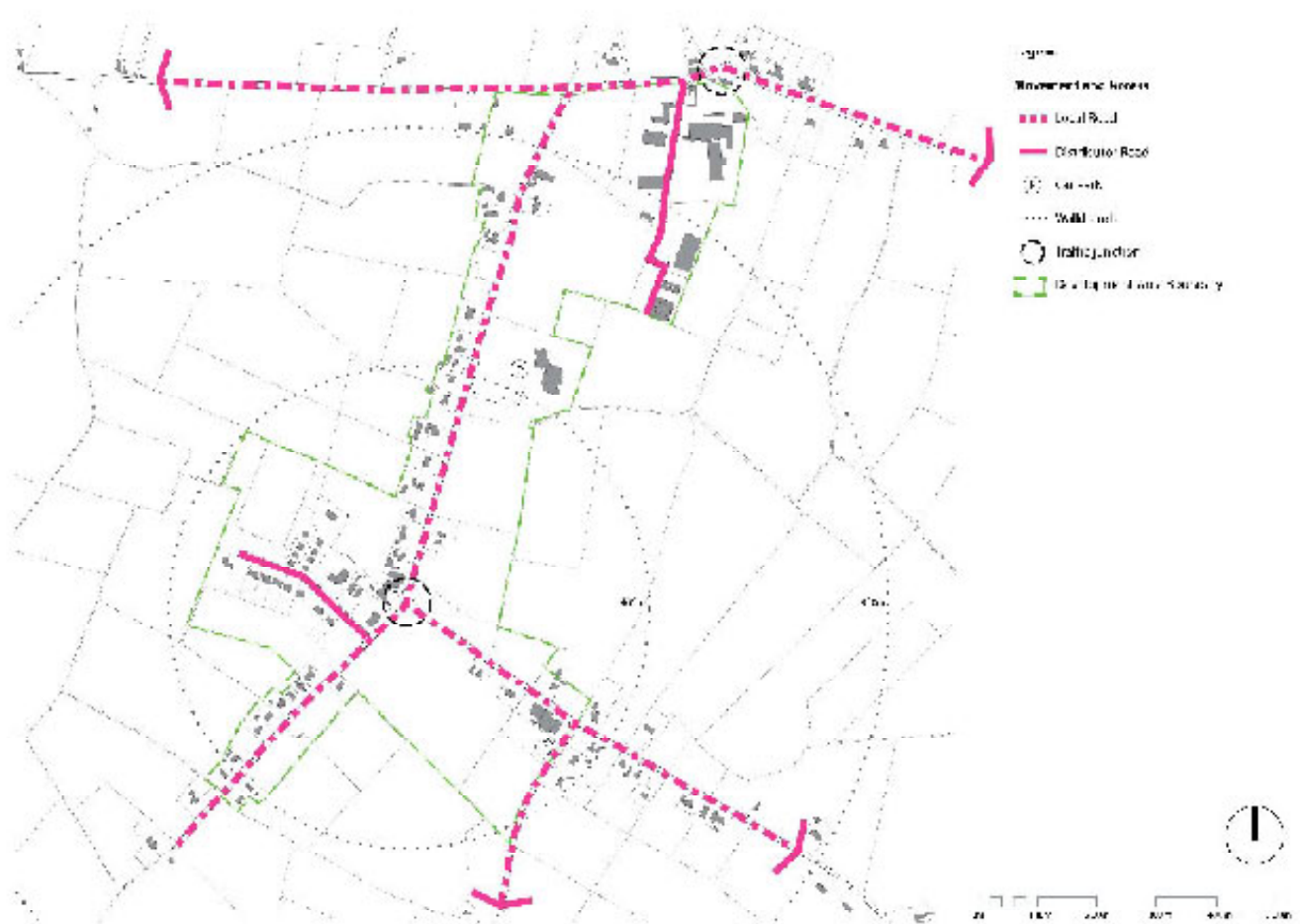
Existing Land Uses

## 2.6 Movement and Access

The village of Rathcairn is located close to the national and regional road systems. The village is defined by the local road network and cul-de-sacs.

The built up area of Rathcairn is largely contained within a 400 metre walkband from the village centre and includes community, educational and residential uses. The industrial estate is within an 800m walkband radius. However, permeability between the industrial area and the village centre is poor, thereby increasing the walking distance between the village centre and the industrial areas. Pedestrian facilities are poor within the village. Car parking generally occurs in a haphazard manner along the principal routes, which obstructs vehicular and pedestrian movement within the area.

Rathcairn is not served by a public transport service. The nearest public transport connections to the village are located at Athboy and Navan, which are served by public bus services.



Movement and Access

## 2.7 Urban Analysis

Rathcairn comprises three distinct areas as follows;

Character Area 1	Village Centre
Character Area 2	Primary School and Residential Cluster
Character Area 3	Rathcairn Industrial Area

Each of these areas is analysed in the following sections with respect to the following urban design considerations:

- Condition of streets, buildings and frontage
- Interaction of streets with adjoining spaces, including their linkages to other spaces / places
- Vibrancy of the street and urban space
- Function and usage of the area
- Attractiveness of each street and space and contribution to security and vitality of the area
- Ease of movement through the area



Urban Analysis

## Character Area 1 Village Centre

This character area comprises the community uses and the village centre.

### Urban Analysis

- Positive building line, formed by community hall creating a sense of place.
- Dangerous junction / road alignment at the community hall.
- Attractive stone boundary treatment to Church and open space.
- Uncoordinated boundary treatment to cul de sac estate to west.
- Varied and attractive boundary treatment to cul de sac to south.
- Distinctive cross road structure.
- Extensive parking area surfaces.
- Poor pedestrian environment in residential area adjacent and providing access to GAA football field.
- Overall poor pedestrian infrastructure.
- Positive sense of place associated with community uses.



Character Area 1



Rathcairn Village Centre



Rathcairn Church

## Character Area 2      Primary School and Residential Cluster

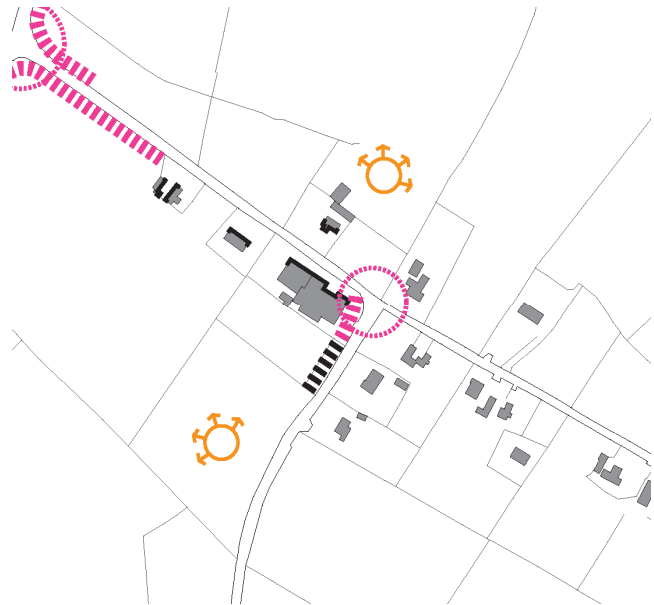
This character area is located at the entrance to the village from the south at the junction with the Trim Road. It is characterised by the primary school and a residential cluster and distant views to the village centre to the west and the industrial area to the north.

### Urban Analysis

- Positive boundary treatment at school and adjoining residential development, including wall and hedges.
- Good pedestrian connections to village centre on north and south of local road.
- Poor boundary treatments to south of local road connecting to the village centre.
- Attractive views westwards to residential clusters adjoining village centre.
- Poor landscape quality / integration of urban to rural development northwards towards industrial area.



Panoramic View of Village Cluster to the West



### Legend

#### Urban Analysis

- Building Frontage
- Attractive Boundary / Edge
- Poor or Weak Boundary / Edge
- Landmark Building / Structure
- Panoramic View
- Mature Tree / Tree Group
- Public Open Space
- Low Grade Uses
- Node / Gateway

Character Area 2

### Character Area 3 Industrial Area

This character area is located to the north of the village. This area marks the entrance to the village from the north, along the Dunderry / Athboy Road. This area presents a poor image of the village.

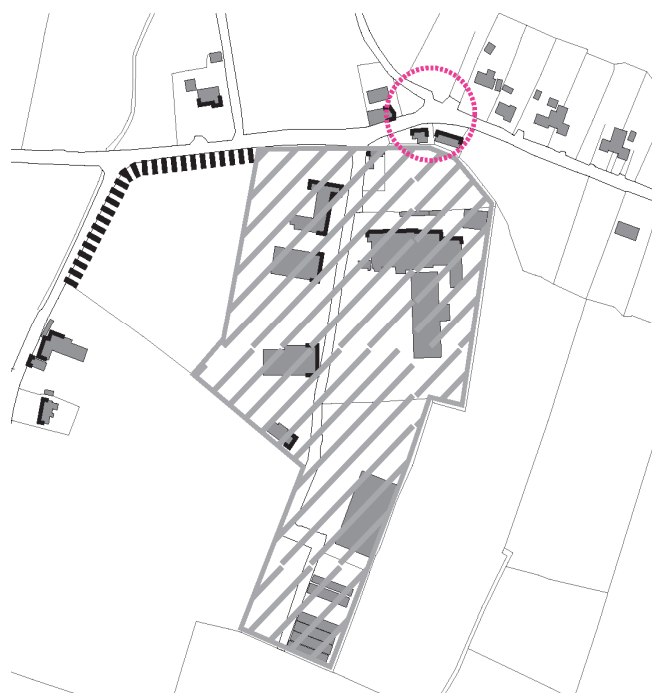
- Industrial development dominates visual amenity and presents a negative visual appearance.
- Poor / deteriorating boundary treatments to north and south of local road.
- Poorly defined boundary to industrial area.
- Poor pedestrian amenity.



Deteriorating Buildings



Entrance to Industrial Estate



#### Legend

#### Urban Analysis

- Building Frontage
- Attractive Boundary / Edge
- Poor or Weak Boundary / Edge
- ▲ Landmark Building / Structure
- Panoramic View
- Mature Tree / Tree Group
- Public Open Space
- ▨ Low Grade Uses
- Node / Gateway

Character Area 3

## 2.8 Services and Utilities

### 2.8.1 *Waste Water Collection and Treatment*

At present the area is not served by a public sewerage system, relying on individual septic tanks, with the exception of one factory which has a small treatment plant. It is intended to connect to the Athboy treatment plant, currently under construction, with a pumping station proposed in Rathcairn. The completion of the Athboy Sewerage Scheme, expected in 2010, will provide for a Population Equivalent (PE) of 800 persons. This infrastructure will facilitate the existing and future resident population.

### 2.8.2 *Water Supply*

Water supply is from the Athboy Water Supply Scheme which is currently at capacity. There are no immediate plans to upgrade / augment this supply. Water savings brought about through water conservation measures should provide a limited amount of additional water supply.

### 2.8.3 *Flooding*

The Office of Public Works have prepared flood hazard mapping for the country. Flood hazard maps are used to indicate areas of land or property that have historically been flooded or that are considered to be at risk from flooding.

No incidents of flooding in Rathcairn have been recorded on the OPW flood hazard maps. However areas liable to flood in extreme weather conditions are identified to the east of the village, and south west of the village.

### 2.8.4 *Other Utility Services*

#### *Waste Management*

The nearest recycling centre in County Meath is located in Kells and Trim. Domestic and commercial refuse collection services are provided by private operators. There are a number of waste collection services in the county.

#### *Telecommunications*

Rathcairn is located within the National Broadband Scheme. The NBS will deliver broadband to certain target areas in Ireland in which broadband is not available.

## 3.0 Strategy

### 3.1 Vision

The vision for Rathcairn is as follows:

*'To promote the development of the village in a manner that protects and enhances its linguistic and cultural heritage, while also providing for development which will allow Rathcairn to develop in a sustainable manner, as an attractive place to live, work, recreate and visit, reflecting its Gaeltacht distinctiveness'.*

In order to facilitate the delivery of the vision for Rathcairn, linguistic and cultural heritage, land use, movement and access and natural and built heritage strategies have been identified. These strategies are augmented by policies and objectives and are described in the following sections.

### 3.2 Linguistic and Cultural Heritage Strategy

The linguistic and cultural heritage strategy for Rathcairn seeks to protect and enhance the status of the Irish language as the spoken language of the community. The strategy also seeks to facilitate the protection and promotion of all cultural aspects of the Gaeltacht area including its rich musical, sporting, dancing and storey telling heritage. This strategy will be supported by objectives to provide for the development of a concentrated and vibrant Irish speaking population which supports local educational and cultural activities based on the Irish language and traditions. Furthermore, this strategy seeks to prioritise employment and enterprise services and facilities which are based on the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht and provide local employment opportunities for the people of Rathcairn.

### 3.3 Land Use Strategy

The land use strategy for Rathcairn seeks to provide for *'distinctive quality driven residential development and essential local commercial and community facilities'* in accordance with the Meath CDP 2007-2013. This strategy includes modifications to the land use zoning objectives of the existing Rathcairn development plan.

The development plan boundary is rationalised to align with existing field boundaries. The boundary is increased marginally to the south of the primary school to facilitate logical and coordinated development between the Trim Road and the village core.

Variation No. 2 of the CDP 2007-2013 provides for an additional 20 no. residential units in Rathcairn village. The residential land use zonings comprise of A1, A2 and A5 land use zoning objectives.

Land use zoning objective A1 reflects existing residential areas, located principally along the local roads and cul de sacs in the form of ribbon development. Land use zoning objective A2 provides for new residential areas adjoining the existing residential areas. These areas are along the local roads, located between existing residential development and comprise infill development.

Land use zoning objective A5 provides for low density residential development in accordance with action area plans. The action area plans are proposed to ensure coordinated development that integrates with existing residential areas. Low density residential development is proposed to provide a sustainable alternative to one-off housing, and to retain the overall rural character of the area.

It is proposed that these areas can intensify in the future to ensure the sustainable use of serviced land. Land use zoning objective A5 replaces the former community, recreational and educational zoning objective to the north west of the village core. Land use zoning objective A5 is also proposed in the backland quadrants adjoining the village core, to the south west, north east, and south east.

Land Use Zoning Objective B1 is proposed to the north east and south east of the village centre. The village centre should seek to meet the social and community needs of the existing and future population while creating an identifiable and legible centre for the village.

Existing Land Use Zoning Objective G1 for community uses have largely been retained. These areas have been increased to the south of the secondary school to facilitate potential associated educational uses, and to the south of the primary school to facilitate potential additional community use expansion. The extent of community use has been reduced to the rear of the existing village centre and library to balance the resultant loss of residential land use zoning.

New F1 land use zoning objectives for recreational amenity are proposed adjoining the church to reflect existing land uses and to protect the amenity of this area. A new F1 Land Use Zoning Objective is proposed to the north of the village to improve village recreational amenity.

The boundary of the industrial zoned lands has been rationalised and increased to incorporate lands adjoining the proposed F1 amenity lands to the north of the village.

### 3.4 Movement and Access Strategy

Sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling shall be prioritised within the village through the development of new footpaths connecting the industrial area to the village core and along the existing cul de sac to the south. Connections through new development areas are promoted to enhance the overall permeability of the village.

New access locations are promoted through existing and new residential areas to the east to facilitate the potential future development of these lands. Access and through way objectives are proposed to facilitate interconnections between various land uses.

### 3.5 Natural and Built Heritage Strategy

Rathcairn suffers from poor boundary treatments and a deteriorating landscape structure. This strategy seeks to ensure that a green edge is established surrounding the built up areas of Rathcairn, and that the visual impact of new development is ameliorated by landscaping proposals to repair and enhance the landscape structure of the village.

The integrity of vernacular structures including the Land Commission dwelling is compromised through personalisation. Although not protected, this strategy seeks to ensure that their integrity is protected and preserved as part of development proposals. New developments should reflect indigenous traditions. A contemporary interpretation of the local style using modern materials and technology is encouraged. This will assist in creating a particular identity for the Rathcairn Gaeltacht that is derived from local tradition.

## 4.0 Policies and Objectives

Policies and objectives have been identified for Rathcairn village with respect to linguistic and cultural heritage, land uses, movement and access, built and natural heritage, design standards and services and infrastructure. These policies and objectives seek to provide for the delivery of the strategies described in section 3.0 over the lifetime of this plan.

### 4.1 Linguistic and Cultural Heritage

The language and culture policies and objectives for Rathcairn provide for the protection and enhancement of the linguistic and cultural distinctiveness of the area. These policies and objectives are described below with respect to employment, community infrastructure, population / residential development and Gaeltacht identity. A number of these policies overlap with land use and natural and built heritage policies and objectives, with the emphasis here on the protection of linguistic and cultural heritage.

#### 4.1.1 Economic Development

The principal economic language and culture policies seek to encourage and support various initiatives, including building initiatives that will promote employment in the area and that contribute to the promotion of Irish Language and Culture, whilst providing sustainable employment.

**LCHP 1** To encourage employment and enterprise development within the village that is language and culture friendly.

**LCHP 2** To recognise that new commercial developments could damage the use, visibility and status of the Irish language and to reduce / prevent their impact.

**LCHP 3** The Planning Authority will in general, and subject to the provisions of the Development Plan, be favourably disposed to applications for economic developments of the following type:

- Language teaching resources
- Recreational facilities through Irish
- Community centres that support the use of the Irish language
- Educational facilities e.g. third level etc.
- Tourism which is language and culturally centred
- Gaeltacht offices for the purpose of providing services through Irish for the Gaeltacht community
- Business which is language centred e.g. translation /communication services

**LCHP 4** To co-operate with Údarás na Gaeltachta and other relevant bodies and agencies in developing sustainable and Irish language based economic uses in the Gaeltacht area.

Language and culture objectives that promote economic development and which provide for linguistic and cultural protection and promotion include:

**LCHOBJ 1** To require that a 'Language Impact Study' be carried out before any application for commercial development is considered in the area. Such a study, by reference to its linguistic background of intended users or occupants, or identification of its relationship with linguistic or cultural development objectives of groups associated or charged with the development of Gaeltacht areas will need to

provide that a given proposal will have a positive impact upon the promotion and use of Irish as the language of the community.

**LCHOBJ 2** To provide for appropriate language and culturally centred development within the appropriate land use zones within the village.

**LCHOBJ 3** To assist in assessing the impact of new commercial uses / developments upon the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht, all planning applications for commercial developments, will be referred to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Údarás na Gaeltachta management for comment and these comments shall be taken into account and such account shall be demonstrated in the making of decisions in all such planning applications.

#### 4.1.2 Community Infrastructure

The principal community infrastructure policies are to encourage and support community organisations in energising local people and in delivering services and opportunities that promote and enhance the language and culture of the area.

**LCHP 5** To support community organisations in delivering services which promote and protect the distinctive language and cultural traditions of the area.

**LCHOBJ 4** To provide for the development of community and recreational facilities on lands in the village core and adjoining the primary and secondary schools that are language and culturally centred.

#### 4.1.3 Population / Residential

The principal population policies are to ensure that the existing population can continue to exist and thrive as a distinctive cultural community. New residents should predominately be prepared to integrate with the Irish speaking culture to ensure the protection of the language and culture of the area. Residential development which is unrelated to the Irish language and culture is not encouraged.

**LCHP 6** To ensure that the resident population is of a sustainable number to protect and promote the linguistic and cultural distinction of the area.

**LCHP 7** To recognise that new residential developments could damage the use, visibility and status of the Irish language and to reduce / prevent their impact.

**LCHP 8** To identify methods whereby the Irish language can be preserved.

**LCHP 9** To plan an efficient system whereby the aspects of the Gaeltacht environment can be assessed and protected as part of the planning process including the use of language conditions.

Language and culture objectives that promote residential / population objectives include:

**LCHOBJ 5** To require that a 'Language Impact Study' be carried out before any application for housing (for single and multiple housing developments) is considered in the area. Such a study, by reference to its linguistic background of intended users or occupants, or identification of its relationship with linguistic or cultural development objectives of groups associated or charged with the development of

Gaeltacht areas will need to provide that a given proposal will have a positive impact upon the promotion and use of Irish as the language of the community.

**LCHOBJ 6** The Local Authority will review the use of potential Language Clauses that will apply to applicants for permission for residential developments and potential Language Conditions that may be applied to permitted residential developments.

**LCHOBJ 7** To assist in assessing the impact of new residential development upon the use of Irish in the Gaeltacht all planning applications for residential development, both single and multiple house developments, will be referred to the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Údarás na Gaeltachta management for comment and these comments shall be taken into account and such account shall be demonstrated in the making of decisions in all such planning applications.

#### **4.1.4 Gaeltacht Identity**

The principal Gaeltacht identity policies are to ensure that new development will have a positive contribution to the physical environment and to ensure that new development will protect and enhance the existing physical attributes and characteristics of the Gaeltacht, by contributing to creating a distinctive identity.

**LCHP 10** To ensure that all new development will enhance the visual character of the area and contribute to the creation of a particular identity for the area.

**LCHP 11** To encourage architectural styles that complement local tradition such as the 'Land Commission house' and the Clachan Dwelling cluster. A contemporary interpretation of indigenous traditions is encouraged.

**LCHP 12** To promote the creation of a distinctive village identity in new development areas and in the public realm.

The local objectives to promote the protection and enhancement of a Gaeltacht identity are as follows:

**LCHOBJ 8** New developments will be required to set out a design statement to accompany planning applications outlining how the development contributes to the creation of a particular Gaeltacht identity.

**LCHOBJ 9** To promote the provision of signage in Irish in the Gaeltacht with respect to the following:

- Entry and exit points to the village with explanatory details of the cultural significance of the areas to visitors
- The provision of all commercial signage in Irish
- In association with the relevant professional and vocational groups, that auctioneers and other temporary signs are in Irish

**LCHOBJ 10** To promote the use of consistent and contemporary public street furniture, seating, lighting, litter bins etc. within the village settlement to create a coherent and consistent identity within the village.

## 4.2. Land Use

The land use policies and objectives for Rathcairn provide for the protection and development of existing and new residential areas, mixed residential and business uses, industrial and related uses and community and recreational uses. These policies and objectives are described in detail in the following sections and should be read in conjunction with the land use zoning matrix and map (Appendix III), and the language and culture policies and objectives.

### 4.2.1 Residential Uses

The principal residential land use policies seek to protect existing residential areas within Rathcairn whilst providing for the sustainable growth of village. These policies include:

**LUP 1** To provide for the local housing need of Rathcairn village.

**LUP 2** To ensure the development of sustainable residential communities located within close proximity of employment, service and recreation uses.

**LUP 3** To achieve a balanced and indistinguishable mix of social and affordable housing throughout the village.

**LUP 4** To implement the policies of the rural settlement strategy of the County Development Plan 2007-2013, including the reservation of between 25-30% of all new multi house developments, being developments in excess of four houses, for persons native to Co. Meath or those who by virtue of their employment require to live in the urban centre. The remainder of the houses shall be provided for local growth only. The reservation of 25-30% of multiple housing units for local derived needs shall include the 20% reservation for social and affordable housing needs.

**LUP 5** To provide a balanced mix of housing typologies suitable for a variety of household types.

**LUP 6** To deliver high quality residential development that respects and enhances the character of the village and contributes to the creation of a village identity.

**LUP 7** To promote infill residential development adjoining existing residential developed areas.

**LUP 8** To ensure that a high standard of design be incorporated into future residential developments in line with the recommendations of the 'Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2008' and the accompanying best practice 'Urban Design Manual: A best practice guide' adopted by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in December 2008. Applications for four or more dwellings shall be accompanied by a landscaping plan and a design statement. Furthermore, regard shall be had to the use of local materials and house styles in designing all future residential developments.

The specific requirements set out in Section 5 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 and the Meath Housing Strategy shall apply in terms of the provision of social and affordable housing in the LAP area.

**LUP 9** To ensure that up to 20% of any land zoned solely for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be made available for the provision of social and affordable housing in accordance with the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Acts, 2000-2006 and the County Housing Strategy.

Land use zoning objectives which provide for the development of residential uses within the village include:

**LUOBJ 1** To provide for detached family homes on residential zoned lands to the north west of the village opposite the secondary school, to the south of the village, north of the primary school and to the south east of the village.

**LUOBJ 2** To provide for low density housing clusters that allow for future intensification, to the north of the village adjoining the industrial area, and to the north east, south east, south west and north west of the village core in accordance with action area plans.

#### 4.2.2 Village Centre Uses

A village centre is proposed to the north east and south east of the village core. This is to improve the village's sense of place and identity and to generate a mix of uses that will enhance the local services in Rathcairn.

**LUP 10** To protect the existing residential function of the village.

**LUP 11** To provide for the development of new services and facilities within the village centre including small-scale retail, commercial and office uses creating an identifiable village centre / focus.

**LUP 12** To facilitate appropriate employment and enterprise uses within the village core.

Objectives which seek to protect and enhance the service function of Rathcairn village centre are as follows:

**LUOBJ 3** To provide for the development of commercial, retail and residential uses in the village core.

#### 4.2.3 Industrial and Related Uses

The existing industrial development provides valuable employment in the village and contributes to the local economy. This plan seeks to provide for the intensification of the industrial area for small scale businesses which compliment the existing industrial uses.

**LUP 13** To provide for the sustainable development of industrial and related uses and the creation of employment opportunities within Rathcairn village.

**LUP 14** To protect the built and natural environment of Rathcairn from the potential impacts of industrial development including visual, water, air and noise pollution.

Specific objectives for the development of industrial and related uses in Rathcairn include:

**LUOBJ 4** To provide for the sustainable consolidation of the existing industrial area.

**LUOBJ 5** To facilitate employment creation through the development of industrial / enterprise uses.

#### 4.2.4 Community and Recreational Uses

Existing community and recreational uses within Rathcairn include the GAA fields, the community hall,

clubhouse, library and church cluster and the primary and secondary schools.

As Rathcainn develops existing community and recreational facilities and amenities should be enhanced to meet the needs of the existing and future population. Educational facilities and associated and complimentary community uses also have the potential to stimulate local employment. This plan will seek to promote these uses.

**LUP 15** To support the provision of and access to a range of community and recreational facilities and amenities for residents and visitors.

**LUP 16** To support the provision of additional community and educational facilities for residents and visitors.

**LUP 17** To ensure community and recreational facilities are developed in tandem with residential and mixed use development.

**LUP 18** To promote a high standard of well designed, high-quality, community facilities that will contribute to the creation of a positive identity for the area.

**LUP 19** To promote a high standard of well designed, high-quality, inclusive open spaces within residential areas.

There are several opportunities within Rathcainn to enhance the existing provision of community and recreational facilities and amenities. These opportunities are reflected in the objectives below.

**LUOBJ 6** To promote the enhancement of the existing community building in the village core.

**LUOBJ 7** To provide for the expansion of Rathcainn primary school and associated play areas and complimentary community uses.

**LUOBJ 8** To provide for additional educational uses including potential third level uses associated with and adjoining the secondary school and complimentary community uses.

**LUOBJ 9** To promote the development of an attractive, overlooked and accessible public park for the purposes of visual and recreational amenity, to the north of the village.

#### 4.2.5 Broad Land Use Layout

A broad land use layout including land use zoning objectives for Rathcainn is appended (Appendix III). The extent of lands zoned is as follows:

Village Centre Uses	1.9ha / 4.8 acres
Existing Residential Areas (A1)	7.4 ha / 18.3 acres
New Residential Areas (A2)	2.3 ha / 5.7 acres
New Residential Areas (A5)	12.4 ha / 30.8 acres
Industrial and Related Uses	8.2 ha / 20.5 acres
Community Uses	8.5 ha / 20.9 acres
Open Space	4.1 ha / 10.2 acres

#### 4.3 Movement and Access

The movement policies and objectives seek to promote sustainable travel patterns and modes of transport. These policies and objectives are described below with respect to public transport, pedestrian and cycle movement, vehicular traffic, and car and bicycle parking.

##### 4.3.1 Public Transport

Rathcainn is poorly served by public transport at present. However, there may be potential for the development of private shuttle bus services to Athboy or Navan where access to public transport services is greater.

MP1 To facilitate the development of public / private bus connections to nearby towns.

To facilitate bus services to the village designated pick up and drop off points should be developed as part of any future environmental improvements within the village centre.

MOBJ 1 To develop pick up and drop off points for buses within the village core.

#### 4.3.2 Pedestrian and Cycle Movement

All new development within the village should prioritise pedestrian and cycle movement. Pedestrian and cycle networks should be safe, direct and well connected to surrounding areas. In this regard the following policies have been identified.

MP 2 To develop a network of safe, direct and well connected footpaths and cycle routes.

MP 3 To require that all pedestrian routes provide for universal accessibility.

MP 4 To require the provision of good public lighting standards on all routes.

MP 5 To provide for traffic calming measures on local roads.

The following objectives have been identified to promote pedestrian and cycle movement and to facilitate the development of pedestrian and cycle infrastructure within the village.

MOBJ 2 To develop a continuous footpath from the village centre to the industrial estate to the north, the secondary school, and the residential areas to the south.

MOBJ 3 To provide for pedestrian connections within and between new residential and community uses.

#### 4.3.3 Vehicular Movement

Vehicular access to and from the village centre should be safe, direct and well connected. Streets and lanes should be developed in favour of roads and should have a character which compliments that of the village core.

MP 6 To establish a hierarchy of safe, well connected and attractive streets and lanes which compliment and contribute to the development of an identifiable character for the village.

MP 7 To promote the development of spaces within new development areas which encourage reduced speed.

With respect to vehicular movement and access within the village, the following objectives have been identified.

MOBJ 4 To develop new streets / access lanes within new development areas to the north east, south east, and south west quadrants of the village core, with connections to existing local roads, and connections to adjoining land uses.

MOBJ 5 To provide vehicular access to lands to the west of the north / south local road connecting the village core to the north of the village and to the east of the cul de sac to the south, to allow for potential future development.

#### 4.3.4 Car and Bicycle Parking

The car and bicycle parking requirements for new development shall be consistent with the CDP. On-street car parking within the village centre should be structured and landscaped as part of any future environmental improvements. Off-street car parking should be absorbed within development parcels and screened from the public realm.

Bicycle parking facilities should also be provided within the village centre.

**MP 8** To facilitate vehicular access to the village centre through the provision of on-street and off-street car parking facilities in accordance with the requirements of the County Development Plan.

**MP 9** To encourage shared parking facilities between community uses.

**MP 10** To mitigate the visual impact of car parking through the development of well designed, detailed and landscaped car parking areas.

**MP 11** To provide bicycle stands within the village centre to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport.

The desired location of car parking within the village varies from site to site. However, the following objectives should be noted with respect to the sites identified below.

**MOBJ 6** Car parking within the proposed new residential areas should be absorbed within the dwelling sites, preferably behind the building line, to ensure the development of attractive and pedestrian safe cluster / courtyard spaces.

**MOBJ 7** Car parking within the industrial area should be provided off street

and absorbed within the industrial development site as part of any future development proposals.

**MOBJ 8** Car parking on new village centre zoned lands should be provided in structured parallel car parking spaces along the main road and within the site to the rear of proposed buildings.

#### 4.4 Natural and Built Heritage

The character of Rathcairn is derived from the rural setting and dispersed nature of development. The rural character of the area should be protected and enhanced for the enjoyment of future generations.

The integration of urban and rural development in the village is poor. It is an objective of the Council to ameliorate and repair this relationship by promoting the enhancement of the natural heritage, including mature trees, hedgerows and traditional field boundaries.

The County Development Plan includes no buildings or fixtures located within the village on the record of protected structures. No monuments or places of archaeological interest have been identified within Rathcairn. However, it is the policy of the Council to ensure that all archaeology including undiscovered archaeology is protected in accordance with current best practice standards and guidelines.

**NBHP 1** To provide for the protection of recorded and potential archaeology within Rathcairn village.

**NBHP 2** To protect mature trees and hedgerows which make a significant contribution to the landscape setting of Rathcairn.

**NBHP 3** To provide for the protection of established field boundaries and hedgerows.

With respect to the natural and built heritage of Rathcairn the Council have identified the following objectives.

NHOBJ 1	To enhance the landscape setting of Rathcairn through the planting of native trees and hedgerows within and surrounding the village.
---------	--

#### 4.5 Design Standards

Rathcairn village has a dispersed built fabric and retains a rural character, with nodes of development at the existing industrial area to the north, the village core and at the primary school. In order to enhance this fabric, policies and objectives with respect to the built form of the village have been identified. These should be read in conjunction with the language and culture policies and objectives.

##### 4.5.1 Building Typologies

New buildings within the village centre and the proposed residential areas should be of a form and scale that reflects the vernacular of Rathcairn.

Residential development should comprise detached dwellings in principal. Infill sites should comprise detached dwellings, retaining access and views through to protect visual connections to the rural hinterland.

New residential areas to the north, proximate to the industrial area, and adjoining the village core will be subject to action plans. These dwellings should be designed in the form of clusters, with varied building alignments, comprising gable and parallel configurations of simple building form. It is proposed in this plan that these areas would develop initially to a low residential density. If demand requires and infrastructure becomes available the intensification of these sites is promoted. This is to promote the sustainable use of serviced sites and the creation of a vibrant and sustainable community.

New industrial and industry related buildings to the north of the village should be clustered within the site and should be of a form and scale which is neither overbearing nor visually intrusive.

New educational uses should be clustered and in development blocks to a scale appropriate to the rural context.

DSP 1	To provide for infill development that respects the scale and massing of adjoining dwellings.
-------	---

DSP 2	To provide for residential housing typologies which are of a form and scale that is in keeping with the village, comprising one storey and a half Land Commission type dwellings.
-------	---

DSP 3	To provide for new industrial building typologies which are visually unobtrusive and of a form and scale that does not injure the rural character of the village.
-------	---

DSP 4	To provide for new educational / community building typologies which are visually unobtrusive and of a form and scale which does not injure the rural character of the village.
-------	---

DSP 5	To promote innovative architectural design in the development of new and existing buildings.
-------	--

With respect to new residential areas, the following specific objectives have been identified.

DSOBJ 1	To promote the development of detached family homes which reflect the traditional building form of the Land Commission dwelling comprising one storey and a half on A2 zoned lands.
---------	---

DSOBJ 2	To provide for the development of a variety of housing typologies in clustered configurations on lands to the north of the village adjoining the industrial area and adjoining the existing village core on A5 zoned lands.
---------	---

#### 4.5.2 Residential Density

The residential density of newly developed lands should be arrived at with respect to qualitative standards such as appropriate building scale and form and design standards. Notwithstanding this, the absence of key infrastructure in Rathcairn and in particular the limited capacity of the water supply system will limit the number of units that can be developed on any one land parcel until such time as this infrastructure has been enhanced.

In this regard, it is proposed that lower residential densities of between 15-20 residential units per hectare should generally be achieved in accordance with the Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas. However, lower residential densities which seek to provide a sustainable alternative to one-off rural housing will also be promoted. It is proposed in this plan that these areas would develop initially to a low residential density. If demand requires and infrastructure becomes available the intensification of these sites should be encouraged. This is to promote the long term sustainable use of serviced sites, and the creation of a vibrant and sustainable community. The design and layout of these sites are required to have cognisance of this potential.

**DSP 6** To promote residential densities which respect the character of the village whilst providing for the sustainable use of land and services and sustainable travel patterns.

**DSP 7** To provide for low density residential cluster developments which provide a sustainable alternative to rural housing.

**DSP 8** To provide for the intensification of new low residential density clustered development in the preparation of action area plans / development layouts.

**DSP 9** To ensure that qualitative design standards are not compromised by quantitative density standards.

With respect to the residential density of individual land parcels within the village, the following objectives have been identified.

**DSOBJ 3** To provide for the development of detached family homes of 6 units / ha (2.5 units / acre) or as appropriate on infill sites (A2 zoned lands).

**DSOBJ 4** To provide for the development of detached family homes of 6 units / ha (2.5 units / acre) or as appropriate on residential cluster lands (A5 zoned lands) in accordance with action plans.

**DSOBJ 5** To provide for the future intensification of residential sites in residential cluster areas when infrastructure becomes available.

**DSOBJ 6** Area Action Plans for residential cluster lands should illustrate long term intensification potential.

#### 4.5.3 Building Height

Buildings in Rathcairn generally range from one to two storeys in height with the exception of the industrial buildings and secondary school. The human scale of traditional buildings should be retained and reflected in development proposals. As such, the eaves or parapet level of new buildings should generally be no greater than 5 metres unless a worthy architectural intention has been demonstrated. In accordance with the County Development Plan, three storey duplex units will not be permitted within the village.

**DSP 10** To retain and reflect the human scale of traditional buildings within the village centre.

**DSP 11** To allow for increased building height where a worthy architectural intention has been demonstrated.

DSP 12 To prohibit the development of three storey duplex units within the village in accordance with the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013.

Proposed building heights within individual sites should conform with the following objectives.

DSOBJ 7 To retain and respect the established eaves lines of the existing building stock within the village centre.

DSOBJ 8 To encourage dwellings of a scale that reflects the vernacular of traditional 20th century houses of the Land Commission tradition.

DSOBJ 9 To promote the development of two storey buildings at the village centre to create a sense of enclosure and identity.

DSOBJ 10 To promote the development of low rise dwellings ranging between one and one and a half storeys on remaining residential zoned lands.

#### 4.5.4 Building Lines and Street Frontage

The building line refers to the edge created by the principal elevation of a building. A continuous building line along street elevations provides for high levels of enclosure to the street and the public domain. Within the village core on lands zoned for village centre uses, new buildings should provide for a continuous building line. These buildings should also achieve active frontage at street level with a fine urban grain and a variety of small scale uses.

Within new residential areas the building typologies proposed are detached in form and the appropriate building line relates to front garden / boundary treatment in general. Front gardens / boundaries in clustered housing areas should be continuous and preferably planted with indigenous hedges. Dwellings should adopt a logical arrangement, but

may present 'gable on' or linear facades within the building plot.

DSP 13 To encourage village centre development which provides for a continuous building line and active street frontage within the village core on lands zoned for village centre use.

DSP 14 To promote the development of a consistent front garden boundary line in new residential areas.

The following objectives have been identified in order to address site specific conditions around the village.

DSOBJ 11 To promote the development of a continuous building line and active street frontage in the village centre.

DSOBJ 12 To encourage the development of a continuous front boundary line of indigenous hedge planting / masonry wall / stone walls in infill and clustered housing areas.

#### 4.5.5 Private and Public Open Space

The provision of high quality private open space is an important aspect of good residential design. In Rathcairn dwellings are generally detached on large plots and benefit from private open space to the front and rear. These spaces should be designed to maximise privacy, amenity and security in accordance with the design standards for residential development described in the CDP. Public open spaces are envisaged to comprise of the proposed cluster courtyards, which should be integral to the overall design proposals.

In accordance with the Meath County Development Plan, a minimum rate of 15% of the total site area of residential development shall be reserved for public open space. Where residential developments are close to existing facilities or natural amenities or where in the opinion of the Planning Authority it would be in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the Planning

Authority may require a financial contribution towards the provision of public open space or recreational facilities in the wider area in lieu of public open space within the development.

**DSP 15** To provide for high quality private open space in accordance with the design standards for residential development contained in the Meath County Development Plan.

**DSP 16** To provide for adequate safe, attractive and usable public open space within residential developments, including high quality hard and soft landscaping of the proposed clustered spaces.

**DSP 17** To provide for public open space to enhance the recreational amenity within the public realm.

The following objectives have been identified in order to address site specific conditions that relate to open space.

**DSOBJ 13** To promote the development of a village space at the village core to include environmental improvements.

#### 4.5.6 *Materials and Finishes*

Stone and rendered walls, pitched slate roofs and timber sash windows and doors are the principal materials that were traditionally used in Rathcairn.

These materials are still relevant today and their application to infill buildings and new streets should be kept simple and in keeping with local tradition. However, pastiche references to traditional building decoration such as ornate plasterwork should be avoided.

With respect to the repair and maintenance of existing buildings, the planning authority will seek to implement the guidelines for architectural heritage protection prepared by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Where new buildings are proposed, the innovative use of materials and in particular locally sourced and sustainable building materials is encouraged.

**DSP 18** To encourage the use of local and sustainable building materials which reflect local tradition and craftsmanship within the village centre.

**DSP 19** To provide for the innovative use of building materials and finishes which respect and enhance the character of the village.

#### 4.5.7 *Architectural Design*

The built form policies and objectives described hereto are intended as good practice guidance rather than prescriptive standards. It is recognised that through innovative architectural design alternative building forms and finishes can make a positive contribution to the character of the village. The Council will consider innovative design proposals where architectural excellence is demonstrated.

**DSP 20** To actively promote innovation and design excellence in the preparation of development proposals.

#### 4.5.8 *Hard and Soft Landscaping*

The quality of the public realm can be significantly enhanced through the development of well designed and landscaped public space. It is the policy of the Council to encourage the use of high quality materials and finishes throughout the public domain to include paved footpaths and attractive and contemporary lamp standards, street furniture and signage. Footpaths should be continuous, generous in width and provide for universal accessibility throughout the village.

Existing boundaries including boundary walls, hedgerows and mature trees should be maintained, repaired and enhanced where necessary. New boundaries should seek to continue the tradition of local stone wall construction to the front of buildings and fronting onto public space. Alternatively,

indigenous hedgerows are encouraged. New boundary treatments should be continuous and coherent.

DSP 21 To promote the use of high quality materials and finishes within the public realm.

DSP 22 To provide for the protection, repair and enhancement of existing boundaries.

DSP 23 To encourage the use of local materials and native trees and hedgerows where new boundaries are proposed.

DSP 24 To promote the coordinated and coherent provision of street furniture including lamp standards, litter bins, bicycle stands and signage.

With respect to existing public open space and boundaries, the Council proposes the following specific objectives.

DSOBJ 14 To promote the enhancement of boundaries where new developments have occurred and boundaries are eroded and discontinuous.

#### 4.5.9 Sustainable Design

Development proposals should seek to minimise the embodied energy and energy requirements of new and existing buildings. Building materials should be sourced locally and should ideally come from renewable sources, have a long life span and require low maintenance.

New buildings should be designed and orientated to maximise upon solar gain and to achieve a high energy performance rating. Renewable energy technologies such as solar water heaters and photo voltaic panels are also encouraged.

The Council also promotes innovative and environmentally sustainable design proposals which seek to reduce demand on public water supplies such as the collection of rain water as a second class water for flushing toilets, secondary washing and garden irrigation.

New buildings should be easily adapted to meet the changing requirements of different users during the lifetime of the building and the life cycle of its occupants.

Residential building plots as part of the proposed clustered housing areas should be designed to facilitate future intensification to enhance the sustainable use of serviced land.

DSP 25 To promote the use of locally sourced and renewable construction materials.

DSP 26 To encourage the use of environmentally sustainable building designs and technologies such as the passive house and renewable energy sources.

DSP 27 To promote building solutions which reduce demand on natural resources such as water.

DSP 28 To provide for the adaptability of buildings in accordance with the loose fit, long life principle.

DSP 29 To provide for the intensification of residential building plots in clustered housing configurations.

#### 4.6 Services and Infrastructure

The provision of key services and infrastructure and in particular the supply of public water is the greatest constraint upon the development of Rathcairn village. The augmentation of services and infrastructure must occur in tandem with the development of the village.

#### 4.6.1 Waste Water Collection and Treatment

The completion of the Athboy Sewerage Scheme, expected to be in early 2010, will provide an 800 population equivalent capacity for Rathcainn. This will accommodate the existing and proposed additional households. There are no expansion proposals.

**SIP 1** To provide an adequate waste water collection and treatment facility to provide for the existing and future population of the village in accordance with the projections in Table 6 of the County Development Plan, the Water Framework Directive 2000 and the Water Services Investment Programme as finances permit.

**SIP 2** To reserve all wastewater capacity in the first instance for community uses and employment generating uses.

**SIP 3** To facilitate the connection of dwellings currently operating on septic tank systems to the public sewerage system.

#### 4.6.2 Surface Water

Surface water generated by new developments should not be permitted to enter the waste water collection system. Permeable ground surfaces are encouraged within new residential areas. The Planning Authority also promotes the collection, attenuation and treatment of stormwater run-off from roads and paved areas below ground in stormwater attenuation cells. The Planning Authority shall consider the feasibility of developing attenuation cells at appropriate locations.

**SIP 4** To promote the use of permeable surfaces where hard landscaping is proposed on the ground plane.

**SIP 5** To encourage the development of attenuation cells for the collection, attenuation and treatment of surface water run-off within new developments.

#### 4.6.3 Water Supply

Supply from the Athboy Water Supply Scheme is currently at capacity. There are no immediate plans to upgrade / augment this supply. Water savings brought about through water conservation measures should provide a limited amount of additional water supply. The long term development of new housing within the village will be contingent upon the augmentation of the existing water supply.

In the short term the implementation of water conservation measures should be undertaken to protect the water resource.

**SIP 7** To facilitate the provision of an adequate water supply to Rathcainn.

**SIP 8** To encourage water conservation measures which reduce demand on existing water supplies.

**SIP 9** To reserve all water capacity in the first instance for community uses and employment generating uses.

#### 4.6.4 Flooding

Whilst the underlying causes of flooding, heavy rain and high sea levels, are essentially uncontrollable, the factors affecting the extent and severity of flooding can be addressed. The most influential of these factors is development.

It is the policy of the Council to seek that development is not subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor be the cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations.

**SIP 10** To seek that development is not subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding nor or be the cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations.

**SIP 11** To require all significant developments impacting on flood risk areas to provide a Flood Impact Assessment, to identify

potential loss of flood plain storage and how it might be offset in order to minimize impacts on the river flood regime.

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government have prepared Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities on The Planning System and Flood Risk Management. The Council will seek to identify areas at risk of flooding and to ensure that development within these areas comply with the Draft Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities and any subsequently adopted guidelines.

**SIP 12** To identify any areas that are at risk of flooding and to ensure that development at such areas comply with the Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities, The Planning System and Flood Risk Management, published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, and any subsequently adopted guidelines.

#### *4.6.5 Other Utility Services*

##### *Waste Management*

Waste will be managed in accordance with the provision of the Waste Management Plans for County Meath. In order to promote the sustainable management of waste a suitable Bring Bank facility is proposed within the village.

**SIP 13** To identify appropriate sites within Rathcairn village for the provision of a Bring Bank recycling facility.

##### *Telecommunications*

A Broadband Strategy for County Meath has been published. In accordance with this strategy, the Local Authority is determined to take advantage of the supportive position that the Government has adopted to ensure that broadband infrastructure is made widely available throughout the county.

It is the policy of the Council to facilitate the provision and enhancement of broadband services in Rathcairn

and to enable lower income households to avail of broadband infrastructure.

**SIP 14** To actively promote e-inclusion in Rathcairn through the planning process and by supporting strategies to encourage and enable lower income households to avail of modern broadband infrastructure.

## 5.0 Master Plan

The Rathcairn master plan is illustrated below. The master plan shows new streets and spaces, appropriate building forms and landscape proposals. The masterplan is indicative only and is intended to provide design guidance with respect to the built form and layout of the village.



Indicative Master Plan

## 6.0 Phasing and Implementation

### 6.1 Opportunity Sites

There are several sites within the village that have the potential to make a significant contribution to the development of Rathcairn and to enhance and promote its Gaeltacht distinctiveness.

The village centre has the potential to develop as a legible village space that would give Rathcairn a strong sense of place and identity. The lands to the rear of the village core have the potential to develop as residential clusters, each with a unique character.

Potential expansion of the educational facilities adjoining the secondary school present an opportunity to enhance employment opportunities, contribute to the development of tourism in the area, and also the development of an identifiable and distinctive identity for Rathcairn.

Additional design guidance has been prepared with respect to these sites and is described the following sections.

#### *Village Centre*

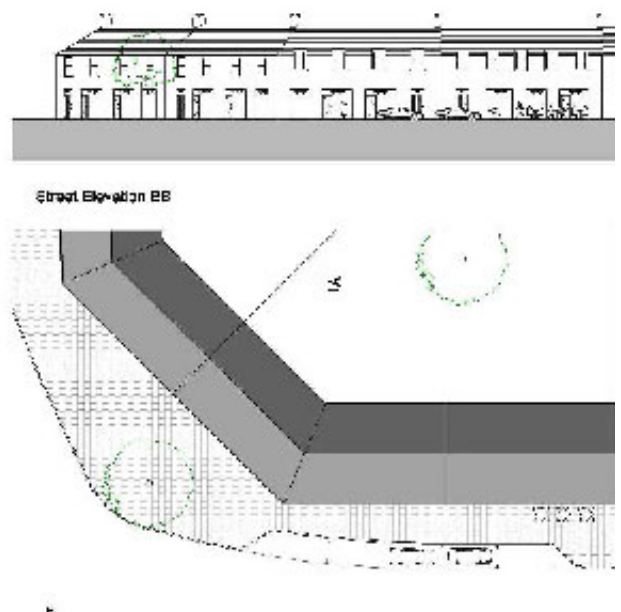
These lands represent a significant landholding centrally located within the village. The lands front onto the village core. The development of these lands should seek to establish an attractive and identifiable village centre whilst respecting the innate characteristics of the existing buildings in the village.

The development proposals for these lands should seek to:

- Provide for a mix of uses and active ground floor frontage facing the village core
- Establish a continuous building line and a strong sense of enclosure at the village core
- Buildings should respect the scale and massing of existing buildings within the village



Village Centre



Indicative Plans of the Village Centre

A two storey terrace is considered appropriate providing a strong urban edge and creating a potential village space. Parallel on street car parking and a landscaped urban space could occur to the front of these buildings. Access to the retail units and off street car parking could also be provided to the rear of the terrace.

### Residential Clusters

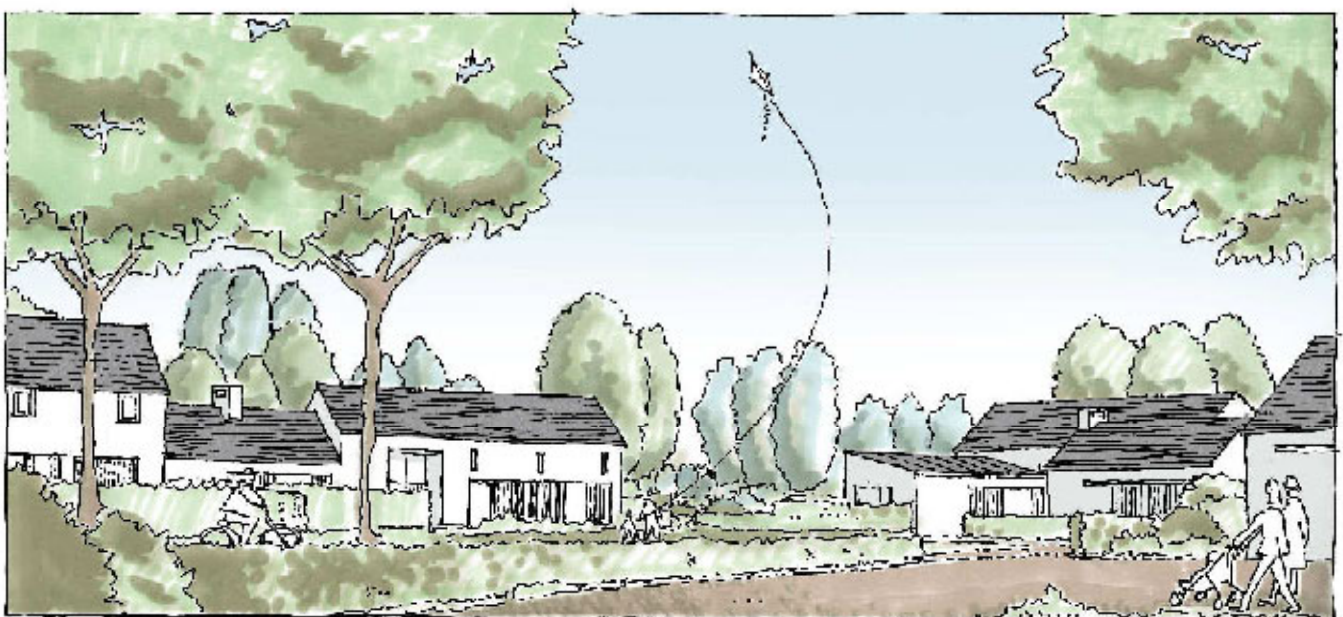
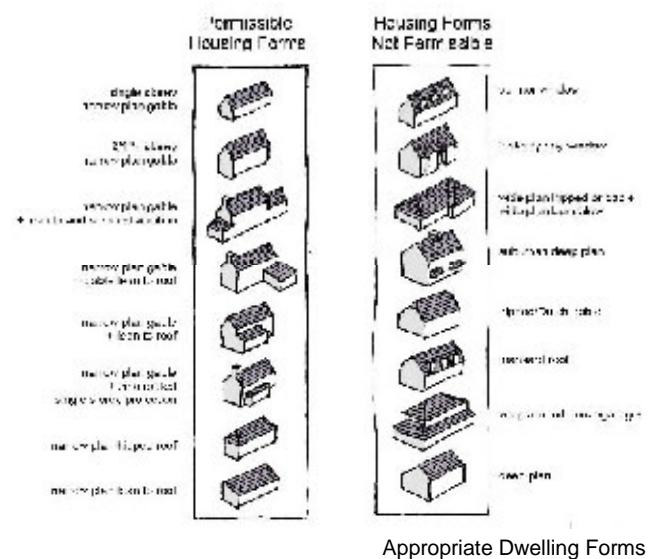
There are six potential residential cluster sites in the village. The development of these sites under the provisions of an action area plan will ensure coordinated development with the existing road network and land uses, and will ensure an overall integrated design approach.

These areas should seek to achieve clustered development that retains a rural character in a village context. It is proposed that these areas would develop at a low residential density initially, with the potential to intensify in the future.

The key components of residential clusters are:

- Single storey to one and a half storey dwellings
- Vernacular building forms as illustrated (Appropriate Dwelling Forms)
- Provision of a central courtyard space providing access to each dwelling
- Shared surfaces with traffic calming measures
- High quality landscaping including courtyard ground finish and boundary treatment
- Boundary treatment to comprise walls / hedgerows of indigenous plants to be planted at the earliest possible stage of development

- Dwelling arrangements that would facilitate intensification in the future
- Render finished, natural slate roofs, timber window and doors
- Action Area Plans to accompany development proposals for these areas should illustrate the manner in which intensification would occur, to ensure coordinated development.



### *Educational Cluster*

A significant site has been zoned to accommodate potential educational uses adjoining the existing secondary school.

It is proposed that the development of these lands would occur in a coordinated manner with adjoining land owners, to facilitate potential connections to adjoining lands and to create a permeable village structure.

It is proposed that educational and associated residential uses could occur on these lands. The key components are:

- Vernacular / simple contemporary building forms
- Buildings arranged to create a building line facing the existing local road
- Car parking absorbed within the site and landscaped to ameliorate its impact
- The overall site should be landscaped prior to construction to ensure that new development will be absorbed in the landscape
- Existing natural features should be incorporated and augmented in any development proposals
- Buildings should be single / two storey in height
- Buildings should comprise of render finish, slate roofs, zinc / grey metal finished roof and timber windows and doors
- Contemporary building forms derived from vernacular tradition are to be encouraged



Educate Together School Celbridge - Grafton Architects



Educational Use South of Existing Secondary School

### 6.2 Phasing

The Planning Authority will promote development in a rational and sequential manner in order to ensure essential facilities such as adequate waste water treatment infrastructure and public water supply are in place. The Planning Authority will also take into consideration the existing and proposed provision of social infrastructure including educational, recreational and amenity facilities and employment opportunities when assessing development proposals.

The development of new residential areas should be concentrated in the centre of the village. Phase 1 development is promoted at the village centre. Development is contingent upon the development of a waste water treatment facility and the provision of adequate water supply. The Planning Authority reserves the right to refuse planning permission for development on the basis of a lack of adequate water and / or waste water infrastructure.

The remaining residential zoned lands within the village shall be released for development as part of Phase 2 only i.e. post 2013, and subject to the criteria identified for the release of residential zoned lands described in Variation No. 2 of the CDP.

The Order of Priority for Rathcairn is illustrated opposite.

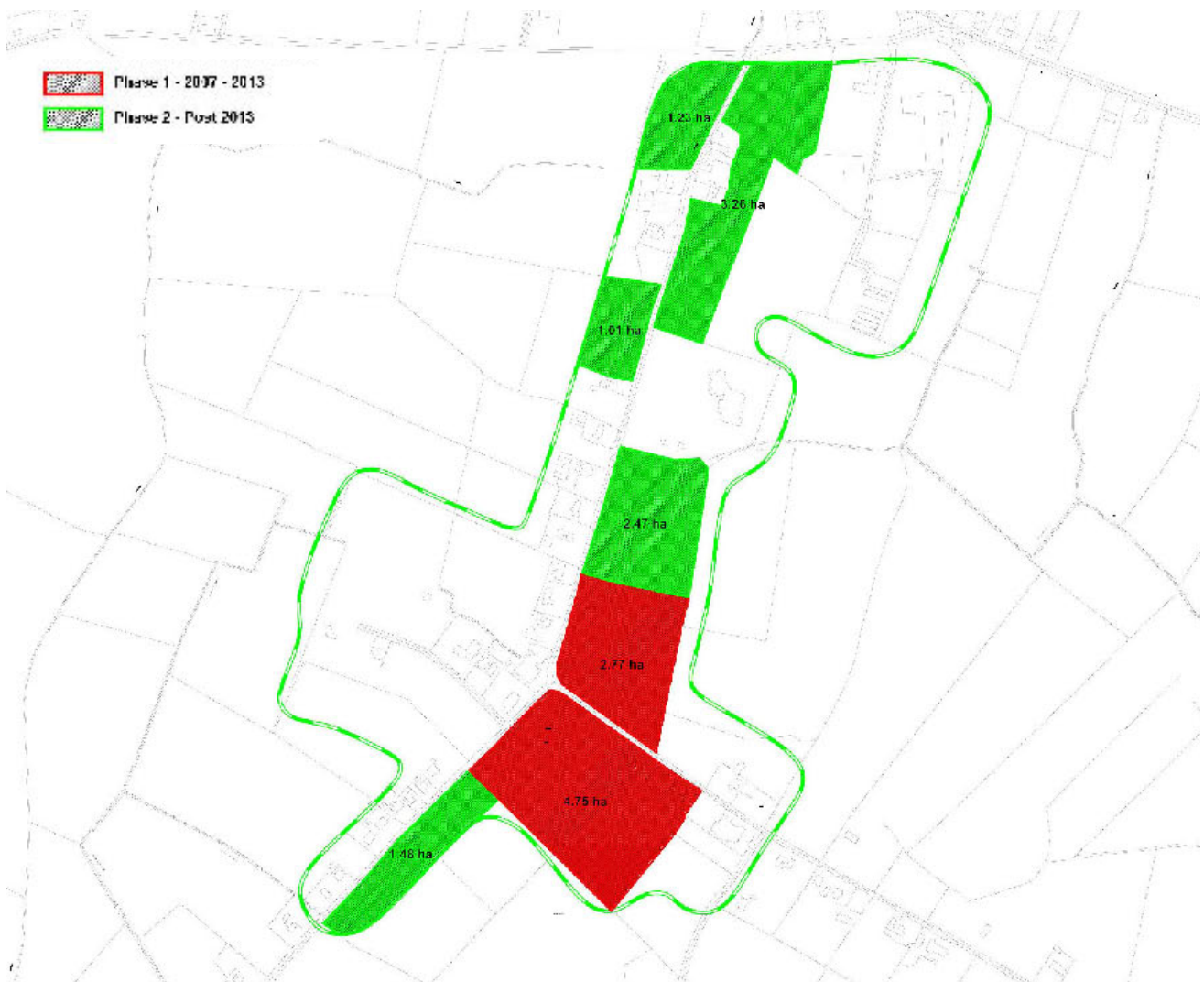
### 6.3 Contributions

In order to facilitate Local Authority investment in key infrastructure development contributions shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of Part III, Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as adopted by Meath County Council.

The Local Authority will also consider the preparation of a supplementary contributions scheme in order to expedite the delivery of critical infrastructure such as the augmentation of water supply facilities.

### 6.4 Monitoring and Review

In order to ensure that the development strategies described in Section 3.0 are being delivered in accordance with the policies and objectives of this plan, the Council, through the day to day activity of its development management function will monitor the implementation and phasing of the Rathcairn LAP. A periodic review will be undertaken in order to assess the implementation of the plan and any environmental effects that may arise from the plan.



Order of Priority

## Appendices

Appendix I	Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report
Appendix II	Appropriate Assessment Screening Report
Appendix III	Land Use Matrix and Zoning Map
Appendix IV	Persons, Bodies and Agencies having made a Pre-Draft submission on the preparation of the Rathcairn LAP
Appendix V	Persons, Bodies and Agencies having made a submission on the Draft Rathcairn LAP

## Appendix I Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

Rathcairn Local Area Plan

Screening Report to Establish Requirement for a Strategic Environmental Assessment

For submission to:

Environmental Protection Agency  
Mr. Tadhg O'Mahony  
Regional Inspectorate  
Inniscarra  
Co. Cork

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government  
The Manager  
Development Applications Unit  
Dun Sceine  
Harcourt Lane  
Dublin 2

The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resource  
Mr. John Wayne  
Assistant Principal  
Co-ordination Unit  
Elm House  
Earlsvale Road  
Cavan

Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources  
Head Office  
29 – 31 Adelaide Road  
Dublin 2

Prepared by:

Meath County Council  
Planning Department  
Abbey Mall  
Abbey Road  
Navan  
Co. Meath

Sheridan Woods  
Architects + Urban Planners  
42 Arran Street East  
Dublin 7

## **1.0 Introduction**

Sheridan Woods Architects + Urban Planners have been retained by Meath County Council to prepare a Local Area Plan for Rathcairn, Co. Meath. As part of this process, consideration has been given to the likely environmental effects of implementing the Local Area Plan, having regard to the criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development Regulations 2004.

Section 3.4 of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines states that screening (i.e. the process for deciding whether a particular plan other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA) is required in the case of Local Area Plans where the population is less than 10,000 persons. As the population of Rathcairn is below 10,000 persons, the purpose of this report is to determine if the Local Area Plan requires a Strategic Environmental Assessment i.e. screen the LAP. In preparing the report reference has been made to the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08. Reference has also been made to the Guidelines for the Implementation of SEA Directive as prepared by the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (2004) and in particular Schedule 2A of SI 436 2004.

## **2.0 Policy Context**

Objective SS OBJ1 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007–2013 states that Local Area Plans shall be prepared for the urban centres contained in Table 7 of the Development Plan, which include Rathcairn.

According to the settlement hierarchy for County Meath set out in the County Development Plan, Rathcairn is listed as a 'village'. The Development Plan states that settlements designated as 'villages' are intended to act as nodes for distinctive quality driven residential development and essential local commercial and community services. Their future growth should be curtailed and safeguarded so that they do not act as catalysts to facilitate continuing expansion of the outer suburbs of Dublin City in particular, or other Large or Moderate Growth Towns. The future development of villages will be predicated more closely to local rather than regional growth.

## **3.0 Location / Context**

Rathcairn is located in the southwest quadrant of County Meath and in the Kells Electoral Area. Rathcairn is one of two designated Gaeltacht Areas in County Meath. As such, the village has a strong linguistic and cultural heritage which warrants special consideration in the preparation of a Local Area Plan for the village. Rathcairn is located between the R154 (Athboy / Trim Regional Road) and the N51 (Athboy / Navan Road) and approximately 5km east of Athboy. Rathcairn is identified in Map 1 Settlement Hierarchy of the MCDP 2007 – 2011 (Appendix A). A location map, current land use zoning map and photographic images of Rathcairn are appended and referred to in the text.

Rathcairn is a medium sized village comprising three distinct areas of development. These include an industrial area to the north of the village, the village centre and associated cul de sac developments and the national school and a cluster of dwellings at the Trim Road junction. The overall village is dispersed and lacks a general coherence comprising mainly one-off housing, medium scale industrial buildings and the Rathcairn Community School. The landscape surrounding Rathcairn comprises mixed woodland and coniferous plantations and rougher mixed pasture and areas of scrappy woodland. The village is illustrated in the appended photographic images (Appendix E).

The 2006 Census of population for the Rath Mor electoral division, within which Rathcairn is located, recorded a population of 860 persons. The Small Area Populations Statistics for the village indicated a population of 210 people living in Rathcairn village and 69 no. households within the village.

#### 4.0 Criteria for determining the likely significant environmental impacts (Schedule 2(A) of the SEA Regulations 2004)

Annex II of the SEA Directive sets out the criteria for determining the likely significant environmental effects. The proposed LAP must be assessed against the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. The most relevant considerations are:

- The Characteristics of the Proposed LAP
- Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the Proposed LAP

These are considered here:

##### 4.1 The characteristics of plans and programmes

##### 4.1.1 *The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions by allocating resources*

Rathcairn is identified as a village in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. As such, Rathcairn is intended to act as a node for 'distinctive quality driven residential development and essential local commercial and community services'.

The proposed Rathcairn LAP will provide detailed planning and development guidance for the proper and planning and sustainable development of Rathcairn Village including land use, transport and linguistic, cultural, natural and built heritage objectives and design guidelines. The Plan will encompass an area approximately 49 hectares in size as defined by the existing land use zoning map and boundary for the village (Appendix C). In accordance with the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, the proposed LAP will provide for development which is appropriately scaled and reinforces the character of the settlement.

In this regard, we note the Settlement Strategy for the county. The settlement strategy for County Meath as contained in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 seeks to locate residential growth in the county in accordance with the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines. The primary tenet of the adopted County settlement strategy is to channel residential development into the three settlements of Navan, Dunboyne / Clonee / Pace Rail corridor and Drogheda Environs. As a result, the development of the small growth towns and key villages in the County will need to be slowed dramatically and will be more closely linked to local growth rather than to regional growth. This will be achieved by reducing the projected growth rates of these centres from that experienced over the past few years and by ensuring that a proportion of new housing in multi house developments are being reserved for locals only. In the case of Kells, Trim, Dunshaughlin and the Small Growth Towns, Key Villages and Villages, the residentially zoned land bank in these areas was reviewed to ensure that only the quantum and scale of projected residential development contained in Table 5 (Population & Household Projection for the Plan Period) and Table 6 (Location of Household Growth 2006 - 2013) will take place. This is to ensure that the Development Plan accords with the policy framework contained in both the NSS and RPG's.

Variation No. 2 (Order of Priority) of the Meath County Development Plan manages the release of residentially zoned lands to ensure that the quantum and scale of residential development that will take place in urban centres interlocks with the quantity of residential units in Table 5 and Table 6 previously referred. Variation No. 2 of the MCDP indicates that the number of units permissible for release in Rathcairn is 20 units for the plan period. The Development Plan prioritises village centre consolidation and residential zoned land adjacent to the village centre for release in Phase 1 (2007 – 2013). Remaining residentially zoned lands will be released in Phase 2 (Post 2013) (Appendix D). The Local Area Plan will provide planning and development guidance that will conform with the County Settlement Strategy, and the Order Of Priority identified in the Development Plan.

#### *4.1.2 The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy*

The proposed Rathcairn LAP will operate at a local level and as such will generally be influenced by rather than influence other plans and programmes. The Plan shall be consistent with the objectives of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 and all other policy documents, strategies, guidelines, directives, conventions etc. which are relevant to the setting of environmental protection objectives.

#### *4.1.3 The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development*

The proposed Rathcairn LAP will include environmental objectives pertaining to the sustainable use of land, sustainable modes of transport, protection and conservation of built heritage, sustainable urban and building design, and water and waste infrastructure. The principles of sustainable development will underpin the objectives of the plan.

#### *4.1.4 Environmental problems relevant to the Proposed LAP*

The environmental problems relevant to the proposed Rathcairn LAP are the sustainable use of land and mix of land uses, the promotion of sustainable modes of transport, the protection of built and natural heritage, the provision of the necessary water and waste water treatment infrastructure and flooding.

#### *4.1.5 The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water pollution)*

The proposed Rathcairn LAP will be consistent with the objectives of Community legislation and shall seek to ensure the implementation of same with particular reference to energy conservation, transport policy, natural resources, waste-management and water protection and management.

### **4.2 Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected by the Proposed LAP**

#### *4.2.1 The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects*

No significant negative environmental effects are anticipated as an outcome of the proposed LAP. The LAP will seek to consolidate development at Rathcairn in order to ensure the efficient use of land and the promotion of sustainable modes of transport. Accordingly, it is anticipated that the proposed LAP will have a positive environmental impact on the Village.

#### *4.2.2 The cumulative nature of the effects*

The cumulative nature of the effects of the proposed LAP is positive, comprising of the consolidation of development, the promotion of sustainable travel patterns through the provision of a mix of uses within a concentrated area, the protection of built and natural heritage, and the promotion of efficient and sustainable water and waste management.

#### *4.2.3 The transboundary nature of the effects*

No transboundary effects are anticipated as an outcome of the proposed LAP.

#### *4.2.4 The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)*

No risks to human health or the environment are anticipated as an outcome of the proposed LAP. The proposed LAP will have a positive effect on the quality of life of the local population through the provision of high-quality residential, working and recreational environments and through the preservation and promotion of linguistic and cultural heritage.

#### *4.2.5 The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)*

The LAP area encompasses approximately 49 hectares. The Small Area Population Statistics for Rathcairn as extrapolated from the 2006 census of population recorded 210 no. persons and 69 no. households resident in the village of Rathcairn. In accordance with the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, the Plan will provide for development which is appropriately scaled and reinforces the character of the settlement and will be predicated more closely to local rather than regional growth which has taken place over the past decade. Accordingly, a significant population increase is not proposed. As previously noted a projected 15 no. additional households in Rathcairn are identified in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 for the period 2006 to 2013. The Order of Priority for the development of residential lands has also been identified in Variation No. 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 as noted (Appendix D) which provides for the logical growth of the village.

#### *4.2.6 The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:*

##### *4.2.6.1 Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage*

Rathcairn is one of two designated Gaeltacht areas in County Meath. The village has a strong linguistic and cultural heritage which it is an objective of Meath County Council to protect and enhance as part of the proposed Rathcairn LAP. The Meath County Development Plan seeks “the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht including the promotion of Irish as the community language, where there is a Gaeltacht area in the area of the development plan”.

The proposed LAP area does not contain any Recorded Monuments and Protected Structures.

The proposed LAP area does not comprise a National Heritage Area (NHA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a Special Protection Area (SPA). The Jamestown Bog, an area of raised bog with species such as bog moss and bog cotton is located approximately 5km north of Rathcairn and is a proposed National Heritage Area. It is not anticipated that the proposed LAP will have environmental effects on same.

There are no designated natural habitats areas within the study boundary. The protection of habitats of localised importance, e.g. river corridors/hedgerows/trees etc., can occur through specific LAP policies, incorporation of existing natural features into landscaping plans during the redevelopment of sites and appropriate conditions to individual planning applications.

The proposed LAP area does not comprise an Architectural Conservation Area or protected structures. There are no structures worthy of protection within the village.

There are no archaeological monuments located within the proposed LAP boundary or within the immediate vicinity of the village recorded on the Record of Sites and Monuments.

#### 4.2.6.2 Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values

With regard to soil quality, noise, air and water quality, no environmental quality standards or limit values have been exceeded within the proposed LAP boundary. We note that no incidents of flooding have been recorded within the proposed LAP boundary. Notwithstanding this, there are areas to the southwest and east of the village which could be liable to flooding in extreme weather conditions. These lands would benefit from Arterial Drainage Works which will need to be reflected in the Rathcairn LAP. These lands are illustrated in Appendix F.

#### 4.2.6.3 Intensive land-use

As previously noted, the proposed Rathcairn LAP will provide for development which is appropriately scaled and reinforces the character of the settlement. The character of Rathcairn is that of a loosely organised traditional Irish village. In this regard, it is proposed that the intensity of development arising from the proposed LAP will seek to consolidate the urban form of Rathcairn at an intensity which reflects the scale of the existing settlement. Accordingly, the value of the receiving environment will be retained and enhanced by the proposed LAP.

Water supply to Rathcairn is from the Athboy Water Supply Scheme which is currently at capacity. There are no immediate plans to upgrade/augment this supply. Water savings brought about through Water Conservation measures should provide a limited amount of additional water supply. Future development in Rathcairn will be contingent upon the sustainable provision of water.

The completion of the Athboy Sewerage Scheme, expected to be in early 2010, will provide capacity for a population equivalent (PE) of 800 persons in Rathcairn. There is potential to attach existing development operating on individual septic tanks to the sewerage system in the future. Future development in Rathcairn will be contingent upon the provision of adequate waste water treatment facilities.

#### 4.2.6.4 The effects on areas or landscape which have a recognised national, Community or International status

As previously noted, the proposed LAP area does not comprise a National Heritage Area (NHA), a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a Special Protection Area (SPA). The Jamestown Bog is a proposed National Heritage Area and is located approximately 5km north of the village

### **5.0 Conclusion**

On evaluation of the relevant criteria set out in Schedule 2A of the Regulations, it is considered that the proposed Local Area Plan will not result in any substantial further impacts on the environment, beyond what was envisaged within the context of the Meath Development Plan 2007-2013. The Planning Authority is satisfied that the LAP will ensure that Rathcairn will be developed in a sustainable and environmentally sound manner fully consistent with the policy and objectives prescribed in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. In view of this, it is considered that a strategic environmental assessment is not required in respect of the proposed Local Area Plan. Notwithstanding this, there are a number of issues which will be considered during the preparation of the Local Area Plan and where appropriate, included in the objectives/policies of the Local Area Plan. These are outlined in the attached Appendix.

## **6.0 Recommendation**

It is not considered necessary to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment for the proposed Local Area Plan for Rathcairn.

**Sheridan Woods Architects + Urban Planners**

30 January 2008

## Appendix II Appropriate Assessment Screening Report

Rathcairn Local Area Plan

Screening Report to Establish Requirement for an Appropriate Assessment

For submission to:

Environmental Protection Agency  
Mr. Tadhg O'Mahony  
Regional Inspectorate  
Inniscarra  
Co. Cork

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government  
The Manager  
Development Applications Unit  
Dun Sceine  
Harcourt Lane  
Dublin 2

The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resource  
Mr. John Wayne  
Assistant Principal  
Co-ordination Unit  
Elm House  
Earlsvale Road  
Cavan

Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources  
Head Office  
29 – 31 Adelaide Road  
Dublin 2

Prepared by:

Meath County Council  
Planning Department  
Abbey Mall  
Abbey Road  
Navan  
Co. Meath

Sheridan Woods  
Architects + Urban Planners  
42 Arran Street East  
Dublin 7

## 1.0 Introduction

This screening report has been prepared in order to establish whether the proposed Rathcairn Local Area Plan 2009-2015 requires an Appropriate Assessment. An Appropriate Assessment is an assessment carried out under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) in order to assess plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites.

This report describes the relevant provisions of the EU Habitats Directive, the methodology used in screening the Rathcairn Local Area Plan, the characteristics of the plan and relevant Natura 2000 sites. This report also identifies assessment criteria for the purpose of completing a 'Screening Matrix' and a 'Finding of No Significant Effects Matrix' in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive.

### Terms of Reference

Appropriate assessment is provided for by Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive.

Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive states:

Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In the light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public'.

Article 6(4) of the Directive states:

'If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of social or economic nature, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest'.

## 2.0 Methodology

The methodology used in screening the Rathcairn Local Area Plan has been derived from the Guidance Document on the Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites prepared by the European Commission in November 2001. This methodology comprises the following four steps:

- Describe the project or plan and the description and characterisation of other projects or plans that in combination have the potential for having significant effects on Natura 2000 sites;
- Determine whether the project or plan is directly related with or necessary to the management of Natura 2000 sites;
- Identify the potential effects on Natura 2000 sites;
- Assess the significance of any effects on Natura 2000 sites.

### 3.0 Brief Description of the Plan

Rathcairn is a small village located approximately 5km east of Athboy, Co. Meath (Appendix A). The village largely came into being when the Land Commission allocated families from congested areas in Galway houses and landholdings in Rathcairn. The population of Rathcairn is estimated at approximately 210 persons.

The Rathcairn LAP 2009-2015 will provide for the proper planning and sustainable development of Rathcairn during the lifetime of the plan. The LAP consists of a written statement comprising a vision for the village and supporting strategies, policies and objectives. The LAP will also comprise supporting mapping and drawings identifying land use zoning objectives with respect to lands within the village boundary, movement and access objectives, an indicative masterplan and design guidelines. The LAP will review and augment the existing Development Plan for the village (Appendix B).

The policy context for the Rathcairn LAP 2009-2015 is derived from the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 and associated Variations. The CDP identifies Rathcairn as one of 19 no. villages and states that these villages 'are intended to act as nodes for distinctive quality driven residential development and essential local commercial and community services. It is envisaged that the future growth of these villages should be curtailed and safeguarded so that they do not act as catalysts to facilitate continuing expansion of the outer suburbs of Dublin City in particular, or other Large or Moderate Towns. The villages located close to the Metropolitan Area or other Large or Moderate Growth Towns and close to significant public roads are particularly under pressure in this regard. Such villages are largely a reflection of their existing status and the nature of their development to date, witnessing the emergence as dormitory villages. The future development of Villages will be predicated more closely to local rather than regional growth which has taken place over the past decade.'

The County Development Plan provides for the development of 20 no. additional households in Rathcairn during the lifetime of the plan. An order of priority for the development of residential lands has also been identified in Variation No. 2 of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 (Appendix C) and identifies 2 no. phases for the development of residential zoned land with respect to the logical growth of the village.

The Rathcairn Local Area Plan will build on the broad policy objectives contained in the CDP by providing a more detailed and comprehensive planning framework to guide the future development of the village. In accordance with the County Development Plan, the LAP will provide for development which is appropriately scaled and reinforces the character of the settlement.

The Rathcairn LAP is described in the following sections with respect to the headings identified in the Guidance Document on the Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites.

#### *Size, scale, area, land-take etc.*

The boundary of the Rathcairn LAP 2009-2015 will largely be consistent with the existing development boundary for the village (Appendix B). The area encompassed by this boundary comprises approximately 45 hectares.

The scale of development provided for by the LAP must reinforce the character of the settlement and as such is of a low density and intensity.

#### *Plan Sector*

The Rathcairn LAP 2009-2015 seeks to facilitate the social, economic and cultural development of the village by providing for local housing demand and employment opportunities whilst protecting and enhancing the village environment and promoting environmental sustainability. The Plan will be used with respect to the development management of the village.

#### *Physical changes that will flow from the project or plan*

Minor modifications to the existing land use zoning objectives for the village are proposed including an increase in village centre zoned lands and a reduction in residential zoned lands.

The principal physical changes which may arise from the LAP are as follows:

- An identifiable village centre comprising local services and facilities
- Low-density cluster housing surrounding the village core
- Additional educational facilities adjacent the existing primary and secondary schools
- Environmental improvements within the village including new footpaths and landscaping

These changes are considered positive in nature providing for the logical growth and consolidation of the village's urban structure and the development of local commercial and community facilities. Whilst some of these changes will require excavation works, it is noted that given the distance (2.5km) of the relevant lands from the nearest designated site (Jamestown Bog NHA) it is not likely that these works would give rise to any significant adverse impact on the site.

#### *Resource requirements*

The additional households and commercial uses provided for will require the provision of waste water treatment facilities and the augmentation of existing water supply. The Plan states that all development will be contingent upon adequate infrastructure being in place in order to provide for development.

In this regard it is noted that the public water supply to Rathcairn is provided by the Athboy Water Supply Scheme. Athboy receives its potable water supply from a borehole at Townparks, with a storage reservoir at the Hill of Ward. The ability of the current system to supply an increased level of potable water is limited, as it is currently operating beyond full capacity. Therefore any future development within the area including Rathcairn will be severely constrained until an independent water supply source can be attained.

Athboy, together with Ballivor, Kildalkey and Rathcairn, which requires substantial water supply improvement in the short to medium term, is listed as Water Service Capital Works Project Number 9 (Meath County Council Water Services Investment Programme Assessment of Needs 2007-2013).

There is currently no waste water treatment plant in Rathcairn. However, it is intended to connect Rathcairn to the Athboy treatment plant, which is currently under construction, by constructing a pumping station at Rathcairn. The completion of the Athboy Sewerage Scheme, expected in 2010, will provide for a Population Equivalent (PE) of 800 persons. The completion of same will also provide for the connection of existing dwellings operating on individual septic tanks to the public sewerage scheme which will have a positive impact on the environment.

#### *Emissions and waste (disposal to land, water or air)*

No significant emissions are anticipated as an outcome of the LAP. As previously noted, the connection of Rathcairn to the Athboy Sewerage Scheme will provide for the connection of existing and new dwellings to the scheme and as such will provide for a reduction in waste discharges to the water table.

At present, the nearest recycling centre in County Meath is located in Athboy. The Draft LAP will seek to identify suitable locations for recycling facilities within the village of Rathcairn. Domestic and commercial refuse collection services are provided by private operators. There are a number of waste collection services in the county.

#### *Transportation requirements*

There are no significant transportation requirements associated with the LAP. The LAP promotes sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling and provides for the enhancement of existing and development of new walking and cycling routes. New streets and design guidance for same are provided where new residential areas are proposed. The consolidation of residential, employment, service and recreation / amenity

uses within the village will provide a sustainable alternative to dispersed settlement patterns which are highly car dependent.

*Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.*

It is not possible to determine the duration of construction or operation of uses provided for by the LAP. Notwithstanding this, the scale of proposed development is such that it is not anticipated that development would occur for a period any greater than one year. It is intended that all new development would have a long life cycle and will be designed in accordance with the loose fit, long life principle. The plan does not propose the decommissioning of uses.

*Plan implementation period*

The lifetime of the Rathcairn LAP will span a six year period from 2009-2015.

*Distance from Natura 2000 sites or key features of the site*

The nearest Natura 2000 site is the Jamestown Bog, a National Heritage Area, is situated approximately 2.5km north east of the village.

*Cumulative impacts with other projects or plans*

The Rathcairn LAP is one on 19 local area plans being prepared for villages in County Meath. It is not anticipated that the Rathcairn LAP in conjunction with any other project will have any significant adverse impacts on Natura 200 sites.

#### 4.0 Relationship between the Plan and Natura 2000 sites

The Jamestown Bog, which is located approximately 1.5 kilometers to the north east of the village, is the nearest Natura 2000 site to Rathcairn. The Rathcairn LAP will have no connection with or be necessary to the management of this site.

Site Code	Site Name
001324	Jamestown Bog

#### Jamestown Bog Natural Heritage Area

Jamestown Bog NHA is situated approximately 8 km west of Navan, mainly in the townlands of Tullaghanstown, Herbertstown and Jamestown in County Meath. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. The site is bounded on all sides by coniferous forestry and old cutover.

The raised bog consists of two flat, elongated lobes, separated by areas of cutover bog and coniferous forestry. The eastern lobe is the largest and contains areas which are quaking, with small, infilling pools and also some dry hummocks. There are large areas of both abandoned and active cutting around the high bog, along with areas of coniferous forestry. There are a number of tracks in the site. This raised bog is of particular interest as it is one of the most north-eastern of the remaining raised bogs in the country, and one of only two raised bogs in County Meath.

Much of the high bog vegetation is typical of raised bogs in Ireland, with species such as Ling Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), Cross-leaved Heath (*Erica tetralix*), Cottongrasses (*Eriophorum* spp.) and bog mosses (including *Sphagnum capillifolium*, *S. magellanicum*, *S. cuspidatum* and *S. papillosum*). In addition, Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*) and White Beak-sedge (*Rhynchospora alba*) are commonly found. There is quite high lichen (*Cladonia* spp.) cover in parts of the high bog, and there are a number of young Downy Birch (*Betula pubescens*) plants scattered over the surface of the high bog.

The Irish Hare, a Red Data Book species, has been recorded at the site.

Current landuse on the site consists of intensive peat-cutting around the edge of the high bog, and the drainage associated with this. There are large areas of coniferous forestry all around the margins of the site. These areas have also been significantly drained. Large portions of the bog have been burned in the past. These activities have resulted in loss of habitat and damage to the hydrological status of the site, and pose a continuing threat to its viability.

Jamestown Bog NHA is a site of considerable conservation significance comprising as it does a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. Its location makes it especially important as it is representative of the north-eastern extreme of the geographic range of raised bogs in Ireland. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of raised bog (over 50%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

## 5.0 Screening Matrix

This section describes the individual elements arising from the Plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on Natura 2000 sites. These impacts are assessed with respect to the assessment criteria identified in the Guidance Document on the Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites.

Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 site.

No individual elements likely to give rise to impact on Natura 2000 sites have been identified.

Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 site by virtue of:

### *Size and Scale*

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising from their size or scale shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

### *Land-Take*

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising from their land take shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

### *Distance from the Natura 2000 site or key features of the site*

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising from their proximity shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

### *Emissions (disposal to land, water or air)*

As previously noted, the connection of existing individual septic tanks to the Athboy Sewerage Scheme will have a positive impact on the environment.

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising from disposal to land, water or air shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

### *Excavation Requirements*

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising from their excavation requirements shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

### *Transportation Requirements*

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising from their transportation requirements shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

*Duration of construction, operation, decommissioning etc.*

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising from their duration of construction, operation or decommissioning etc. shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

*Other*

No projects giving rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura 2000 sites arising from any other effects shall be permitted on the basis of this Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

Describe any likely changes to the site arising as a result of:

*Reduction of habitat area*

No projects giving rise to reduction of habitat areas for Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

*Disturbance to key species*

No projects giving rise to disturbance to key species for Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

*Habitat or species fragmentation*

No projects giving rise to habitat or species fragmentation of Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

*Reduction in species density*

No projects giving rise to a reduction in species density of Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

*Changes in key indicators of conservation value (water quality etc.)*

No projects giving rise to a reduction in water quality of Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

*Climate change*

No projects giving rise to significant adverse climatic changes in Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 site as a whole in terms of:

*Interference with the key relationships that define the structure of the site*

No projects giving rise to interferences with key relationships that define the structure of Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

*Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site*

No projects giving rise to interferences with key relationships that define the function of Natura 2000 sites shall be permitted on the basis of the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects).

Provide indicators of significance as a result of the identification of effects set out above in terms of:

*Loss*

Not applicable

*Fragmentation*

Not applicable

*Disruption*

Not applicable

*Disturbance*

Not applicable

*Change to key elements of the site (e.g. water quality etc.)*

Not applicable

Describe from the above those elements of the project or plan, or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale or magnitude of impacts is not known.

Not applicable

## 6.0 Finding of no significant effects matrix

This section comprises the completion of a finding of no significant effects matrix as described in the Guidance Document on the Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites.

### *Name of Plan or Project*

Rathcairn Local Area Plan 2009-2015

### *Name and Location of Natura 2000 sites*

Site Code	Site Name
002299	Jamestown Bog

### *Is this project or plan directly connected with or necessary to the management of the sites (provide details)?*

The proposed LAP includes objectives which seek to ensure that development in Rathcairn does not have a significant adverse impact on the sites outlined above.

### *Are there any other projects or plans that together with the project or plan being assessed could affect the sites (provide details)?*

A local Area Plan is currently being prepared for the town of Athboy which is located 5km west of Rathcairn. The nearest major settlement after Athboy is Navan town which is located approximately 10km north east of Rathcairn. It is not anticipated that plans for these settlements will have a cumulative impact on Natura 2000 sites.

## The assessment of significance of effects

### *Describe how the project or plan (alone or in combination with other projects or plans) is likely to affect the Natura 2000 site*

It is not anticipated that the Rathcairn LAP (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) is likely to affect Natura 2000 sites.

### *Explain why these effects are not considered significant*

Not applicable

### *List of agencies consulted*

SEA screening letters were sent to the following:

- The Manger, Development Applications Unit, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2.
- Co-Ordination Unit, Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (DCMNR), Leeson Lane, Dublin 2.
- Tadhg O' Mahony, Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Inspectorate, Inniscarra, County Cork

### *Response to consultation*

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

The submissions made by the Department with respect to the Rathcairn SEA Screening report and include the following comments with respect to nature conservation and built heritage:

- Depending on the policies of the LAP there is potential for significant impact on the environment through impact on the river Boyne and its tributaries as a result of waste water discharges and / or water abstractions
- It is noted that development will be contingent on water supply and wastewater treatment being available
- The Plan should be screened for Appropriate Assessment

- Potential impacts on archaeological heritage arising for the LAP can be dealt with in the normal planning process
- A new local area plan could have a significant effect on the architectural heritage of each locality
- Opportunities exist to consolidate the built form of the village and reinforce its individual sense of place and identity within the county at large
- Architectural Heritage does not solely comprise Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas and the Departments Guidance on architectural heritage should be taken into consideration when assessing same
- New development should enhance the local environment and contribute to creating a place of distinction
- An architectural framework should be prepared for the delivery of same
- All existing features of built heritage should be engender an evolving new identity as a familiar and recognisable place
- Opportunities exist to identify additional structures of architectural merit other than those identified on the Record of Protected Structures

*Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources*

The submissions made by the Department with respect to the Rathcairn SEA Screening report are as follows:

- With respect to the protection of water quality and fishery status of the receiving waters, the status objectives set out in the Water Framework Directive should not be compromised as a result of the LAP
- Any development proposed on foot of this LAP shall be considered premature until suitable sanitary services infrastructure (incl. treatment plant capacity) is in place to take and treat satisfactorily the anticipated increased loading (both organic and hydraulic) that are expected as a result of the population increases projected in the LAP

*Environmental Protection Agency*

The submissions made by the EPA with respect to the Rathcairn SEA Screening report are as follows:

- Provisions should be made in the Plans for the incorporation of the specific objectives and measures set out in Draft Eastern River Basin District (RBD) River Basin Management Plan
- The Plan should implement and include, as appropriate, the relevant recommendations set out in The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland – A report for the Years 2006-2007
- It is noted that the Navan and Mid Meath Public Water Supply is currently on the EPA's Remedial Action List
- This Plan should ensure the supply of safe drinking water in the Plan area
- Specific policies and objectives regarding the provision of adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment to service lands should be included within the Plan
- Water conservation measures should be included within the Plan
- The Plan should include a clear policy and objective for the protection of groundwater resources and associated habitats and species
- Consideration should be given to policies and objectives regarding the enforcement of Planning Conditions related to installation, operation and maintenance of septic tank systems and the connection of all dwellings within the Plan area to a wastewater treatment plant when available
- Appropriate zoning of lands and restriction of use should apply in areas liable to flooding
- Provisions should be made to Climate Change and the likely increased risk of flooding arising from predicted changes in weather
- The Plan should provide for protection, management and as appropriate enhancement of existing wetland habitats where flood protection/management measures such as arterial drainage works are necessary
- Measures to promote the use of adequate and appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems should be included within the Plan
- Where zoning/rezoning lands the adequacy of existing water supply/wastewater treatment facilities should be assessed

- The Plan should contain a clear policy to protect non-designated habitats, species and local biodiversity features including rivers, hedgerows, individual trees, streams and grassland etc.
- The Plan should provide for the enhancement of local features of biodiversity value where opportunities arise
- Infill development should be encouraged over the development of greenfield sites
- The Plan should provide for promotion, where appropriate, of the use of renewable energy systems (e.g. solar, wind, geothermal etc.) within the Plan area and energy conservation within buildings
- The Plan should provide for sustainable modes of transport
- All water services authorities wastewater discharges, including surface (or storm) water discharges will be subject to new regulations
- Zoning for development should be linked to availability of waste water infrastructure and capacity
- Opportunities for waste prevention should be maximised
- Where development is proposed within the Plan area, considerations should be given to the implementation of an integrated approach to waste management
- Appropriate density and height restrictions should apply to ensure that the landscape characteristics of the Plan area and the adjoining lands are not adversely impacted.
- Consideration should be given to the requirement for an appropriate visual impact assessment for any proposed development with potential to impact adversely on the landscape character of the Plan area and adjoining lands
- The Plan should ensure provision of adequate and appropriate amenity to serve both the existing community and likely future increases in population
- The plan should provide for adequate and appropriate cycleway and footpath networks along with adequate relevant signage
- The Plan should promote the protection of existing natural and cultural heritage resources in the area as a local amenity and educational resource

*Data Collected to carry out the assessment*

*Who carried out this assessment?*

Sheridan Woods Architects & Urban Planners

*Sources of Data*

Existing Records

*Level of Assessment Completed*

Desktop Study

*Where the full results of the assessment can be accessed and viewed?*

This document contains the full results of the Appropriate Assessment Screening exercise.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

Following a review of the draft Rathcairn Local Area Plan 2009-2015 in accordance with the 'Methodological guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43', a Screening Matrix and Findings of Significant Effects have been completed.

This screening report was carried out to ascertain if the Plan is likely to have significant adverse effect on Natura 2000 sites and as such the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment. The Plan has been formulated to ensure that developments and effects arising from permissions based upon the Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) do not give rise to significant adverse effects on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites.

This screening report finds that the Rathcairn Local Area Plan (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects) does not require further appropriate assessment.

**Sheridan Woods Architects + Urban Planners**

02 April 2009

## Appendix III Land Use Matrix and Zoning Map

The land use zoning matrix for Rathcairn has been taken from the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The land use zoning matrix is intended to provide guidance to potential developers with respect to uses that may or may not be permitted within a zoned area. The Zoning Matrix illustrates the acceptability or unacceptability in principle of various uses for the zoning objectives below.

- A1 To protect and enhance the amenity of developed residential communities
- A2 To provide for new residential communities and community facilities and protect the amenities of existing residential areas in accordance with an approved framework plan
- A5 To provide for low density residential development in accordance with action area based planning and individual dwelling design
- B1 To protect and enhance the special physical and social character of existing town and village centres and to provide for new and improved town centre facilities and uses
- E1 To provide for industrial and related uses subject to the provision of necessary physical infrastructure
- F1 To provide for and enhance open spaces for active and passive recreational amenities
- G1 To provide for necessary community, recreational and educational facilities

A = Will Normally be Accepted

A use which will normally be acceptable is one which the Planning Authority accepts in principle in the relevant zone. However, it is still subject to the normal planning process including policies and objectives outlined in the plan.

O = Are Open for Consideration

A use which is open for consideration means that the use is generally acceptable except where indicated otherwise and where specific considerations associated with a given proposal (i.e. scale) would be unacceptable, or where the development would be contrary to the objective for a given area.

X = Will Not Normally be Permitted

Development which is classified as not normally acceptable in a particular zone is one which will not be entertained by the Planning Authority except in exceptional circumstances. This may be due to its perceived effect on existing and permitted uses, its incompatibility with the policies and objectives contained in this Plan or the fact that it may be inconsistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

The expansion of established and approved uses not conforming to land use zoning objectives will be considered on their merits.

However, an indication that a proposal would be 'permitted in principle' from the matrix should in no way be taken to imply granting of permission, or indeed that a planning application may be necessarily successful. Individual applications are a matter for the Planning Authority to decide and the final decision rests with them, taking into consideration the merits of individual cases and circumstances that may be relevant at a specific time or at a specific location.

The matrix relates to land use only and important factors such as density, building height, design standards, traffic generation etc., are also relevant in establishing whether or not a development proposal would be acceptable in a particular location.

## Land Use Matrix

Use Classes	A1	A2	A5	B1	E1	F1	G1
A.T.M. (In Commercial Premises)	A	A	A	A	X	X	X
Abattoir	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
Adverts	O	O	O	A	A	X	X
Outdoor Advertising Structures	X	X	X	O	A	O	X
Agri-Business	X	X	X	O	A	X	X
Amusement Arcade	X	X	X	O	X	X	X
B&B	A	A	A	A	X	X	X
Bank / Financial Institution	X	O	O	A	X	X	X
Betting Office	X	O	O	A	X	X	X
Bring Banks	A	A	A	A	A	O	O
Car Park (Commercial)	X	X	X	O	O	X	X
Caravan Park	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Car Dismantler / Scrap Yard	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
Cash & Carry	X	X	X	O	A	X	X
Casual Trading	X	X	X	A	X	X	X
Cemetery	X	X	X	X	X	X	A
Church	X	O	O	A	X	O	A
Cinema	X	X	X	A	X	X	A
Community Facility / Centre	O	A	A	A	X	O	A
Conference Centre	X	O	O	O	X	X	X
C&D Waster Recycling Centre	X	X	X	X	O	X	X
Creche / Childcare Facility	O	A	A	A	O	X	A
Cultural Facility / Use	O	O	O	A	X	O	A
Dance Hall / Night Club	X	X	X	A	X	X	X
Doctors / Dentists*	O	O	O	A	X	X	O
Drive Through Restaurants	X	X	X	O	X	X	X
Education	O	O	O	A	X	X	A
Energy Installation	X	X	X	X	A	X	X
Enterprise Centre	X	O	O	O	A	X	X
Fuel Depot – Domestic	X	X	X	X	A	X	X
Fuel Depot – Petroleum Products	X	X	X	X	A	X	X
Funeral Home	X	O	O	A	X	X	A
Garden Centre	X	X	X	X	A	X	X
Guest House	O	A	A	A	X	X	X
Halting Site / Group Housing	O	A	A	X	X	X	O
Health Centre	O	O	O	A	X	X	A
Heavy Goods Vehicle Car Park	X	X	X	X	A	X	X
Home Based Economic Activities	O	O	O	O	X	X	X
Hospital	X	O	O	X	X	X	A
Hostel	X	O	O	A	X	X	X
Hotel / Motel	X	X	O	A	X	X	X

Use Classes	A1	A2	A5	B1	E1	F1	G1
Industry – General	X	O	X	X	A	X	X
Industry – Light	X	O	O	X	A	X	X
Leisure / Recreation	X	A	O	A	X	O	A
Library	X	X	A	A	X	X	A
Motor Sales / Repair	X	O	X	O	A	X	X
Offices < 100m <sup>2</sup>	X	X	O	A	X	X	O
Offices 100 to 1000m <sup>2</sup>	X	X	X	A	X	X	X
Offices > 1000m <sup>2</sup>	X	A	X	A	O	X	X
Open Space	A	X	A	A	O	A	A
Park and Ride	X	O	X	X	A	X	X
Petrol Station	O	X	O	O	X	X	X
Plant & Tool Hire	X	O	X	X	A	X	X
Public House	X	A	O	A	X	X	X
Public Services	A	X	A	A	A	A	A
Civic & Amenity Recycling Facility	X	X	X	X	A	X	A
Refuse Transfer Station	X	X	X	X	A	X	X
Residential	A	A	A	O	X	X	X
Residential Institution	O	O	O	O	X	X	O
Restaurant / Café	X	X	X	A	O	X	O
Retail Warehouse	X	X	X	O	O	X	X
Retirement Home	O	A	A	X	X	X	A
Science & Technology Based Enterprise	X	X	X	O	O	X	X
Shop – Local**	O	A	A	A	O	X	X
Shop – Major	X	X	X	A	X	X	X
Shopping Centre	X	X	X	A	X	X	X
Sports Facilities	O	O	O	O	X	A	A
Take-Away	X	X	X	A	X	X	X
Telecommunication Structures	X	X	X	A	A	O	O
Third level Educational Institute	X	X	X	X	X	X	A
Tourism Complex	X	X	X	A	X	A	A
Transport Depot	X	X	X	X	A	X	X
Veterinary Surgery	O*	O*	O*	A	X	X	X
Warehouse	X	X	X	X	A	X	X
Water Services***	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
Wholesale Warehousing	X	X	X	O	A	X	X

\* Where this use would be ancillary to the use of the overall dwelling as a normal place of residence by the user of the office

\*\* A local shop is defined as a convenience retail unit of not more than 200 sqm in gross floor area

\*\*\* Refers to public utility installations

## Land Use Zoning Map

## Appendix IV Persons, Bodies and Agencies having made a Pre-Draft submission on the preparation of the Rathcairn LAP

<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Submission Made By</b>
001	Joan Crosbie OPW Engineering Services, 17 – 19 Lower Hatch Street, Dublin 2
002	Padraig Griffin c/o COIS
003	Shirley Kearney Dept Education & Science
004	Padraic McCraith
005	John Spain Assoc on behalf of Patrick Kerrigan
006	Joe Tynan
007	Una Ni Fhairchealaigh
008	Daithi Mac Carthaigh
009	Seosamh O Teimhneain
010	Paraic Griffin Turmac Engineering
011	Padraig & Anna Seoighe
012	Aighneacht um Reamhdhreacht
013	Liam Mac Coil
014	Cariona Ni Cheallaigh
015	Teresa Halloran, Development Applications Unit, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government – Architectural Heritage
016	Miachael McCormack NRA
017	Imelda Conlon, Dept of Transport
018	Frances Heaslip Department of Communications Energy and Natural Resources
019	Udaras Na Gaeltachta
020	Frank Fagan
021	Teresa Halloran, Development Applications Unit, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government – Nature Conservation

## Appendix V Persons, Bodies and Agencies having made a submission on the Draft Rathcairn LAP

<b>Ref. No.</b>	<b>Submission Made By</b>
001	Teresa Halloran, Development Applications Unit, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin 2
002	Seána McGrearty, Coordination Unit, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Elm House, Earlsvale Road, Co. Cavan
003	Michael Owens, Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Inspectorate, Inniscarra, County Cork
004	John Spain Associates on behalf of Patrick Kerrigan, Midland Contractors Ltd., Cortown, Kells, Co. Meath
005	Shirley Kearney, Department of Education and Science
006	Frances Heaslip, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
007	Patrick O' Sullivan, Spatial Policy, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
008	Michael McCormack, National Roads Authority, St. Martin's House, Waterloo Road, Dublin 4